

BLACKWASHING 2.0

ARE CORPORATIONS, IN FACT, COMMITTED TO THE RACIAL AGENDA?

ACT 20 ANOS
Promoção da Saúde

TECHNICAL SHEET

Blackwashing 2.0
Are corporations, in fact, committed to the racial agenda?

Produced by:

ACT Promoção da Saúde 20 ANOS

Executive Director: Paula Johns

Innovation and Strategy Manager: Marília Albiero

Research Coordination: Vitória Moraes

Research: Vitoria Moraes, Letícia Portugal, Jéssica Lima, Emily Maya Almeida

Writing: Emily Maya Almeida

Technical Supervision: Camila Maranha

Legal Supervision: Adriana Carvalho

Proofreading: Juliana Waetge

Graphic design, layout, and cover art: Ronieri Gomes

São Paulo, Brazil, April 2026.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ana Carolina Rocha - General Coordination of Food and Nutrition of the Ministry of Health (CGAN/MS)

Beatriz Santangelo - RAP da Saúde Collective of the Municipal Health Secretariat of Rio de Janeiro (SMS-Rio)

Denize Amorim - ACT Health Promotion

Elisa Mendonça - Latin America and the Caribbean Community of Practice on Nutrition and Health (Colansa)

Fabiana Nogueira - Tobacco Control Division of the National Cancer Institute (Ditab/INCA)

Filipe Lopes - Environment and Climate Secretariat of the City of Rio de Janeiro (SMAC)

Gabriel Martins Teles - Directorate of Affirmative Policies of the Ministry of Racial Equality (DPA/MIR)

Gaby Makena - Museum of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture

João Diamante - Diamantes na Cozinha Social Project

Joyce Bueno - Rio de Janeiro City Council

Laio Victor Tavares Cardoso - Street Clinic of the Health Secretariat of Rio de Janeiro (SMS-RIO)

Laurenice Pires - Specialization in Human Rights, Ethno-Racial Matters and Health (FIOCRUZ) and Strategy and Advocacy Director, Women in Global Health Brazil

Letícia Da Hora - Mulheres da Parada Collective

Luana Cunha - FIAN Brazil

Matheus Pinto - Independent social communicator

Marília Albiero - ACT Health Promotion

Max Jaques - Chef and researcher in food culture, memory, and development

Raphael Barreto - National School of Public Health of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (ENSP/FIOCRUZ) and Aurora de Afonso Costa School of Nursing of the Fluminense Federal University (EEAAC/UFF)

Renata Couto - Desiderata Institute

Sinara Rúbia - Museum of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture

Udmila Santos - Eumelanina Institute

Vanessa Nascimento - Peregum Black Reference Institute

Vitor Hugo Cardozo - Independent social communicator

Preface 6
Foreword 9
Introduction 12
Skin color as a risk factor 12
Racism as an engine of inequality and determinant of health 15
Commercial determinants of health and corporate power 19
From Black Lives Matter to blackwashing: how the study was conducted 22
The Black person as a consumer 28
Desired consumer, denied citizen 31
The place of the Black person in the production chain 37
Racial division of labor and unequal value capture 38
Territorialization of risks, environmental racism, and food systems 38
Varieties of blackwashing 45
1. Selective disclosure 46
2. Empty policies and claims 53
3. Dubious certifications 60
4. Support and partnership with co-opted NGOs 71
5. Inefficient voluntary programs 79
6. Misleading narratives and discourses 94
7. Misleading brands 100
8. Access and influence in policymaking 111
Conclusion 115
Why confront blackwashing? 115
Focus group: the promotion of a collective debate in search of solutions 116
From diagnosis to responses 118
Steps for the future 119
Final considerations 126
Annexes 126
Annex I 126
Annex II 131

PREFACE

What do Doritos, Devassa, Carrefour, Carnaval, and São João festivities have to do with racism? Are Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies, the corporate accountability agenda on ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) issues, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) - including corporate actions for Black people to occupy central leadership positions in companies - effective means to confront racism? Or are they merely reputation management tactics by large corporations based on performative anti-racism?

The racial division of labor and the place designated for Black people in the supply chain are part of a history of exclusion and violence imposed on the Black population. In a regime where capital is the absolute master and the Black population lacks the means to fully access it, they end up integrating into the consumer society in a precarious and unequal manner. On the other hand, they become the target of commercial strategies of industries and economic sectors that have little or no concern for the impacts of their products on this population, such as the ultra-processed foods and tobacco industries.

Have you ever wondered why, in the vicinity of the poorest and most densely populated areas, where a predominantly Black population lives, it is so much easier to find ultra-processed foods in local markets and shops instead of healthy foods? Why do natural fruit juices cost twice as much as sodas produced in distant locations that involve packaging, logistics, and machinery for their production? This report invites us to reflect on food deserts and food swamps and food apartheid - the socio-spatial segregation that organizes unequal access to adequate food according to markers of race, class, and territory.

It is impossible to dissociate the impacts of these commercial practices from the illness of the Black population due to Non-communicable diseases (NCDs). As you will see in this publication, official health data indicate that the incidence of hypertension in the adult Black population is 26% higher in comparison with white people, and that the abusive consumption of alcoholic beverages has increased significantly among Black and mixed-race people, surpassing the growth recorded among the white population. Advertising targeted at this audience, the sponsorship of festivities that have deep roots in Black culture, such as Carnaval (including samba schools) and São João, and the use of identity and affective elements related to Black culture play an important role in consumption patterns and, consequently, in the impact caused on health.

Manufacturers of alcoholic beverages such as Devassa, already analyzed in the first edition of the Blackwashing report, promote a product of abusive consumption associated with high health risks, which disproportionately affect the Black population, already exposed to greater social vulnerability. Thus, the business model continues to concentrate profits within the companies and transfer the health and environmental damages, the social consequences, and the impacts on human rights to the public sector and the society.

The operational logic of capital demands the maximization of profits for the owners of the means of production. To this end, anything goes. Despite a chronic invisibility of centuries and a subalternized and stereotyped social representation, Black groups and movements have historically fought (and still fight), disputing political recognition, symbolic representation, and economic inclusion. This tension caused the market to begin to recognize, albeit unequally and often instrumentally, the macroeconomic weight of the Black population in national consumption.

In recent decades, advertising began to increase the incorporation of Black people, their narratives, their identity elements, their community symbols, and discourses of belonging to create affective bonds between corporations and historically marginalized groups. The objective is clear: to present these companies as allies, even when their products produce health damages. But, if part of the critique regarding the place of Black people in the supply chain consists of the lack of representation of these individuals, the invisibility and subalternity, and the lack of access to decision-making spaces, why are we talking now, in 2026, after so many struggles for inclusion, about Blackwashing 2.0 from a critical perspective on corporate initiatives for inclusion, career acceleration for Black people, and the promotion of Black entrepreneurship, questioning corporate "anti-racism"?

This report summons us to reflect on how corporations have repeated perverse racist practices and, despite their meticulously redesigned discourse, have not the slightest intention of abandoning them, much less repairing the damages and impacts caused. On the contrary, the publication provides many examples, such as the reputation management strategy carried out by Carrefour after the murder of João Alberto in 2020. The group signed an agreement claiming, among other measures, to invest R$ 115 million in a racial equity plan. The broad dissemination of the agreement in the press and institutional channels of the company became a form of propaganda of its supposed Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and commitment to anti-racist initiatives, and, moreover, acted as an explicit attempt to dissociate itself from the event(s) that originated them. It was pure marketing and reputation management to continue serving capital, maximizing profits without concretely changing their practices.

Another example is the market of incentives, sponsorships of social actions to promote an image of support for racial equity through entrepreneurship fairs, cultural events, and career acceleration programs for Black people. Although these initiatives represent capital injections and concrete opportunities for Black people in leadership positions, by focusing their actions at the individual level, corporations fragment collective agendas and, in a labor context that imposes an asymmetrical cultural adaptation process on Black workers, these individuals are frequently exposed to experiences of non-belonging. This performative inclusion reveals that visible presence does not necessarily imply real distribution of power and reinforces, rather than challenges, the racial division of labor and the margin of decision-making within corporations.

The lack of internal transparency in companies is also evidence of what the report calls performative anti-racism. Doritos, for example, promotes a positive image

through external partnerships with non-profit organizations and social impact projects led by Black people throughout Brazil and dedicates a product from its portfolio to represent a cause, but does not disclose transparent information about the racial profile of its workforce, especially in leadership positions.

Playlists, festivals, manifestos, and career acceleration projects celebrate the aesthetics of diversity, utilize Black imagery, symbols, and cultural elements, but do not address crucial points such as hiring, Black leadership, funding, or the redistribution of power. The corporate capture employed by large corporations seeks to associate the brands with non-profit civil society organizations, establishes public-private partnerships in which companies obtain validation from state agencies, resort to certifications and seals of doubtful efficiency, and intend to present themselves as "part of the solution" - all to convey a socially responsible corporate image. However, the focus of corporations is the maintenance of their practices exactly as they are: distant from binding legal obligations and, therefore, voluntary, which allows them to mask violations, make use of a performative anti-racism agenda, and, on top of that, profit from it.

Enjoy your reading!

By Alexandra Maria Santos Montgomery

Lawyer and master in international human rights law from the American University College of Law, in the United States. She has worked at Justiça Global, the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), in the corporate accountability area of the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net) and, more recently, at Amnesty International Brazil. Currently, she is a human rights consultant and advisor for Justiça Global.

FOREWORD

ACT Health Promotion is a Brazilian NGO founded in 2006 and dedicated to the promotion of public health and the defense of human rights. Focusing on the prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs, which include chronic cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, diabetes, and cancer), it combines advocacy strategies, social mobilization actions, and knowledge production based on the 360º[1] Prevention approach, which proposes integrated action on the five main risk factors for NCDs - tobacco use, alcohol consumption, inadequate diet, physical inactivity, and air pollution - , in addition to the promotion of healthy environments. Along with civil society organizations and the scientific community, ACT seeks to influence public policies aimed at the prevention of NCDs, which are responsible for over 70% of preventable and avoidable deaths in Brazil and worldwide.

In 2023, the organization published its Policy for the Promotion of Racial Equity & Combating Racism[2], reaffirming its commitment to overcoming racism, racial inequalities, and all forms of prejudice and discrimination based on color or race. The initiative reinforces ACT's institutional positioning in favor of racial equity.

ACT's Racial Equity Policy proposes the review of internal processes and dynamics, including hiring practices and the professional development of Black employees, as well as the strengthening of knowledge production and scientific dissemination that articulate health and racial issues. It also includes guidelines for the development of communication campaigns committed to respect for diversity, among other measures.

The Blackwashing study, now in its second edition, is part of this set of initiatives. It is worth highlighting that the research's technical team, as well as its leadership, is predominantly composed of Black people.

Previously, ACT supported the publication of "Racism as a social determinant of health: impacts of smoking on the health of the Black population",[3] by the National Cancer Institute (INCA, 2025), and published, in partnership with researchers from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, the report "Social determinants in health" in 2025[4]. Building on this work, public health researcher Laurenice Pires published "Non-communicable diseases and the intersection of

1 ACT Promoção da Saúde. **O que é prevenção 360º?** Available at: https://prevencao360.org.br/

2 ACT Promoção à Saúde. **Política para Promoção da Equidade Racial e Combate ao Racismo** [electronic document]. São Paulo, SP: ACT Promoção da Saúde, 2023. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/uploads/arquivos/Politica-para-Promocao-da-Equidade-Racial-e-Combate-ao-Racismo.pdf

3 INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE CÂNCER (Brazil). **Racismo como determinante social da saúde: impactos do tabagismo na saúde da população negra**. Rio de Janeiro: INCA, 2025.

4 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE. **Determinantes sociais em saúde: doenças crônicas não transmissíveis e seus fatores de risco e de proteção na população adulta brasileira.** Rio de Janeiro: ACT, 28 mai. 2025. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/biblioteca/determinantes-sociais-em-saude-doencas-cronicas-nao-transmissiveis-e-seus-fatores-de-risco-e-de-protecao-na-populacao-adulta-brasileira/.

race, gender, and education" (2025)[5]. ACT also launched the newsletter "MonitorACT: special Blackwashing edition" (2023)[6] and contributed to the book "Chemical dependency, racism, gender, social determinants, and human rights" (2023)[7] by the Brazilian Association of Studies on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ABEAD).

The goal of this report is to qualify civil society's debate on public policies to tackle NCDs, contributing to filling gaps resulting from the absence of intersectional and inclusive perspectives. It begins with the recognition of the specificities, diversity, and complexity that characterize the Brazilian population, which is predominantly composed of Black and brown (mixed-race) people. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), these two groups represent more than half of the country, and combined compose the Black population[8].

Without an intersectional approach[9, 10, 11] that articulates dimensions such as race, gender, sexuality, and ableism, public policies will tend to reproduce institutional negligence, perpetuate inequalities, and compromise their effectiveness.

In this sense, the initiative is not limited to this publication. It unfolds into communication actions, the promotion of public debates, and political advocacy strategies aimed at the implementation of the recommendations presented at the end of the document. These recommendations are the result of twenty years of accumulated action by ACT Health Promotion, along with contributions and strategies developed by researchers and activists in the field. Specific advocacy materials can be found in the Annexes of this publication.

5 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE. **Doenças crônicas não transmissíveis e o recorte de raça, gênero e escolaridade.** Rio de Janeiro: ACT, 17 feb. 2025. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/biblioteca/doencas-cronicas-nao-transmissiveis-e-o-recorte-de-raca-genero-e-escolaridade

6 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE. **monitorACT | Edição especial: Blackwashing**. ACT Promoção da Saúde, São Paulo, 8 nov. 2023. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/monitor/monitoract-special-edition-blackwashing/.

7 ASSOCIAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DE ESTUDOS EM ÁLCOOL E OUTRAS DROGAS (ABEAD); PASSOS, Rachel Gouveia. **Dependência química, racismo, gênero, determinantes sociais e direitos humanos.** 1. ed. Curitiba: Appris, 2023.

8 Article 1, paragraph IV, of the Statute of Racial Equality (Law No. 12,288/2010. Estatuto da Igualdade Racial) states: "Black population: the set of people who self-identify as Black and mixed-race (*pretas e pardas*), according to the color or race category used by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)". This formulation was driven from the 1970s and 1980s onward, with the actions of the contemporary Black movement, especially the Unified Black Movement (MNU), which began to advocate the political notion of "Black" as a collective identity, of presumed African origin, for confronting racism. The idea was to combat the racial fragmentation produced by the myth of racial democracy and the historical encouragement of miscegenation as a form of "whitening" the Brazilian population.

9 CRENSHAW, Kimberlé W. **Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics**. University of Chicago Legal Forum, v. 1989, p. 139-167, 1989. Disponível em: https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship/3007/.

10 CARNEIRO, Sueli. **Enegrecer o feminismo: a situação da mulher negra na América Latina a partir de uma perspectiva de gênero.** In: ASHOKA EMPREENDEDORES SOCIAIS; TAKANO CIDADANIA (org.). Racismos contemporâneos. Rio de Janeiro: Takano Editora, 2003. p. 49-58.

11 COLLINS, Patricia Hill. **Black feminist thought: knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment.** Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990.

INTRODUCTION

Skin color as a risk factor

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which include cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, cancer, and diabetes, are among the greatest public health challenges in Brazil and worldwide. NCDs are the leading cause of global mortality, accounting for 41 million deaths per year, of which 15 million correspond to premature deaths[12]. In Brazil, NCDs were responsible for 53.9% of the total deaths registered in 2023, and 40.9% of them occurred prematurely (between 30 and 69 years of age)[13]. The occurrence of these health conditions is directly associated with risk factors such as inadequate diet, consumption of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, physical inactivity, and exposure to air pollution.

In this context, the role of the consumption of ultra-processed foods, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco products draws attention. Despite being recognized as harmful to health, their spread has been driven by the actions of large corporations. The influence exerted by these companies, including undue influence on public policies, shapes individual and collective choices and is pointed out as one of the main obstacles to the reduction of NCDs on a global scale.[14]

At the same time, the risk factors associated with these diseases are deeply linked to the living conditions of the population and to structural determinants related to the guarantee of rights. Unequal access to public services, information, employment, and income, as well as concrete limitations for the adoption of healthy habits, among other aspects, contribute to both the risks and the burden of NCDs being distributed unequally, disproportionately affecting historically vulnerable groups.

This identification is also present in the field of International Human Rights Law. In a thematic report[15], the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) states that NCDs are one of the main challenges to the right to health

12 WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO). **Noncommunicable diseases progress monitor 2022**. World Health Organization, Genebra, 2023. Available at: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240047761

13 Ministério da Saúde. *Vigitel Brasil 2006-2024*. Available at: https://www.gov.br/saude/pt-br/centrais-de-conteudo/publicacoes/svsa/vigitel/vigitel-brasil-2006-2024.pdf/view

14 ULUCANLAR, S., LAUBER, K., FABBRI, A., HAWKINS, B., MIALON, M., HANCOCK, L., TANGCHAROENSATHIEN, V., & GILMORE, A. B., **Corporate Political Activity: Taxonomies and Model of Corporate Influence on Public Policy.** Revista Internacional de Gestão de Políticas de Saúde. 2023:12:7292. DOI: 10.34172/ijhpm.2023.7292. Electronic document, 6th june 2023. Available at: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37579378/

15 COMISSÃO INTERAMERICANA DE DIREITOS HUMANOS (CIDH). **Doenças não transmissíveis e direitos humanos nas Américas.** Washington, D.C.: Organização dos Estados Americanos, 2023. Available at: oas.org/es/cidh/informes/pdfs/2023/REDESCA_enfermedades_NoTransmisibles_DDHH_SPA.pdf#:~:text=OAS%20Cataloging-in-Publication%20Data%20Inter-American%20Commission%20on%20Human%20Rights.

in the Americas and disproportionately affect historically discriminated populations, such as Black people, indigenous peoples, women, and people living in poverty. According to the IACHR, these inequalities stem from structural factors, such as racism, socio-economic exclusion, and the influence of commercial interests on public policies, which imposes on the countries the duty to adopt robust regulations and health policies guided by an intersectional and anti-discriminatory approach.

The World Health Organization (WHO) created the Commission on Social Determinants of Health[16] in 2005 to identify health inequities and generate evidence that strengthens policies to reduce them. Its 2008 report recommended actions to improve living conditions, public governance, and the understanding of social determinants. In 2011, the World Conference on Social Determinants of Health in Rio reaffirmed the need for health equity through intersectoral actions and "Health in All Policies." The WHO renewed this commitment by creating a Department of Social Determinants of Health in 2018 and retrieved the Rio Declaration in 2021, in Resolution WHA74.16[17] of the 74th World Health Assembly.

In May 2025, the Commission published its latest global report[18], with 14 recommendations that highlight the persistence of disparities in healthy life expectancy associated with factors such as place of residence, the community to which people belong, level of education, race and ethnicity, income and wealth, gender, and the presence or absence of a disability. This document analyzes how social, economic, political, and environmental conditions shape health inequalities worldwide. The WHO concludes that health inequities are preventable and result from political choices. Therefore, tackling them requires state commitment, international cooperation, and the centrality of human rights. In August 2025, the Health Inequality Monitoring (HIM) Network was launched.

In Brazil, inequality is even more expressive of the reality of the Black population — and also of the indigenous population, although intersected by its own historical, territorial, and socio-cultural specificities —, which faces persistent barriers in accessing rights, including health. Studies[19] based on the race/color category, especially those produced by the Ministry of Health, demonstrate that racial inequities structure the epidemiological profile of NCDs in the country, deepening already existing inequalities.

16 ORGANIZAÇÃO MUNDIAL DA SAÚDE (OMS). **World report on social determinants of health equity**. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2025. 214 p. ISBN 978-92-4-010758-8. Available at: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240107588.

17 ORGANIZAÇÃO MUNDIAL DA SAÚDE (OMS). **Social determinants of health.** Resolução WHA74.16, 31th may de 2021. Genebra: Organização Mundial da Saúde, 2021. Available at: https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA74/A74_R16-en.pdf

18 ORGANIZAÇÃO MUNDIAL DA SAÚDE (OMS). **World report on social determinants of health equity**. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2025. 214 p. ISBN 978-92-4-010758-8. Available at: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240107588.

19 BRASIL. Ministério da Saúde. **Boletim epidemiológico: saúde da população negra: número especial, vol. 2,** out. 2023. Available at: https://www.gov.br/saude/pt-br/centrais-de-conteudo/publicacoes/boletins/epidemiologicos/especiais/2023/boletim-epidemiologico-saude-da-populacao-negra-numero-especial-vol-2-out.2023

Data from the 2019 National Health Survey (PNS)[20] indicate a prevalence of hypertension of approximately 48.7% among the adult Black population, a rate about 26% higher than that observed among white people. The 2013 and 2019 editions of the PNS also reveal that the abusive consumption of alcoholic beverages increased significantly among Black (from 18.8% to 23.2%) and mixed-race individuals (from 15.1% to 20.3%) between 2006 and 2023, surpassing the growth recorded among the white population.

Although the prevalence of cancer is higher among white people, mortality is higher among Black people in Brazil (INCA, 2023[21]). Furthermore, approximately 15.1% of the adult Black population is diagnosed with diabetes, and the mortality rate from the disease is 7.2% higher when compared to white people[22], reflecting inequalities in access to health services and in exposure to risk factors (Ministry of Health, 2023[23]).

Moreover[24], a study commissioned by ACT Health Promotion on NCDs and social determinants such as sex, race/color, and education, based on data from 2010 to 2022, identified that the prevalence of obesity was 42% higher among Black women compared to white women, and that the prevalence of overweight was 10% higher among Black people.

The research also pointed out that, in 2023, the consumption of fruits and vegetables increased by 16% among women; however, the prevalence was 19% lower among mixed-race women and 14% lower among mixed-race people in general. On the other hand, the regular consumption of beans was 13% higher among Black people and 6% higher among mixed-race people, with Black women consuming 18% more, in comparison with white women.

Regarding physical activity, unequal patterns were observed: insufficient practice was 14% lower among Black people and 36% lower among people of Asian descent, but 8% higher among white people.

20 BRASIL. **Pesquisa Nacional de Saúde 2019: hipertensão arterial e fatores associados.** Rev. Saúde Pública 2023;56:122. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9749662/

21 BRASIL. Ministério da Saúde. **Estimativas 2023: Incidência de Câncer no Brasil.** Rio de Janeiro: INCA, 2023. Available at: https://www.inca.gov.br/sites/ufu-stc-institucional/files/media/document/estimativa-2023-incidencia-de-cancer-no-brasil.pdf.

22 Instituto de Estudos para Políticas de Saúde (IEPS). **Boletim Çarê-IEPS n.º 6/2025: Saúde da População Negra – Internações e mortalidade por diabetes (2012–2023)** [livro eletrônico]. São Paulo: IEPS; 2025. Disponível em: https://ieps.org.br/sdc_download/19132/?key=g2umrdyij6n8i3qew81psmk151h5zo

23 BRASIL. Ministério da Saúde. **Boletim epidemiológico: saúde da população negra:** número especial, vol. 2, out. 2023. Disponível em: https://www.gov.br/saude/pt-br/centrais-de-conteudo/publicacoes/boletins/epidemiologicos/especiais/2023/boletim-epidemiologico-saude-da-populacao-negra-numero-especial-vol-2-out.2023

24 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE. **Doenças crônicas não transmissíveis e o recorte de raça, gênero e escolaridade**. São Paulo: ACT Promoção da Saúde, [s.d.]. Disponível em: https://actbr.org.br/uploads/arquivos/Doencas-cronicas-nao-transmissiveis-e-o-recorte-de-raca-genero-e-escolaridade.pdf

Racism as an engine of inequality and determinant of health

The data presented earlier demonstrate how racism organizes the health-disease-death process of the Brazilian population[25]. The inequality that outlines this reality is the consequence of a long historical, social, and economic trajectory spanned by more than three centuries of slavery, followed by an abolition without reparations and the adoption of systematic policies of abandonment, discrimination, and exclusion[26]. The scenario of structural racism and violations of fundamental precepts in Brazil was recognized by the Supreme Federal Court in December 2025, within the scope of the Claim of Non-Compliance with a Fundamental Precept (ADPF) 973[27], known as the ADPF of Black Lives.

Find out more

Institutional racism and structural racism

Institutional racism is the way in which public or private institutions reproduce and perpetuate racial inequalities through their norms, practices, procedures, and organizational cultures, even when there is no explicit intention to discriminate on the part of individuals. It is a structural mechanism that operates in a diffuse and systematic manner, placing racialized groups in positions of disadvantage regarding access to rights, services, opportunities, and power, regardless of the will or awareness of institutional agents.

The term was coined in the United States by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton in *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (1967)[28]. In Brazil, it was consolidated by the Program to Combat Institutional Racism (2005)[29] and by authors such as Jurema Werneck (2013)[30].

25 WERNECK, Jurema. **Racismo institucional e saúde da população negra**. Saúde e Sociedade, São Paulo, v. 25, n. 3, p. 535-549, jul./set. 2016. Available at: https://www.scielo.br/j/sausoc/a/bJdS7R46GV7PB3wV54qW7vm/?format=pdf&lang=pt.

26 ALMEIDA, Silvio Luiz de. **Racismo estrutural.** São Paulo: Sueli Carneiro; Pólen, 2019. (Coleção Feminismos Plurais).

27 BRASIL. Supremo Tribunal Federal. **Arguição de Descumprimento de Preceito Fundamental n. 973**, relator(a): Min. Luiz Fux. Available at: https://portal.stf.jus.br/processos/detalhe.asp?incidente=973

28 CARMICHAEL, S.; HAMILTON, C. V. **Black power: the politics of liberation in America.** New York: Vintage, 1967.

29 BRASIL. **Programa de Combate ao Racismo Institucional**. Brasília: SEPPIR/PNUD, 2006.

30 WERNECK, Jurema. **Racismo Institucional: uma abordagem conceitual.** São Paulo: Geledés – Instituto da Mulher Negra; Cfemea – Centro Feminista de Estudos e Assessoria, 2013.

Later, Silvio Almeida (2019)[31] contributed to disseminating a broader concept, that of **structural racism**, describing racism not as a deviation or a pathology, but as part of the established social order constructed historically and systematically, functioning as a rule that organizes relations and institutions. Institutional racism is one of the forms of manifestation of structural racism.

While structural racism operates at the macro level of society (abstract norms, economic dynamics, historical hierarchies), institutional racism materializes in the concrete functioning of institutions (schools, companies, hospitals, justice system, public agencies) which, by applying supposedly neutral rules and procedures, systematically produce unequal results for racialized groups.

In contemporary capitalism, especially under neoliberal logic, racism operates as a central engine in the reproduction of social inequalities. The accumulation of profits by a political and economic minority occurs at the expense of the exploitation and systematic denial of rights of a majority — prominently, in Brazil, the Black majority[32]. Thus, the relationship between race and class in Brazil is dialectical: structural problems are frequently individualized, while large corporations act to weaken state regulations that could protect collective health[33].

Driven by the mobilization of Black social movements and collectives, with the protagonism of Black women, in defense of the right to equity in access to and care in health, the debate on the Health of the Black Population gains greater visibility in the field of public policies following the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution. Over the following decades, these demands were consolidated as a fundamental field of knowledge production and social intervention, indispensable for understanding the structural inequalities of Brazilian society[34].

Several leaders of the Black movement also acted as central intellectuals in the construction of this field, including Altair Lira, Edna Roland, Fátima Oliveira, Fernanda Lopes, Isabel Cristina da Cruz, Jurema Werneck, Luís Eduardo Batista, Maria Inês Barbosa, and Maria Lúcia da Silva, and collectives such as the National Network of Afro-Brazilian Religions and Health (RENAFRO) and the

31 ALMEIDA, S. L. **Racismo estrutural**. São Paulo: Pólen, 2019.

32 BARBOSA, Raphael Barreto da Conceição. **Negro Drama: o racismo como determinante social no trabalho e na saúde**. 2024. 141 f. Thesis (Saúde Públic Health's PHD candidate) - Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sergio Arouca, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, 2024. Available at: https://arca.fiocruz.br/items/9d816217-18d5-4e50-b072-b694a846f57a

33 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE. **Relatório Blackwashing: as corporações estão engajadas na pauta racial?** São Paulo, nov. 2023. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/uploads/arquivos/RELATORIO-BLACKWASHING-ficha.pdf

34 COELHO, Rony; CAMPOS, Gisele. **O campo de estudos sobre saúde da população negra no Brasil: uma revisão sistemática das últimas três décadas.** Saúde e Sociedade, v. 33, n. 1, p. e220754pt, 2024. Available at: https://www.scielo.br/j/sausoc/a/pMhnXHr54br9hWSrbTm6FcJ/?lang=pt#top.

Network of Black Women. Their contributions were decisive for the recognition of racism as a social determinant of health[35].

A recent study[36] points to a significant growth in scientific production regarding the Health of the Black Population in Brazil. These studies demonstrate that racism sickens and prematurely kills Black people, manifesting itself through different aspects[37,38,39,40], among which the following stand out:

Living conditions: skin color and social origin influence the disproportionate exposure to precarious living conditions, unhealthy environments, and dangerous work, as well as access to health services and concrete opportunities to adopt healthy habits.

Daily stress: symbolic and material violence, such as state violence and episodes of racial injury, combined with precarious working conditions and lack of access to leisure, represent chronic stressors that favor behaviors harmful to health, such as smoking and the abusive consumption of alcohol.

Institutional racism: expressed in the systematic failure of institutions to provide adequate services, which results in barriers to accessing treatments, late, inadequate, or incomplete diagnoses, and, in the case of Black women, practices of dehumanization and mistreatment during pregnancy, childbirth, and the puerperium.

These trajectories converged directly in 2009, when the National Health Council finally agreed to create the National Comprehensive Health Policy for the Black Population (PNSIPN)[41], transforming this political and technical accumulation into an official State guideline. The measure represented a milestone by recognizing the structural nature of racism in the health field. The poli-

35 MALTA, Deborah Carvalho (org.). **Determinantes sociais em saúde: doenças crônicas não transmissíveis e seus fatores de risco e de proteção na população adulta brasileira.** 1. ed. São Paulo: Rema Editora; ACT Promoção da Saúde, 2025. E-book. ISBN 978-65-83761-00-2. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/DETERMINANTES-SOCIAIS-ebook-final.pdf

36 COELHO, Rony; CAMPOS, Gisele. **O campo de estudos sobre saúde da população negra no Brasil: uma revisão sistemática das últimas três décadas.** Saúde e Sociedade, v. 33, n. 1, p. e220754pt, 2024. Available at: https://www.scielo.br/j/sausoc/a/pMhnXHr54br9hWSrbTm6FcJ/?lang=pt#top.

37 OLIVEIRA, Fátima. **Oficinas: mulher negra e saúde – manual.** Belo Horizonte: Mazza, 1998.

38 BRASIL. MINISTÉRIO DA SAÚDE. **Vigitel Brasil 2018 – População negra: vigilância de fatores de risco e proteção para doenças crônicas por inquérito telefônico:** estimativas sobre frequência e distribuição sociodemográfica de fatores de risco e proteção para doenças crônicas para a população negra nas capitais dos 26 estados brasileiros e no Distrito Federal em 2018. Brasília: Ministério da Saúde, 2019. Available at: https://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/vigitel_brasil_2018_populacao_negra.pdf

39 WERNECK, J. C. S.; et al. **Racismo institucional e saúde da população negra**. Saúde e Sociedade (SciELO), São Paulo, v. 25, n. 3, p. 535-549, 2016. Available at: https://www.scielo.br/j/sausoc/a/bJdS7R46GV7PB3wV54qW7vm/

40 ANUNCIAÇÃO, D. et al. **(Des)caminhos na garantia da saúde da população negra e no enfrentamento ao racismo no Brasil**. Ciência & Saúde Coletiva, v. 27, n. 10, p. 3861–3870, out. 2022. Disponível em: https://www.scielo.br/j/csc/a/Lqd6jsjQByrvCVyxWCxkqjN/

41 BRASIL. Ministério da Saúde. **Política Nacional de Saúde Integral da População Negra: uma política para o SUS.** Brasília, 2013. Available at: http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/politica_nacional_saude_integral_populacao.pdf.

cy established guidelines aimed at the anti-racist training of professionals, the strengthening of social control, the promotion of research — with disaggregated health data containing the color/race component — and the promotion of education and communication actions aimed at eliminating discrimination in services and reducing vulnerabilities. These guidelines, as highlighted by Jurema Werneck (2010)[42], also value non-medicalized care practices anchored in African-based knowledge.

At the international level, the scientific journal *The Lancet*, a reference in the health field, recognized in 2022[43] the importance of the ethno-racial dimension (as well as xenophobia), understood as a socially constructed category, for the analysis of the social determinants of health. The article "Racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and the determination of health," written predominantly by women, emphasizes the institutional and structural nature of inequalities and that such forms of discrimination not only coexist with **health inequities**, but actively produce them, influencing who gets sick, who dies earlier, and who has access to adequate care.

The group of scientists argues that addressing these inequities requires structural responses, going beyond isolated or exclusively biomedical interventions. Among the recommendations, the incorporation of racism and discrimination in epidemiological analyses, the production of disaggregated data, holding institutions accountable for discriminatory practices, and the adoption of a human rights approach in health policies stand out, in addition to the critical review of the knowledge production processes themselves (which has historically marginalized the knowledge and experiences of racialized populations).

It is worth emphasizing that several of these elements are already guided within the scope of Brazilian public policies through the PNSIPN. However, 17 years after its promulgation, the National Comprehensive Health Policy for the Black Population still lacks the political strength to be implemented effectively.

Commercial determinants of health and corporate power

Confronting structural racism and advancing public health policies are inseparable processes. Among the various measures necessary to tackle Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) — such as access to adequate housing, healthy environ-

42 WERNECK, Jurema. **Saúde da população negra - passo a passo:** defesa, monitoramento e avaliação de políticas públicas. Criola: Rio de Janeiro, june 2010. Available at: https://criola.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Livreto-2-Saude.pdf

43 DEVAKUMAR, Delan; SELVARATAH, Sujitha; ABUKWIDAR, Riyadh; BAMBRA, Clare; CUSACK, Linda; PERERA, G. Nilani; YENIKOYE, Ibrahim Abdoulaye; ABU-SAAD, Kathleen; SATO, Priscila de Morais; LOPES, Fernanda. **Racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and the determination of health.** The Lancet, [s. l.], v. 400, n. 10368, p. 2097-2108, dez. 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(22)01972-9. Available at: https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)01972-9/abstract.

ments, employment under fair and appropriate conditions, and the promotion of physical activity — the regulation of the influence exerted by commercial agents on human health, the environment, and equity gains centrality.

For decades, researchers and civil society organizations, such as ACT Health Promotion, have denounced the exploitation of socio-economic vulnerabilities by corporations in the ultra-processed foods, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco sectors as a market expansion strategy[44]. For example, between 2008 and 2018 in Brazil (Louzada et al., 2023[45]), while the consumption of ultra-processed products declined among higher-income and more educated groups, it grew significantly among Black and low-income individuals, largely driven by the relative price reduction of these products compared to fresh (*in natura*) foods.

Within the WHO, the Council on the Economics of Health for All[46] has deepened the analysis of the private sector's involvement and impact on health through advisory groups, programmatic approaches, and normative instruments, notably the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), ratified by Brazil through Decree 5,658/2006, which establishes specific guidelines on the relationship between governments and private interests in the public health field, especially regarding the prevention of conflict of interest and corporate interference. In 2025, this global effort was expanded with the launch of a new action program on the Economic and Commercial Determinants of Health, whose first report was still under development as of the closing of this publication[47].

In 2016, commercial determinants of health were defined as strategies and approaches used by the private sector to promote products and choices that are harmful to health[48]. In the special series of *The Lancet* journal on the topic,

44 BURGESS, R., NYHAN, K., FREUDENBERG, N. et al. **Corporate activities that influence population health: a scoping review and qualitative synthesis to develop the HEALTH-CORP typology**. Global Health 20, 77 (2024). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-024-01082-4.

45 LOUZADA, M. L. da C.; CRUZ, G. L. da; SILVA, K. A. A. N.; GRASSI, A. G. F.; ANDRADE, G. C.; RAUBER, F.; LEVY, R. B.; MONTEIRO, C. A. **Consumo de alimentos ultraprocessados no Brasil: distribuição e evolução temporal 2008–2018.** Revista de Saúde Pública, São Paulo, v. 57, p. 12, 2023. DOI: 10.11606/s1518-8787.2023057004744.

46 Know more at: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. **Commercial determinants of health.** Geneva: WHO, [s.d.]. Available at: https://www.who.int/health-topics/commercial-determinants-of-health.

47 his initiative builds upon the World Health Assembly's World Report on Social Determinants of Health and Equity and contributes to the implementation of Resolution WHA74.16 (2021), in articulation with previous milestones, such as Resolution WHA62.14 (2009) and the Rio de Janeiro Political Declaration (2011). It also aligns with the WHO's Fourteenth General Programme of Work and the recommendations of the Council on the Economics of Health for All, by recognizing the confrontation of **Commercial determinants of health** as a strategic axis for political coherence, harm prevention, and the reorientation of economies in favor of health, in consonance with World Health Assembly resolutions on issues such as tobacco, alcohol, road safety, physical activity, and access to medicines.

48 KICKBUSCH I, ALLEN L, FRANZ C. **The commercial determinants of health.** *Lancet Global Health*. 2016. Dec;4 (12):e895–e896. DOI:10.1016/S2214-109X (16)30217-0. Available at: https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(16)30217-0/fulltext

launched in 2023[49], the definition was coined presenting them as the pathways, systems, and strategies that influence health and equity, either positively or negatively. The evidence presented demonstrates that large transnational corporations influence public health by hijacking political systems for their own benefit, obstructing regulatory policies, and creating environments that favor diseases.

Thus, the business model becomes intrinsically perverse: while profits remain concentrated within the companies, the damages to health, the environment, and human rights are externalized to the public sector and the collective. These are the approaches that guide the analysis proposed by this work.

Among the main corporate strategies identified in the literature are the control of scientific production, direct or indirect political lobbying, including through intimidation practices against groups opposed to their interests, marketing and reputation management, often targeted at vulnerable groups, financial practices such as tax evasion or avoidance, which reduce the resources available for public policies, and the limitation of competition, hindering access to healthier products. Added to these strategies are labor and employment conditions, as well as the decisions made throughout the entire production chain, encompassing stages such as cultivation, supply of inputs, processing, storage, transport, distribution, commercialization, and post-consumption destination.

From the broader perspective of Human Rights and corporate accountability, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, approved in 2011, establish the duty of States to protect, respect, and remedy abuses committed by third parties, including companies, as well as the responsibility of corporations to respect human rights throughout the entire value chain and the right of affected individuals and communities to effective mechanisms of reparation.

In the health field, these principles are particularly relevant in recognizing that corporate impacts are not limited to direct damages but include cumulative and structural effects, such as the promotion of harmful products, regulatory capture, abusive advertising directed at vulnerable groups, and the reproduction of racial and socio-economic inequalities.

Concurrently, since 2014, a binding instrument has been under negotiation within the UN Human Rights Council: the Binding Global Treaty on Business and Human Rights. The initiative seeks to establish clear international legal obligations, accountability mechanisms, and transnational cooperation, in addition to guaranteeing effective access to justice for people and communities affected by corporate violations.

In contexts marked by structural racism, such as the Brazilian one, this treaty is strategic as it recognizes the power asymmetry between corporations and vulnerable populations, strengthens the extraterritoriality of state obligations, and confronts corporate impunity in global production and consumption chains.

49 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE. **A Série *Lancet* sobre Determinantes Comerciais da Saúde.** São Paulo: ACT Promoção da Saúde, 3rd ago. 2023. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/biblioteca/a-serie-lancet-sobre-determinantes-comerciais-da-saude/

The incorporation of this agenda into the debate on commercial determinants of health reinforces that protecting the right to health of the Black population requires not only public policies but also robust and binding regulatory frameworks capable of holding companies accountable for the racial, social, environmental, and health impacts of their business models.

From Black Lives Matter to blackwashing: how the study was conducted

Following protests in 2020 in several countries against racism and police violence against the Black population, motivated by the death of George Floyd that year in the United States[50], several transnational corporations began to adopt the discourse of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, seeking to build an image of social responsibility[51]. However, these initiatives frequently fall into practices of social washing or brandwashing[52], in which anti-racist discourse is appropriated, but without confronting the structures that produce inequality, maintaining organizational norms, practices, and cultures that are not inclusive and contribute to the illness of Black people. These practices are also conceptualized as brand anti-racism, market anti-racism, or performative anti-racism (Barbosa, 2025)[53].

The first edition of the Blackwashing study[54], from 2023, was an experimental initiative by ACT Health Promotion aimed at analyzing whether the social justice actions promoted by companies in the alcohol and ultra-processed foods sectors constituted genuine commitments or mere reputational marketing strategies. Inspired by reports from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids[55] on the predatory

50 On May 25, 2020, in the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, 46-year-old African American George Perry Floyd, Jr., was the victim of strangulation by police officer Derek Chauvin, a white man, who knelt on his neck during a stop for allegedly using a counterfeit twenty-dollar bill at a supermarket. The crime triggered a series of protests, including in Brazil, against police violence directed at the Black population, highlighting the protagonism of #BlackLivesMatter. The movement is led by Black female activists such as Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, and has been mobilizing since 2013.

51 GUTTERMAN, Alan S., JUST Business: Companies Respond to the Murder of George Floyd (May 9, 2021). **JUST Business: Companies Respond to the Murder of George Floyd**. Oakland CA: Sustainable Entrepreneurship Project, 2021. Available at: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3846622 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3846622.

52 GLOBAL HEALTH ADVOCACY INCUBATOR (GHAI). Industry Alert – June 2021: **Industry narratives: how ultra-processed food and beverage companies undermine healthy food policies to protect their corporate image.** [S.l.], june 2021. 12 p. Available at: https://assets.advocacyincubator.org/uploads/2021/07/2021_06_alert_en.pdf

53 BARBOSA, Raphael Barreto da Conceição. **O antirracismo de aparência: da negação global ao reconhecimento singular e oportunista**. Revista Trabalho Necessário, v. 23, n.50, 2025.

54 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE. **Relatório Blackwashing: as corporações estão engajadas na pauta racial?** São Paulo, nov. 2023. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/uploads/arquivos/RELATORIO-BLACKWASHING-ficha.pdf

55 CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS. **Stopping Menthol, Saving Lives: Ending Big Tobacco's predatory marketing to Black communities.** Washington, D.C.: Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2023. Disponível em: https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what-we-do/industry-watch/menthol-report

marketing of menthol cigarettes targeted at the Black community in the United States, the Brazilian study examined the national context, in which 57% of the population self-identifies as Black or brown (mixed-race) (IBGE, 2022).

Find out more

Blackwashing

Blackwashing is a corporate tactic that instrumentalizes the anti-racist cause to disguise the relentless pursuit of profit. Blackwashing actions are characterized by those in which companies demonstrate engagement in racial justice agendas, especially after the #BlackLivesMatter movement, but do not address the issue of health inequities along racial lines in a structural manner.

In the context of the launch of the first edition, in 2023, it is worth mentioning that the discussion surrounding the Conduct Adjustment Agreement (TAC) signed between the Carrefour chain and various agencies, including the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office, to confront racism was still reverberating. This articulation occurred in the wake of the murder of João Alberto Silveira Freitas, a 40-year-old Black man beaten in a unit of the French group in Porto Alegre (RS), on the eve of Black Awareness Day in 2020, just six months after the death of George Floyd.



Source: A Nova Democracia

The following day, November 20, 2020, protesters participating in the 17th Black Awareness March of São Paulo destroyed a Carrefour unit on Pamplona Street, in the central region of the state capital, in protest. Five days later, the company announced the creation of the External Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, inviting public figures, all Black, to advise on the formulation of internal policies. Among these figures was researcher Silvio Almeida, who later, as Minister of Human Rights and Citizenship, personally received the ACT publication.



Source: CBN

The TAC in question, signed in June 2021, amounting to R$ 115 million, was the largest agreement in the country's history in the area of racial equality[56] and received criticism from part of the Black movement. Such was the case[57] with the Black Coalition for Rights, composed of approximately 150 organizations. In a public statement at the time[58], the Coalition asserted that "there are no solutions that are not built with the organizations of the Black social movement and with unrestricted respect for the victim's family and their community, as well as for other families affected by the repeated practices of racism within the company."

Upon concluding the analysis of the internal dynamics of organizations in the first edition of this study, the authors (Carvalho and Moraes, 2023) provoke reflection: could the initiatives of such corporations constitute an updated version of the "myth of racial

56 ALMA PRETA; BORGES, Pedro. **As parcerias do Carrefour.** Published nov. 27 2025. Available at: https://almapreta.com.br/sessao/politica/as-parcerias-do-carrefour.

57 FERREIRA, Lola (Colabo to UOL). **Comitê do Carrefour após morte em loja gera divergência no movimento negro.** UOL Economia, dez. 23 2020. Available at: https://economia.uol.com.br/noticias/redacao/2020/12/23/comite-do-carrefour-apos-morte-em-loja-gera-divergencia-no-movimento-negro.htm

58 COALIZÃO NEGRA POR DIREITOS. **Nota da Coalizão Negra por Direitos sobre o comitê externo de diversidade e inclusão do Carrefour Brasil.** Rio de Janeiro: Criola, dez. 16 2020. Available at: https://criola.org.br/nota-da-coalizacao-negra-por-direitos-sobre-o-comite-externo-de-diversidade-e-inclusao-do-carrefour-brasil/.

democracy"?[59,60,61,62] After all, if we have a company full of Black people, how could racism exist? The question that seems to arise is that the corporate structure itself is sustained by a racist bias, since Black employees almost always occupy low-paying positions and, at times, highly hazardous ones.

However, in recent years, especially from 2024 onwards, the international political landscape has registered a rollback in agendas of inclusion and racial diversity, particularly in the corporate sector. The rise of conservative governments and movements, the intensification of nationalist discourses, and backlashes against identity-affirming policies have produced an environment less favorable to racial equity initiatives[63]. In some countries, such as the United States, judicial decisions and regulatory changes have weakened affirmative action and corporate diversity programs, while political pressures and organized campaigns have begun to frame these initiatives as ideological or discriminatory. These changes have also impacted the Brazilian corporate landscape[64].

Added to this is a context of global economic instability, in which companies tend to prioritize cost reduction and reputational risk management, frequently downgrading structural commitments to diversity to symbolic actions. This set of factors contributes to the cooling off of robust racial inclusion policies and amplifies the risk of substituting structural changes with merely communicational strategies.

Within this critical framework, this new edition deepens the methodological analysis and poses the central question: what remains for the Black community after these "anti-racist" advertising campaigns end? The objective is to offer scientific and political subsidies for the confrontation of structural racism, both in health institutions and in the corporations that profit from the illness of the Black population.

In this investigation, practices of symbolic appropriation were observed, such as the use of Black influencers and symbols of Afro-Brazilian culture in the advertising of unhealthy products, while racial diversity in leadership positions within the advertising companies remains low. Advertising targeted at people in vulnerable situations was also identified, which could be classified as abusive under the Consumer Defense Code (Law No. 8,078/1990)[65]. According to Article 37, § 2, abusive advertising includes, among others, discriminatory advertising of any nature, that which incites violen-

59 FERNANDES, Florestan. **A integração do negro na sociedade de classes.** 5. ed. São Paulo: Globo, 2008.

60 MOURA, Clóvis. **Sociologia do negro brasileiro.** São Paulo: Editora Ática S.A., 1988.

61 MUNANGA, K. **Rediscutindo a mestiçagem no Brasil: identidade nacional versus identidade negr**a. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1999.

62 GONZALEZ, L. **Por um feminismo afro-latino-americano.** Organização: Flavia Rios e Márcia Lima. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2020.

63 AOL. **FORTUNE 500 giants like Meta and Target are rolling back DEI—These are the policies they're changing.** AOL, [s.l.], 14 fev. 2025. Available at: https://www.aol.com/fortune-500-giants-meta-target-090000305.html

64 G1; MOURA, Rayane. **Programas de diversidade estão acabando? Entenda como o movimento dos EUA pode chegar ao Brasil.** G1, 4 jul. 2025. Available at: https://g1.globo.com/trabalho-e-carreira/noticia/2025/07/04/programas-de-diversidade-estao-acabando-entenda-como-o-movimento-dos-eua-pode-chegar-ao-brasil.ghtml

65 BRASIL. **Lei nº 8.078, de 11 de setembro de 1990**. Dispõe sobre a proteção do consumidor e dá outras providências. Diário Oficial da União: Brasília, DF, 12 set. 1990. Art. 37, § 2º. Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l8078compilado.htm

ce, exploits fear or superstition, takes advantage of the deficiency of judgment and experience of children, disrespects environmental values, or that is capable of inducing the consumer to behave in a manner harmful or dangerous to their health or safety.

In several observed cases, narratives of social responsibility functioned as reputational shields, silencing criticism and blocking regulatory initiatives that could affect corporate profits through the instrumental appropriation of concepts such as "human rights" and "equity."

Beyond corporate communication strategies, the study incorporates a critical analysis of the place occupied by the Black population as consumers and throughout the production chain of products associated with Non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Based on the evidence gathered and presented throughout the research, it was observed that, as consumers, Black people are frequently the target of aggressive and segmented marketing strategies that exploit socio-economic and symbolic vulnerabilities and reinforce patterns of illness.

At the same time, the analysis of the production chains highlights the disproportionate concentration of the Black population in the stages most characterized by precarious work, marked by low wages, informality, exposure to occupational hazards, and labor rights violations. Added to this is the recurrent incidence of these productive activities on racialized territories, configuring situations of environmental racism, in which Black communities are more exposed to pollution, environmental degradation, and food and nutritional insecurity[66,67,68] . This articulation between consumption, work, and territory shows that blackwashing operates structurally, hiding racial, social, and environmental inequalities that sustain corporate profits and deepen health inequities.

By questioning whether the actions promoted by transnational companies actually confront the roots of structural racism or merely represent new brandwashing strategies, this report seeks to contribute to corporate accountability and to the debate on the health outcomes of the Black population.

The text shows that, faced with social pressure, many companies reacted with public statements of support for social demands and with promises of donations and social investments. However, these responses were widely criticized as superficial, performative, or contradictory, especially when not accompanied by concrete changes in internal practices, production chains, hiring policies, and business models.

The set of information analyzed in this second edition of the Blackwashing study goes beyond denunciation and seeks to offer foundations for the continuous confronta-

66 PORTUGAL, Letícia De Freitas et al. **Emergência nutricional no território Yanomami: ações desenvolvidas para enfrentamento da fome e sua interface com os determinantes comerciais da saúde.** Cadernos de Saúde Pública, v. 41, n. 11, p. e00073525, 2025.

67 INTERNATIONAL PANEL OF EXPERTS ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS. **Unravelling the food-health nexus: addressing practices, political economy, and power relations to build healthier food systems.** [S.l.]: The Global Alliance for the Future of Food: IPES-Food, 2017. Available at: https://ipes-food.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Health_FullReport1.pdf.

68 BURGESS, Raquel et al. **Corporate activities that influence population health: a scoping review and qualitative synthesis to develop the HEALTH-CORP typology.** Globalization and Health, v. 20, n. 1, p. 77, nov. 9 2024.

tion of structural racism, aiming at the consolidation of policies that guarantee comprehensive, humanized, egalitarian, and equitable health for the entire population, and for the full accountability of companies regarding human rights, especially the right to health and equity.

Drawing also from international human rights frameworks (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[69], the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination[70], the United Nations debates on business and human rights, and recommendations from the World Health Organization and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[71]), the effort of this edition is, finally, to outline pathways for regulatory and reparatory public policies that effectively protect and simultaneously promote racial justice and health.

THE BLACK PERSON AS A CONSUMER

Throughout the history of Brazil, the Black population (marked especially here by skin color, African ancestry, and the diaspora resulting from colonial enslavement[72,73,74)] has been systematically excluded and devalued economically and socially by different structural mechanisms. For more than three centuries, Black people were treated as commodities themselves, reduced to the condition of an appropriable, violable, and disposable workforce[75]. With the Abolition of Slavery in 1888, however, this logic was not overcome, but reorganized[76,77]: the formal end of slavery did not inaugurate the inclusion of the Black population into citizenship, but rather its subaltern insertion into the social order governed by capital. The Black body ceased to be direct property and came to be exploited as a precarious workforce and, progressively, as a limited consumer, engaged by the market, yet kept on the margins of full social recognition[78].

69 UNITED NATION ORGANIZATION. Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.** Paris: UNO, 1948. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/brazil/declaracao-universal-dos-direitos-humanos.

70 UNITED NATION ORGANIZATION.. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**.** New York: UNO, 1965. Available at: https://www.pfdc.pgr.mpf.mp.br/atuacao-e-conteudos-de-apoio/legislacao/racismo/conv_eliminacao_racismo.pdf

71 ORGANIZAÇÃO DAS NAÇÕES UNIDAS. **Transformando nosso mundo: a Agenda 2030 para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável.** Nova York: ONU, 2015. Available atÍ: https://brasil.un.org/pt-br/91863-agenda-2030-para-o-desenvolvimento-sustentavel.

72 NOGUEIRA, Oracy. **Preconceito racial de marca e preconceito racial de origem: sugestão de um quadro de referência para a interpretação do material sobre relações raciais no Brasil.** Tempo Social, São Paulo, v. 19, n. 1, p. 287-308, 2007 [1954].

73 MUNANGA, Kabengele. **Rediscutindo a mestiçagem no Brasil: identidade nacional versus identidade negra.** Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2004.

74 GUIMARÃES, Antonio Sérgio Alfredo. **Classes, raças e democracia.** São Paulo: Editora 34, 2002.

75 MOURA, Clóvis. **Sociologia do negro brasileiro.** São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2019.

76 SODRÉ, Muniz. **Pensar nagô.** Petrópolis: Vozes, 2017.

77 FERNANDES, Florestan. **A integração do negro na sociedade de classes.** São Paulo: Globo, 2008,

78 GONZALEZ, Lélia. **Por um feminismo afro-latino-americano.** Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2020.

As Muniz Sodré (2023)[79] points out, the liberation of the enslaved occurred within a new regime of domination, in which capital became the absolute master, indifferent to the human qualification of the Black worker, inaugurating an order where "to be" became equivalent to "to have," in which consumption becomes the criterion for social belonging. However, the Black person has been historically denied full access to the material means that enable this belonging, producing a paradoxical condition: they are a priority target for the market, but rarely recognized as a consumer with rights. Commodity fetishism operates, therefore, in a racialized manner.

This process is inscribed in a national history deeply marked by the articulation between race and class. The very formation of the Brazilian State, since Independence, was conditioned by the maintenance of slavery and the violent control of Black and popular uprisings[80]. An emblematic example of this arrangement is the 1850 Land Law, enacted in the same year as the prohibition of the transatlantic trade of enslaved people. By transforming land into a commodity and restricting its access to purchase, it systematically excluded the newly freed Black population, consolidating the latifundium system and deepening economic and social marginalization[81,82].

It is in this scenario that the figure of the Black consumer in Brazil is constructed: formally recognized as a subject of rights, but materially excluded from the full exercise of citizenship in consumption. According to Jonas Sales Fernandes (2023)[83], the Consumer Defense Code (Law No. 8,078 of 1990)84 made little progress in the specific protection of Black consumers. The jurist observes that judicial decisions confronting racism in consumer relations are scarce and reveal a still timid development of jurisprudence on the subject, incapable of responding to the complexity of even the everyday discrimination experienced by Black people in commercial, financial, and service provision spaces.

Throughout the 20th century, especially with urbanization and the expansion of the internal market, the Black population began to integrate into the consumer society in a precarious and unequal manner. Until the 1980s, as studies in the field of communication and the sociology of work point out85,86,87,

79 SODRÉ, Muniz. **O fascismo da cor: uma radiografia do racismo nacional**. 1. ed. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 2023.

80 MOURA, Clóvis. **O negro: de bom escravo a mau cidadão?** Rio de Janeiro: Conquista, 1977.

81 CARVALHO, José Murilo de. **Cidadania no Brasil: o longo caminho.** 24. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2017.

82 MARTINS, José de Souza. **O cativeiro da terra**. 9 ed. São Paulo: Contexto, 2013.

83 SILVA, Jonas Sales Fernandes da. **Capítulo 15 - Nem todos somos consumidores!** In: Estudos contemporâneos de direito do consumidor. Santo Ângelo: Metrics, 2023.

84 BRASIL. **Lei nº 8.078, de 11 de setembro de 1990.** Dispõe sobre a proteção do consumidor e dá outras providências. Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, [1990]. Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l8078compilado.htm

85 SODRÉ, Muniz. **Claros e escuros: identidade, povo e mídia no Brasil.** Petrópolis: Vozes, 1999.

86 SOVIK, Liv. **Aqui ninguém é branco.** Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano, 2009.

87 HASENBALG, Carlos. **Discriminação e desigualdades raciais no Brasil.** Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1979.

the idea prevailed in the advertising field that Black people did not constitute a relevant consumer audience, which justified their near absence in advertisements. When they did appear, they were portrayed in subaltern or stereotyped roles, reinforcing a "racialized regime of representation," in the words of Stuart Hall (2016)[88], which naturalizes racial hierarchies in the social imaginary.

In recent decades, this framework of invisibility began to be challenged by the historical actions of Black movements, which broadened the dispute for political recognition, symbolic representation, and economic inclusion, at the same time that the market began to recognize, albeit unequally and often instrumentally, the macroeconomic weight of the Black population in national consumption[89,90,91].

According to the Locomotiva Institute (2020)[92], the contingent that makes up the Brazilian Black population generates approximately R$ 1.9 trillion per year in consumption, a figure that surpasses the total spending of class A. However, although the group has become a strategic segment for the market, this "purchasing power" has not yet translated into proportional inclusion in terms of social protection, wage equity, or access to fundamental rights[93].

Desired consumer, denied citizen

It is in this context that advertising begins to incorporate, more visibly, Black bodies and narratives. A survey[94] by the Multidisciplinary Study Group on Affirmative Action (GEMAA/UERJ) indicates that, between 1987 and 2017, the presence of Black or mixed-race people in Brazilian advertising grew from 9% to 16%. More recent data show an acceleration of this movement: between 2018 and 2023, 83% of models in ads in *Veja* magazine were still white, but the participation of non-whites reached 35% in 2023. On social media, the presence of Black people in campaigns rose from 44% to 53% between 2021 and 2022.

88 HALL, Stuart. **Cultura e representação.** Organização e revisão técnica de Arthur Ituassu; tradução de Daniel Miranda e William Oliveira. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. PUC-Rio: Apicuri, 2016.

89 ROCHA, Ana Raquel Coelho; CASOTTI, Leticia Moreira. **Reflexões sobre o consumidor negro brasileiro.** Revista Pensamento Contemporâneo em Administração, v. 11, n. 2, 2017.

90 CASTELLO-BRANCO, Felipe Mathias; PARDO, Catalina Revollo; TAVARES JÚNIOR, Frederico Augusto. **Pistas de um blackface para o consumo? Atravessamentos do capital nos processos de subjetivação do povo negro no Brasil**. Revista Desenvolvimento & Civilização, 2023.

91 INSTITUTO AKATU; INSTITUTO DATARAÇA; MARKET ANALYSIS. **O consumo invisível da maioria: percepções, gatilhos e barreiras de consumo da população negra no Brasil.** São Paulo: Instituto Akatu, 2025.

92 INSTITUTO LOCOMOTIVA. **Poder de consumo da população negra no Brasil.** São Paulo: Locomotiva, 2020.

93 INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA (IBGE)**. Desigualdades sociais por cor ou raça no Brasil.** Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2022.

94 CANDIDO, Marcia Rangel; FERES JÚNIOR, João. **A cor da publicidade: 30 anos de representação racial na revista Veja (1987-2017)**. Rio de Janeiro: GEMAA/IESP-UERJ, 2019. (Informativo GEMAA, n. 11). Disponível em: http://gemaa.iesp.uerj.br/informativo/informativo-11/. Para dados mais recentes, consultar: GRUPO DE ESTUDOS MULTIDISCIPLINARES DA AÇÃO AFIRMATIVA (GEMAA). **Painel da Diversidade na Publicidade: Representação de raça e gênero.** Rio de Janeiro: IESP-UERJ, 2023. Disponível em: http://gemaa.iesp.uerj.br.

On television, the leading role of Black women went from 3% in 2015 to 27% in 2021; among Black men, from 7% to 20% in the same period (TODXS, 202295).

Despite the numerical advancement, however, representativeness remains marked by limits and contradictions. More than presence, the central problem lies in the form of representation. Predominantly, "controlling images," a concept developed by Patricia Hill Collins[96], still persist, associating Black people with restricted typologies, such as the athlete, the artist, the domestic worker, or the hypersexualized or decontextualized figure removed from family and community life[97].

These patterns are not residual, but reveal, as discussed by Barbosa (2024)[98], that the expansion of Black visibility occurs under constant negotiation with the interests of capital. Blackness becomes a symbolic asset mobilized to generate identification, engagement, and profit, without this implying a structural transformation in power relations. As bell hooks (2019[99]) argues, blackness is commodified: historical identities and agendas are incorporated as aesthetics and discourse, but emptied of their critical potential.

This contradiction is acutely expressed in the everyday experience of consumption. Although desired as clients, the Black population continues to face discriminatory practices in stores, shopping malls, and services. Research by Grupo Globo[100] indicates that 81% of Black consumers stop buying or reduce their consumption after experiencing racial discrimination. Recurrent cases of violence and harassment in large retail chains evidence that economic recognition does not automatically convert into the recognition (and guarantee) of rights.

Within the advertising sector itself, inequalities are reproduced: only 0.74% of upper management positions in large agencies are occupied by Black people (Clube da Criação, 2019[101]). The lack of diversity in decision-making spaces

95 ELAS NO MERCADO. **Pesquisa Todxs de Representatividade na Publicidade Brasileira: 10ª edição.** [S. l.]: Todxs, 2022.

96 COLLINS, Patricia Hill. **Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment.** 2. ed. New York; London: Routledge, 2000 [1990].

97 ARAÚJO, Joel Zito. **A negação do Brasil: o negro na telenovela brasileira.** São Paulo: Senac, 2000.

98 BARBOSA, Raphael Barreto da Conceição. **Negro Drama: o racismo como determinante social no trabalho e na saúde.** 2024. 141 f. (Public Heath PHD's candidate thesis) - Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sergio Arouca, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, 2024. Available at: https://arca.fiocruz.br/items/9d816217-18d5-4e50-b072-b694a846f57a

99 HOOKS, bell. **Olhares negros: raça e representação.** Translating Stephanie Borges. São Paulo: Elefante, 2019.

100 TRACKING SINTONIA COM A SOCIEDADE. **O que falta para reinar? As dimensões do consumo afro-brasileiro.** Survey conducted in August 2023 with an online population aged 18+ from socioeconomic classes A, B, and C. Em: Globo Gente: "O que falta para reinar? Um olhar para consumidores negros", 2023. Available at: https://gente.globo.com/infografico-o-que-falta-pra-reinar-um-olhar-para-consumidores-negros/

101 CLUBE DA CRIAÇÃO. **Survey sobre diversidade racial na liderança do setor publicitário brasileiro. São Paulo, 2019** (data citation from Rocha, Valdir; Leão, Luiz. Representation Of Black People In Brazilian Advertising Grows). Available at: https://www.mondaq.com/unitedstates/broadcasting-film-tv-radio/987858/representation-of-black-people-in-brazilian-advertising-grows

contributes to superficial campaigns that treat representativeness as a marketing strategy rather than an ethical and political commitment.

In this context, corporations that control the production of goods with a critical impact on health — such as those in the ultra-processed foods, tobacco, and alcoholic beverages sectors — have refined marketing strategies that exploit racial identities instrumentally. As the Black population has historically been deprived of social recognition, the industry uses advertising to convert the consumption of these products into 'shortcuts' to prestige.

Thus, this group becomes the priority target of campaigns that resignify harmful items as symbols of power, freedom, and individual autonomy. With the aesthetic support of the film and advertising industries, the consumption of ultra-processed foods or beverages ceases to be a merely nutritional or recreational choice to become a performance of status and modernity. The strategy has a perverse effect: the market offers the symbolic promise of emancipation and social inclusion — attributes structurally denied — through access to products that, in the long term, deepen health inequalities and the vulnerability of these bodies[102,103,104]. Thus, racialized populations are not called to fully enjoy this ideal of freedom, but to desire it, consuming products that reinforce dependencies, illnesses, and inequalities. Desire is stimulated, but the benefits are systematically denied.

This issue is addressed in a 2021 study[105] by the Brazilian Institute of Consumer Defense (IDEC) and the USP Chair of Nutrition and Public Health on "targeted marketing," demonstrating how the ultra-processed foods industry focuses on peripheral neighborhoods and Black populations using the idea of "status" and "modernity."

A concrete example of the sophistication of this strategy is found in the 2023 report[106] by The Center for Black Health and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, which denounces the promotion of menthol cigarettes in African American communities. By smoothing the harshness of the smoke, menthol facilitates initiation and hinders smoking cessation, being historically marketed

102 HARRIS, Jennifer L. **Targeted food marketing to Black and Hispanic consumers: the tobacco playbook**. American Journal of Public Health, Washington, v. 110, n. 3, p. 271-272, 2020.

103 EATON, Tiffany M. et al. **Black community conversations about opposing ethnically targeted marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages.** Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, Cham, v. 9, n. 5, p. 1946-1956, 2022.

104 SKEA, Ashley et al. **The use of ethnic marketing strategies by the tobacco, alcohol, and food industries: a systematic review.** American Journal of Public Health, Washington, v. 109, n. 7, p. e1-e13, july 2019.

105 INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE DEFESA DO CONSUMIDOR. **A publicidade de alimentos ultraprocessados no Brasil: estratégias de marketing digital direcionadas a públicos vulneráveis.** São Paulo: Idec, 2021.

106 CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS; AFRICAN AMERICAN TOBACCO CONTROL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL; et al. **Stopping Menthol, Saving Lives: Ending Big Tobacco's Predatory Marketing to Black Communities.** Washington, D.C.: Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2023. Available at: https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what-we-do/industry-watch/menthol-report;/

disproportionately to Black consumers, especially the youth[107]. This action has contributed to higher rates of addiction, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer among the country's Black populations, evidencing how the market operates selectively in the distribution of health damages.

The tobacco industry has even targeted Black-led organizations, including one of the oldest in the United States, such as the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), founded in 1909, to insidiously insert itself into the Black community[108].

This practice is not an isolated deviation, but part of a broader pattern of corporate racism. Analyses produced by the US governmental organization Corporate Accountability[109] point out that many of the contemporary marketing and reputation management strategies of large corporations have roots in historical racist practices, even if today they are presented under narratives of diversity, inclusion, and social responsibility.

Without the real transformation of business models that produce death, illness, and inequality, the instrumental use of ethno-racial identity affirmation agendas reinforces a logic in which Black lives continue to be considered disposable, while profit remains untouched.

Find out more

Corporate racism

The concept of corporate racism (or racism in companies) refers to the practices, policies, and organizational cultures that, intentionally or not, perpetuate racial inequality, excluding or subordinating Black people in the workplace. Unlike individual and explicit acts of prejudice, corporate racism is structural and institutional, manifesting itself in the racial hierarchization of jobs, in the difficulty of access and advancement of Black professionals to leadership positions, and in the naturalization of whiteness as the ideal "profile" for positions of power and decision-making. Studies on the subject show that, in Brazil, labor relations are historically intertwined with the racial issue. Since

107 THE CENTER FOR BLACK HEALTH & EQUITY. **Tobacco & Menthol.** The Center for Black Health & Equity, [s.d.]. Available at: https://centerforblackhealth.org/issues/tobacco-and-menthol

108 YERGER, Valerie B.; MALONE, Ruth E. African American leadership groups: smoking with the enemy. Tobacco Control, London, v. 11, n. 4, p. 336-345, Dec. 2002.

109 CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY; LEGENDRE, Michél. **Common Dreams: The Racist Roots of Big Tobacco.** Boston: Corporate Accountability, 14 abr. 2021. Available at: https://corporateaccountability.org/media/common-dreams-racist-roots-oped/

> the slave era, a social imaginary was constructed that associates Black bodies with manual and subaltern labor, while white people were considered naturally fit for management and command. This legacy is reproduced in contemporary corporations through mechanisms such as hierarchical segregation, barriers to advancement, the "subtleties of racism" (while whiteness operates under the "privilege of normality"), silencing and exclusion, and the limits of diversity policies.[110,111,112 ,113 ,114]

International studies demonstrate that the use of cultural identities, community symbols, and discourses of belonging creates affective bonds between corporations and historically marginalized groups, leading to the perception of these companies as allies, even when their products produce health damages. In Australia, for example, a study[115] revealed that targeted advertising and the sponsorship of events aimed at the LGBTQIA+ community cause the alcohol industry to be seen as an ally to the cause. Another study[116] with indigenous communities in the country revealed that this group believed that tobacco products produced by a certain corporation were beneficial to health due to the use of indigenous elements and figures on their labels. The same study points to ultra-processed foods and beverages as a point of concern regarding the health of Aboriginal Australians. Among the factors that enhance exposure are selective pricing and targeted marketing. Similar evidence appears in research with African American populations in the United States[117], where targeted

110 BENTO, Maria Aparecida Silva. **Branqueamento e branquitude no Brasil**. In: CARONE, Iray; BENTO, Maria Aparecida Silva (Orgs.). Psicologia social do racismo: estudos sobre branquitude e branqueamento no Brasil. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2002.

111 JAIME, Pedro. **Executivos negros: racismo e diversidade no mundo empresarial.** São Paulo: EDUSP/FAPESP, 2016.

112 SILVA, Elisangela de Jesus Furtado da. **Racismo nas empresas: até quando?** Farol – Revista de Estudos Organizacionais e Sociedade, Belo Horizonte, v. 6, n. 15, p. 399-408, 2019. Available at: https://revistas.face.ufmg.br/index.php/farol/article/view/5430.

113 MONTEIRO, Jorge Aparecido. **A questão racial e a administração de recursos humanos nas empresas brasileiras**. Revista de Administração de Empresas, São Paulo, v. 29, n. 1, p. 53-59, jan./mar. 1989.

114 MENEZES, Mário; MENDES, Luciano. **O silêncio, o silenciamento e o silêncio cúmplice como mecanismos de perpetuação do racismo nas organizações**. Cadernos EBAPE.BR, Rio de Janeiro, v. 21, n. 6, e2023-0007, 2023. Available at: https://periodicos.fgv.br/cadernosebape/article/view/88975

115 ADAMS, J.; ASIASIGA, L.; NEVILLE, S. **The alcohol industry—A commercial determinant of poor health for Rainbow communities.** Health Promotion Journal of Australia, 3 out. 2022. Available at: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36103136/.

116 CROCETTI, A. C. et al. **The commercial determinants of Indigenous health and well-being: a systematic scoping review.** BMJ Global Health, v. 7, n. 11, p. e010366, nov. 2022. Available at: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36319033/

117 GRIER, S. A.; DAVIS, B.; PATRICK, R. **The context for choice: health implications of targeted food and beverage marketing to ethnic minority populations.** v. 98, n. 9, p. 1616–1629, 2008. DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2007.115626. Grier, Sonya & Kumanyika, Shiriki. (2010). Targeted Marketing and Public Health. Annual review of public health. 31. 349-69. 10.1146/annurev.publhealth.012809.103607.

marketing contributes to the deepening of health inequities regarding Non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

In the Brazilian *favelas*, whose population is markedly Black[118], this dynamic is exacerbated in territories marked by racial and socio-economic inequality. Research[119] conducted in Belo Horizonte (MG) corroborates this perspective by revealing that Black women are the most affected by food and nutritional insecurity in contexts characterized simultaneously as food deserts and food swamps (see frame).



Food deserts and Food swamps

Food deserts refer to territories with insufficient or non-existent supply of fresh or minimally processed foods, hindering physical and economic access to healthy options.

Food swamps, on the other hand, are characterized by the saturation of establishments that predominantly sell ultra-processed foods, sugar-sweetened, and alcoholic beverages, producing a food environment dominated by options of low nutritional value and high impact on health[120].

Another study, also conducted in Belo Horizonte[121], reveals that food consumption in *favelas* is influenced mainly by the scarcity of financial services, the lack of information, and the lack of time to prepare meals. The study participants described difficulties in buying fruits and vegetables due to the price, in addition to the lack of quality and variety, and stated that they would adopt a more diversified diet if they had the financial means to access them, as well as more time to prepare the food. Residents reported the challenges of maintaining

118 AGÊNCIA BRASIL. **População de favela é mais negra e jovem que restante do país.** EBC – Empresa Brasil de Comunicação, 08 nov. 2024. Available at: https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2024-11/populacao-de-favela-e-mais-negra-e-jovem-que-restante-do-pais

119 ROCHA, Luana Lara; RECINE, Elisabetta; VIEIRA, Letícia Lopes; OLIVEIRA, Emanuelly Porto; MENDES, Larissa Loures. **Food and Nutrition Security in the context of structural inequities: insights from Brazilian favelas.** The Lancet Regional Health – Americas, v. 52, p. 101287, 24 out. 2025. DOI: 10.1016/j.lana.2025.101287.

120 MENDES, Lívia Lúcio et al. **Desertos e pântanos alimentares no Brasil: definições, controvérsias e lacunas do conhecimento.** Ciência & Saúde Coletiva, Rio de Janeiro, v. 29, n. 8, e03222024, 2024. DOI: 10.1590/1413-81232024298.03222024. Available at: https://www.scielo.br/j/csc/a/8fGgBnnjyRBr8YG4qvBDVjp/?lang=pt.

121 MENDES, Lívia Lúcio et al. **Desertos e pântanos alimentares no Brasil: definições, controvérsias e lacunas do conhecimento.** Ciência & Saúde Coletiva, Rio de Janeiro, v. 29, n. 8, e03222024, 2024. DOI: 10.1590/1413-81232024298.03222024. Available at: https://www.scielo.br/j/csc/a/8fGgBnnjyRBr8YG4qvBDVjp/?lang=pt.

apparatuses such as community gardens without public sector support. Another point of attention in the research is the alteration of eating behavior due to emotional and psychological issues, with violence being a factor that influences these issues. Converging with the wide supply of ultra-processed foods, driven by selective pricing, aggressive advertising, and the absence of street markets or organic fairs, the precariousness of public services and the chronic scarcity of income and time (the latter aggravated by long urban commuting journeys) build a scenario that conditions structurally imposed food "choices," converting these territories into the "spaces of exclusion" theorized by Milton Santos (2007)[122], from the fundamental right to healthy and adequate food[123].

Finally, it is worth noting the projections[124] of the Institute for Consumer Defense (IDEC) with research groups from the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), which indicate that ultra-processed foods are expected to become cheaper than fresh foods as early as 2026. This scenario could considerably worsen the dietary patterns of vulnerable groups. The existence of oligopolies at different stages of the food chain is also one of the factors pressing food inflation, the impact of which is greater on the poorest families, who allocate a larger part of their budgets to purchasing food[125].

THE PLACE OF THE BLACK PERSON IN THE PRODUCTION CHAIN

The production chain comprises a set of stages ranging from the production of inputs to post-consumption, passing through industrial processing, logistics and transport, commercialization, and consumption, intersected by dimensions of governance, decision-making power, and value capture. More than 130 years after the formal abolition of slavery in Brazil, however, the Black population remains predominantly concentrated in the most precarious links of

122 ROCHA, Luana Lara; FRICHE, Amélia Augusta de Lima; JARDIM, Mariana Zogbi; CASTRO JÚNIOR, Paulo César Pereira de; OLIVEIRA, Emanuelly Porto; CARDOSO, Letícia de Oliveira; MENDES, Larissa Loures. **Percepção dos residentes de favelas brasileiras sobre o ambiente alimentar: um estudo qualitativo.** Cadernos de Saúde Pública, Rio de Janeiro, v. 40, n. 3, p. e00128423, 2024. DOI: 10.1590/0102-311XPT128423

123 ORGANIZAÇÃO DAS NAÇÕES UNIDAS. Comitê dos Direitos Econômicos, Sociais e Culturais. **Comentário Geral nº 12: o direito à alimentação adequada (artigo 11).** Genebra: ONU, 1999. Disponível em: https://www.fao.org/3/ax450p/ax450p.pdf.

124 INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE DEFESA DO CONSUMIDOR (IDEC). **Pesquisa indica que ultraprocessados podem ficar mais baratos do que alimentos saudáveis em 2026.** São Paulo: Idec, 05 nov. 2025. Available at: https://idec.org.br/release/pesquisa-indica-que-ultraprocessados-podem-ficar-mais-baratos-do-que-alimentos-saudaveis-em

125 PALMIERI JUNIOR, Valter. **A Inflação de Alimentos no Brasil: Um fenômeno estrutural, específico e sistêmico.** São Paulo, SP: ACT Promoção da Saúde, 2026.

these chains and underrepresented in strategic decision-making spaces and the appropriation of generated profits[126,127].

The incorporation of the Black population into the Brazilian labor market occurred in a structurally subordinate manner, as a surplus, cheap, and replaceable workforce. Faced with accelerated industrialization and urbanization throughout the 20th century, Black men and women remained predominantly inserted in occupations with low remuneration, high turnover, informality, and reduced social protection. This position implies greater exposure to environmental, health, and social risks, while systematically keeping this population away from the economic and political command centers of the production chains[128].

From the 2000s onwards, although affirmative action policies expanded the Black population's access to education and certain segments of formal employment129, the racial structure of the Brazilian labor market remained relatively intact. Informality and precarious work continued to be reserved for Black people in activities marked by extensive working hours, unhealthy environments, greater exposure to toxic substances, and lesser protection of rights such as contractual stability and better remuneration levels[130,131,132] .

Racial division of labor and unequal value capture

This asymmetry is not limited to occupational insertion, but is expressed in the very organization of production chains, which concentrate racialized labor at the base and economic power at the top. Sectors such as ultra-processed foods, tobacco, and alcoholic beverages, characterized by high economic concentration and elevated communicative and political power, depend on a productive base sustained by precarious work, racialized, and territorially located in areas marked by socio-economic and racial inequalities[133,134,135] .

126 MOURA, Clóvis. **Dialética do Radicalismo Negro.** São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1994.
127 FERNANDES, Florestan. **A integração do negro na sociedade de classes** São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1965.
128 HASENBALG, Carlos Alfredo. **Discriminação e desigualdades raciais no Brasil.** Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1979.
129 ZEIDAN, Rodrigo; ALMEIDA, Silvio Luiz de; BÓ, Inácio; LEWIS JR., Neil. **Racial and income-based affirmative action in higher education admissions: Lessons from the Brazilian experience.** Journal of Economic Surveys, v. 38, n. 3, p. 956–972, 2024.
130 THEODORO, Mário. **A sociedade desigual: racismo e branquitude na formação do Brasil.** Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2022.
131 MONT'ALVÃO, Arnaldo; RIBEIRO, Carlos Antônio Costa. **Race, education, and labor market outcomes in Brazil.** International Journal of Sociology, New York, v. 52, n. 1, p. 45-68, 2022.
132 DEPARTAMENTO INTERSINDICAL DE ESTATÍSTICA E ESTUDOS SOCIOECONÔMICOS - DIEESE. **Boletim Especial: apesar dos avanços, desigualdade racial de rendimentos persiste**. São Paulo: DIEESE, 2024.
133 GONZALEZ, Lélia. **Lugar de negro.** Rio de Janeiro: Marco Zero, 1982.
134 NASCIMENTO, Abdias. **O genocídio do negro brasileiro: processo de um racismo mascarado.** Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1978.
135 SANTOS, Milton. **O espaço dividido: os dois circuitos da economia urbana dos países subdesenvolvidos.** Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1979.

Territorialization of risks, environmental racism, and food systems

This inequality is also expressed in the territorial distribution of risks throughout the entire production chain, in which socio-environmental impacts fall disproportionately on racialized populations, especially the Black population in peripheries and *favelas*, indigenous peoples, *quilombolas*, and other traditional communities. It is in these territories or in their proximities that monocultures, processing industries, logistics infrastructures, and waste disposal areas expand, systematically exposing these groups to contamination by pesticides, soil and water degradation, loss of biodiversity, and land tenure insecurity. In the case of traditional peoples and communities, the impacts go beyond immediate environmental damages, compromising ways of life, their own food systems, cultural practices, the social reproduction of territories, and their very permanence within them.

In the agri-food system, this insertion occurs in a context that Abramovay and Favareto (2025)[136] define as "triple monotony": the expansion of grain monocultures in large latifundia, the intensive use of pesticides, and the growing availability of ultra-processed foods, to the detriment of dietary diversity. This is a model that standardizes production, concentrates income and power, and amplifies socio-environmental impacts.

This dynamic is exemplified in the book *O Sabor do Açúcar* ("The Taste of Sugar", 2022)[137], produced by Papel Social and launched by ACT Health Promotion, in which an investigation shows how companies linked to the world's largest sugar production chain — controlled by Coca-Cola and the four main global agricultural commodity operators (ADM, Bunge, Cargill, and Louis Dreyfus Company) — benefit from recurring violations on sugarcane farms, such as slave labor, invasion of indigenous lands, environmental contamination, land grabbing, deforestation, tax fraud, and pesticide poisoning of workers.

136 ABRAMOVAY, R.; FAVARETO, A. **Caminhos para a transição do sistema agroalimentar.** São Paulo: Cátedra Josué de Castro, 2025.

137 CASARA, Marques (coord.); PISMEL, Matheus Lobo; BURBULHAN, Talita; PICOLOTTO, André; BONALDO, Manoela. **O sabor do açúcar: trabalho escravo, desmatamento e violência contra povos indígenas na cadeia produtiva dos refrigerantes.** São Paulo: ACT Promoção da Saúde; Papel Social, 2022. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/biblioteca/o-sabor-do-acucar-livro/



Source: Papel Social and ACT Health Promotion

It should be emphasized that this agri-food model accounts for approximately one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions, being the main driver of biodiversity degradation and chemical contamination of water resources, soil, and air — both due to the massive use of pesticides and the use of veterinary drugs in animal production (IPCC, 2023; FAO, 2023[138]). However, when the systemic impacts of these lucrative corporate choices manifest, the bill is distributed asymmetrically: it is once again the historically vulnerable populations that suffer the worst consequences and find themselves more unprotected in the face of the climate crisis[139].

This development model thus organizes the production chain through veritable sacrifice zones, an environmental expression of structural racism, in which environmental, health, and social costs are externalized to historically marginalized groups. Economic benefits and decision-making power, in turn, remain concentrated in socially and racially privileged sectors, in an unequal distribution of risks, which Milton Santos (1987[140], 2000[141]) describes as the corporate use of space.

138 IPCC. **AR6 Synthesis Report.** Genebra, 2023; FAO. The State of Food and Agriculture. Roma, 2022.

139 FILHO, Diosmar (org.). **Justiça climática e racismo ambiental no Brasil.** Salvador: Ogum's Toques Negros, 2022.

140 SANTOS, Milton. **O espaço do cidadão.** São Paulo: Nobel, 1987.

141 SANTOS, Milton. **Por uma outra globalização: do pensamento único à consciência universal.** Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2000.

Find out more

Environmental racism and sacrifice zones

The term "sacrifice zone" began to be used in the 1970s in the United States, in government technical reports related to mineral exploration, especially coal, over areas whose activity would irreversibly damage the environment[142]. The term describes a geographically defined territory subjected to extraordinary levels of environmental degradation, pollution, and health risks, whose damages are considered socially acceptable or inevitable in the name of economic development[143].

From the 1980s and 1990s, the concept was politicized by environmental justice movements, especially based on the contributions of Robert D. Bullard (2000)[144], who demonstrates how environmental policies and urban planning decisions produce the systematic concentration of pollution, environmental risks, and territorial degradation upon Black, poor, and racialized communities — a process he identifies as environmental racism.

In Latin America, the term is appropriated from the 2000s onwards in the socio-environmental justice debate, articulating political ecology, confronting coloniality, and defending human rights to denounce territories affected by extractivism, agribusiness, and large infrastructure works, where "development" is sustained by the violation of collective and territorial rights.[145,146,147,148 ,149]

142 JUSKUS, Ryan. **Sacrifice zones.** Environmental Humanities, v. 15, n. 1, p. 3-24, 2023

143 LERNER, Steve. **Sacrifice zones: the front lines of toxic chemical exposure in the United States**. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010.

144 BULLARD, Robert D. **Dumping in Dixie: race, class, and environmental quality**. 3. ed. Boulder: Westview Press, 2000.

145 ACSERALD, Henri. **Justiça ambiental e construção social do risco**. Desenvolvimento e Meio Ambiente, n. 5, p. 49-60, 2002.

146 SVAMPA, Maristella. **Neoextrativismo na América Latina**. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2019.

147 FILHO, Diosmar. **A Terra gira no entorno do Eixo Imaginário: escala racial global na natureza Terra.** Rio de Janeiro: Justiça Global; Associação de Pesquisa Iyaleta, 2025. (Coleção Caminhos, v. 4).

148 HERCULANO, Selene. **O clamor por justiça ambiental e contra o racismo ambiental.** InterfacEHS – Revista de Gestão Integrada em Saúde do Trabalho e Meio Ambiente, v. 3, n. 1, p. 1-20, 2008.

149 PACHECO, Tania; FAUSTINO, Cristiane. **A iniludível e desumana prevalência do racismo ambiental nos conflitos do mapa.** In: PORTO, Marcelo Firpo; PACHECO, Tania; LEROY, Jean Pierre (Orgs.). Injustiça ambiental e saúde no Brasil: o mapa de conflitos. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fiocruz, 2013.

Before the use of the term itself, the issue already permeated debates on ecology and race, as demonstrated in the book *Há um Buraco Negro entre a Vida e a Morte*, written by Arnaldo Xavier and Nilza Iraci da Silva and published by Geledés – Instituto da Mulher Negra in partnership with Soweto – Organização Negra on the eve of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio 92. The publication was relaunched in 2025[150].

The Black population occupies the base of this productive structure and, simultaneously, suffers its most severe impacts. In rural areas, Black workers are exposed to pesticide contamination, environmental degradation, and land tenure insecurity. In cities, especially in *favelas* and urban peripheries, living conditions characterized by the absence of basic sanitation, exposure to heat islands, floods, and landslides predominate, in addition to the physical and economic distance from public health facilities, transportation, and healthy food supply circuits. In this context, food deserts and food swamps (CAISAN, 2024[151]) are consolidated. In many cases, these environments are concentrated around industrial and logistical zones and urban peripheries, where a significant portion of the Black working class is located. Subjected to long working hours, strenuous commutes, and restrictions of time and income, male and female workers become structurally dependent on these degraded food circuits, which compromises their food and nutritional insecurity, in what is being called food apartheid: a socio-spatial segregation that organizes unequal access to adequate food according to race, class, and territory markers.

Find out more

Food apartheid

The concept was coined by activist Karen Washington (2018[152]), from the Bronx, to describe a system of segregation imposed by public policies and economic decisions that deliberately deny racialized communities access to healthy, fresh, and culturally adequate food. It is used to emphasize that inequalities in access to food are not natural or accidental phenomena, but symptoms of structural social injustices such as poverty, racism, and dis-

150 SILVA, Nilza Iraci da; XAVIER, Arnaldo. **Há um buraco negro entre a vida e a morte**. São Paulo, SP: Geledés – Centro de Documentação e Memória Institucional, 2025. Available at: https://www.geledes.org.br/biblioteca/ha-um-buraco-negro-entre-a-vida-e-a-morte/

151 BRASIL. **Câmara Interministerial de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (CAISAN).** Mapeamento dos desertos alimentares no Brasil: atualização 2024. Brasília, DF: CAISAN, 2024.

152 BRONES, Anna. Karen Washington: **It's Not a Food Desert, It's Food Apartheid.** Guernica, 7 maio 2018. Available at: https://www.guernicamag.com/karen-washington-its-not-a-food-desert-its-food-apartheid/.

> crimination, which produce an unequal allocation of resources. Thus, the lack of availability of healthy food and the greater exposure to ultra-processed foods affect people of all races, but Black and mixed-race people are disproportionately affected.
>
> In Brazil, where the Black population has a lower average income than whites, supermarkets and establishments with a greater supply of healthy food are concentrated in wealthier regions[153].

A national survey[154] by the Brazilian Research Network on Food and Nutritional Sovereignty and Security (Rede PENSSAN) pointed out that, in 2022, still amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, more than 33 million people were in a situation of severe food insecurity in Brazil, more than half of them being Black people. Hunger was particularly high in households headed by Black or mixed-race women, reaching 22%, almost double the national average. Among workers in the food industry and retail trade, food insecurity paradoxically coexists with the production and circulation of large volumes of food.

This contradiction deepens when observing the perception of the workers themselves regarding the products they manufacture and sell. Qualitative research (Silva and Carvalho 2021[155]; Louzada, 2015[156]) indicates that many workers recognize the harmfulness of ultra-processed foods, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco products to health, associating them with the increase in Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity, but they report the lack of employment alternatives and the need to secure income as factors that keep them in these sectors, evidencing forms of structural coercion that limit individual choices[157].

In the alcohol chain, in turn, informal ties and low wages predominate[158], while the impacts of abusive consumption fall more intensely on Black territories[159], where targeted advertising, high density of points of sale, and low supply of

153 GRILO, M. F.; MENEZES, C. DE .; DURAN, A. C. **Mapeamento de pântanos alimentares em Campinas, Brasil.** Ciência & Saúde Coletiva, v. 27, n. 7, p. 2717–2728, 2022.
154 REDE PENSSAN. **II Inquérito Nacional sobre Insegurança Alimentar no Brasil**. São Paulo, 2022.
155 SILVA, Maria Aparecida de Moraes; CARVALHO, Sérgio Resende. **Trabalho, saúde e indústria de alimentos: percepções de trabalhadores sobre riscos e adoecimento.** Saúde e Sociedade, São Paulo, v. 30, n. 4, e210123, 2021. DOI: 10.1590/S0104-12902021210123. Available at: https://www.scielo.br/j/sausoc/a/dqJm3XHXkPkZ9Ygbk7FQk7t/?lang=pt#.
156 LOUZADA, Maria Laura da Costa et al. **Ultraprocessados e perfil nutricional da dieta no Brasil.** Revista de Saúde Pública, São Paulo, v. 49, p. 38, 2015. DOI: 10.1590/S0034-8910.2015049006132. Available at: https://rsp.fsp.usp.br/pt-br/article/alimentos-ultraprocessados-e-perfil-nutricional-da-dieta-no-brasil/.
157 On the limitation of individual choices in harmful productive contexts, see: BREILH, Jaime. **Epidemiologia crítica: ciência emancipadora e interculturalidade.** Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2006.
158 REPÓRTER BRASIL. **Cadeia do etanol e os direitos humanos: diagnósticos e perspectivas sobre o trabalho no setor sucroenergético.** São Paulo: Repórter Brasil, 2021.
159 GARCIA, Leila Posenato; FREITAS, Lúcia Rolim de. **Consumo abusivo de álcool e mortalidade no Brasil: uma análise sob a perspectiva de raça e gênero.** Cadernos de Saúde Pública, Rio de Janeiro, v. 36, n. 8, e00124519, 2020.

public prevention and care policies are combined (WHO, 2023[160]). In tobacco production, tobacco farming exposes rural workers, mostly small producers, to exhausting working hours, chronic indebtedness, and occupational diseases such as green tobacco sickness, caused by the dermal absorption of nicotine[161].

Thinking about the place of the Black population in the production chain requires, therefore, going beyond the rhetoric of employability or individual inclusion. It implies questioning a development model that naturalizes racism and sacrifice zones, externalizes environmental and health costs, and concentrates economic and decision-making power in a predominantly white elite. Without directly confronting environmental racism and the racial division of labor that underpin the productive gears, corporate discourses on sustainability, social responsibility, or diversity are emptied of meaning, operating merely as cosmetic rhetoric incapable of altering structures of oppression and guaranteeing rights.

160 WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO). **Global status report on alcohol and health and treatment of substance use disorders.** Geneva: World Health Organization, 2024.

161 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE. **A cadeia produtiva do tabaco no Brasil: impactos socioambientais, econômicos e alternativas viáveis para a agricultura familiar.** São Paulo: ACT Promoção da Saúde, 2021.

VARIETIES OF BLACKWASHING[162]

Classification	Definition
Selective Disclosure	Corporate communication emphasizes only the areas in which they are seeking an improvement in performance regarding racial issues, and does not disclose areas in which they have not improved or have even worsened.
Empty policies and claims	Implementation of policies sold as a radical transformation in racial relations, when in fact there is little power for implementation or the policies have low potential for changing the status quo.
Dubious certifications	Use of third-party certifications to promote a product and/or a company as beneficial for Black people.
Support and partnership with co-opted NGOs	Association with organizations active in the racial agenda to lend credibility to corporate efforts in the pursuit of racial equity.
Inefficient voluntary programs	Creation of and commitment to voluntary programs and codes to promote racial equity in the workplace, with weak enforcement mechanisms.
Misleading narratives and discourses	Marketing campaigns aimed at positioning the corporation as an anti-racist benchmark, regardless of its history in this area.
Misleading brands	Use of logos, influencers, and strategic voices to imply that the brand is anti-racist.
Accessing and influencing policymaking	Access and influence in decision-making spaces regarding racial equity policies, health, and the rights of the Black population.

162 Adapted from: WALTERS, R. **Varieties of gender wash: towards a framework for critiquing corporate social responsibility in feminist IPE**. Review of International Political Economy, v. 29, n. 5, p. 1577–1600, 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2021.1935295.

1. Selective disclosure

Selective disclosure is a communication practice of institutional publications that exclusively highlights the areas in which there are actions to reduce racial inequity, omitting areas where there has been no progress or where regression has occurred. This strategy can be viewed as "performative anti-racism", when groups or individuals claim anti-racism without demonstrating real interests in historical and institutional reparation or in changing the conjuncture of racial relations. Thus, the primary objective in this case is the concealment of institutional racism.

Find out more

Performative anti-racism

According to Barbosa (2025[163]), performative anti-racism can be defined as a posture that, although presenting itself as opposed to racism, operates in a superficial and selective manner. It oscillates between the global denial of the existence of racism and a punctual and opportunistic recognition of the problem, which only occurs when this can bring some individual or institutional benefit. This practice does not commit to the structural transformation necessary to combat racial inequalities, but rather uses the anti-racist agenda as a tool for distinction or gain, without effective engagement with the collective struggle and the profound changes it demands. In short, it is a formal and utilitarian adherence to anti-racist discourse, devoid of a consistent practice committed to racial justice.

Especially since 2020, large companies began to adopt Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies in a movement that intellectuals characterized at the time as market anti-racism or performative anti-racism[164]. This timeframe was driven by pressure from society and even from the market to take a stand amidst the intensification of the global debate on racism, mainly after the protests that accompanied the Black Lives Matter movement, following the murder of George Floyd by police officers in the United States that year.

163 BARBOSA, Raphael Barreto da Conceição. **O antirracismo de aparência: da negação global ao reconhecimento singular e oportunista.** Trabalho Necessário, Niterói, v. 23, n. 50, p. 01-13, 09 abr. 2025. DOI: 10.22409/tn.v23i50.66137. Available at: https://periodicos.uff.br/trabalhonecessario/article/view/66137/39085

164 BARBOSA, Raphael Barreto da Conceição. **O antirracismo de aparência: da negação global ao reconhecimento singular e oportunista.** Trabalho Necessário, Niterói, v. 23, n. 50, p. 01-13, 09 abr. 2025. DOI: 10.22409/tn.v23i50.66137. Available at: https://periodicos.uff.br/trabalhonecessario/article/view/66137/39085

Find out more

Market anti-racism

Manoel (2019)[165] conceptualizes "market anti-racism" as a theoretical and political perspective that seeks to 'combat' racism, but within the frameworks of liberalism and capitalism. For the author, racism causes a cultural and symbolic inferiorization of everything related to Black people. From the perspective of "market anti-racism," this inferiorization would be resolved by the occupation, by Black people, of the most diverse positions in capitalist society — that is, the concept is directly related to another: representativeness.

Representativeness as a facade

The strategy of selective disclosure emerges as one of the corporate tools that, instead of dismantling institutional racism, serves to camouflage it and safeguard the interests of its leaders. This approach focuses on "combating" racism through the incorporation of Black people into leadership positions, prioritizing representativeness as the main motto. However, when this inclusion occurs as "performative anti-racism," the primary objective is the concealment of racism, without promoting reparatory interests or altering the patterns of racist relations[166].

These practices involve visible initiatives to demonstrate an effort in inclusion and career development, such as Acceleration and Mentoring Programs, Affirmative action hiring, and the establishment of Commitments and Targets. The survey produced by the Ethos Institute, "Social, Racial and Gender Profile of the 1,100 Largest Companies in Brazil and their Affirmative actions 2023-2024"[167] highlights the low representativeness of Black people, especially women, in leadership positions. According to the research, Black and mixed-race people make up less than 6% of boards and less than 14% of executive and directorial positions, despite representing 55% of the Brazilian population.

165 MANOEL, Jones. **As ilusões da representatividade: o antirracismo de mercado.** Brasil: Canal Jones Manoel, 2019. 1 vídeo (11:12 min). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpUHnS4KMzY.

166 BARBOSA, Raphael Barreto da Conceição. **O antirracismo de aparência: da negação global ao reconhecimento singular e oportunista.** Trabalho Necessário, Niterói, v. 23, n. 50, p. 01-13, 09 abr. 2025. DOI: 10.22409/tn.v23i50.66137. Available at: https://periodicos.uff.br/trabalhonecessario/article/view/66137/39085

167 ETHOS – INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE RESPONSABILIDADE SOCIAL EMPRESARIAL. **Perfil Social, Racial e de Gênero das 1.100 Maiores Empresas do Brasil e suas Ações Afirmativas 2023-2024**. São Paulo: Instituto Ethos, 18 set. 2024. Available at: https://www.ethos.org.br/publicacao/perfil-social-racial-e-de-genero-das-1-100-maiores-empresas-do-brasil-e-suas-acoes-afirmativas-2023-2024/

In the beverage sector, Ambev, for example, appears as a standout for two consecutive years for DEI in the ethno-racial category in the 2024[168] Ethos/Época Survey of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, ranking 2nd among the most inclusive companies in the country. The company highlights exceeding the goal of 200 new Black workers in leadership positions in 2022 and 500 hires of this profile in 2021.

According to the 2024 IDIVERSA Latam Index[169], a Latin American diversity index with a focus on gender and race, Ambev was classified among the five most inclusive in the region. The company created programs such as Dàgbá — Leaders of the Future and Representa, an exclusive internship for Black and mixed-race university students, which involves training for leadership roles.

Despite these efforts, however, the 2024 team composition data reveal a structural contradiction:

- Workers: 51.2% self-identify as Black.
- Leadership positions: 27% self-identify as Black.
- Board of Directors/Executive Board: 6.93% self-identify as Black.
- Board of Administration: 0% self-identify as Black. *Ambev Sustainability Report 2023-2025.

**Relatório de Sustentabilidade da Ambev 2023-2025[170].*

This reveals a disparity of 24.2 percentage points between the general workforce of Black workers (51.2%) and the occupation of leadership positions by Black people (27%). The disparity becomes even more pronounced at the executive and governance levels.

In other giants of the food sector, such as MBRF (controller of brands like Sadia and Perdigão), the logic is repeated. The company promoted racial literacy campaigns and mentoring programs, such as "Nossa Cor" (Our Color), and states that 53% of its employees are Black or mixed-race, with 27.5% of them in leadership positions[171]. However, a lack of transparency persists, as the company is questioned for not specifying what it considers a "leadership position" in its diversity and governance frameworks. This gap illustrates the difficulty of market

168 ETHOS – INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE RESPONSABILIDADE SOCIAL EMPRESARIAL. **Pesquisa Ethos/Época de Diversidade, Equidade e Inclusão de 2024**. Available at: https://www.ethos.org.br/confira-os-resultados-da-pesquisa-ethos-epoca-de-diversidade-equidade-e-inclusao-de-2024/

169 B3 – BRASIL, BOLSA, BALCÃO. **Índice IDIVERSA B3: carteira teórica de ações com critérios de diversidade de gênero e raça** (versão 2024). São Paulo: B3, 2024. Available at: https://www.b3.com.br/pt_br/market-data-e-indices/indices/indices-de-sustentabilidade/indice-de-diversidade-idiversa-b3.htm

170 HEINEKEN BRASIL. **Relatório de Sustentabilidade Grupo HEINEKEN 2023-2025.** São Paulo: HEINEKEN Brasil, 2025. Disponível em: https://www.heinekenbrasil.com.br/relatorio-de-sustentabilidade/

171 BRF. **Relatório Integrado 2024.** 12 mai. 2025. Available at: https://ri.brf-global.com/informacoes-financeiras/relatorios-anuais/

anti-racism in addressing the contradictions of corporate action and the real condition of Black people throughout the entire production chain.

When racial equity is treated strictly in a symbolic and sectoral manner, without being transversally integrated into the business strategy, the transformative impact is limited. In the case of Heineken, which launched awareness initiatives and has a goal of 40% Black leadership by 2030, reports[172] indicate that, although more than half of the workforce (52%) self-identified as Black or mixed-race in 2022, only 28% of leadership positions were occupied by Black people.



Source: Marcas pelo Mundo

Arcos Dorados (an independent franchise holding that operates McDonald's restaurants in 21 countries and territories in Latin America, including Brazil) is another standout in the Ethos Institute's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion survey that exemplifies data omission[173]. Although the company cites the adoption of Human Rights clauses in contracts that condemn distinction based on race and claims to have no records of critical incidents since 2012, the disclosure of racial data is limited. The company

172 HEINEKEN BRASIL. **Relatório de Sustentabilidade do Grupo HEINEKEN 2023-2025.** São Paulo: HEINEKEN Brasil, 2025. Available at: https://www.heinekenbrasil.com.br/relatorio-de-sustentabilidade/

173 Instituto Ethos. **Confira os Resultados da Pesquisa Ethos/Época de Diversidade, Equidade e Inclusão de 2024.** 13 jun. 2024. Available at: https://www.ethos.org.br/confira-os-resultados-da-pesquisa-ethos-epoca-de-diversidade-equidade-e-inclusao-de-2024/

provides information on the composition of Black people (33% Black and mixed-race and 13% multiracial/indigenous) only at the staff (attendant) level[174].



Sources: Estadão and Portal Mazé Mourão

For the corporate and operational levels, the company's information is restricted to gender, obscuring racial representation in the instances of power. This selective disclosure coexists with a reality of complaints: in July 2020, Arcos Dorados was reported[175] to the Public Ministry of Labor by at least 16 former employees, most under 18 years old, who alleged they had been systematically humiliated and harassed by their supervisors in cases of discrimination and racial prejudice.

Regarding the mentioned cases, Arcos Dorados merely stated, in a note, that it did not have access to the document and, therefore, could not take a position on the issue. The company added that it is committed to promoting an inclusive work environment, does not tolerate harassment or discrimination practices, promotes training based on its Code of Conduct, and maintains an

174 Arcos Dorados. **Relatório de Impacto Social e Desenvolvimento Saudável 2023.** Available at: https://www.arcosdorados.com/pt/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/07/AD_2023_POR.pdf

175 AGÊNCIA BRASIL. **Sindicatos pedem investigação de racismo nas lojas McDonald's.** 20 jul. 2020. Available at: https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/justica/noticia/2020-07/sindicatos-pedem-investigacao-de-racismo-nas-lojas-mcdonalds

ombudsman channel for complaints, in addition to carrying out communication campaigns on the topic of diversity and inclusion[176].



Source: Agência Brasil

The superficiality of the approach is evident when the company's report does not provide racial data on suppliers, outsourced workers, or communities. To advance consistently, for example, Heineken would need to transform racial equity into a transversal institutional commitment, with clear data, ambitious goals, and structural actions.

The analysis of the corporations Ambev, Arcos Dorados (McDonald's), MBRF, and Heineken, therefore, reveals a significant and consistent disparity in racial representativeness, with substantially higher percentages of Black people in base positions (staff and general workforce) and falling drastically at the leadership, directorship, and board of administration levels.

Racism and institutional suffering

It is undeniable that the incorporation of Black professionals — especially in leadership and decision-making positions — is an opportunity for entry into the labor market, expanding families' incomes and bringing diversity to the company's perspective in relations with consumers. But, if limited to appearan-

176 AGÊNCIA BRASIL. **Sindicatos pedem investigação de racismo nas lojas McDonald's**. Agência Brasil, 20 jul. 2020. Available at: https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/justica/noticia/2020-07/sindicatos-pedem-investigacao-de-racismo-nas-lojas-mcdonalds,

ces, this strategy can even condition these hired professionals to situations of everyday racism.

In this scenario of performative anti-racism and instrumentalized diversity, racism tends to perfect itself, diminishing its explicit demonstrations, but remaining present in a more sophisticated way. The restricted admission of Black professionals in management positions, especially via affirmative action vacancies, can be neurotizing (Barbosa, 2025)[177], since it can trigger a feeling of isolation and loneliness, impotence, or even the perception that their presence in that position is used to build an anti-racist image.

Depending on the role occupied by the Black person and their understanding of the world, their positioning can cause tension and discomfort, making the institutional environment absurdly violent. The situation worsens when we add the susceptibility of Black people in work environments to be victims of racism and the pressure caused by the increase in unemployment in the segment.

Thus, it is important to distinguish and incorporate into the debate the notion of tokenism, a sociological concept by Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977[178]), a phenomenon by which the visible presence of Black people in isolated or symbolic positions is used as a justification for inclusion, without this implying an effective transformation of power relations or in the redistribution of opportunities. An empirical study in the United States[179] analyzed how Black workers in corporate environments marked by low diversity are often positioned as "symbols" of inclusion, but subjected to greater surveillance, pressure for exceptional performance, and emotional overload resulting from the expectation of representing an entire racial group.

Although they may achieve positions of visibility and even institutional recognition, these professionals report exhaustion, isolation, and a limitation of real opportunities for structural advancement. Brazilian research180,181 observed that the presence of Black professionals in prominent positions occurs symbolically, without corresponding to a structural change in access to decision-making power or the appropriation of economic value. This performative inclusion reveals that visible presence does not necessarily imply a real distribution of power, reinforcing rather than challenging the racial division of labor and the margin of decision-making within Brazilian corporations.

177 BARBOSA, Raphael Barreto da Conceição. **O antirracismo de aparência: da negação global ao reconhecimento singular e oportunista**. Revista Trabalho Necessário, v. 23, n. 50, 2025.
178 KANTER, Rosabeth Moss. **Men and women of the corporation.** New York: Basic Books, 1977.
179 GREEN, Sydney. **Successful but exhausted: the effect of tokenism on Black employees.** 2023. Dissertation (Doctor of Philosophy). Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, 2023.
180 CAVALCANTE, Elydio; FERNANDES, Mateus. **Tokenismo racial nas organizações brasileiras: uma análise da presença simbólica de pessoas negras em posições de destaque**. Revista de Gestão & Organização, São Paulo, v. 16, n. 46, p. 143–157, 2020.
181 COSTA, Jéssica; MELO, Rafael. **Empresas e 'cotas de diversidade': entre a inclusão performática e a manutenção das hierarquias raciais.** Cadernos de Estudos Sociais, v. 34, n. 78, p. 89–108, 2019.

Tokenism, therefore, not only masks organizational inequalities, but also reproduces racial hierarchies by concentrating decision-making power and control of resources in predominantly white hands, keeping inclusion on a symbolic plane.

Finally, it should be added that, frequently, companies' responses to such questioning are generic, usually carried out in the face of episodes of racial injury or discrimination and do not contemplate a broader context of institutional racism.

Thus, racial equity actions remain subordinate to the reputational logic of the companies. To break with market anti-racism, it is necessary to institutionalize policies of reparation, transparency, and redistribution of power throughout the entire production chain.

2. Empty policies and claims

In recent years, large Brazilian corporations have increasingly invested in inclusion and professional training programs aimed at Black people. Education appears as the central axis of these initiatives, presented as an engine for social mobility and an instrument for correcting historical inequalities. However, a closer analysis reveals that part of these actions can be understood as what critical literature calls empty policies or performative inclusion: initiatives that produce visibility and institutional reputation, but operate with low impact on the structures that sustain racial and labor inequities.



Diversity washing

Liliane Rocha (2017[182]), founder of the Brazilian consulting firm Gestão Kairós, named this phenomenon diversity washing, alluding to *greenwashing*[183], as a form of marketing communication that holds diversity as a reputational asset, but without structural correspondence in organizational practices, for example, by substantively altering the racial composition of its leadership or the working conditions in its production chains.

182 ROCHA, Liliane. **Como ser um líder inclusivo: fuja do diversitywashing e valorize a diversidade: seu guia para construir uma sociedade mais justa e uma empresa mais competitiva.** São Paulo: DVS Editora, 2021.

183 SEELE, Peter; GATTI, Lucia. **Greenwashing revisited: in search of a typology and accusation-based definition incorporating legitimacy strategies.** Business Strategy and the Environment, v. 26, n. 2, p. 239–252, 2017. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.1912

This critique aligns with the analysis of Australian philosopher Sara Ahmed (2012)[184] when analyzing institutional diversity policies. Ahmed argues that many of them function as performative, that is, statements that declare a commitment to transformation but do not produce the effects they name. The policy exists, the report is published, the committee is created, but the power relations remain intact. In this logic, diversity becomes an organizational sign, not a real redistribution of power.

Between discourse and precarious work

A recent example is the Bora Zé Program, launched by Zé Delivery, an Ambev platform, in partnership with educational organizations. Since 2023, the initiative has offered short courses and scholarships for the completion of elementary and high school, with the promise of boosting the social mobility of delivery workers and their families. According to data released by the company itself, 80% of the participants reportedly secured employment after 180 days.



Source: GKPB

184 AHMED, Sara. **On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life.** Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2012.

The proposal dialogues with the widely held belief that education is the "passport to upward mobility," but it does not alter the nature of the labor relationship at the base of the business. Delivery workers remain predominantly linked as independent contractors, without formal labor protection, exposed to extensive working hours, accident risks, and income instability, as research on app-based work in Brazil has been documenting[185].

Thus, individual qualification can expand specific opportunities, but it does not modify the structural regime of precarious work that sustains the business model. The educational policy acts on the individual; the vulnerability remains in the system.

A survey[186] conducted by the NGO Ação da Cidadania in 2025 showed that 32% of app delivery workers in Brazil experience some degree of food insecurity. Considering only severe food insecurity, which is popularly known as hunger, 8% of them faced this problem.



Source: Ação da Cidadania

Inclusion at the top, opacity in the supply chain

The contrast between productive inclusion programs and the persistence of hunger among workers in the food sector evidences the dissociation between narrative and material reality. At the other end of the market, Nestlé Brazil launched, in 2023, the Ônix Program, aimed at accelerating the trajectory of Black professionals toward leadership positions. The initiative involves mentoring, te-

185 AMOBITEC; CEBRAP. **Relatório de perfil dos motoristas e entregadores de aplicativos no Brasil** (inclui dados de Zé Delivery, iFood, Uber e 99). São Paulo: Amobitec/Cebrap, 2023.
186 AÇÃO DA CIDADANIA Contra a Fome, a Miséria e Pela Vida. **Entregas da Fome.** Available at: https://www.acaodacidadania.org.br/entregasdafome

chnical training, and top management engagement. It is an effort that responds to a legitimate demand for racial representativeness in strategic positions.

However, Nestlé's effort to accelerate Black leaders, evidenced by the Ônix Program — the only racial initiative mentioned in three analyzed corporate reports —, does not extend throughout its entire production chain. The corporation has already been associated, in different investigations and public denunciations, with human rights violations involving suppliers, including accusations of child labor and land conflicts related to the production of agricultural commodities[187,188,189,190,191]. In 2022, for example, one of its palm oil suppliers was accused[192] of illegally occupying lands of *quilombola* communities in the Alto Rio Acará, in Pará. Another journalistic investigation revealed that a supplier for Nestlé (and Marfrig) used meat from cattle raised illegally on indigenous land[193].

187 WHORISKEY, Peter; SIEGEL, Rachel. **Cocoa's child laborers: Mars, Nestlé and Hershey pledged to stop using cocoa harvested by children.**. The Washington Post, Washington, DC, 5 jun. 2019. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/business/hershey-nestle-mars-chocolate-child-labor-west-africa/

188 BBC NEWS**. Nestlé, Cargill and Mars accused of channelling child labour.** BBC News, [s. l.], 13 fev. 2021. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-56044038.

189 O JOIO E O TRIGO. **Relatório mostra falhas em compromissos sociais de Coca, Nestlé, Pepsi e Unilever.** O Joio e o Trigo, 28 mar. 2019. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2019/03/relatorio-mostra-falhas-em-compromissos-sociais-de-coca-nestle-pepsi-e-unilever/.

190 IWASAWA, Nathália; INTERCEPT BRASIL. **Para a Nestlé, nem todos os bebês são iguais: relatório revela produtos piores nos países do Sul Global.** Intercept Brasil, 16 abr. 2024. Available at: https://www.intercept.com.br/2024/04/16/nestle-relatorio-produtos-piores-nos-paises-do-sul-global/.

191 MERLINO, Tatiana; O JOIO E O TRIGO. **Fornecedora da Nestlé segue aterrorizando quilombolas no Nordeste do Pará.** O Joio e o Trigo, 14 mar. 2022. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2022/03/fornecedora-da-nestle-segue-aterrorizando-quilombolas-no-nordeste-do-para/

192 MERLINO, Tatiana. O JOIO E O TRIGO. **Nestlé compra óleo de palma de empresas envolvidas em violações de direitos humanos na Amazônia paraense.** O Joio e o Trigo, 15 fev. 2022. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2022/02/nestle-compra-oleo-de-palma-de-empresas-envolvidas-em-violacoes-de-direitos-humanos-na-amazonia-paraense/.

193 MERLINO, Tatiana; O JOIO E O TRIGO. **Fornecedor da Nestlé usou carne de gado criado ilegalmente em terra indígena.** O Joio e o Trigo, 16 set. 2022. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2022/09/fornecedor-da-nestle-usou-carne-de-gado-criado-ilegalmente-em-terra-indigena/.

Intercept_ Brasil

APOIE HOJE

PARA A NESTLÉ, NEM TODOS OS BEBÊS SÃO IGUAIS: RELATÓRIO REVELA PRODUTOS PIORES NOS PAÍSES DO SUL GLOBAL

Pesquisa inédita mostra que produtos da corporação para crianças menores de dois anos vendidos no Sul global contêm adição de açúcar. Já na Suíça, país-sede, os mesmos itens são livres desse ingrediente



Nathália Iwasawa
16 de abr de 2024, 15h01

Em colaboração com:

SEMENTEIRA

o joio e o trigo
Jornalismo investigativo sobre alimentação, saúde e poder



Quilombolas seguem sob constante vigilância dos seguranças da empresa Agropalma. Foto: Elielson Sil

CULTURA ALIMENTAR

Fornecedora da Nestlé segue aterrorizando quilombolas no nordeste do Pará

09.03.22 | Por Fábio Zuker, especial para o Joio

Sources: BBC, Intercept, and O Joio e o Trigo

Furthermore, the company does not disclose in detail the percentage of Black people in its general workforce in Brazil, which hinders the independent evaluation of the structural impact of its racial policies. This lack of transparency restricts social control and demonstrates how the rhetoric of social responsibility often lacks objective indicators to support it.

When inclusion does not transform

Although inclusion and professional training programs aimed at Black people can demonstrate some kind of effort and represent important advances at the individual level, as already observed, the reality of the production chain and labor frequently contradicts the equity discourse, limiting the reach of affirmative action policies[194]. The analysis suggests that policies focused solely on promoting education are insufficient to address racial inequities and guarantee the permanence of Black people in the market. When disconnected from changes in hiring structures, remuneration, governance, and power distribution, they tend to operate in the register of symbolic recognition, not material redistribution.

Furthermore, even with equivalent education, Black professionals face informal barriers related to sociability networks, cultural codes, and implicit standards of belonging, as observed by the Black Brazilian economist Michael França in press articles[195,196,197]. He argues that cultural capital remains a silent filter of racial exclusion in corporate environments and that inequality is expressed not only in the absence of a degree, but in the persistence of invisible criteria for selection and promotion.

This dynamic imposes on Black workers a process of asymmetrical cultural adaptation, frequently accompanied by experiences of non-belonging. Individual advancement does not eliminate the subjective cost of navigating racialized structures, imposing psychological suffering on the individual who has ascended in isolation[198,199].

Performative inclusion and revictimization

Not infrequently, corporate diversity policies include training and awareness spaces that ask Black people to share experiences of racism to promote internal awareness. Although they may generate learning, such practices can also ex-

194 PERES, João; O JOIO E O TRIGO. **O topo tem cor: negros ainda são minoria em cargos de liderança da indústria alimentícia**. O Joio e o Trigo, 22 out. 2020. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2020/10/o-topo-tem-cor-negros-ainda-sao-minoria-em-cargos-de-lideranca-da-industria-alimenticia/

195 FRANÇA, Michael. **Capital não é apenas sobre dinheiro**. Folha de S.Paulo, São Paulo, 19 nov. 2024. Available at: https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/colunas/michael-franca/2024/11/capital-nao-e-apenas-sobre-dinheiro.shtml

196 FRAÇA, Michael. **Não é sobre competência. É que você é preto.** Folha de S.Paulo, São Paulo, 23 out. 2025. Available at: https://www.uol.com.br/colunas/michael-franca/2025/10/nao-e-sobre-competencia-e-que-voce-e-preto.shtml

197 FRANÇA, Michael. **Estudar para quê?** Folha de S.Paulo, São Paulo, 22 set. 2025. Available at: https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/colunas/michael-franca/2025/09/estudar-para-que.shtml.

198 SOUZA, Neusa Santos. **Tornar-se Negro: Ou as Vicissitudes da Identidade do Negro Brasileiro em Ascensão Social**. Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1983.

199 BENTO, Maria Aparecida. **Pactos narcísicos no racismo: branquitude e poder nas organizações empresariais e no poder público**. 2002. Tese (Doutorado em Psicologia Social) – Instituto de Psicologia, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2002.

pose workers to processes of reenacting traumatic experiences, transferring to them the pedagogical burden of institutional transformation.

When diversity becomes an event, campaign, or individual account, but does not reorganize hierarchies, decision flows, and evaluation criteria, it runs the risk of reinforcing what it intended to combat. Inclusion, in this case, functions as language, but not as a redistribution of power.

Education is a fundamental tool for social mobility and should not be disregarded. The problem emerges when it is presented as an all-encompassing solution for inequalities that are structural. Racial transformation in the labor market requires data transparency, revision of hiring models, responsibility over the production chain, and the real democratization of decision-making power. Without these changes, diversity can become a valuable reputational asset — and, paradoxically, a stabilization mechanism for the very status quo it claims to combat.

3. Dubious certifications

The search for a socially responsible corporate image has driven the expansion of a market of certifications, rankings, and sustainability seals. What should function as an instrument of transparency and accountability has become, in many cases, a tool for symbolic legitimation. Companies begin to flaunt awards and indices as proof of ethical excellence, even when their operational practices reveal profound contradictions[200].

200 O JOIO E O TRIGO; MELO, Mylena. **O ESG pode nos salvar do apetite das grandes empresas?** O Joio e o Trigo, 12 dez. 2022. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2022/12/o-esg-pode-nos-salvar-do-apetite-das-grandes-empresas/



Source: O Joio e o Trigo

In the racial field, **blackwashing** finds fertile ground in this environment. The practice consists of using certifications granted by third parties to promote products or brands as allies of the Black population, even though there is no structural transformation in the production chains or in decision-making centers. It is, however, a phenomenon inserted into a broader logic: the primacy of market voluntarism over binding legal obligations. In this arrangement, reputation and profitability frequently supersede the effective protection of human rights[201].

The main stage for this dynamic is the **ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)** universe. Although the term encompasses Environmental, Social, and Governance dimensions, its origin lies in the financial market as a response to investors' demand for long-term risk metrics[202]. **ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)** was not born as a social justice agenda, but as a strategy for the valorization and stability of capital. Even so, it has come to be presented as the synthesis of contemporary corporate responsibility.

In the social axis of **ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)**, companies seek public recognition in themes of high symbolic legitimacy, such as racial equality and diversity, but the problem lies in the voluntary nature of these commitments. There is no robust standardization for the disclosure of results, nor comparable and auditable

201 HOMA – Instituto de Direitos Humanos e Empresas. **Acúmulo da agenda de Direitos Humanos e Empresas no Brasil.** Homa, 16 fev. 2023. Available at: https://homacdhe.com/index.php/2023/02/27/acumulo-da-agenda-de-direitos-humanos-e-empresas-no-brasil/

202 SOUZA, Clarissa; ALMEIDA, Fernando. **A financeirização da sustentabilidade: uma análise crítica do surgimento e evolução da agenda ESG.** Revista de Administração Contemporânea, Curitiba, v. 26, n. 4, e210234, 2022.

metrics that allow assessing the consistency between discourse and practice. Many companies disclose unassured data, whose reliability is lower than that of financial information, even though these indicators influence market value and business strategy.

The false brilliance of diversity and ethics seals

Concrete examples reveal this asymmetry. Ambev has been repeatedly awarded in the Ethos/Época survey in the ethno-racial diversity categories and announced having exceeded hiring goals for Black people in leadership positions. However, the company did not make public consistent results or racial diversity programs. Institutional visibility also contrasted with denunciations regarding its supply chain in Amazonas. An investigative report by O Joio e o Trigo[203] revealed that in Maués, the main guaraná producing hub, which supplied Ambev and Coca-Cola, the purchasing system through middlemen kept family and indigenous producers in a situation of economic dependence, with reduced remuneration and a concentration of commercial power.



Source: O Joio e o Trigo

A similar situation can be observed in the case of Nestlé. The multinational was one of the first companies to adhere to the **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** and a founding member of the Partnering for Racial Justice in Business initia-

203 O JOIO E O TRIGO. Coca e Ambev: impactos negativos de todos os tipos e tamanhos no Amazonas (e no Brasil). Published june 25 2020.

tive of the World Economic Forum. The Swiss corporation has a detailed roadmap for human rights and implementation plans for reporting indicators.

Find out more

UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

The guidance for the creation of National Guidelines on Business and Human Rights arises within the framework of the United Nations, with the approval in 2011 of the **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** by the Human Rights Council, structured on the pillars of protect, respect, and remedy. These principles, drafted by Harvard researcher John Ruggie, recommend that States adopt national plans and policies for their implementation[204,205]. However, the voluntary and non-binding nature of the Principles is the target of criticism[206], as it does not establish mandatory mechanisms for corporate accountability for human rights violations, weakening their effectiveness and favoring corporate adherence without effective sanctions.

Despite all these credentials, Nestlé was ordered[207] to pay R$ 50,000 in moral damages to a Black employee who was a victim of racism by his supervisor in the workplace. The racist insults were proven in the case files and uttered publicly, demonstrating the perpetuation of **structural racism** in the work environment, even with the company's Code of Conduct in force.

204 OXFAM BRASIL. **10 anos depois: os princípios da ONU sobre empresas e direitos humanos.** Oxfam Brasil, july 21, 2021. Available at: https://www.oxfam.org.br/10-anos-depois-os-principios-da-onu-sobre-empresas-e-direitos-humanos/

205 DA RÁDIO USP RIBEIRÃO PRETO; INSTITUTO DE ESTUDOS AVANÇADOS POLO RIBEIRÃO PRETO (IEA-RP) DA USP. **USP Analisa: Direitos Humanos e Empresas – Parte 1.** YouTube, 15 out. 2021. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9K_HX1kFCE

206 HOMA – INSTITUTO DE DIREITOS HUMANOS E EMPRESAS. **Os Princípios Orientadores sobre Empresas e Direitos Humanos da ONU.** Homa, oct 6, 2020. Available at: https://homacdhe.com/index.php/2020/10/06/os-principios-orientadores-sobre-empresas-e-direitos-humanos-da-onu/

207 ALMA PRETA; SERPA, Verônica. **Nestlé é condenada a pagar R$ 50 mil por danos morais a funcionário vítima de racismo**. Alma Preta, ago 26, 2025. Available at: https://almapreta.com.br/sessao/cotidiano/nestle-e-condenada-a-pagar-r-50-mil-por-danos-morais-a-funcionario-vitima-de-racismo/.



Source: Alma Preta

Furthermore, Nestlé was held legally liable as a service contractor in labor lawsuits involving the transport company Framento[208]. In the case in question, drivers — including Venezuelan immigrants — were subjected to conditions analogous to slavery, working exhausting shifts of up to 15 hours, living in the vehicles themselves, and deprived of fundamental rights, such as paid weekly rest and overtime pay. The company, which requires its suppliers to comply with a Code of Conduct[209], was aware of this precarious situation.

208 TERRA. **Longas jornadas: funcionários processam transportadora Framento e Nestlé.** Terra, 29. abr.2022. Available at: https://www.terra.com.br/nos/longas-jornadas-funcionarios-processam-transportadora-framento-e-nestle,46ce2ad5fb2760119129e841b6766f2aj5vfuqsy.html

209 NESTLÉ S.A. **Código de Conduta Empresarial** [documento eletrônico]. Versão 2025. Available at: https://www.nestle.com/sites/default/files/asset-library/documents/library/documents/corporate_governance/code_of_business_conduct_pt.pdf



Source: Terra Nós

The disparity between the public image and the internal practice of such corporations reinforces the critique that, often, companies are rewarded and certified for merely complying with voluntary measures, even while systematically violating human rights.

Sustainability in crisis: offending companies on the ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) podium

The credibility of the seals unravels even further upon examining the corporations that make up the prestigious sustainability indices of the financial market, such as the Corporate Sustainability Index (ISE) of B3 (the Brazilian stock exchange).

To give a notorious example, Rumo, the largest railway operator in the country, has a contradictory history of practices violating socio-environmental rights, despite flaunting awards and having been part of the B3 ISE portfolio for consecutive years[210]. The company accumulated lawsuits for environmental crimes, such as noise pollution, damage to historical heritage, and soil contamination. More seriously, the corporation was involved in lawsuits for employing labor analogous to slavery, including truck driver shifts of up to 34 hours a day.

An inspection operation rescued 51 workers from construction sites in degrading conditions, with restriction of movement and threats to physical integri-

210 O JOIO E O TRIGO; MELO, Mylena. **Corporação condenada por trabalho escravo e crimes ambientais integra índice de sustentabilidade da bolsa**. O Joio e o Trigo, jan 10, 2023. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2023/01/corporacao-condenada-por-trabalho-escravo-e-crimes-ambientais-integra-indice-de-sustentabilidade-da-bolsa/

ty. Such violations occurred under Rumo's management, which claimed that outsourced companies were to blame. The fact that Rumo remains on a stock exchange sustainability index is a reflection of how **ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)** performance can be divorced from operational reality.

This is not an isolated case. Marfrig is also listed on the ISE B3 sustainability index, but it is directly linked to deforestation and illegal cattle production on indigenous lands. Investigations revealed that cattle raised illegally on indigenous lands (such as Menku) ended up in Marfrig slaughterhouses, which in turn supplied meat to Nestlé and other multinationals in the food sector, such as the fast-food restaurants McDonald's and Burger King[211]. BRF is also found in the index, but accumulates sanitary infractions and uses products with high doses of additives harmful to health[212].



CULTURA ALIMENTAR

Corporação condenada por trabalho escravo e crimes ambientais integra índice de sustentabilidade da bolsa

10.01.23 | por Leandro Melito

Source: O Joio e o Trigo

These cases demonstrate that the premises and objectives of **ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)** may even converge with those of sustainability, but do not replace them, often operating as an "ESG label" applied without due distinction regarding the quality or effectiveness of the adopted practices.

211 O JOIO E O TRIGO; CASTILHO, Alceu Luís; FONTES, Tatiana. **Fornecedor da Nestlé usou carne de gado criado ilegalmente em terra indígena.** O Joio e o Trigo, [s. l.], set. 26, 2022. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2022/09/fornecedor-da-nestle-usou-carne-de-gado-criado-ilegalmente-em-terra-indigena/.

212 O JOIO E O TRIGO; ROSSI, Marina. **O ESG pode nos salvar do apetite das grandes empresas?**. O Joio e o Trigo, [s. l.], dez 7, 2022. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2022/12/o-esg-pode-nos-salvar-do-apetite-das-grandes-empresas/

The dilution of responsibility: ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) and Due diligence as dubious tools

The fragility of voluntary certifications and market indices stems from a global architecture of impunity that favors profit at the expense of rights[213]. **ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)**, in and of itself, is not a "social justice" revolution, and the belief that it exhausts the corporate sector's contribution to sustainable development is a "dangerous illusion." The absence of a clear regulatory standard for the disclosure of results and the lack of comparable and reliable metrics make the verification of non-financial information disclosed by companies almost impossible.

At the international level, the need for accountability led to discussions on national **Due diligence** laws, seen as the new paradigm following the inadequacy of the **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights**. However, the European Union Directive on **Due diligence** itself is criticized for being an "insufficient pseudo-regulation" and a "legal sophism devoid of effective content."[214]

This directive is based on corporate self-regulation, allowing companies great freedom to define their prevention plans. Furthermore, accountability is only applied in the absence or failure of these plans, creating an obligation of means, not of results. This logic allows companies to use the fulfillment of **due diligence** measures as a checklist to exempt themselves from responsibility for violations[215].

For the Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity, which advocates for a Binding International Treaty[216], the persistence of voluntary regulatory frameworks such as **ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)** and the dilution of responsibility into mechanisms such as merely formal **due diligence** allow violating corporate activity to continue. The failure to establish binding norms that supersede trade and investment agreements and the insistence on "self-monitoring" models sustain a system in which the sacrifice of human rights is the cost absorbed by the market.

213 HOMA – INSTITUTO DE DIREITOS HUMANOS E EMPRESAS;FIGUEIREDO, Ana Laura. **Acúmulo da agenda de Direitos Humanos e Empresas no Brasil.** Homa – Instituto de Direitos Humanos e Empresas, fev 27, 2023. Available at: https://homacdhe.com/index.php/2023/02/27/acumulo-da-agenda-de-direitos-humanos-e-empresas-no-brasil/

214 HOMA – INSTITUTO DE DIREITOS HUMANOS E EMPRESAS; FIGUEIREDO, Ana Laura. **Na última quarta-feira foi realizada Audiência Pública sobre o PL 572/22 no âmbito da PFDC/MPF.** Homa – Instituto de Direitos Humanos e Empresas, ago.31, 2024. Available at: https://homacdhe.com/index.php/2024/08/31/na-ultima-quarta-feira-foi-realizada-audiencia-publica-sobre-o-pl-572-22-no-ambito-da-pfdc-mpf/

215 HOMA – INSTITUTO DE DIREITOS HUMANOS E EMPRESAS; FIGUEIREDO, Ana Laura. **Na última quarta-feira foi realizada Audiência Pública sobre o PL 572/22 no âmbito da PFDC/MPF.** Homa – Instituto de Direitos Humanos e Empresas, Aug 31 2024. Available at: https://homacdhe.com/index.php/2024/08/31/na-ultima-quarta-feira-foi-realizada-audiencia-publica-sobre-o-pl-572-22-no-ambito-da-pfdc-mpf/

216 HOMA – INSTITUTO DE DIREITOS HUMANOS E EMPRESAS. **Nem devida nem diligente: a diretriz da União Europeia, uma pseudo-regulamentação insuficiente.** Homa, April 25 2024. Available at: https://homacdhe.com/index.php/2024/04/25/nem-devida-nem-diligente-a-diretriz-da-uniao-europeia-uma-pseudo-regulamentacao-insuficiente

Find out more

Binding Global Treaty on Business and Human Rights

Discussions surrounding the **Binding Global Treaty on Business and Human Rights** have been ongoing since the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council approved Resolution 26/9 in 2014, which created an Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group (OEIGWG) on the subject with the specific mandate to elaborate a legally binding international instrument to regulate the activities of transnational corporations. The measure was initially led by Ecuador and South Africa, with strong support from other countries in the Global South[217,218]. With the support of civil society organizations, they criticize the voluntary nature of the **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** and primarily demand the primacy of human rights over trade agreements, in addition to the creation of accountability mechanisms and access to justice for those affected, with full reparation for social and environmental damages[219]. Since 2018[220], this group has met regularly in draft negotiation sessions in Geneva — the eleventh session took place in October 2025[221] — with States, civil society, and other stakeholders debating text drafts, accountability mechanisms, and ways to ensure access to justice for victims of human rights violations.

Even without explicitly naming **structural racism**, the drafts of the **Binding Global Treaty on Business and Human Rights** offer relevant elements for confronting **blackwashing**, above all by transforming human rights **due diligence** into a legal obligation rather than a mere voluntary practice. By requiring companies to identify, prevent, and mitigate adverse impacts throughout the entire value chain, the treaty shifts the focus from corporate reputation to the

217 COMISSÃO SUL (South Commission); NYERERE, Julius. **The Challenge to the South: The Report of the South Commission**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

218 INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES. **North-South: A Programme for Survival.** Cambridge: MIT Press, 1980.

219 ROLAND, Manoela; ANGELUCCI, Paola. **O Processo de Elaboração do Tratado de Direitos Humanos e Empresas: uma oportunidade de superação da perspectiva estadocêntrica.** Juiz de Fora: Homa/UFJF, 2017.

220 Saiba mais: NAÇÕES UNIDAS. **Empresas do mundo todo têm ignorado obrigações de direitos humanos, dizem relatores da ONU**. As Nações Unidas no Brasil, Oct 16 2018. Available at: https://brasil.un.org/pt-br/81327-empresas-do-mundo-todo-t%C3%AAm-ignorado-obriga%C3%A7%C3%B5es-de-direitos-humanos-dizem-relatores-da-onu

221 Saiba mais: FIDH – INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. **United Nations binding treaty on business and human rights: FIDH's position ahead of the 10th negotiation session.** Genève: FIDH, Dec. 12 2024. Available at: https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/business-human-rights-environment/business-and-human-rights/un-binding-treaty-business-human-rights-position-tenth-session-negotiations

concrete analysis of risks and damages. This reduces the space for anti-racist communication strategies disconnected from structural changes, since inclusive campaigns do not replace the obligation to address disproportionate impacts on racialized populations.

The drafts of the treaty also broaden responsibility to include global value chains, subsidiaries, and commercial relations. This extraterritorial strategy can contribute to weakening the logic of a "good local image" with invisibilized structural damages, given that many companies invest in anti-racist marketing while maintaining production chains marked by racialized exploitation, precarious work, or environmental impacts concentrated in Black territories.

Furthermore, strengthening access to justice and reparation for victims of corporate abuses can contribute to addressing asymmetries that historically hinder corporate accountability for discriminatory practices. By providing for mechanisms that reduce procedural barriers and expand accountability, including in transnational contexts, the treaty creates conditions for Black communities and other historically vulnerable groups to contest corporate practices that reproduce racial inequalities, even if these are cloaked by institutional discourses of diversity and inclusion. Another aspect is that the discussion of the treaty reinforces access to justice and reparation for victims of corporate abuses, with the reduction of procedural barriers and the inversion or flexibilization of the burden of proof in certain contexts. This can reduce the structural asymmetry between racialized communities and large corporations.

Finally, the drafts discuss clauses on the prevalence of human rights obligations over trade and investment agreements. This is politically relevant because **blackwashing** frequently operates in the symbolic realm, while strategic decisions remain exclusively driven by profit maximization.

However, the potential effectiveness of the treaty in confronting **blackwashing** will depend on the explicit incorporation of an anti-racist and intersectional perspective in its drafting and implementation. Without clear language on **structural racism** and racial discrimination, there is a risk that companies will formally comply with **due diligence** requirements without altering practices that reproduce inequalities. Therefore, the action of civil society will be fundamental to ensure that the treaty does not merely become a new reputational instrument, but an effective mechanism for accountability and the promotion of racial justice.

The solution to overcoming the deception of dubious certifications lies in the requirement of national and international regulatory frameworks that establish direct and compelling obligations for transnational companies, guaranteeing the primacy of human rights over the logic of profit. Only with the consolidation of compelling norms and the overcoming of the logic of voluntarism will it be possible to dismantle the architecture of impunity and the deception of **blackwashing**, ensuring that companies are held accountable for violations and that human dignity is not a mere cost to be absorbed by the market.

Between the seal and the court: the crisis of representativeness

Blackwashing becomes even more evident when we analyze the disparity of racial representation in upper corporate echelons. A study[222] conducted by Quero Bolsa, using data from the General Register of Employed and Unemployed Persons (Caged), indicated that only 3.68% of leadership positions in general are occupied by Black people in São Paulo, and these professionals earn, on average, 8% less than white people in equivalent roles. Black professionals remain the majority only in operational positions. Despite their diversity policies, companies do not publish the number of Black people in leadership or board positions. The "top has a color," and Black people are still a minority in decision-making centers.

With reports from Black professionals in the food sector, an article[223] resulting from a partnership between the journalism agencies Alma Preta and O Joio e o Trigo confirms the discrimination that hinders advancement. A former employee of Nestlé Cereals, despite being the most qualified, with a degree and an MBA, was prevented from being promoted to the board of directors because he was a Black man. Such offenses and implicit barriers are difficult to prove judicially, as they occur verbally, implicitly, or through "little jokes," requiring witness testimony that is frequently avoided for fear of retaliation and job loss.



Source: Alma Preta/O Joio e o Trigo

222 QUERO BOLSA. **Apenas 3,68% dos cargos de liderança são ocupados por negros em SP.** Quero Bolsa, São Paulo, 18 nov. 2020. Available at: https://querobolsa.com.br/revista/apenas-368-dos-cargos-de-lideranca-sao-ocupados-por-negros-em-sp.

223 ALMA PRETA; O JOIO E O TRIGO; MELO, Mylena. **O topo tem cor: negros ainda são minoria em cargos de liderança da indústria alimentícia.** O Joio e o Trigo, 13 out. 2020. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2020/10/o-topo-tem-cor-negros-ainda-sao-minoria-em-cargos-de-lideranca-da-industria-alimenticia

The crisis of representativeness and the racial and labor violations contrast with the **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** actions aimed at denormalizing the lethal image of their products. Thus, the search for certification or association with agreements like the UN Global Compact allows corporations that systematically violate human rights to be rewarded for complying with voluntary measures.

The regulatory framework as an antidote to impunity

The persistence of **blackwashing** and other forms of social whitewashing is a direct reflection of the inadequacy of the current regulatory framework, which is based on voluntary guidelines and corporate goodwill. This approach, inspired by the **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights**, has proven ineffective in providing answers to the complexity of violations committed by transnational companies.

In Brazil, Decree No. 9,571/2018, which instituted the National Guidelines on Business and Human Rights, was harshly criticized[224] by civil society for being a "top-down" determination without democratic consultation, and for reproducing the voluntarist logic, rewarding companies with seals and moral gratifications for doing what should be mandatory.

The regulation was fully revoked by Decree No. 11,772/2023, issued in November 2023, which established the Interministerial Working Group for the elaboration of a proposal for the National Policy on Human Rights and Business. The group held, in 2024, the first hearing (and the only one up to the closing of this publication) with experts, companies, and civil society in 2024.

224 O JOIO E O TRIGO; MELITO, Leandro. **Por que precisamos discutir uma legislação sobre direitos humanos para empresas nesta eleição?** O Joio e O Trigo, 14 set. 2022. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2022/09/por-que-precisamos-discutir-uma-legislacao-sobre-direitos-humanos-para-empresas-nesta-eleicao/

4. Support and partnership with co-opted NGOs

In recent years, racial equity has strategically become part of the discourse of Brazilian corporations, ceasing to be an exclusive field of social demands to become a reputational asset in institutional marketing. Therefore, their initiatives should not be interpreted merely as ethical maturation, but analyzed in light of the political economy of reputation and critical theories on power, legitimacy, and institutional capture.

Sustainability reports and social impact campaigns aggregate vocabularies such as "inclusion," "diversity," and "commitment to Black communities," but this discursive proliferation does not always translate into structural changes in the power relations that produce and reproduce racial inequalities.

The phenomenon also operates through the symbolic association between companies and organizations legitimized by the anti-racist struggle. By financing training projects, cultural events, or entrepreneurship grants, corporate actors assume voluntary commitments that project social responsibility, while their business models remain structurally untouched.

This logic approaches what a series in the scientific journal *The Lancet* termed "**commercial determinants of health**," which are strategies through which corporations seek to mitigate criticism of the damages associated with their core activities through social responsibility actions. It is a sophisticated form of legitimacy management. The company does not deny the problem; it presents itself as part of the solution[225].

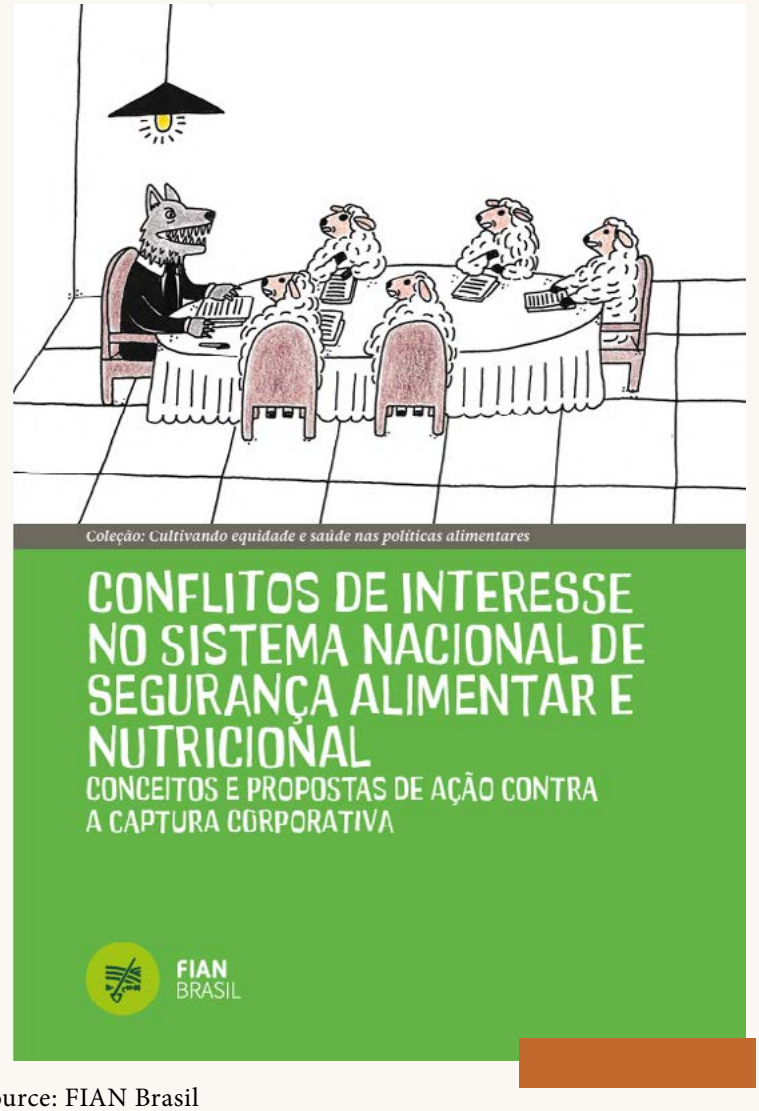
In Brazil, FIAN Brasil coined, in 2024, the expression "corporate charity"[226] to describe corporate protagonism in tackling structural inequalities that their own economic dynamics help to produce. As an analytical category, the concept points to the displacement of responsibility from the political-structural field to the voluntary-corporate terrain.

Problems such as hunger, racial inequality, and **precarious work** cease to be treated as social justice issues and begin to be framed as challenges of efficient resource management. In this movement, corporate philanthropy ceases to operate as a gesture of solidarity and begins to function as a technology of power, producing the appearance of progress while postponing structural transformations.

225 GILMORE, Anna B.; FABBRI, Alice; BAUM, Fran; BERTSCHER, Adam; BONDY, Krista; CHANG, Ha-Joon; et al. **Defining and conceptualising the commercial determinants of health**. The Lancet, v. 401, n. 10383, p. 1194-1213, Apr 8. 2023. DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(23)00013-2. Available at: https://www.thelancet.com/pb-assets/Lancet/series/commercial-determinants-health/defining-conceptualising_portuguese-1698064128243.pdf

226 MOURA, Beatriz Gouveia; Santarelli, Mariana. **Conflitos de interesse no Sistema Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional: conceitos e propostas de ação contra a captura corporativa.** Brasília, DF: FIAN Brasil, 2024. Available at: https://fianbrasil.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Caderno_FIAN_Digitial_v3.pdf.

The FIAN Brasil Notebook points out that punctual interventions, disconnected from public commitment in terms of transparency, binding targets, and accountability for practices that generate inequalities, have the potential to dilute collective struggles into performative corporate responsibility programs. The so-called corporate charity offers symbolic cover to the corporate actor, without confronting the power relations that structure the problem it claims to combat.



Acesse o material

Source: FIAN Brasil

It is common for partnerships between companies and organizations that defend the rights of the Black population, or that promote Black entrepreneurship and careers, to occur on an ad hoc basis. In these cases, commercial actors use these pro-inclusion and pro-diversity actions to expose their products. The question is not only how much a company invests in social impact programs, but how these investments articulate with its **supply chain**, its organizational culture, its power mechanisms, and its responsibility for the social and environmental damages it originates or reproduces.

Find out more

Conflict of interest

It occurs when secondary (and non-public) interests, generally of an economic or institutional nature, have the potential to influence decisions that should be guided by the public interest. In the area of public health, this concept is widely discussed in the literature on commercial determinants of health, which demonstrates how companies producing harmful goods may seek to interfere in policymaking, in the production of scientific evidence, and in the actions of civil society organizations. In these situations, the problem is not limited to individual conduct, but involves power structures that create asymmetries between the private sector and the collective interest. Thus, conflict of interest represents a risk to the integrity of public policies and the protection of the right to health, demanding transparency, clear governance rules, and adequate prevention and management mechanisms[227,228,229,230].

The beer cycle: training at festivals and brand amplification

One of the emblematic cases is the partnership between the multinational Heineken and the Central Única das Favelas (CUFA) in the Cri.Ativos da Favela project[231]. The initiative promises audiovisual and artificial intelligence training for youth from vulnerable territories. At first glance, this is a relevant social investment. The analysis, however, requires observing the complete circuit of the operation. The project emerged in 2023, in São Paulo, financed by the commercialization of Heineken 0.0 during The Town festival. In 2024, it was expanded to Rio de Janeiro, linked to Rock in Rio, with the promise of doubling the number of youths served. At first glance, it is a social investment; upon closer analysis, it reveals itself as an example of how the corporate sector converts

227 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE; IDEC; CENTRO INTERNACIONAL DE PESQUISA PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO. **Conflito de interesses em políticas públicas** [folder eletrônico]. São Paulo, SP: ACT Promoção da Saúde, 2023. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/uploads/arquivos/FOLDER-A5_CONFLITO-DE-INTERESSES-EM-POLITICAS-PUBLICAS_REDUZIDO_PAGS-SEP-%281%29.pdf

228 FREUDENBERG, Nicholas. **Lethal but legal: corporations, consumption, and protecting public health.** New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

229 KICKBUSCH, Ilona; ALLEN, Luke; FRANZ, Christian. **The commercial determinants of health.** The Lancet Global Health, v. 4, n. 12, p. e895–e896, 2016. Available at: https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(16)30217-0/fulltext

230 OBSERVA COI — Observatório de Conflitos de Interesse. **Conflitos de interesse em políticas públicas e setor privado.** Observa COI, [s.l.], [s.d.]. Available at: https://observacoi.org.br/conflitos-de-interesse/

231 CENTRAL ÚNICA DAS FAVELAS (CUFA). **Criativos da Favela.** Available at: https://cufa.org.br/project/criativos-da-favela

consumption into a social impact narrative. Executives celebrated the initiative as an example of the simultaneous generation of economic and social value.



Source: CUFA

The company emphasizes that it provides a "promising future" and socio-emotional development through training pathways. However, the financing is intrinsically tied to the sale of a product whose massive consumption is widely debated from a public health perspective. The promotional activation at Rock in Rio 2024 included digital influencers encouraging the purchase of the 0.0 version as a way to support the training of 120 youths. The symbolic logic is potent: consume to include. The purchase becomes an act of social responsibility. The connection between the consumption of a product and the promise of inclusion reproduces the logic of a "business solution for social problems," something that the FIAN Notebook identifies as a characteristic of responses that naturalize individualized social responsibility, to the detriment of the structural accountability of economic actors. In this case, of a product whose social impact is ambiguous, both from the point of view of public health and the production dynamics that sustain the regime of **precarious work**. Furthermore, such programs tend to be episodic, dependent on events, sponsorships, and campaigns. There are no structural guarantees of permanent labor insertion or systemic transformation in the company's own **production chains**. The risk is that the social impact operates as a seasonal appendage to marketing strategies.

Doritos, Black Voices and the vacuum of internal transparency

Another case is that of Pepsico, through the Doritos brand, which is another large corporation that uses extensive partnerships with civil society to promote an image of support for racial equity through entrepreneurship fairs, cultural events, and career advancement programs for Black people. The brand's actions manifest both in local actions and global initiatives. In 2023, in Brazil, Doritos supported the resumption of the Arraiá do Alemão in 2023, an event that had not been held for eight years. The event is organized by Voz das Comunidades, an NGO with 20 years of work in social impact and community journalism in a *favela* in the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro. Doritos also brought community influencers to showcase the authentic *arraiá*, using the hashtag #DoritosnoArraiádoAlemão. This event generated a direct socio-economic impact of more than R$ 450,000 on the local economy, benefiting motorcycle taxi drivers and residents with typical food stalls. The partnership was praised for valuing the community and exalting the culture.



Source: Voz das Comunidades

In addition to one-off events, Doritos has partnered with more structural organizations. The brand has partnerships with the PretaHub platform, an accelerator for young, female, Black, indigenous, and LGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs. PretaHub is responsible for the Feira Preta Festival, the largest Black culture festival in Latin America, which since 2002 seeks to include these groups in a fairer and more balanced ecosystem in terms of opportunities and financial results, ranging from the creation to the distribution of products and services.



Source: Marcas Mais

In August 2024, Doritos, together with the Feira Preta Institute and the PepsiCo Foundation, launched the Impacto Black public notice, to finance 10 non-profit organizations or social impact projects led by Black people throughout Brazil, featuring Preto Zezé as the poster boy.



Source: Portal Global ESG

Internationally, the PepsiCo Foundation and Doritos promote SOLID BLACK®, an ongoing initiative that provides resources and a platform for Black Changemakers. In 2023, 16 leaders of non-profit organizations were selected for the program, with a focus on areas such as education, youth development, and food security. Each participant received a $50,000 grant, as well as leadership development training from the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University and coaching. The goal is to bridge the financial gap, since organizations led by Black people historically generate 24% less revenue than those led by whites. Among the beneficiaries were Jamila Trimuel, founder of Ladies of Virtue Chicago, and Alvin Irby, founder of Barbershop Books. Although these initiatives represent capital injections and concrete opportunities for racialized leaderships, a critical reading warns that such actions frequently pacify deep political disputes by associating with civil society organizations that make up the political struggle. By fragmenting collective agendas into micro-interventionist offerings, these corporations can compromise the autonomy of the entities and restrict the social crisis to windows of action strictly compatible with market strategy. Thus, private social investment begins to operate as a damage containment mechanism, which promotes punctual inclusions without, however, destabilizing the macroeconomic asymmetries that sustain capital itself.

The vacuum of transparency and internal asymmetry

Despite the significant volume of support and investment in Black communities and *favelas*, the described actions reflect the ambiguity of reputation management. Doritos, while promoting a positive image through external partnerships and designating a product from its portfolio to represent a cause, does not disclose transparent information about the racial profile of its workforce, especially in leadership positions. This lack of internal transparency, added to the punctual and temporary nature of some opportunities, reinforces the critique of "corporate charity." Corporations manage to lend credibility to their efforts in racial equity through strategic association with high social impact NGOs, such as CUFA or Voz das Comunidades. However, by using the racial agenda as a marketing strategy to position themselves as fundamental in solving structural problems, without necessarily promoting deep transformations in their own power structures or ensuring the stability of the created opportunities, the risk that **blackwashing** prevails over systemic change remains high. This lack of institutional openness is a central component of the critique of the FIAN Notebook, which highlights the need for public, independent, and reliable data on companies so that the real effectiveness of **affirmative action** policies can be evaluated. Without this, the so-called corporate charity offers symbolic cover to the corporate actor without confronting the power relations that structure the problem it claims to combat.

5. Inefficient voluntary programs

The adherence of large Brazilian corporations to voluntary programs, codes, and commitments to promote racial equity and socio-environmental responsibility has proven, in many cases, to be a performance of social responsibility rather than an effective effort toward structural transformation.

While giants of the meat industry, such as JBS and Marfrig, invest in rhetoric of ethical commitment, social responsibility, and equity, the reality in their production chains is marked by severe socio-environmental violations, such as terrible working conditions, increased poverty in the cities where they operate, and a deepening of **structural racism** — especially in its environmental expression — in Brazil.

Marfrig, for example, associates diversity and inclusion with its **ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)** commitments and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, presenting racial equity as part of its "**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**". The company mentioned isolated initiatives, such as the distribution of over 300 English course scholarships for Black employees and the participation of three employees in the Pro-líder Black Leadership Development Program, in addition to the formation of an internal discussion group on diversity and racial literacy sessions for strategic areas.

Based on the analysis of Marfrig's sustainability reports from 2022[232, 2023][233], and 2024234, it is possible to observe that the company treats racial and equity issues in a predominantly institutional and discursive manner. The company lacks transparency and self-criticism, failing to offer concrete data on Black representativeness in leadership positions, hiring goals, or measurable results.

JBS, in turn, cites that 49% of its employees in Brazil self-identify as Black. However, the approach to the racial issue in its 2022[235] and 2023[236] Sustainability Reports is superficial and generic, diluted within the broad discourse of **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies**. The company mentions the

232 MARFRIG GLOBAL FOODS S.A. **Relatório de Sustentabilidade 2022** [documento eletrônico]. São Paulo, SP: Marfrig Global Foods S.A., 2022. Available at: https://www.marfrig.com.br/pt/Lists/CentralConteudo/Attachments/5/Informe%20de%20Progresso%20em%20Sustentabilidade%202022.pdf.

233 MARFRIG GLOBAL FOODS S.A. **Relatório de Sustentabilidade 2023** [documento eletrônico]. São Paulo, SP: Marfrig Global Foods S.A., 2023. Available at: https://marfrig.com.br/pt/Lists/CentralConteudo/Attachments/3/Relatório%20de%20Sustentabilidade%202023%20(versão%20resumida).pdf

234 MARFRIG GLOBAL FOODS S.A**. Relatório Integrado 2024** [documento eletrônico]. São Paulo, SP: Marfrig Global Foods S.A., 2025. Available at: https://www.marfrig.com.br/pt/Lists/CentralConteudo/Attachments/3/Relatório%20Integrado%202024.pdf

235 JBS S.A**. Relatório de Sustentabilidade 2022** [documento eletrônico]. São Paulo, SP: JBS S.A., 2023. Available at: https://www.jbs.com.br/storage/2023/10/JBS-2022-sumario-executivo_BR_PT-Updated-2.pdf

236 JBS S.A. **Relatório de Sustentabilidade 2023** [documento eletrônico]. São Paulo, SP: JBS S.A., 2024. Available at: https://jbsesg.com/pt/relatorios/nossos-relatorios/

existence of a DEI Committee, but does not present specific policies or goals or results for Black representativeness in leadership positions.

This superficiality suggests that the topic is configured more as part of an image strategy than an internal structural transformation, seeking only to reinforce the brand's moral capital. Although it mentions isolated initiatives, such as English course scholarships and the participation of Black employees in leadership development programs, this rhetoric is interpreted as a symbolic reputation strategy, used to reinforce the brand's moral capital without generating concrete impacts on equity.

Both Marfrig and JBS have joined the Movement for Racial Equity (MOVER), a non-profit association that brings together over 50 large corporations in Brazil with the goal of raising awareness and fostering the career and business development of Black people, but the analysis of these companies' sustainability reports indicates that their voluntary programs have weak enforcement mechanisms, and the treatment given to racial and equity issues is predominantly institutional and discursive.

Labor exploitation and wage disparity

The contradiction between the corporate image and internal social impacts is flagrant regarding working conditions and wage disparity. While JBS grows exponentially (over 400% since the 1960s) and today represents more than 2% of the Brazilian GDP, the company currently has over 100,000 workers, who earn an average of R$ 1,700 per month. The data comes from research published by the Tiny Beam Fund in 2024[237].

In contrast, nine members of the JBS board receive more than R$ 60,000 per month, and five top executives bill the equivalent of over R$ 2 million per month. In the last decade, the salary of JBS administrators increased by 2000%, while the company's wage policy limited workers' raises to 10%. The survey also highlights the impact on social inequalities in the locations where the company operates. In the period from 2013 to 2023, poverty and hunger indicators increased in 11 of the 12 major Brazilian cities where JBS has operations. In these municipalities, enrollment in social assistance programs increased.

237 TINY BEAM FUND; PINA, RAISA. **Alimentando a desigualdade: os cursos ocultos do monópolio industrial da carn**e. TINY BEAM FUND, April 2024. Available at: https://apublica.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Estudo_Municipios-em-que-JBS-se-instalou-tiveram-aumento-da-pobreza-aponta-pesquisa.pdf.



Acesse o material

Source: Tiny Beam Fund

The contradiction between the corporate image and internal social impacts is glaring concerning working conditions. In JBS and Brasil Foods units, the Justice system had to intervene to force the granting of breaks to employees, seeking to guarantee the body's recovery and preserve the health of employees exposed to freezing environments (below 15ºC), repetitive movements, and exhausting shifts[238].

Produced by Repórter Brasil in 2012, the *Moendo Gente* (Grinding People)[239] investigation pointed out a series of health and safety problems for employees of the three largest companies in the meatpacking industry, one of the main sectors of national agribusiness: JBS, Marfrig, and Brasil Foods. In that year, the sector employed over 750,000 people and, in 2011, exported the equivalent of US$ 15.64 billion in meats.

238 G1. **JBS fecha acordo de R$ 5 milhões após 230 processos por falhas em saúde e segurança do trabalho em MT**. G1, Sept 25 2025. Available at: https://g1.globo.com/mt/mato-grosso/noticia/2025/09/25/jbs-fecha-acordo-de-r-5-milhoes-apos-230-processos-por-falhas-em-saude-e-seguranca-do-trabalho-em-mt.ghtml.

239 REPÓRTER BRASIL. **"Moendo Gente" mostra as condições de trabalho nos frigoríficos do Brasil.** Repórter Brasil, Sept 10 2012. Available at: https://reporterbrasil.org.br/2012/09/quot-moendo-gente-quot-mostra-as-condicoes-de-trabalho-nos-frigorificos-do-brasil.

MOENDO GENTE

"Moendo Gente" mostra as condições de trabalho nos frigoríficos do Brasil

Investigação realizada pela Repórter Brasil aponta os problemas à saúde e segurança dos empregados das principais indústrias de carnes do país

REPÓRTER BRASIL

10/09/2012 10:57

A rotina dos trabalhadores da indústria de abate de aves, suínos e bovinos envolve inúmeros riscos devido ao manuseio de instrumentos cortantes, a pressão por altíssima produtividade e, não raro, jornadas exaustivas em ambientes frios e insalubres.

Source: Repórter Brasil

Between 1995 and 2024, 17.3 thousand workers were subjected to conditions analogous to slavery in activities within the livestock sector, according to data from the MTE (Ministry of Labor and Employment) systematized by Repórter Brasil. Across the entire historical series, livestock farming accounted for 26% of the number of slave labor victims in Brazil.

According to data published by the Annual Social Information Report of the Ministry of Labor and Employment, almost 140,000 people worked in beef slaughterhouses in Brazil in 2022. In 2019, employees of the meat industry in Brazil suffered four times more occupational accidents and had ten times more occupational diseases than the average Brazilian worker.

The failure of self-regulation and environmental racism in the production chain

In the rural context[240], the historical segregated environment of the Black population is exacerbated by the results of measures such as the 1850 Land Law and the policy of attracting European immigrants, which imposed obstacles for the Black population to access land and the means to enjoy it, consolidating land concentration in the hands of white owners[241]. Land concentration characterizes the dynamics of meat production in Brazil.

As a result, the Black population continues, from the following decades to the present day, to be the majority among workers in **precarious work**[242,243,244], but also the majority in urban areas with less access to infrastructure[245] (also an effect of the rural exodus), such as *favelas*[246], and in the fields.

On large rural properties, with an area equivalent to about 10,000 football fields, 79.1% of the owners are white, while only 17.4% are mixed-race/brown and 1.6% are Black, points out the 2017 Agricultural Census by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)[247]. Also, 69.9% of salaried rural workers in Brazil are Black, according to the 2021 Continuous National Household Sample Survey by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (PNADC/IBGE 2021).

240 GIRARDI, Eduardo Paulon. **A indissociabilidade entre a questão agrária e a questão racial no Brasil: análise da situação do negro no campo a partir dos dados do Censo Agropecuário 2017**. São Paulo, SP: Cultura Acadêmica, 2022. 134 p. ISBN 978-65-59542-29-1. Available at: https://www.culturaacademica.com.br/catalogo/a-indissociabilidade-entre-a-questao-agraria-e-a-questao-racial-no-brasil/

241 G1. **Racismo fundiário: negros são maioria no campo, mas têm menos terras do que brancos**. G1, nov 20 2022. Available at: https://g1.globo.com/economia/agronegocios/noticia/2022/11/20/racismo-fundiario-negros-sao-maioria-no-campo-mas-tem-menos-terras-do-que-brancos.ghtml

242 G1. **Trabalhadores pretos ganham 40,2% menos do que brancos por hora trabalhada.** G1, Nov 15 2022. Available at: https://g1.globo.com/economia/noticia/2022/11/15/trabalhadores-pretos-ganham-402percent-menos-do-que-brancos-por-hora-trabalhada.ghtml

243 G1. **Pessoas negras são mais afetadas por precariedade ocupacional durante grandes crises, diz estudo da Unicamp**. G1, Apr 23 2023. Available at: https://g1.globo.com/sp/campinas-regiao/noticia/2023/04/23/pessoas-negras-sao-mais-afetadas-por-precariedade-ocupacional-durante-grandes-crises-diz-estudo-da-unicamp.ghtml

244 AGÊNCIA BRASIL. **Negros são maioria entre desocupados e trabalhadores informais no país**. Agência Brasil, Nov 13. 2019. Available at: https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/economia/noticia/2019-11/negros-sao-maioria-entre-desocupados-e-trabalhadores-informais-no-pais.

245 AGÊNCIA BRASIL. **Pretos e pardos têm menos acesso à infraestrutura urbana que brancos.** Agência Brasil, Apr 17 2025. Available at: https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/direitos-humanos/noticia/2025-04/pretos-e-pardos-tem-menos-acesso-infraestrutura-urbana-que-brancos.

246 O GLOBO. **Pretos e pardos representam 72,9% dos moradores de favelas, indica Censo; mulheres também são maioria.** O Globo, Nov 8 2024. Available at: https://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/noticia/2024/11/08/pretos-e-pardos-representam-729percent-dos-moradores-de-favelas-indica-censo-mulheres-tambem-sao-maioria.ghtml

247 G1. **Racismo fundiário: negros são maioria no campo, mas têm menos terras do que brancos**. G1, Nov 20 2022. Available at: https://g1.globo.com/economia/agronegocios/noticia/2022/11/20/racismo-fundiario-negros-sao-maioria-no-campo-mas-tem-menos-terras-do-que-brancos.ghtm.

Meanwhile, research data from Oxfam Brasil[248] show that 69.6% of rural workers are Black, and 58.3% of these occupations are informal, indicating a strong presence of Black men and women at the base of agricultural work without formal protection. The research points out that:

- 46.1% of the employed Black population in Brazil is in informality;
- Black men earn 59.8% less than non-Black men;
- Black women earn 61.6% less than non-Black women;
- 69.6% of rural workers are Black;
- 58.3% of rural workers are in informality;
- 12.1% of formalized vacancies in the field are occupied by women.

Further drawing the quantitative scenario of the **racial division of labor** in the field, another survey[249] by the Heinrich Böll Foundation highlights that:

- Men control 87% of rural properties in Brazil;
- White people occupy 59% of the areas registered by the IBGE, while Black people occupy 28%;
- Only 26% of the owners of establishments with more than 500 hectares are Black or mixed-race;
- 88% of soy producers are white.

248 OXFAM BRASIL. **Mulheres e negros são maioria no trabalho informal no campo.** São Paulo: Oxfam Brasil, May 21 2024. Available at: https://www.oxfam.org.br/mulheres-e-negros-sao-maioria-no-trabalho-informal-no-campo/.

249 FURTADO, Fabrina Pontes; KATO, Karina Yoshie Martins; BARROS JUNIOR, Orlando Aleixo de. **Raça, gênero e classe: as interseccionalidades da estrutura fundiária brasileira** [livro eletrônico]. Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Fundação Heinrich Böll, 2022. 54 p. ISBN 978-65-87665-09-2. Available at: https://br.boell.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/boll_desigualdade_fundiaria_final.pdf

The study "Slave, no way! – Education for the prevention of slave labor"[250], by the organization Repórter Brasil, points out that more than 60% of the workers rescued from contemporary slave labor between 2003 and 2021 were Black.



Acesse o material

Source: Repórter Brasil

It is worth reinforcing that the meat industry and industrial livestock farming are largely responsible for phenomena such as negative environmental impacts, deforestation, and contamination[251]. This sector is one of the main vectors of socio-environmental violations in the country and figures at the center of the multiple crises in

250 REPÓRTER BRASIL. **Escravo, nem pensar!: uma abordagem sobre o trabalho escravo contemporâneo na sala de aula e na comunidade.** São Paulo: Repórter Brasil, 2022. Available at: https://reporterbrasil.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/LIVRO-ESCRAVO-NEM-PENSAR-2022-WEB.pdf.

251 MERCY FOR ANIMALS BRASIL. **Racismo ambiental: como a indústria da carne prejudica comunidades.** [S. l.]: Mercy For Animals, Sept 20 2021. Available at: https://mercyforanimals.org.br/blog/racismo-ambiental-como-a-industria-da-carne-prejudica-comunidades/

agro-industrial food systems[252]. On the other side, more impoverished and vulnerable populations, mostly Black populations, *quilombolas*, riverside dwellers, and indigenous peoples, are disproportionately affected by these effects.

The expansion of livestock farming is one of the main causes of deforestation, primarily in the Amazon and the Cerrado. This advance often occurs through land grabbing and the expulsion of indigenous peoples and traditional and/or rural communities from their territories, who suffer from violence and the loss of their livelihoods, perpetuating social exclusion and inequality, and preventing low-income communities, predominantly Black and indigenous[253,254], from having access to productive lands and dignified housing[255].


REPÓRTER BRASIL 25 ANOS

JORNALISMO | PESQUISA | EDUCAÇÃO E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

FRIGORÍFICOS

MPF decide processar frigoríficos que se beneficiam de escravidão e desmatamento

Autoridades tentaram negociar ajustamento de conduta antes de decidir acionar 26 empresas na Justiça. No total, indenização por danos ambientais pode chegar a mais de R$550 milhões

POR STEFANO WROBLESKI

18/04/2013 11:19

252 CASTRO, Franciléia Paula de. **Racismo e sistemas agroalimentares.** Salvador: CESE; São Paulo: Instituto Ibirapitanga, Dec 2022. Available at: https://fase.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Racismo-e-Sistemas-alimentares-Fran-Paula-tema1.pdf

253 REPÓRTER BRASIL; WROBLESKI, Stefano. **MPF decide processar frigoríficos que se beneficiam de escravidão e desmatamento.** Repórter Brasil, Apr 18 2013. Available at: https://reporterbrasil.org.br/2013/04/frigorificos-que-se-beneficiam-de-escravidao-e-desmatamento-sao-processados/

254 REPÓRTER BRASIL; HARARI, Isabel. **Inauguração de maior frigorífico do Nordeste intensifica conflitos por terra em Pernambuco.** Repórter Brasil, Sept 19 2022. Available at: https://reporterbrasil.org.br/2022/09/inauguracao-de-maior-frigorifico-do-nordeste-intensifica-conflitos-por-terra-em-pernambuco/

255 LEROY, J.P., and MEIRELES, J. **Povos Indígenas e Comunidades Tradicionais: os visados territórios dos invisíveis**. In: PORTO, M.F., PACHECO, T., and LEROY, J.P., comps. Injustiça ambiental e saúde no Brasil: o Mapa de Conflitos [online]. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FIOCRUZ, 2013.

REPÓRTER BRASIL 25 ANOS
JORNALISMO | PESQUISA | EDUCAÇÃO E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

Inauguração de maior frigorífico do Nordeste intensifica conflitos por terra em Pernambuco

Nova fábrica da Masterboi impulsiona pecuária no estado, mas aumenta violência em regiões de antigas usinas de cana; 1.500 famílias vivem sob tensão, com ameaças de morte, invasões, risco de despejo e patrulha feita por homens armados e drones

ISABEL HARARI

Source: Repórter Brasil

Furthermore, the excessive use of pesticides and the lack of treatment for livestock waste contaminate soils and waters, directly affecting the health of the populations living around these areas. This movement drives a migratory flow from the countryside to urban peripheries in risk zones within large industrialized centers[256], with low rates of basic sanitation and infrastructure, and where the concentration of industries and livestock activities (such as meatpacking plants) increases the local population's exposure to diseases.

Environmental racism related to livestock farming and the meat industry also manifests itself in the intentional use of pesticides as a "chemical weapon" in land conflicts by large farmers (often ranchers or grain producers for animal feed) to expel low-income rural communities, which are mostly Black and indigenous. Furthermore, the contamination of soil and water by the excessive use of pesticides and livestock waste directly affects the health of surrounding populations, who have no other choice of housing.[257]

256 PACHECO, T., and FAUSTINO, C. **A Iniludível e Desumana Prevalência do Racismo Ambiental nos Conflitos do Mapa**. In: PORTO, M.F., PACHECO, T., and LEROY, J.P., comps. Injustiça ambiental e saúde no Brasil: o Mapa de Conflitos [online]. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FIOCRUZ, 2013, pp. 73-114. Available at: https://books.scielo.org/id/468vp/pdf/porto-9788575415764-04.pdf

257 CASTRO, Franciléia Paula de. **Racismo e sistemas agroalimentares.** Salvador: CESE; São Paulo: Instituto Ibirapitanga, Dec. 2022. Available at: https://fase.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Racismo-e-Sistemas-alimentares-Fran-Paula-tema1.pdf

In addition, proprietary whiteness is central to this system[258]. A study reveals that 70% of the Brazilian cattle herd (the second largest in the world) belongs to white people. Tax exemption for profits and dividends, for example, is seen as an expression of white privilege, concentrating the wealth generated by a sector that relies on the exploitation of Black workers and expropriated lands[259,260].

The marks of deforestation261, slave-like labor[262], and land conflicts in the meat **production chain** evidence the fragility of voluntary sustainability programs. As a result, the intensive production model drives climate change and **environmental racism**, interconnected phenomena that fall disproportionately on indigenous peoples, *quilombola* communities, and rural Black populations.

JBS, the world's largest animal protein processor, accumulates records of human rights violations in its history. Recently, an investigation by Repórter Brasil[263] revealed that ranchers caught using slave labor were part of the supplier networks of large meatpackers. The study also identified cases of invasion of indigenous lands and illegal deforestation among producers who directly or indirectly supplied companies like JBS.

On the "Dirty List" of Slave Labor, released by the Ministry of Labor in April 2025, of the 159 new companies included, 20 were from the cattle raising sector, including MRJ Prestadora de Serviços, contracted by JBS Aves and the target of a federal operation that rescued ten workers in degrading conditions in Rio Grande do Sul[264]. This case generated a crisis in the Ministry of Labor and Employment due to the attempt by Minister Luiz Marinho to "call up" (avocate) the administrative process, which, according

258 OBSERVATÓRIO DA BRANQUITUDE. **Branquitude e agropecuária: desafios para a justiça climática**. [S. l.]: Observatório da Branquitude, Sept. 2025. Available at: https://observatoriobranquitude.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/OdB_RELATORIO_Branquitude-e-agropecuaria_desafios-para-a-justica-climatica.pdf.

259 GOMES, J.P.F.; do RADA, R.P.;CARDOMING, M.R., NASSIF-PIRES,L. **Privilégio branco na estrutura tributária brasileira: uma análise interseccional de impostos diretos e transferências**. Nota de Política Econômica nº 027. Made - Centro de pesquisa em macroeconomia das desigualdades (FEA/USP). Universidade de São Paulo, 22 nov. 2022. Available at https://madeusp.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/npe_27_made-3.pdf

260 CARVALHO, Laura; LEITE, Fabrício; SERRA, Gabriel. **As desigualdades de gênero e raça no mercado de trabalho brasileiro.** São Paulo: MADE/USP, Nov 2022. (Nota de Política Econômica, n. 27). Disponível em: https://madeusp.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/npe_27_made-3.pdf.

261 DEUTSCHE WELLE BRASIL; PONTES, Nádia. **Cadeia da carne ainda tem gargalos ambientais no país.** DW BRASIL, 6 dez. 2024.h Available at: ttps://www.dw.com/pt-br/cadeia-da-carne-ainda-tem-gargalos-ambientais-no-pa%C3%ADs/a-70981169

262 REPÓRTER BRASIL. **Trabalho escravo na indústria da carne**. São Paulo: Repórter Brasil, dez. 2020. (Monitor, n. 8). Available at: https://reporterbrasil.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Monitor-8_Trabalho-escravo-na-industria-da-carne.pdf.

263 SANTANA, Bianca; CAMPOS, André. **Novos casos de trabalho escravo nos maiores frigoríficos do país**. São Paulo: Repórter Brasil, Oct 9 2025. Available at: https://reporterbrasil.org.br/2025/10/novos-casos-trabalho-escravo-maiores-frigorificos-pais/

264 G1. **Lista suja do trabalho escravo é atualizada; veja os novos nomes.** Rio de Janeiro: G1, Apr 9 2025. Available at: https://g1.globo.com/trabalho-e-carreira/noticia/2025/04/09/lista-suja-do-trabalho-escravo-e-atualizada-veja-os-novos-nomes.ghtml

to critics[265], could weaken the policy to combat slave labor in the country and set a precedent for the selective impunity of large companies.

The history of JBS reveals a pattern of recidivism. In 2013, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (MPF) sued meatpackers, including JBS and Marfrig, for benefiting from the purchase of cattle raised on farms involved in deforestation, slave labor, and violations of indigenous rights[266]. Even after assuming non-deforestation commitments with the MPF and participating in international pacts, such as the joint declaration at COP 26, the company continued to fail to fulfill these obligations[267].

Global Witness268 points out that JBS is the main buyer of cattle raised in the Amazon, where 70% of the deforested area is currently occupied by livestock farming. The company is linked to indirect suppliers operating illegally on lands belonging to small farmers and indigenous peoples, devastating territories and threatening the livelihoods of legitimate residents[269]. A 2025 report by the Human Rights Watch organization revealed that illegal farms within the territories of small farmers and indigenous peoples in Pará sold cattle to direct suppliers of JBS[270].

In addition to land irregularities, the company accumulates a history of direct and indirect environmental damages. JBS Confinamento LTDA signed a Conduct Adjustment Agreement (TAC) with the Public Prosecutor's Office of Mato Grosso after being fined for polluting watercourses and operating without an environmental license in Lucas do Rio Verde (MT)[271]. In previous years, the company was investigated for leaks and irregular dumping in rivers in Goiás

265 AGÊNCIA PÚBLICA. **Caso JBS-Aves: auditores acionam STF contra lei que permitiu avocação de Luiz Marinho.** São Paulo: Agência Pública, Oct 1st 2025. Available at: https://apublica.org/nota/caso-jbs-aves-auditores-acionam-stf-contra-lei-que-permitiu-avocacao-de-luiz-marinho/.

266 REPÓRTER BRASIL. **Frigoríficos que se beneficiam de escravidão e desmatamento são processados.** São Paulo: Repórter Brasil, Apr 18 2013. Available at: https://reporterbrasil.org.br/2013/04/frigorificos-que-se-beneficiam-de-escravidao-e-desmatamento-sao-processados/.

267 BRASIL DE FATO. SUDANO, Murilo. **Desmatamento ilegal conecta grileiros, frigoríficos, montadoras de carros e bancos estrangeiros**. São Paulo: Brasil de Fato, July 15 2022. Available at: https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2022/07/15/desmatamento-ilegal-conecta-grileiros-frigorificos-montadoras-de-carros-e-bancos-estrangeiros/

268 GLOBAL WITNESS; MOYE, CHRIS. **Vacas à venda: o descaso dos frigoríficos com o desmatamento no Pará**. [S. l.]: Global Witness, June 23 2022 . Available at: https://globalwitness.org/pt/campaigns/forests/vacas-a-venda/

269 HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH. **"O gado está comendo a floresta": a pecuária e o desmatamento na Amazônia brasileira.** [S. l.]: Human Rights Watch, Oct 15 2025. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/pt/report/2025/10/15/392217

270 HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH. **"O gado está comendo a floresta": a pecuária e o desmatamento na Amazônia brasileira.** [S. l.]: Human Rights Watch, Oct 15. 2025. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/pt/report/2025/10/15/392217

271 RD NEWS. **JBS firma TAC e deve pagar R$ 200 mil por poluição ambiental em Lucas.** Cuiabá: RD News, Feb 25 2025. Available at: https://www.rdnews.com.br/judiciario/jbs-firma-tac-e-deve-pagar-r-200-mil-por-poluicao-ambiental-em-lucas/207502.

and Mato Grosso do Sul, which generated protests from local communities affected by the foul odor and contamination[272,273,274].

Investigations by Repórter Brasil[275] in 2025 showed strategies used by cattle breeders to circumvent the policies of meatpackers that restrict the purchase of animals from prohibited locations, such as indigenous lands and environmental reserves. Among the cases is the revelation, in 2022, that ranchers illegally raising cattle inside the Apyterewa Indigenous Territory, of the Parakanã people, in São Félix do Xingu (PA), were indirectly supplying cattle to large meatpackers such as JBS and Frigol[276]. The company responded at the time that the supplier was blocked and that, for 15 years, it has been working to improve the issue of cattle traceability.

Repórter Brasil and Greenpeace also documented277 that, between 2018 and 2022, the company purchased almost 9,000 head of cattle from farms linked to a gang of deforesters in Rondônia. JBS acknowledged the connivance of employees in the scheme. The investigation also pointed out that Marfrig and Minerva also benefited from the same illicit practices, and that the products from these chains supplied large retail networks such as Carrefour, Grupo Pão de Açúcar, Grupo Mateus, and Assaí Atacadista[278].

Marfrig follows the same path. A report by Earthsight[279], published in 2022, revealed that farms supplying the company were illegally raising cattle in the

272 ISTOÉ Independente. **JBS investiga vazamento de amônia em unidade em Goiás.** São Paulo: Editora Três, Sept 20 2016. Available at: https://istoe.com.br/jbs-investiga-vazamento-de-amonia-em-unidade-em-goias.

273 MINISTÉRIO PÚBLICO DO ESTADO DE MATO GROSSO. **MPF instaura inquérito para apurar poluição no Rio Araguaia em MT.** Cuiabá: MPMT, Aug 10 2020 Available at: https://mpmt.mp.br/portalcao/news/732/89233/mpf-instaura-inquerito-para-apurar-poluicao-no-rio-araguaia-em-mt.

274 MINISTÉRIO PÚBLICO DO ESTADO DE MATO GROSSO DO SUL. **MPMS pede na justiça que frigorífico adote providências contra mau cheiro na unidade do Nova Campo Grande.** Campo Grande: MPMS, Mar 7 2025. Available at: https://www.mpms.mp.br/noticias/2025/03/mpms-pede-na-justica-que-frigorifico-adote-providencias-contra-mau-cheiro-na-unidade-do-nova-campo-grande. Publicado em 07 de março de 2025.

275 REPÓRTER BRASIL. **Fora do radar – Como pecuaristas flagrados com trabalho escravo integram a rede de fornecimento dos maiores frigoríficos do país.** Monitor n.º 23. São Paulo, SP: Repórter Brasil, Oct 2025. Available at: https://reporterbrasil.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/ReporterBrasil-TrabalhoEscravo-Pecuaria.pdf

276 REPÓRTER BRASIl; GIL ALESSI. **Gado criado ilegalmente em terra indígena no Pará abastece JBS e Frigol.** Repórter Brasil, Sept 15 2022. Available at: https://reporterbrasil.org.br/2022/09/gado-criado-ilegalmente-em-terra-indigena-no-para-abastece-jbs-e-frigol/

277 REPÓRTER BRASIL, UNEARTHED; HOFMEISTER, Naira; CAMPOS, André; HARARI, Isabel; JORDAN, Lucy. **JBS admite ter comprado quase 9 mil bois ilegais do 'maior desmatador do país'** . Repórter Brasil, Nov 10 2022. Avaialble at: https://reporterbrasil.org.br/2022/11/jbs-admite-ter-comprado-quase-9-mil-bois-ilegais-do-maior-desmatador-do-pais/

278 GREENPEACE BRASIL. **Estudo de caso: JBS tem cadeia contaminada por gado ilegalmente em terra indígena.** JBS cozinhando o planeta. Greenpeace Brasil, [s.l.] Sept de 2025. Available at: https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-brasil-stateless/2025/09/e49308f3-greenpeace-caso-jbs-pequizal-do-naruvotu-lowres.pdf

279 O JOIO E O TRIGO; BRONOSKI, Bruna; MEERS, Jelters. **"Maior produtora de hambúrgueres do mundo" capta dinheiro de investidores para comprar gado do desmatamento**. O Joio e o Trigo, Aug 14.2025. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2025/08/maior-produtora-de-hamburgueres-do-mundo-capta-dinheiro-de-investidores-para-comprar-gado-do-desmatamento/

Ituna-Itatá, Cachoeira Seca, and Apyterewa Indigenous Territories in Pará, regions marked by conflicts and land grabbing.

According to the 2024 diagnosis[280] by the Socio-environmental Institute (ISA) in partnership with the National Coordination of Articulation of Black Rural Quilombola Communities (Conaq), agricultural and livestock activities are among the main vectors of pressure and threat to *quilombola* territories in the country, alongside infrastructure and mining projects and property overlapping.

Dodging the dirty list: the use of weak legal mechanisms

The superficiality and failure of voluntary sustainability and equity programs of large corporations are evident, especially in the meat **production chain**. Mechanisms such as the Meat Conduct Adjustment Agreement (TAC), signed between the MPF and meatpackers (including JBS and Marfrig) in states of the Legal Amazon, are intrinsically fragile, as they only monitor direct suppliers, allowing illegal cattle (from deforestation or slave labor) to be "laundered" and indirectly enter the supply chains of the country's largest companies[281].

The weakness of voluntary mechanisms allows ranchers fined for illegal practices, including slave labor, to continue indirectly supplying cattle to the country's largest meatpackers. Experts point out that supplier blocks are made only by the name and CPF (taxpayer registry number) of the fined party, which is easily violated. Examples revealed by investigations demonstrate how this flaw is exploited[282,283].

280 INSTITUTO SOCIOAMBIENTAL (ISA); COORDENAÇÃO NACIONAL DE ARTICULAÇÃO DAS COMUNIDADES NEGRAS RURAIS QUILOMBOLAS (CONAQ); OVIEDO, Antonio Francisco Perrone; LIMA, William Pereira; SOUSA, Francisco das Chagas. **As pressões ambientais nos territórios quilombolas no Brasil.** Nota Técnica. Brasília: Instituto Socioambiental, Conaq, 2024. Available at: https://acervo.socioambiental.org/acervo/documentos/pressoes-ambientais-nos-territorios-quilombolas-no-brasil

281 Ver mais: GLOBO RURAL. Brechas no TAC da Carne permitem venda de gado de áreas ilegais na Amazônia. Published Oct 8 2020; REPÓRTER BRASIL. JBS lidera ranking de irregularidades na compra de gado ou carne no Pará, aponta MPF. Publicado em Oct 8 2021.

282 AMIGOS DA TERRA - AMAZÔNIA BRASILEIRA. **10 anos: TAC da Carne no Pará e Compromisso Público da Pecuária: a importância da rastreabilidade da carne na redução dos desmatamentos na Amazônia.** São Paulo: Amigos da Terra, 2019. Available at: https://amigosdaterra.org.br/project/10-anos-tac-da-carne-no-para-e-compromisso-publico-da-pecuaria-a-importancia-da-rastreabilidade-da-carne-na-reducao-dos-desmatamentos-na-amazonia/.

283 MONGABAY; BOURSCHEIT, Aldem. **Desigualdades na cadeia da carne comprometem política de desmatamento zero na Amazônia.** Mongabay, 14 ago. 2021. Available at: https://brasil.mongabay.com/2020/08/desigualdades-na-cadeia-da-carne-comprometem-politica-de-desmatamento-zero-na-amazonia/.

Subsidies that perpetuate inequalities

The contradiction extends to state financing. Despite billion-dollar profits, meatpackers such as JBS, BRF, and Marfrig are the largest beneficiaries of tax incentives and subsidies in the country, according to data obtained from the Transparency Portal[284]. In 2024 alone, JBS, BRF, and Marfrig failed to pay around R$ 2 billion in taxes, an amount almost four times greater than the budget of the Ministry of Human Rights and ten times higher than that of the Ministry of Racial Equality for the same year[285,286].

These tax waivers reduce public revenue and, consequently, compromise the implementation of policies aimed at promoting racial equality and the well-being of the Black population, among other social agendas. Instead of reinvesting resources to repair historical inequalities, the State subsidizes sectors marked by severe socio-environmental and labor violations.

Furthermore, the lack of taxation on profits and dividends materializes white privilege in the Brazilian tax structure. By exempting capital income (historically concentrated in the hands of a white elite), the State renounces a mechanism of income redistribution and overburdens the base of the socio-economic pyramid, which is mostly Black, and which proportionally bears more taxes on consumption and labor.

Meanwhile, the financial market, through agribusiness investment funds (Fiagro), directs billions to large companies[287]. The history of land grabbing, deforestation, and labor analogous to slavery does not seem to carry weight in investment decisions, with funds investing in companies denounced for the enslavement of indigenous people or for environmental crimes.

284 Controladoria-Geral da União. Portal da Transparência: Renúncias Fiscais. Available at: https://portaldatransparencia.gov.br/renuncias/visao-geral

285 REPÚBLICA FEDERATIVA DO BRASIL. **Missão Permanente do Brasil junto à OEA - Questionário para seguimento das recomendações do Relatório sobre a Situação dos Direitos Humanos no Brasil.** Enviado para a Comissão Interamericana de Direitos Humanos. n. 326 Washington D.C,Oct 22 2024. Available at: https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/docs/anual/2024/notas/Cap5_BRA_2024_Nota_326.pdf

286 BRASIL. Ministério do Planejamento e Orçamento. **Projeto de Lei Orçamentária Anual (PLOA 2024): Anexos I a VII**. Brasília, DF: MPO, 2023. Available at: https://www.gov.br/planejamento/pt-br/assuntos/orcamento/orcamentos-anuais/2024/ploa/projeto-de-lei-orcamentaria-anual-ploa-2024/anexos-i-a-vii.pdf

287 INTERCEPT BRASIL; O JOIO E O TRIGOHOFMEISTER, Naira; GRIGORI, Pedro. **Fundos agro impulsionam empresas com histórico de trabalho escravo, grilagem e desmatamento.** The Intercept Brasil, Jul 20 2023. Available at: https://www.intercept.com.br/2023/07/20/fundos-agro-impulsionam-empresas-com-historico-de-trabalho-escravo-grilagem-desmatamento/.



Source: The Intercept Brasil

Meanwhile, the meatpacking sector mobilizes in the National Congress to expand its privileges, as in the recent attempt to include meat in the basic food basket during the debate on tax reform.[288] This space could, instead, be reserved for socio-biodiversity products, strengthening community economies and agroecological production.



Source: O Joio e o Trigo

Once again, overcoming the sector's labor and socio-environmental inequities cannot rely on corporate goodwill. Rigorous external oversight and the requirement for comprehensive transparency throughout the entire **production chain** are indispensable. Without mandatory mechanisms for traceability and accountability, equity promises will remain mere instruments for corporate self-promotion.

288 O JOIO E O TRIGO; PERES, João. **Os bastidores do lobby que fez a carne escapar dos impostos.** O Joio e o Trigo, Aug 20 2025. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2025/08/os-bastidores-do-lobby-que-fez-a-carne-escapar-dos-impostos/.

6. Misleading narratives and discourses

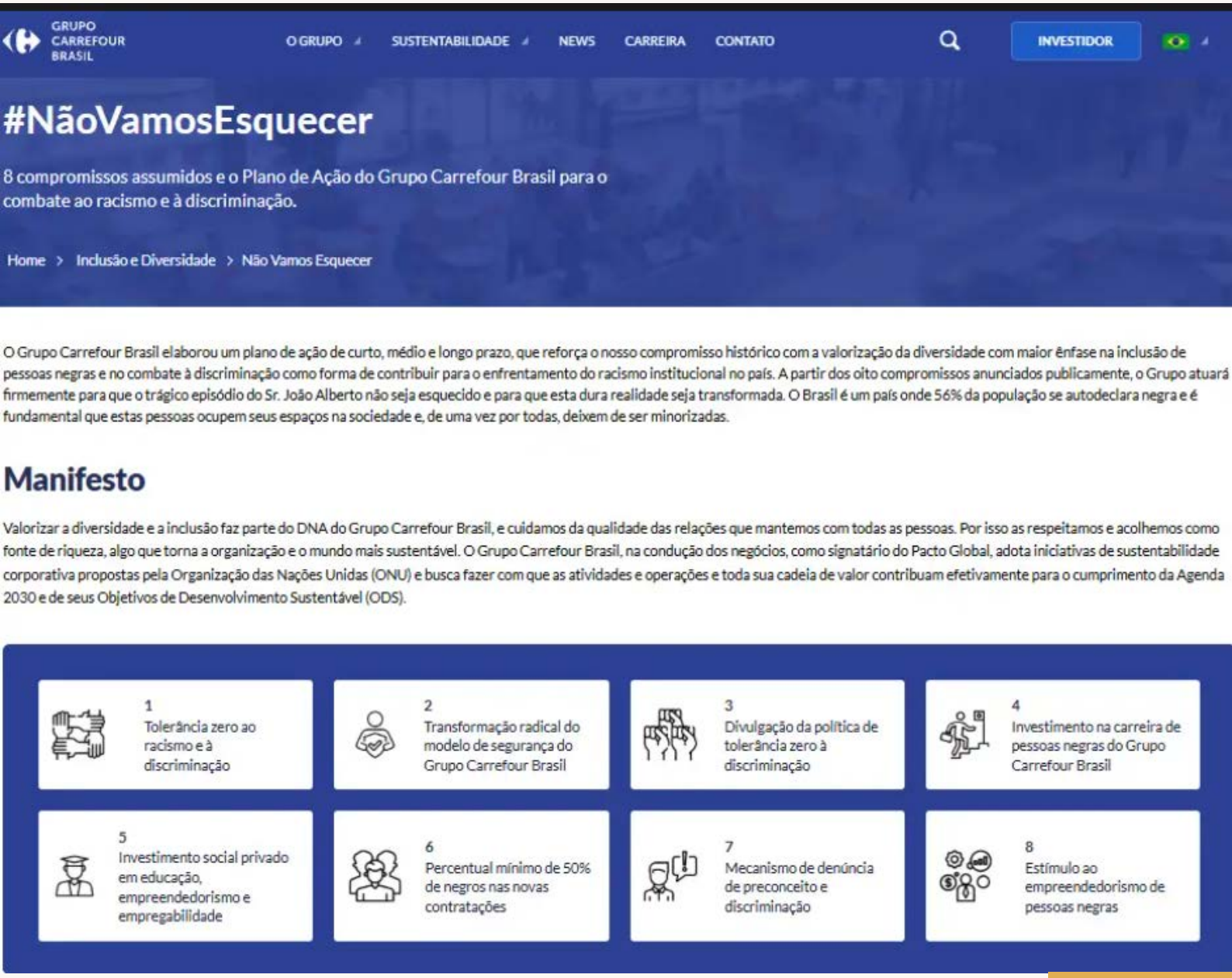
On November 19, 2020, the eve of Black Awareness Day, João Alberto Silveira Freitas, a 40-year-old Black man, was brutally murdered in a Carrefour store in Porto Alegre (RS)[289]. The case, recorded and widely broadcast, provoked a wave of indignation and reignited the debate on **structural racism** in Brazil and the role of large corporations in the reproduction of these violences.

It was not the first time. In 2009, electronics technician Januário Alves de Santana was beaten by security guards at a Carrefour unit in Osasco (SP), accused of stealing his own car. Five years earlier, actors Leandro Firmino, Luís Carlos Lomenha, and Emerson Gomes, known for their roles in *City of God* (Brazil, 2002), denounced racism during a store approach on Marginal Pinheiros, in São Paulo (SP). More than fifteen years separate the episodes, but they all occurred within the same retail chain and reflect a pattern that goes beyond an "isolated case."

Other serious incidents, such as the death of a sales representative in Recife, whose body was covered with beer boxes and umbrellas while the store operated normally, and the beating of the dog Manchinha by security personnel in Osasco, also took place in the chain's units.

After the murder of João Alberto, Carrefour launched a series of initiatives to reposition its image. The discourse of "zero tolerance for racism" was supported by ostensive communication, including institutional videos, partnerships with the Zumbi dos Palmares University, a multimillion-dollar fund for **affirmative action**, and the "We Will Not Forget" website, created to gather the supposed reparatory measures. On paper, it seemed the beginning of a transformation. In practice, it revealed itself to be the opposite: a marketing operation carefully designed to contain damage and regain the trust of the consumer public.

289 G1-RS. **Caso João Alberto: 4 anos após assassinato no Carrefour, processo teve motivação racial afastada pela Justiça**. G1 Rio Grande do Sul, Nov 19 2024. Available at: https://g1.globo.com/rs/rio-grande-do-sul/noticia/2024/11/19/caso-joao-alberto-4-anos.ghtml



Source: Carrefour Brasil

Brand anti-racism

Shortly after the tragedy, the group signed a Conduct Adjustment Agreement (TAC) committing to invest R$ 115 million in a racial equity plan. The document included eight commitments, such as the review of security protocols, inclusion of anti-discriminatory clauses in contracts, mandatory training for employees, support for Afro-entrepreneurship, and the reservation of vacancies for Black people.

The company began to disclose reports, partnerships with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Social Development, and audits by PwC and KPMG to "prove" the execution of the measures. On its institutional portal, it displayed

expressive numbers: 300,000 people impacted, 130,000 employees trained, 41,000 hires of Black professionals, and 68 million reais in scholarships.

The commitments assumed by Carrefour were widely disclosed through institutional channels and in the press. The promises included the implementation of a "zero tolerance policy for racism and discrimination," which would extend throughout its entire **production chain**, in addition to the inclusion of an anti-racist clause in contracts with suppliers. A radical transformation of the security model was promoted, with the internalization of more than 6,600 agents and the mandatory training of the team in human rights, diversity, and the fight against discrimination.

But the grandiose numbers hide the real scale. The total of 883 scholarships granted represents only 0.01% of the universe of higher education students in the country, while the group's revenue in the fourth quarter of 2022 was R$ 31.5 billion — more than 460 times the amount invested in scholarships.

In the face of billionaire profits, the "reparatory" actions are statistically residual. And, as researchers point out[290], the group deliberately sought to dissociate its institutional identity from the anti-racist initiatives. The *Não Vamos Esquecer* (We Will Not Forget) website, for example, was launched with a color palette and logo distinct from the brand's standard, in a gesture of symbolic distancing between the company and the crime that originated it.

290 MUSA BELMIRO, D. M.; BARBOSA DE OLIVEIRA, S. R.; MORENO FERNANDES, P. **"Não vamos esquecer": reflexões sobre antirracismo nas organizações a partir do caso Carrefour.** Revista Internacional de Relaciones Públicas, [S. l.], v. 13, n. 26, p. 63–80, 2023. DOI: 10.5783/revrrpp.v13i26.837. Available at: https://revistarelacionespublicas.uma.es/index.php/revrrpp/article/view/837



Source: Carrefour Brasil

In 2023, the website even went offline for months, reappearing later as a discreet subpage of the corporate portal. The message is that the memory of the crime, which the company said it would never erase, was relegated to invisibility. The gesture synthesizes what researchers (RESENDE, COVALESKI, 2023[291]) call brand anti-racism — a set of corporate discourses that instrumentalize the racial agenda as a tool for reputation management and self-promotion, without promoting structural changes in the work environment or in corporate practices.

While Carrefour tried to recover publicly, new cases of discrimination occurred again in its stores. In 2023, lawyer Vinícius de Paula was prevented from using a priority checkout lane in Alphaville, São Paulo; in the same year, teacher Isabel Oliveira protested in Curitiba, stripping after being followed by security guards at Atacadão, a cash-and-carry store belonging to the Group; in Salvador, a Black couple was beaten by chain

291 RESENDE, V.L., COVALESKI, R.J. **O antirracismo como estratégia de marca: posicionamento do Carrefour em confronto com a prática cotidiana.** RIF - Revista Internacional de Folkcomunicação (periódico) v. 21 n. 46(2023). p.54/57, jan/jun.2023. Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa.10.5212/RIF.v.21.i46.0003. Available at: https://revistas.uepg.br/index.php/folkcom/article/view/21831/209209217817

employees; and, in Porto Alegre, the husband of player Fabiana Claudino reported having been the target of racism in another unit[292].

The company's responses followed a well-known pattern of announcements of "training reinforcement," individual dismissal of employees, and promises of "protocol review." Among the measures, was the payment of R$ 68 million in undergraduate and graduate scholarships for Black students, as well as English scholarships in courses aimed at the same audience and training of its employees with the Zumbi dos Palmares University. Instead of acknowledging systemic failures, Carrefour insisted on treating the episodes as isolated deviations, reproducing the logic it claims to combat.

The criticism intensifies when the financial behavior of the group is examined. Although presenting itself as a benchmark in social responsibility, Carrefour does not promote structural changes capable of consistently addressing the human rights violations associated with its operations. Concurrently, it figures among the companies benefiting from tax incentives in the country, having received around R$ 17 million in 2024[293] — an amount equivalent to approximately 14.45% of the budgetary execution of the Ministry of Racial Equality in the same year[294], whose budget is one of the smallest among the ministries[295]. The same State that finances the expansion of large retail chains restricts resources for public policies aimed at historical reparation and racial equity[296].

Researchers João Peres and Vitor Matioli, in the book *Donos do Mercado*[297] (2020), observe that the cash-and-carry model — in which Carrefour is the leader, through Atacadão — "devalues fresh food and privileges **ultra-processed foods**, consequently affecting the health of the Black and peripheral population." In other words, inequalities are not only at the doors of the stores, but also on the shelves: racism manifests itself in access to food, in **precarious work**, and in the symbolic violence of consumption.

292 BRASIL DE FATO. **Carrefour: 30 meses após Beto Freitas, casos de racismo expõem comitê de diversidade da marca.** Brasil de Fato, Apr 22 2023. Available at: https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2023/04/22/carrefour-30-meses-apos-beto-freitas-casos-de-racismo-expoem-comite-de-diversidade-da-marca/

293 O FATOR; SILVA, Cedê. **Carrefour recebeu R$ 17 milhões em benefícios fiscais em um ano.** O fator, Nov 24 2024. Available at: https://ofator.com.br/informacao/carrefour-recebeu-r-17-milhoes-em-beneficios-fiscais-em-um-ano

294 INSTITUTO DE ESTUDOS SOCIOECONÔMICOS - INESC. **Investimentos do governo federal em igualdade racial praticamente dobram em 2024**. Inesc, Nov 29 2025. Available at: https://inesc.org.br/investimentos-do-governo-federal-em-igualdade-racial-praticamente-dobram-em-2024/

295 ALMA PRETA; TERRA; BORGES, Pedro. **Igualdade Racial tem o menor orçamento entre os ministérios; veja os valores**. Terra: Nós: May 8 2023. Available at: https://www.terra.com.br/nos/igualdade-racial-tem-o-menor-orcamento-entre-os-ministerios-veja-os-valores,6ff79786d52fa70106fbd1b36a0a43f70yxdhluv.html?

296 MATIOLI, Victor; PERES, João. **Donos do mercado: como os grandes supermercados exploram trabalhadores, fornecedores e a sociedade.** São Paulo: Elefante, 2020.

297 MATIOLI, Victor; PERES, João. **Donos do mercado: como os grandes supermercados exploram trabalhadores, fornecedores e a sociedade.** São Paulo: Elefante, 2020.

Forgetting as a strategy

What presents itself as social engagement is, in fact, a strategy of forgetting. **Blackwashing** — a term that designates the opportunistic use of the racial agenda for marketing purposes — functions as a symbolic cleansing operation. Emotional marketing campaigns, cultural sponsorships, and institutional documentaries fulfill the role of substituting responsibility with narrative. Collective pain is transformed into an advertising piece; crime, into a branding opportunity.

Years after the murder of João Alberto, Carrefour continues to profit and expand its operations in the country. Anti-racist actions were diluted in sustainability reports and the public debate cooled off. The episode, which should have provoked a profound reevaluation of the corporate culture, was absorbed by the logic of the market, and the crisis was converted into symbolic capital. The "We Will Not Forget" website remains online, but now without force, lost among marketing pages and institutional reports. It is the perfect metaphor for the process it denounces: programmed forgetting, disguised as commitment.

Meanwhile, Black communities continue to face in the stores — and outside of them — the same barriers, approaches, and violence that the company promised to eradicate. Carrefour may have learned to speak about diversity. But, in practice, the silence in the face of repetitions shows that what least interests the brand is remembering.

7. Misleading brands

Advertising, being a powerful vector of symbolic discourses, has the capacity to shape social perception regarding racial groups. The global consumption landscape, increasingly influenced by social demands for inclusion, has given rise to a concerning category of corporate tactics: "misleading brands".

In the racial scope, this practice manifests itself as "brand anti-racism" or **blackwashing**. It is a marketing maneuver designed to project a progressive image and establish affective bonds with the public — especially the Black population — without, however, a transposition of this discourse into structural changes in the governance or organizational culture of the companies.

With 56% of the population self-identifying as Black or mixed-race/brown (IBGE), the discrepancy between advertising representation and Brazil's demographic reality reveals a scenario of systemic exclusion. Although the rise of anti-racist movements and the amplified debate on social networks have driven an increase in Black presence, inclusion is still limited and superficial, as shown by research from Gemaa (Multidisciplinary Study Group on **Affirmative action**), from the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). In 2017, for

example, Black or mixed-race people represented only 16% of human figures in advertising pieces[298].

Frequently, this "inclusion" camouflages processes of **cultural appropriation** or the promotion of products that exacerbate the social and health vulnerability of Black communities.

Another study, by UN Women[299], pointed out, for example, that the presence of Black people in TV commercials is more likely in pieces with multiple protagonists, where there are groups of people. In these cases, the presence of the Black race is observed in 71% of situations. But it is important to note that this type of commercial (with multiple protagonists) represented only 13% of the TV sample and 7% on Facebook. This exclusion in narratives of success reinforces the view that inequality is "something innate and normal".

The difficulty in changing these misleading patterns is intrinsically linked to the homogeneity of those who hold the power of content production. Behind the screens, in advertising agencies, a report[300] carried out in 2023 by the Observatory of Diversity in Advertising (ODP) and Gestão Kairós shows that this population is still a minority (30%), while 68% are white. The research further points out that diversity decreases as the hierarchy rises.

This absence of plurality in leadership perpetuates **structural racism** and sexism in advertising, reinforcing stereotypes (such as the Black woman being hypersexualized) and prioritizing the Eurocentric aesthetic standard (white, thin women with straight hair).

Black lives at risk

Blackwashing manifests itself through the strategic use of symbols, elements of Afro-Brazilian culture, and association with opinion makers on the anti-racist agenda, aiming at commercial ends for products and/or productions that make the Black population vulnerable. It is important to understand that **Commercial determinants of health301** refer to business models and corporate practices that aim to maximize profits and advantages, even if this com-

298 NEXO JORNAL; FELIX, M.; **Raça e Gênero na publicidade nas últimas três décadas.** Nexo, May 19 2021. vailable at: https://pp.nexojornal.com.br/opiniao/2021/05/19/raca-e-genero-na-publicidade-nas-ultimas-tres-decadas

299 ONU MULHERES. **TODXS - O Mapa da Representatividade na Publicidade Brasileira. 10a edição**. Published 2022. Available at: https://www.onumulheres.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/UA_TODXS10_Final-PORT.pdf

300 GESTÃO KAIRÓS; OBSERVATÓRIO DA DIVERSIDADE NA PROPAGANDA. P**ublicidade Inclusiva – Censo de Diversidade das Agências Brasileiras 2023.** Published 2023. Available at: https://gestaokairos.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Publicidade_Inclusiva_Censo_de_Diversidade_das_Agencias_Brasileiras_2023_Gestao_Kairos_e_ODP.pdf#page=3.00

301 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE. **Determinantes Sociais em Saúde: Doenças Crônicas Não Transmissíveis e seus fatores de risco e de proteção na população adulta brasileira.** São Paulo, SP: ACT Promoção da Saúde, 2025. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/DETERMINANTES-SOCIAIS-ebook-final.pdf

promises health and social justice. When companies instrumentalize the use of Black presence, the association with opinion makers on the anti-racist agenda, or symbols and elements of Afro-Brazilian culture, the marketing of harmful products ends up aggravating **health inequities** of the Black population, which is already in greater social vulnerability and has a higher prevalence of **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**[302].

The history of tobacco marketing in the United States offers a counterpoint to this practice, as evidenced by a report from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids[303]. For over 60 years, the tobacco industry targeted Black communities, including children, with advertising for menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars. The tactics were aggressive and comprehensive, including the sponsorship of community and musical events (such as the Kool Jazz Festival), the distribution of free samples, and targeted ads in magazines with high Black readership.

As a result, while less than 10% of Black smokers used menthols in the 1950s, by 2021, this number was 85%. Menthol cigarettes continue to be heavily propagated, widely available, and cheap in African American communities. Currently, tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death among Black Americans, claiming 45,000 lives annually and contributing to higher rates of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and stroke.

In Brazil, we can make a comparison with the scenario of alcoholic beverages. Their abusive consumption, which is a behavioral risk factor304 for **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**, increased significantly across all races between 2006 and 2023. The prevalence of excessive consumption grew in the white population (from 14.7% to 21%), Black population (from 18.8% to 23.2%), and mixed-race population (from 15.1% to 20.3%). Abusive consumption among women, in particular, doubled, going from 7.7% in 2006 to 15.2% in 2023[305].

The first edition of this **Blackwashing** report brought as an example the case of the beer brand Devassa, a company that had already been sued for broadcasting a racist advertising piece, and then began to present itself as a tropical beer, in-

302 BURGESS, Raquel et al. **Corporate activities that influence population health: a scoping review and qualitative synthesis to develop the HEALTH-CORP typology.** Globalization and Health, v. 20, n. 1, p. 77, Nov 9 2024. Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12992-024-01082-4.

303 TOBACCO-FREE KIDS. **Stopping Menthol, Saving Lives: ending big tobacco's predatory marketing to black communities**. [S. l.]: TFK, Feb 2021. Available at: https://assets.tobaccofreekids.org/content/what_we_do/industry_watch/menthol-report/2021_02_tfk-menthol-report.pdf.

304 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE. **Determinantes sociais em saúde: doenças crônicas não transmissíveis e seus fatores de risco e de proteção na população adulta brasileira.** São Paulo, SP: ACT Promoção da Saúde, 2025. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/DETERMINANTES-SOCIAIS-ebook-final.pdf

305 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE. **Determinantes sociais em saúde: doenças crônicas não transmissíveis e seus fatores de risco e de proteção na população adulta brasileira.** São Paulo, SP: ACT Promoção da Saúde, 2025. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/DETERMINANTES-SOCIAIS-ebook-final.pdf

vesting in the use of elements that refer to Afro-Brazilian culture. However, the entire team behind this reconstruction process was composed of white people.



Source: Veja

This strategy extends to platforms such as "Tudo Nosso", launched by the brand, which presents itself as a space for the valorization of Black culture and creativity. In it, Black protagonism is on the aesthetic and promotional plane, with the use of artists and influencers such as Samuel de Assis and Cristian Bell, who at the time had around 5.5 million followers.



Source: Tudo Nosso

The discourse, although supported by emotional narratives and celebrations of inclusion, lacks pragmatic goals, structural transformation policies, or real advances in the occupation of leadership positions. This 'facade representativeness' is limited to celebrating the aesthetics of diversity, restricting Black protagonism to the imagetic and promotional planes, while the effective transfer of power, resources, or **institutional racism** remains neglected or stagnated in the face of the maintenance of current structures.

This framing is not new: in its 2021 Sustainability Report[306], Heineken had already highlighted Devassa as the brand that "honors the Brazilian Black population" and exalted its cultural legacy. However, by claiming ancestry and Black protagonism as part of its identity, the brand practices a form of **blackwashing**, appropriating racial agendas to reinforce its corporate image without demonstrating real changes behind the scenes.

The actions on the campaign's official website confirm this logic: playlists, festivals, and manifestos celebrate the aesthetics of diversity, but do not address crucial points such as hiring, Black leadership, financing, or redistribution of power. At the same time, Devassa promotes a product of abusive consumption associated with high health

306 GRUPO HEINEKEN (Brasil). **Relatório de Sustentabilidade 2021: Brindando um Mundo Melhor.** São Paulo: Grupo Heineken, 2022. Available at: https://www.heinekenbrasil.com.br/sustentabilidade.

risks, which fall disproportionately on the Black population, already exposed to greater social vulnerability.

It is important to mention that cross-sectional epidemiological studies[307] demonstrate that the intersection between race/color and the abusive use of alcohol exposes Black individuals to higher morbidity rates and lethal violence outcomes, aggravated by the asymmetry in access to health and psychosocial care services. That is, although statistics may indicate varied consumption patterns, the impact of alcohol-related consequences (such as chronic diseases, violence, and barriers to treatment access) falls disproportionately on the Black population[308]. Additionally, **institutional racism** in reception networks acts as a barrier that invisibilizes the specific demands of Black and mixed-race individuals[309,310] causing behavioral disorders and chemical dependencies to become targets of punitive and policing responses, to the detriment of therapeutic approaches[311].

In this dynamic, investigations by Zila van der Meer Sanchez (2020)[312] show that families in peripheral territories suffer substantially more severe impacts. The scarcity of formal support networks transforms substance abuse into a catalyst for intrafamilial conflicts, feeding back into a chronic cycle of domestic violence and financial precariousness.

307 GARCIA, GAF; SILVA, EKP; GIATTI, L; BARRETO, SM. **A interseção entre raça/cor e gênero, tabagismo e consumo excessivo de álcool: uma análise transversal da Pesquisa Nacional de Saúde, Brasil, 2013.** Cadernos de Saúde Pública, Rio de Janeiro, v. 37, n. 11, e00224220, Nov 2021. Available at: https://www.scielo.br/j/csp/

308 ACT Promoção da Saúde; MALTA, Déborah Carvalho (Org.). **Determinantes sociais em saúde: Doenças crônicas não transmissíveis e seus fatores de risco e de proteção na população adulta brasileira.** São Paulo: Rema Editora, 2025. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/biblioteca/determinantes-sociais-em-saude-doencas-cronicas-nao-transmissiveis-e-seus-fatores-de-risco-e-de-protecao-na-populacao-adulta-brasileira/

309 SILVA, Júlio César Paiva e; ROSA, Lucia Cristina dos Santos. Redução de danos e sua potencialidade como ferramenta antirracista na atenção psicossocial. Revista de Políticas Públicas, São Luís, v. 25, n. 2, p. 720-737, July/Dec 2022. Available at: https://www.redalyc.org/journal/3211/321171229014/html/.

310 ASSOCIAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DE ESTUDOS EM ÁLCOOL E OUTRAS DROGAS (ABEAD); PASSOS, Rachel Gouveia. **Dependência química, racismo, gênero, determinantes sociais e direitos humanos**. 1. ed. Curitiba: Appris, 2023.

311 ANUNCIAÇÃO, Diana et al**. (Des)caminhos na garantia da saúde da população negra e no enfrentamento ao racismo no Brasil.** Ciência & Saúde Coletiva, Rio de Janeiro, v. 27, n. 10, p. 3861-3870, Oct 2022. Available at: https://www.scielo.br/j/csc/a/Lqd6jsjQByrvCVyxWCxkqjN/.

312 SANCHEZ, Zila M.; GARCIA, Leila Posenato. **Consumo de álcool durante a pandemia da COVID-19:uma reflexão necessária para o enfrentamento da situação.** Cadernos de Saúde Pública, Rio de Janeiro, v. 36, n. 10, e00124520, Oct 2020. Available at: https://cadernos.ensp.fiocruz.br/csp/artigo/1188/consumo-de-alcool-durante-a-pandemia-da-covid-19-uma-reflexao-necessaria-para-o-enfrentamento-da-situacao

Monopoly, opacity, and the cultural appropriation of popular culture

Blackwashing also materializes intensely in the sponsorship of large festivities that have deep roots in Brazilian Black culture, such as Carnival (including samba schools) and São João. Manufacturers of alcoholic beverages (such as Devassa, Heineken, Ambev, Brahma, Skol) and, more recently, betting houses (bets, such as Superbet at the Rio Carnival, VaideBet, and Bet 7K at São João[313]) invest heavily to associate their brands with an "affective" image.



313 O JOIO E O TRIGO; ROCHA, Ana Paula. **Nas maiores festas juninas do Brasil, a regra é patrocínio de cerveja e falta de transparência**. O Joio e o Trigo, São Paulo, Sept 10 2025. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2025/09/nas-maiores-festas-juninas-do-brasil-a-regra-e-patrocinio-de-cerveja-e-falta-de-transparencia/



Sources: Brahma and Devassa

This **corporate capture**, however, frequently results in the monopolization of public space and social exclusion. A report[314] by O Joio e o Trigo showed that, at the São Paulo Carnival, Skol's (Ambev) sponsorship guaranteed a monopoly on beverage sales. Consequently, street vendors who were not registered or who did not wear the official sponsor's uniform were prevented from participating in sales.

Furthermore, inspectors confiscated merchandise from informal workers, many of whom depend on the festival for their livelihood, in a scenario of high unemployment rates and informality. Street vendors report that the practice, which forces them to buy products only from the sponsor, is "terrible" and "humiliating" and results in a price increase for the final consumer.

Questioning Ambev's exclusive sales rights in the street carnival, obtained from the Belo Horizonte city hall, the feminist collective Maria Felipa went as far as filing a lawsuit in 2025. The lawsuit cited a potential **conflict of interest** involving Bárbara Me-

314 O JOIO E O TRIGO; ZOCCHIO, G.. **No Carnaval de SP, quem não tem abadá não entra.** O Joio e o Trigo, Feb 21 2020. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2020/02/no-carnaval-de-sp-quem-nao-tem-abada-nao-entra/.

nucci, then president of the Municipal Tourism Company of Belo Horizonte (Belotur), who had been an Ambev employee before assuming public office, and contested the amount of R$ 5.9 million paid by the company for the sponsorship quota[315]. Although the injunction requested by the collective was initially denied, the Public Ministry of Minas Gerais recommended overturning Ambev's exclusivity at Carnival, reinforcing the collective's position.



O TEMPO | POLÍTICA

ASSINE ENTRAR

Contra exclusividade da Ambev no Carnaval, coletivo processa prefeitura por conflito de interesses

Autor da ação é o mesmo que conseguiu, em 2017, uma liminar no TJMG contra a exclusividade da empresa no evento aquele ano

25 de fevereiro de 2025 | 18:36 - Atualizado em 25/02/2025

Ouvir

Source: O Tempo

This monopolization is repeated at the *festas juninas* in Campina Grande and Caruaru, where street vendors are forced to buy resale beverages at the sponsors' depots, which are more expensive. A pillar of this misleading practice is opacity in contracts. In several Northeastern capitals (Teresina, Natal, São Luís, Fortaleza, Recife), city halls failed to disclose the values and terms of sponsorship agreements with beverage manufac-

315 O TEMPO. **Contra a exclusividade da Ambev no Carnaval, coletivo processa a prefeitura por conflito de interesses.** O Tempo, Belo Horizonte, Feb 25 2025. Available at: https://www.otempo.com.br/politica/2025/2/25/contra-exclusividade-da-ambev-no-carnaval-coletivo-processa-prefeitura-por-conflito-de-interesses.

turers, ignoring or responding incompletely to requests via the Access to Information Law (Law 12,527/2011).



Source: O Joio e o Trigo

While brand activations like these drive the normalization of alcohol consumption in public spaces, excessive consumption of this type of substance was responsible for 2.6 million, or 4.7%, of all deaths on the planet in 2019, according to the World Health Organization[316], with the mortality burden being significantly higher in populations in situations of socio-economic vulnerability, regardless of the total volume ingested.

316 WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. **Global status report on alcohol and health and treatment of substance use disorders.** Geneva: World Health Organization, 2024. Available at: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240096745.

8. Access and influence in policymaking

The epidemic of **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**, which include cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and cancer, represents the leading cause of death in the world, accounting for about 70% of deaths, and approximately 80% in the Americas region, according to the WHO[317]. In low- and middle-income countries, the burden of these diseases is particularly high, and they disproportionately affect the most vulnerable social groups[318].

In Brazil, for example, Black or mixed-race/brown individuals have a higher prevalence of **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**, in a direct reflection of profound socio-economic inequalities[319]. In this scenario, the way large corporations, notably the unhealthy products industries, influence the formulation of public and regulatory policies, often under the guise of social or anti-racist actions, are seen as **Commercial determinants of health**[320].

Corporate influence practices are described as strategies to ensure preferential treatment or to prevent, shape, circumvent, or undermine public policies in favor of private interests. Such tactics are frequently more aggressive and audacious in low- and middle-income countries[321].

In a 2022 document[322], the United Nations Human Rights Council's special rapporteur on the right to health, Tlaleng Mofokeng, observes that certain business practices economically exploit socially vulnerable groups, exacerbating their disadvantages. Similarly, structural inequalities in food systems disproportionately affect communities exposed to the intense commercialization of **ultra-processed foods** and without adequate access to nutritious foods, which has resulted in higher rates of **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)** among

317 FÓRUM DCNTs. **OMS lança relatório sobre fatores de riscos para DCNTs.** FórumDCNTs, Apr 6 2023. Available at: https://www.forumccnts.org/post/oms-relatorio-dcnts.

318 ORGANIZAÇÃO PAN-AMERICANA DA SAÚDE (OPAS). **Fatores de risco para doenças crônicas não transmissíveis nas Américas: considerações sobre o fortalecimento da capacidade regulatória**. Documento de Referência Técnica REGULA. Washington, D.C.: OPAS, Jan 4 2015. Available at: https://www.paho.org/pt/documents/noncommunicable-disease-risk-factors-americas-considerations-strengthening-regulatory.

319 MALTA, D. C.; BERNAL, R. T. I.; LIMA, M. G.; SILVA, A. G.; SZWARCWALD, C. L.; BARROS, M. B. A. et al. **Desigualdades socioeconômicas relacionadas às doenças crônicas no Brasil: Pesquisa Nacional de Saúde, 2019.** Revista Brasileira de Epidemiologia, v. 24, supl. 2, e210011, 2021. Available at: https://www.scielo.br/j/rbepid/a/ZRMgDg8DVvCKmkQC44WB7nH/.

320 GILMORE, Anna B.; FABBRI, Alice; BAUM, Fran; BERTSCHER, Adam; BONDY, Krista; CHANG, Ha-Joon; et al. **Defining and conceptualising the commercial determinants of health**. The Lancet, v. 401, n. 10383, p. 1194-1213, 8 apr. 2023. DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(23)00013-2. Available at: https://www.thelancet.com/pb-assets/Lancet/series/commercial-determinants-health/defining-conceptualising_portuguese-1698064128243.pdf

321 GILMORE, Anna B.; FABBRI, Alice; BAUM, Fran; BERTSCHER, Adam; BONDY, Krista; CHANG, Ha-Joon; et al. **Defining and conceptualising the commercial determinants of health**. The Lancet, v. 401, n. 10383, p. 1194-1213, 8 apr. 2023. DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(23)00013-2. Available at: https://www.thelancet.com/pb-assets/Lancet/series/commercial-determinants-health/defining-conceptualising_portuguese-1698064128243.pdf

322 UNITED NATIONS. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health: Racism and the right to health. A/77/197, 20 July 2022.

these groups, such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. In Brazil, what is observed is the strategic use of social agendas, such as the promotion of racial equality, to build legitimacy and credibility — a phenomenon that can be understood as **blackwashing** — but which, in practice, neutralizes or diverts attention from public health policies that could benefit the Black and vulnerable population, the most affected by the products of these companies.

The focus on the Black population as a tactic for reputation management and political infiltration

According to *The Lancet*[323] series on **Commercial determinants of health**, reputation management is one of the seven main practices of the commercial sector to influence health, functioning as a central tool to increase legitimacy and credibility, enabling and integrating other influence practices.

These tactics, frequently framed as **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, are criticized for being, at best, a public relations exercise and, at worst, a tax-deductible way to shape policies against the public interest. **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** is most heavily practiced by corporations whose primary products are harmful to health.

In Brazil, Coca-Cola illustrates this **blackwashing** strategy by actively seeking infiltration into the Federal Executive, especially after political changes that resulted in the creation of the Ministry of Racial Equality (MIR). The company was the one that registered the most meetings with MIR, focused on the "promotion of race and gender equality" and "anti-racist actions" of the Coca-Cola Institute[324,325].

Such activities demonstrate the intention to position itself as a "good corporate citizen," while at the same time the company is one of the leaders in the production of unhealthy products (sugar-sweetened beverages) that provenly contribute to the increase in **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**, most intensely affecting precisely the Black and mixed-race population, which faces the highest prevalences of chronic diseases in the country.

The company's **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** also materializes in partnerships, such as the Technical Cooperation Agreement (ACT 10/2024)

323 GILMORE, Anna B.; FABBRI, Alice; BAUM, Fran; BERTSCHER, Adam; BONDY, Krista; CHANG, Ha-Joon; et al. Defining and conceptualising the commercial determinants of health. The Lancet, v. 401, n. 10383, p. 1194-1213, 8 apr. 2023. DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(23)00013-2.

324 e-Agendas. Ministério da Igualdade Racial. Agenda de Anielle Francisco da Silva, ex-ministra. Available at : https://eagendas.cgu.gov.br/info-compromisso/agenda/15917/compromisso/60228; https://eagendas.cgu.gov.br/info-compromisso/agenda/15917/compromisso/72400; https://eagendas.cgu.gov.br/info-compromisso/agenda/15917/compromisso/326877

325 e-Agendas. Ministério da Igualdade Racial. Agenda de Marcelle Decothé da Silva. ex -assessora de assuntos parlamentares. Available at: https://eagendas.cgu.gov.br/info-compromisso/agenda/20657/compromisso/179181; https://eagendas.cgu.gov.br/info-compromisso/agenda/20657/compromisso/184956

with the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship (MDHC)[326]. The objective of the agreement is to expand access to safe water in a sustainable manner to the Pitanga dos Palmares Quilombola Community, in the metropolitan region of Salvador (BA), and to the Marajó Archipelago (PA), with the possibility of extending its reach to other communities in vulnerable situations, with an emphasis on rural communities – *quilombolas*, indigenous people, riverside dwellers, among others.

Although the agreement addresses a fundamental human right (potable water), it allows Coca-Cola to present itself as "part of the solution" to problems that the very nature of its business exacerbates, masking its substantial "water footprint" (336 to 618 liters of water needed for one liter of sugar-sweetened beverage)[327] and the denunciations of depletion of water reserves in rural communities, such as in Itabirito (MG)[328].

By focusing on specific human rights agendas and public-private partnerships, the company obtains the validation of state agencies, while averting the gaze from the structural damages caused by its business.

The capture of public health through self-regulation and tax incentives

Coca-Cola's strategy of political influence in Brazil is evident in the blocking and subversion of crucial regulatory policies to protect children's health and vulnerable groups, in direct opposition to global and Inter-American commitments to reduce risk factors[329,330].

326 Ministério dos Direitos Humanos e da Cidadania. **Acordo com a Coca-Cola Brasil vai garantir água potável às comunidades do Quilombo Pitanga dos Palmares (BA) e do Marajó (PA).** Jun 6 2024. Available at: https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2024/junho/acordo-com-a-coca-cola-brasil-vai-garantir-agua-potavel-as-comunidades-do-quilombo-pitanga-dos-palmares-ba-e-do-marajo-pa

327 GLOBAL FOOD RESEARCH PROGRAM. **Ultra-processed foods: a global threat to public health.** Chapel Hill, NC: Global Food Research Program, Nov. 2023. Available at: https://www.globalfoodresearchprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/GFRP_FactSheet_UltraProcessedFoods_2023_11.pdf

328 NEXO JORNAL; SCHIOCHET, Flávia. **Como a Coca-Cola acabou com a água de 800 famílias em Minas.** Nexo Jornal, São Paulo, Dec 7 2024. Available at: https://www.nexojornal.com.br/externo/2024/12/07/coca-cola-acaba-agua-familias-minas-gerais.

329 ORGANIZAÇÃO PAN-AMERICANA DA SAÚDE (OPAS). **Fatores de risco para doenças crônicas não transmissíveis nas Américas: considerações sobre o fortalecimento da capacidade regulatória.** Washington, D.C.: OPAS, 2016. (Documento de Referência Técnica REGULA). Available at: https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/28583.

330 COMISIÓN INTERAMERICANA DE DERECHOS HUMANOS (CIDH). **Las enfermedades no transmisibles y los derechos humanos en las Américas**. Elaborado por la Relatoría Especial sobre Derechos Económicos, Sociales, Culturales y Ambientales (REDESCA). Approved by CIDH in Aug 28 2023. Washington, D.C.: CIDH, 2023. (OAS. Documentos oficiales; OEA/Ser.L). ISBN 978-0-8270-7712-6. Available at: https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/informes/pdfs/2023/redesca_enfermedades_notransmisibles_ddhh_spa.pdf..

The company spent years lobbying behind the scenes to bury Bill (PL) 1755/2007, which aimed to prohibit the sale of soft drinks in schools, as evidenced by a journalistic investigation by Intercept Brasil[331]. Instead of accepting the total prohibition, according to the report, the company's lobbyist Vitor Bicca Neto argued that the restriction should only apply to children up to 12 years old. This proposal, which transferred the responsibility for inspection to mixed schools, was considered "impractical" and "completely ineffective" by activists, representing a victory for corporate interests and a defeat for the public interest of protecting childhood.

Preempting legal regulation through self-discipline or self-regulation is a marketing tactic to avoid more stringent regulation. A 2016 voluntary agreement with Ambev and PepsiCo not to sell soft drinks to children under 12 in schools served as a "marketing strategy" to virtue signal, while, in practice, the sector rejected being regulated by the State, maintaining the exposure of young people to the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, a crucial modifiable risk factor for **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**[332].

Concurrently, corporate influence operates in the tax system. The State must abstain from granting tax incentives that promote unhealthy products, as this constitutes an obstacle to the reduction of poverty and inequality. However, Coca-Cola benefited from R$ 2 billion in tax incentives in 2024[333,334]. This permissiveness of the neoliberal political and economic system allows corporations to externalize costs to society while obtaining excessive profits.

The company also acted vigorously in the tax reform to avoid the taxation of soft drinks with the Selective Tax. This action had the support of politicians with ties to the industry, such as Senator Otto Alencar, who has previously received donations from Abir and Coca-Cola, and the rapporteur Eduardo Braga, who defended the amendment and participated in the inauguration of the expansion of the Coca-Cola factory in Manaus (Recofarma) one day after the approval of his text. This political incoherence allows the government, instead of using fiscal measures such as taxes on harmful products (like sugar-sweetened beverages and alcohol) to increase revenue and disincentivize consumption, to end up subsidizing the sector that causes health damages[335].

331 INTERCEPT BRASIL; LEMES, Thais. **Como a Coca-Cola ajudou a enterrar PL que proíbe refrigerante em escolas.** The Intercept Brasil, Jul 29 2024. Available at: https://www.intercept.com.br/2024/07/29/coca-cola-refrigerante-em-escolas/.

332 INTERCEPT BRASIL; LEMES, Thais. **Como a Coca-Cola ajudou a enterrar PL que proíbe refrigerante em escolas.** The Intercept Brasil,Jul 21 2024. Available at: https://www.intercept.com.br/2024/07/29/coca-cola-refrigerante-em-escolas/.

333 BRASIL DE FATO; BERTONI, Estevão. **Governo deixa de arrecadar, e Coca-Cola poupa R$ 4,3 bi em impostos.** Brasil de Fato, São Paulo, Apr 13 2024. Available at: https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2024/04/13/governo-deixa-de-arrecadar-e-coca-cola-poupa-r-4-3-bi-em-impostos/.

334 O JOIO E O TRIGO. **Refrigerantes e bebidas alcoólicas têm isenção de R$ 9,5 bilhões em menos de uma década.** O Joio e o Trigo, São Paulo, Apr 17 2025. Available at: https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2025/04/refrigerantes-e-bebidas-alcoolicas-tem-isencao-de-r-95-bilhoes-em-menos-de-uma-decada/.

335 METROPOLES; GADELHA, Igor. **Senador contra refrigerantes no "imposto do pecado" é dono de fábrica.** Metrópoles, Brasília, Dec 12 2024. Available at: https://www.metropoles.com/colunas/igor-gadelha/senador-contra-refrigerantes-no-imposto-do-pecado-e-dono-de-fabrica.

Structural impact and disproportionate exposure to risks in low- and middle-income countries

The profit strategy of transnational corporations, which focuses on countries in the Global South, has devastating social and environmental consequences that affect the most vulnerable populations, including the Black and impoverished population.

Brazil is one of the largest sugar suppliers for Coca-Cola, which purchases 14% of the global sugar[336]. The company's **supply chain**, which includes national mills (such as Jayoro, a sugar and guaraná supplier for Recofarma in Manaus), has a "vast history of rights violations," including the invasion of indigenous lands (Waimiri-Atroari), illegal exploitation, deforestation, and pesticide contamination in *igarapés* (streams). The burning of straw by the Jayoro Mill caused air pollution, affecting settlers and causing respiratory problems.

These practices in the **supply chain** and regarding waste cause damage to human and planetary health. Rent extraction and the externalization of costs (such as pollution and environmental damages) fall on low- and middle-economy countries, transferring wealth to a restricted elite. The massive extraction of water and pesticide contamination in areas with vulnerable populations violate the right to a healthy environment and access to potable water, which are health determinants. The lack of potable water in communities such as Chiapas (Mexico) and Itabirito (MG) can lead to the consumption of alternatives such as sugar-sweetened beverages, intensifying the risk of **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**.

Corporate influence, combined with the concentration of wealth and power, ensures that the system acts in favor of transnational corporations, reorienting norms (norm shaping) to divert attention from their responsibility. By presenting themselves as partners in racial equality agendas (such as **blackwashing**), companies disarm criticism and guarantee the political inertia necessary to maintain their profitable operations, regardless of the social and health cost imposed on the most vulnerable populations.

In summary, the strategy of corporate access and influence exploits regulatory and fiscal fragilities, especially in low- and middle-income countries, using **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** and attention to racial/social agendas as a way to mask and neutralize resistance to more rigorous health policies, thus perpetuating the disproportionate exposure of the Black and poor population to the modifiable risk factors of **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**.

336 CASARA, Marques. **O sabor do açúcar: (investigação sobre a cadeia produtiva da cana-de-açúcar e seus impactos sociais e ambientais).** São Paulo: ACT Promoção da Saúde / Papel Social, Mar 28 2022. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/uploads/arquivos/O-SABOR-DO-ACUCAR_Final.pdf.

CONCLUSION

Why confront blackwashing?

Blackwashing is not a merely communicational phenomenon. It compromises the realization of the right to health, racial equity, and social justice by shifting the focus from structural transformations to symbolic and reputational actions. This practice obscures the concrete impacts of **production chains** on the Black population, hinders corporate accountability, and weakens consistent regulatory responses.

Confronting it means recognizing that marketing strategies anchored in diversity and social responsibility can neutralize public debate — especially when linked to products harmful to health — in the sense of obscuring truly structural alternatives to confronting racism. The challenge is to overcome the voluntarist logic and advance toward binding regulatory frameworks that align economic activity, human rights, and racial justice.

The debate is inherently interdisciplinary, involving public health, consumer law, human rights, political economy, communication, and racial equality policies. Given this complexity, it was decided to bring together agents from different sectors in a focus group, with the objective of discussing the phenomenon, sharing experiences, and building concrete pathways for confrontation. The consolidation of these discussions resulted in the recommendations systematized below.

Focus group: the promotion of a collective debate in search of solutions

The workshop "Blackwashing 2.0: Are Corporations Still Engaged in the Racial Agenda?" brought together experts, researchers, and activists to analyze the intersection between **Commercial determinants of health**, race, and Brazilian structural inequalities. The focus group took place on October 24 at the Museum of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture (MUHCAB), in Gamboa, a symbolic territory of the so-called Little Africa, in Rio de Janeiro.



Source: ACT Health Promotion

Holding the debate in this space was not merely a logistical choice, but a political one. The memory of the African diaspora and colonial violence present there evidences that racism is not a historical residue, but a living structure that organizes territories, work, consumption, and power. The consensus established in the group was that racism operates as a fundamental gear of Brazilian capitalism. In this arrangement, **blackwashing** is not a mere communicational excess, but a technology for maintaining racial inequality within the political economy of illness.

The debate held in the focus group can be summarized in three acts:

I. Consumer relations: the false choice in the unequal food environment

The discussion demystified the idea that the consumption of health-harming products by the Black population is the result of an autonomous individual decision. It is consumption conditioned by structural, economic, and psychosocial barriers.

Urban peripheries concentrate **ultra-processed foods** and offer less access to fresh foods, configuring **food deserts** and **food swamps**. The regime of **precarious work** — extensive working hours, multiple commutes, and informality

— reduces the time available to cook. The historical overload of caregiving, especially on Black women, intensifies the dependence on the "ready and easy".

On the symbolic plane, corporations invest heavily in food engineering, behavioral marketing, and racialized segmentation to manufacture desires and associate their products with belonging, modernity, and upward social mobility. An inversion of values is produced: fresh food can be stigmatized as backwardness, while the ultra-processed product becomes a symbol of progress.

The presence of Black people in the advertising of these products was identified as an ambivalent strategy. Although it generates identification, it primarily serves to legitimize the consumption of items of low nutritional quality and capture narratives of social mobility. This representativeness, often concentrated on symbolic dates, masks the structural nature of the damages and shifts the debate to the imagistic plane of diversity.

II. Production relations: environmental racism and structural precariousness

If in consumption there is structural conditioning, in production there is systematic racial hierarchization. The productive model most negatively affects the Black population at all stages of the chain, from exposure to pesticides and degrading conditions in the field to precariousness in urban services, such as app-based deliveries, street vending, and informal work. The opacity of **production chains** prevents the tracking of responsibilities. Everyday products hide trajectories marked by labor violations and environmental degradation.

Environmental racism manifests itself in the installation of polluting industries and harmful enterprises in predominantly Black territories, configuring **sacrifice zones**. Processes of deterritorialization and gentrification reinforce this cycle. The logic of commodities and nutritionism fragment food into isolated nutrients, disconnecting it from territory, culture, and nature. Traditional knowledge is devalued and culturally rooted products become global commodities inaccessible to the producing communities themselves, consolidating contemporary forms of food colonialism.

III. Blackwashing as discursive capture

Blackwashing was understood as a tactic of structural concealment. By adopting anti-racist rhetoric and sponsoring social actions, companies keep intact the productive logic that generates illness.

The occupation of the state vacuum is central to this process. Corporate philanthropy creates financial dependency, hinders public criticism, and shifts responsibility from the political field to corporate voluntarism. Inequality ceases to be treated as a problem of power redistribution and begins to be framed as a question of efficient resource management.

Internally, racial inclusion is frequently limited to companies' diversity areas, without reaching strategic decision-making spaces. "Racial literacy" programs operate without structural transformation. The myth of individual merit captures individual ascensions while preserving the racialized architecture of exploitation.

The debate was categorical: even if Black leaders occupied central positions in companies whose business model produces illness, the structures of exploitation would remain, since the issue is systemic.

From diagnosis to responses

Blackwashing, as demonstrated, is not a deviation from the path, but a gear that keeps racial inequality functional to accumulation. Therefore, confronting it requires more than punctual denunciations or ethical appeals: it requires the construction of responses capable of acting upon the architecture that makes it possible. The following guidelines are oriented by this premise. They seek to translate the diagnosis into concrete propositions, anchored at the intersection of public health, law, political economy, and racial equality, and are aimed at replacing the voluntarist logic with effective accountability mechanisms.

What already exists to address adjacent issues?

Although the direct confrontation of **blackwashing** is still incipient, there are normative, political, and technical instruments that offer important foundations for this advancement, among them:

- The Consumer Defense Code (CDC), especially regarding the prohibition of abusive and misleading advertising;
- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations on regulating the advertising of unhealthy foods and alcoholic beverages and the implementation of healthy taxes as means to disincentivize the consumption of products harmful to health;
- The **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights**, as well as the ongoing debates on a **Binding Global Treaty on Business and Human Rights**;
- National policies such as the National Comprehensive Health Policy for the Black Population (PNSIPN) and the National System for the Promotion of Racial Equality (SINAPIR), still poorly articulated with **Commercial determinants of health**;

- Evidence produced by initiatives such as The Lancet Series on **Commercial determinants of health**[337], in addition to the existing literature on **conflict of interest** and corporate political activity[338], which recognize the central role of corporate practices in the production of chronic diseases.

Steps for the future

The critical repertoire of ACT Health Promotion, in addition to the investigation produced in this report and the consolidation of the focus group discussions, resulted in the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1

Advance the regulation of the advertising of products harmful to health, especially tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, and **ultra-processed foods**.

To the Judiciary and regulatory agencies:

Rule as valid and constitutional Anvisa's RDC No. 24, including with regard to Anvisa's competence to issue this norm, which establishes the mandatory nature of health warnings in advertising regarding the risks of excessive consumption of products with high fat, sodium, and sugar content, and advance its implementation;

Debate infra-legal frameworks that provide for the regulation of the advertising of harmful products targeted at vulnerable and socially disadvantaged groups, along the lines of what exists for children's advertising.

To the Legislative Branch:

Advance the regulation of the advertising of alcoholic beverages, in order to include beer brands, which represent almost 90% of the national market and link their products to cultural elements, such as samba, football, and carnival. To this end, advance bills No. 1548/2025 and No. 753/2015 in the Chamber of Deputies, and PL 2502/2023 in the Senate, which aim to restrict the adver-

337 ACT PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE. A Série Lancet sobre Determinantes Comerciais da Saúde. Biblioteca ACT, Aug 3. 2023. Available at: https://actbr.org.br/biblioteca/a-serie-lancet-sobre-determinantes-comerciais-da-saude/

338 OBSERVACOI. **Biblioteca.** Observatório Brasileiro de Conflitos de Interesse em Alimentação e Nutrição – ObservaCoI. Available at: https://observacoi.org.br/biblioteca/

tising of beverages with any alcoholic content and suggest the inclusion on labels of warnings about the negative impacts of the product, such as diseases and traffic accidents.

To academia and civil society:

Monitor, document, and denounce advertising practices targeted at vulnerable groups, with special attention to the exploitation of cultural and identity symbols associated with the Black population;

Produce and systematize technical, scientific, and legal evidence demonstrating the impacts of the advertising of harmful products on the health of the Black population, subsidizing the advancement of more robust regulatory measures;

Act in advocacy and social control strategies, strengthening the public and institutional debate on the relationship between **structural racism**, market practices, and **health inequities**;

Collaborate with regulatory agencies and public policy makers, offering technical subsidies oriented toward health promotion and the reduction of racial inequalities;

Critically debate the sponsorship by companies that manufacture products harmful to health for actions disseminating and celebrating Afro-Brazilian culture.

RECOMMENDATION 2 - Tackling food swamps and food deserts

Recommendation to governments:

Implement the Alimenta Cidades Strategy in racialized territories, such as *favelas* and urban peripheries, prioritizing actions that confront racial inequalities in access to adequate and healthy food, with continuous training of municipal administrations;

Monitor the implementation of the new Worker's Food Program (PAT) in different productive sectors, ensuring that its guidelines promote adequate and healthy food, especially in work environments with a predominance of Black male and female workers;

Identify, manage, and mitigate **conflict of interest** in the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of Food and Nutritional Security (SAN) policies, in order to avoid the distribution of **ultra-processed foods** and alcoholic beverages,

as well as advertising disguised as **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**.

Recommendations to civil society:

Act in monitoring the implementation and maintenance of SAN policies and facilities.

Recommendations to academia:

Produce studies and evaluations on the implementation of the Alimenta Cidades Strategy in racialized territories, analyzing its impacts on reducing racial and territorial inequalities in food and nutritional security;

Research the effects of the new PAT on the health and diet of Black workers, considering different sectors, working hours, and occupational contexts.

RECOMMENDATION 3 - Fostering Afro-Brazilian food culture

Recommendations to governments:

Foster **production chains** of Afro-Brazilian food culture, encouraging the cultivation and commercialization of traditional ingredients and preparations, in line with the guidelines of the Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population;

Promote and disclose gastronomic and cultural routes via initiatives such as the Sabores e Saberes Public Notice, in order to value establishments that utilize ingredients, techniques, and narratives of Afro-Brazilian food culture, recognizing them as a structuring component of Brazilian cultural identity;

Subsidize productive inclusion initiatives, ensuring opportunities for socio-economic protagonism for Black people, especially women and youth, through public notices, tax incentives, and training programs;

Protect and encourage the cultivation of traditional ingredients, such as palm oil (*azeite de dendê*), against the appetite of large corporations, ensuring sustainable practices, productive sovereignty, and the preservation of ancestral knowledge associated with its use.

Recommendations to civil society

Strengthen community networks and collectives of Afro-entrepreneurs, promoting cooperation, knowledge exchange, and economic organization based on the principles of the solidary and circular economy;

Act in political advocacy and social control, defending public policies that guarantee rights, cultural recognition, and economic inclusion of the Black population in the food system;

Monitor the implementation of the Ecoforte Redes Public Notice, which allocated R$ 100 million for actions aimed at strengthening and expanding agroecology, extractivism, and organic production networks, benefiting family farmers, agrarian reform settlers, traditional peoples and communities, *quilombola* peoples, and indigenous peoples.

Recommendations to academia

Produce and disseminate interdisciplinary knowledge about Afro-Brazilian food culture, its **production chains**, and its socio-economic, nutritional, cultural, and environmental impacts;

Support processes of social and technological innovation directed at culture-based agroindustry, the sustainable use of traditional ingredients, and the strengthening of gastronomic Afro--entrepreneurship;

Integrate teaching, research, and extension, developing projects that contribute to socio-economic inclusion, the preservation of food biodiversity, and the valorization of Afro-Brazilian culture;

Evaluate the impact of implementing initiatives such as the Ecoforte Redes public notice on the guarantee of the human right to adequate food, the right to land, and food sovereignty among racialized people.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Popularization of the Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population in peripheral regions.

Recommendations to governments:

Carry out campaigns to disseminate the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population with accessible language and territorialized strategies, aligned with the social, cultural, and economic realities of racialized territories;

Distribute physical and digital copies of the Guidelines in health units located in peripheral regions and racialized territories;

Conduct ongoing training with health professionals, especially community health agents, based on the recommendations of the Guidelines.

Recommendations to civil society:

Contribute to the cultural adaptation of the Guidelines' messages, promoting their appropriation by peripheral and racialized communities;

Ensure the full participation of Black people in the territorial dissemination processes of the Dietary Guidelines' principles.

Recommendations to academia:

Evaluate the impact of the Guidelines' dissemination actions, producing evidence on their effectiveness in promoting healthy eating practices and in reducing **health inequities**.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Establishment of minimum standards for the hiring of Black people in companies and enhancement of the debate on **institutional racism**

Recommendations to governments:

Expand and regulate **affirmative action** policies directed at the private sector, with objective criteria, progressive targets, and monitoring mechanisms, such as the Annual Social Information Report (RAIS/MTE);

Regulate advertising and communication strategies of **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, especially of health-harming industries, ensuring that discourses of diversity, racial equity,

and inclusion are not used opportunistically or dissociated from effective structural practices;

Based on the recognition of the unconstitutional state of affairs, create mechanisms to confront **institutional racism**.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Creation of a fund into which health-harming companies contribute financially for research on the health of the Black population

Recommendations to governments:

Create a specific public fund, supported by mandatory financial contributions from health-harming industries, intended to finance research on the health of the Black population and the confrontation of racial **health inequities**;

Establish transparent criteria for governance and **conflict of interest** management of the fund, ensuring scientific independence, social participation, and public control, with the inclusion of representatives from civil society, academia, and Black communities in decision-making processes;

Restrict advertising via **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** by the involved corporations;

Implement healthy taxes, with the intent to disincentivize the consumption of products harmful to health;

Link the resources collected through healthy taxes to the strengthening of the Unified Health System (SUS), considering that the Black population constitutes the majority of people dependent on the public health system;

Allocate part of the fund's resources to strengthen the implementation of the National Comprehensive Health Policy for the Black Population (PNSIPN).

RECOMMENDATION 7

Address the **Commercial determinants of health** in legal frameworks, such as the PNSIPN

Recommendations to governments:

Incorporate the dimension of **Commercial determinants of health** into legal frameworks and debates on the health of the Bla-

ck population, including in policies such as the National Comprehensive Health Policy for the Black Population (PNSIPN);

Address the **Commercial determinants of health** within the scope of the National System for the Promotion of Racial Equality (SINAPIR);

Consider the dimension of **Commercial determinants of health** in referentials on **environmental racism**.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Advance the discussion on HRs (Human Rights) and business

Recommendations to governments:

Demand evaluation and transparency from companies regarding the impact of their **production chains** and products on the health of Black people;

Within the scope of infra-legal frameworks on human rights and business, address **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)** as a violation of the human right to health when associated with systematic corporate practices, and advance in holding accountable the companies that contribute to the illness of the Black population;

Avoid granting tax incentives, subsidies, or benefits to companies whose products or practices are associated with the aggravation of racial **health inequities**;

Restrict or prohibit partnerships, contracts, and public purchases with companies that have a history of human rights violations in their **production chains**, including complaints or convictions related to conditions analogous to slavery, the use of child labor, or other forms of exploitation;

Adhere to initiatives such as the creation of a Global Minimum Tax on transnationals.

Recommendations to civil society:

Engage in political advocacy with governments in defense of more robust regulatory frameworks for corporate accountability and the protection of historically vulnerable groups.

Recommendations to academia:

Explore the framework of human rights and business as a theoretical and methodological basis for the production of evidence on the **Commercial determinants of health** and their differential impacts on Black populations and other historically vulnerable groups;

Provide technical support for the formulation of public policies, offering scientific subsidies for regulatory processes, judicial actions, and corporate accountability initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Advance the construction of spaces and mechanisms to mitigate industry interference

Recommendations to governments:

Advance the construction of **conflict of interest** policies to manage commercial engagement in research and political processes;

Create a treaty and/or convention for CDH (**Commercial determinants of health**), for **ultra-processed foods**, and for alcohol, along the lines of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control;

Strengthen the regulation of political contributions, corruption, and **conflict of interest**.

Recommendations to civil society:

Engage in political advocacy with governments in defense of more robust regulatory frameworks for the identification, prevention, management, and mitigation of **conflict of interest**.

Recommendations to academia:

Develop research that addresses the impact of **conflict of interest**, corporate political activity, and **Commercial determinants of health** on public health and equity for vulnerable groups and populations.

Final considerations

Blackwashing is not a peripheral deviation, but an integral part of the rationality of racialized capitalism. It operates simultaneously in consumption, in production, and in discourse, ensuring that racial inequality remains functional to economic accumulation. Overcoming it requires shifting the axis from voluntarism to legal obligation, from symbolic diversity to the redistribution of power, from philanthropy to structural accountability. It is, ultimately, about replacing Black life, public health, and territory at the center of the political dispute against the **Commercial determinants of health**.

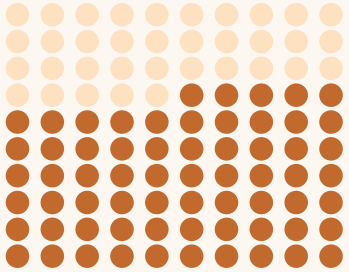
Annexes

RACIAL HEALTH INEQUITIES:
LIVING CONDITIONS, WORK, AND THE IMPACT OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDS)
WORKING CONDITIONS

56,7%
of Black people in the employed population
IBGE/DIEESE (2024)

8,6%
of Black people in directorial/management positions
(IBGE - Síntese dos Indicadores Sociais 2025)

~45%-47%
Informality among Black people
DIEESE/IBGE (2024)[339]
(Portal SME)



65%
of unemployed are Black people
(DIEESE/2022)

Wage gap

40%
lower than whites on average
(IBGE, 2021)

Average salary

R$ 9.831
white directors and managers

R$ 6.446
Black directors and managers

Sectors with the highest concentration of Black workers are historically associated with lower remuneration and greater precarious work

62,0%
Agriculture

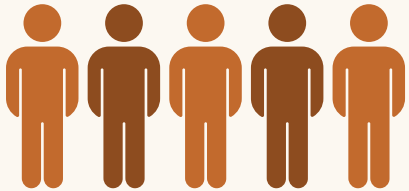
65,1%
Civil construction

66,4%
Domestic services

Black people use public transportation more and automobiles less (Censo 2022 – IBGE)
The Black population, poorer and less educated, faces a higher average daily commute time

RACIAL HEALTH INEQUITIES:
LIVING CONDITIONS, WORK, AND THE IMPACT OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDS)
HEALTH

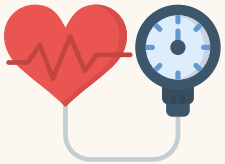
Multimorbidity
(two or more chronic diseases)



more prevalent among Black and mixed-race/brown people
(BARRETO et al., 2022)

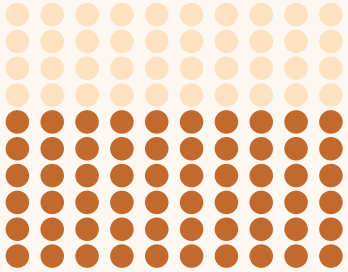
Arterial hypertension

48,67%



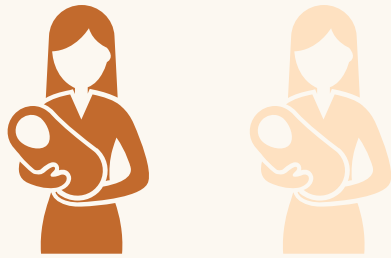
higher prevalence in Black people compared to white people
(BARRETO et al., 2022)

Tuberculosis



about 60% of cases occurred in Black and mixed-race people
(BRASIL, 2025)

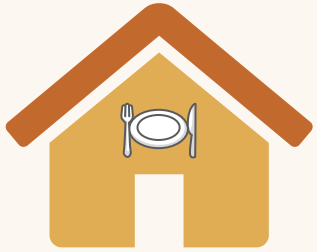
Maternal mortality
per 100,000 live births



125,8
Black women

64,15
White women

Severe food and nutritional insecurity



more prevalent in households headed by Black women or with Black heads of household
(VIGISAN 2023 – Rede PENSSAN)

Physical activity (Vigitel)

Black and mixed-race individuals more involved in non-leisure physical activities (occupational/domestic); white individuals in leisure physical activity (such as sports)

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)



BLACK **PR 1,04**

MIXED-RACE **PR 1,05**

higher prevalence among Black (PR 1.04) and mixed-race (PR 1.05) individuals when compared to whites, even after adjustments, which signals racial inequalities (Malta et al.)

Inadequate dietary profile, physical inactivity, excess weight, and smoking tend to be more prevalent in socio-economically vulnerable populations

ACT Promoção da Saúde 20 ANOS

RACIAL HEALTH INEQUITIES:
LIVING CONDITIONS, WORK, AND THE IMPACT OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDS)
SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Black and mixed-race people: **56% of the population** (IBGE, 2023)



Face worse average socio-economic conditions

Structural inequalities: reduce life expectancy and amplify the burden of Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) (OPAS, 2025)

More exposed to precarious housing conditions, lower income, and informal work (IBGE, 2023; OPAS, 2025)

Housing tenure insecurity



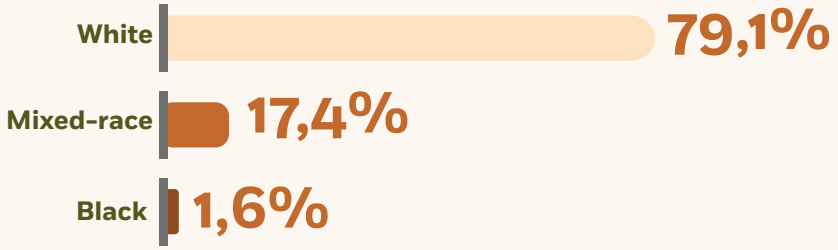
20,8% Mixed-race people

19,7% Black people

10,1% White people

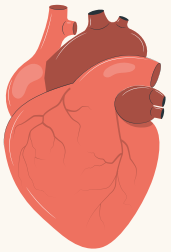
own homes did not have property documentation

Owners of agricultural establishments >10 mil hectares
(2017 Agricultural Census)



Land tenure inequality

Socio-economic inequalities



linked to racial disparities in cardiovascular and metabolic diseases (BARRETO et al., 2022

ACT Promoção da Saúde 20 ANOS

Structural racism and the production chain of health-harming products in Brazil: how ultra-processed foods, alcohol, and tobacco reproduce racial inequalities from production to consumption and disposal

Production of inputs (agriculture and livestock / monocultures) ↓	Industrial processing ↓	Logistics (storage, transport, and distribution) ↓	Commercialization and retail ↓	Consumption ↓	Post-consumption (waste) ↓	Governance and value capture ↓
Land concentration > Conflicts and land tenure insecurity	Precarious work with a high presence of the Black population: Unhealthy environments Intense production pace Exposure to chemicals, heat, noise, and extensive working hours, occupational risks High added value, but low wages at the base of the workforce	Precarious work with a high presence of the Black population: Long working hours Outsourced work High risk of accidents	Precarious work with a high presence of the Black population: Low wages High turnover Strong presence of youth and the Black population	The same groups that produce are frequently the most exposed to the negative impacts of consumption	Waste pickers and informal workers (predominantly Black)	Underrepresentation of Black people
Threats to rural workers, indigenous peoples, *quilombolas*, and traditional communities	Installation in urban peripheries	Territorial conflict among rural workers, indigenous peoples, *quilombolas*, and traditional communities	Aggressive marketing strategies	Food deserts and food swamps > hunger and Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)	Exposure to health risks without adequate protection	Concentration of profits and decision-making power
Labor exploitation (Precarious work and/or analogous to slavery)	Contamination of soil, water, and air	Contamination of soil, water, and air	Greater concentration in peripheral territories			
Use of chemical inputs (pesticides, fertilizers, veterinary drugs) > High exposure to environmental and health risks			Contamination of soil, water, and air		High rate of informality	

339 DIEESE – DEPARTAMENTO INTERSINDICAL DE ESTATÍSTICA E ESTUDOS SOCIOECONÔMICOS. A inserção da população negra no mercado de trabalho: dados do 2º trimestre de 2024. São Paulo: DIEESE, 2024. Infográfico. Disponível em: https://www.dieese.org.br/infografico/2024/consc ienciaNegraInfo.pdf


ACT
Promoção da Saúde
20
ANOS