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A research survey released in November by the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatistica (IBGE) showed that an economic and educational abyss separates black and white Brazilians, leading black Brazilians to earn about half as much as whites.

The study showed that low rates of education and a historic process of exclusion still deeply depress the level at which black Brazilians are able to enter the labor market. Black and brown Brazilians lack access to labor market Brazilians who identified themselves to researchers as black or brown ("Negros e pardos") earn on average 51.1% of the income white Brazilians earn.

While blacks and brown Brazilians in the six main metropolitan regions of the country received 660.45 reais (about US$308) on average in the month of September, whites had an average salary of 1,292.19 reais (about US$603).

Cimar Azeredo, coordinator of the survey, said the income disparity may be explained for the most part by the low levels of education for black and brown Brazilians. They have an average of 7.1 years of education, while whites have an average of 8.7 years. In higher education, 8.2% of black and brown Brazilians older than 18 took or had taken some coursework, where that percentage was 25.5% for white Brazilians.

"The passport for the labor market is education, qualification, specialization," said Azeredo. "If that passport does not have a good base, that insertion [into the market] does not happen." He said that a white worker with a greater level of completion of higher education earns 32% more than the average for a black or brown worker. He said the survey did not assess a link between the difficulty of entry to the workplace and racial prejudices.

In September 2006, the population self-declaring as black or brown made up 42.8% of the 39.8 million people 10 years old or older in the six metro areas Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Salvador, Recife, and Porto Alegre surveyed during the Monthly Employment Survey (Pesquisa Mensal de Emprego, PME). Self-identifying whites made up 56.5%. Although black and brown Brazilians represent 42.8% of the active work population, represent 50.8% of the unemployed people in the country, said another IBGE survey. The research found an unemployment rate of 11.8% among black and brown Brazilians and a rate of 8.6% among white Brazilians. [Sources: Folha de Sao Paulo (Brazil), www.ibge.gov.br, 11/17/06; O Globo (Brazil), 11/16/06, 11/29/06]

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