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PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT IN SOUTH AMERICA

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* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the Working Group or the United Nations

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PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT IN SOUTH AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

The black population in the Americas is above 140 million. They constitute one third of the continent's 450 million people.¹ This population is not the same. Thus, a black person from the USA has cultural differences regarding another contemporary from El Salvador, Bahia, in Brazil, or from Asuncion in Paraguay. The black groups spread throughout the continent are diverse. Blacks from the Americas have fought with indigenous and Europeans. The mutual influence gave rise to a new culture, as Manuel Zapata Orivella said the "*Mestizaje cultural etnico*". According to the different historical processes, one race will predominate over another, but generally the different roots are simultaneously present.²

The American Societies must value their multi-ethnic character. In the case of Afro descendents, Roger Bastide would differentiate between "Afro-American Cultures", generally marked by African elements, and "*negroamericanos*", who have suffered more intense aculturation process. There is no doubt that the cultural "*supervivencias*" of these "*sincretismos*" have resisted for centuries the white race domination.³

The *afrocultures* do not express only in the dance and in music, as Mr. Amir Smith-Cordova would write "we are not from Africa, but there is fact that "*pigmentogeograficamente*" we are a big number of inhabitants that one can think in the *negritud* definition as an ethnic flag to achieve our goals. For this reason, it is very important to create the suitable conditions, not only to make black people dance but also perform different tasks.

Every black person knows his/her African roots, the slavery trade, the slavery in the cities, the *Palenques*' resistance inhabited by those who freed themselves, who even now, represent a symbol of dignity and struggle of the black movement, and are part of the spiritual-humankind inheritance.⁴

The *cimarronaje* has been not only a reaction of the slavery imposition but also a vigorous cultural expression based on the common African origin and experience of a total oppression. It has been based on ethnic-identity awareness.

The history told by the oppressors is now revealing many outstanding names, who encourage those who still fight for freedom world-wide: Nat Turner in the USA, Satuye de los Garifonas of San Vicente in Central America, Bayano in Panama, King Miguel and Queen Guiomar in Venezuela, Domingo Bioho in Colombia, Alonso de Illescas in Ecuador, Francisco Congo in Peru, Zumbi in Brazil, Lemba in Santo Domingo, Makandhal in Haiti and Cudjoe in Jamaica. These people constitute a source of inspiration to motivate young black politicians.⁵

BOLIVIA

People of African Descent in Bolivia. Bolivia is a Multicultural country, in its land there are 37 Ethnic groups culturally different and one of them is the "Afro-Bolivian."⁶

Demographic Situation of the Black Communities. The Bolivian Population is at around 8.200.000 inhabitants, and People of African Descent account for 30.722. According to the

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

¹ http://www.thechronicle.demon.co.uk/archive/7_8_12af.htm

² Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

³ Different writers. Mi Cristo Negro de las Americas. CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

last census held in 2001, 70 % of the Black Population are at the South and North Yungas of the Administrative District of La Paz, the other 30 % are spread throughout the country.⁷

Location of the Black Communities. The Black Population is basically located in the provinces of North Yungas and Caranavi of the Administrative Department of La Paz, black families are also in Santa Cruz, Cochabamba and La Paz.

In the Region of Yungas there are Black Communities such as: Tocana, Chicaloma, Villa Remedios and Colpar. Whereas in other cities such as Chijchipa, San Juaquin, Santa Ana, Santa Barbara, Marca, Suapi, Coscama, Calacala, Dorado Chico, Dorado Grande Arapata, Chillamani, San Felix, Cienegas, Naranjani, Chulumani, Irupana and Coroico black families live with Aymara Families.⁸

Economic Reality of the Black Communities. There is no difference between the black population and the rest of the indigenous communities country-wide, that is they both face poverty.

Economic Situation of Black Communities before 1952. Until 1952, Black families were forced to work as slaves in farms. Their principal activities in the farms and country houses were the agriculture and housekeeping tasks. Men worked in the agriculture, and the women and children in specific tasks as housekeepers, coca and coffee harvesting. Children of the age of 8 years were considered as manpower; at the age of 15 years they carried out hard duties and were punished together with adults.⁹

Economic Situation of the Black Communities after 1952. After the slavery abolition (1952) the Black Families started working as unskilled labours at the Yungas Administrative Department of La Paz. Nowadays, they live in communities and colonies and develop a subsistence economy based on the agriculture. They cultivate coca, coffee, sugar cane, rice, cocoa, peanuts, banana, citrus fruits, cassava, and other tubers. Besides they also elaborate alcohol and honey moon.

With the Agrarian Reform in 1953, the government granted up to three hectares of land, at that time it was a lot of land. Today this land is not enough because the black population's growth.¹⁰

Current Situation of the Black Population. In the rural areas, the situation of blacks is the same as the indigenous, both are poor and excluded. There are not economic policies to develop the rural areas and even less the black communities. There is the small holding because of the division of the lands, poor production and land impoverishment.

The black families who life in rural areas have their own houses, but face problems regarding basic services, such as running water, drain, electricity, luck of roads, etc.¹¹

Education in Black Communities. Most of the Black Communities have primary schools. In order to pursue their education, they have to move to bigger towns, which is quite difficult for the majority due to the high cost.

Despite that Bolivia has undertaken an Educational Reform, which in principle guarantees the recuperation of the cultural identity with its own values, however, in practice the black population is not taken into account.¹²

Health in the Black Communities

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⁷ Different writers. Mi Cristo Negro de las Americas. CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003

⁸ Different Writers: Mi Cristo Negro de Las Americas, CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito, p. 9. 2003

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid

Regarding health, blacks families do not have health insurance, the health centres are insufficient and sometimes do not exist. In Chulumni, Coripota and Coroico there are hospitals.¹³

Organizing system of Black Communities.

The Afro-Bolivian Community during the time of the Farms were constrained from any kind of organization, since the Agrarian Reform in 1953 the unions have been motivated. Every black family settled in the rural areas is part of the Agrarian Unions. Regarding the cocoa, coffee and honey production new organizations emerged during the 90s.

Black People were given the opportunity to become grass root leaders. Besides, the so-called “*Movimiento Saya Afro Boliviano*“ whose main goal was to recuperate , strengthen and promote the values and cultural identity of the Afro- Bolivians. This movement co-ordinates the black living in rural areas with the ones living in the cities.¹⁴

Migration of Black Families. Because of the economic situation, certain black families find themselves forced to migrate to the cities, especially to Santa Cruz that receives 30 %, La Paz receives 25 %, Cochabamba and others 22%. From those who go to the cities 52% are civil servants and privet employees; 26% are housekeepers, 4% freelance workers. And 16 % high school, institute and university students.

Origin of Black Bolivians. Everybody acknowledges that their ancestors come from Africa.

The First Phase. The first slaves unlawfully brought to *La Audiencia de Chacas*, according to researchers, came through Spain, that is, they came as servants of the conquerors, later the authorities of the *Real Audiencia de las Charcas* asked the Governor of Las Indias the entry of the slaves into the mining work in Potosi, taking into account that sickness had weakened the indigenous slaves. So, at the beginning of the year 1500, thousands of blacks entered Potosi through Brazil.

According to reports of the *Audiencia de Charcas*, in the XVI century there were already blacks in Potosi, who came from Congo, Senegal and Angola on Boats.¹⁵

The Second Phase. When the transport of Blacks via Brazil or Rio de la Plata increased, the quantity of blacks multiplied in Brazil, they were put up for auction to be sold as merchandise. The servants in the aristocratic families increased. Having slaves meant a high socio-economic status at that time.¹⁶

The Third phase. According to researchers, the entry into the area of Yungas of la Paz, took place through three main ways:

-**El Camino del Inca“ (The Inca Trail)** Transferring blacks who arrived in Coroico, Tocana, Chijchipa, Mururata, San Jeronimo, Tihuli, Negrinani, Achu, Mayu, and other villages or smaller farms of that region.

-Another way was “**Taquesi**“ to enter into Coripata, Cala Cala, Dorado Chico, Cienegas, San Isidro and others.

-Third way was the entrance through “Yungas Cruz”, which allowed the arrival in the South, as Colplar, Naranjani, Rio Blanco, Villa Remdios, Tacma, Chuchulumani, Chicaloma, Irupana and others.¹⁷

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¹³Different Writers: Mi Cristo Negro de Las Americas, CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

Contribution of the Black Communities to the Bolivian Society. The contribution given by the Black People to the Bolivian society has never been recognized and appreciated. Even now there is little appreciation for Black Communities. Nevertheless, we have to recognize the black people's contribution even by giving their own lives for the country. "The slavery and death of blacks meant life and freedom of the indigenous people."¹⁸

Black Culture Contribution. The black culture is the result of a cultural mixture that resisted the violations of its values. Since 1952 the Afro-Bolivian culture has risen, before that the culture was unknown for the fact that it was a "slavery culture". There is a process of self-motivation of their own cultural identity. Nowadays, there is a reunion with their values and tradition, recognition of their own rights before the State and Civil Society. The Afro-Bolivians were just recognized as good athletes, and now the spectrum is wider in the Civil Society because a feeling of respect and appreciation for their culture is arising.¹⁹

Black Contribution to the Bolivian Society. With the creation of schools in the former farms, the social boundaries have gradually been eradicated. Since the new generations, born after 1950, started receiving education . "*For the education for everybody*" many people moved to different cities to pursue their studies in high schools and then entered institutes and universities to get professional degrees, especially during the 1970s and 1980s. Hence, now there are doctors, professors, economists, lawyers, etc.²⁰

B R A Z I L

BRASIL: POBLACION POR COLOR, 2000						
Regions	Pretos e pardos	Indígenas	Otros	Total (1)	% Afro	% Indígena
North	8.739.834	200.934	3.809.120	12.749.888	68,5	1,6
Norwest	31.917.610	166.550	15.285.103	47.369.213	67,4	0,4
Southeast	26.289.392	156.134	45.489.039	71.934.565	36,5	0,2
South	3.762.661	50.891	21.197.705	25.011.257	15,0	0,2
West Centre	5.709.737	127.003	5.733.446	11.570.206	49,3	1,1
Brazil	76.419.233	701.462	91.514.433	168.635.128	45,3	0,4

Source: IBGE, Recenseamento do Brasil, 20002

AFRO-COMMUNITIES - *QUILOMBOS* - IN BRAZIL

Introduction

With the occupation of the so-called Black Continent by the West, thousands of Africans were colonized in their own countries or enslaved for use as labour in the colonization of other lands. The modern black slave traffic thus became an economic option involving a minimum of expense and risk. The slavery of the African populations in the Americas accounted for around 15 million slaves violently uprooted from their lands. It is estimated that approximately 40% of the total of African slaves came to Brazil in order to serve as labour in the colonial undertaking. Unlike in other South American countries such as Colombia and Peru, where the slaves were concentrated in particular circumscribed areas, slavery in Brazil covered the entire country. A further particularity of slavery in Brazil when compared with other countries or regions of the South American continent is that it lasted uninterruptedly for close on 400 years. In short, Brazil imported a greater number of slaves compared with other

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¹⁸ Different Writers: Mi Cristo Negro de Las Americas, CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito, p. 8, 2003

¹⁹ Ibid p. 10

²⁰ Ibid

countries, distributed them throughout the various regions of the country and maintained the practice of slavery for almost four centuries. The Negroes brought from Africa to Brazil between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries were active on farms and plantations and in towns, mills and mines, contributing economically to the country's development. Despite living as slaves, they left numerous and profound marks on Brazil's social life, as we can see today in its music, cooking, language and religious practice. In this way slavery penetrated every aspect of Brazilian social life, serving to construct its culture and national identity.²¹

The inhuman experience of slavery did not fail to produce reactions and resistance. The slaves employed a number of strategies of resistance. These included destroying work tools, setting fire to plantations and the farmhouse, working deliberately slowly, murdering owners, administrators and those employed to recapture fugitive slaves, suicides, rebellions and individual and mass escapes that led, in some cases, to the establishment of the '*quilombos*. The rebellions and escapes, albeit responsible for moments of crisis in the Brazilian system of the slavery, were not decisive in its abolition. Nonetheless they did represent a form of resistance to the existing order. The individual and/or mass escapes resulted in the establishment of the *quilombos*, where the Negroes and other minorities laid the bases for a new existence. This kind of reaction became the most typical and effective mode of resistance to slavery. Similar experiences with different names were observed throughout the Americas: *cimarrones* in many countries colonized by Spain, *palenques* in Cuba and Colombia, *cumbes* in Venezuela and *maroons* in Jamaica, the Guyanas and the United States. In Brazil these groups of runaway slaves formed communities called *quilombos* and *mocambos* and those who lived in them were known, respectively, as *quilombolas* (or *calhamabolas*) and *mocambeiros*.²²

The geographical distribution of the *quilombos* in Brazil followed the economic cycles, principally those of sugar, gold and coffee, thereby permitting the introduction of African Negroes and/or their descendants as slave labour in the colonization and settlement of the different states and regions of the country. The *quilombo* made its presence felt throughout the period of slavery and was to be found in practically the whole of Brazil: in the states of Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Mato Grosso, Goiás, Pará, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Sergipe, Maranhão, Rio Grande do Norte and São Paulo. In 1740, Portugal's *Conselho Ultramarino* (Overseas Council), the body charged with the control of the colony's assets, after consulting the King of Portugal, defined the *quilombo* as "*any dwelling of more than five fugitive slaves, even if they have no huts erected or there is no pestle and mortar to be found in them*" (Moura, 1981: 11).²³

During the period of slavery various *quilombos* were established, organized in different ways, the dimensions and duration of which varied very greatly. Their inhabitants were subjected to severe persecution, whether they were few in number or ran into the thousands and regardless of whether they lived close to or far from the towns. Among the groupings that attained a certain stability, some were situated in areas that were considerably isolated, while others maintained alliances with other groups in the region. In order to survive outside the system of slavery the *quilombo*'s residents needed a minimum of economic and military organization so as to produce and/or harvest food and ensure the protection of their domains. Thus, although they practiced agriculture, based on the vast experience of this activity on the part of the majority of the peoples of Africa, they possessed no uniform economic model. According to Moura (1987) and Décio Freitas (1980), the *quilombos* can be divided into seven basic types:

- **the agriculturalists**, who were prevalent in all parts of Brazil

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

²¹ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

²² Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

²³ Ibid

- the **extractors**, characteristic of the state of Amazonas, where they live on drugs from the *sertão* (arid region)
- the **mercantilists**, also in the Amazon region, who acquired the drugs directly from the indigenous tribes in order to barter them with the river traders
- the **miners**, in the states of Minas Gerais, Bahia, Goiás and Mato Grosso
- the **herdsmen**, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, who raised cattle in the open country not yet appropriated or occupied by ranchers
- the service **providers** who left the *quilombos* to work in the urban areas
- the **predators**, who were to be found more or less everywhere and lived on the plunder obtained from attacks on the whites.²⁴

The *quilombos* attempted to adapt to the ecological conditions and to what was available in the region, producing what they needed for survival in accordance with the traditions and opportunities afforded by the places where they were settled. Rather than devoting themselves to the monoculture that characterized slave-based agriculture, and which also entailed the monopoly of production in the hands of the landowners, the *quilombos* practiced a multicrop and community-based agriculture, an economic model capable of meeting the needs of all their members. In addition to the main activity, they also engaged in a range of complementary activities for maintaining and feeding their peoples. The poverty has a colour “Renciro says” and poverty in my country is eminently black.

Recent studies point to a broad integration of many *quilombos* with the nearby populations or even with the neighbouring towns, a fact that would contradict their traditional image as totally isolated and autonomous communities. All the evidence suggests that the largest and best organized *quilombos* had a complex web of relations with society. Alliances were formed and contacts maintained with small local landowners, peddlers and river traders in order to obtain all they needed, especially weapons and gunpowder. With their surplus²⁵ production they practiced bartering and clandestine trading. Thus, contrary to what was believed for a long time, the *quilombos* did not live in total isolation.²⁶

2. Studies on the Quilombos

In the 17th Century escaped-slaves founded a number of *Quilombos* (hidden slave-governed territories).²⁷ Extensive historical research carried out over the past two decades on the black resistance during the period of slavery in Brazil serves as a basis for reinterpreting the *quilombo* as a specific form of resistance to slavery. But we must bear in mind the paucity of existing data on the internal organization of these communities of fugitive slaves, as well as their different forms of interaction with slave-based society and the occurrence of such interaction in every region of Brazil where historically slavery played an important role. The early studies on the *quilombos*, however, appear as chapters in the military history of Brazil. The colonial chroniclers emphasized their capacity for resistance, particularly that of the most famous example - the Quilombo dos Palmares - and the authorities' difficulty in suppressing them. The inhabitants of Palmares, the largest of *quilombos*, fought a decade-long war against colonial oppressors.²⁸

The most systematic reflections concerning the *quilombos* were to emerge in the context of Afro-Brazilian studies of the 1930s. Viewed from a cultural standpoint, the *quilombos* were understood as a resistance to the European ‘acculturation’ to which the slaves were subjected in the slave quarters. The social organization of the *quilombo*'s residents was seen as an effort

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²⁴ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

²⁵ http://www.fordfound.org/publications/ff_report/view_ff_report_detail.cfm?report_index.285

²⁶ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

²⁷ <http://www.brazilianmusic.com/capoeira/>

²⁸ Ibid

to counter acculturation. It was also seen as a kind of alternative society to slave society in which all would be free and possibly equal, such as they were believed to have been in a considerably romanticized Africa. Since the 1950s the *quilombos* have been revisited from a Marxist perspective, which defined black resistance in the *quilombos* as the refusal of the regime of captivity, even though it admitted the inability of the Negroes to propose the destruction or defeat of the slavery regime as a whole. In spite of the differences, these perspectives had a fundamental similarity: they treated the *quilombos* as a phenomenon of the past.²⁹

Over the past three decades the discussion concerning the *quilombos* has been conducted in the context of revisions of national and regional histories. In the wake of these studies there has been a significant ‘discovery’, namely that of the existence of rural black communities, whether descendants or not of the historical *quilombos*. Black political militancy and the social emancipation movements have idealized the *quilombos* as a model of equality, community life and resistance, laying emphasis on the presumed ‘African purity’ existing in them.³⁰

The Abolition of Slavery and the Land Question in Brazil

Following the abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888 there was no policy for the inclusion of the black population – former slaves and their descendants – in the project of nationhood that was beginning to emerge at that time. As a result, the State’s policies were informed fundamentally by concepts of evolution and improvement of Brazilian society, seeking its progressive incorporation into the roll of modern civilizations. In short, a country that mirrored those of Europe, regarded as civilized, modern and prosperous. The Negroes represented a past that the new nation wished to forget, a past marked by traditions of African origin considered to be primitive, barbarous and inferior. Accordingly, there was no social place for the Negroes and their cultural traditions in modern Brazil.³¹

For long it was believed that the *quilombo* communities were a thing of the past that had disappeared with the end of slavery. What, then, really happened to the Negroes after abolition? Did they leave the *quilombos* and become integrated into the life of the country? Or did they remain in the rural areas? In what way did the members of these former *quilombos* organize their lives following the end of slavery in a society impregnated with racial prejudice?

Several vestigial *quilombos* remained scattered throughout the country, mainly in distant and isolated areas and in regions characterized by a low level of industrial development. The prevailing ignorance of the existence of these black communities in rural areas in the various regions of Brazil underlines their **social invisibility** on the national stage. Surviving on the margins, keeping themselves alienated from economic growth and the development of the large Brazilian metropolises, these communities are centres of the traditions and memory of a people – the black people. Their existence revolves around the land, the symbol of freedom and *sine qua non* of their survival.³²

These communities nowadays are part of Brazil’s peasantry. As peasants they exhibit some specific characteristics: they are groupings of Negroes whose origin goes back to the days of slavery and who have remained on the land for over a century. But the land they inhabit is not ordinary land. The value it represents for these groups is a reflection of the satisfaction of their needs, including their traditions and cultural heritage. In other words, the strong attachment to the **land** reveals the bonds that unify and express their identity, their customs

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

²⁹ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

and their history. Also referred to as Negroes' lands, these areas were initially inhabited by former slaves and represent the physical, social and cultural heritage of their descendants who struggle today to be recognized as their legitimate owners.³³

Until the eve of Brazil's independence from Portugal the regime of ownership was that of the unrestricted occupation of unoccupied lands, followed or preceded by its formal recognition through the deed of allotment (*sesmaria*). In this way the official appropriation of land in Brazil began with the regime of donation of allotments. The Act of Allotments (*Lei das Sesmarias*) was introduced with the designation of the hereditary provinces (*capitanias*) of Brazil in 1534 with a view to occupying and defending the country's lands. The provinces were received as an endowment by the beneficiaries, men who enjoyed prestige with the Portuguese crown and who possessed the wealth and resources to exploit them. The title deeds could only be obtained by people who were white and free and who until the seventeenth century were known as 'good men'.³⁴

These lands, being given over to large-scale cultivation (which was the purpose of the occupation and its connection with European trade), required substantial capital for their exploitation. Slavery thus prevented the poor from acquiring the unoccupied lands. This form of land distribution has generated many excluded people ever since the colonial period.

Whenever an allotment was granted on previously occupied land, the status of its original inhabitants became that of illegal occupants, who were either obliged to live as servants of the large farm or were simply evicted, being then obliged to seek new unoccupied lands. This situation presented a clear demarcation between the formal landowner and the legally unrecognized occupier: the former was a respectable citizen and the latter a person excluded from society. In 1822 the regime of allotments was abolished. Until the passing of the Land Act in 1850, which created a new right of ownership to replace the regime of allotments, there was a long period of unrestricted occupation of land. In accordance with this new law, the basis of Brazil's current right of ownership, unoccupied lands could not be acquired by any means other than purchase. Even before the abolition of slavery in 1888, steps were taken to approve a regime of ownership that would prevent the ownership of land by anyone without the money required to buy it, even if the land in question was common or unoccupied land. By the time the slaves were freed, mechanisms were already in place for regulating and controlling the land, leading to the creation of a contingent of people with no chance of acquiring ownership of it.³⁵

The British pressure for the abolition of slavery and the existence of land with no instrument for limiting its acquisition created the conditions for legitimizing the economic and political power of the large landholders. In this way the Land Act prescribed the purchase of land as the only instrument for acquiring ownership and this should be understood in the context of the political and economic transformations that the country was experiencing.

The transformation of the land into a saleable commodity and the creation of conditions for its demarcation in periods of time determined by the government became obstacles to the legal acquisition of land by a majority of the de facto occupiers. In fact, ever since the time of the Empire a set of laws had defined who could and who could not own land in Brazil which, in practice, excluded among others, Negroes and poor people generally. This, however, did not prevent these people from settling in the countryside, creating an extremely diversified agrarian structure unprotected by any formal legal provisions. With the end of slavery few possibilities for social and economic participation were available to the Negro in Brazil. The inheritance of slave society required a perverse and unequal adjustment to capitalist society on the part of the Negro. The extremely negative image of the black worker as a disorderly

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³³ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

person unable to discipline himself for work served as the rationale for excluding him from the free labour market resulting from the process of urbanization and industrialization. This brief historical background enables us to understand the events that gave rise to the peasant class in Brazil and at the same time to point out the diversity of forms of land ownership.³⁶

The persistence of a race-based division of labour has been a compelling reality in all former slave societies in the Americas. One can trace this to nineteenth century abolition movements across the Americas, which did not lead (and were not intended to result in) a transition from race-based labour to race-neutral wage labour for former slaves. Rather the abolition of slavery led to the emergence of multiracial societies wherein capital/labour relations were characterized by new forms of extra-market coercion that were explicitly linked to racial categories. Post-slavery Brazilian Society is a classic example of this pattern.³⁷

Perverse Economic Modernization and the Negroes' Lands

In the middle of the twentieth century, Brazil was already well on the way to becoming an industrial society, as attested by the spectacular growth of large urban centres such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte. This is where the Brazilian industrial complex is located today and it is the Southeast region that accounts for almost two thirds of the labour force and two thirds of national output. However, the advance of capitalism in Brazil had repercussions in the countryside. The opening of highways encouraged the seizure of common land in several regions, above all in the Amazon and Central West regions. The lower land prices and government tax incentives intended to attract investment to these regions have played a preponderant role and brought about a new social pattern marked by countless disputes. The introduction of development projects (mining, hydroelectric power plants or livestock schemes) meant that other, pre-existing forms of occupation (native Indian lands, vestigial *quilombo* and peasant communities) were disregarded, leading to innumerable conflicts. The *quilombo* communities started to experience the arrival of strangers on their lands without realising at first that a long struggle was just beginning.³⁸

Thus, when the expansion of Brazilian capitalism begins to absorb new territories, with the aim of extracting the resources and raw materials of the subsoil and entailing the building of dams across rivers, the *quilombos'* lands are affected. Their existence is disregarded, development projects are introduced on lands considered to be empty and the populations in question are driven to the edge of survival. This is one of the perverse faces of economic modernization in Brazil³⁹. The *quilombos'* descendants, the Amerindians, and the peasants show many similarities as far as the impact on their lands is concerned. They are lands inherited from their ancestors, a kind of right that lacked any judicial protection and which was opposed to the division of the land into individual plots. The incorporation of their lands makes these groups similar to one another as a result of the capitalist appropriation of the land, the expansion of which involves the search for profit, but which ultimately man from his origins, leading to either his expulsion or resistance.⁴⁰

Common sense would suggest that the black communities descended from the *quilombos* represent insignificant remnants of a history that should be forgotten. They are considered as populations destined to disappear, even non-existent or perhaps minute and consequently of little importance. Unlike what may be imagined, the communities descended from the *quilombos* are not isolated experiences, lacking in and form of organization. They are, in fact,

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³⁶ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

³⁷ <http://www.allbookstores.com/book0313312427>

³⁸ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Ibid

present-day nuclei of resistance in which the use and possession of their land coexist with its public and private appropriation, reinforcing the idea of lands being used in common, thereby representing a dramatic counterpoint to the logic of the capitalist incorporation of land into the market. The *quilombos* survive on an identity rooted in territory occupied for centuries, where they engage in activities covering cultural and religious practices and their particular way of life and work. They assert themselves as a distinct group on the basis of their particular beliefs and notion of legal rules enshrined in common law. They understand these territories to be theirs *de jure*, making unnecessary, in their logic, any formalization by means of wills or inventories. The lands are invariably engraved in the memory of the group, constituting a commitment accepted and respected by all.⁴¹

The communities in question are clearly viewed, above all by government bodies who are generally completely lacking in information on them, as groups destined to disappear, as if they were by now in a terminal condition, as is the case in Brazil with, for example, indigenous peoples, artisan fishermen, rubber tappers and chestnut gatherers.. Nonetheless, it so happens that they have a history and a tradition of resistance that cannot be ignored. The lack of data or possession of inaccurate information are not exactly the result of ingenuousness, for, after all, ignorance of the facts may also be regarded as a refined way of dominating. Given that their numbers, history and importance are thus unknown, denying them that to which they are entitled by right and by law would be an even more serious omission.⁴²

The descendants of the *quilombos* achieved an initial and tardy recognition in **Brazil's 1988 Constitution**. Articles 215 and 216 include the *quilombos*' descendants as part of the country's national heritage, and article 68 refers to "Transitory Provisions". The latter guarantee the right of ownership of the lands they occupy – the so-called 'Negroes' Lands' - to the descendants of former slaves, in theory granting title to the land to all the communities originating from *quilombos* existing in the country:

Art. 68. Definitive ownership is recognized for the descendants of the quilombo communities who are occupying their lands, the State having the duty to issue them with the respective title deeds.

(Article 68 of the Transitory Constitutional Provisions/1988)

In this way the Constitution enabled the Negro to be recognized as an individual, and as a citizen able to demand rights that had been withheld for centuries by the State in collusion with a significant part of the elite. Thus a number of preliminary criteria should be taken into account in identifying and characterizing the black communities descended from the *quilombos* in Brazil.⁴³

- These communities, found all over Brazil, may be characterized inasmuch as their inhabitants employ categories of self-definition and/or self-attribution that function as an identity-generating element for such social groups, invariably refer to themselves as **blacks** and claim to belong to a given **territory**;

- Descendants of the *quilombos* may be identified on the **lands** used for work and abode of Afro-Brazilian communities, whose proven occupation is based on the secular possession of the lands in question;

- The communities have a geographical focus common to the group, invariably with no document of title or legal procedures of inventory or division. They value their sociability, regulated by social bonds established collectively, with no kind of fragmentation of the land that is common to the dwellers as a whole. In these locations religious or cultural manifestations are carried out or work is performed, factors that give the group its identity;

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

⁴¹ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

- They **organize** themselves in **family working units**, in which the family is not only a social unit but also an economic unit of production. The work of all family members operates on a logic that simultaneously guarantees the sustenance of a family and, at the same time, integrates it into the collective entity in the areas of common interest;
- To refer to themselves the communities use expressions such as: "Blacks' Land", "Descendants of *Quilombos*", "Rural Black Communities", "*Mocambo*", "*Quilombo*" or some analogous term that indicates a preponderantly black ethnic identity. Such terminological variation permits a constant updating of meaning and adaptation to the different forms of organization currently encountered;
- Such communities live in relative harmony with the existing natural resources, the **environment** being viewed as essential for the continued existence of present and future generations in the same area.

If the Brazilian government were able to come to terms with the institutional recognition that would be necessary to begin to implement the spirit of the Constitution - that is the required expropriations and the issuing of the respective title deeds - it would need to proceed as follows:

- (i) The initiative should, whenever possible, come from the interested communities themselves, whether judicially or extra-judicially;
- (ii) The federal tier of the judiciary has the power to examine the dossiers for recognition and issue of title deeds of the rural black communities, a cautionary measure in their favour being appropriate in situations of conflict over possession of land;
- (iii) On common lands, administrative legal proceedings prepared with a favourable written opinion of the Palmares Foundation (an organ of the Brazilian Ministry of Culture) and a competent anthropological report will be sufficient for the issuing of the collective deed of ownership;
- (iv) In the definition of territorial domains, the direct beneficiaries of the act of recognition should be compulsorily heard;
- (v) The decisions regarding recognition shall be based on ethnic-historical and anthropological reports, in the preparation of which the Brazilian Anthropology Association should be consulted in terms of the appointment of the expert.⁴⁴

Political Mobilizations, Official Recognition and Title Deeds

Between 1986 and 1995 a number of mobilizations of regional and national importance occurred. In the State of Maranhão. *Meetings of Rural Black Communities* were held (the first in 1986, the second in 1988, the third in 1989 and others in the following decade), and in 1992 the *Frexal Quilombo Extractive Reserve* was set up. In the State of Pará *Black Roots Meetings* were organized (the first in 1988, the second in 1989 and others in the following decade), and in 1989 the *Oriximiná Association of Quilombo Descendants* was founded. In the early 1990s similar mobilizations began in other states such as Bahia, São Paulo, Pernambuco and Mato Grosso do Sul. In Brasilia, in 1994, the *I National Seminar of Vestigial Quilombo Communities* was held under the aegis of the Palmares Cultural Foundation. In 1995 the *1st National Meeting of Rural Black Communities* took place with representatives of 26 rural black communities, resulting in a letter of demands delivered to the President of the Republic.

Since 1994 the *Brazilian Association of Anthropology (ABA)* had been in a state of mobilization and has drawn attention to the process of redefining the term "*quilombo*."

The ABA working party's document '*Rural Black Communities*' pointed to the following three criteria that have been used to characterize these communities as a vestigial *quilombo*:

- a) The existence of a noticeable Black group of residents,
- b) Other Ethnic groups with their own particular feelings of belonging,
- c) Other communities with their own distinctive way of living and territoriality predominantly based on the common use of the land.

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⁴⁴ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

An intense discussion has been conducted on the procedures for the recognition and the issuing of the title deed of *quilombo* lands on the basis of article 68 of Brazil's Constitution. In several states of the Brazilian Federation there are policies being implemented. In the state of São Paulo, for example, a government group was set up that decided to take responsibility for the question of the 'vestigial *quilombos*. In the case of the state of Pará, where some of the *quilombos* are situated on officially unoccupied land, action was being taken by INCRA, the National Institute of Settlement and Land Reform. In other states, the demands have been referred to various federal and state official bodies.⁴⁵

A work of systematization carried out by the Palmares Cultural Foundation – a government organ linked to the Ministry of Culture and charged with the co-ordination and execution of actions in the field of Afro-Brazilian culture - has since 1996 identified 724 communities where two million descendants of *quilombos* are living. Of these 32 have now been recognized by publication in the Official Gazette, and of these 18 have now received their definitive title deeds. Once all the conflicts and tensions caused by the lack of land have been resolved, there arises the problem of the structuring and maintenance of the settlements. This will involve the creation of conditions favourable to the permanence of the groups in locations that are for the most part difficult to reach and with few productive areas.

The Brazilian government, responding to improve the lot of black population, has begun imposing **racial quotas** for government jobs.⁴⁶

Final Comments

As we have seen, with the end of slavery the Brazilian Negro's prospects of economic and social participation were extremely limited. The Negro's **exclusion** in Brazilian society is basically twofold: **racial** and **economic**. The camouflaged racial prejudice relegates Negroes to a subaltern position in Brazilian society; accordingly, a large part of the black population swells the pockets of poverty and wretchedness.⁴⁷

With regard to the *quilombo* communities, the main question concerns the **land**, which is shared in common among a group of relations and constitutes the essential condition for life. It also provides the basis of group memory and tradition that guides them and structures their vision of the world. Nevertheless, the reality they face today is one of immense conflicts with other groups of Brazilian society - mining companies, hydroelectric power plants, livestock agriculture, political projects - by virtue of the interests that call into question their possession of ancestral land. They are subjected to many forms of violence on the part of hired gunmen acting on the orders of landowners, while threats of every kind make it impossible for them to work the land and remain in their places of origin.⁴⁸

The historical reality of black resistance has recently become the symbolic frame of reference for a new **black identity** in the rural areas. This is beginning to emerge from the resistance to the new threats represented by capitalist expansion in the countryside and from the subsequent loss of the traditional black territories. The rural black communities find backing for their struggle in Brazil's 1988 constitution which, in article 68 of the Transitional Provisions, grants the vestigial *quilombos* the definitive possession of their lands. This concept, that originally benefited a small number of black communities that succeeded in proving their descent from the former *quilombos*, has been acquiring a broader application. Today it covers a wide range of situations in which traditional communities of Negroes find in the *quilombo* the chief symbol of their struggle for possession of their ancestral land and

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

⁴⁵ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

⁴⁶ Read Larry Rohther (NY Times) April 7, 2003

⁴⁷ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

⁴⁸ Ibid

the improvement of their living conditions.⁴⁹ Thus the *quilombos*' descendants today experience a discovery and a reinterpretation of their enslaved forebears, placing them in the context of the wider struggle for ownership of the land and citizenship on the part of a historically marginalized population.

And why is it that some of the vestigial *quilombo* communities are losing their territories? Why, then, have so few of them obtained recognition of the occupied lands and the subsequent definitive title deeds? As we have seen, there are various **reasons** explaining their loss of land occupied for centuries and the slowness in the issuing of the deeds of ownership. These include:

- the building of interstate highways intended to integrate states and regions and that have endangered the equilibrium of these communities and aroused the interest and greed of large landowners;
- the construction of hydroelectric power plants;
- the existence of *quilombos* in privately owned and ecologically protected areas;
- the bureaucracy of public bodies that shows a sad lack of interest on the part of the State;
- the political pressure exerted by the oligarchic elite;
- the difficulties faced by the communities in pursuing, unaided, the legal proceedings for recognition of their lands and subsequent receipt of the respective title deed;
- manipulation and fraud on the part of the large landowners involving the presentation of documents falsely claiming ownership of the lands in question.

Since the *quilombos* are not merely relics of the past but they are owed all due respect in memory of the heroes killed in the fight against slavery. It is, therefore, essential that they be viewed as a present-day **challenge**, bearing in mind the hundreds of black communities scattered throughout Brazil who are deprived of land rights and for whom true freedom has not yet arrived. But they are also a **commitment** for the future, seeing that the *quilombo* represent an important and formative element in Brazil's civilization process. Their future generations will not survive without their lands, particularly since they have never known any other home. Denying them access to land would be a major denial by the Brazilian State of the fundamental right of this historically significant ethnic group.⁵⁰

The vestigial *quilombo* communities are not claiming a more acceptable or respected place within Brazilian society as is the case with other social minorities. In fact they already enjoy such a place. What they do demand, however, is the recognition of the legality and legitimacy they have possessed by right since the promulgation of Brazil's 1988 constitution. They wish to remain exactly where they have always been in their communities without facing the risk of expulsion, without suffering the pressure of large landowners coveting the rich natural resources existing on their land, and without the prohibition of their traditional forms of survival. In short, what they really want is to be treated with **dignity** and **respect** as they are citizens who have contributed – and still contribute – to Brazil's process of civilization.⁵¹

COLOMBIA

GENERAL INFORMATION

The arrival of a Boat loaded with black people in Bahía de Cartagena, in 1518, was a milestone in the slavery trade in Colombia. The main places to trade slaves were in the North,

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⁴⁹ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

Cartagena (Black harbour of the country), and, in the South, Popayan (Province from where they distributed slaves to the Pacific area and to the Northwest of the current Antioquia).

The autonomous settlement of blacks in Colombian is linked to the creation of the Slavery Abolishment Law on 21st of May 1851. But it should be kept in mind that the presence of blacks who were freed since the XVI century were through the **cimarronismo**, which means the escape of slaves. This activity became true in the XVIII century, giving rise to the beginning of **palenques**, in which black societies were freed. Nowadays, there are still some villages which used to be palanques, for instance: San Basilio de Palenque, San Jose de Ure en Cordoba and other places in the Atlantic as well as in the Pacific.⁵²

The majority of Afro-Colombians are in the Pacific Coast, where they keep the cultural traditions and indeed the pride of being blacks. Afro-Colombians have emigrated to Nariño and Choco and to the South to Caqueta and Putumayo.

Many black communities are on the Atlantic Coast. Those blacks do not identify themselves as blacks for being mixed.

There also the islanders, so called "raizal". They are the mixture of the English who arrived in the Providence Island in 1626, and 7 years later in San Andres, with Africans brought as slaves from Jamaica and other islands in the Caribbean to work in the cotton and tobacco plantations. Another element in this mixture is the Meskitos from the Coast of Central-America. The relation of the Meskitos and the English had to reasons: One was trade and the second was to fight against the Spanish.⁵³

Afro-Colombians are also concentrated in big cities like Cali, Medellin and Bogota, where they have gone looking better work conditions as well as to continue their education.

Still now, there is no data of the Afro-Colombian Population. The only thing which exists is the approximate data. In spite of this difficulty it is believed that they account for about 12.000.000, which is the 26% of the whole population.⁵⁴

Economic Situation of Afro-Colombians

A big part of the Afro-Colombians among whom is the church, are characterized by social, economic, and cultural exclusion, in which there is a high rate of children mortality, malaria, lung tuberculosis, etc.

In places where there are black communities the development of the culture has not received support by the government. Their sport has not received any support either.

The use of inappropriate technology to explore the natural resources is causing a strong environment impact in the region. Consequently, causing multiple damages to the earth, water and in general to the environment.⁵⁵

The recent migration to the Pacific area for the settlers and investors have introduced new productive models, which are not sustainable and damage the social organization that the production process that Afro-Colombians have applied.⁵⁶

Regarding the economic aspect, most of afro-Colombians live in the rural areas, where they work in the mining industry, fishing and timber industry. These industries are characterized by low productivity in the employment of traditional technology, generally with low environmental impact.

In the cities Afro-Colombians work in the informal sector of the economy: peddlers, construction, housekeeping and others, with low paid and without social security.⁵⁷

The Afro-Colombian women face poverty, unemployment, low health protection and high domestic violence. This has forced them to abandon the original settlements. The same thing

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⁵² Different writers. Mi Cristo Negro de las Americas, p 33. CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

happens with young Afro-Colombians, who do not have guaranties and opportunities to enter universities, get good jobs, and maintain their own vision of the cultural and social reality.⁵⁸

The origin of the Africans who came to Colombia is quite controversial, in particular talking about “*rasgos culturales*” (cultural characteristic), of certain group of people living in particular areas. However the conclusions about the tribal origin are still unclear.

There is a theory which is the most credible one, and says that during XVI and XVII black people were taken from: Cape Verde and Guinea. There is a theory that many slaves arrived in Nueva Grenada from Sierra Leona, Congo, and Angola. From these countries they were brought to the Peninsula Ibérica and then to the coasts of Cartagena, then distributed in other regions.

The black people have contributed to the Colombian Society and Latin America with their work in farms, mining construction, building roads, housekeeping, etc.

In the cultural aspect, we find great contributions from people of African origin in the musical instruments, such as: drums, maraca, marimba; in music and dance; in sports, traditional medicine, and in the culinary. In the literature the oral tradition through *teles*, *décimas*, sayings, myths, legends, etc.

In the Pacific area, historically this area has been influenced by many external interests, especially during the 80s and 90s, where this following facts happened:

The growing economy has promoted the region as “Sea of the XXI century“. Many projects were boosted, such as the Canal Inter-Oceanic, Modern Terminal of Tribuga, The road which communicate with the whole American Continent.

At the same time, the area is promoted as a very important for the entire world for its biologic diversity. A new definition came as Pacific Bio-Graphic for being one of the five areas of major big-diversity on earth.⁵⁹

The 1991 Constitution and the New Possibilities for Autonomy

In last two decades of the 20th century, the international context offered the Pacific Coast new opportunities to express and negotiate its inclusion into the Colombian nation. First, trade with Asia reinforced the geo-strategic position of the region and, second, the global interest in bio-diversity encouraged a different perspective on the natural resources of Pacific Coast. This changing context was favourable to push forward the emerging processes of affirmation of ethnic identity and the cultural project of sustainable management of natural resources.⁶⁰

This rural mobilization on the Pacific Coast – unprecedented in the history of the region - culminated in the 1991 Constitution that granted specific rights to ethnic groups. Article 55 granted territorial rights to the *black* population of the Pacific Coast –exclusively – and this led to the formulation of the Law 70 of 1993. This law establishes regional community councils, defines the areas that are excluded from the process of granting titles to land and also the general procedures for collective land titling. A Division of Black Communities in the Ministry for Internal Affairs was also created (*Agenda Pacífico XXI*: 2000).⁶¹

However, the legislation on Afro-Colombian communities of the Pacific Coast is far from being equivalent to that of the indigenous groups. This is partly due to the strong organization of the indigenous movement in Colombia in comparison to the Afro- Colombian one and also to the State’s vision over the *ethnicity* of these two groups. In fact, indigenous *resguardos*, as set up by article 330 of the Constitution are *autonomous territorial entities* -as compared to the Afro-Colombian collective territories- and this status marks significant differences, notably in the fact that indigenous *resguardos* receive part direct financial support from the

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

⁵⁸ Different writers. Mi Cristo Negro de las Americas, p 33. CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003.

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

⁶¹ Ibid

national budget. The proportion of territory in relation to the population for each ethnic group also is not comparable. Indigenous groups -representing 4% of the region’s population- have legal title to 1.6 m. Hectares on the Pacific Coast as a result of their own strong mobilization and lobbying tactics.⁶² On the other hand, Afro-Colombians –90% of the population- have been granted only 1.5m. Hectares of land. Moreover, territorial zoning now mark the borders between indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities that had been living next to each other with their own norms for sharing natural resources and resolving conflicts. These defined lines and the presence of external mediators have created new sources of tensions between the different communities on the Pacific Coast.⁶³

The vision of Afro-Colombians established by the Constitution can be explained by looking at their two main perceptions of **cultural identity**: the *black* vs. the *Afro-Colombian*. The first perception is based on *mestizaje* and sees blacks as colonizers while the second vision takes into account historical processes, continuities with Africa – death rituals, *alabaos*, social and political organization, extended family patterns, knowledge and techniques for environmental management - and adaptation to Spanish and indigenous cultures. The last perception is what is claimed by many today as *ethnicity* though many also deny it.⁶⁴ The Constitution includes elements of both visions though is favours the former as it formulates the Law of *Black Communities of the Pacific settled on empty lands*, thus reducing ethnicity to race and ancestrally to colonization. On the other hand, the recognition of collective territories and the formation of community councils – though created according to national rules and not to tradition - make an implicit recognition of the cultural specificity and ethnicity of Afro-Colombians.⁶⁵ Furthermore, it idealizes certain traditions while, at the same time, disregarding the impact of decades of cultural imposition, processes of social stratification and environmental degradation. These two tendencies among Afro-Colombians themselves and in the country in general are giving a political value to black or Afro-Colombian identity. Hence, the political Constitution represents a first step for the inclusion of Afro-Colombians into the Nation, but total inclusion remains a distant goal given the ambiguities in the formulation of the Law and lack of political will to implement the Law as outlined in the Constitution (Maya: 1997, Arocha: 1997).⁶⁶

Cultural and Populating aspects

The Pacific area has an overwhelming black majority, which stands for 92%, indigenous 5%, half-caste 3%. The biggest concentration of the population is in the urban areas of Buenaventura in Valle del Cauca District, Quibdo in Chocó District, Tumaco in Nariño District and Guapi in Cauca District.

This area is inhabited by 79% of black and indigenous communities. There has always been a linkage between people and the nature.

The Pacific’s Population

Indicador	Región	Nación
Población (1993 censo ajustado)	2.250.583 inhabitants	37.664.711 habitantes
Participación de la región en la población nacional	6.01%	
Población cabecera	42.2% (945.789 habitantes)	68.6% (25.849.387 habitantes)

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⁶² Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

Población resto	57.98% (1.304.794 habitantes)	31.4% (11.815.324 habitantes)
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Source: Dane/ Biopacífico.

Most of the communities have large family members (6 average), they recognize the authority of the elderly.

ECUADOR

The Ecuadorian population accounts for about 12 million people including blacks, indigenous and mestizos (half caste). According to the census the black population accounts for about 8%, that is to say 960.000 *Afro-Ecuadorians*.

The regions where traditionally black people have been settled are: Esmeraldas, Valle del Chota and Bank of Mira River in Imbabura and Carchi provinces. There are also blacks in Guayas Province, El Oro, Pichincha, Sucumbios, Orellana, Los Rios and Loja.

During the past years blacks have settled in Pichincha and Guayas Provinces.

Black Ecuadorians were brought from Africa as slaves, as we can see bellow:

In 1553 a boat coming from Panama ran aground in Esmeraldas Province. This boat was bringing merchandise and blacks that belonged to the Spanish Alonso de Illescas. There were 17 black males and 6 black females, who ran into the bush. The first blacks were Anton, Alonso de Illescas and the Arrobe.⁶⁷

In 1575 the first blacks arrived in the Chota Valley, who were brought from Colombia by Caique de Tulcan, Garcia Tulcanaza. Although we can say the majority of blacks were brought by Jesuits (1627-1700) to work in the sugar cane farms.⁶⁸

General Jose Maria Urbina, on 21st of July 1857, issued a *Decreto de la Abolición de la Esclavitud* (Statute of the Slavery Abolition), however the slavery continued . At the end of the XVIII century the news of the *labaderos de oro del Rio Santiago* gold washing area in Santiago River in Esmeraldas Province, brought many slaves from Colombia to Ecuador to work in the already said *Labaderos de Oro*.⁶⁹

The Afro-Ecuadorians have contributed to the progress of the county. In the cultural area there are some important names such as Adalberto Ortis, Nelson Estupiñan Bass, Antonio Preciado, Aparicio Arce, among others.

In the last 8 years many black organizations have emerged. These organizations liase between black people and the state towards the creation of effective policies for the black community.

The strengthening of the black process in Imbabura and Carchi Provinces with the *Federación de Comunidades y Organizaciones Negras de Imbabura y Carchi* (FECONIC); in Pichincha Province the *Federación de Organizaciones y Grupos Negros de Pichincha* (FOGNEP), among other organizations in the country, in March 1998, gave rise to the *Confederación Nacional Afroecuatoriana* (CNA), which is the official voice of the Afro-Ecuadorians before the State.⁷⁰

In these days, it is very important to have the *Cooperación de Desarrollo Afroecuatoriana* (CODAE), which is a secretary assigned to the Presidency of the Republic to create good conditions for the Afro-Ecuadorian Community. This entity needs to be strengthened by the State and the black community to create projects for the development of the black society.⁷¹

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

⁶⁷ Different writers. Mi Cristo Negro de las Americas. CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Ibid.

The *etnoeducación* is an educational proposal, which emerges from a reality, *cosmovisión* and thought of the Afro-Ecuadorian Culture. In this sense the proposal is oriented to promote the *Culturas Afroecuatorianas* in schools where there is a black population.

Statistics on Ethnicity in Ecuador

The first statistics on the question of ethnic self-definition was the “*Encuesta de Medición de Indicadores de la Niñez y Hogares*” (EMEDINHO), Survey of Measurement of the Youth and Home that took place in 2000. The survey was to evaluate if Ecuador was in compliance with the World Summit for the Childhood’s goals carried out in 1990. Many Ecuadorian Institutions as: (SIISE, INEC, Instituto del Niño y la Familia) and some international organizations (UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA) agreed on funding. SIISE with the technical assistance of the University of Cornell designed and asked the inclusion of an additional module on ethnic and share capital to study ethnic discrimination on the labour market. In this survey some ethnicity principles were taken into account as: Language, parents` mother tongue and ethnic self-definition.⁷²

Ethnic self-definition.

According to the 2001 census, 6% of the population under 15 years identified themselves as indigenous, and 5.0% as Afro-descendent. From the latter, 2.3% identified themselves as Black, and 2.7% mulatto. The 77.7% of the population under 15 years identified themselves as *mestizo* (half caste), and 10.8 identified themselves as white⁷³. The fact that the percentage of white is bigger than the percentage of the indigenous attracts people’s attention because it shows that people do not want to recognize their *mestizaje* (cross-breeding).

In general, the results of the census are different from the ones found in EMEDINHO 2000. In this survey, 5.7% of the population under 15 years identified themselves as indigenous and a similar percentage accepted to be Afro- Ecuadorians. Taking into account the importance of the indigenous movement in Ecuador, consequently the social appreciation of being indigenous, in the future surveys the number of indigenous will be higher. In addition, in EMEDINHO, 72.4% of the population under 14 years identified themselves as *mestiza* (half caste), and 15.4% to be white.

The Farming and Livestock Census of 2000 also included the questions of language and ethnic self-identification. The latter was applied on a producing person while being interviewed. The producing person decides and organizes habitual activities of the production and marketing. This census took place in the rural areas of the country and shows that 21% of the producing people identified themselves as indigenous, 15% as black, 72% as *mestizo*, and 5.5% as white.⁷⁴

Table No. 1 Ethnicity according to the Population Census of 2001. 100% of the population under 15 years.

	Selfidentify	Speak a native language	Speak a native language or self-identify
<i>Indígenas</i>	6.1	4.6	6.6
<i>Afroecuatorianos</i>	5.0	n.a	n.a
<i>Negros</i>	2.3	n.a	n.a
<i>Mulatos</i>	2.7	n.a	n.a

Source: INEC, VI Censo de Población y V de Vivienda

Table: Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador-SIISE

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⁷² The results of EMEDINHO are published in SIISE, *Los niños y las niñas ahora, 2001*

⁷³ The percentage of the Census 2001 is: 6.8% indigenous, 2.2% black, 77.4%. mestizo, 2.7% mulatto, 10.5% white.

⁷⁴ See INEC-MAG-SICA, III Censo Nacional Agropecuario, Resultados Nacionales y Provinciales, Vol.. 1. 2002

Geographic Distribution of ethnic groups

In this context, the impact and percentage of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian population is based on provinces (Attached 1 and 4). The impact is understood to be the percentage of the indigenous and Afro Ecuadorians in each province, which results of the division of the number of the indigenous and black population by the total population of the province.

The indigenous and black populations are throughout the county. Nevertheless, they are more numerous in certain provinces and *cantones*. In the case of the indigenous population according to the joint definition language and self-identification, the provinces with bigger impact are: Napo 56.1%, Mora Santiago (41.3%), Chimborazo (38.7%), Pastaza (38.4%), Orellana (31.4%), Imbabura (25.8%), Cotopaxi (24.8%), Bolivar (24.4%), Canar (17.3%), Tungurahua (15%), Zamora Chinchipe (12,8%) and Zucumbios (11%). However, the distribution indicator shows that nearly 50% of the total indigenous population live in Chimborazo (17.6%), Pichincha (12.2%) Imbabura (10%) and Cotopaxi (9.8%). Other high percentages of distribution belong to Tungurahua (7.5%) and Guayas (6%). The 50.2% of the indigenous population is in the following cantons: Quito (8.1%), Otavalo (5.7%), Riobamba (5.5%), Ambato (5.3%), Colta (4.4%), Guaranda (4.1%), Guayaquil (4.0%), Pujili (3.8%), Guamote (3.7%), Tena (5.3%), and Alausi (2.6%). It should be noted that 12.1% of the indigenous population, that is, approximately one of out ten indigenous live in the two most important cantons of the country: Quito and Guayaquil.⁷⁵

The provinces that have more Afro-Ecuadorians are: Esmeraldas (39.9%), Guayas (6.6%), Carchi (5.4%), El Oro (5.4%), Sucumbios (5.2%) and Imbabura (4.8%). Nevertheless, nearly three of the quarter of the Afro-Ecuadorian population are in Guayas (35%), Esmeraldas (25.5%) and Pichincha (13%). The 50% of the population lives in Cantons of Guayaquil (26%), Esmeraldas (11.6%), Quito (9.5%) and Eloy Alfaro (3.5%). Approximately one of ten afro-descendent persons live in the main cantons of the country, Quito and Guayaquil (36%).⁷⁶

Inequality and exclusion for ethnic reasons

It is important to mention that before determining the indigenous and black percentage, the goal of the questions was to demonstrate the inequality in social achievements of these people regarding the majority *white-mestizo*, this result is due in part to the excluding presence in the allocation of public resources and in the offer of basic services.

An indicator that shows the lack of vital conditions of the population is the poverty according to the unsatisfied needs (NBI). The percentage of the poor population in the country, according to the definition of basic unsatisfied needs, suggested by the Andean Community, is 61.3% (see Attach No.6). However, this national average hides differences in the interior of the country. As we can see in the graphic No.1 nine of out ten people identified themselves as indigenous and seven out of ten identified themselves as black. The impact of the poverty on these people is bigger than the national average. The only ethnic group with poor impact below of the national average is the one formed by who self-identified as whites. In fact, less than five out of ten people identified themselves as white is poor (45%).

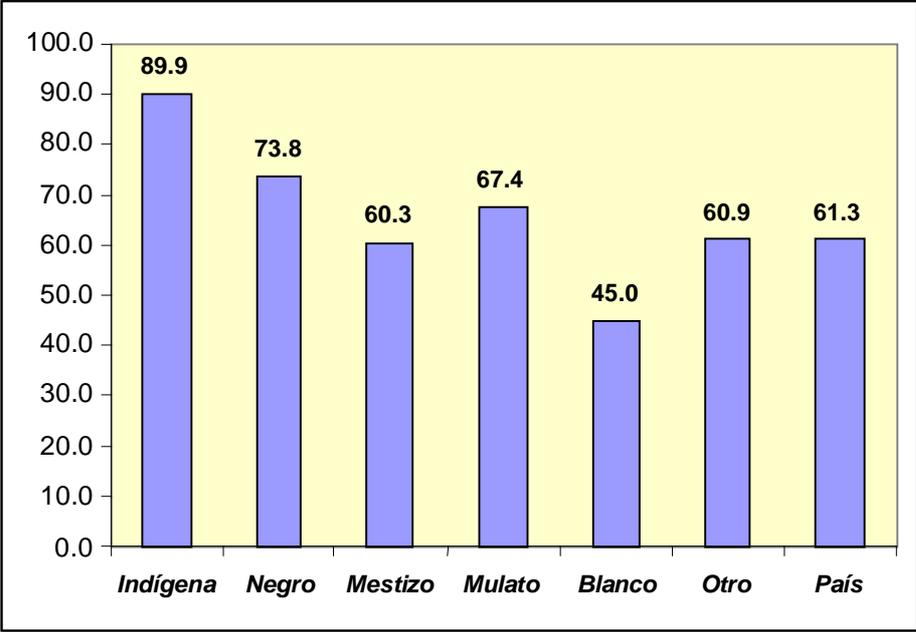
Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

⁷⁵ Leon Guzman Mauricio, *Etnicidad y Exclusion in Ecuador: una mirada a partir del censo de Poblacion de 2001*. February 2003.

⁷⁶ Leon Guzman Mauricio, *Etnicidad y Exclusion in Ecuador: una mirada a partir del censo de Poblacion de 2001*. February 2003.

Graphic No. 1

Percentage of the population according to the unsatisfied needs (NBI)



Source: INEC, VI Censo de Población y V de Vivienda
Graphic: *Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador-SIISE*

There are some indicators that show the differences regarding social achievement among ethnic groups and this is the education. The table No. 3 describes the average education in the population under 24 years according to the ethnic group. The Graphic shows that those who speak one the native language have 2.1 years of education (average); whereas those who only speak spanish have 7.4 years of education (average).

It is of paramount importance to mention that the Ecuadorian society is very racist against *Afroecuatorianos*. The first characteristic on this is the **denial** of the ethnicity and culture; and when they somehow recognize it is always **played down** or they apply certain false *racial integration*. But this racial integration is proven not to be true. This was ratified when in 1995 the *Jefe de la OID* (Chief, Office of Criminal Investigation) said in a public gathering that: *“There is a particular human race, which is prone to commit crimes...and this is the **black people**, who are coming to the cities forming places of poverty prone to commit crimes for being daring and ignorant.”*⁷⁷

While our Constitution says that everyone **is equal before law**. *“Todas las Personas serán consideradas iguales y gozan de los mismos derechos, libertades y oportunidades, sin discriminación en razón de nacimiento, edad, sexo, etnia, color, origen social, idioma, religión, filiación política, posición económica, orientación sexual; estado de salud, discapacidad, o diferencia de cualquier otra índole.”*⁷⁸ Apparently this is true, but in real life things are different, since everyday we see and hear stereotypes against blacks. The fact that

Savoia Rafael. *El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana* 2002
⁷⁷ Article Published by *Diario Hoy*, 9 September 1995, which refers to the shootout in which four blacks were murdered.
⁷⁸ *Constitución Política de la República del Ecuador*. Legislative Decree No. 000.R0/1 of 11th August of 1998.

Ecuadorian society does not recognize the existence of racism make things even worse because there is no hope that things are evolving.

The Political Constitution of Ecuador, in Chapter V (Collective Rights), § 1, refers to **Pueblos Indigenas y Negros o Afroecuatorianos**. Thus, Art. 83. Says *Los pueblos indigenas, que se autodefinen como nacionalidades de raíces ancestrales, y los pueblos negros o afroecuatorianos, forman parte del Estado Ecuatoriano, único e indivisible.*⁷⁹ (The indigenous peoples, who identify themselves as communities of ancestral origin, and the black people or afro-descendent, are part of the Ecuadorian State, distinctive and indivisible.

National Human Rights Programme

The Executive Decree No 1527 of 18th of June 1998, is the legal instrument whereby the President of the Republic passed **El Plan de Derechos Humanos** (The Human Rights Programme). The mastermind of this *plan* was the Former High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Jose Ayala Lasso. This Human Rights Programme has a chapter devoted to the Rights of the Black Population. *General Objectives:*

Improve the quality of life for the Afro-Ecuadorian people.

To strengthen and consolidate the Afro-Ecuadorian Movement.

Strategic Guidelines:

Establishment of social, economic, and cultural policies to allow the development of the Afro-Ecuadorian population and contribute to the advancement and preservation.

Establishment of concrete actions to ensure the full protection of the rights of the Afro-Ecuadorian population.

Ratification of ILO Convention

Involvement of Afro-Ecuadorians in top positions both in public and the private sector, in a proportion no less than 10%.

Legal and effective recognition of the participation of the participation of the black population's individual and collective rights.

Guarantee a real participation of black population in the administrative are of COPLEDE-IN and other decision-making agencies.

Ethnic-oriented education, mainly in communities where most of the population is black.⁸⁰

Finally, Ecuador has ratified the ILO Convention No. 169.

PARAGUAY

The presence of black and indigenous people account for 2% of the total population of 6 million. They are located in Emboscada, Diocesis de Caupé, 36 Kms. from Asuncion and FernandoMora, San Lorenzo, Camba Cua Community located at 15 Kms from Asuncion city.

The people of la Emboscada are 80 to 85% afro-descendant and work in mining.⁸¹

The people who live in Camba Cua lost their lands; as a result they became poorer. Hence the agriculture was not a good choice for those who lived in Camba Cua that is why they went to Fernando de la Mora and Asuncion looking for jobs. As a result, women played an important role in the sustenance of their families.⁸²

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⁷⁹ Political Constitution of Ecuador. P 30. 2001.

⁸⁰ See Plan Nacional de Derechos Humanos, Chapter of Rights of the Black Population, April 2000

⁸¹ Different Writers: Mi Cristo Negro de Las Americas, CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003

⁸² Ibid

Because of racism in the Paraguayan Society, for men to find a job was harder than for women. Women worked as housekeepers despite the low salaries; whereas men stayed at home taking care of their children.⁸³

The people of Camba Cua have had trouble trying to attend schools. The public schools are in terrible condition; however poor children can not attend private schools due to the high costs. The people who have finished primary school are unable to go to secondary school. In these days there are just five young people in University. The majority assume that for them is almost impossible to pursue their education and this has a negative impact in attitude to study. The health system in Paraguay is divided in two: private and public sector. Most of the people in Camba Cua have to use the public health service. The quality is poor and the medicine is expensive.⁸⁴

The first blacks who came to Paraguay was in 1717 to build the Castle for the defense of the territory under the Spanish rule. The castle was abandoned in 1738 and in 1740 the Emboscada town was founded by the 846 Afro-Americans, who lived nearby.

The contribution of the blacks to the Paraguayan society is evident, especially with the group of blacks, who enlisted the Paraguayan army during the war of Chaco and Coimbra. Perhaps their contribution has not been as remarkable as in other Latin-American countries because they were not so numerous.⁸⁵

PERU

Department	Population	Region
Piura	City, Morropón, Ypateras, Talamdraca, Chapica, Lomas, Santa Rosa de Parcaipampa	Coast. Perhaps this is the area where there are more mestizo people High Lands
Chiclayo	Lambayeque, Zaña, Capote, La Tina	Coast
Trujillo	Chicama muy dispersos	Coast
Ancash	Chimbote muy dispersos	Coast
Lima	Centre of the biggest presence: Huaral, Aucayama , Boza, Chancay, Puente Piedra, Comas, La Victoria, Barrios Altos, El Rimac, Lince, San Miguel, Chorrillos, Surquillo, Villa el Salvador, Nueva Esperanza, El Vallecito, Mala, Cañete	Coast
El Callao Prov. const.	Dispersos	Port
Ica	Concentration in Chincha San José, Hoja Redonda, El Carmen, Guayabo, San Regis, La Dacha, Chincha Baja, Tambo de Mora, Pisco. Ica ciudad, El Ingenio, La Banda, Changuillo, Cahuachi, Coyungo	Coast
Arequipa	Acarí	Coast
Tacna	Sama, Locumba	Coast

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⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ Different Writers: Mi Cristo Negro de Las Americas, CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003

⁸⁵ Ibid

AFRO-PERUVIAN COMMUNITIES ON THE PACIFIC COAST FROM SLAVES TO CITIZENS

There are few authoritative figures for the traffic of African slaves to the newly acquired Spanish colonies in the Americas from the early 1500s right up until the middle of the 1800s. Figures appear to range from 12 to 15 million, with the major influx occurring in the 1500s and 1600s (Delgado, 2000). What is a fact is that the first African slaves to arrive in Peru came with Pizarro's conquering army in 1527. They were the first foothold in the then *Virreinato* and since then they have been a noticeable but not substantial group within both colonial and Peruvian society. In 1535, for example, attracted by the stories of gold, 600 Spaniards and 400 black slaves arrived in Peru. The distinctive feature of this early migration was the fact that the black slaves had already been partially integrated into Spanish society via language and the catholic religion and few arrived directly from Africa to the western coast of the Americas. By the mid 1550s it was estimated that there were some 3.000 *negros* and *mulatos* in Peru, of whom over a half lived in Lima. By the time of the first census in 1604 there were already 3,428 *negros* in Lima alone (Rostworowski, 2000).⁸⁶ From the very beginning the *negros* were settled on the coast as labour on the vast sugar and cotton plantations and this geographical concentration has continued up to today. Furthermore it was in the 1540s that the first acts of rebellion were reported among the black slaves that began a long road of struggle that culminated with their emancipation in 1854. Between the early 1500s and the early 1800s it is estimated that up to 100,000 black slaves were transported to the *Virreinato* of Peru (Aguirre, 2000). Lima was their stronghold, but they were scattered along the coast. The number of *Negros* in Limas rose from 13,000 in 1619 to around 40,000 in 1790 that represented half the population of the city. Traditionally the *negros* worked as slaves in the larger houses or were lodged in the side streets - *callejones* - and poorest *barrios* where services were minimum and squalor everywhere. This has formed the basis of the *barrios negros* that are still a feature of Lima's demography. Emancipation arrived in 1854 but, in terms of their economic and social status, it had little effect on the lives of the *negros*. Liberation was proclaimed but it was not accompanied by any measures to raise the standard of living of the *negros* or to protect them from the discrimination that was rampant.⁸⁷ Indeed in the census in Lima in 1908 there were officially only 6,700 *negros*, which is a reflection or the denial of ethnic origin of many *negros* in order to escape the worse effects of discrimination. Even today 'ethnic origin' is not a question in a Peruvian national census and so there are no official figures of the numbers of Black Peruvians *Afro-Peruanos*. However there is agreement that the total numbers of *Afro-Peruanos* is certainly no less than 1.4 million and could be as high as 2.5 million, always bearing in mind the difficulties of unequivocal ethnic identity in situations of extensive ethnic mixing. This means that *Afro-Peruanos* could represent from 5 - 9% of the national population (Luciano and Pastor, 1997).⁸⁸ This is a sizeable minority that, in relation to the development of the country, goes largely unnoticed. For example, the World Bank funded *Indigenous and Afro-Peruvian Development Project* devotes far more space to examining the Indigenous Communities than the Afro-Peruvian ones. Today Peru's *Afro-Peruano* communities are concentrated in (a) Lima/Callao (b) in Tumbes/ Piura and a number of communities in the Department of Lambayeque in the north of the country and (c) in larger numbers in the provinces of Ica and Tacna in the south. While in Lima/Callao the majority of *Afro-Peruanos* - apart from professionals - are in low paid domestic, hotel or other services, in the Provinces *Afro-*

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

⁸⁶ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Ibid

Peruanos are largely **subsistence** farmers. But not all black Peruvians take pride these menial jobs.⁸⁹ Many of these farmers gained titles to small plots of land in the Agrarian Reform of the 1970s. In the north sugar and rice are the basic crops grown, while in the south cotton and corn are more dominant. With the disappearance of small farmer agricultural credit after the fall of the Apristas in 1990, most small *Afro-Peruano* farmers depend on the chain of middlemen. These finance crop production but on a basis that holds the small farmers permanently in debt and receiving only a small return on their labours.⁹⁰ The **poverty** and **deprivation** of these *Afro-Peruano* rural communities is clearly visible and theirs is a life to survive and not to prosper.⁹¹ There are no government extension services, rarely any external development agency apart from occasional church related welfare work, the minimum of basic services and little sense of any kind of 'development' or moving forward. Outside of Lima/Callao, *Afro-Peruanos* lives in **enclaves** of neglect and poverty and there are few signs that anybody is concerned with their interests. There is an air of resignation and little energy to do other than ensure survival. Furthermore it would appear that African based traditions and practices largely struggle to survive in a context in which identity is confused, resources are few and racism and discrimination against blacks are widespread.⁹²

CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS OF AFRO-PERUANOS

Poverty

Since the time of their first substantial presence in Peru, *Afro-Peruanos* have always been among the nation's poorest groups. Contemporary historical descriptions paint vivid pictures of the utter **poverty** and degradation in which *Afro-Peruanos* lived in Lima, the coastal towns and the sugar plantations. From the very beginning the *Afro-Peruanos* have always been identified with poverty and it has always been assumed that that was their lot. Even today if images of the poverty of the country are transmitted, inevitably the *negros* will be featured. While clearly contemporary Peru has risen above the squalor and degradation of the colonial and immediate independence periods, relatively most *Afro-Peruanos* continue to live on the margins of society and to struggle to achieve a decent livelihood. Along with the highland indigenous groups *Afro-Peruanos* have the highest percentage of their people in abject poverty and there is little prospect of any meaningful improvement.⁹³ There are very few wealthy or rich *Afro-Peruanos* and no contented middle-class. Most *Afro-Peruanos* in the cities gain a livelihood by selling their labour or in menial service tasks. The more prominent adorn the entrance halls of the big hotels or serve as night watchmen. It is only in Sport - the *Alianza Lima* Football Club - and some areas of dancing and music that *Afro-Peruanos* are able to make some money. Certainly they are never held up as role models of successful entrepreneurs. Furthermore few *Afro-Peruanos* reach the heights of further education. There is strong evidence that few *negros* get to University and also that very few reach the higher echelons for the professions.⁹⁴

The majority of *Afro-Peruanos*, however, are small **subsistence** farmers scattered along the country's Pacific coast. There is a hard existence in the absence of even a minimum infrastructure of support. It is on the coast that the *Afro-Peruanos* struggles to survive. In terms of basic services such as health and education, all the indicators show higher levels of illiteracy and school achievement and poorer health indicators. For example, most young *Afro-Peruanos* lack easy access to secondary education because of the costs involved of travel and subsistence and certainly all are falling behind in the age of information management.

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⁸⁹ www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/42a/009.html

⁹⁰ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Ibid

Furthermore it is more likely that an *Afro-Peruano* community will lack a reliable water supply. Certainly there seems little evidence that the basic fabric or rural *Afro-Peruano* lives has changed significantly over the past 20 years. One channel out of this depressing poverty is **sport**, and in particular the Lima based **Alianza Lima** Football Club that traditionally has been the team of black Peruvians and which even today is largely made up of players of obvious African descent. Alianza Lima is an important symbol for young *Afroperuanos* since it presents the image of immediate social and economic benefit for those young *Afroperuanos* with footballing skills.⁹⁵

Racism and Discrimination

While race comments can often be used as terms of endearment in Latin America - *sambo, mi negrito* - they cannot hide the also deep-rooted **racism** that is, for example, a characteristic of contemporary Peruvian society. And the *Afro-Latinos* often takes the brunt of harsh racist comments. For example, at the highest level, senior government officials will expose unwittingly their innate racism when issues relating to *Afro-Peruanos* are on the agenda. Recent loan discussions sparked off the reaction - *no queremos endeudar al pais por unos cuantos negros* - and such a comment reflects the institutionalized antipathy towards the plight and the problems of *Afro-Peruanos*. Similarly in much commercial propaganda relating to insecurity and violence, for example, it is the *negro's* face that more often appears. Much of this institutionalized racism is subtle and below the surface, but much also surfaces in the manner above. Peruvian professionals are remarkably frank in discussing institutionalized racism not only against the *Afro-Peruanos* but also against the minority *indian* populations and the *cholos*. This racism is complex and widely spread and affects the relations between most of Peru's ethnic groups, but the more generalized racism is directed at *Afro-Peruano*.⁹⁶ In 1997 Congress approved a law to outlaw racial discrimination in its more subtle forms - for example job adverts requesting *buena presencia* or *ropa apropiada* - but the more entrenched racist attitudes will be more difficult to change. While there is some inter-ethnic social mixing - particularly at community level - *Afro-Peruanos* tend to keep to themselves and to mix little with other groups. Peru's whites and *mestizos* in particular have the most entrenched racist attitudes towards *Afro-Peruanos* whom they see as both spoiling the ethnic purity of *lo Peruano* and as essentially little better than their slave forefathers. Many Peruvians are 'embarrassed' by *Afro-Peruanos* and show little tolerance to their plight and poverty. Despite their numbers and the fact that there is a noticeable cadre of black professionals within the Peruvian economy, the *Afro-Peruanos* as a group have found it difficult to rise above the general level of poverty and exclusion that characterize their lives.⁹⁷ Part of the answer to this is the racism and **discrimination** that they experience within Peruvian society. Furthermore their ethnic profile is bottom heavy, with the greatest mass among Peru's poor and only a fraction has risen above this level. Apart from the black professionals, there are a much smaller number of black intellectuals who promote their cause, but this by itself is not powerful enough to nudge the group forward in any substantial way. In most walks of Peruvian social, economic and political life *Afro-Peruanos* suffer the indignities of discrimination that is sometimes subtle but often overt. Indeed it is said that older *Afro-Peruanos* advise their children to marry outside of the black ethnic group in order to avoid the discrimination that a black skin inevitably causes as a first reaction. Furthermore, *Afro-Peruanos* point the finger at those blacks who have married into a different racial group as those who practice the more hostile discrimination.⁹⁸

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

⁹⁵ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

⁹⁶ Ibid

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Ibid

Identity

There is a crucial need for a body that would make the *Afro-Peruanos* more **visible** as an ethnic minority and fight for their interests. In a country as poor as Peru, organization is critical if a minority group is to have a chance to push for their legitimate claims. But as a group the *Afro-Peruanos* generally lack the experience and skills to enter the political arena, unlike some of the indigenes groups who for decades have been developing the skills and organization necessary for this work. In a country like Peru, the queue is long of seeks seeking justice and a recognition of their needs.⁹⁹ The *Afro-Peruanos* need to join that queue! *Afro-Peruano* **identity** and **self-esteem** are not strong enough to give the group the cohesion and force that it needs to get on the national development agenda. While among some of the indigenous groups of the Amazon region and the *aymara*, for example, the sense of national identity is strong, with the *Afro-Peruanos* it is weak and reduced to the efforts of a small number of representative groups. There are some black intellectuals, but their writings are not enough to help develop a strong sense of identity among *Afro-Peruanos* of their race, history and culture. Local initiatives exist to strengthen these but collectively they are weak.¹⁰⁰

AFRO-PERUANOS AND THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

While the overall development priority of Peru is its combat against endemic poverty, there are few - if any - specific development initiatives directed at the country's *Afroperuanos*. Indeed in a country as resource poor as Peru, it is perhaps unrealistic to expect that there would be particular attention directed at this minority group. The *Afroperuanos* are low in the pecking order of national importance after the small but very powerful *criollo* elite, the majority *mestizo* population, the *quechua* and *aymara* of the highlands and the indigenous tribes of the Amazon basin. While official statistics are not available, it would appear that even the established highland communities are losing out to the indigenous tribes of the Amazon in terms of development initiatives. The *Afro-Peruanos* are largely concentrated on the coast and scattered among a number of towns and communities and do not present a collective development agenda.¹⁰¹ The result is that, in development terms, they are largely **invisible** and ignored and there are few initiatives currently being directed at them. The fact that this can occur in the face of the overwhelming evidence of the **poverty**, in which the vast majority of *Afroperuanos* live, speaks volumes for this invisibility and their lack of ability to force their issues to be noted. While we found evidence that a number of charitable bodies and several national and international NGOs do target *Afro-Peruanos* with development initiatives that address their specific material needs, there are few examples of initiatives that are designed to address the broader issues of *Afro-Peruano* poverty and exclusion. We visited four locations of *Afroperuano* communities - Tarapote, Zaña, El Carmen and Guayabo - and found little evidence on any previous or on-going development initiatives designed to address the *Afroperuanos* fundamental needs of basic services and inputs to sustain their production base. It would appear, for example, that the recent wave of expansion of micro-credit and enterprises has passed by the *Afroperuano*; indeed few have any kind of contact with formal financial institutions.¹⁰² In this respect the question of balance between *rescate cultural* and access to tangible development inputs becomes important. As a group *Afroperuanos* labour in the field with no technical support and in a precarious relationship with the market. Admittedly we are talking of a very poor country but, nonetheless, it was surprising to witness the extent of the exclusion of *Afroperuanos* from any semblance of a development initiative. Given the fact that Peru is a country of priority for many bilateral donors and is the home of one of the

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

⁹⁹ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

¹⁰⁰ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Ibid

biggest national and international NGO communities, the exclusion of the *Afroperuanos* is that much more noticeable.¹⁰³

At the level of the **Peruvian Government**, PROMUDEH has a special *Secretaria Tecnica de Asuntos Indigenas (SETA)* that, by its very name, signals the **exclusion** of *Afro-Peruanos*. SETAI is based place to observe and note development initiatives directed at *Afro-Peruanos* and it confirms that, both in terms of bilateral aid and the NGO community, very little support is extended to *Afro-Peruano* communities.¹⁰⁴ At the **international donor** level, **USAID**, for example, has a working theme of 'democracy' in terms of the promotion of citizenship, equitable access to justice and human rights, but the contact of the programme with *Afro-Peruanos* is nil. USAID has a small projects fund that could be accessed by national NGOs on behalf on *Afro-Peruanos* but few have come forward yet with proposals relevant to this group. Similarly the **BID** has unsuccessfully tried on more than one occasion to target *Afro-Peruanos* but has failed due to the lack of an adequate organizational structure to represent the interests of the minority group. However there would appear to be a mayor and important initiative in the pip -line between the BID and the *Afro-Peruano* community in terms of BID support to the Consortium of *Afro-Peruano* NGOs to undertake a detailed situation analysis (**diagnostico**) of *Afro-Peruanos* and issues related to their development.¹⁰⁵ If this *diagnostico* is undertaken and completed it should reveal critical information on both the developments needs of *Afro-Peruanos* but more importantly, on realistic strategies for their development? Much will depend on how the diagnostic is focused and the content of its contextual analysis. At this moment, however, the only major initiative in terms of the development needs of *Afro-Peruanos* is a US\$ 5 m. World Bank project specifically aimed at Peru's indigenous population and *Afro-Peruanos*. The project is still in the process of being operationalised and has several major components:

- Strengthening state institutions that work with indigenous peoples
- Building the capacity of groups like the *Afro-Peruanos* in terms of training and the skills of project preparation
- National wide information campaign on issues related to the problems of Peru's ethnic minorities
- General community development
- Legal support on issues such as land.¹⁰⁶

The World Bank project appears to be the only major development initiative to which *Afro-Peruanos* have a genuine opportunity of access. It is however still at the operationalisation stage and there is no way of assessing how successful *Afro-Peruano* groups might be in accessing it. It is not a substantial fund and the potential candidates will be plentiful. However the emphasis of the programme would appear to be on indigenous groups. The analytical part of the project document is devoted almost exclusively to issues relating to indigenous groups, while the analysis of the *Afro-Peruano* group is brief. It would be unrealistic to expect this project to have a major impact on the *Afro-Peruanos*.¹⁰⁷ Projects of institutional strengthening and information management might well help to raise the profile of *Afroperuanos* but it is to be assumed that indigenous groups - who tend to be better organized - will reap the most benefit from this critical initiative. It is also a question of who will submit projects on behalf of the *Afro-Peruvian* community. Certainly the *Afroperuano* communities are unaware of this initiative and there is little evidence of any kind of participatory process in Preparation for identifying needs and determining priorities.¹⁰⁸ The lines of communication between the

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

¹⁰³ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

¹⁰⁴ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

¹⁰⁶ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

Afroperuano NGOs and their supposed bases are not always effective. More generally the international development community at all levels is largely ignorant of the development needs of *Afro-Peruanos* and offer little support. To an extent development aid has been much more attracted to the plight of 'indigenous peoples' than it has to less visible, but equally poor, ethnic groups.¹⁰⁹ This is certainly the case of the *Afro-Peruanos*. At the bilateral aid level *Afro-Peruano* initiatives are simply too small to command attention and usually are unable to meet the demanding requirements. Furthermore, apart from a small number of Dutch and Canadian NGOs and a small number of religious bodies, there are few non-government sector initiatives

Directed at the *Afro-Peruanos*. It is as if the group of between 1.5 - 2.5 million people did not exist.¹¹⁰

CONCLUDING ANALYSIS

Although authoritative demographic evidence is lacking, there can be no questioning the fact that the overwhelming majority of *Afroperuanos* live in relative or abject poverty and that there is an air of resignation and hopelessness about their plight. Apart from a number of distinguished *Afroperuano* families - the Santa Cruz and the Campos families, for example - artistes like Susana Baca, a small cadre of eminent *Afroperuano* professionals and a slightly larger group of black, middle-class professionals who have managed to rise above the general social and economic level of their ethnic group, most *Afroperuanos* simply strive to exist in an environment that discriminates against them, that offers them few opportunities and that, at the end of the day, judges them by the colour of their skin. **Poverty** lies at the heart of the problem of *Afroperuanos*, not only the poverty that they share with the majority of their compatriots, but the complete **lack of opportunity** that might enable them to rise above the morass. There are, for example, few small business opportunities targeted at *Afroperuanos*. Outside of the bodies that profess to represent their interests, neither the State, the international development community nor their own national NGOs concern themselves with this sizeable minority of the Peruvian population. The largest group is swallowed up in the 8-9 million Peruvians who live in Lima while the rest stretch out in dozens of communities along over 1000 miles of Peruvian coastline. Poverty breeds **competition** for scarce resources and, in this respect, the *Afroperuanos* continue to lose out.¹¹¹

Afroperuano intellectuals, professionals and subsistence families alike all feel essentially **excluded** from the mainstream Peruvian State. While they participate in formal electoral processes, *Afroperuanos* feel excluded positively from civic and public processes and that the formal mechanisms of the state administration largely pass them by. In this respect the exclusion goes beyond the economic and the inability to compete in a saturated labour market and reaches into the social and political fabric of the country. It is enough in the labour market to confront the stereotype of the lazy, dirty, and untrustworthy black without having to struggle in a society that essentially rewards the white and the *mestizo*.¹¹² There are few *Afroperuanos* in senior public positions, they are poorly represented in Congress and they have yet to be incorporated into the processes of civil society strengthening in Peru. In any ranking of ethnic groups in Peru in terms of their relative influence and 'inclusion' in Peruvian society - and apart from the many small indigenous tribes of Loreto - *Afroperuanos* tend to come out at the bottom, despite the fact that their numbers are not insignificant. Historians have emphasized the indigenous in Peru's history, the *indigenista* movement of the 1920s consolidated this hegemony and, more recently, anthropologists and sociologists have

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

¹⁰⁹ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

¹¹² Ibid

similarly concentrated on *lo indigena*. *Afroperuanos* have for too long been **anonymous** in their own country. *Afroperuanos* have never been able to shake off these centuries of Disinterest in their lives - apart, that is, from the intellectual promotion and study of African Culture - and their inherited image as slaves.¹¹³

URUGUAY

The black community is very small but its contributions to the culture have been notorious. Uruguay was the first country to abolish slavery. However blacks do not have the same job opportunities or the option to enrol in the universities as white people. Gustavo Laborde who is the correspondent of the *Servicio Informativo Iberoamericano* de la *OEI* in Montevideo (Ibero-American News Service), points out that from 165.000 black people only 60 have gone to university and there is no report on a single successful business, politician, ecclesiastical black person.

According to the Uruguayan Historian Oscar Montaña (1997) it is unknown the number of slaves who came to Uruguay because of the fire in the customs in 1923, which destroyed the registry books of slavery boats. Nevertheless, it was noted the arrival of 270 slavery boats in Montevideo since 1742 to 1810, bringing around 30.000 Africans. In view that the slave trade continued until 1840, Montaña estimates that the number of slaves was around 60.000.¹¹⁴

Mundo Afro 1997, in the report of the situation of the Afro-Uruguayan community, pointed out the year 1680 was the first year that Portuguese brought slaves to the colony. This record shows that in the middle of the XVIII century the first slaves came to Uruguay from Guinea.¹¹⁵

Another important piece of information is that Montevideo was declared by the “*Real Cedula*”, as the only entry port in South America (Mundo Afro, 1997). In 1842 slavery was abolished in Uruguay and in 1846 the freedom for “useful” men was declared in the throughout the territory to allow them to enrol in the army. (Mundo Afro, 1997).¹¹⁶

According to the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (INE), Mundo Afro confirms, that “5.9% of the Uruguayan population, who live in cities identified themselves as “black”, whether they are pure black or mestizo.” Approximately 78.000 live in Montevideo and 86.200 in other places, accounting 162.000 people.¹¹⁷

Outside the capital there is a large black concentration in the North West border (in the Departments of Artigas, Rivera, Tucuarembó, Cerro Largo y Rocha). According to Ramirez there are small villages in the countryside where there are communities made up of afro-descendent people. Although there is no figure regarding the black population.

From the information given by *Mundo Afro (Informe Sobre la Realidad de la Colectividad Afrouguaya, 1997; Diagnostico Socio-Económico de la Mujer Uruguaya, 1998; Different, however similar: document made by the Coordinadora Uruguaya de Apoyo a la Cumbre Mundial Contra el Racismo, 2000; Survey of the Asociación de Maestros del Uruguay on Racism in the formal educational system, 1994)*, likewise the module of the Race 1996-1997, we can mention the following discoveries:¹¹⁸ According to the Constitution of Uruguay everybody is equal before law (Article 8)¹¹⁹

Savoia Rafael. El Bloque Negro Agenda Latinoamericana 2002

¹¹³ Oakley Peter. Social Exclusion and Afro-Latinos. 2001

¹¹⁴ Different Writers: Mi Cristo Negro de Las Americas, p 94, CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003

¹¹⁵ Diagnostico Socioeconomico de la Mujer Afrouguaya. Ediciones Mundo Afro. Montevideo 1998

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ Different Writers: Mi Cristo Negro de Las Americas, p 95, CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003

¹¹⁹ Constitution of Uruguay.

Standard of living-employment:

.Up to 90% of Afro-Uruguayans live below the poverty line

.90% of Afro-Uruguayans work within the service sector

.The income of Afro-Uruguayans is 20% less than white's.

.The white retired get an average of 20 *Unidades Reajustables* (UR), whereas the blacks get 14 UR.

.The Afro-Uruguayans present bigger activity rates, employment rates and unemployment rates than the other races.

The Afro-Uruguayans do not have jobs in which they can serve the public.

The majority of the black people work in jobs involving manual labour.

Black women earn very low salaries despite that they work long hours.

There is a high percentage of housewives.

40% of women work as housekeepers.¹²⁰

This survey, the first study on the subject by the National Statistics Institute (NSI), covered the years 1996-1997. It confirmed an earlier study conducted by Argentine specialist Alejandro Frigerio, which argued that Afro-Uruguayans remained poor because they were marginalized economically and culturally.¹²¹ According to the NSI, unemployment among Blacks varied from 15.8 to 18.6 percent while for whites this figure oscillated between 11.3 and 11.7 percent in the period surveyed. The survey also confirmed that wages for white workers were some 65 percent higher than those of blacks. Income levels averaged 865 dollars for whites and 525 dollars for blacks.¹²²

Education

These days, there are less than 100 Afro-Uruguayans holding professional degrees.

Most of Afro-Uruguayans only attend elementary schools.

The Afro-Uruguayans drop out of school more frequently than whites.¹²³

In the public schools there is a close linkage between the black's standard of living and poverty.

According to the census, which was taken in 1996, the illiteracy rate of Uruguayans over the age of 10, was 3.1 percent. Blacks were socialized in a culture influenced by white European values. Consequently, Uruguayan national culture erased their native traditions and cultures which made them abandon traditional racial values. Frigerio stated.¹²⁴ In terms of education, the greatest inequalities were found among the older sectors of the population. Between the 40 to 49 year old group, the average years of schooling were 8.9 percent for whites and 7.1 percent for blacks.¹²⁵

Psychological Repercussions:

White parents reject the presence of black teachers.

Two out of ten Afro-Uruguayans have low self-esteem and young people show feelings of discouragement and misery. In regard to the latter point, during the last years it has been shown the existence of the "syndrome of exclusion", in which the economic condition, devaluation, and poor self-image are factors of disturbing behaviour to the school rules.

The Africans who came to Uruguay were Sudanese, Bantus, and Angolans.

Black people enormously contributed to the "Candonbe", this is a cultural type that collects in addition to the rhythm other cultural aspects of the Afro-Americans.

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¹²⁰ Different Writers: *Mi Cristo Negro de Las Americas*, p 95, CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003

¹²¹ http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/june98/19_04_074.html

¹²² http://www.one.world.org/ips2/june98/19_04_074.html

¹²³ Different Writers: *Mi Cristo Negro de Las Americas*, p 95, CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003

¹²⁴ http://www.one.world.org/ips2/june98/19_04_074.html

¹²⁵ Ibid.

VENEZUELA

According to researchers the black population in Venezuela accounts for about 12% of the whole population. Others believe that 60 percent of the population of Venezuela are of African descent and indigenous.¹²⁶ It is difficult to prove this percentage with the official census because the black terminology is included in the Creole terminology. They belong to the poorest group of the country; they basically live in the countryside and in the outskirts of the cities.

Blacks in Venezuela are located in: Puerto Cabello, La Boca del Uriche, Nirgua Estado Carabobo; in some towns of the Falcon Andes, Peninsula de Patria, Estado Sucre, Altagracia de Orituco, Valles de Tuy, Barlobento Region, in Miranda State, Aragua Valley, Yaracuy Valley, Bobures, Santa Maria, Palmarito and Gibraltar, on the Coast of Maracaibo Lake, Estado Zulia, Tumeremo, and Callao in Venezuelan Guyane, and in other isolated villages of Guarico State, Lezama, San Rafael in the low lands.

In the XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX centuries Africans came from Congo, Benin, Angola Ivory Coast. To these Africans, we have to add the migration of the black community from Trinidad Tobago during the XVIII and XIX centuries; and the migration of Afro-Colombians in the XX century.¹²⁷

At the beginning of the XX century the Venezuelan economy was based on coffee and cocoa production. Black people were the ones who used to work in these plantations, that is why they were taken to colonized lands. We can say that black people have contributed a lot to the progress of the country. These days, most of the people who work in the petroleum industry are blacks.

Regarding politics, Afro-Venezuelans have played a pivotal role in the fight for the independence of the country. Thus, the precursor for the independence in Falcon State was a black (Jose Leonardo Chirinos), as well as the black Andresote, both of them protested against the colonial regime. In the contemporary history many blacks have participated in politics with an outstanding performance as Luis Beltran Prieto Figueroa, and in these days the Minister of Culture, Education and Sports Mr. Aristibulo Isturis). Hugo Chavez is the first multiracial president of Venezuela and is called "Negro" (Nigger) by his detractors because of his African-Indigenous features.¹²⁸

The African presence in Venezuela is combined with other cultural values. There are some Africanisms in the language, religious activities (Fiesta de San Juan, San Benito, San Antonio, Los Diablos Danzantes de Yare).

The Constitution of Venezuela in its Article 2.1 says that everybody is equal before law.¹²⁹

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¹²⁶ [Http://www.sfbayview.com092502/africanvenezuelans09252.fShtml](http://www.sfbayview.com092502/africanvenezuelans09252.fShtml)

¹²⁷ Different Writers: Mi Cristo Negro de Las Americas, CELAM, CEF, CCA. Quito 2003

¹²⁸ <http://www.sfbayview.com092502/africanvenezuelans09252.fShtml>

¹²⁹ Constitution of Venezuela

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ACRONYMS:

ABA: Brazilian Association of Anthropology

BID: Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, Inter-American Development Bank

CNA: Confederacion Nacional de Afroecuatorianos

CODAE: Corporacion de Desarrollo Afroecuatoriana

DRI: Programa para el Desarrollo Rural Integrado en Colombia
EMEDINHO: Encuesta de Medición de Indicadores
FECONIC: Federación de Comunidades y Organizaciones Negras de Imbabura y Carchi
FISE: Fondo de Inversión Social de Emergencia
FOGNEP: Federación de Organizaciones y Grupos Negros de Pichincha
INCORA: Instituto Colombiano para la Reforma Agraria
ILO: International Labour Organisation
IILS: International Institute for Labour Studies
INEC: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos
MNAFC: Movimiento Nacional Afro peruano Francisco Congo
MNFC: Movimiento Negro Francisco Congo
NBI: Necesidades Básicas Insatisfechas
PNUD: Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo
PNR: Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación de Colombia
SIDA: Agencia Sueca para el Desarrollo Internacional (ASDI)
SIISE: Sistema Integrado de Indicadores del Ecuador
SETAI: Secretaria Técnica de Asuntos Indígenas (en Perú)
USAID: Agencia Estadounidense para el Desarrollo Internacional