



Brazil in Black and White

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

*How does a society guarantee equal opportunity for its people?
Does affirmative action work?*

- What is affirmative action? How does a quota system work? How might a quota system increase racial tensions in a country that has traditionally been divided by race?
- To what extent can a society such as Brazil, with clear income disparities by race, really be free of racism? What do you think about the Brazilian magazine covers and advertisements that glamorize white people as both beautiful and successful?
- At what point does class inequality become more important, as a public policy in need of redress, than race alone? If the purpose is to create greater equality in higher education what is wrong with the quota system?
- In the long run will the effects of affirmative action in the media have a more dramatic impact upon views of race and racial economic opportunities than the affirmative action programs in the universities? When you answer think about the effects of socialization upon attitudes by the media upon a society.
- In Brazil there are over 100 ways of describing complexions including cinnamon and milk chocolate. What does it mean to be black in Brazil? How do we discuss color in America?
- What does the term “minority” really mean any more? Is it about the number of individuals or rather is it about issues of power? Explain. Who has the power in the United States? Who has the power in Brazil?
- How can the American experience with affirmative action — both good and bad — inform the Brazilians now that they have begun taking the affirmative action road there? Can they learn from the U.S.?
- How can a more equitable system be created without using quotas? Explain.

ACTIVITIES

Research and report on one of the following:

- How successful has affirmative action been in the United States? In business contracts? In education?
- How successful has affirmative action been in India (issues of caste)?