

# The world and diversity: Issues in debate

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**T**HE ISSUE of diversity and recognition of differences now belongs to the discussion agenda of all countries, even those that could once be regarded as monocultural and monolingual. The human trafficking of Africans (called slave trade), both in the Arab and Western worlds and the migrations of all times brought together in the same geographical territory descendants of different peoples, ethnicities, cultures, and languages. This is a fact of human history that we are unable to change but the inertia of the consequences and legacies of this history continues to perversely affect the relationships between communities and people, fruit of these historical encounters. For about half a century, post-colonial phenomena, civil wars, and natural disasters have caused new migratory waves from poor developing countries, especially African countries toward wealthy, developed European ones, mostly former colonizing metropolises and United States and Canada.

Previous (combined with human trafficking and the colonization of invaded territories) and postcolonial migrations, together with the perverse effects of economic globalization create problems that hinder the peaceful coexistence between the diverse and the different. These include racism, xenophobia, and all kinds of discriminations (especially religious ones, known as religious intolerances). This engenders inequalities characterized as violations of human rights, especially the right to be both equal and different. Hence the importance and urgency, in all countries, of implementing policies aimed at respecting and recognizing differences, centered on the formation of a new citizenship via a multicultural pedagogy. This new pedagogy can contribute to building a culture of peace and end wars between gods, religions, and cultures.

Discursively, the solution seems simple but, in practice, it has been difficult to transform diversity (with its constituting differences) into a collective richness of humanity rather than degrading them into superior and inferior. It is impossible to effectively construct democracy as a process (rather than as a finished product) if we continue to oppose equality and difference instead of combining them so we can live together as both equal and different. How can we, for example, mobilize ourselves to currently defend the original peoples whose territories were invaded and transformed into reserves, without first recognizing their cultural diversity and their rights over the territories of their founding ancestors? The same question of recognizing the differences and identities of those

with Black skin also arises for African Americans in all countries of the African diaspora which have benefited from the trafficking of Africans. This recognition configures a question of social justice and collective rights and is considered as one of the aspects of affirmative action policies.

Against the context of homogenizing neoliberal globalization which wants to drag all peoples into the same divide runs, in parallel throughout the world, the debate on preserving diversity as one of the riches of humanity. The fundamental question put everywhere is how to combine individual freedom, the recognition of cultural events, and the constitutional guarantees protecting this freedom and difference without conflicts. This issue provokes a complex reflection that includes politics, law, and education. This reflection lies at the heart of endless debates about affirmative action and the obligation of multiculturalism in education, mobilizing intellectuals, activists, and members of Brazilian civil society in general in a Manichean manner. Some have forgotten that we have differences beyond our similarities and generic human identity. Others only saw the differences and stopped considering our similarities. Some created a false opposition between race and society by opposing racial and social quotas as if discrimination of race or gender failed to constitute issues within society (thus, social issues).

According to Alain Touraine (1997, p.209), no modern society which is open to exchanges and change has a complete cultural unit. Moreover, cultures are constructions which constantly transform themselves by interpreting new experiences. This renders artificial the search for an essence or a national soul and the reduction of a culture to a code of conduct. Thus, the idea that a society should have a cultural unity, whether reason, religion or ethnicity, is currently out of favor.

Brazil, a country born precisely from the encounter of cultures and civilizations is unable to evade this debate. The best path, in my view, is one which follows the dynamics of society via the demands of its communities rather than one which takes refuge in an outdated approach of racial miscegenation which, for dozens of years, froze the debate about cultural and racial diversity in Brazil (then seen only as mixed culture and identity).

How does the Brazilian society currently deal with this complex issue, which involves, at the same time, the defense of human rights, distributive justice, the right to be both equal and different, and the construction of citizenship, identity, and national consciousness? Until 2001, marked by the organization of the third UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, this issue had no echo in the press, government sectors, and general population, except among the few scholars and researchers who dedicate themselves to the subject in academic and intellectual circles. Country leaders seemed to live with an ease conscience, according to the ideal of the myth of racial democracy which showed Brazil as a racial paradise, i.e., a country without racial prejudice and discrimination.

Thus, Brazil had no protectionist human rights laws for non-whites for a long time since they were unnecessary due to the absence of prejudice and racial discrimination (or so ran the argument). While its leaders and organized civil society's ease conscience remained, Blacks and Indigenous peoples suffered countless injustices and human rights violations, as shown by the quantitative research the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics and the Institute of Applied Economic Research have conducted in the last 20 years.

After the Durban Conference (of which Brazil was one of its signatory countries), the "official country" aimed, as never before, to seek ways to implement the Conference Declaration. It provided for the implementation of affirmative action policies, including quotas, to benefit Blacks, Indigenous peoples, and other minorities. The controversies about these policies indicate the realities of a society that still lives between myth and fact, or rather, that confuses myth and facts, i.e., in it, myth functions as reality. For a significant portion of society (sadly unmeasured by lack of statistics but reflected in the mainstream media, academia, government sectors, and vaguely in organized civil society), the resolution of the third UN World Conference disagrees with the realities of the highly miscegenated Brazilian society, in which evidence of discrimination should be sought in socioeconomic differences – rather than in racial ones since Brazil no longer has races. *Não Somos Racistas* (We are not racist), a book by Ali Kamel (2006), prefaced by a renowned anthropologist, sold quite well and would represent this portion of the population.

The other portion of the population includes all who believe in the existence of racism "à la Brazilian." They divided themselves into two rhetorically opposed groups. The first group comprises all essentialist academics, media, politicians, and activists who share the conviction that humanity has a nature or an essence and, as such, a specific or generic identity which makes human beings a rational animal unlike others. They claim that human beings share a common nature and thus the same rights, regardless of differences in age, sex, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, etc. They clearly defend universalism or abstract humanism (conceived as democratic), illustrated by the constitutional principle "before the law we are all equal." Considering race as a fiction invented to oppress Black people, they advocate abandoning this concept and replacing it with more comfortable ones, such as ethnicity. In fact, they oppose public recognition of the differences between whites and non-whites. Here we have an egalitarian anti-racism between all human beings which defends arguments opposed to the antiracism of difference. The best public policies, they think, which can solve the ills and inequalities in the Brazilian society should only be macrosocial, or rather, universalist. This approach considers any State proposal for affirmative action which includes biological differences to fight against inequalities as an official recognition of races and thus as racializing a country whose dominant characteristic is miscegenation. Proposals to recognize differences would imply,

according to them, a change in thinking which can mortgage the peace and social balance the ideal of a Brazilian racial democracy solidly built. On the other hand, they claim that policies to recognize racial identities, especially Black people's, may threaten the national identity or unity, on the one hand, and reinforce the praise of racial awareness, on the other. Such policies could have a boomerang effect, creating racial conflicts that, they say, inexistent in Brazilian society. This concern has targeted its criticism against quota policies, considered a threat to racial miscigenation stimulating and strengthening the belief in races (Fry, 2005, p.335-47). Likewise, other scholars agreed with Peter Frye, such as Demétrio Magnoli (2009) in his *Uma gota de sangue* (A drop of blood), the authors of the collective *Divisões perigosas* [Dangerous divisions – organized by Peter Fry et al. (2007)], and *A utopia brasileira e os movimentos negros* (The Brazilian utopia and Black movements), by Riseiro (2007).

I oppose some of the aspects in that argument. First, all whites and Blacks in Brazil believe in the “racial mix” as the genetic foundation of the Brazilian society. Geneticist Sergio Danilo Pena's research (2002) shows that all Brazilians, even those who have a European phenotype, have several African or Amerindian genetic marker percentages, confirming the already known principle of the absence of pure breeds. I fail to see how, except in a creative imagination, affirmative action can undo this “racial mix,” challenging the laws of human genetics and the voluntary action of people who will continue to maintain interracial sexual intercourses. If laws and racial barriers against interracial sexual relations in the United States and South Africa (apartheid) have failed to undo the “racial mix,” how can quotas enable this only in Brazil? This would attribute a magical power to affirmative action it does not actually possess.

Secondly, we all know that race is social and politic. If it inexistent for molecular biologists or geneticists, it exists in racists and their victims' minds. It would be very difficult to convince Peter Botha and a South African Zulu that the Black and white races inexistent in South Africa during apartheid due to a socio-historical divide that genetics is unable to automatically fill. Mixed-race people in the United States are defined as Black by the law based on a single drop of blood. They have accepted and taken on this attributed racial identity which politically unites and mobilizes them around their common struggle to conquer their civil rights in American society, although aware of the mixture that runs in their blood and of the Blackness which promotes their discrimination.

Aware of the discrimination which Blacks and Brown people suffer despite their “blood mixture” is not only an economic issue affecting all the poor of society but also stems from a long-camouflaged racial discrimination. The Black Movement has been trying to raise awareness and mobilize Black and Brown people around a single identity via the “Negro” concept, inspired by the American “Black.” It is clearly a political definition based on the American biracial or bipolar division, rather than a biological one. This division is a nearly 40-year-old

effort and dates back to the foundation of the Unified Black Movement, which has a clear political proposal to build solidarity and identity of those excluded by racism “à la Brazilian.” It predates the discussion on quotas or affirmative action (which is only 20 years old). More than that, it occurred with the popular chromatic classification based precisely on the multiplicity of tones and nuances of the skin of Brazilians due to centuries of miscegenation. To claim that the bipolar definition of Black and white Brazilians stems from affirmative action policies still under debate is to ignore the history of the Brazilian Black Movement. To think that Brazil is under international or multilateral pressure to impose quota policies is to minimize its own national sovereignty and ignore past and present demands of the Black Movement which, even without using the words “quota” and “affirmative action,” has always claimed specific policies that could reduce inequalities and put Black people on the same level as white ones.

The fundamental problem is not race, a scientific classification which biological scientists have rejected. The crux of the problem is in racism, which hierarchizes, dehumanizes, and justifies existing discrimination. For about half a century, geneticists and molecular biologists have stated that pure races do not exist scientifically (cf. Jean Hiernaux, J. Ruffie, A. Jacquard, F. Jacob, etc.). They even defended eliminating the concept of race from dictionaries, encyclopedias, and scientific books as a measure to combat racism. They quickly concluded that this proposal was a scientific naivety, realizing that racist ideology dispensed with the concept of race to remake itself and reproduce. Apartheid shows the radicalization of racism without using the word race. In fact, apartheid is an Afrikaans word which has received the ideological definition of a separate development project aiming to preserve the cultural wealth and ethnic identities of South African peoples. In the name of respect for identities and cultural diversities, South Africa implemented a segregationist regime which confiscated the fundamental, political, and social rights from most of its population for half a century. Just as Brazil created its racism based on denying this, contemporary racism no longer needs the concept of race. Most Western countries discriminate Blacks and Arabs, without resorting to the concepts of higher and lower races, using only the concepts of cultural and identity differences.

Proposals to combat racism neither involve abandoning or eradicating race (which is only a concept and not a reality) nor using comfortable lexicons such as ethnicity, identity or cultural diversity since racism is an ideology which can parasitize all concepts. Benjamin Isaac (2006), in a book from research which lasted about 15 years, defends the existence of proto-racism between the ancient Greeks and Romans. However, the ancients were unaware of the modern concept of race. They used the concepts of *ethnos* or *natio*, which are not synonymous with race. The law of blood purity in force in Portugal and Spain in the 14-15th centuries, which gave rise to antisemitism (a subvariant of racism), dispensed with the modern sense of race. However, the law of blood purity in

the Iberian Peninsula failed to greatly differ from the Nuremberg laws during the Nazi regime.

Would anyone become racist for the simply assuming their Blackness or whiteness? I reject this possibility since racism persists with or without “race.” The way out, in my view, is, rather than eradicating race and the processes which build racial identity, to emphasize education and socialization which stress co-existence of differences and particular identities. From this perspective, I think that implementing affirmative action policies not only in tertiary education but in all sectors of national life which exclude Black people fails to mean destroying national identity or “racial miscegenation,” as critics of quota policies think. Without building their racial or ethnic identity (alienated in the racist Brazilian universe), Black people will be unable to participate in the process of building democracy and a plural national identity an equal footing with their compatriots of other ancestries.

The second group comprises all scholars, intellectuals, media, politicians, and activists who adopt nominalism or constructivism. They understand racism as an imaginary production to be regarded as a reality from a double view of the different other, i.e., of its mystified body and culture. The other exists, first of all, for their body before it becomes a social reality. Thus, if race biologically, historically, and socially inexists, it exists because it produced and produces victims. Although racism no longer has a scientific foundation (as in the 19th century) and currently has no rational legitimacy, this social racial reality that continues to pass by the geography of people’s bodies cannot be ignored. Seen thus, publicly recognizing racial differences is the best way to think about public policies which can contemplate present and future victims of racism, claim the advocates of this approach. From that perspective, W. Kymlicka recalls that, after World War II, many liberals hoped that the emphasis on human rights, in the spirit of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), would solve the problems of “minorities.” They thought that instead of directly protecting groups via special rights given to their members, cultural minorities would be, to some extent, indirectly protected by the guarantees given to all individuals as to their fundamental civil and political rights, without regard to their belonging to any group. An implicit reasoning supported this hope: the fundamental rights recognized to human beings, such as expression, association, and conscience freedoms, although attributed to individuals, are, in fact, always exercised in community with other individuals and, thus, recognizing such individual rights protects, ipso facto, the “life of the group.” As long as individual rights are firmly protected, it will be needless to assign other rights to members of any community (Kymlicka, 1996, apud Mesure; Renaut, 1999, p.211-12).

The conviction that the defence of individual rights alone would solve the problems of “minorities” is based on the thesis of the neutrality of the rule of law before conceptions of good to which citizens have adhered. For, if the

State should refrain from taking sides, it should neither adhere to any consideration of good nor, of course, worry about protecting the diversity of existing conceptions, i.e., the cultural plurality that in fact sustains, at least in part, this plurality of conceptions of the good. Kymlicka defends that this model, which had allowed the nascent modern state to regulate the problems of wars of religion, could no longer be applied today to the problem of cultural “minorities.” For if the State is neutral in the face of the issues caused by the diversity of ethnic-cultural groups, it will be structurally incapable of resolving the issues resulting from the controversy concerning minorities (apud Mesure; Renault, 1999, p.212-13).

The difficulty is due to the fact that the traditional doctrines of man’s rights respond poorly to the questions of effective democracy practices. In most cases, by themselves, they fail to provide answers. For example, the right to free expression says nothing regarding knowing what a linguistic policy should be adapted to a situation of coexistence between several languages in the same social space. Similarly, the right to come and go fails to answer questions about what an immigration and naturalisation policy should be. In the case of silence from fundamental principles in face of such conflicts, its usual way out is to deliver the decisions to the majority holding power, i.e., according to relations of force rather than from the principles corresponding to individual rights. From this difficulty arises the need to reconstruct the liberal theory of human rights to meet an imperative of justice regarding the cultural groups to which individuals identify, i.e., to complementarily transform liberalism to integrate a demand for justice, which Kymlicka designates as “ethnocultural justice” (Mesure; Renault, 1999, p.214-15).

The construction of this program of “ethnic-cultural” justice begins as a question about “collective rights” whose recognition would require the cardinal values of political liberalism. The first difficulty is how to articulate these collective rights with individual rights, a question which undoubtedly refers to the old debate between justice and freedom, essentially developed in the socialist tradition. A debate which led Max Horkheimer to point out the existence of an antinomy between the demands of justice and those of freedom. A rational organization of society which would guarantee a mode of fair distribution far from, at the same time, giving birth to the realm of freedom, would bring about a “fully administered world,” defined by the disappearance of all the authority of the individual as such... For every time justice increases, freedom decreases (apud Mesure; Renault, 1999, p.216).

We find not only a diversity of groups in democratic societies but different types of groups with diverse claims; and thus different claims for collective rights types. Hence the previous need, in formulating a liberal conception of minority law, to determine which, in the various types of claims stemming from several types of groups, could be legitimately accepted in the framework of a theory

of human rights. It fails to a priori preclude certain types of collective rights of minorities to be compatible with human rights and, on the other hand, the rights of minorities, in certain respects, should be limited by considering the principles of the liberal State. Any homogenizing response, accepting or refusing the rights of minorities, would, in fact, risk losing the very complexity of the problem whose solution could then be formulated in terms of a partial acceptance or a limitation. This means that the *démarche* to be made must start by analyzing the various types of rights which are effectively claimed in our society by its ethnic-cultural groups.

The first source of diversity is coexistence within a given state of several nations. Each nation corresponds to a historical union occupying a given territory and sharing a distinct language and culture in that territory. A country comprising more than one nation is a multinational state, in which small communities form national minorities, rather than a nation state. Thus, most Western democracies are multinational.

The second source of cultural diversity stems from immigration and ethnicity, when the enslaved, the emigrated, and their descendants conserved a certain dimension of ethnic-cultural particularity. This is the case in Brazil, many South American countries, and the United States, which we can consider as countries of old immigration. Many countries in Western Europe have become new immigration countries since the 1960s and have since constituted their ethnic-cultural minorities.

The aspirations of these two types of diversity are fundamentally different and we should refrain from confusing them under the term “multiculturalism.” In the first case, national minorities mainly worry about preserving themselves as a distinct society alongside the majority one. Their first claim is internal autonomy. In the second case, these minorities or ethnic majorities aim to integrate into society. Some states contain both configurations of multiculturalism and may be both multinational and multicultural, as in Canada and the United States, for example. A national minority may also be an ethnic minority, as is the cases of traditional peoples in the United States and the native Australian populations.

The various types of collective rights to be granted directly relate to the types of diversity or minorities: 1) rights of political sovereignty or political autonomy (self-government rights), which correspond to the rights that national minorities in most multinational states tend to claim by demanding a form of political autonomy or free territorial jurisdiction to ensure the complete and free development of their cultures and to defend its members’ interests. One of the main means to meet this type of claim in most involved countries is political federalism; 2) polyethnic rights relate to the rights immigrants and descendants of enslaved diasporas claim in northern and southern Americas and the recent diasporas to Western countries. They accuse the integration model (by assimila-

tion) of forcing them to abandon their cultural heritage to adopt the norms of the “majority” or “dominant” culture (see Lacorne, 1997). The minorities or diversities involved demand official recognition of their cultural practices and of various forms of public support in favor of them, going from bilingual education systems or ethnic school study programs to legal provisions exempting community members from applying certain laws on the grounds of their religious beliefs or practices.

This type of claim fails to question the state neutralization ideal. On the contrary, it especially demand that the State be neutral, i.e., that it separate itself from nationality as it did from religion when religious conflicts marked the beginning of modernity and, thus, that the State be able to repair the damage caused to these communities by the privilege so far given to the national identity it considers homogeneous. It is a demand for justice which refers to equal treatment, and which (rightly or wrongly) is based on the conviction that individual rights are insufficient to ensure specific recognition. It is no longer the identity of all citizens, but rather, the difference in identity, a new requirement that certainly corresponds to a demand for “differentiated citizenship.”

In the face of this transformation of demand, the whole question is whether the demand, as inscribed in the logic of the claim in favor of polyethnic rights, is not by definition explosive for the liberal state, even for the rule of law in general? In principle, polyethnic rights, by leading to possible “differentiated citizenships,” are certainly supposed to promote integration, rather than a political autonomy or a new political sovereignty, which national minorities demand within multinational states. But what ensures that the recognition of polyethnic rights can guarantee the expected outcome rather than the other way around? Despite the doubt, the question has to be re-raised, accepting, at its beginning, a certain difference in identity, thus establishing new conditions for possible integration. Within the logic of such a differentiation of citizenship, a last type of right to consider could correspond to special representation rights. In fact, ethnic and national minorities and (more globally) groups considering themselves harmed, such as women who, in some countries, claim “parity” in political instances of representation have revindicated such rights. What is essential in all these irreducible cases is to denounce the unfaithfully representative character of a political power that is unable to reflect the diversity of its population. It aims to systematically correct accumulated disadvantages and enable the effective representation of these groups’ interests or conceptions.

Both approaches, i.e., the anti-racism of equality which essentialists advocate and the anti-racism of difference nominalists or constructionists defend preach Manichean positions of good and evil which, in fact, reflect the very oppressive structure of racism to the extent that society feels forced to choose between denying and affirming difference at all times. Despite the coherence of the defended arguments, both approaches are problematic. The best approach

would accept both generic human identity and the identity of difference. Color blindness is a failed strategy to deal with racist oppression since it fails to enable the self-definition of the oppressed and institutes the values of the dominant group, thus ignoring the reality of everyday discrimination. The strategy which, forced to make differences salient in all circumstances, compels the denial of similarities and imposes restraining expectations. Difference becomes a new virtue capable of creating new ideological pitfalls. These lie at the heart of the criticism toward philosopher Will Kymlicka, an advocate of multicultural claims, by one of the great figures of feminist political theory, Susan Moller Okin. She criticizes him for unrestrictedly accepting the slogan “praise cultural differences,” which could promote cultures that stimulate gender inequality and violate women’s political rights. What should we do when the cultural or religious claims of some ethnic minorities clash with the norms of gender equality in a rule of law? (Fassin; Fassin, 2006, p.243-6). A few years ago, a young Nigerian woman would have been stoned dead according to “Sharia” principles condemning marital infidelity if the international community had avoided to take a stand in defense of her life. Should we, in the name of the right to cultural differences, approve ritual initiations that excise women in some African and Muslim cultures? I am thinking of Salman Rushdie’s case, author of the *Satanic Verses*. Islam fails to separate religion and politics, individuals and society, the public and the private. For Islam, Salman Rushdie is reprehensible (also part of the Muslim culture in the diaspora in England). So, simply saying “this is the way it is here” disrespects the culture of these English Islamic citizens. But, on the other hand, the question of the universal principles of human rights arises regarding freedom of expression and choice, in the name of which the conviction could not be accepted, as, more than that, murder.

The fundamental question that remains is how to combine equality and difference so we can harmoniously live together. Borrowing Alain Tourraine’s arguments (1997, p.371), I see no other way but to associate political democracy with cultural diversity based on the freedom of the Subject. Finally, what do we really fear? Differences or the similarities hidden behind the differences? The ego and the alter are always together in a dialogical relation. No multicultural society is either possible without a universalist principle that enables communication between socially and culturally different individuals and groups or if this principle commands a conception of social organization and personal life that is deemed normal and superior. We should criticize the identification of human rights with certain forms of social organization, especially economic liberalism, but we should also state the right to freedom and equality of all individuals within the limits impeding the opening of any government or legal code, and which concerns both cultural rights and political functions, such as freedom of expression and choice (Tourraine, 1997).

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*ABSTRACT* – The migratory waves from the cradle of humankind, scientifically located in the African continent, that continue until today for different historical reasons, the human trafficking of Africans, and the colonial invasions of territories in America, Africa, and Asia have brought together descendants of different peoples and cultures in the same geographical territory. On the one hand, there has been undeniable cross-cultural enrichment in these encounters: bloods have mingled, the gods have touched, and the identity fences have weakened. On the other hand, differences continue to be the reason for conflicts, and are ideologically manipulated by the ruling classes through

the practice of dividing to dominate. These conflicts are reflected notably in racism and xenophobia, engendering violations of the human rights of different peoples and consequent social inequalities. The question that arises is how to establish equity and equal treatment without first recognizing both the collective existence of the bearers of differences and their identities. Despite advances in science and technology, in the globalization of the market economy from a neoliberal capitalist perspective, and in the media, debates about diversity and its differences put all countries in the same boat. This text discusses several issues concerning diversity, starting from the Brazilian realities of the last twenty years after the Durban Conference.

**KEYWORDS:** Diversity, Difference, Identity, Multiculturalism, Human rights, Racism, Xenophobia, Affirmative policies.

**RESUMO** – As ondas migratórias que partiram do próprio berço da humanidade cientificamente situado no continente africano e que se prolongam até hoje por motivos históricos diversos, o tráfico humano dos africanos e as invasões coloniais dos territórios da América, da África e da Ásia somando juntaram no mesmo território geográfico descendentes de povos e culturas diferentes. Nesses encontros houve enriquecimentos transculturais incontestáveis; os sangues se misturaram; os deuses se tocaram e as cercas das identidades vacilaram, por um lado. Mas, por outro lado, as diferenças continuam a ser motivos de conflitos, pois manipuladas ideologicamente pelas classes dominantes na política de dividir para dominar. Esses conflitos se traduzem notadamente pelas práticas racistas e xenofóbicas que engendram a violação dos direitos humanos dos diferentes e consequentes as desigualdades sociais decorrentes. A questão que se coloca é como estabelecer a equidade e a igualdade de tratamento, sem antes reconhecer a existência coletiva dos portadores das diferenças e suas identidades. Apesar dos progressos da ciência e tecnologia, da globalização da economia do mercado na óptica capitalista neoliberal e dos meios de comunicação, os debates sobre a diversidade e suas diferenças colocam todos os países no mesmo barco. Este texto tem como proposta discutir algumas questões em debate sobre diversidade, partindo das realidades brasileiras dos últimos vinte anos depois da Conferência de Durban.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVES:** Diversidade, Diferença, Identidade, Multiculturalismo, Direitos humanos, Racismo, Xenofobia, Políticas afirmativas.

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