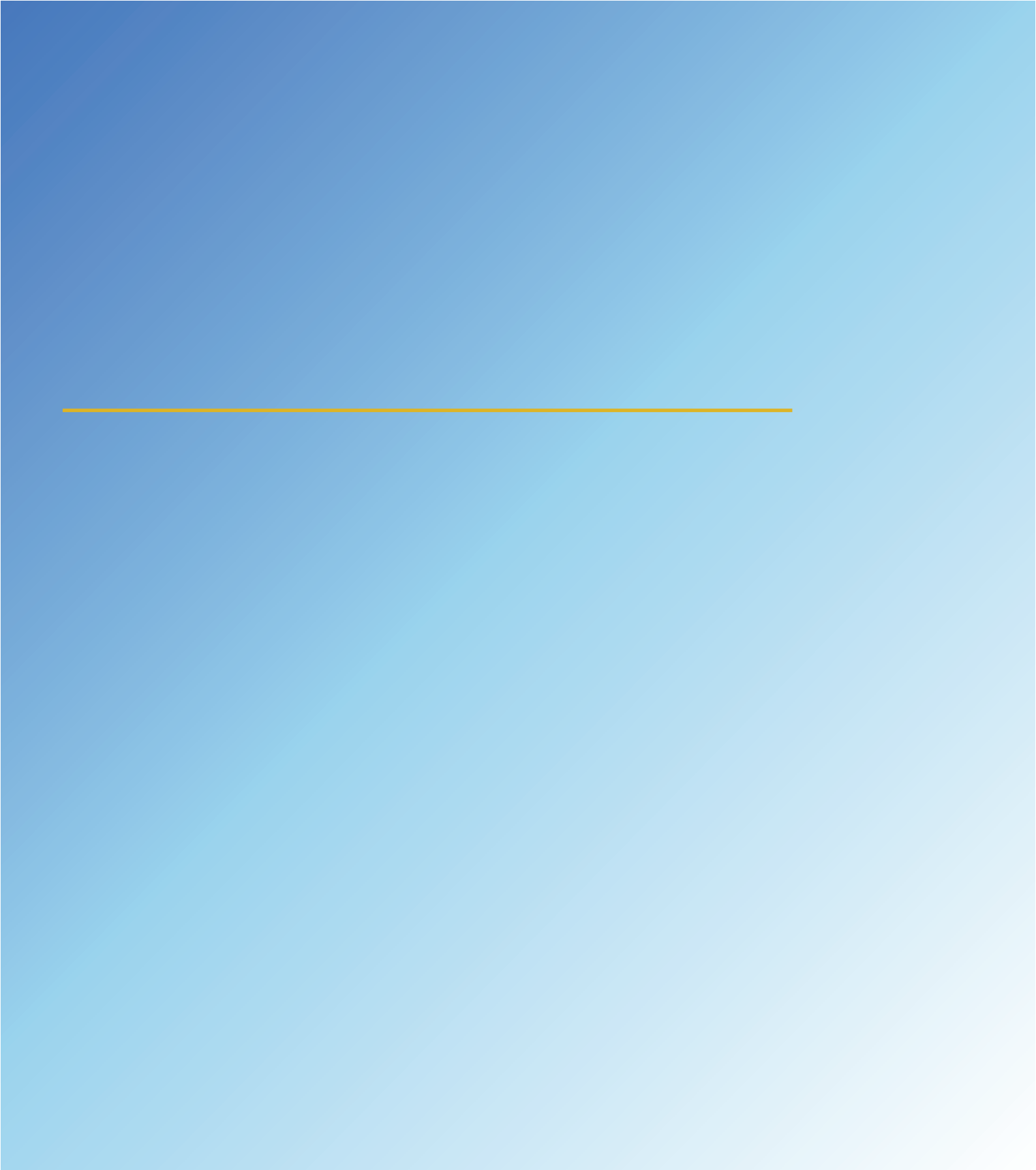




Does the rise of the middle class disguise existing

PART I: MACROECONOMIC APPROACH TO THE MIDDLE CLASS AND INCOME INEQUALITY

Marcelo Neri (2010, 2014) observes that the income of the previously poor significantly improved during the early 2000s by using the Brazilian government's classification, which differentiates economic classes based on total household income as shown in the table 1 below. According to Neri (2014), 44.7 million people entered the new middle class: Class C from 2003 to 2013. During the same period, 12.5 million joined the "traditional middle class": Class A and B (Neri, 2014).

Table 1: Economic classifications defined by total

available, this shows the World Bank's failure to acknowledge the full scale of inequality, making their claim misleading.

According to another measure of inequality, the Palma Ratio, which has overcome the downside of the relative Gini coefficient (sensitiv

PART II: POLITICAL-ECONOMY OF INCOME AND WEALTH INEQUALITIES

racialised, and gender inequality also adds another dimension to the marginalisation of Afro-Brazilian women, who are at the bottom of the social hierarchy (Gonçalves, 2010; Corossacz, 2017). The section focuses on domestic work for Afro-Brazilian women since this kind of precarious work is largely overlooked in debates on inequality (Bear, 2014). This is also an arena where the intersection of race, class and gender discrimination marginalises these women, and the middle class plays a part in this process since both middle-class men and women tend to employ domestic workers from the lower class, often perpetrating sexual violence or exploiting their labour (Goldstein, 2003; Silva, 2010)

The Racialisation of Class

Brazil was under colonial rule by the Portuguese from 1500 to 1815, who brought slaves from Africa for economic exploitation (Guimaraes, 2007). Colonial Brazil was characterized by high stratification based on wealth, property ownership, racial categories, and civil status – whether free or enslaved (Nazzari, 1996). Slavery remains a significant factor for creating class relations rather than household wealth, education, or place of residence in contemporary Brazil (Andrews, 1992; Reichmann, 2010; Layton and Smith, 2017). As Guimaraes (2007) states, the colonial relationship between white slave owners and slaves in the colonial past “evolved into ‘class’” (p.126). In today’s Brazil, lower classes constitute non-whites rather than white people (Santos, 2011; Layton and Smith, 2017).

Racial discrimination is persistent, which affects outcomes in education, employment and incomes (Andrews, 1992; Arias et al., 2004; Lovell, 2010; Layton and Smith, 2017). Afro-Brazilians earn 48% as much as whites earn for the same job (Montero, 2005; Layton and Smith, 2017). Returns to education also vary in accordance with skin colour due to the persistent

worker stated, “unfortunately, paid domestic work is a door into the work market for black women in our country” (p. 63).

Domestic Work as a Site of (Racialised) Class Formation and Exploitation by the Middle Class

The rising middle class has increased access to and demand for affordable domestic work, leading to (racialised) class differentiation. Silva (2010) identifies that the “ease of accessing others’ labour originates from the forms of economic inequality” (p.22) and “the

2017; Layton and Smith, 2017). Afro-Brazilian female domestic workers are often subject to sexual violence by employers, sons, husbands, relatives and friends (Gonçalves, 2010; Corossacz, 2017). According to a survey by DeSouza and Cerqueira (2009), 26% of 366 unionised domestic workers in Porto Alegre answered that they had experienced some form of sexual harassment at work within a year.

Glucksberg (2018) argues that class differentiation, reproduction of elites'6.23798(3333 T17v2(7r)4.

and Brazil is on track to achieve equality based on the relative Gini coefficient. However, the

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