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Author(s): Stanley R. Bailey

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Group Dominance and the Myth of Racial Democracy: Antiracism Attitudes in Brazil

Stanley R. Bailey

University of California, Irvine

Group dominance perspectives contend that ideologies are central to the production and reproduction of racial oppression by their negative affect on attitudes toward antiracism initiatives. The Brazilian myth of racial democracy frequently is framed in this light, evoked as a racist ideology to explain an apparent lack of confrontation of racial inequality. Data from a 2000 probability sample of racial attitudes in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, contradict this long-held assertion, showing that most Brazilians in this state recognize racism as playing a role in Brazilian society, support the idea of affirmative action, and express interest in belonging to antiracism organizations. Moreover, opinions on affirmative action appear more strongly correlated with social class, as measured by education level, than race. As compared with results from the United States regarding opinions on similar selected affirmative action policies, the racial gap in Brazilian support for affirmative action is only moderate. Results also show that those who recognize the existence of racial discrimination in Brazil are more likely to support affirmative action. Implications for race theorizing from a group dominance perspective in Brazil as well as for antiracism strategies are addressed.

The ideologic construct referred to as the myth of racial democracy continues to constitute the central framework for understanding the “racial commonsense” in Brazil (Warren 2002; Winant 2001), as well as in much of Latin America (de la Fuente 2002; Wade 1997). The dominant trend in Brazilianist literature faults this construct for masking racism (Guimarães 2001; Winant 1999), discouraging positive black identification (Hanchard 1994), and neutralizing support for antiracism strategies (Twine 1998).

However, some individuals question this wholly negative view, arguing that the myth of racial democracy can be harnessed in ways that

promote subordinate populations (Andrews 2000; de la Fuente 2002; Segato 1998). This myth endorses the utopian dream of a less discriminatory society (Sheriff 2001) and can act as a “charter for social action” (Fry 2000:97). By viewing it as a positive cultural value, Da Matta (1997:74) wrote that we should “. . . elevate the myth of racial democracy as a patrimony capable of helping Brazil in . . . honoring its commitment to equalitarianism.”

Whether the myth of racial democracy is viewed favorably or critically, a key issue is how it affects public opinion on important racial issues, such as explanations regarding racial inequality and attitudes toward antiracism strategies. Bailey (2002) tested the question concerning explanations for racial inequality using a 1995 data set. The test is replicated in this article with recent data, and my previous argument is extended through testing of the effects that racial inequality beliefs have on support for antiracism in Brazil.

To explore these issues, I use a “general group dominance perspective” (Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo 1996). The theories clustered under this label emphasize the functional role

Direct all correspondence to Stan Bailey, Department of Sociology, University of California, Irvine, 3151 Social Science Plaza, Irvine, CA 92697-5100 (bailey@uci.edu). For their insightful comments, the author thanks Mara Loveman, Cookie Stephan, Karen Ivy, and the *ASR* editor and reviewers. The author gratefully acknowledges support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation as a Mellon Fellow in Latin American Sociology at University of California Los Angeles.

of ideology in generating group-based oppression. These include realistic group conflict theory (Bobo 1988; Jackman 1994), group position theory (Blumer 1958), social dominance theory (Sidanius and Pratto 1999), and neoclassical hegemony models (e.g., Gramsci 1971). Assumptions shared by all these models when used in the study of racial dynamics include the concepts that individuals identify with their own racial group, that differing groups have divergent group-based interests leading to intergroup conflict, and that dominant groups develop ideologies to justify their privileged position (Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000).

In this article, I narrow my focus to social dominance theory (Sidanius and Pratto 1999) and examine its adequacy for understanding the nature and effects of the racial democracy myth. Empirically, do Brazilians subscribe to the central tenets of this myth? If so, does this myth create negative attitudes toward antidiscrimination strategies, namely affirmative action, black movement mobilization, and antiracism organization? In addition, does the way Brazilians explain racial inequality influence opinions toward these interventions? Finally, what other factors, such as age, education, and color, are associated with attitudes toward antiracism?

For these analyses, I use original data from a 2000 probability sample survey of racial attitudes in the state of Rio de Janeiro. In answering the aforementioned questions, this article accomplishes the following: (1) it sheds new light on the relation between the Brazilian racial democracy myth and possibilities for antiracism; (2) it explores the adequacy of social dominance theory for understanding that relation; and 3) it brings new empiric evidence to bear on the Brazilian policy debate over affirmative action and the organization of antidiscrimination efforts.

THE ESSENCE OF THE RACIAL DEMOCRACY MYTH

Myths are not necessarily untruths or statements of truth. Rather, they are stories and belief systems that help people navigate their social context. In this way, myths can justify specific cultural values and social rules. They can have a powerful impact on individuals because they

communicate and reinforce a particular worldview (Roberts 2004). In this sense, the myth of racial democracy can be viewed as an understood interpretation or worldview of Brazilian racial dynamics, a "racial commonsense."

The essence of this myth is contained within an allegory common to school texts in Brazil addressing the origins of that nation's population: the "fable of three races" (Da Matta 1997). This fable holds that the people of Brazil originated from three formerly discrete racial entities: Europeans, Africans, and Indians. These "races" subsequently mixed, each contributing to the formation of a uniquely Brazilian population, culturally and biologically fused, whose strength is in its hybridism. Results from a 1998 national survey speak to the embedded nature of this fusion understanding. Brazilians were asked in open-ended format: "Of what ancestry (*origem*) do you consider yourself to be?" To this question, 68 percent responded simply "Brazilian," with only 3.5 percent replying "indigenous," 5.8 percent answering "Portuguese," and 1.4 percent saying "African" (Schwartzman 1999).

The myth of racial democracy may be regarded as the moral code that speaks to the values for this fusion of Brazilians. A manifestation in practice of this moral code is the normative ideal, if not always the practiced reality, of exhibiting cordiality irrespective of skin color (Da Matta 1997).

This myth was a source of national pride during much of the 20th century, as Brazilians compared their reality to that of a segregated and racially violent United States. Because the United States was the central counterpoint for the myth's development (Fry 2000), Guimarães (1999) characterized the racial worldview in Brazil as "antiracist" in reaction to the United States' "racialism." Contemporary United States racialism represents the popular belief in the existence of discrete racial groups and their essential role in nation building and community organizing (Appiah 2000).¹ In contrast, antiracism is a rejection of a focus on discrete racial entities, most especially their use as soci-

¹ Results from the 2000 United States Census show that given the opportunity to mark more than one race, 97.4 percent of the United States population marked only one (Farley 2002).

etal organizing principles (Guimarães 1999).² In this sense, racialism and antiracialism both are myths that help people navigate their social contexts.

The result of the Brazilian racial fusion, according to Gilberto Freyre (1959:7), the myth's principal interlocutor, was an "ethnic democracy, the almost perfect equality for all men [sic] regardless of race or color." In reality, of course, Brazil is stratified along color lines, and Freyre's academic musings reflect a romanticized view. His vision suggests a serious disjuncture between "ideal" and "real" culture, between what Brazil is supposed to, or even said to, resemble and how it actually is (Fry 2000; Hanchard 1994). Nonetheless, popular ideologies or beliefs, like stereotypes, can contain elements of truth that people embrace. Although Brazil definitely is not a racial democracy in the sense that color is irrelevant for socioeconomic outcomes, Brazilians celebrate an antiracist perspective as morally superior to racialism in the United States (Silva 1998). It is this antiracist perspective that academics largely equate with the myth of racial democracy.

ANTIDISCRIMINATION STRATEGIES IN BRAZIL

Beyond myths, what is the state of organized antiracism in color-stratified Brazil? Although possible strategies to mitigate black disadvantage vary, two well-recognized initiatives can be observed: affirmative action policies and black movement mobilization. There is little history of the former in Brazil (Guimarães 1999), except that of recent initiatives, and the Brazilian black movement has traditionally been confined to a very small segment of the black population (Andrews 2000; Hanchard 1994). I briefly review these two strategies in contemporary Brazil.

RACE-TARGETED POLICIES

Affirmative action policies have a history of implementation in several nations, but it was not until the term of Brazil's last president, Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–2003), that the idea of "race"-targeted strategies was actively promoted in that context (Grin 2001; Reichmann 1999; Souza 1997). During the Cardoso administration, the federal government's 1996 National Human Rights Plan proposed for the first time in modern Brazilian history that racial categories be used to implement targeted public policies (Reichmann 1999).

Although attempts to establish race-targeted legislation in the form of racial quotas largely failed at that time (Fry 2000), there have been some recent successes in the public sphere. Racial quotas now exist in some federal government ministries and state level public agencies and have been instituted at a few universities. In the state of Rio de Janeiro, affirmative action laws, in the form of quotas, regulate state university admissions. In November of 2001, the following legislation addressed a historic cycle of nonwhite under-representation in higher education: "It is hereby established a minimum quota of up to 40 percent for brown and black populations [self-identified] in the filling of openings at the university level at the State University of Rio de Janeiro and the State University of the Norte Fluminense" (Assembléia Legislativa 2001).³

The evolution of racial quota legislation in Rio de Janeiro will no doubt be studied closely. Many researchers believe that widely enacted race-targeted policies may not be received favorably, and that implementation difficulties will be significant (Fry 2000; Martins 1996; Sansone 1998). Already, lawsuits have been filed by white students who feel their exclusion constitutes racial discrimination (Jeter 2003), and according to the Rector of the State University of Rio de Janeiro, there have been problems with "whites self-classifying as brown" for inclusion in the quota (Merola 2003).

² Brazilian antiracialism differs from the notion of nonracialism, *strictus sensus*. The birth of the Brazilian nation is believed to have come from three discrete races. These, however, are said to exist no longer in isolation, but centrally as elements of a fusion.

³ "Brown" and "dark black" are rough translations of the census categories *pardo* and *preto*, respectively (see Guimarães [2001] as per "dark black"). I use "black" as a translation for "*negro*," commonly treated as an umbrella term for "brown" and "dark black" (Andrews 1991).

BLACK MOVEMENT MOBILIZATION

Unlike race-targeted policies, there is a more substantial history of black activism and antiracism organization in Brazil. Black mobilization in 20th century Brazil dates back at least to the founding of the *Frente Negra Brasileira*, or the Brazilian Black Front, in the 1930s. The Front's goals were the moral uplift and material advancement of blacks. It disbanded when President Getúlio Vargas outlawed all political parties in 1937 (Andrews 1991). Two decades later, the *Teatro Experimental do Negro*, or the Black Experimental Theater, was founded in Rio de Janeiro. This organization sought to make room for black actors in the arts and to recuperate the image and the self-esteem of the black Brazilian (Andrews 1991). However, contemporary black movement mobilization in Brazil began with the waning of military authoritarianism in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and with the birth of the *Movimento Negro Unificado Contra Discriminação Racial* (MNU), or the Unified Black Movement to Combat Racial Discrimination, in 1978.

Unlike earlier black organizations, the contemporary black movement has been effective in bringing the interests of its organizations to the national stage of public debate and policy. For example, the MNU convinced most major political parties to include antiracism in their platforms during the general elections of 1982 and 1986 (Andrews 1991). The movement also significantly influenced the content of the 1988 Constitution, which recognized, for example, the property rights belonging to the descendants of maroon or runaway slave communities (Fry 2000). Perhaps most impressively on the political front, however, has been the movement's successful promotion of the recent affirmative action strategies mentioned earlier.

Beyond its influence on political discourse and policy, however, the black movement has not been effective in mobilizing popular support (Burdick 1998; Guimarães 2001). According to Hanchard (1994:139), the black movements of the 1970s and 1980s failed at the practical tasks of community outreach and grassroots politics. In addition, there was no significant antiracism mobilization: "There were no Afro-Brazilian versions of boycotting, sit-ins, civil disobedience . . .". To a large extent, these absences carried over into the 1990s (Burdick 1998). Most recently, Andrews (2000:100)

reported on the movement's "failure to attract popular support beyond a very small constituency based mainly in the Afro-Brazilian middle class."

Why does the black movement have difficulty mobilizing a constituency and organizing antiracism protest? How do scholars account for the late and localized initiation of race-targeted policies in Brazil? In addressing the difficulties of antiracism efforts, dominant Brazilianist literature faults the myth of racial democracy as a primary culprit (Hanchard 1994; Guimarães 2001). What is it about this myth that is believed to condition antiracism negatively in Brazil?

DENIAL OF RACISM AND THE NEUTRALIZATION OF ANTIRACISM

The dominant sector of Brazilianist race scholarship considers the myth of racial democracy to be pernicious (Hanchard 1994; Winant 2001). It equates the antiracism mindset with the Freyrean view of Brazil as a harmonious and cordial "racial paradise" (Guimarães 1999). In this way, the myth is viewed as solidifying dominance on the part of white Brazilians by producing a pliant and cooperating population of black Brazilians (Twine 1998). A significant part of this acquiescence is believed to come from a particular stratification belief on the part of most Brazilians that racism is not a significant national phenomenon (Winant 1999). Within this argument there is believed to exist a national consensus that "discrimination cannot possibly exist in Brazil since all Brazilians are people of mixed blood and, therefore, non-white" (Guimarães 1999:145). This consensus is said to be among both white and black Brazilians (Hasenbalg and Huntington 1982; Twine 1998).

Researchers charge this denial of racial discrimination specifically with the generation of opposition to race-targeted policy (Bertulio 1997; Hanchard 1994; Martins 1996). As Andrews (1997:142) described, "In a racial democracy, there is no need for programs based on racial preference; to the contrary, these programs represent a negation of the most basic principles of this hegemonic ideology." In addition, activists hold that "the lack of popular black participation in the black movement can basically be understood as due to vague, distant,

or secondary awareness of color prejudice" (Burdick 1998:139). Because Brazilians deny the existence of racial discrimination, they are apathetic to movements dedicated to fighting racial inequality (Hanchard 1994).

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES: SOCIAL DOMINANCE THEORY

The dominant Brazilianist stance emphasizing the pernicious effects attributable to the myth of racial democracy generally is consistent with social dominance theory (SDT) (Federico and Sidanius 2002; Sidanius, Peña, and Sawyer 2001; Sidanius and Pratto 1999; Sidanius et al. 1996). Social dominance theory endeavors to explain why and how group-based social hierarchies are produced and maintained. Unlike traditional group dominance perspectives that focus on the mindsets and actions of dominants, SDT focuses more attention on "the manner in which subordinates actively participate in and contribute to their own subordination," noting that "group oppression is very much a cooperative game" (Sidanius and Pratto 1999:43–44). Thus, this theory is especially concerned with consensually held ideologies in which subordinates and dominants share a perspective that enables social inequalities. In this respect, SDT draws strongly from Marxist and neo-Marxist theorizing on "false consciousness" (Marx and Engels 1846/1970) and "ideologic hegemony" (Gramsci 1971).

Social dominance theory centers its argument on how ideologic hegemony is established through "legitimizing myths." These myths "consist of attitudes, values, beliefs, stereotypes, and ideologies that provide moral and intellectual justification for the social practices that distribute social value within the social system" (Sidanius and Pratto 1999:45). In the context of racial politics, for a belief or ideology to be considered a legitimizing myth, it should influence attitudes toward antiracism initiatives that affect social hierarchies (a SDT empiric standard). Beliefs leading to support for strategies that reinforce group-based domination are called *hierarchy-enhancing* legitimizing myths. Those myths that produce support for policies that challenge hierarchies are called *hierarchy-attenuating* legitimizing myths. Social dominance theory further details the nature of myths as either consensual, in which dominants

and subordinates share the same perspective, or "dissensual," in which dominants and subordinates diverge in their perspectives on group-based hierarchy.

Social dominance theory researchers have begun using this framework in Latin America. In a recent study of racial attitudes in the Dominican Republic (Sidanius et al. 2001), researchers specifically addressed the Brazilian myth of racial democracy. They defined the myth as a perspective that "denies the existence of any racism" (p. 829), and that is consensually held by blacks and whites. Furthermore, they claimed that the myth functions to enhance group-based hierarchy by "retarding the possibility of group-based collective action" (p. 848).

This article uses the SDT framing based on the growing attention given to this framework in the general literature (Sears et al. 2000); to its provision of empiric standards for testing some of its derived hypotheses (Sidanius and Pratto 1999:48); to its accounting for black racial attitudes as well as those of whites, a dimension few others actually consider (Krysan 2000); and to its vision of a general applicability beyond the United States (on which the bulk of the literature on racial attitudes is centered) that specifically includes Latin America (Sidanius et al. 2001).

HYPOTHESES

Social dominance theory is compatible with the dominant Brazilianist perspective. This stance holds that the myth of racial democracy is hegemonic and pernicious. The influence of this myth induces an apathetic stance toward the black movement, a rejection of race-targeted policy initiatives, and a neutralization of antiracism in general. Using this perspective, I offer the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The myth of racial democracy produces a context of generalized opposition to antiracism strategies in Brazil.

Furthermore, the dominant literature in Brazil, as well as SDT researchers, specifically isolates a stratification belief, the denial that racial discrimination causes black disadvantage, as a central element of this myth. This stratification belief is viewed as pervasive and consensual (endorsed by both blacks and whites). It is believed to influence attitudes toward race-tar-

geted policy and antiracism organization (Bobo and Kluegel 1993), and to do so in a negative direction. Three further hypotheses are based on this perspective:

Hypothesis 2: A majority of Brazilians of both white and black categories consensually endorses a specific stratification belief: a denial that racial discrimination is behind black disadvantage.

Hypothesis 3: The majority stratification belief acts as a legitimizing ideology (i.e., it affects attitudes toward antiracism strategies).

Hypothesis 4: The majority stratification belief is hierarchy-enhancing (i.e., it is negatively associated with support for antiracism).

DATA

For my analysis, I use original data gathered through collaboration in a study of racial attitudes in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.⁴ The bulk of the project involved the elaboration of a context-sensitive research instrument (questionnaire). To that end, I spent 1 year in the field (August 1998 to August 1999). This endeavor involved weekly work sessions with the research team; key informant interviews with community leaders, clergy, movement activists, and school directors; and focus group research.⁵

The testing and application of the instrument was entrusted to the DataUff research center of the Federal Fluminense University in Rio de Janeiro. This institute specializes in instrument elaboration, sampling, and instrument application. The sampling frame consisted of Brazilian adults 18 years of age or older residing in the state of Rio de Janeiro. The frame was defined using census tract data gathered in 1996. The sampling method was a stratified, multistage technique to draw a probability sample of 1,170

individuals. The state of Rio de Janeiro was divided initially into three regions: capital city, greater metropolitan area, and rest of the state. After municipalities had been selected at random from within the region strata, successive random samples were taken of neighborhoods, then streets, households and individuals. The response rate was 87 percent. Three weights were included to correct for the oversampling of the interior of the state, for the within-household probabilities of selection, and for the sampling variance of gender. Special care was taken with regard to the training of the interviewers for dealing with racially sensitive topics. Also, in an effort to temper the possible introduction of nonrandom measurement error resulting from race-of-interviewer bias (Schuman and Converse 1971), the project used interviewers of diverse skin colors in an attempt to reflect the general population.

The data used in this study can be generalized narrowly only in the state of Rio de Janeiro. In terms of racial composition, this state, with its black population (browns and dark blacks) of approximately 44 percent, stands at a midpoint between the São Paulo region (lower percentage of blacks) and that of Bahia (higher percentage of blacks). In terms of political orientation, in the 2002 presidential elections, 78.9 percent of the voters in the state of Rio de Janeiro, the highest percentage of all the states, voted for the leftist Worker Party's candidate, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who won the election with 61.2 percent of the nation's votes. These results suggest that less support for antiracism strategies than reported in this study might be expected for other areas of Brazil.

METHODS

I began by exploring four series of items concerning attitudes toward antiracism strategies in Brazil. In a first series, respondents were asked about levels of agreement with several types of quota legislation that had been used or suggested in Rio de Janeiro: in higher education, in the job market, in state-sponsored television commercials, and in compilation of candidate lists for election to public office (Araujo 2001) (items 1–4 listed in Table 1). In a second series, respondents were asked whether they would be interested in membership in an antiracist organization (item 5, Table 1). In a third series, the

⁴ I worked with a Brazilian black movement, *Centro de Articulação de Populações Marginalizadas* (CEAP) (Center for the Articulation of Marginalized Populations). Funding was provided by the Ford Foundation.

⁵ I conducted six focus groups of approximately 10 individuals each, varying in setting (rural vs urban), age, color, and socioeconomic levels.

Table 1. Survey Items on Antiracism Strategies and Stratification Beliefs

Affirmative Action Strategies	
1. In Brazil, there are very few black students in universities. Some people believe that to change this situation the Government should set aside openings for blacks in public universities. Other people believe that setting aside openings for blacks by the Government would place other persons at a disadvantage. Do you believe the Government should set aside openings for blacks in public universities? . . . the Government should not set aside openings?
2. Today, to increase the representation of women in politics, political parties are obligated by law to set aside 30% of candidate openings for women. Do you believe that to increase the representation of blacks in politics openings for black candidates should also be set aside? . . . it is not necessary to set aside openings?
3. Continuing with the question of setting aside openings, do you agree or disagree that openings should be set aside in good jobs for black workers, being it that, in general, they have worse jobs than do whites?	Agree (strongly or in part). Disagree (strongly or in part).
4. Presently the administration of the municipality of Rio de Janeiro mandates that 33% of persons that participate in commercials paid for by the municipality has to be black. Do you agree or disagree?	Agree (strongly or in part). Disagree (strongly or in part).
Membership in Antiracism Organization	
5. Would you like to become a member of an organization to fight against racism?	Very much. Would like to. Perhaps. No.
Opinions on the Black Movement	
6. Some groups that are organized to look after the interests of blacks are part of the so-called "black movement." Do you believe that the black movement is right in affirming that there is a lot of prejudice in Brazil and that it should be combated. . . . is not right in saying that there is a lot of racial prejudice in Brazil and is making something out of nothing. . . . is not right because there is prejudice but it is not necessary to combat it.
Stratification Beliefs	
Some studies show that in general black persons have worse jobs, salaries, and education than white persons. I am going to mention some reasons that people say explain that situation. Please state whether you agree or disagree with each explanation, a lot or a little.	
7. Racial discrimination impedes blacks from obtaining good jobs and bettering their lives.	Agree Disagree
8. Blacks' slave past continues to weigh heavily upon them.	Agree Disagree
9. Blacks are less motivated than whites.	Agree Disagree

Source: DataUff/Ceap

survey inquired about attitudes toward the Brazilian black movement's opinion on prejudice in Brazil and the necessity to fight against it (item 6, Table 1). In a final series, to access beliefs about racial stratification, respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with several items offered as explanations for why black Brazilians have worse jobs, lower income, and less formal education than white

Brazilians. The explanations presented to respondents for that inequality were racial discrimination, historic slavery, and a lack of motivation on the part of blacks (items 7–9, Table 1). I present bivariate statistics for each of these items.

Next, to understand more fully the relations between attitudes toward antiracism strategies, stratification beliefs, and several sociodemo-

graphic variables, I turned to regression techniques. First, I regressed race-targeted policies on racial stratification beliefs and sociodemographic variables using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. The dependent policy variable was composed of the four items concerning affirmative action in the areas of education, employment, the choosing of political candidates, and the choosing of actors in state-financed television commercials (items 1–4, Table 1). I created this variable using scale construction techniques. My first goal was to ensure that all items would appear to be measuring a common underlying dimension. Principal factor analysis with iterations and a varimax rotation showed a significant eigenvalue on one primary factor at 2.7 and significant factor loadings (>0.5).⁶ I then standardized the four survey items and created a new variable combining and averaging them. After converting the scale to a range of 0 to 1, I also reversed the scale so that a higher value indicated greater acceptance of race-targeted policies. I treated this dependent variable as continuous.

The first independent variable attempted to capture the stratification belief that the dominant Brazilianist stance and SDT researchers hold as a principal element of the racial democracy myth: a denial that racial discrimination is behind black disadvantage (Guimarães 1999; Sidanius et al. 2001). This denial is specifically viewed as inducing a negative response to antiracism strategies. To test this relation, I constructed a stratification belief measure using the responses to item 7 (Table 1). This item asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the idea that racial discrimination was responsible for black disadvantage, and offered the response options of 1 (agreement) and 0 (disagreement).

The independent color variable was formed according to self-classification in the census

format: white, brown, and dark black.⁷ White was the omitted category. The remaining sociodemographic independent variables were education level, treated as a continuous variable with five values consisting of 1 (illiterate/primary incomplete), 2 (primary complete/junior incomplete), 3 (junior complete/secondary incomplete), 4 (secondary complete/superior incomplete), and 5 (superior complete); age, a continuous variable; and sex, with 1 representing female. I present both metric and standardized coefficients for this model.

My second equation (a multinomial logit model) regressed interest in becoming a member of an antiracism organization (item 5, Table 1) on the same stratification belief and sociodemographic variables as my first equation. The dependent variable was composed of the four response options pertaining to levels of interest in membership: a lot, a little, perhaps, and no. I treated the “no” response as the reference category.

The final equation (multinomial logit model) addressed the black movement’s opinion regarding prejudice in Brazil and the necessity to fight against it (item 6, Table 1). Response option “a,” indicating agreement with the black movement’s opinion and antiracism mobilization, acted as the reference category. Response options “b” (disagreement with black movement and mobilization) and “c” (disagreement with black movement because there is some prejudice but no necessity for mobilization) represented levels of disagreement with the black movement. The independent variables were the same as those in my other equations. For both logistic regression models, logit coefficients and odds ratios were presented. Also included was a correlation matrix with all the study variables, in addition to means and standard deviations for all the variables (see Appendix Table 1).

FINDINGS

Beginning with the question of attitudes toward race-targeted policies, the results presented in Table 2 show that a majority of Brazilians in Rio

⁶ The eigenvalue defines the total variance across all items that is explained by a hypothetical underlying dimension or factor. The variance explained by a factor with an eigenvalue of 2.7 with four items is 68 percent ($= [2.7/4] * 100$). Factor loadings are the correlations between each variable and the hypothetical factor. The rule of thumb for salient loadings is $> .5$ (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). The alpha coefficient for the scale was $< .83$.

⁷ The remaining two census terms, *amarelo* (Asian descent) and *Indígena* (Indigenous), were excluded from my analysis because of their small numbers in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Table 2. Distribution of Survey Items on Antiracism Strategies in 2000

	White, %	Brown, %	Dark Black, %	Total, %
Affirmative action				
University quotas (N = 1011)	46.3	59.7	69.8	54.9
Employment quotas (N = 1004)	48.0	63.5	71.2	57.4
Candidate quotas (N = 1006)	43.4	55.9	64.7	51.3
Commercial quotas (N = 983)	64.3	66.1	63.5	64.8
Antiracism organization (N = 980)				
A lot	19.4	25.3	33.3	23.8
A little	13.5	16.9	17.5	15.4
Perhaps	16.2	17.1	5.9	14.8
None	50.9	40.7	43.3	46.1
Black movement (N = 923)				
Right	77.4	84.4	81.4	80.6
Wrong	13.3	10.2	10.8	11.8
No need	9.3	5.4	7.8	7.7

Note: Table presents percent distributions on “agreement” responses only for affirmative action items. Cohorts are Brazilian adults in the State of Rio de Janeiro.
Source: Ceap/DataUff

de Janeiro (54.9 percent) favor quotas for higher education. Levels of agreement vary by color category: 46.3 percent of whites, 59.7 percent of browns, and 69.8 percent of dark blacks. This general distribution pattern regarding agreement continues for quotas in employment and for political candidates. However, in the case of quotas for state-sponsored commercials, there is substantially closer agreement among the three color categories, with an average level of support at 64.8 percent. These findings show that concerning quota legislation of the most varied type, there is consistent majority agreement with these measures.

The response distributions with regard to interest in joining an antiracism organization also are presented in Table 2. The results show that 23.8 percent of Brazilians in Rio express “a lot” of interest in membership in organizations dedicated to antiracism: 19.4 percent of whites, 25.3 percent of browns, and 33.3 percent of dark blacks. When the levels of interest for all color categories are combined, it is evident that a major-

ity of Brazilians in Rio (53.9 percent) expresses some level of interest in becoming a member of organizations dedicated to fighting racism.

Table 2 also presents the statistics on attitudes toward the black movement’s opinion regarding color prejudice in Brazil and the necessity to combat it. The results show overwhelming and near consensual support for this item: 77.4 percent of whites, 84.4 percent of browns, and 81.4 percent of dark blacks.

In all, a majority of Brazilians in the state of Rio expresses support for affirmative action, some level of interest in belonging to an organization dedicated to antiracism, and agreement with the black movement’s opinion on prejudice in Brazil and the necessity to combat it. These results clearly contradict my first hypothesis that the myth of racial democracy in Brazil has created an infertile context for antiracism.

Moving to the issue of stratification beliefs, Table 3 shows a near consensus from individuals of white and black categories that discrimination is the cause of black disadvantage. Fully

Table 3. Agreement on Causes of Racial Stratification by Racial Classification Schemas in 2000

Stratification Beliefs	Two-Color Scheme		Three-Color Scheme		
	White	Black	White	Brown	Dark Black
1. Discrimination, % (N = 1009)	76.6	86.0	76.6	83.6	91.0
2. Slavery, % (N = 1004)	67.1	73.1	67.1	71.9	75.9
3. Less Motivated, % (N = 1009)	16.1	12.6	16.1	12.3	13.3

Note: Cohorts are Brazilian adults in the State of Rio de Janeiro. Source: Ceap/DataU7ff.

76.6 percent of individuals self-classifying in the white category fault discrimination, as do 86 percent of those in the black category (83.6 percent of browns and 91 percent of dark blacks). This black and white consensus also holds for agreement on historic slavery and disagreement on a lack of black motivation as possible explanations. Therefore, regarding my second hypothesis that a majority of Brazilians in the white and black categories consensually denies that racial discrimination is behind black disadvantage, the results show exactly the opposite. There is a near consensus among a majority of whites and blacks that racial discrimination is a cause of contemporary black disadvantage in Brazil. Therefore, as judged by my data, the myth of racial democracy does not lead to a denial of racial discrimination on the part of most Brazilians. Moreover, Brazilian antiracism should not be viewed as characterized by that denial (see also Bailey 2002).

With this new understanding of how a majority of Brazilians explains black disadvantage, I examine my third hypothesis to determine whether the majority stratification belief affects opinions toward antiracism strategies. It will be recalled that for a stratification belief to qualify as a legitimizing myth, it is necessary to demonstrate that it significantly influences opinions on antiracism, irrespective of the direction of that effect. The regression results in Table 4 show a statistically significant relation between the majority stratification belief (that discrimination is behind racial inequality) and attitudes toward race-targeted policies (Panel 1). The results also show a statistically significant relation between the stratification belief and expression of "a little" interest in joining an antiracism organization as compared with "no" interest (Panel 2). Finally, Table 4 demonstrates the significant relation between the stratification belief and claiming the black movement is "right" compared to saying that it is "wrong"

Table 4. Ordinary Least Squares and Logit Regression Analysis of Antiracism Initiatives in 2000

Independent Variable	Panel 1 OLS Regression	Panel 2 Multinomial Logistic Regression ^a			Panel 3 Multinomial Logistic Regression ^b	
	b	logits (A Lot)	logits (A Little)	logits (Perhaps)	logits (Right)	logits (No Need)
Color ^c						
Brown	.076*** (.021)	.463** (.187)	.291 (.218)	.221 (.208)	.230 (.242)	-.480 (.368)
Dark Black	.118*** (.028)	.543* (.230)	.293 (.273)	-.999** (.387)	-.092 (.310)	-.259 (.430)
Education	-.106*** (.008)	-.241*** (.073)	-.039 (.084)	-.043 (.082)	-.025 (.089)	-.373** (.138)
Female	.043* (.019)	.020 (.171)	.257 (.204)	-.014 (.200)	.404 (.216)	.503 (.322)
Age	-.002** (.001)	-.032*** (.006)	-.047*** (.007)	-.029*** (.007)	-.024*** (.007)	-.017 (.010)
Stratification belief	.050* (.025)	.121 (.216)	.578* (.288)	.184 (.252)	1.517*** (.228)	.970** (.354)
Intercept	.842*** (.048)	.970* (.419)	.161 (.512)	.089 (.492)	1.619 (.508)	.477 (.739)
R ² ^d	.20					
N	992		980		923	

Note: Cohorts are Brazilian adults in the State of Rio de Janeiro. OLS = ordinary least squares; OR = odds ratio.

Source: DataUff/Ceap.

^a "No" omitted.

^b "Wrong" omitted.

^c "White" omitted.

^d R² has undesirable properties with weighted data in logistic regression, thus that statistic is omitted for Panels 2 and 3.

(Panel 3). Hence, my third hypothesis receives significant support. The majority stratification belief does qualify as a legitimizing myth.

After confirming that this stratification belief can classify as a legitimizing myth, I next approach the issue of whether it is hierarchy-enhancing or hierarchy-attenuating. Is its association with antiracism strategies negative (i.e., hierarchy-enhancing) or positive (i.e., hierarchy-attenuating)? Referring again to Table 4, Panels 1, 2, and 3, I observe that the association is positive. Therefore, my fourth hypothesis that the majority stratification belief acts as a hierarchy-enhancing myth is not supported. Rather, the positive associations indicate that this belief is hierarchy-attenuating (it leads to support for antiracism).

What other variables are significantly associated with opinions toward antiracism in Brazil? Beginning with the relation between antiracism strategies and color, there are some significant differences between whites, browns, and dark blacks, especially as concerns affirmative action. Although a large percentage of whites supports affirmative action strategies (e.g., 48 percent concerning quotas in employment and 64.3 percent concerning quotas in commercials [Table 2]), whites are significantly less likely than browns and dark blacks to do so (Panel 1, Table 4). As pertains to the relation between color and interest in joining an antiracism organization, browns and dark blacks are significantly more likely than whites to express “a lot” of interest in membership, as

compared with “no” interest. For example, an examination of the odds ratios in Panel 2 (Table 5) shows that the odds of choosing “a lot” rather than “no” are 1.6 and 1.7 times greater for browns and dark blacks, respectively, than for whites, when all other variables are held constant. Finally, concerning attitudes toward the black movement and the necessity to fight against racial prejudice (Panel 3, Table 4), there are no significant color effects.

These significant relations between opinions on antiracism initiatives and color show an element of apparent group-based interest. Concerning affirmative action policies, whites may show less support because they would not be the benefactors of the policy preferences, and possibly could be disadvantaged by them. This finding is consistent with the general group dominance perspective. However, as compared with results on similar selected items in the United States context (Table 6), for example, the racial divide on race-targeted policy issues in Brazil appears only moderate (Telles and Bailey 2002). In Brazil, 46.3 percent of whites, as compared with 63 percent of blacks, favor quotas in higher education. In the United States, according to the 1992 National Election Study that included a similar question on quotas in higher education, only 24.8 percent of whites favored the same, as compared with fully 75.6 percent of blacks (Kinder and Winter 2001:441). The difference between whites and blacks is 16.7 percentage points in Brazil and 50.8 percentage points in the United States. Concerning quotas

Table 5. Ordinary Least Squares and Logistic Regression: Analysis of Antiracism Initiatives in 2000

Independent Variable	Panel 1 OLS Regression	Panel 2 Multinomial Logistic Regression ^a			Panel 3 Multinomial Logistic Regression ^b	
	B	OR (A Lot)	OR (A Little)	OR (Perhaps)	OR (Right)	OR (No Need)
Color ^c						
Brown	.111	1.590	1.339	1.248	1.259	.619
Dark black	.133	1.721	1.340	.368	.91 2	.772
Education	-.399	.786	.962	.958	.976	.689
Female	.064	1.020	1.293	.987	1.497	1.276
Age	-.083	.969	.954	.972	.977	.983
Stratification belief	.060	1.129	1.782	1.202	4.558	2.639

Note: Cohorts are Brazilian adults in the State of Rio de Janeiro. OLS = ordinary least squares; OR = odds ratio.

Source: DataUff/Ceap.

^a “No” omitted.

^b “Wrong” omitted.

^c “White” omitted.

for good jobs, 48 percent of whites favor this policy in Brazil, as compared with 66 percent of blacks. In the same 1992 survey in the United States, only 13.3 percent of whites, as compared with 55.9 percent of blacks, favored preferential hiring and promotion of blacks (Kinder and Winter 2001:441). On this question, the difference between whites and blacks is 18 percentage points in Brazil and 42.6 percentage points in the United States. Therefore, although there appears to be some evidence suggesting group-based interests concerning attitudes toward race-targeted policy, color categories in Brazil appear to be associated only moderately with opinions on race-targeted initiatives in comparison with the United States context.

However, group-based interest may not be the driving force behind these results in Brazil. An alternative explanation may be that of simple self-interest (Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Kinder and Sanders 1996). As nonbeneficiaries of race-targeted policies, white individuals may perceive race-targeted policies as possibly meaning tangible loss for themselves and their families, a stance that may have little or nothing to do with racial group solidarity. In practice, it may be hard to distinguish between the effects of self- and group-based interests on the formation of attitudinal stances. According to Kinder and Sanders (1996), the possibility for the determinant effect of self-interest is increased, for example, when a question involves a policy for which the benefits and harms are well publicized, and for which these are certain to take effect should a policy pass.

Concerning the relation of color category and belonging to an antiracism organization, it is not surprising that whites differ significant-

ly from browns and dark blacks regarding the choice of "a lot" of interest over "no" interest (Panel 2, Table 4). Black movements may be the only popularly known antiracism organizations in Brazil, and according to Burdick (1998), these movements prefer the use of the term black (*negro*) for their members. Burdick suggested that this preference results in "color alienation" (i.e., the discomfort that individuals who do not see themselves as black would experience in those organizations). Color alienation, then, may help to explain in part the associations between color and interest in membership in antiracism organizations. The lack of color effects on the item of whether the black movement is right about prejudice and on the necessity to mobilize against it (Panel 3, Table 4) may result from the fact that this item does not posit a membership commitment. Hence, color alienation would not come into play for whites expressing agreement on this issue.

Next, I look at the relation between education and opinions on antiracism. Education is considered a strong social class proxy in Brazil, where it plays a decisive role in the maldistribution of wealth (Pastore and Silva 2000; Schwartzman 1999). Brazil's socioeconomic inequality has resulted in strong class divisions, which traditionally have been considered stronger than racial cleavages (Harris 1964; Wagley 1952). For example, Telles (1995:1219) has argued that "in places like Rio de Janeiro . . . , segregation between the poor and the middle class is extreme, while racial segregation is not." Moreover, the strength of class cleavages led Harris' (1964:61) to argue that "it is one's class and not one's race which determines the adoption of subordinate and superordinate attitudes between specific individuals in face-to-face relations". In my previous research (Bailey 2002), I also found that education, acting as a proxy for social class, was the strongest predictor of explanations for racial inequality in Brazil.

Several findings in this analysis indicate that education also is the strongest factor in relation to opinions on race-targeted policy. Table 7 shows that approximately 80 percent of individuals with a low level of education support quotas in universities and for jobs, as compared, respectively, with 30 percent and 35.6 percent of those with a high education level. This decisive relation with education thoroughly holds

Table 6. Support for Race-targeted Intervention in Brazil and the United States

	White	Black ^a	Difference
Brazil			
University Quotas, %	46.3	63.0	16.7
Job Quotas, %	48.0	66.0	18.0
United States			
University Quotas, %	24.8	75.6	50.8
Hiring Preferences, %	13.3	55.9	42.6

Sources: Brazil—Ceap/DataUff 2000; United States—NES 1992 (adapted from Kinder and Winter 2001).

^a Brown and dark black collapsed in Brazilian case.

Table 7. Support for Race-targeted Policies by Educational Level and Color in 2000

	Race-Targeted Initiatives			
	Quotas in Universities YES	Quotas in Employment YES	Quotas for Candidates YES	Quotas in Commercials YES
Educational level				
All				
Low, %	79.6%	81.1%	76.4%	79.3%
Medium Low, %	68.0	68.5	59.1	67.6
Medium, %	46.2	49.0	44.6	59.0
High, %	30.0	35.6	30.6	56.9
Education/Color				
White				
Low, %	74.8	74.5	67.3	80.7
Medium Low, %	58.9	58.5	51.6	63.6
Medium, %	39.5	43.9	38.1	63.9
High, %	23.1	27.6	26.1	57.2
Brown				
Low, %	80.0	85.7	79.5	76.0
Medium Low, %	70.7	71.7	60.0	70.4
Medium, %	52.6	54.7	52.6	62.7
High, %	38.8	44.9	36.5	57.1
Dark Black				
Low, %	90.5	88.1	92.9	82.5
Medium Low, %	82.5	82.8	71.9	70.8
Medium, %	48.5	48.5	42.4	37.5
High, %	41.4	51.7	37.9	53.6
N	1011	1004	1006	983

Note: Cohorts are Brazilian adults in the State of Rio de Janeiro. Source: DataUff/Ceap.

when control is used for color category. Table 7 shows, for example, that whereas approximately 75 percent of whites with a low level of education support quotas in universities and for jobs, only 23.1 percent of whites with a high level of education do so in the case of university quotas, and only 27.6 percent support quotas for jobs. Moreover, the OLS regression results further document the decisive relation between education and opinions on affirmative action, as compared with the results for the other independent variables. For example, an examination of the standardized coefficients (Panel 1, Table 5) shows that the coefficient for education is almost four times larger than for the two color categories brown and dark black in relation to the omitted white category ($-.399$ vs $.111$ and $.113$, respectively).

Education level also is associated significantly with interest in joining an antiracism organization (Panel 2, Table 4). My findings show that individuals of lower education levels are much more likely than those of higher lev-

els to show interest, according to a comparison of the responses "a lot" and "no." In terms of the odds ratios (Panel 2, Table 5), with a one unit increase in education level, the odds of choosing "a lot" over "no" decrease by a factor of .79 when all other variables are held constant.

These results showing the strong effect of social class on attitudinal stances, as measured by education level, lend some support to Harris's (1964) claim that class more than race shapes attitudinal stances in Brazil.

DISCUSSION

The findings in this study speak to three issues located at the core of contemporary academic and public policy discussions regarding racism and antiracism in Brazil: (1) the nature and significance of the racial democracy myth, especially regarding its relation to possible intervention strategies targeting black disadvantage; (2) the adequacy of group dominance perspectives for analyzing Brazilian racial dynamics, and (3) the possibility of race-tar-

geted initiatives and antiracism organization in Brazil. My findings have clear implications for these issues in Brazil, and perhaps in other similarly structured contexts of Latin America.

NATURE OF THE RACIAL DEMOCRACY MYTH

Is the myth of racial democracy a “racist ideology” (Guimarães 1999) that neutralizes antiracism initiatives in Brazil? My findings suggest that it is not, thereby contradicting the dominant Brazilianist perspective. Rather, significant percentages of Brazilians from each color category in the state of Rio de Janeiro express support for affirmative action policies and state an interest in belonging to antiracism organizations. In addition, a majority of both white and black Brazilians agrees with the black movement’s stance on prejudice and the necessity to mobilize against it. Furthermore, there is a majority consensus among individuals in the white and black categories on the belief that racial discrimination *is* a causal factor of black disadvantage. Finally, this stratification belief appears to constitute a *hierarchy-attenuating* myth (i.e., it is positively associated with support for affirmative action, interest in joining antiracism organizations, and agreement with the black movement’s view on prejudice and the necessity to contend with it).

These findings suggest that much of the academic discourse regarding Brazil and the nature and effects of this commonsense myth is not easily reconciled with the views of ordinary Brazilians in Rio de Janeiro in 2000. Prominent Brazilianists Carlos Hasenbalg and Nelson do Valle Silva (1999:165–66) have suggested an origin for this disjuncture:

The academic literature on race and politics in Brazil has been developed without the benefit of knowledge of the general public’s attitudes on matters of race relations. We know much more about what the elite thinks about these matters, whether they be black or white, than we know about the general public.

Perhaps most importantly, Hasenbalg and Silva (1999:166) have added regarding this disjuncture between the attitudes of elites and of the general population:

The best example of this is the overused ideology of racial democracy, an idea invented by intellectuals and appropriated by government—which made it the official story of race relations in the

nation. It has been presumed to constitute the common sense about race in the population. Yet, the ways in which this ideology is translated into concepts and attitudes among white and black Brazilians continue to be largely unknown.

The historic lack of generalizable public opinion data on racialized issues in Brazil may have hampered a clearer understanding of prevalent racial perspectives (Hanchard 1994:63). The error has consisted of attributing to ordinary Brazilians a romanticized Freyrean or “racial paradise” interpretation of the racial democracy myth. This attribution has led researchers to fault a perceived lack of “antiracist consciousness” (Twine 1998:153) on the part of a majority of black (and white) Brazilians for the perpetuation of racial inequality, a type of victim blaming. My findings suggest that not only do Brazilians not lack this “antiracist consciousness,” but that there also seems to be fertile ground for antiracism mobilization. It therefore appears that it is a misstep to associate Brazilian antiracism with a denial of racial discrimination.

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF SOCIAL DOMINANCE THEORY

According to the SDT framework, in situations of historic racial inequality, hegemonic ideologies function to enhance “group-based racial hierarchy” (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). These ideologies generally operate through the subordinate racial group’s adoption of the dominant group’s perspective (the former are victims of a type of “false consciousness” [Sidanius and Pratto 1999:103, 124]).⁸ Social dominance theory researchers frame the Brazilian myth of racial democracy in this light, as an ideology that “denies the existence of any racism,” as consensually held by blacks and whites, and as enhancing group-based hierarchy (Sidanius et al. 2001).

However, my findings suggest that this type of framing in Brazil is flawed. The survey results show no evidence of a consensual denial of racism among a majority of black and white

⁸ The compatibility of SDT and the dominant Brazilianist stance is not perfect. Hanchard (1994), for example, specifically viewed a “false consciousness” framing as misleading.

Brazilians that enhances racial hierarchy. On the contrary, Brazilian public opinion overwhelmingly recognizes racial discrimination, a view associated positively with support for antiracism. Therefore, the problem of contemporary racism, as expressed through the attitudinal survey in Rio de Janeiro, does not follow the argument of SDT.

How can we account for this misread? An answer may lie in the reality that there are intersecting identities in Brazil that do not fit well into framings that assume strong group-based dynamics. Group dominance perspectives, including SDT, endorse three basic assumptions in contexts of racial inequality: group-based racial subjectivity, interests, and ideologies (Sears et al. 2000). Social dominance theory specifically states that its framing is limited to the study of social dominance "with respect to groups qua groups" (Sidanius and Pratto 1999:125). Thus, as applied to Brazilian racial dynamics, this framing rests on the postulate that Brazilian color categories indeed strongly organize group-based racial interests, ideologies, and identities (Loveman 1999).⁹ However, if racial interests are clearly group-based in Brazil, why, for example, does a majority of lower educated white and black Brazilians support affirmative action, whereas these policies are not supported by a majority of higher educated white and black Brazilians? In addition, why does a majority of white Brazilians endorse a stratification ideology that in effect de-legitimizes white privilege?¹⁰

Reskin (2003) criticized the type of "group-specific" approach that I suggest weakens the applicability of the SDT framework to Brazil.

⁹ With respect to the problematic issue of assuming robust racial subjectivity in Brazil, see Bailey (2002) and Loveman (1999).

¹⁰ Social desirability bias is an issue in attitudinal surveys (Bickart and Felcher 1996). However, at the same time that a majority of whites in the United States voices support for racial equality, a majority also voices strenuous opposition to antiracism initiatives such as affirmative action (Schuman et al. 1997). Following that logic, it may be difficult simply to target social desirability bias as leading white Brazilians to voice support for antiracism. Moreover, in the dominant Brazilianist view, that support would be anathema in this context that supposedly denies the existence of racial discrimination.

She claimed that conflict theories of social stratification display a tendency toward the "balkanization" of identities. Too often, according to Reskin, studies of ascription-based inequality produce accounts that are wholly "group specific." This propensity results in the frequent assumption of within-group homogeneity with regard to the attitudes, motivations, and ideologies of the implicated social identities, leading to a type of "essentialism" (5). Reskin viewed this essentialism as often precluding the exploration of within-group variation stemming from alternative social identifications.

Brubaker and Cooper (2000) also explored this issue and noted the tendency in identity studies to reduce societal heterogeneity to a "multichrome mosaic of monochrome identity groups" (33). In the study of racial and ethnic dynamics, Brubaker (2002) argued that researchers tend to present the social world as composed of "monochrome ethnic, racial, or cultural blocs" (3). These monochrome entities then are attributed interests and agency and become the "chief protagonist of social conflict" (2).

An assumption of monochromatic racial identities and dynamics may be less problematic in contexts characterized by prolonged histories of segregated racial identities and overt racial conflict (Telles 1999). These particular histories may have resulted in unified attitudinal stances on issues pertaining to race, such as appears to be the case in the United States (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Segato 1998). However, social identities generally are considered multifaceted and situational (Cohen 1978; Cornell 1996; Okamura 1981). They can be fragmented and fluid (Hoetink 1967; Jenkins 1997). Treating them analytically as singular necessarily results in the neglect of the effects from overlapping or nested identification. An emphasis on "bounded groupness" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000) tends to preclude the reality of "crosscutting cleavages" (Cohen 1978:395).

Focusing on monochrome racial identities may be especially hazardous in Brazil, where social class-based dynamics play a significant role in the cognitive organization of attitudinal stances (Andrews 2000; Harris 1964; Sansone 2003; Wagley 1952). An emphasis highlighting the effects of class on race with regard to attitudinal stances on racial issues is not frequent in the United States, for example, where race is

perceived as a strong group-based identity. In one study investigating the effect of class divisions on racial issues among African Americans, Hwang, Fitzpatrick, and Helms (1998) summarized their findings as follows: "Our analysis suggests that blacks, regardless of class standing, join in a united front with their attitudes serving as grim reminders of the racial inequalities created and maintained by the current stratification system" (377). In this same vein, Kinder and Sanders (1996) found in an extensive study of United States public opinion that it is "race, not class" (298), that determines race-targeted policy perspectives.

However, I find that a class proxy, education level, is quite significant in Brazil. Concerning the relation between policy perspectives and education (Panel 1, Table 5), the OLS regression model shows that this proxy's standardized coefficient is almost four times as large as the race coefficients. In Table 7, I show that whereas whites and browns with a low education level similarly supported quotas in universities (74.8 and 80 percent, respectively), whites and browns with a high level of education supported them much less (23.1 and 38.8 percent, respectively). Finally, Table 5 (Panel 2) also shows that with a one unit increase in education level, an individual is only .79 times as likely to express "a lot" of interest in membership in an antiracism organization, as compared with "no" interest.

These findings suggesting the importance of class-based identification are not surprising in a context of extreme social class inequalities. Brazil had the world's second most unequal income distribution in 1999, ranked only after that of Sierra Leone (Silva 2000). Shared histories of disadvantage are a central factor in the formation of ascriptive identities (Hwang et al. 1998:369; Jenkins 1997). In Brazil, class identification is considered strong precisely because the most dramatic inequalities in that context "are more visibly and verbally linked to class distinctions" (Guimarães 2001:169; Telles 1995). Studies in Brazil certainly do document outcome disparities along color lines (Silva 2000), and these disparities cannot but result in racialized understandings. However, it becomes clear that intersecting identities must be taken into account in Brazil, thereby complicating frameworks that tend to reduce social identification, and thus the interests and ideologies that accompany them, to one primary essence. It

also is clear, however, that the perpetuation of racial inequality does not require neatly organized interests and ideologies. For example, the perverse realities of institutionalized racism and the effects of accumulated disadvantage do not necessarily need majority ideologic consent, black or white, for their maintenance (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967; Feagin 1977; Reskin 2003).

REPERCUSSIONS FOR THE ANTIRACISM DEBATE

My final goal was to bring some empiric evidence to bear on the practical task of devising strategies to combat racism in Brazil. The results show surprising levels of support across all color categories for antiracism organizations, mobilizations, and race-targeted initiatives. Will this hypothetical support expressed in the survey translate into practical support for these strategies? Just as social class had a strong effect on attitudinal stances, could it also play an important role in the organization of antiracism?

The evolving case of quotas for university entrance in Rio de Janeiro may be illustrative for exploring aspects of these questions. The law passed in 2001 establishing quotas of 40 percent for browns and blacks recently has been significantly modified as a result of public and university-centered debate. In contrast to that exclusively race-based legislation, the revised law passed in September 2003 created a quota of 45 percent for poor students distributed as follows: 20 percent for blacks, 20 percent for students from the public school system,¹¹ and 5 percent for students with physical disabilities and for ethnic minorities (Asembléia Legislativa 2003). To be considered a candidate for some type of quota, an individual must first demonstrate a family income below the poverty level. Non-poor blacks, for example, cannot be beneficiaries of the 20 percent quota for blacks. Thus, this new income limit for the color quota may represent "the necessity to diversify corrective public policies or affirmative action

¹¹ Basic public education in Brazil is below par in comparison with private education, whose clientele largely excludes poor Brazilians. This divide is implicated in the disproportional success of private school students on university entrance examinations, as compared with public school students.

...to deal with poor populations of different colors" (Guimarães 2001:178), as opposed to dealing exclusively with color populations irrespective of levels of poverty. It may follow, then, that race, as an issue, does not stand alone in the Brazilian public's mind, and that creating policies as if race does stand alone could jeopardize broad public support for these policies.

With regard to mobilizing against discrimination, significant percentages of individuals of all colors expressed interest in belonging to antiracism organizations. Consequently, there should be some fertile ground for antiracism activities. However, class also is certain to remain an issue. Interestingly, although the black movement is characterized as a middle-class organization (Andrews 2000; Burdick 1998), individuals in the survey with lower levels of education showed much more hypothetical willingness to join antiracism organizations than those with higher levels of education. However, Andrews (1991) has offered a possible explanation for the current lack of participation in the black movement on the part of poor blacks. He has claimed that middle-class activists and poor blacks may "have little in common beyond the color of their skin" (198). Andrews suggested that the exclusively race-based discourse of the black movement (Guimarães 2001:168) may not address the issues that most affect lower class blacks, thereby making active participation a less attractive proposition in the past. He wrote:

To unemployed blacks and those living on the fringes of the urban economy, racial discrimination

seems the least of their worries. The differences between these people and the poverty-stricken whites and near-whites who live among them are negligible in comparison to those which divide middle-class blacks from their white counterpart (Andrews 1991:198).¹²

Therefore, just as class became an issue in the legislation of affirmative action policies in Rio de Janeiro, class may also be a decisive issue for the organization of antiracism mobilization (Guimarães 2001:169; Andrews 2000).

In summary, the results from the survey of racial attitudes in Rio de Janeiro in 2000 suggest that the racial commonsense in Brazil framed by researchers with the myth of racial democracy does not appear to be characterized by a lack of antiracist consciousness. However, the success of the diverse antiracism strategies explored in this article may rest on the ability of legislators and activists *not* to reduce the identities of Brazilians to one primary (racial) essence. The same applies to the success of researchers in the task of theory building in Brazil.

Stanley R. Bailey is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Irvine. His research interests include racial and ethnic dynamics and religion, principally in Latin America. His work on public opinion in Brazil challenges dominant views of the myth of racial democracy and its effect on attitudinal stances. This present article builds on his argument recently published in the American Journal of Sociology 108(2002):406–39.

¹² Stated differently, Guimarães (2001:178) wrote: "In Brazil, color charisma meshed together with class, placing poor whites in a situation closer to blacks and mestizos than middle-class whites."

APPENDIX

Table 1. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for all Variables

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(1) Policy	1.000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(2) Black M.	.162	1.000	—	—	—	—	—	—
(3) Interest	.084	.199	1.000	—	—	—	—	—
(4) Color	.182	.059	.031	1.000	—	—	—	—
(5) Education	-.389	.082	.031	-.144	1.000	—	—	—
(6) Female	.058	.049	.018	.019	-.020	1.000	—	—
(7) Age	-.001	-.115	-.219	-.058	-.264	.020	1.000	—
(8) Stratify	.083	.213	.039	.126	.025	.015	-.035	1.000
Mean	.57	.84	.81	.68	2.62	.63	43.02	.81
SD	.40	.86	.40	.74	1.23	.48	16.26	.39

Source: DataUff/Ceap.

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