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Race as a Dependent Variable: Three Papers on the Social Predictors of Racial
Attribution and Identification in Brazil

By

Laura M. Mangels

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

in the

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Marion Fourcade, Chair

Professor Mara Loveman

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Abstract

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Professor Marion Fourcade, Chair

Racial classification is relational, and it is constructed and contested as both an identity and as an ascribed category. In this three-part dissertation, I examine racial classification in São Paulo, Brazil, and argue that we can leverage survey data on racial classification to reach a more nuanced understanding of racial boundaries.

Paper 1: Because racial classification is relational, we must examine both sides of the relationship, and yet most studies on ascription do not consider the ways in which the ascriber's traits matter for classificatory outcomes. Using a quasi-experimental design, I examine how statuses of both the classifier *and* of the person being classified matter for racial attribution. I find that high-status biographies paired with a racially ambiguous face have a higher likelihood of white (versus *pardo*) racial attribution. I also find that educational achievement is significantly predictive of seeing whiteness in others—irrespective of the phenotype, self-identification, or the social status of the person being classified.

Paper 2: Drawing on a large-scale survey linked to census-tract data, I examine how classification can operate asymmetrically across different racial boundaries. I compare the effects of various individual-level and neighborhood-level traits on the chances of having one's racial identity contested by an observer. I show that social status does not have a uniform effect, mattering greatly for the boundary between white and *pardo*, and much less for the boundary between *pardo* and black. I also find that individuals living in richer or more educated neighborhoods—even when controlling for individual status—are more likely to be whitened, and less likely to have their white identities challenged.

Paper 3: In this paper, I demonstrate how we can leverage racial mismatch data to study the everyday impact of institutions (in this case, the police) on individual racial identity. With a combination of survey and census data, I show how self-reported contact with the police in the twelve months prior to the survey is associated with a lower chance of identifying as white, even when controlling for individual status and observed race. I also show how neighborhood characteristics can further shape racial identity: Proximity to a *favela*, the neighborhood rate of economically motivated crime, and the racial makeup of the neighborhood all have separate and independent effects on racial identity.

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Introduction

The consequentialness of racial categories should be reason enough to motivate us to pay close attention to how individuals in a particular society are classified racially. Considering how one's life chances are impacted by one's race, and how far-reaching discrimination is as a social dynamic (Lucas 2008), we must not unquestioningly treat this process as given. Racial classification is also germane to understanding how it is that we, as social creatures, construct the world around us. As noted by Ian Hacking (2005: p. 109), "[c]lassification and judgment are seldom separable. Racial classification *is* evaluation." The process of classification gives rise to subjectivity itself, which in turn mediates one's relationship to oneself, to others, and to important institutions, such as law enforcement. And, classification patterns—rules of vision and division (Bourdieu 1991, 1998), or of "splitting and lumping" (Zerubavel 1996), which provide "information infrastructures" (Bowker and Star 1999)—affect the extent to which collective identification and group formation are possible (Barth 1969; Brubaker 2002), including novel forms (Hacking 1996).

Long before racial classification became intriguing to American sociologists of late, Blumer (1958) argued that racial group identification varied across time and space in its degree of salience, and in the rigidity, sharpness, and location of boundaries. A decade later, Barth (1969) put out a strong call for the study of "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (Barth 1969: 6 & 15). Meanwhile, Wagley (1965) argued that there were distinct racial classificatory systems operating across societies; and he identified ancestry, physical appearance, and sociocultural status as three different sets of criteria that could be emphasized to differing degrees by a given culture as bases for category membership.

In direct contrast to a focus on meaning and symbolic content of racial categories (Omi and Winant 1994), these scholars push us to see that by attending to *boundaries* we can better understand the differences between cultures or ethnicities and how they are socially organized in relation to each other. Further, Barth specifically calls for the study of self-ascription in relationship to ascription by others in specific interactions (thereby foreshadowing the racial-mismatch studies of late); and he emphasizes that we must focus on agents' definition of race to get at race—not the analyst's.

Drawing explicitly upon a Weberian understanding of ethnicity, Loveman (1999) proposes that the mere imposition of racial categories by a scholar does not in fact mean that a racial group objectively exists. Rather, we must look to cognitive systems like categorization *and* social processes like social closure to decide whether or not a racial category corresponds to a group. The relationship between processes of classification and kinds of social closure—and the extent to which a collective identity is formed—is an empirical and historically contingent question, and should never be assumed *a priori*. Our analytical attention should be invested in an analysis of the construction and contestation of boundaries in relationship to each other, taking special note of the interests and pre-existing relationships that may play into constructing the boundaries as such.

"Groupism," or "ethnic common sense," is the human tendency to divide the social world into "deeply constituted, quasi-natural intrinsic kinds," and "is a key part of what we want to explain, not what we want to explain things with; it belongs to our empirical data, not to our analytical toolkit" (Brubaker 2002: 165). Racial categories are cognitive layers we place upon the world, and by attending to ways in which these cognitive structures are actually structured, we can better understand *how* race works, and how it is constructed. Cognitive psychology, as a

general approach, can help illuminate the connection between large-scale and small-scale processes of group-making (Brubaker, Loveman, and Stamatov 2004). Classification of others and of oneself are cognitive processes that are necessary (if not sufficient) for group-making. Furthermore, to the extent that these cognitive processes can be shown to be contextually patterned, or to have other predictable regularities, we can begin to show *how* aspects of racial identity or ascription are socially contingent. Although it may seem that we are studying inherently individual-level phenomena by examining mental cognition, we must keep in mind that these mental schemas themselves are socially given—and by studying the patterning of mental cognition across people, we can uncover not only the on-the-ground workings of racial classification, but also some of its social underpinning.

Race is not a fixed social given, and it can be shown to be quite fluid and malleable, shifting like a kaleidoscope (Morning 2018) along with the lived structures of life itself. The same person might be seen as black in one country or state (Jenks 1916), but not in another (Davis 1991). In Brazil, which has been something of a poster child for the study of the malleability of race, it is common for people to switch between racial categories, even within a single classificatory system (for instance, see: Sansone 2003; Loveman, Muniz, and Bailey 2012; Muniz and Bastos 2017). Races have long been perceived to be more fluid in Brazil (Pierson 1942, Harris 1952, Wagley 1952, Bailey 2009, Telles 2004), and in Latin America more generally (Wade 1997; Telles 2014), when compared to the United States, where race is more likely to have been seen as fixed. However, even within the US, whether race feels self-evident or not has itself been an object of inquiry to be explained, and not just assumed. Scholars have noted that Americans too have “ethnic options” (Waters 1990), which can sometimes be mobilized strategically (Almaguer 1994; Haney-Lopez 1996). Even in the US, ethnicity does not always seem to transmit inter-generationally in a straightforward way (Lieberson and Waters 1993), perhaps in part because the relative availability and popularity of categories may shift over time, such as with the rise of biracial identities (Rockquemore and Brunnsma 2002).

And yet, despite all this documented movement of people across racial categories, we cannot say that classification is a free-for-all; racial categories are coercive too. At every turn, individuals' classificatory options are constrained and shaped by the social world around them, as is evidenced by people like Rachel Dolezal, whose claims to a black identity have been thoroughly rejected by society (Brubaker 2016a). This dual reality of race as both fluid and fixed is true in Latin America and in Brazil as well. While it is true that people do have complex patterns of racial identification and ascription, it is not the case that Latin Americans are free to select racial categories at will. So, although shifts in classification, such as “whitening” in Latin America (Wade 1997; Telles 2002; Schwartzman 2007; Telles and Paschel 2014), truly do occur, it is also the case that who *can* claim a given race is very much socially constrained. Considering both the fluid and rigid nature of racial categories, we can say that racial classification tends to have a structured malleability to it.

In addition to being both structured and malleable, race and racial boundaries are also *relational*. Not only are the categories constructed in relationship to each other, but so are the people, who are classifying not only themselves, but also each other, in a highly dynamic set of processes (Emirbayer and Desmond 2015). Ascription, or racial attribution (Roth 2018), is an act of an observer assigning another person to a racial category or label. As a social process, it is analytically separable from racial identification, which is an act of self-classification into a category. Again, we can think of both processes as being both malleable and constrained. As such, these two processes may be governed by different patterns, and someone's racial identity

may not necessarily match up with how an observer is classifying them. Further, it is not possible to say that one racial attribution (self-identified versus ascribed) is more or less “real” than the other (though we could of course argue that one or the other may be more or less consequential, depending on the circumstances).

How a classifier reads any given trait will vary from classifier to classifier. This process will likely also depend on both the content and the degree of activation of cognitive racial schemas, which are “cognitive bundles” of socially shared racial categories and rules that operate as templates for individuals’ understanding of themselves and others in any given situation (Roth 2018: p. 1095). One’s social position in society will likely affect one’s understanding and application of racial categories. The degree to which race-related schemas are activated in turn likely varies from situation to situation—perhaps even for the same individuals—and these variations are unlikely to be random.

In other words, the personal traits of the classifier and the social features of the context both matter for ascription outcomes. Classification is not simply a function of the phenotypical traits—or even the social traits—of the person being classified, as may be assumed by a commonsense understanding of racial classification. We must look at those doing the classifying too.

Furthermore, both ascription and self-identification are processes that are themselves sensitive to social context. For example, we know that experiences of racial segregation and of social disorganization as a child are predictive of having a stronger black identity (Charles et al. 2015), and having sustained contact with Chinese-speaking people increases ethnic salience for Chinese Americans (Yip 2005).

Another layer of complexity lies in the fact that the processes of ascription and of self-identification are also sensitive to each other. How one classifies oneself may very much depend on how others classify you, and classifiers may very well be responsive to how a person self-identifies. While a black woman’s experience of discrimination in the United States differs from that of a black man’s or of a white woman’s in important ways that cannot be reduced to either race or gender category on its own (Brah and Phoenix 2004), that’s not to say that we should not also consider the ways in which identification with a particular category is constituted in relationship to other people, across other categories. To deepen our understanding of overlapping identities, we can focus on the social *dynamics* that play out across these boundaries to constitute subjects (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall 2013), or to *reciprocally constitute* subjects (Collins 2015).

Both ascription and identification are socially relevant acts of racial classification, and it is inherent to race that it is relationally constructed in this manner by multiple processes. However, it is only recently that a new literature has flourished that takes advantage of the insight that racial classification, as a relational process, necessarily involves these two separate processes of ascription and self-classification (Hill 2002; Telles 2002; Saperstein 2006, 2009; Brunsmma 2006; Campbell and Troyer 2007; Roth 2010, 2016, 2018; Saperstein and Penner 2012; Telles and Paschel 2014; Feliciano 2016; Garcia and Abascal 2016; Monk 2016; Vargas and Kingsbury 2016; Vargas and Stainback 2016). The recent emergence of these studies can in part be explained by the relatively new availability of data where multiple measures of race are available. These studies have leveraged racial classification “mismatches,” or have controlled for phenotype in various ways, to attempt to uncover some of the factors other than phenotype that shape racial classificatory outcomes. In so doing, they are carving out new empirical territory for sociologists of race, where we can use relatively simple survey and laboratory techniques to study race in such a way that takes seriously that it is socially constructed through relational

practices. And, in more explicitly drawing our attention to the non-racial social traits that feed into racial classificatory decisions, the racial mismatch studies have opened up a renewed interest in the ways in which race is socially constructed by social status and other factors. Because ascription and self-identification often have divergent outcomes—in other words, because people don't always self-identify in the ways that others choose to classify them—scholars have the opportunity to analyze whether the discrepancies can be systematically tied back to non-race attributes. In making these connections, we can begin to see how one's status, where one lives, or who one interacts with shapes how one self-identifies racially, how others racially identify, and the inconsistencies therein.

Because race in Latin America is seen as highly fluid and particularly sensitive to money-whitening effects (Wade 1997), it is perhaps unsurprising that research on racial classification discrepancies got a head start in Latin America. In Brazil, it has been long observed that upwardly mobile individuals might “escape” out of blackness into the middle *pardo* category (Degler 1971). Telles (2002, 2004) has in fact shown that observers are more likely to classify a more highly educated “racially ambiguous” person as white.

We also know that social status matters for one's racial *identity* too (and of course we must be cautious not to conflate self-identification with ascription). In studying university applicants, Francis and Tannuri-Pianto (2013) show that belonging to a family that employs a domestic maid and attending a private high school are both predictive of identifying as white, even controlling for skin color. Similarly, Telles and Paschel (2014) show that people from a high consumption class are more likely to identify as white versus *pardo*, again while holding skin color constant. However, they also find that education is marginally predictive of identifying as black rather than brown, which suggests that status can have complex effects on racial classificatory outcomes.

In the meantime, research on racial classification in the United States has also shown that racial contestation is actually fairly common in the United States, with Vargas and Stainback (2016) reporting a rate of 6-14% for mono-racial individuals. Several studies have focused on how status impacts racial classification outcomes, with particular focus on how the traits of the person being classified matter for how they are racially classified by an observer. Using a longitudinal design, Penner and Saperstein (2008) show that individuals in the United States are more likely to be perceived and to identify as black—and less likely to be perceived and to identify as white—if they are unemployed, impoverished, or incarcerated (also see Saperstein and Penner 2010). In a follow-up study (Saperstein and Penner 2012), they show how individuals' self-identified and ascribed race shifts over time in response to employment status, poverty status, incarceration history, welfare, living in the inner city, and marital status. Arrest history (Saperstein, Penner, and Kizer 2014) and gender (Penner and Saperstein 2013) also impact how a person is perceived racially. And, looking back to 1870 to 1920, Saperstein and Gullickson (2013) used census data from the US South to show how men's chances of identifying as “mulatto” were contingent on occupational status.

In a survey experiment design, Garcia and Abascal (2016) examine a slightly different outcome variable. Rather than looking at racial categorization, their dependent variable is instead a measure of how people attribute phenotypical traits. They show that faces paired with a racially distinctive name are significantly more likely to be described as darker. In other words, it is not only the case that phenotype impacts racial attribution outcomes; the causality can run the other way too, with racial markers impacting phenotypical attribution. These findings suggest that our racial vision can be quite malleable indeed, where even supposedly fixed traits like physical

characteristics can be shown to be socially contingent. Monk (2015) has shown how self-reported skin tone is a better predictor in the US of self-reported discrimination than is observer-ascribed skin tone.

We have made some progress in our understanding of what impacts racial classification patterns, particularly surrounding the relationship between an individual's ascribed race and said individual's other traits, such as status. We know far less about how the *ascriber's* traits matter for ascription outcomes—though there are some exceptions. Hill (2002) has shown that an observer's race matters for how they see another person racially. While white observers saw black respondents' skin as significantly darker than did black observers, black observers saw white respondents' skin as significantly lighter than did white observers. More recently, Feliciano (2016) showed that self-identified black observers are more likely to classify another person as black, and that women tend to be more likely to classify another person as white, thereby showing the importance of both racial identity and gender for how one classifies a person racially.

Although Feliciano's dataset did not allow her to examine the effect of a person's status on how they racially categorize, her work makes important strides in drawing attention to the fact that non-racial attributes (in this case, gender) can have an impact on how one sorts people racially. However, we need a stronger research agenda for analyzing the ascriber as a social entity, as an object of study in its own right. While Roth (2018) has put out a call for studying racial attribution as a process, and particularly points to the importance of looking at how ascription happens at a cultural level (for instance, how we think of Obama's race; see Citrin et al. 2014), we need to also pay attention to how the *ascriber's traits* matter, as a function of identity or social position. After all, strategically positioned gatekeepers often control access to resources in society, and so understanding discrimination depends in part on understanding these gatekeepers' ascription patterns.

We also know relatively little about the effects of social context on racial classificatory outcomes. Telles (2002) is one of the few scholars to look into how regional context impacts racial classification. He looks at a nationally representative sample of Brazilians to examine how racially ambiguous people are classified, and shows that racial classification is most consistent for white people living in urban areas, and least consistent for black people living in rural areas. Telles and Paschel (2014) do a systematic, comparative analysis of how racial classification varies across several Latin American countries. Meanwhile, if we zoom from the national context down to the hyper-local, Harris and Sim (2002) offer us insight into how an individual's response to a question about racial identity can shift according to the context in which the survey was administered (at school, at home, or in a room with another person). And, Xie and Goyette (1997) provide neighborhood-level evidence showing that an individual's racial identity may vary by local minority concentration. For the most part, however, the impact of context on racial classification remains unexplored.

Recently, Morning (2018) has made a helpful intervention in organizing our thinking about racial classification, suggesting that the presence of racial contestation in society is a reflection of the fact that we have competing bases for racial membership. She goes on to suggest that there are at least eight separate dimensions of racial attribution that can compete for legitimacy: descendant (ancestry), somatic (phenotype), status (socioeconomic), affiliate (cultural), and also four new ones; genetic, cosmetic (body alterations), emotive (feelings of belonging), and constructed (designating people who reject that race is real, and who choose to see their own identity through a constructivist lens). In her analysis, racial identity seems to take

on a spectrum-like quality, from core to periphery. Whether one is a core or peripheral member depends in part on how many claims you can make across the different possible bases. Such an analysis helps us to be more specific when we refer to certain societies (like Brazil) as having “contentious” racial classification systems.

In taking stock of the literature, we can see that there has been an impressive advancement in researching and thinking about racial classification in recent years. Despite these great strides that have been made, we still have much uncharted empirical territory to explore and theory-building to pursue. In this dissertation, I hope to show that race can be productively studied by attending to classificatory boundaries in an even more detailed way than has been studied so far, by paying closer attention to the ascriber side of the classificatory relationship, and to the social context surrounding classification. I locate my research in my native country of Brazil, arguably the most closely studied nation of all when it comes to racial classification.

A History of Race and Racial Classification in Brazil

Perhaps because of such fluidity within its racial classification system, Brazil has been one of the few countries outside the United States to have historically garnered a fair deal of interest and investigation of racial classification—although always in implicit (if not explicit) comparison to the US. The debate about the extent to which Brazil is the same as or different from the US in terms of its race relations has been alive since the 1930s, and the driving question of the debate has been the same up until recently: To what extent is Brazil racist, or to what extent is it an example of racial mixing and relative tolerance (in comparison to racist USA)?

When slavery was abolished in Brazil in 1888, the colonial categories of slave and freeman, of *indio* and *mestiço*, were destabilized. Brazilian elites, like Latin American elites across the continent, were very much preoccupied with the racial order of their budding nation (Wade 2008; Loveman 2014). Eugenicist ideas were very much *en vogue*, but Brazilian elites met these ideologies with ambivalence. On one hand, they saw the country’s large, dark-skinned population as a problem for the emerging national identity, and they believed it was up to the white elites to steer the nation towards modernity. But, rather than seeing mixture as a path towards degeneracy, as was claimed by European geneticists, Brazilian intellectuals (as was the case across Latin America) instead insisted that racial mixing would allow for a “regeneration” of the population. Since white was considered to be the “stronger race,” immigration and subsequent intermarriage would inevitably lead to a dilution of the problems inherent in the blackness of the population (Stepan 1991).

The first generation of American race scholars peering into Brazil, who observed foreign race relations from their Jim-Crow vantage point, were both startled by and quick to romanticize a society in which people with light skin color seemed to work and live side by side with their darker brethren (Eads 1936; Pierson 1939; Frazier 1942; Pierson 1942; Morse 1953). Brazilian scholars themselves reinforced romantic notions of racial harmony, touting their country as a racial democracy (Freyre 1933; Ramos 1941). Scholars noted high rates of miscegenation and acceptance—even a celebration—of ambiguity.¹ Iconic studies by Marvin Harris (Harris and Kottak 1963; Harris 1970) documented the incredible diversity of racial terms used by Brazilians. Hundreds of terms were elicited in response to drawings of faces, and a significant

¹ Work by Lowrie (1939; 1942), who repeatedly reported discriminatory attitudes and practices among Brazilians, presents a notable exception.

number of respondents gave more than 15 categories. The median respondent used nine categories to describe the 72 faces, and the range in categories used per respondent was as low as two and as high as seventy. Follow-up research (Sanjek 1971; Jones 2009) found similar results.

The second wave of scholars on race in Brazil (Wagley 1952; Harris 1956; Hutchinson 1952; Fernandes 1965; Degler 1971; Hasenbalg 1979) spent their careers debunking the racial democracy myth, showing that non-whites were structurally below and symbolically inferior to whites. Furthermore, not only did race have implications for one's position, but one's position could shape one's race. Race in Brazil was shown to be fluid, ambiguous, multi-determined (based on phenotype and status, but not ancestry), and subject to change across one's lifetime (Harris 1964).

It is important to understand that Brazil has several classification systems for race, including: 1) on-the-ground classification, with its shimmering abundance of ambiguously overlapping categories; 2) official census classification, with five finite and non-overlapping categories; and 3) the Brazilian black movement's system, where there is no intermediate category between black and white. Despite all this seeming ambiguity, people are able to sort themselves according to the official census categories of black, white, *pardo*, *amarelo*, and indigenous. *Pardo* is a category that corresponds to what is traditionally thought of as similar to *mulatto*, or a mixture of black and white. *Amarelo* literally means "yellow," and is used similarly to "Asian" in the United States.

When Brazilians are given the choice to self-classify racially both with the official census categories *and* as an open-ended question, we find that the correspondence between classification systems is imperfect, and yet patterned. The correspondence between the systems is not always straightforward, and the logic is not always evident—and yet patterning does occur. This is perhaps best illustrated by describing the actual correspondence between two classificatory systems in one sample of university employees in Rio de Janeiro: 95% of respondents who identified as either white or *pardo* in an open-ended question about racial identity also identified as such on a census-style question. Meanwhile, almost one full quarter of people who self-identified as black (*preto*) on the open-ended question instead identified as *pardo* on the census-style question (Chor et al. 2005). Of those who self-identified as *moreno* on the open-ended question, three quarters chose *pardo* and one quarter chose white on the census question. People who self-identify in the open-ended format as *mulato* pick *pardo* on the census question by far at the greatest rate (90%), with most of the rest picking *preto*. Finally, self-identified *negros* (a term favored by the black movement) choose *preto* two thirds of the time, and *pardo* one third of the time when given the census categories.

It should be noted that Brazil's census categories have shifted substantially over the generations, and the trajectory of the categories is deeply intertwined with the country's elites' nation-making project of whitening the population (Nobles 2000; Loveman 2014). The ways in which the population has been distributed across the categories has shifted over time too, and racial identities have not always transmitted inter-generationally. In Southern Brazil, children of two black parents have up to a 13% chance of identifying as white, and children of two white parents have up to a 14% chance of identifying as black (Muniz 2012). According to research on the official racial categorization of children versus parents, these inter-generational shifts may be related to inter-generational status mobility (Schwartzman 2007).

Because American scholars have tended to see the race relations outside the United States through a bifocal black-white lens, systematic theory-building throughout much of the twentieth century has been difficult (Wacquant 1997). Some treatments of race in Brazil have in fact

minimized the differences between Brazil and the US, arguing that the ideology of multiple, ambiguous categories is nothing more than an ideology to keep non-whites from mobilizing as a group (Gans 1999; Winant 1999). Afro-Brazilian mobilization, seen through the binary lenses of US race relations as a latent manifestation of white-black domination, has simply buttressed notions that Brazil is much more like the United States than not. However, it is also true that the Afro-Brazilian movement has made gains, successfully pressuring the state in coordination with international activists (Paschel 2016). Most notably, there has been the adoption of affirmative action programs by the government, including for public university admissions. Universities set aside a certain percentage of their vacancies for *negros*—an umbrella category for all Brazilians who share any African descent (often specifically defined as including both *pretos* and *pardos*). Although it can be argued that there never was a coherent national Afro-Brazilian movement (Arocena 2008), there is evidence that racial quotas at universities have served to buttress the viability of an umbrella Afro-descent category (Francis and Tannuri-Pianto 2013). In fact, according to one estimate (Miranda 2015), by 2010 nearly one third of self-identified black people were “newly re-classified,” in comparison to the 1990s census figures.

Since the classic studies on racial classification of the middle of the last century, Brazil as a country has developed and changed significantly in terms of its class structure, economy, politics, and technology. Sansone (2003) has shown how American cultural understandings of blackness have shaped the content of racial categories in Brazil, and Twine (2001) has shown how acceptance of categories can be reinforced by racial democracy ideology, an ideology regarding the supposedly color-blind nature of Brazilian society (Eakin 2017).

Today, there is no doubt that Brazil is not a racial democracy (Bailey 2009), and Brazilians are stratified by race, with white Brazilians having greater access to income (Gradín 2014; Silveira and Muniz 2014), healthcare (Pereira and Telles 2014), freedom to marry without facing discrimination (Osuji 2014), and educational opportunities (Marteleto 2012). In an examination of the trajectory of racial inequality by income since the 1970s, Osório (2010) showed that the income gap between whites versus *pretos* and *pardos* persisted at a relatively constant level, even though earnings inequality across the country as a whole dramatically decreased from 1996 to 2012 (Alvarez et al. 2017). The decline in inequality was primarily driven by an increasing real minimum wage (Engbom and Moser 2017). So, although the country has seen a marked re-distribution of wealth to those lower on the socioeconomic hierarchy, this distribution did not have an impact on racial socioeconomic inequalities. Meanwhile, Afro-Brazilians continue to experience discrimination as a matter of daily life (Silva et al. 2016), even if surface-level rhetoric may be focused on maintaining “cordial” relations, where race is often discussed in euphemistic terms (Sheriff 2001). Within Afro-Brazilians, browns have somewhat better life outcomes than do blacks (Monk 2016). And yet, when presented with a binary classificatory option (black or white), the Brazilian population appears to be at once both whiter and more unequal (Loveman, Muniz, and Bailey 2012). As we shall see in this dissertation, different boundaries—or even the same boundaries—can have different significance in different contexts, so the apparent inconsistency in these findings might very well reflect the complex realities of how racial boundaries map onto other social divisions in Brazilian society.

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation consists of three papers, each organized around a separate set of

empirical analyses undertaken in São Paulo, Brazil. Throughout all three papers, I argue that race is at once fluid and bounded, relational, and contested. Race is both patterned in its fluidity and fluid in its patterning. Racial attribution occurs with reference to oneself and with reference to the other individual, and because people are located in structured social spaces, the tendencies for classification will vary systematically across individuals.

In the first dissertation paper, I argue that if ascription and identification really are separate processes, then we should study them as such. And, if we consider ascription on its own, it becomes clear we are not giving it the full research attention it deserves. Although the recent flurry of racial mismatch and skin-color-controlled studies represent an important rise in the study of ascription, it also seems to be the case that we are looking at how the ascriber's traits impact ascription to a much greater extent than we are looking at how the ascriber's traits impact the process. In this paper, I look at how one's educational background influences how one classifies a racially ambiguous photograph, and I find that more highly educated people are more likely to ascribe whiteness to the person depicted in the photograph. (I also show that status does indeed whiten perceptions of the target photograph—and at a surprisingly high rate.)

In the second paper of this dissertation, I argue that racial systems are not uniform, and the dimensions across which they vary are multiple and complex. And so in our research too we must be able to show how racial categories do not always operate in simple, straightforward ways, as functionally mirror-image equivalents on opposite sides of a consistent power hierarchy. Because these mechanisms themselves are wrapped up in the society's power structures, the ways in which sorting plays out will vary across social space. Diverse racialization processes have resulted in a complex array of categories, rules for membership therein, and relationships thereof. It may not be the case that any given racial boundary within a particular racial system is policed to the same degree as another. The significance of crossing a given racial line may also vary depending on the direction from which one is crossing it. To be clear, being blunt or consistent can be features of racial power structures too, and these are important to study. However, to fully understand the impact and implications of racial domination, we must understand the diversity of mechanisms by which people are sorted into categories, as well as the diversity of consequences thereof. And we can unpack this heterogeneity by empirically looking at the ways in which status matters differently for different potential boundaries within a system.

In the second paper, I show that the white/pardo boundary seems to be more highly policed than the pardo/black boundary, and I argue for the potential for this kind of analysis. By looking at how racial classificatory patterns correlate with individual and neighborhood-level traits, we can glean information about the relative sharpness or permeability of boundaries. The more contestation associated with a particular boundary, the more, we might argue, the boundary is salient for the system of racial domination—at least for that particular context.

I also take seriously the fact that different racial boundaries may matter—and operate—differently depending on context. While work by Telles (2002, 2014) has shown that both intra-national region and national contexts can impact racial classification, local context at the neighborhood or even the city level has not been examined in the same way. In the second paper, I show how neighborhood-level status impacts racial classificatory outcomes. The higher the respondent's average neighborhood education or income level, the more likely they are to be classified as white, and the less likely they are to be classified as black. These findings illustrate that social context can have surprisingly local geographic effects, on a much smaller scale than region or nation.

Finally, we can further leverage moments of racial classification mismatch to examine

how various institutions may impact identification and ascription. In examining how one's history of contact with the police impacts one's racial self-identification (while controlling for ascribed race), the third paper of this dissertation attempts to demonstrate how we might go about doing this kind of research. Saperstein and Penner (2010) have shown that contact with the criminal justice system in the US causes people to be more likely to both identify and be classified as black, and less likely to identify and be classified as white. In the third paper, I show that contact with the police seems to have a similar effect on one's identity in Brazil. The findings suggest that policing may be particularly relevant for the white/non-white boundary (rather than the pardo/black boundary). A similar methodology might be leveraged to study the impacts of the healthcare, legal, and educational systems. While these kinds of quantitatively driven racial mismatch studies are imperfect in the insight they are able to offer into social historical or structural mechanisms, they do offer a promising avenue for mapping out fissures. Like a first scan of the terrain, before drilling deeper, we might use such an approach to train our attention to salient boundary-institution nexuses.

All in all, this dissertation is offered as a three-part sampling of the ways in which we might begin to further deepen our understanding of racial classification, and add further nuance to how we go about studying its contours.

Though we have reason to believe that different societies—and different people within them—will have distinct rules for their racial systems, the extent to which we can see variation in patterns of struggle across societies remains to a great extent an empirical question. The categories and boundaries we study are emergent, they cannot be located in any given individual. Only by attempting to identify the content and operation of the rules governing classification across social space can we hope to successfully compare different racial systems, and to ask *why* they differ in the ways that they do. Within a system of ethno-racial classification, who can claim any given racial identity is contested and contingent. The “inputs” into racial boundary-making that we can show by leveraging moments of racial classification to analyze these patterns may very well prove to be as varied and as complex as the inputs we have classically shown to operate for socioeconomic status, which have long included factors such as educational attainment (Mincer 1970; Sewell and Hauser 1980), gender (Altonji and Blank 1999), the strength and types of social ties (Lin, Ensel, and Vaughn 1981; Portes and Stepick 1985), parenting styles (Pearlin and Kohn 1966), or sexuality (Badgett 1995). The rules and practices by which identities are contested are yet to be more systematically investigated, both in the US and in Brazil. Research is needed to examine the relationship between individuals' objective social positions and the rules by which they categorize themselves and others. I write this dissertation in hopes of working towards this goal.

Lastly, to study the ways in which race is constructed as a function of class, or of neighborhood context, or of experiences with policing—as opposed to just accepting racial categories as socially given—is to work towards de-naturalizing racial categories. In current times, as educators, sociologists have the responsibility and the opportunity to be able to make a strong case for de-naturalizing race generally, and the more empirical evidence we have to support our claim, the easier this task will be.

**Seeing in Color:
How Social Status Shapes Racial Ascription in Brazil**

Paper 1/3

The ways in which we classify ourselves and other human beings are both socially constructed and objectively given. Racial ascription—both by gatekeepers, but also all social actors in general—is an emblematic form of social classification. Not only is race not biologically fixed, but it is also not socially fixed. Racial categories, including their content and boundaries, and all the social mechanisms involved in enforcing or contesting them, depend on context. How we see and embody race depends on our individual social trajectories, on the institutional or national context, or on the social interaction underway. Rather than a fixed social tether, race is fluid and malleable, shifting like a kaleidoscope (Morning 2018) along with the lived structures of life itself. We can see evidence of this fact, for instance, in the ways in which national censuses’ racial and ethnic categories constantly evolve, both in their content, as well as how the same individual might identify (Nobles 2000). Or, we can see this fluidity in how the very same person may be seen as “black” in one country (Davis 1991) or state (Jenks 1916), but not in another. And yet, classification is not infinitely mutable—even when transgressive or revolutionary, classification is constrained and shaped by intractably real social structures. Rachel Dolezal, as much as she wanted to be recognized for her self-identified blackness, was resoundingly rejected by society at large (Brubaker 2016a, 2016b). As scholars of race, we seek to understand both the fluidity of race, as well as the concrete—and often rule-bound—ways in which this fluidity is bounded by and contingent upon social structures and institutions.

The structured malleability of race is not only relevant to our understanding of how racial classification works, but also for the very workings of the social structures and institutions that shape and constrain it. Consider, for instance, the importance of gatekeepers, and their influence on social stratification. Because the ways in which institutions sort individuals have incredibly high-stakes consequences for their life chances and for quality of life in general, how key agents ascribe race is of paramount concern. At these gatekeeping positions in the social structure, we see a merging of what it means for race to be institutionalized, on one hand, and for race to be seen as cognition (Brubaker 2002; Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov 2004; Roth 2018), on the other. As sociologists, we can be aware of the processes that shape and reshape race on a cognitive level, and thereby contribute to an understanding of how racism operates on an institutional level as well. How a given society or institution is racially stratified depends in part on the rules governing the slotting of people into categories. In some societies, this is a fairly straightforward and ossified process, and in others, it’s much more malleable and open to contestation.

Racial ascription is a relational, multilayered process. If we are to understand the ways in which a classificatory outcome is reached, we must understand this process as unfolding within the context of a relationships between people in social space—and the social positions of these people matter. We must pay attention to both the social position of the person doing the classifying, as well as the social position of the person being classified—both may matter for the classificatory outcome. Scholars have productively argued that racial classification is relational (Blumer 1958; Barth 1998; Bonilla-Silva 1997, 1999; Bailey 2008)—that is, dependent on the interaction between both the ascriber and the ascribee, and therefore the social position of each person in question. The social characteristics of the setting and the individuals involved certainly affects social processes such as classification, and racial ascription has been theorized in this way extensively, even if the data outside Brazil (Telles 2002; 2014) remained thin until so recently (Roth 2016). Interestingly, both the Latin American tradition of studying racial fluidity, as well as the latest research on racial ascription in the United States, has tended to emphasize the social position of the person being classified—and not of the classifier. Usually the classifier is simply

referred to as “the interviewer,” and is typically not theorized or studied as a sociologically relevant piece of the puzzle. To begin addressing this gap, I use an experimental design to ask whether social status matters both for how one is racially classified *and* for how one classifies.

Throughout much of its history, there has been a tension running through mainstream sociology’s understanding of race. Historically, scholars on race rarely separated out ascription versus identification, often lumping them together as if they are one and the same. At the same time that scholars have long operationalized race as ultimately in the eye of the individual identity-taker, sociologists have also emphasized that race is an *ascribed* identity, placing theoretical emphasis on the key stratifying role played by gatekeepers—who make their own judgments about any given person’s race. This tension between the empirical and the theoretical—or between *identity* as the ultimate “measure” of race, on the one hand, and *ascription* as the ultimate mechanism of racial domination, on the other—has gone largely unexplored for much of the field’s history.

In part, this can be explained by the fact that early research on race that dominated sociology was carried out in the United States—a country where disagreement over any given’s race was relatively rare (Wagley 1967; Davis 1991). And, as in the United States, one’s self-defined identity (rather than ascribed identity) has typically been prioritized, at least politically. The trend may also be reinforced by the way in which demographic research has depended on data collected by the census, an institution where self-identified race has prevailed as the one and only way to operationalize race (in part an effect of the success of the very identity politics mentioned).

It should be noted that sociologists of race who studied Brazil and other Latin American countries, though often marginal to the mainstream US-centric scholarship, have long emphasized the socially contingent nature of race, seeking to denaturalize the commonsense notion of phenotypical determinism. Latin America is a good place to study racial indeterminacy because the fluidity inherent to racial classification is on full display here. It should not be surprising, then, that much of the groundbreaking research on racial fluidity—and in particular, on the Latin American truism that “money whitens,”—has taken place in this part of the world (this literature will be examined in greater depth below).

Whereas research on race in Latin America was previously seen as exceptional in its fluidity and context-dependence, it’s increasingly the case that race is more and more understood by mainstream sociologists to be *inherently* fluid—not just in its theorization, but also in how it is studied and operationalized empirically (Saperstein and Penner 2012). With this in mind, we can now see Brazil as a privileged location for understanding how race works *in general*, and not just as exotic examples of an entirely different way of conceiving of race.

Even in places like the US, which has one of the most rigid racial classification systems in the world, there has been a recent surge in interest in understanding race as a fluid phenomenon, both at the individual and institutional level. We are seeing how racial categories can change, depending on context or time—both in terms of what categories are available, as well as how people are slotted into said categories. Multiracial identities are on the rise in the United States, and this can be understood as part of a change in the operation of the preexisting one-drop rule that governed the boundary between blacks and whites. The rules for deciding who is what race are being reconfigured, and sociologists are highlighting the importance of this fluidity for how we measure and study race, even in the United States (earlier examples include

Davis 1991; Harris and Sim 2002; Rockquemore and Brunnsma 2002). And, as we will see below in the next section, there is a fledgling body of research that examines that ways in which various social characteristics influence one's racially ascribed identity in the US.

The latent tension in racial analysis, between theorizing race as fluid, while operationalizing and studying race as if it is fixed and rigid, comes to a head in the notion that ascription and identity can no longer be un-reflexively conflated in the way we study or measure race. Once we crack open the assumption that race is inherently fixed, we come across the reality that there may be disagreements about racial classification. In particular, the classifier and the classified may not agree (Brunnsma 2006; Saperstein 2006, 2009; Campbell and Troyer 2007; Roth 2010)—and we can study the particular ways in which such disagreements or switches are patterned. In particular, there has been an emphasis on understanding how the characteristics of the person being classified—the ascriber—matter for racial attribution, including phenotype (Feliciano 2016), social status (Penner and Saperstein 2008; Saperstein and Penner 2012), incarceration history (Saperstein and Penner 2010), arrest history (Saperstein, Penner, and Kizer 2014), and gender (Penner and Saperstein 2013).²

In Latin America, races are perceived to be more mixed than is the case in the US, and scholars have commented on racial fluidity in this context for decades (Pierson 1942, Harris 1952, Wagley 1952, Degler 1971, Wade 1997; and, more recently: Telles 2004 and 2014; Telles and Paschel 2014; Bailey 2009; Loveman 2014). Among Latin American populations, it's widely "known" that "money whitens" (Wade 1997). Degler (1986) famously described the mulatto "escape hatch," which is the notion that those originally identified as black may "escape" into the relatively less stigmatized mulatto category as a result of social mobility across one's lifetime. Although there have been historical and ethnographic accounts of this *narrative* in Brazil (Twine 1997, Sheriff 2001), only a few studies have attempted to empirically demonstrate this phenomenon in the actual practice of racial categorical ascription. Using census data from Brazil, Schwartzman (2007) shows that children of highly educated nonwhite parents are more likely to classify their children as white than are their less educated counterparts. She does concede that one cannot be sure whether her results are driven by phenotypical gradations (and accompanying gradations in stigma) that predict both class and classification outcomes. So, the fact that educated mixed-race couples have whiter children could just be that they really *are* lighter, which predicts both their higher likelihood of access to education, as well as a higher probability of having white children. We would need a different kind of methodological design to be able to tease this apart (which I attempt to do in this study).

While some empirical research on racial fluidity the United States has examined identity (for instance, see Waters 1990), classification as a topic of research has too gained some attention more recently. In her study of how people perceive multiracial adolescents in the United States, Herman (2010) shows that classifiers perceive almost half of the individuals in question as mono-racial, and that this tendency was particularly high for adolescents who self-identified as black. In other words, she found that self-identified race does seem to be predictive of attributed race.

² We also have evidence that some of these factors also matter for racial *identity*, both in the US (Penner and Saperstein 2008; Saperstein and Penner 2010, 2012), and in Latin America (Telles 2014; Telles and Paschel 2014)—though we must be careful not to conflate self-identification with ascription.

Penner and Saperstein (2008) show that how American blacks both perceive themselves and are perceived racially depends on their social position, including unemployment status, history of incarceration (also see Saperstein and Penner 2010), and poverty—which all predict blackness, regardless of how they identified or were classified previously. In a follow-up study (Saperstein and Penner 2012), they use two decades of longitudinal data on the United States to examine how individuals' self-identified and ascribed racial identity shifts over time in response to social position, including employment status, poverty, previous incarceration, and being on welfare, living in the inner city, and marital status. Mobility in social status—in many ways—predicts racial mobility too. This newfound fluidity in American racial construction is not limited to recent times either. In a longitudinal study of census categories from 1870 to 1920, Saperstein and Gullickson (2013) show that Southern men's likelihood of identifying as “mulatto” was predicted by changes in occupational status.

Garcia and Abascal (2016) look at how one's perception of phenotype is itself shaped by racialization. Using a survey experiment, they show that the presence of a racially distinctive name results in significantly darker attributions—especially for male faces. So, it's not just that phenotype influences racial classification—markers of racial classification also influence perceptions of phenotype.

One major trait of the existing research on racial classification is a marked inattention to the characteristics of the classifier. Considering that racial classification is a relational process, it's important to take both social positions into account. Although concerned with intra-racial differences in color rather than racial categorization proper, Hill (2002) is an early exception, in that he takes into account the social characteristics of the classifier. He shows that the race of the observer has consequences for how they perceive race in another person. White observers reported black respondents' skin tone as significantly darker than did black interviewers. Black observers described the skin tones of white respondents as much lighter than did their white counterparts. The original survey design explicitly tried to match interviewer and respondent by race, and because the process was imperfect, this study was possible. However, it is likely that the error wasn't random. Whites interviewed 14% of the black respondents, while blacks interviewed 11% of the white respondents. Black interviewers were disproportionately assigned to low-income areas, which matters—blacks classified low-status people as darker, and this result could be a class effect. Because of existing structures of discrimination in the United States, there's also the case that the skin tone may be darker for the low-SES people in general. The author acknowledges this second possibility, but not the first—that class actually impacts how the interviewer *sees* skin tone. Instead, the author argues that the bias results in understating the race effect, since the lower-income blacks were actually probably darker on average. Also, the study was limited by its lack of attention to any social traits of the observers besides race.

Feliciano (2016) uses online dating data to examine how observers' characteristics influence their racial categorization of photographs. She shows that self-identified black observers are more likely to attribute blackness, thereby demonstrating the importance of ascriber race on racial ascription outcomes. These results are consistent with Hill's findings, where self-identified black people tended to see their interviewees as darker than did their white counterparts. Feliciano also shows the importance of gender, in that photos viewed by women were more likely to be classified as white. Unfortunately, the dataset did not allow for examination of the effect of observers' socioeconomic status or education.

At the end of the day, we are left with an emerging picture that social status indeed matters for racial classification, and in all kinds of ways and contexts. However, there are no

studies that are able to simultaneously control for status and race on both sides of the racial classification equation, taking into account characteristics of both the observer and the observed simultaneously. My methodological design, as will be discussed later, allows us to simultaneously examine how social status affects both how one is seen, as well as how one sees race.

The Case: Brazil

In 1888, Brazil was the last country in the world to abolish slavery in the Americas. A eugenicist movement to strengthen the Brazilian gene pool, which was seen as too dark, was underway. Whitening, as prescribed by scientists of the time, became the explicit basis of the country's immigration policy, which attempted to attract Western Europeans and Japanese. By the 1920s, immigration and race were the key measures for how the nation state measured its own progress (Loveman 2014).

The Brazilian census, which has collected data on race since the 1870s, reveals that blacks and browns (*pardos*, or *mulattos*) have consistently remained underprivileged relative to whites. Yet, despite its history of institutionalized racism and glaring racial disparities, Brazil was touted by the nation's political and intellectual elites as a racial democracy for much of the 20th Century. This ideology resonates with some even today, and many Brazilians still believe that their country is relatively racism-free when compared to other countries, even if people are also increasingly aware of racial inequality (Telles 2004; Bailey 2009).

Gilberto Freyre was largely responsible for disseminating Brazil's self-image as a racial democracy. He published his influential monograph, *Casa Grande e Senzala*, in 1933. In it he argued that Brazil's extensive miscegenation resulted in a nation that celebrates the mixing of skin tones and cultures, thereby rendering racism a non-issue. Other researchers corroborated his finding that Brazilians were exceptionally "open-minded" about interracial marriage and sociability (Pierson 1942; Harris 1952; Wagley 1952). The racial democracy concept resonated with Vargas' vision of a unified nation, and he embraced and promoted this view during his presidency and dictatorship from 1930 to 1945.

By the 1960s, scholars were beginning to question whether Brazil really was the racial utopia many claimed it was. After research on blacks' social position, Fernandes (1965) concluded that blacks were economically disadvantaged in relation to whites. He contended, however, that existing discrepancies were the vestigial results of the psychological handicaps caused by a history of slavery. He believed that the inequalities were temporary, and that new black generations unburdened by slavery would be able to take advantage of the upward mobility opportunities afforded by quickening industrialization. Any discrimination faced by the black poor, he asserted, was class-based rather than race-based.

The second military dictatorship, from 1964 to 1985, continued to tout the racial democracy myth. Given Brazil's relatively peaceful (or, hegemonic) history of race relations, it is not difficult to understand why many would continue to successfully espouse the idea of racial democracy. Brazil was compared to the United States, which had a far more contested racial history involving institutionalized segregation and intense racial antagonism. Some scholars, however, took Brazil's relatively peaceful race relations as evidence that racism in Brazil was of a more insidious variety, far enough beneath the surface of the public consciousness so as to undermine the potential for racial mobilization.

The consensus today is that racial democracy is a myth and that racism and racial inequality are present (Telles 1994; Bailey 2009) and perhaps even worse in Brazil than in the United States (Gans 1999)—though it’s also problematic to see Brazilian racial stratification through the lens of American-based race theories (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999).

Telles (2004) argues that racial relations in Brazil have two dimensions—vertical and horizontal. Vertical relations refer to dynamics of economic exclusion and stratification along racial lines. Horizontal relations refer to levels of sociability among different races within classes. Telles argues that Brazil is very highly stratified along the vertical dimension, but more egalitarian along the horizontal dimension. Although there are significant racial discrepancies in economic outcomes, there is more interracial interpersonal contact within a given social class and less racial segregation than is the case in the United States (Telles 1992). Proponents of the theory that Brazil is a racial democracy were probably quick to emphasize the horizontal dimension of racial relations, while ignoring vertical stratification.

However, in recent decades, Brazil has experienced an increased awareness of vertical stratification, evidenced by a growing black movement and new governmental policies aimed at decreasing economic exclusion of minority populations. In 1995 black-movement leaders led a march on Brasilia, the capital, demanding that the government devise a plan to address racial inequality. By 2000, the Brazilian government was systematically instituting race-related policies for the first time since the eugenics-driven immigration policies of the previous century. Perhaps most significant of these are affirmative action policies for higher education and certain kinds of jobs, including mandatory racial quotas and fellowships for blacks and browns.³

Today, the various systems of racial classification that co-exist in Brazil reflect both its history of oppression and resistance thereof. These systems include those of the census, of everyday on-the-ground usage, and of racial movements. All Brazilians are fluent in these systems, and are able to navigate and draw upon them with ease, as is demanded by the particular context (Sansone 2003). These systems overlap to some extent, but they also represent important differences in how one is to split or lump a group (Zerubavel 1996), of one's social vision and division (Bourdieu 1991, 1998), and of how one is making up people (Hacking 1996). And while it’s true that phenotype does predict racial classification in Brazil (Telles and Paschel 2014), the racial categories matter more for Brazilians’ life chances than do actual phenotype. Using survey data, Bailey, Saperstein and Penner (2014) show that racial self-identification better accounts for inequality than does skin color.

The census classification of white, brown, and black is perhaps the best known outside of Brazil, having been most extensively covered by scholars. These census categories have been generations in the making and re-making, inextricably intertwined with Brazil's identity as a whitening nation, both a catalyst to and a product of nation-making itself (Nobles 2000, Loveman 2014). From 1950 to 1980, we see a 38% loss of the black category in the census, with a 34% gain in the brown category (Magno de Carvalho et al. 2004). From 1980 to 1990 we see a similar, though less dramatic, pattern.

³ Bailey (2008) argues that this modern racial policy in Brazil can be seen as political struggle to impose a binary racial system top-down, as group-making from above. He argues the objective consequence of this is that some potential mulattoes “lose beneficiary status,” and that the symbolic consequences are on the balance successful in forging a new identity. In close citation of Bourdieu, suggests this could be a case of “producing a group out of a statistical category” (610). He also provides evidence for the contingent nature of racial classificatory outcomes in Brazil, showing that priming the quota system doubles the rate of “black” identification.

Everyday usage tends to simultaneously use the most splintered, the most ambiguous, and the most all-encompassing of racial categories. Harris (1970) famously presented a deck of 72 full-face black-and-white drawings (3 skin tones X 3 hair forms X 2 lips X 2 nose X 2 genders) in random order to 100 native-born Brazilians of varying socioeconomic classes, regions, genders, and phenotypes. Each respondent was asked to glance at the whole deck before classifying each face racially. Hundreds of terms were elicited, and 25% of respondents gave more than 15 categories. The median respondent used nine categories to describe the 72 faces, and the range in categories used per respondent was as low as two and as high as seventy. The categories used vary greatly in terms of how precise or ambiguous they are. For instance, the term “moreno” can mean anything from “has brown hair” to “has a suntan” to “of clear African descent,” and is a particular umbrella category many Brazilians favor in everyday conversation (Nogueira 1955; Harris and Kottak 1963; Pacheco 1987; Stephens 1989; Sansone 2003; Sheriff 2001; Bailey and Telles 2006).

Some have argued (for instance, see Marx 1998) that one of the consequences of Brazil's tri-variate (in the case of the census) and splintered (in the case of everyday usage) systems of classification has been to neutralize the possibility of uniting a nonwhite Afro-majority that might challenge the dominance of the white elite. Brazil's fluid and differentiated racial classification system makes it difficult to foster race-based solidarity, despite objectively stark racial inequality (Gradín 2014, Pereira and Telles 2014, Osuji 2014, Marteleto 2012). Not only is there the intermediate category of brown between black and white, but there is also considerable slippage between categories, including the “mulatto escape hatch” (Degler 1971). Much as the institution of slavery was kept intact by the potential of upward mobility offered by manumission (Patterson 1982), and as the black American ghetto was kept intact by promises of upward mobility within (Drake and Cayton 1993), perhaps the institution of racial classification in Brazil can be thought of as in part kept intact by promises of racial mobility. Seen as a “divide and conquer” strategy (Marx 1998), Brazil's split classification for those of African descent can be seen—and has been interpreted by some activists—as a nefarious victory of white supremacy. Such ideas were influential for launching the country's Afro-Brazilian movement. As racial awareness in Brazil grew, racial justice activists pushed for a binary identification of Afro-Brazilian (or black) vs. white, so as to unite the oppressed in solidarity against white-dominated institutions of power. Research on inequality in Brazil (Hasenbalg and Silva 1999, Telles 2004) does in fact seem to suggest that this might be the most meaningful division, in terms of structural differences. Also, when forced to use a binary classificatory system, the picture that emerges of the Brazilian population is one that is both whiter and more starkly unequal (Loveman, Muniz, and Bailey 2012). Perhaps as a result of the partial success of the Afro-Brazilian movement, there is some evidence that more highly educated Brazilians are more likely to identify as black (Bailey and Telles 2006, Telles and Paschel 2014), especially when government racial quotas (for education or jobs) are in question (Bailey 2008).

As Sheriff (2001) has argued in her ethnography of race relations in Rio de Janeiro, it may not be productive to think of racial classification in Brazil as a system of static categories, even if multiple and overlapping. Focused on maintaining “cordial” relations, people describe race in euphemistic terms, only rarely (in moments of intense conflict or solidarity) speaking of the bipolar system that lies beneath. The fluidity in language, according to Sheriff, is more closely tied to notions of politeness and a reluctance to pin down particular individuals in their identity, rather than to an absence of a clear and dichotomous racial logic. She claims that people are aware of the underlying logics, even if they don't explicitly acknowledge them. When

“someone calls Susana morena [brown], she inevitably hears the echo of preta [black woman] ringing silently but somehow palpably” (2001: 53–54). And, although Sheriff doesn’t explicitly argue this, her data suggest that racial ascription says more about the relationship between people than about actual phenotype of the ascriber. To capture the relational nature of racial classification, an experimental approach that allows for systematic manipulation of both sides of the equation might be useful.

Methodological Overview

Research on racial classification that relies on survey data (e.g., Telles 2004; Almeida 2007) or census data (e.g., Schwartzman 2007) suffers from thorny causal attribution challenges. Typically, disagreement between the observer and the observed is analyzed in order to make sense of the factors that impact classificatory outcomes. However, if it could be argued that it is in fact phenotype that drives both the classificatory ambiguity, as well as the relative socioeconomic success of individuals who seemingly get “whitened.” By using experimental data, I can tease this apart.

Furthermore, the design of existing studies don’t allow for characteristics of the classifier to also be considered when examining the relational moment of racial classification. Again, by using an experimental design, I am able to systematically vary the phenotype and the social status of the ascriber—and to therefore also isolate the effect of the classifier’s social traits.

Data and Methods

Data

Of the total 127 participants, 98 were recruited in the spring of 2007; and 29 were recruited in January of 2013, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. I, or someone I trained, carried out all interviews. The sample was designed to include people from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Interviews were held in two favelas, at a gated community, at a university, on the street in middle- and working-class neighborhoods, at church, and at associational meetings (including a middle-class neighborhood association meeting, an organization for CEOs, and a gardening club attended by elite women). The sample is nonrandom and non-representative of the city of São Paulo—both the poorest and the richest are over-represented. However, because the status extremes are represented (as well as the middle), comparisons across the status range are still possible and substantively meaningful. Twelve cases were dropped due to missing data in the first two models, for a sample of 117, and two additional cases were dropped for the full third model, for a sample of 115 individuals.

Potential participants were screened for whether or not they were over the age of 18, whether they were born in Brazil, and whether they are permanent residents of São Paulo. Upon initial contact, the interviewer explained that this is a sociological study about social perception, and asked if s/he is willing to participate. The interviewer then showed the participant a photograph⁴ (see Figure 1) and read them a biography about the person.

⁴ A dozen photographs of varying phenotypical traits were field-tested. Photographs were randomly selected from the internet to represent a range of skin tone and facial features, while presenting neutral attire and background.

The two interviewers (including myself) were both unambiguously white Brazilian women in their late twenties. They were both natives of São Paulo, and both possessed advanced degrees (master's). Before conducting the interviews, the two interviewers engaged in inter-coder reliability training to ensure similarity in emphasis, tone, and pace.

Half of the respondents were read a biography that was designed to signal high status (rich neighborhood, capitalist father, stay-at-home mother, prestigious education, prestigious occupation), while the other half of the respondents were read a biography that was designed to signal low status (migrant from the Northeast, school drop-out, worked odd jobs in the illicit economy). Upon completion of the biography, the respondent was asked to estimate the depicted person's age and race, and to say whether he seemed nice and whether he seemed hard-working. A second photograph was then shown to the participant, this time paired with the other biography (if the first photograph was paired with the high-socioeconomic-status biography, then the second one was paired with the low-SES one, and vice versa). For the purposes of this study, analysis was restricted to the white/brown-ambiguous photograph (the lighter one). Analysis of the second photograph is part of a separate investigation, as the boundaries between white/brown and between brown/black cannot be assumed to follow the same patterns. The order in which faces and biographies was presented was randomized. The final section of the survey collected background information about the respondent.

After the interview, interviewers de-briefed participants and explained that the study was in fact about how status affects perceptions of racial classification. The experimental design of the survey was explained and an opportunity to ask questions was offered. All participants were left with my contact information in case they wanted to follow up with additional questions (none did).

Assignment of respondents to different treatment groups was random, but because the experiment was carried out in an uncontrolled setting, the research falls short of the full rigor of an experimental design in which the environment is meticulously controlled. However, the importance of experimental conditions is perhaps over-stated, and the controlled, aseptic environment of a true experimental setting would present additional validity problems (Lucas 2003).

Measures

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable was the race the respondent ascribed to the depicted individual. Because the question about ascribed race was open-ended, I collapsed the 10+ categories⁵ used by respondents to ascribe race into 3 major umbrella categories: white, brown, and black. One third of participants included in the analysis coded face 1 as brown, while two-thirds coded it as

Photographs of team shots for semi-professional soccer league were used and tested with a sample of XX individuals. I selected the two photographs that yielded the greatest rate of disagreement (variation) around each racial boundary (white vs. brown, and brown vs. black). All photographs were presented in gray-scale, similar as to what is depicted in Figure 1.

⁵ In descending order of commonality, terms recoded as "brown" include: *pardo*, *mulato*, *moreno*, *moreno claro*, *moreno escuro*, *escuro*, and *mestiço*. Though outside the scope of this study, the terms coded as "black" (for the second face) include: *negro*, *preto*, and *afro-brasileiro*.

white. The target face generated enough disagreement—i.e., variation—over racial attribution to allow us to study its determinants.

Controls

Male. Participant sex is operationalized as a dummy variable, where 1 equals “male” and 0 equals “female.” The sample was 42% male.

Age. Age is operationalized as a continuous variable. The mean is 39 years old.

Racial identity. Self-identified race was an open-ended question. Responses, like the racial ascription categories, were recoded as either white, brown, or black. In the sample, 58% were white, 35% identified as brown, and 7% as black.

Individual-Level Status

I created a status index that equally weighed education and income. Models were run with either status measure alone, and results did not substantively differ.

Education was operationalized as a variable with seven categories: 1) incomplete middle school; 2) middle school completed; 3) incomplete high school; 4) high school complete; 5) incomplete college; 6) college completed; 7) post-graduate degree. One quarter of the sample is in the lowest category of education, while only 6% is in the highest. An additional 21% completed college. Thirty-seven percent either graduated from high school or attended some college, and 34% dropped out before completing high school.

I operationalized income using a self-reported measure of total household income (including salaries, investments, and pensions), in three categories: 1) up to three minimum salaries; 2) more than three minimum salaries but less than ten; 3) ten minimum salaries and above. Thirty-six percent of the sample was in the bottom category, 29% was in the middle category, and 36% was in the top category. Of the sample of 127 individuals, 9 cases were coded as missing for income. When compared to the rest of the sample, these cases were on average older (55 years old) and more likely to be female (78%), though neither racial identity nor ascription (the dependent variable) differed substantially.

The combined status index had 17 categories. Reflecting the fact that Brazil is a country with high rates of extreme poverty, a full 15% of the sample found itself in the bottom-most category (less than three monthly minimum salaries for the family’s income and less than a high-school degree) while 7% of individuals were in the top category (post-graduate education and income greater than ten minimum salaries).

The fictive nature of the person being classified raises validity concerns, as racially classifying a photograph in a contrived interview setting is certainly distinct from classifying in the real world when the stakes are more pressing. The price paid here buys us the arguable advantage of being able to both control for and manipulate ascriber characteristics systematically, including phenotype and status.

Analytical Strategy

Because the racial attribution outcomes were largely binary, I used logistic regression. One respondent coded the white/brown-ambiguous face as black, and was dropped, so as to allow for a binary dependent variable and ease of interpretation.

For a better assessment of real-life implications of the findings, predicted probabilities are calculated for both high- and low-status respondents while holding other variables constant.

Results

The photograph elicited a wide range of racial attributions, from “white” to “black” and everything in between, though there were very far more “white” and “brown” attributions (only one “black,” which was dropped). Responses were recoded to reflect white/brown categories, which are the categories that match up with the census, and with most existing research on racial classification in Brazil.

As would be expected from the existing qualitative body of research on race relations in Brazil, high-status biographical information paired with the target photograph does increase the odds of respondents identifying the target as white (See Figure 2). In fact, a respondent presented with a high-status biography is, on average, more than twice as likely to attribute whiteness to the ascribee in question (statistically significant, with a z-score of 3.02 and corresponding p-value of 0.003). Because we have entirely controlled for phenotype, we can be fairly certain of the isolated effect of status. In other words, money does seem to “whiten” in the traditionally claimed way.

Furthermore, respondent—or classifier—status is significant in the case of racial attribution. The greater the social status of the respondent, the more likely s/he is to identify the photograph as white rather than brown, regardless of which biography the picture is paired with. Each additional level gained on the status index is associated with an increase in the odds of classifying the fictitious person as white (statistically significant, with a z-score of 2.51 and corresponding p value of 0.012). The experimental findings buttress the claim that social status—and not only phenotypical factors—is in fact responsible for racially classificatory outcomes. Perhaps such a pattern might be explained by the fact that higher-status individuals are more likely to identify as white, independent of their phenotype, which suggests that high-status whites may be on average darker in tone than low-status whites. If high-status whites are in fact darker than low-status whites, then high-status individuals may be more inclined to attribute whiteness to individuals with “borderline” phenotypes.

Considering predicted probabilities allows for a better assessment of the effects of both respondent and ascribee status. If we consider what the model shows for the lowest-status individuals examining the lighter photograph, we find that a high-SES bio is associated with a 58% rate of whiteness attribution, while a low-SES bio is associated with a 27% rate of whiteness attribution. When we consider the highest-status individuals examining the same lighter photograph, we see a 91% whiteness attribution rate for the high-SES bio and 72% for the low-SES bio. In other words, being high-status may cause one to attribute whiteness to the low-SES bio at a greater rate than even the high-SES bio among low-status people.

Gender has no effect, but age does—the older the respondent, the less likely s/he is to attribute whiteness to the lighter photograph, and with a z-score of -2.06 (and associated p-value of 0.039), this result is statistically significant. This result may reflect a cohort effect.

It should be highlighted that observer race makes no difference for racial attribution. Instead, it's socioeconomic status and educational status that matters for racial ascriptive dynamics in Brazil. Also, I tested for interaction effects of respondent status (race, income, and education) with biography, but found none. In other words, my evidence shows a main observer effect, but not an interaction effect between observer and ascriber status.

Region of origin is important for racial classification in São Paulo. where up to a quarter of residents in some neighborhoods are from the Northeast (São Paulo is in the Southeast). The Northeastern part of the country has the highest percentage of Afro-Brazilians of any region, and is known for having greater phenotypical variation within the brown and white categories. People from the Northeast may often have an accent. Respondents' region of origin was analyzed,⁶ but since these variables had no statistical significance, and did not alter the results substantively, they were removed from the analysis.

Discussion

Using a unique experimental dataset, I evaluated how factors other than phenotype matter for racial classificatory outcomes in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The analysis confirms that race in Brazil is not only contingent on social status of the person being classified, but the social status of the person classifying as well. The more educated an individual, the more likely s/he was to “whiten” the individual depicted in the experiment—regardless of whether the photo was paired with a high-status or low-status biography. Not only does the social position of an individual influence how others perceive his race (Degler 1971; Telles 2002, 2004; Schwartzman 2007), but the same individual's perceived race will also vary systematically by the classifier's social position. This finding has clear implications for how we approach the study of racism and discrimination, suggesting we can systematically link the ascriber's social characteristics to not only discriminatory practices, but to the analytically prior moment of classification itself. Systematic differences between ascribers' classificatory patterns may help explain some of the variation in discriminatory practices.

These results also offer a potential challenge to the traditional ways in which we study racial classification. In studies that look at ascription while only examining the status of the ascriber, we may be confounding the results and erroneously attributing variation. For example, in Schwartzman's (2007) study of racial boundary-crossing across generations (whitening and darkening), she looks at how parents classify their children, and concludes that families whiten their own children because of the family's higher status. However, as highly educated individuals, these parents are, according to my findings, possibly also more likely to label *other* children as white too--irrespective of class. It's not just that class causes you to "become whiter" as a result of status, it's also possibly the case that class causes you to have a more open definition of whiteness. Of course, being whiter and seeing whiter may go hand in hand, but let us not forget that I also found that self-identified race does not pattern how one classifies other people.

⁶ Birth region was coded as five dummy variables, for North, Northeast, Central, Southeast, and South.

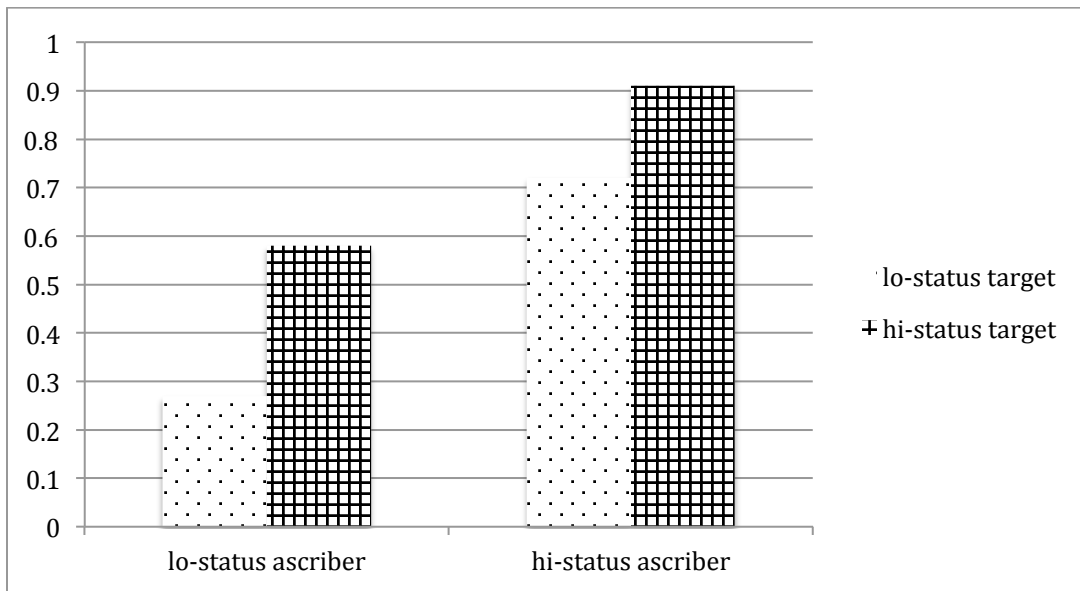
Furthermore, whitening occurs not only longitudinally, as previous scholars have pointed out, but also cross-sectionally. These findings suggest that racial classification can in fact best be thought of as a relational phenomenon, in the sense that a classificatory outcome is influenced by the social position of both parties involved.

We might have expected that the combined interaction of the observer and the observed could produce “interaction effects,” where relative status matters in addition to absolute status. None were found in this study, but this possibility warrants further investigation, perhaps with a larger sample size and a greater variety of both phenotypes and status-signaling biographies.

Figure 1. Target photograph used



Figure 2: Predicted Probability of Ascribing Whiteness to Target (Face 1)



Logit model controls included respondent sex, age, and race, which were set to their means for the purpose of calculating predicted probabilities.

**Seeing in Boundaries: The Effects of Individual and Neighborhood
Status on Racial Identity Challenges in Brazil**

By

Laura M. Mangels

Paper 2/3

While race's impact on one's position in Brazilian society is undeniable (Andrews 2004; Osório 2010; Chadarevian 2011; Silveira and Muniz 2014; Monk 2016), it is also the case that one's socioeconomic position in Brazilian society impacts one's race. According to commonsense understandings of race in Brazil, it's understood that a person is classified into a racial category based on a combination of physical appearance and class standing, not by ancestry or hypo-descent (Telles 2004). As is the case with other Latin American countries, it is taken as a truism that "money whitens" (Wade 1997). One's race need not be the same as one's parents or siblings (Schwartzman 2007) and may change over the course of one's lifetime, perhaps in direct response to social mobility—what has famously been described by Degler (1971) as the "mulatto escape hatch," the notion that those originally identified as black may "escape" into the relatively less stigmatized middle category between black and white. Degler, who published his classic study in 1971, has been quite influential in shaping our understanding of the relationship between social mobility and race in Brazil—though it must be mentioned that his analysis was entirely based on secondary historical documents available to him at the time.

Studying the influence of class on one's race in Brazil is not straightforward, in part because of the very nature of the country's racial fluidity in general. Several racial classification systems co-exist, allowing for one's race to be context-dependent rather than fixed. The various classification systems can be described as three groups: There is the census classification system (white, *pardo*, black); the black movement classification system (Afro-Brazilian, white); and everyday usage, which is regionally specific, and tends to use the most ambiguous and all-encompassing of racial categories. For instance, the term "Moreno" can mean anything from "has brown hair" to "has a suntan" to "of clear African descent." Many Brazilians favor this type of umbrella category in everyday conversation (Sansone 2003; Sheriff 2001; Bailey and Telles 2006). Depending on what categories one uses to describe the Brazilian population, the racial composition of the country can vary from majority white to majority black (Bailey et al. 2013). If one considers all the possible schemas by which an individual may be classified, as many as half of all Brazilians may be racially ambiguous to some degree (Muniz and Bastos 2017). However, as a general rule, Brazilians are able to recognize and translate between three main racial classification systems. The degree to which people disagree about what race a given person may not necessarily be a result of race being less consequential or less visible—it is a function of the contingent and contentious nature of the social classification process.

Ethnographers in Brazil have offered glimpses of evidence that can help us examine the "money whitens" thesis, or more broadly that one's race is impacted by one's position in the social hierarchy. In her ethnography of residents of a Rio de Janeiro *favela*, Sheriff (2001) explicitly dismisses Degler's escape-hatch thesis, claiming that being *mulatto* does not confer as many advantages as claimed. She sees the fragmented discourse around race in Brazil as an intricate system designed to avoid talking about the underlying binary system of white supremacy, to avoid any association with the negativity of blackness. In this respect, escape to some middle category becomes meaningless. Meanwhile, her analysis does not offer insights into whether changes in status were associated with changes in association with whiteness. On the other hand, in his exploration of the nexus of race, culture, and identity, Sansone explains that it is understood (in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro) that one "tends to give a few 'advantage points' on the chromatic scale" to those for whom one wishes to show respect (2003: 45). Also, in his comparison of *negros* to *pretos*, he shows that *negros* tend to be younger and more educated than *pretos*. Meanwhile, Twine (2001) reports in passing that working-class Brazilians she described as "Euro-Brazilians" hesitated to identify as white, in contrast to their elite counterparts.

More recently, there have been quantitative studies that perhaps give us the most compelling evidence to date that status does in fact impact race in Brazil. In an examination of the relationship between status and racial identity among university applicants that controlled for skin color, Francis and Tannuri-Pianto (2013) found that individuals whose family employed a domestic worker and who had attended a private school were more likely to identify as white. Meanwhile, Telles and Paschel (2014) report that education, when holding skin color constant, is marginally predictive of identifying as black (*preto*) rather than brown (*pardo*, with a significance level of $p = .06$), and that being a member of a higher consumption class is predictive of identifying as white versus *pardo*.⁷

Controlling for color in these studies represents an attempt to tease out the effect of status on racial identity as independent from phenotype, but we must remember skin color is only one aspect of phenotype. Racial calculus in Brazil, to the extent that it is phenotypically based, considers a host of physical features other than skin tone, to the point that Brazilian scholars make unquestioned distinctions between “skin color” and “African phenotypes” (see Sansone 2003). As a clear example of how skin color is certainly not the only phenotypical trait that matters, take the Brazilian racial category of *sarará*. This designation is used in Salvador to describe people with a combination of light features (skin, hair, eyes) and “African” features (curly hair, broad nose, and thick lips). Despite objectively light skin, such people may not necessarily be identified as white (Fish 2010). This is not to say, though, that these people necessarily do *not* identify as white either. Racial identity, of course, is contested, and the terms and outcomes of these struggles are influenced by a host of factors, both phenotypical and social. Furthermore, even seemingly objective phenotype measures like skin color can result from socially contingent processes. In examining how individuals make racial attributions, Garcia and Abascal (2016) show that a racially distinctive name causes respondents to “see” a darker skin tone in the United States. Even with phenotype attributions, we find ourselves embedded in a socially contingent process. So, although controlling for one dimension of phenotype is a ground-breaking approach, we must be careful to not assume that phenotype overall has been controlled for. This matters because when we find a statistically relevant correlation between, say, wealth and white identity, while holding skin color constant, it is not the case that we can claim that wealthy self-identified whites and non-wealthy self-identified whites are phenotypically similar, despite skin tone similarities.

Another approach to teasing out the effect of status on race that does not rely on using skin color as a control is to control for ascribed race by an observer (an approach made prominent in the US by Saperstein and Penner 2012). This approach has the disadvantage of not allowing for objective phenotypical measures (like skin tone, which can be specified on a color chart), but may make up for this drawback in its real-world validity for capturing the dynamics of contestation over racial identity. In a study of racial mismatch, Telles (2002) reports that education is correlated with a respondent being “lightened” by an observer. Although in his discussion he interprets his results to be true “primarily at the lighter end of the color spectrum” (Telles 2002: 435), because his analysis hinges on the traditional tri-variate racial classification (white, *pardo*, black), what his results show is that the effect of education is more important for the white/brown boundary than it is for the brown/black boundary. Furthermore, he shows that the importance of this white/brown boundary is most salient in predominantly nonwhite regions. Because the bulk of Telles’ analysis was undertaken at the national level—even though evidence

⁷ Their findings also show that education is predictive of *not* identifying as white ($p < .001$).

suggests that race may operate differently in Brazil, depending on the region—if we were to zero in on one particular location in Brazil, it is quite possible that we would see even stronger effects. At the national level, it is possible that subtle counter-veiling tendencies may mask each other, showing up as a wash at the aggregated national level.

On the whole, existing findings offer support to the notion that status impacts race. However, the existing evidence so far is limited in at least the following ways: 1) It does not allow us to disentangle the effects of different kinds of status. In other words, independent of education, we still don't really know whether “money whitens.”⁸ 2) With a few exceptions (Sheriff 2001; Telles 2002), the existing evidence says very little about the boundaries in relationship to each other. For example, is the white/nonwhite boundary more consequential than the *pardo*/black boundary? 3) The existing studies do not consider the directionality of effects. For instance, if higher status lightens, does lower status darken?

Using a dataset that contains both interviewer and self-identified racial classification, I attempt to extend the literature on the rules and contours of racial classification, paying particular attention to separately look at the effect of different kinds of status—at both the individual and neighborhood levels. Because of the particular design of the survey, I am able to look at and compare moments of racial contestation by an observer, which also allows me to consider the relative importance and the directionality of effects across different boundaries.

Perhaps the social process of racial classification itself is as intricately patterned as the systems in which it operates. Perhaps a simple, one-dimensional spectrum does not accurately capture the diversity of relationships between racial categories. And, perhaps different types of status matter differently for racial classification outcomes. Using a linked dataset that includes information on both individual and neighborhood traits, I take a closer look at the effect of status on racial classification in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Data and Methods

I use a combination of survey data and census data to examine the relationship between status and racial categorization outcomes by examining what factors predict discrepancies between observer and self-identified racial attribution.

Data

The dataset combines variables from the 2003 Instituto Futuro Brasil (IFB) social survey on São Paulo with Brazilian census data.

⁸ Although Telles did have access to data on income and class as well, he does not report on these effects, other than to mention in passing that education is a superior predictor (though it's unclear whether he meant in models that included both measures, or models that considered education and income separately). “Although I considered income and Marxist class position (Portes 1985), separate analysis proved education to be a far better predictor of inconsistency” (Telles 1992: 424).

The IFB data, gathered by private market research firm Ipsos, are based upon a stratified random sample of 5,000 households within the official limits⁹ of the city of São Paulo who are over the age of 16. Based on the *National Victimization Survey* of the U.S., the face-to-face survey includes sixty pages of questions, covering a broad range of topics including income, wealth, education, occupation, work, sociability, deviant behavior, criminal victimization, attitudes, and experiences with the police.

One thousand census tracts were stratified and randomly selected to ensure their representativeness of the city's five regional administrative units (east, north, center, west, south), of its 96 official neighborhoods (each containing an average of a couple hundred thousand residents), of census tract wealth (as quartiles), and of neighborhood theft and robbery rates. Households were randomly selected within each census tract. Respondents within these households were selected using the Kish (1949) selection procedure, whereby a quota system was used to ensure the sample's representativeness by sex, age, educational attainment, and head-of-household status. The data were collected in four waves, each with an independent random stratified sample. Each wave of the dataset was compared to key census statistics on age, gender, income, and dwelling type to ensure the sample's general representativeness of the target population. Approximately fifty interviewers were trained and assessed to ensure cross-interviewer reliability and data integrity was checked by a random selection of cases for re-interview.

To assess whether neighborhood status matters for racial classification outcomes, I linked the IFB data to 2000 census data (IBGE, the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics) for the respondent's neighborhood.

Methods

Outcome Variables

One unique characteristic of this survey is that it records both self-identified race and race as decided by the interviewer. Furthermore, the interviewer is given the opportunity to classify the respondent at the very end of the interview—*after* the respondent has already self-identified and *after* the interviewer has gathered a great deal of information about the respondent. So, to the extent that the interviewer's classification disagrees with the respondent's, we can think of it as a direct contestation of racial classification.

Race was measured using a combination of emic and etic categories, in that *a priori* racial categories were presented (white, *pardo*, black, *amarelo*, *índio*), and were based on the official national census question about race. For the emic measure, respondents were also given the option to select “none of the above” as their answer. The racial identity question, in not being open-ended, doesn't allow us to see how individuals actually identify. However, even if they use different racial terms to describe themselves in everyday life, it's still the case that all Brazilians are able to intelligibly interpret the census categories, and seem to have no trouble placing themselves in them (Telles 1995, Sansone 2003).

Anyone identified (either by themselves or by the observer) as either *amarelo* (Asian; literally, “yellow”) or *índio* (native Brazilian, or “indian”) were also excluded from the sample

⁹ Households located in the largely working class satellite regions of the city were excluded from the sampling.

(together this group comprised less than 3% of the sample, and was about evenly divided between *índios* and *amarelos*).

A small but significant minority of respondents (a little over 2%) claimed that none of the given options described their racial identity. These individuals represent a potentially important sub-section of society—people who reject the official categories entirely. However, because this research relies on a design that observes mismatches between observer- and self-given racial categories along the white/pardo/black spectrum, people who opt out of the spectrum entirely were not included. The remaining sample preserved 4,707 respondents, or 94% of the original survey sample.

When generalizing the results, it's important to remember that whatever “rules of classification” we uncover, even if they are hegemonic, are certainly not universal. Some Brazilians altogether reject the very categories themselves, and their refusal to answer the question as it was posed itself represents a manifestation of the ways in which racial classification struggles unfold in the world.

From field reports provided by the marketing company that carried out the survey, we know that the “majority” of respondents who refused to answer the race category were considered to be nonwhite by the interviewers. The report claimed that a significant minority of non-white individuals objected to being classified as *preto*, (literally, “black”), preferring the term *negro* instead—a label claimed by racial justice activists as more progressive and more inclusive than *preto*. Of the 118 people who refused to answer the race question, 26% were described as white by the interviewers (vs. 59% in the sample overall), 46% as *pardo* (vs. 31%), and 25% as black (vs. 10%), 2% Asian (vs. 1%), and 1% native Brazilian (vs. 2%). We can also break down the nonresponse rate according to the proportion within each ascribed racial groups: Of those identified as white by the interviewers, 2% refused to answer the racial identity question. Of those identified as *pardo*, 7% refused; and of those identified as black, 8% refused. So, it does seem to be the case that darker individuals are more likely to refuse to answer the question about racial identity, but it's also the case that light respondents refused too, albeit at a much lower rate. Those who refused to answer the question about race are more likely to claim that race is important to them than average (75% say race is important, versus 64% for the rest of the sample). It's fair to conclude that those who are most politically engaged when it comes to race are likely to be underrepresented in the final sample that excludes all those who refused to answer the racial identity question.

We know that racial identity is context-sensitive. The individual social characteristics of the interviewer may certainly influence the respondents' answer about their racial identity. Although all interviewers had near-identical occupational prestige and education, they varied by gender, age, race, and department. Such differences may have impacted individual answers. Even though the bias is presumably randomly distributed across cases (and therefore not of urgent concern), we cannot entirely rule out the possibility that systematic interviewer effects drove any existing results. The dataset does not contain information on which interviewer conducted any given survey, so an analysis of interviewer effects is not possible.

Six kinds of racial contestation are theoretically possible, but only four occur in practice.¹⁰ Of those who self-identified as black, no one was coded as white by the interviewer.

¹⁰ The absence of racial contestation that “jumps” a category is not entirely surprising—one might expect categorical struggles to be most prominent along the borders of categories. The

Similarly, no one who self-identified as white was coded as black. Therefore, the data allow me to examine four kinds of racial contestation by the ascriber: 1) *Contesting Whiteness*; 2) *Whitening*; 3) *Blackening*; 4) *Contesting Blackness*. *Contesting whiteness* refers to the situation where the classifier disagrees with the respondent's self-description of whiteness, instead classifying the respondent as *pardo*. *Whitening* occurs when the classifier disagrees with the respondent's self-description of *pardo*, instead classifying the person in question as white. *Blackening* occurs when the classifier disagrees with the respondent's self-description of *pardo* in the opposite direction, instead classifying the respondent as black. *Contesting blackness* refers to the classifier re-classifying the respondent from black to *pardo*.

Within this sample, the highest rates of discrepancies occurred for people who self-identified as black, followed by those who self-identified as *pardo* (Table 1). Of those who self-identified as white, 6% were contradicted by the interviewer who, in all cases, claimed the respondent was actually *pardo*. Of those who self-identified as *pardo*, 14% were coded by the interviewer as white and 8% were coded as black. Finally, of those who self-identified as black, 31% were coded as *pardo* by the interviewer. Overall, there is a classification consistency rate of 89%.

Individual-Level Indicators

Male. Sex is operationalized as a dummy variable, where 1 equals “male” and 0 equals “female.”

Age. All respondents were sixteen years of age or older, and age was operationalized as a continuous variable. Recent years have shown an elevated level of support for black mobilization and black political organizations, along with the greater visibility and distribution of racial inequality statistics (Silva and Paixão 2014). Since the 1990s, younger Brazilians have been increasingly likely to identify as non-white, and not all of the increase can be attributed to racial mixing (Magno de Carvalho et al. 2004). Further, a movement to reject the middle *pardo* category as interfering with non-white racial solidarity has been gaining ground in Brazil (Miranda 2013) and is even supported by the state (Bailey 2008), and young people are more likely to be involved—and are therefore also more likely to identify as black instead of *pardo*.

Region of Origin. Migrant status from the Northeast is operationalized as a dummy variable, where respondents received a score of 1 if they were born in the Northeastern region of Brazil (including the states of Pernambuco, Ceará, Bahia, Rio Grande do Norte, Maranhão, Paraíba, Alagoas, Piauí, and Sergipe), and a score of 0 if they were not. São Paulo, the richest and most industrialized city in Brazil, experienced a dramatic influx of people migrating from the northeast beginning in the 1950s. A full quarter of the city's total population originated in the northeastern region of the country, where the population is majority black. People from the Northeast came to be stigmatized as mentally slow and lazy (Póvoa-Neto 1994), which may influence how an ascriber sees the race of someone from the northeast. And because the racial

absence of white-to-black and black-to-white re-classifications may also suggest the role played by phenotype in limiting the “space of possibles” (Bourdieu 2000)

dynamics in the northeast are different from São Paulo, the rules for classification may operate differently for the respondent too. Therefore, it's important to control for region of origin.

Income. Income is one of the key measures of individual respondent status. Because the interviewer explicitly asked and recorded the respondent's income prior to assigning the respondent's race, there is little question as to whether the observer was aware of the ascriber's socioeconomic status prior to deciding upon a racial attribution.

I operationalized income using a self-reported measure of total household income (including salaries, investments, and pensions) in nine categories standardized according to multiples of the official minimum salary at the time (approximately 90 US dollars): 0) zero, 1) up to one, 2) between one and two, 3) between two and three, 4) between three and five, 5) between five and ten, 6) between ten and twenty, 7) between twenty and thirty, and 8) over thirty minimum salaries.

Of the sample of 4,707 cases, 917 cases (19%) were coded as missing for income, because the respondent either did not know or did not wish to report the household's income. The remaining sample has 3,790 cases. Respondents who do not report income are more likely to have a household head with a university degree (14% versus sample average of 11%) or high school degree (19% versus 17%), so it is likely that the missing cases have on average a higher income than the rest of the sample. Also, it's likely that respondents at the higher end of the income spectrum have a systematic tendency to under-report income. Finally, household income reliability may be lower for the cases in which the respondent is not the head of the household.

Education. Education is another key indicator of individual status. The survey asked the respondent for their highest level of education that was either completed or in progress, so it's not possible to discriminate between people with completed degrees and people who are currently enrolled (and who may or may not ever complete the degree). Educational status was operationalized at the individual level as dummy variables: college or post-graduate (received degree or currently attending), high school degree (received degree or currently attending), and (as the reference category) less than a high school degree (not including those currently attending).

It's important to note that educational achievement may simply be a proxy for department. In other words, it's not necessarily the credential itself that matters for racial ascription outcomes (though that's certainly possible), but also possibly other behavioral attributes that come with growing up privileged and white (Tyson 2011)—attributes that signal status and are further reinforced by rewards in school. With this research design, it is of course impossible to distinguish between the two.

Out of the remaining sample of 3,790 cases, an additional 16 (about half a percent) were dropped because the respondent did not know or refused to report their educational attainment, reducing the sample size to 3,774 individuals.

Head of Household. A simple 0 versus 1 dummy variable captures an additional status measure: whether or not the respondent is the head of the household.

Importance of Racial Identity. This variable is operationalized as a dummy, where 1 equals "yes" and 0 equals "no" to a question asking whether or not race is important to the respondent's identity.

Neighborhood-Level Indicators

I linked 2000 IBGE (census) data and 2002 municipal health department data to each respondent, so that every respondent could be described in terms of the characteristics of their geographical surroundings.

The respondents were distributed across 338 census tracts, with an average of 14 respondents per tract. Census tracts ranged in size between 42 and 717 households, with an average household population size of 253. The total number of neighborhood residents varied between 140 and 2,744, with an average of 883.

Neighborhood: Natural Log of Percent High-Earning. Using census data, neighborhood wealth rate was operationalized by using the natural log of the proportion heads of household with an income over 15 minimum monthly salaries (over R\$ 3,000, or approximately \$1,300 US dollars). The natural log was used to account for the fact that the distribution was heavily right-skewed.

Neighborhood: Percent Low-Earning. The census-based neighborhood poverty rate was operationalized by measuring the proportion of heads of household with an income up to three minimum monthly salaries of R\$ 200 (approximately \$270 USD total).

Neighborhood: Natural Log of Percent High-School Degree. Neighborhood educational attainment was operationalized by using the neighborhood-level 2000 census data to create a variable that represents the percentage of residents with a high school degree or higher. The natural log was used to account for the fact that the distribution was right-skewed.

Neighborhood: Percent from the Northeast. The census data was used to create a variable measuring the percentage of residents living in any given tract that were born in the northeastern region of the country, which includes the states of Pernambuco, Ceará, Bahia, Rio Grande do Norte, Maranhão, Paraíba, Alagoas, Piauí, and Sergipe.

Neighborhood: Percent White. Census data on racial self-identification includes the percentage of residents who identify as white, which was used as a measure to capture the racial makeup of the neighborhood.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the independent variables in the analysis.

Analytical Strategy

I analyze each self-identified racial group (blacks, pardos, whites) separately. For self-identified whites (whose whiteness is either contested or not) and for self-identified blacks (whose blackness is either contested or not), I employ logistic regression. Because self-identified pardos may be either whitened *or* blackened, I use multinomial logistic regression for this group

so as to be able to simultaneously analyze both whitening and blackening effects.¹¹ If black and white racial categories were actually opposite ends of a single spectrum, then taking an ordered logistic regression approach would be more parsimonious than a multinomial logistic regression approach, and therefore preferable. However, because different variables mattered for different outcomes (as we shall see), an ordered logistic regression is inappropriate in this case. All models are estimated with cluster-robust standard errors to account for respondents being clustered at the district level.

The models for white-identified respondents had 2,244 cases (59% of the total final sample), those for *pardo*-identified respondents had 1,161 cases (31% of the total final sample), and those for black-identified respondents had 366 cases (10% of the total final sample). It's important to keep these discrepancies in sample size in mind, as it means that the estimators will have the greatest power for the white-identified sample, and the least for the black-identified sample. Substantively, this means we are best able to pick out subtle relationships among the variables when examining the dynamics of challenging whiteness, and least able to do so when examining the dynamics of challenging blackness. Or, to put it another way: The risk of having real, substantive effects among the variables that we are *not* able to pick up on statistically is greatest for our examination of challenging blackness, and least for our examination of challenging whiteness. The risk for the analyses of whitening and of blackening falls somewhere in the middle.

Although the coefficient from the regressions tell us the direction and significance of the effects exerted by the independent variables, it is difficult to immediately interpret just how substantively meaningful these effects are. In order to understand how these effects might play out in the real world, predicted probabilities were calculated for both high- and low-status respondents, while holding other variables constant.

Results

The racial claim least likely to be contested is the claim to whiteness—93% of claims were accepted by the observer. All re-classifications from whiteness were to *pardo*. At a contestation rate of 31%, a claim to blackness was more likely to be contested than either a claim to whiteness (contestation rate of 7%) or *pardo*-ness (contestation rate of 22%), and when it was contested, the person was always re-classified as *pardo*.

Challenging Whiteness: Self-Identified Whites Re-Classified as *Pardo*

Overall, high status seems to protect self-identified whites from being challenged (see Table 3). Lower income is predictive of having one's claim to whiteness challenged, while higher income protects one from that risk. Similarly, having a high-school or university level of schooling are both protective from having one's whiteness challenged. Furthermore, if we

¹¹ Multinomial logistic regression is like logit, except it allows your dependent variable to have more than two categories. The effects of the independent variables are allowed to vary for every outcome on the dependent variable. The multinomial logit for the three-category dependent variable is like running three separate logits, with the following dependent variables: 1) white attribution; 2) brown attribution; and 3) black attribution.

include both education and income in the same regression models, we see that they both matter independently of each other.

Being from the Northeastern region of the country—which is poorer and blacker—is positively predictive of having one’s whiteness challenged, even when controlling for class.

Having the status as household head is positively protective of having one’s whiteness challenged—even when controlling for gender, age, income, and education.

Individual (Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6)—not neighborhood (Table 7)—variables were relevant for predicting what respondents in the sample would have their whiteness contested. None of the neighborhood variables proved relevant.

Whitening

Self-identified *pardo* women are more likely than their male counterparts to be whitened (see Table 4). However, while gender is significant for the phenomenon of whitening, it seems not to matter for challenging whiteness, challenging blackness, or blackening. In other words, gender matters only for the white/*pardo* boundary—and then only in one direction, for the challenging of self-identified *pardo* men and women. Women have a significantly higher chance of being whitened by the interviewer even when controlling for individual and neighborhood status, and for region of origin. Importantly, it’s not the case that this effect can be explained by selectively gendered migration patterns. Looking at simple correlations (not reported in tables), I found that females are *generally* more likely to identify as white (.0921***), as well as to be identified as white (.0914***). This correlation between whiteness and being female is weaker for people who are from the majority-nonwhite northeastern region of the country. Females from the northeast have a .0623* correlation with self-identified whiteness and .0816* with ascribed whiteness. Females from the rest of the country have a .1078*** correlation with self-identified whiteness and .1015*** correlation with ascribed whiteness. If one uses individual income in the regression models rather than household income (results for individual income models are not shown, but are substantively similar), the effect of gender is even more pronounced—perhaps because women are less likely to be the main breadwinners of the household.

Higher income is predictive of being whitened if one self-identifies as *pardo*, while lower income is associated with a lower risk of being whitened. Although a high household income is associated with higher rates of being whitened, this effect seems to be mediated by education. Though both income and education are individually predictive of being whitened on their own, when they are placed in the same model, the effect of having a university degree persists, while that of income does not. Also, while both a university degree and a high-school degree mattered for contesting whiteness, now only a university degree matters for contesting whiteness. It is also not the case that the non-result is a function of a marginal effect not quite attaining significance. In fact, the coefficient in the regression models are all slightly, though consistently, negative—which is the opposite of the effect of the university degree.

Being the head of the household is associated with being whitened too. This effect, however, is not mediated by education—or income, for that matter. Thinking race is important, on the other hand, matters little for whether or not one is whitened.

Unlike the case for challenging whiteness, which seemed to be an individual-level phenomenon, the phenomenon of whitening seems to be at least in part associated with neighborhood-level characteristics. Higher-status neighborhoods seemed to be associated with

higher rates of whitening for individual respondents who lived there. The percentage of rich people and the percentage of people with a high-school degree or greater were both positively and significantly predictive of being whitened by the survey interviewer. However, the poverty rate, the migrant rate, and the racial makeup of the neighborhood were not significantly predictive of being whitened.

Blackening

Being blackened—or having one’s self-defined *pardo* identity be reclassified as black—is more related to context than it is to individual indices of status. Neither income nor education are predictive of being re-classified as black, but thinking that one’s race is important is highly predictive of being blackened (Table 5). Being older is also predictive of being blackened.

Living in a largely nonwhite neighborhood is protective against being blackened, which may seem paradoxical—though it is also possible that boundaries are not challenged to the same extent in predominantly nonwhite contexts. The rest of the neighborhood-level effects are more aligned with what we might expect if we believe that neighborhood status is predictive of racial status: The percentage of people from the Northeast, the percentage of poor people, and the percentage of people with less than a high-school degree are all positively associated with being blackened.

Contesting Blackness

Being young is positively predictive of having one’s blackness contested (Table 6). So we see that age only matters for the black/*pardo* division—and it matters in both directions (so, being older is positively predictive of self-identified *pardos* of being blackened too). One way to interpret the finding that being younger is predictive of having one’s blackness contested is to speculate that the group of younger individuals who identify as black are more likely to contain members who are phenotypically lighter on average than their older counterparts. If there is a rising black movement in Brazil towards embracing a black-white dichotomy more like the US (Telles and Paixão 2013), then we might expect younger people to be more likely to embrace the new classificatory scheme, which might explain why young people are also more likely to be challenged.

Being from the Northeast is predictive of having one’s blackness contested. Interestingly, being northeastern is *also* predictive of having one’s *whiteness* contested. So, it’s not simply the case that being from the northeast is associated with being darker, for instance—the relationship is more complex than that, reflecting systematic regional differences. It may be the case, for instance, that the prototype of the *nordestino* is a *pardo* person.

Having expressed the opinion that race is important to one’s identity, however, protects one from having one’s blackness contested. This is the opposite effect of that for blackening, where we saw that thinking race was important was predictive of being re-classified from *pardo* to black. It’s possible that thinking one’s race is important is overall associated with blackness in the minds of the classifiers, as it was the Afro-Brazilian movement that both challenged the Brazilian taboo about talking about racism, as well as encouraged *pardos* and blacks to unite as Afro-Brazilians who reject “middle” categories.

Individual socioeconomic status shows no statistically significant relationship with having one's blackness contested, which was also true for being blackened (if one identifies as *pardo*). In other words, individual status matters for the boundary with whiteness—and in both directions, but the same cannot be said for the boundary with blackness.

The Size of the Impact of Status on Racial Challenge

All else being equal (gender, age, and region of origin), self-identified whites who are low-status (no high school degree, in the second-lowest income bracket, and in a neighborhood with few rich people) have between an 11% and 21% chance of being re-classified as *pardo*, while their high-status counterparts (with a university degree, and in the second-highest income bracket, and living in a relatively rich neighborhood) have between a 0% and 2% chance of being re-classified in the same way.

Self-identified pardos varied by status in terms of their risk for re-classification to white, but not to black. While low-status pardos experienced a re-classification to white at a rate of 5 to 11%, their high-status counterparts experience a re-classification rate of 43 to 83%.

Self-identified blacks' status did not have a significant impact on their chances of having their blackness challenged.

Cross-Model Results

Although the coefficient from the logistic regressions tell us the direction and significance of the effects exerted by the independent variables, it is difficult to interpret just how large these effects are or the substantive ramifications of interaction effects. In order to understand how these effects play out in the real world, expected probabilities were calculated for different levels of key independent variables while holding all other variables constant.

If whitening and blackening (or contesting whiteness and contesting blackness) were functions of a single mechanism, then we would expect the results to be mirror images of each other. We would expect the signs of the coefficients for the same independent variables to have opposite signs. However, this is not the case. Indeed, application of ordered logistical regression—which assumes that the categories are ordered—to the three-category variable yielded insignificant and unintelligible results. This finding adds credibility to the interpretation that challenges to different racial identifications are distinct phenomena that cannot be attributed to the same mechanisms—thereby raising doubts as to the utility of thinking of the racial categories as uni-dimensionally related to each other on a spectrum.

Taken as a whole, these results suggest that we cannot assume that racial categories, nor their relationship to status, are unified or one-dimensional. Depending on the category, different factors matter for category membership. While a certain set of traits may matter for one boundary in one way, they may matter for a different boundary in a separate kind of way—or they might not matter at all.

Discussion

Social status did not have a uniform effect for classification, mattering greatly for the boundary between white and pardo, but not so acutely for the boundary between pardo and black. While conventional social status was important for the pardo-white boundary, factors that seemed to matter for the boundary between black and pardo were being young and thinking race is important. These findings are consistent with others' observations that Brazilian society is polarizing racially, into white and nonwhite, which would represent a reversal of the trend of the 1950s through 1980s, when individuals increasingly identified as pardo (Magno de Carvalho et al. 2004; Miranda 2013).¹² The polarizing of identity may or may not be driven by the affirmative action policies; or the policy's implementation might be a reflection of changing times. Either way, the shift may be driven by changes within more highly educated Brazilians. The proportion of women with secondary education or higher who label themselves as black doubled from 1982 to 2007, and the proportion of men with higher education who self-identify as black nearly tripled—and their children are significantly more likely to identify as black too (Marteleto 2012). Younger people being more likely to identify as black (“preto”) relative to previous generations (Miranda 2015) is consistent with Bailey's (2008) argument that the state has successfully engaged in a racial project to impose a black-white binary. Since the Brazilian government's move in 2001 to implement affirmative action for public universities and government jobs, discussion in Brazil over race and racism has increased, and it is possible that there is an emerging racial awareness (Telles and Paixão 2013), with *pardos* becoming increasingly aware that their interests and life chances are in fact quite aligned with *pretos*, and vice versa, as Brazilians come to terms with the reality of racial inequality. A move towards a black-white binary in Brazil might be viewed as a direct opposition to the trend in the United States, which seems to be moving towards greater emphasis of multiracial categories, particularly among young people (Rockquemore and Brunson 2002), or upon a wide range of competing bases for category membership (Morning 2018). Wade (2010) suggests that such polarization of identity is occurring within the context of a Latin American trend more broadly, towards an increasingly explicit racial order. Another interpretation is that US-style affirmative-action policies in both countries might be responsible for both shifts. Because the context is so different in the US versus Brazil, similar policies could lead to diverging results.

Not only does individual status matter for the white-pardo barrier, but having rich or educated neighbors also contributes to whitening and detracts from contesting whiteness, even if one controls for the respondent's own status. The fact that neighborhood characteristics also matter for racial classification outcomes—even when controlling for individual characteristics—add further complexity to our understanding of the ways in which race is shaped. According to Zerubavel (1996), geographical boundaries, such as neighborhoods, can support and represent deep social divisions, including between ethnic groups. How individual racialization maps onto this “spatial zoning,” which can be understood in terms of the Durkheimian distinction between sacred and profane (Zerubavel 1996:429), has implications for understanding race as a multi-level phenomenon. Taken together, the evidence I present that both individual characteristics and neighborhood characteristics matter for racial classification in Sao Paulo—but only for the pardo-white boundary, while age and ideas about race matter for the black-pardo boundary—suggests that race is even more highly patterned than heretofore demonstrated empirically.

¹² Bailey and Telles (2006) found that education level positively predicts identifying as *negro* over *moreno*, as does age.

Although the brown/white boundary seems most salient in the context studied here, we must be careful to not overgeneralize to race across Brazil as a whole, as there may be regional—and even intra-regional—differences in racial dynamics. In examining levels of racial segregation across major Brazilian cities, Telles (1992) found that the white/brown dissimilarity index was higher than the brown/black dissimilarity index in São Paulo, as well as many other major Brazilian cities, including Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and Belo Horizonte. These findings line up with the results presented here. However, this pattern did not hold up across the country as a whole. Several major cities, including Recife, Fortaleza, Vitória, and Curitiba, had higher dissimilarity indexes for black versus brown segregation than for white versus brown segregation. So, we might expect that the impact of status on racial classification and contestation may vary similarly by metropolitan context. Such patterning may not be exclusive to Brazil, or even Latin America. This demonstrated context-specific patterning of race may help us make sense of mounting evidence that racial ascription is sensitive to framing effects even in the US—particularly for immigrants (Itzigsohn, Gorguli, and Vazquez 2005) and self-identified multiracial individuals (Harris and Sim 2002).

Perhaps the most central finding is the fact that the boundary between white and pardo is contentious in a different way than the boundary between pardo and black, which suggests a theoretical need to differentiate between the mechanisms policing different boundaries within the same classificatory system. The common conceptualization of racial contestation in Brazil as a battle over placement in a one-dimensional “spectrum” between black and white (or black and pardo and white) is perhaps not the most useful metaphor, as it glosses over complex, patterned diversity in the mechanisms by which individuals are sorted—mechanisms that appear to be qualitatively different from each other at different “points” along the spectrum.¹³ We tend to treat races as categories with distinct attributes that relate to each other in uniform ways: white is “above” pardo in the same way that pardo is “above” black. But, as these findings show, these categories do not present such symmetrical and orderly structures. Assuming so is to commit a scholastic fallacy of seeing these categories as overly clean and parsimoniously rule-bound. The relationships between categories are heterogeneous, and we can’t think of the relationship between them as a one-dimensional, continuous spectrum. The fluidity of race in Brazil, rather than measurement error that deviates from the “true” categorical rules, is actually reflective of the reality of social logic. Race is not just “fuzzy” (Bourdieu 1980), it’s complex and contingent, incorporating multiple logics simultaneously. Social status matters, neighborhood traits matter, as do age, gender, and the attributes of the interviewer¹⁴—and they matter in different ways and to different degrees for different boundaries. We can still bite off pieces of these logics to study the ways in which racial classification is patterned, but we should also maintain an awareness of the complexity from which we are distilling. Rather than understand racial categories as a smooth and universal hierarchy that operates according to a single logic across society, we can instead look at the ways in which these hierarchies are multiple and reconfigured across contexts.

Although some scholars may be tempted to dismiss disagreements over racial classification as a mere by-product of the messiness of classification in Brazil, the fact that the boundaries between categories may not always be crystal clear or easily agreed upon does not obviate the fact that these boundaries do exist, with very real consequences both for individuals and for society. Just as Bourdieu argues that we can uncover the “few generative principles” of

¹³ Evidence from Peru (Golash-Boza 2010) suggests that a spectrum logic may be inappropriate in Peru as well.

¹⁴ For the effects of the ascriber’s traits on racial classification, see Paper 1.

social logic while still taking seriously the fuzziness of practical logic and logical practice (1980:86), we too can successfully make sense of racial classification in Brazil—fluidity and all. We must not take the fuzzy logic of social classification as an excuse for dismissing diverging classificatory outcomes in Brazil as mere byproduct of the fluid messiness of race in Brazil. As Wade (1997) warns, we must be mindful of the situational nature of race, but without falling into a mire of hopelessly indecipherable relativism. Not only may this fuzziness—or blurred boundary (Alba 2005)—be a natural by-product of social life (in contrast to crisp scholastic categories), but it could represent a central part of the story as to how it is that racial classification may be enforced on a day-to-day level. In Brazil, a given person might be “allowed” to claim whiteness in settings where the stakes are not tightly tied to race, while being systematically classified as *pardo* in settings where race is more consequential, such as the classroom or a job interview. Meanwhile, an ideology of fluidity, and the real experience of being white in certain settings, serves to mask the systematic nature of racial stratification of resources. Uncovering such contingencies of race requires digging deeply into the empirical details of classificatory systems, across different times, spaces, and institutional and non-institutional settings. Rather than be satisfied that race is socially constructed, we can push further to question the *ways* in which it is constructed in concrete settings.

Table 1. Self-Identified Race versus Attributed Race (Dependent Variable)

	Self-Id White	Self-Id Pardo	Self-Id Black	TOTAL
Ascribed as White	2655	197	0	2852
	93.65	14.06	0	60.59
Ascribed as Pardo	180	1094	145	1419
	6.35	78.09	30.79	30.15
Ascribed as Black	0	110	326	436
	0	7.85	69.21	9.26
	2835	1401	471	4707
	100	100	100	100

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables

	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Male	3774	0.54	0.5	0	1
Age	3774	36.9	15.68	16	92
Household Income	3774	4.31	1.58	0	8
University Degree	3774	0.15	0.36	0	1
High School Degree	3774	0.37	0.48	0	1
Nordestino	3774	0.24	0.43	0	1
Head of household	3774	0.31	0.46	0	1
Is Race Important	3774	0.64	0.48	0	1
Social	3774	2.6	2.1	0	13
Dangerous	3769	0.24	0.43	0	1
Drunk	3766	1.1	1.6	0	6
Neigh Wealth % (nat. log)	3771	1.1	0.96	0	3.46
Neighborhood Poverty %	3771	11.4	5.01	0.59	24.6
% High School Degree	3771	0.10	0.08	0.01	0.59
% Northeastern	3771	0.26	0.16	0	0.80
% White	3771	0.57	0.15	0.29	1
Near Favela	3774	0.31	0.46	0	1
In Favela	3774	0.13	0.13	0	1
Murder Rate (per 1,000)	3774	0.41	0.34	0	1.37

Table 3. Challenging Whiteness: Log Odds of Individual-Level Determinants of *Pardo* Racial Classification of Self-Identified Whites by an Observer

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Male	.201 (.155)	.169 (.154)	.177 (.154)	.351* (.167)	.177 (.154)
Age	-.003 (.005)	-.009 (.142)	-.007 (.154)	-.001 (.006)	-.007 (.006)
Household Income	-.222*** (.053)		-.130* (.059)	-.133* (.061)	-.130* (.063)
College Degree		-1.64*** (.401)	-1.37*** (.414)	-1.35*** (.416)	-1.37*** (.415)
High School Degree		-.561** (.214)	-.471* (.224)	-.461* (.225)	-.469* (.229)
Nordestino	1.17*** (.175)	1.03*** (.175)	.988*** (.175)	1.01*** (.175)	.987*** (.175)
Head of Household				-.613** (.107)	
Race Is Important					0.14 (.165)
Constant	-2.10*** (.308)	-2.38*** (.316)	-1.93*** (.316)	-2.08*** (.341)	-1.94*** (.309)
Observations	2244	2244	2244	2244	2244
Pseudo R-squared	.066	.076	.080	.087	.080

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, *p<0.05

Table 4. Whitening: Log Odds of Individual Determinants on "White" Racial Classification of Self-Identified *Pardos* by an Observer

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Male	-.405** (.138)	-.379** (.145)	-.394** (.142)	-.488** (.157)	-.391** (.142)
Age	.002 (.008)	.002 (.008)	.000 (.008)	-.003 (.009)	.000 (.008)
Household Income	.184** (.067)		.098 (.063)	.102 (.063)	.096 (.063)
College Degree		1.30*** (.301)	1.10*** (.312)	1.06*** (.317)	1.03*** (.312)
High School Degree		-.066 (.214)	-.125 (.210)	-.128 (.209)	-.147 (.212)
Nordestino	-.262 (.231)	-.199 (.228)	-.187 (.228)	-.193 (.228)	-.178 (.224)
Head of Household				.353+ (.214)	
Race Is Important					-.332 (.210)
Constant	-2.20*** (.374)	-1.60*** (.331)	-1.89*** (.406)	-1.84*** (.422)	-1.63*** (.428)
Observations	1162	1162	1162	1162	1162
Pseudo R-squared	.014	.022	.024	.026	.035

Robust cluster standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, *p<0.05 +p<.10

Table 5. Blackening: Log Odds of Individual Determinants on “Black” Racial Classification of Self-Identified *Pardos* by an Observer

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Male	-.107 (.222)	-.123 (.219)	-.107 (.219)	-.132 (.234)	-.123 (.220)
Age	.013+ (.007)	.011 (.008)	.012 (.008)	.012 (.007)	.013+ (.008)
Household Income	-.087 (.063)		-.094 (.068)	-.093 (.068)	-.091 (.070)
College Degree		-.034 (.474)	.166 (.492)	.160 (.492)	.334 (.500)
High School Degree		-.073 (.236)	-.013 (.247)	-.014 (.246)	.044 (.253)
Nordestino	-.332 (.230)	-.318 (.228)	-.326 (.230)	-.329 (.229)	-.356 (.227)
Head of Household				.091 (.299)	
Race Is Important					1.18*** (.210)
Constant	-2.19*** (.376)	-2.44*** (.320)	-2.17*** (.387)	-2.15*** (.380)	-3.22*** (.504)
Observations	1162	1162	1162	1162	1162
Pseudo R-squared	.014	.022	.024	.026	.035

Robust cluster standard errors in parentheses

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, + $p < .10$

Table 6. Challenging Blackness: Log Odds of Individual Determinants on “*Pardo*” Racial Classification of Self-Identified Blacks by an Observer

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Male	-.275 (.245)	-.270 (.243)	-.292 (.249)	-.335 (.275)	-.293 (.220)
Age	-.025** (.009)	-.026** (.009)	-.027** (.010)	-.029** (.009)	-.032** (.010)
Household Income	.041 (.087)		.074 (.098)	-.075 (.099)	.079 (.101)
College Degree		-.516 (.656)	-.646 (.700)	-.656 (.694)	-.580 (.728)
High School Degree		-.177 (.264)	-.210 (.273)	-.217 (.274)	-.209 (.274)
Nordestino	1.09*** (.267)	1.00*** (.259)	1.04*** (.264)	1.00*** (.273)	.968*** (.265)
Head of Household				.174 (.280)	
Race Is Important					-1.18*** (.345)
Constant	-.355 (.395)	-.049 (.368)	-.275 (.412)	-.225 (.400)	.902 (.606)
Observations	368	368	368	368	368
Pseudo R-squared	.053	.055	.056	.057	.080

Robust cluster standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, *p<0.05, +p<.10

Table 7. Summary of One-Way Effects of Neighborhood Traits on Racial Struggle (Controlling for Sex, Age, Region of Origin, Household Income, and Educational Attainment); Each Log Odds Reported Run Separately

	(Challenging Whiteness)	(Whiteni ng)	(Blacken ing)	(Challenging Blackness)
Ln (% Rich)	-.152 (.160)	.269* (.130)	-.284 (.180)	-.024 (.180)
% Poor	.022 (.018)	-.017 (.021)	.043+ (.026)	.022 (.030)
% High school	-1.10 (1.34)	2.96* (1.23)	-4.16+ (2.22)	-2.47 (2.30)
% Northeastern	-.281 (.751)	.852 (.972)	1.61+ (.932)	-.484 (1.21)
% White	-.285 (.527)	-.109 (.848)	-3.32*** (.977)	-.285 (.527)
Observations (lowest)	2244	1162	1162	368
Pseudo R-squared (highest)	.081	.031	.031	.075

Robust cluster standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, *p<0.05, +p<.10

Policing Racial Boundaries in São Paulo, Brazil

Paper 3/3

Racial domination exists in cognition, institutions, and in bodies, and is created, re-created, and reinforced continuously and iteratively across society's largest of institutions and smallest of interactions. Operating simultaneously through the processes of categorization, discrimination, and violence, racial domination's effects can be seen in discrepancies in mortality (Collins and Williams 1999), physical and mental health (Williams et al. 1997; Priest et al. 2013), and in happiness (Yang 2008). One's race is consequential for socioeconomic success (Hout 1984; Bloome 2015), access to labor markets (Bonacich 1972), the accumulation of wealth (Oliver and Shapiro 1995), access to housing (Massey and Denton 1993), and access to and success in education (Carter 2005; Howard 2014). Meanwhile, racial micro-aggressions permeate every major institution (Sue et al 2007; Solorzano, Ceja and Yosso 2000).

Although racial inequality structures and is structured at all levels of society, not every racial boundary is equally salient across contexts, and not every institution shapes and reinforces race in the same way. Criminal justice institutions like the police and prison are particularly salient and important for the construction of race. We know that black and brown people have higher odds of being targeted by the police (Rios 2011; Penner and Saperstein 2015) and charged more severely (Kutateladze 2018). Irrespective of one's identity, or even of conscious racism overt within an institution, policing and the criminal justice system more broadly can have racially unequal operations by virtue of seemingly race-neutral policy decisions or police deployment strategies (Tonry 1995).

Running in the opposite causal direction, recent research has also shown that being incarcerated (Saperstein and Penner 2010 and 2012) or even having had a single arrest (Saperstein, Penner, and Kizer 2014) can increase the odds that an observer will perceive the subject to be nonwhite. However, using an experimental design that controlled for phenotype, Foy, Ray, and Hummel (2017) found no relationship at all between arrest record and racial attribution by an observer.

The effect of arrest or incarceration on racial identity is a separate question from the effect on ascribed race. On the one hand, we have (at least some) evidence that incarceration increases the odds of not only being seen as black, but also identifying as black (Saperstein and Penner 2010¹⁵). In a later paper where they again had measures for both self-identification and ascribed race by an observer, despite being able to show the effect of blackness on arrest probability, Penner and Saperstein (2015) note that they could not find a correlation between arrest probability and black racial *identity* for those who were not perceived to be black. Although they were examining arrest as the outcome of interest (i.e., the dependent variable) rather than racial identity, their results do seem to suggest that racial identity—when controlling for how an observer perceives one's race—is not necessarily directly related to arrest history. Rather, being *perceived* to be a member of a minority group is what seems to be associated with the probability of being arrested.

The United States, however, has relatively rigid racial categories. Brazil, on the other hand, is a country where racial identity is especially malleable. It is also a country with an incredibly active and heavy-handed police force (Smith 2013), and an expanding prison population (Alves 2016). Does contact with the police in Brazil matter for racial identity, a country at the other end of the racial rigidity spectrum, even when controlling for observed race? In other words, in a more racially volatile context like Brazil, can it be shown that contact with the police changes the chances that one will *identify* as black, or as nonwhite?

¹⁵ Also see Hannon and DeFina's (2016) critique, where they show the findings to be "extremely fragile."

Racial Identity in Brazil

Racial group membership is not a straightforward function of phenotype in any society—and especially not in Latin America. Afro-Latin Americans, like their counterparts in the US, are descendants of slaves brought to the Americas. Experiencing discrimination on a daily basis (Twine 2001; Sansone 2003; Silva et al. 2016), Afro-Brazilians, compared to their white counterparts, are poorer, less educated, have lower incomes, higher unemployment, and lower access to goods and services (Wade 1997, Andrews 2004, Henriques 1999, Telles 2004, Osório 2010, Silveira and Muniz 2014). Race in Brazil, like race in Latin America more generally, is less rigidly fixed than in the United States; and racism co-exists with a national narrative built around the promise of racial mixing and a denial of institutionalized racism (Skidmore 1974; Wade 1997). There's a multiplicity of overlapping racial classification systems, and even within a single classification system, it's not uncommon for individuals to switch racial categories (Sansone 2003; Loveman, Muniz, and Bailey 2012; Muniz and Bastos 2017). While phenotype is a significant predictor of racial identity in Brazil, status also whitens (Degler 1971, Twine 2001, Sheriff 2001, Telles 2002, Schwartzman 2007). It's also the case that darker individuals with higher education are more likely to identify as black (rather than brown) than their less educated counterparts—in other words, money “polarizes” in Brazil (Telles and Paschel 2014). There is some evidence that the younger generation is more likely to self-identify as black (Francis and Tannuri-Pianto 2013), even if observers identify them as *pardo* (paper 2 of this dissertation). The polarizing of identity seems to be driven by the more highly educated Brazilians. The proportion of women with secondary education or higher who label themselves as black doubled from 1982 to 2007, and the proportion of men with higher education who self-identify as black nearly tripled—and their children are significantly more likely to identify as black too (Marteletto 2012). After the initiation of race-based quotas in public universities, students in the darkest two quintiles were less likely to identify as white (Francis and Tannuri-Pianto 2013). Another factor that may contribute to the polarization of identity is the importation of American-style racial identity, both directly as a result of American-funded think tanks and activist groups (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999; Paschel 2016) and as a side-effect of the importation of neoliberal ideologies and practices.

The polarization of race in Brazil as a function of access to privilege may represent the dawning of a new era of racial consciousness. Despite its history of institutionalized racism and glaring racial disparities, Brazil was held up by the nation's political and intellectual elites as a racial democracy for much of the 20th Century. The myth was in part supported by scholarship by both Brazilian and international social scientists (Freyre 1933; Pierson 1942; Harris 1952; Wagley 1952). Even if fading, in modern days this ideology has not entirely died out, with a significant portion of Brazilians willing to claim that they live in a relatively racism-free country (Twine 2001; Bailey 2009), based on traditional arguments that class-based disadvantages and psychological insufficiencies that the result from slavery's legacy can account for the relative disadvantage of darker skinned Brazilians (Fernandes 1965). Part of the reason this ideology succeeded is that the Brazilian spectrum-based racial classification system, in its great fluidity, weakens the potential for solidarity and political action (Hanchard 1994; Marx 1998). Unlike the US black-versus-white racial classification system, a substantial portion of the Brazilian population identifies with intermediate categories, such as “*pardo*” (brown), who have been

shown to be somewhat better off than blacks (Hasenbalg and Silva 1999; Monk 2016). The drive to increase one's status by identifying with lighter categorizations, described by Degler (1971) as the "mulatto escape hatch," may have created disincentives in the dark-skinned population that prevented race-based mobilization against existing discrimination. Speaking openly about racism or race is considered to be impolite, and is largely avoided (Turra and Venturi 1995; Guimarães 1999; Silva et al. 2016). That said, in recent decades the country has experienced a growing Afro-Brazilian movement (Telles 2004; Bailey 2009). Concessions have been made in the form of affirmative action for nonwhites at universities and for government jobs, and Brazilians are increasingly aware that both blacks and *pardos* continue to be significantly underprivileged in relation to whites (Turra and Venturi 1995; Hasenbalg and Silva 1999; Telles 2004; Bailey 2009; Marteleto 2012).

Crime and Punishment in Brazil

The police in Brazil are well known for their militaristic strategies and practices, as well as for their corruption, violence, and arbitrariness (Pinheiro 1991; Chevigny 1996; Paes-Machado and Noronha 2003; Van Reenen 2004; Kant de Lima 2005). The military police, which patrols the city streets, has the *de facto* right to kill the urban poor at will, in the name of maintaining order (Willis 2015). Deeply shaped by its roots in authoritarian Brazil of the dictatorship years, reform efforts have been met with limited success—due to resistance both by the institution itself, as well as by the public, which continues to support—even demand—an oppressive police force (Zaverucha 2000; Caldeira 2013). Wacquant (2004) argues that the Brazilian state instead relies on a law-and-order strategy to shore up legitimacy in a climate of social instability. The Brazilian underclass—both black and poor—is poorer than its American counterpart, has limited access to quality education, is terrorized by extreme levels of gun violence (from both organized drug operations and the police themselves), and is faced with a justice system that does not follow the rule of law. Many members of the urban poor are left with little alternative but to turn to informal markets, including the dangerous lives of drug trafficking or robbery. In order to manage the destabilized neighborhoods of the dispossessed population that is left without legitimate employment or a security net, the country relied on the neoliberal model of penality as the complimentary "big state" twin of a "small state" social welfare system (though welfare did expand under the PT starting in the 2000s). All in all, the military police in urban Brazil has remained largely unaccountable to the rule of law, and for decades they have murdered civilians at a rate unsurpassed by other nation's cities (Chevigny 1996), and continue to do so at a rate greater than ever (FBSP 2018).

It is important to analytically decouple crime and punishment. Punishment serves functions well beyond the scope of criminal deterrence or incapacitation, such as symbolic re-affirmation of group morality (Durkheim 1983), managing fluctuating labor-market needs by using inmates as a workforce (Rusche and Kirchheimer 1939), and controlling populations through disciplinary techniques (Foucault 1977). In other words, punishment is rarely simply a rational or systematic response to violence, and the two are often uncorrelated (Spelman 2000). However, it is also impossible to ignore that the expansion and militarization of the penal state in Brazil unfolds in a context of prolific violence (Adorno 2013), and one of a chronic state of fear among the Brazilian populace (Caldeira 2000). While the media may play a role in stoking fears (Ramos and Paiva 2005), it's also true that of the fifty cities with the highest murder rates in the

world in 2015, twenty-one are located in Brazil. Fully one quarter of adult residents of São Paulo reported having had a loaded gun pointed at them (Instituto Futuro Brasil 2004).

Crime is not randomly distributed across the population in Brazil. Those who live in *favelas* live in chronically criminal territories that are *de facto* run by organized crime groups. In some instances, residents of *favelas* pay rent to drug lords in exchange for “protection,” which may or may not materialize. Rival gangs engage in frequent shoot-outs, and sometimes in all-out war that lasts for days, weeks, or months. Brazilians fortunate enough to not live in the *favelas* are warned of these outbreaks of violence, and often adjust their behavior to avoid passing close by *favelas* during times of conflict—because everyone knows that death by a stray bullet from one of these wars is not an uncommon fate. The residents of *favelas*, however, have no choice—they must hunker down in their often-flimsy homes, hoping to escape the deluge of bullets that sporadically spray their neighborhoods.

The criminal activity also has the effect of attracting an oppressive police presence in *favelas*, a fact that significantly heightens the everyday level of danger in these neighborhoods. Over half (51%) of people shot and killed by the police in Brazil have been shot in the back—a chilling statistic that points to the shoot-first-ask-later *de facto* policy that informs policing in these neighborhoods. Life and dignity are systematically devalued in the *favela*. Police officers have been caught on camera strolling down the street while indiscriminately throwing smoke bombs into every open window that they pass, seemingly unconcerned that they might be disrupting and terrifying the lives of ordinary law-abiding citizens (Coletivo Papo Reto). Although unstudied, it is possible that living in a criminalized territory like a *favela* has implications for one’s racial identity, separately from the effect of directly experiencing policing. Because these criminalized areas are also most heavily policed, regression techniques might be useful to tease out these two effects (as there is reason to be concerned that any measure of policing might simply serve as a proxy for being located in a *favela*).

While residents of *favelas* bear the brunt of shoot-outs, of all-out war (both between gangs and between gangs and the police), and of police brutality, Brazil’s urban residents also contend with a deluge of economically motivated crime. High-quality data are rare, but best estimates put the combined annual theft and robbery rate at 20% of the city of São Paulo’s adult population—meaning, one in five residents were victims of robbery or theft at least once in a twelve-month period. The robbery/theft victimization rate for the richest tenth of São Paulo residents was that of 37% in 2003, while it was 11% for the bottom class quartile (Instituto Futuro Brasil 2004).

The Intersection of Race and Punishment in Brazil

Nonwhite people in Brazil are criminalized (Flauzina 2008), much as is the case in the United States (Devine 1989). Nonwhite Brazilians are more heavily targeted by the police (Mitchell and Wood 1999, Noronha et al. 1999, Vargas and Alves 2010, Smith 2013, Sclofsky 2016), are subject to discriminatory trials (Adorno 1995), and are over-incarcerated (Alves 2016). While data issues and research design choices disallow the separation of race from class effects, or of differences between *pardos* and blacks, differences in gradations in skin tone are predictive of one’s position in Brazilian society (Monk 2016), and we may surmise that this logic may very well translate to policing too (where black Brazilians are targeted more heavily than brown Brazilians). On the other hand, research showing that the division between whites and

pardos is much greater than the difference between *pardos* and blacks (Hasenbalg and Silva 1999, Telles 2004) might lead us to expect these groups to be equally targeted.

What does the above imply for racial identity? On the one hand, if the police target both *pardo* and black individuals equally, then we might expect that contact with the police is most relevant for the white/nonwhite racial boundary. In other words, we might expect that being targeted by the police increases the odds of white-ascribed and *pardo*-ascribed individuals identifying as *pardo* or black rather than as white. On the other hand, if the police target black people more than they target *pardo* people, it is possible that contact with the police has a greater effect on identifying as black, rather than on identifying as *pardo*. In this case, we might instead expect that contact with the police increases the odds of *pardo*-ascribed and black-ascribed individuals identifying as black rather than as *pardo* or white.

Data

My analysis relies upon a nested dataset that links a social survey collected by Instituto Futuro Brasil (IFB) in 2003 to data from the Brazilian census and to data on the state of São Paulo's Secretary of Public Security by census tract. This linked dataset allows us to examine both individual-level and neighborhood-level effects of policing and crime on racial identity.

The IFB survey (which included questions on racial identity, ascribed race, and whether or not the respondent had had various types of contact with the police in the 12 months prior to the survey) relied upon a stratified random sample of 5,000 residents of the city of São Paulo who are over the age of 16. The data were collected in four waves, each with an independent random stratified sample, in order to allow for rigorous reliability assessment. Each wave of the dataset was compared to key census statistics (age, gender, income, race) to ensure the sample's general representativeness of the target population. Interviewers were trained and assessed to ensure cross-interviewer reliability and data integrity was checked by a random selection of cases for re-interview.

Because this analysis concerns itself with how racial identity is affected by contact with police, we need a way to control for phenotype. Darker individuals in Brazil tend to be less likely to identify as white (or brown), and lighter individuals tend to be less likely to identify as black (or brown). The survey included interviewer-imputed race, which was often at odds with the respondent's racial identity. The analyses for racial identity were run separately for each ascribed group: those classified as white, brown, and black, respectively. For those individuals classified as brown, separate analyses were run for examining the predictors of white identity (vs. brown), and for the predictors of black identity (vs. brown). As a result of this design, we can at least somewhat control for how an individual's race may be perceived by an observer—a factor that's likely important both for racial identity *and* for the likelihood of being targeted by the police. Without a control for phenotype or ascribed race, it would be much more difficult to claim that the regression models help us see the impact of policing on racial identity. Instead, we would be left with the likely hypothesis that any correlation observed between racial identity and policing was mediated by phenotype. However, since we have a control in place for ascribed race, we have a stronger claim that any observed effect of policing on racial identity is an effect that cannot be simply reduced to the fact that darker people are *both* more likely to identify as nonwhite *and* to also more likely to be targeted by the police.

Although this data set is one of the most methodologically rigorous of its kind available in Brazil, it has several restrictions that limit its generalizability.

First, the geographic area covered is restricted to the official city limits, thereby excluding residents of the satellite communities that are home to a large portion of the metropolitan area's working and middle classes. The phenomenon of interest, the interaction between civilians and the police, is not restricted to the city limits. The military and civil police operate at the state level and across all regions of the country. Also, even if one is to strictly consider the police-civilian contacts that occur within city limits, restricting the sample to residents of *São Paulo* means excluding the experiences of commuters who may work in the city but live in one of the satellite communities. However, there is enough class and racial variation within the population of city residents to allow for an analysis of how different groups are policed.

A second limitation of the data is that they do not include individuals under the age of 16. Criminologists have shown that youths are more likely to be criminally active than their older counterparts (Sampson and Laub 1993). Therefore, it is feasible that adolescents are disproportionately targeted by the police, which suggests that the available sample does not allow us to accurately estimate the extent of civilian-police contact in *São Paulo*.

Another population that is not included in the sample is homeless people. This exclusion may be particularly significant for the project at hand because the Brazilian police have a reputation for violent management of homeless urban youth. Instances of extreme police violence towards street children, such as the widely publicized 1993 "Candelaria" massacre in Rio de Janeiro, are possibly indicative of more widespread day-to-day targeting of homeless youths. However, this population was not sampled.

Finally, the data set is limited in its lack of inclusion of those who are arguably most affected by the police—the incarcerated and the victims of police shootings. Any estimates of the proportion of the population that has had interaction with the police will necessarily be biased downwards. Those who are most likely to be arrested or shot may differ systematically from the rest of the population and also certainly vary systematically in how they are treated by the police. Therefore, any effects reported here can only be generalized to how the police interact with those who remain members of the free population. Existing evidence does suggest that nonwhites are disproportionately killed by the police (Vargas and Alves 2010) and imprisoned (Alves 2016), though there is little information that further breaks down the demographics by race. Experiencing the most extreme forms of contact with the police may have different implications for the racialization of identity.

In summary, one must be careful to remember that any conclusions drawn on the basis of these data can only be generalized to residents of the city of *São Paulo* who are over the age of 16 and who have relatively stable dwellings. Particularly significant are the exclusion of youths, the homeless, those murdered by the police, and the incarcerated population. To the extent that these groups are not represented in the data set, the rate of police-civilian contact is underestimated. Therefore, if anything, the effects reported here are probably more pronounced in reality than suggested by this analysis.

The data on murder, theft, and robbery were obtained using official statistics from São Paulo's Secretary of Public Security, which is mandated by law to provide monthly reports on twelve types of crimes. Although the statistics for murder are considered by Brazilian social scientists to be relatively accurate, the official statistics for robbery and theft are likely to be underestimated. Therefore, caution must be extended before generalizing from the findings relating to robbery and theft in particular. That said, I was able to ascertain that the neighborhood incidence rate of

robbery and theft is significantly and positively correlated with the probability of experiencing robbery or theft as an individual ($p < .001$), a finding that lends credibility to the data.

Research Design and Methods

First, I will go over the descriptive results. A victimization study of the quality and size used here is unusual for any country, much less a relatively poorer country like Brazil. This kind of large-scale victimization study is the only way to obtain reliable estimates for police violence. Although the regression techniques are important for understanding the relationships between our variables of interest, I first take the time to assess the scope of police violence in São Paulo. Focusing exclusively on the regression results glosses over the breadth and depth of violence experienced by São Paulo citizens at the hands of the police.

Next, there were four sets of logistic models run, for three different groups of respondents. It is important to account for the fact that certain unmeasured traits (like skin tone, facial features, etc.) may be important for how one identifies racially *and* for the probability of contact with the criminal justice system. To mitigate this race-related selection bias regarding who is targeted, I divide the respondents into groups based on their racial classification by an observer.

The first group of respondents were those identified as white by the interviewer. The analyses examined what predicts whether these white-ascribed individuals self-identify as white (therefore confirming to the observer's categorization) or as brown.¹⁶

The second group of respondents analyzed were those identified as black by the interviewer; the dependent variable for the regressions was black self-identity (versus brown). There were no cases of black-ascribed individuals self-identifying as white.

The third group of respondents were identified as brown by the interviewer. Unlike the white- and black-ascribed respondents, members of this group self-identified as white, as black, *and* as brown—which means that the dependent variable in the analysis consists of a three-category outcome, rather than a binary one (e.g., white v. brown). One way to model this would be to use ordered logistic regression, which allows for a hierarchically ordered categorical variable with more than two categories. However, if identifying as white (versus brown) and identifying as black (versus brown) are results of different processes, then it would be inappropriate to treat the categories as ordered (Long 1997). Therefore, I use two separate logistic regressions for this group—one for the odds of identifying as white, and a separate analysis for the odds of identifying as black.¹⁷

Dependent Variable: Racial Self-Classification

The dependent variable for this analysis is the respondent's racial self-classification. The IFB survey contained two questions about the respondent's race. The first was answered by the respondent herself and the second was answered by the interviewer. The race of the respondent

¹⁶ Because no individuals who were ascribed as white identified as black, there was no need to run analyses for this potential scenario.

¹⁷ A multinomial logit for the three-category dependent variable would be equivalent to running separate standard logits, but is less familiar to readers, and therefore complicates interpretation.

could fall into the following categories: white, *pardo*, black, native, or yellow (Asian). For purposes of this analysis, the three categories of interest are white, *pardo*, and black. Dummy variables were constructed for each of the three racial categories analyzed. The response rate for this variable is 100%.

It is important to keep in mind that the analyses of racial identity are set up so as to compare individuals to each other who have all been identified as having the *same race* by an observer. Therefore, when we examine racial identity, we are examining racial identity that controls for ascribed race.

Of the people in the sample who were described as white by the survey interviewer, 93% identify as white; 7% identify as brown. Of those described as brown, 77% also identify as such; 13% identify as white, and 10% identify as black. Of those described as black, 75% identify as black, and 25% identify as brown.

Independent Variables: Policing and Lawlessness

The key independent variables used in this analysis operationalize the respondent's contact with the police; the respondent's proximity to a *favela*; and the degree to which the respondent is surrounded by criminality, as measured by a neighborhood's murder rate and its incidence of crime and theft.

Police Contact Index. The variable that captures contact severity with the police is an index of interactions experienced in the 12 months prior to the survey. Five questions were used to construct the index: "Between July of 2002 and June of 2003, did a military or civil police officer or officer from the Armed Forces place you in any of the following situations... a) You had to show ID; b) You were searched; c) You were threatened; d) You were disrespected; e) You suffered physical aggression or abuse." For each question, the respondent could answer "yes," "no," or "I don't know." Each question was coded 1 (for "yes"), 0 (for "no") or missing (for "I don't know") and then summed to result in an index that ranged from 0 to 5. The response rate was near 100% for these questions, with only six missing cases¹⁸. (See Table 1 for descriptive statistics of this and all other variables.)

The index was analyzed to ensure reliability. Two assumptions underlying methods for testing reliability are that the items measure a phenomenon *equally* and that the items measure only *one* phenomenon. The data may very well violate both these conditions. Factor analysis, which consists of statistical techniques to identify clusters of interrelated variables, can be used to cope with both of these circumstances, while Cronbach's alpha offers an additional reliability check for inter-correlation among items in a one-dimensional scale.

In factor analysis, each cluster, or factor, is composed of the items that are more correlated with each other than with the other variables. The criteria used to define the first factor are that the variance of the new factor be maximized and, second, that the variance *around* the new factor be minimized (Carmines and Zeller 1979). Consecutive factors are then defined so as to capture the greatest possible amount of the remaining variability not accounted for by previous factors. Each variable within the factor is statistically described by its factor loading, which is an

¹⁸ Cases were dropped if the respondent answered "I don't know" to *any* of the questions used to construct the index. The same is true for all indexes constructed in this analysis.

indication of how much the individual item contributes to the particular factor with which it is associated. Thus, not only does factor analysis provide information about the number of concepts being measured by a group of variables, it also allows for items to measure a concept unequally. Another important property of extracted components are that they are independent from (uncorrelated with) each other because each factor represents variability not captured by other factors.

Because components are extracted in order of decreased importance in explaining variance, the first extracted component should represent the phenomenon in question. It is acceptable for the variance-maximizing solution to yield more than one component, but certain criteria must be met if the set of items being analyzed are to be considered of a single phenomenon: 1) The first component should explain over 40% of the total variance. 2) Any subsequent components should be roughly equal in the amount of variance they explain, except for a gradual decrease. 3) All items should have loadings greater than 0.3. 4) All or most of the items should have higher loadings on the first component than on subsequent components.

The factor analysis performed on the five variables used to construct the policing index showed that all these criteria were comfortably met: The first component explained over 90% of the total variance; subsequent components were all small; the minimum factor loading was 0.58; and all items had the highest loadings on the first component.

In Cronbach's internal-consistency method, reliability is assessed and statistically described by an alpha score, which can be thought of as a measure of inter-correlation amongst the items to be included in a scale. In other words, it shows the extent to which we can think of all the items included in a scale or index as measuring the same phenomenon. The value of the alpha score increases as a function of both inter-item correlation and the number of items in the scale. Adding items indefinitely makes progressively less impact on the reliability, and adding items with low inter-item correlation may reduce the lengthened scale's reliability. Cronbach's method can be used as a tool for determining what items should be included in an index so as to maximize its reliability.

Convention dictates either using an alpha cut-off of 0.80 or of 0.70. The alpha score that is calculated on Pearson correlations for binary variables (as is the case with this index) will be an underestimate of inter-correlation. Similarly, alpha scores will underestimate inter-correlation when there are fewer than seven items included in the scale (and in this case, there are five). Given these factors that downwardly bias the alpha estimates for the analysis at hand, I chose to use the lower threshold of 0.70 as the acceptable limit for inter-correlation for the police contact index. Given the index's alpha score of 0.76, we can say that it does show an acceptably high level of inter-correlation, and therefore of reliability.

While aggregating the various types of police contact into a single index allows use of all the information available in the most parsimonious way possible (rather than running separate models for each question), it may cause us to miss discrepancies between different types of police practices. This research will concern itself with patterns of police-civilian interaction in general rather than the patterns of deployment of different policing strategies. It is important to note that because the survey does not ask the frequency of any given occurrence, repeated contact will not be measured and some events may be double-counted (for instance, as both being searched and being disrespected). As a result, the dependent variable is best thought of as a rough scale in severity of contact with police rather than a strict count of interactions.

Favela: Policing is spatially differentiated. *Favelas* in urban Brazil are both underserved by the police, as well as most brutally targeted (Larkins 2015; Vargas and Alves 2010; Wacquant 2004). While failing to provide security to the cities' poorest citizens, the police show up for periodic military-style raids, and treat all residents as potential criminals (Penglase 2014). Although home to an essential sector of the urban working class, *favelas* are viewed by middle-class and elite Brazilians as the site of the hopeless intertwining of extreme poverty and extreme lawlessness (Caldeira 2000). In Brazilian everyday language, the word "marginal" (spelled the same in Portuguese) is perfectly interchangeable with the word "criminal." Such attitudes towards the urban poor living in *favelas* legitimize ongoing police brutality, which in turn helps legitimize the Brazilian law-and-order state itself. As a result, one might expect people who live in or transit through *favelas* to disproportionately experience police harassment and violence. One question on the survey (answered by the interviewer instead of the respondent) allows to control for whether or not the respondent lives in a *favela*, lives near a *favela*, or there was no *favela* nearby. Two dummy variables were used, one for respondents who live inside a *favela*, and one for respondents who live near a *favela*. Those who did not have a *favela* nearby were the reference category.

It is important to note that "*favela*" is a contested category, which limits the efficacy of any given measure that purports to categorize neighborhoods thus. Although not a perfect measure, the question used here does provide at least a rough measure of how a resident of the city (and possibly the police) might perceive the respondent's neighborhood. The response rate for this variable is 97%.

Neighborhood Murder Rate. The murder rate is the first of two measures of neighborhood criminality. The average murder rate in Sao Paulo for 2002 was around 0.4 homicides per 1,000 residents. At the time the survey was conducted, São Paulo had a murder rate eight times higher than that of the 2017 murder capital of the United States, East St. Louis. Within Sao Paulo, the violence is not evenly distributed across space or class. The neighborhoods with the highest murder rates in Sao Paulo tend to be poorer, on average, and more violently policed. Living with such high levels of violence may have implications for racial identity, as criminality is certainly racialized. The neighborhood murder rate *also* may have implications for one's likelihood of being approached by the police. Therefore, in addition to neighborhood criminality being of interest for understanding racial identity, it also serves as a control for examining the relationship between contact with the police and racial identity. Including measures of neighborhood crime in the analysis help us know that any relationship we might see between police contact and racial identity is not simply a function of high-crime neighborhood effects on both policing and on identity.

I capture the murder rate using 2003 data from the Secretary of Public Safety, which is linked to the IFB data by census tract; the standardized district murder rate represents the number of homicides per one thousand residents for the respondent's residential district.

Neighborhood Theft and Robbery. The second measure of neighborhood criminality (which, again, may have implications for both racial identity and for likelihood of encounters with the police, so also serves as a control for examining the effect of policing on identity) is an index for theft and robbery constructed at the census district level using 2003 data from the state's Secretary of Public Security. The index was created by simply adding the rates of the following crimes: phone theft, wallet theft, and other pickpocketing; theft at commercial or

educational establishments; car break-ins, car theft, and car robbery; personal robbery; and commercial robbery.

Several statistical standards were met for the reliability and integrity of the index. Cronbach's alpha was .84, which is considered to be an indication that the scale is reliable and one-dimensional. Factor analysis showed that the first component explains 87% of the total variance, which is well above the recommended 40% or higher (Carmines and Zeller 1979). Subsequent components explain between zero and 9.8% of the variance, with a gradual decrease. All the items have higher loadings on the first component than on subsequent components. Finally, each item in the factor had factor loadings between .5 and .9 (well above the recommended .3 or higher). The results of the reliability assessment suggest that the index indeed does measure a single phenomenon, perhaps best thought of as economically motivated crime.

While neighborhoods with higher murder rates have higher levels of poverty, the opposite is true of neighborhoods with high rates of theft and robbery. Wealthier neighborhoods tend to have higher theft and robbery rates. The decision to include two separate measures of criminality—one for murder, and the other for economically motivated crime—stems from the fact that different types of crime often have very different etiology and effects. And, in fact, the two measures of criminality used in this research are negatively correlated with each other (correlation of -.24, with a p -value $\leq .001$).

Additional Control Variables

Male: A dummy variable was used in which male respondents were coded as 1 and female respondents were coded as 0. The response rate for this item on the survey was 100%.

Age: Respondents were between the ages of 16 and 92 years old. The response rate for this item on the survey was 100%.

Family income: Household income is one of two operationalizations of respondent status. As discussed above, status is a key factor contributing to racial identity in Brazil. A nine-category variable was used for family income. Categories were based on multiples of the minimum wage, which was 200 Reais per month at the time of the survey: no income; up to one minimum salary; between one and two; between two and three; between three and five; between five and 10; between 10 and 20; between 20 and 30; over 30 minimum salaries. The accuracy of the reported estimates probably varies by age, with older family members being most reliable. However, there is no reason to assume that younger family members would tend to systematically err in the same direction, thereby allowing us to assume that the error will not bias our results in any given direction. The response rate for family income was 80%.

Education. The second operationalization of respondent status used two dummy variables to capture educational attainment, one for respondents who had a high school degree, and a second for those who had a college degree. In some models, having a college degree was automatically dropped from the analysis because it perfectly predicted the outcome variable. So as not to lose these cases, I re-ran the analyses with a single dummy variable that collapsed the high-school and college categories so that both received a score of "1," while those who did not

graduate from high school received a score of zero. The results did not substantively alter upon the replacement of the educational variable.

Region of Origin. Because migrants from the northeast are likely to have *both* a systematically different way of seeing race (including their own racial identity) *and* a systematically different likelihood of being targeted by the police, I control for region of origin. A full quarter of São Paulo's residents are from the northeast, which is demographically, historically, and culturally different from the rest of the country, with accompanying differences in race relations. Brazilians hold stereotypes about people from the northeast, seeing them as lazy, easy-going, and poor. These stereotypes very well may have implications for how northeasterners are viewed by the police. People from the northeast can be identified by their accents, so it is certainly possible for the police to single them out. Also, it seems to be the case that people from the northeast are less likely to be black. Despite being the region with the highest afro-Brazilian population, Afro-Brazilians living in the Northeast are more likely to identify as *pardo* than as black (*preto*) (Henriques 2001). To control for region of origin, individuals from the northeast are coded using a dummy variable.

Racial Makeup of Neighborhood. The racial makeup of one's neighborhood may impact one's racial identity. It also may impact how heavily the police target a given neighborhood. To take these facts into account, I control for the racial makeup of the neighborhood using Brazilian census data from 2000, which is linked to the IFB and Public Safety dataset via census tract. The measure used is % white.

Descriptive Results: The Scope and Focus of Policing in São Paulo

The breakdown of policing by age and gender is represented in Table 2. Simply from the aggregate rates, we can see that the police are very active: 22.2% of the sampled population have been stopped by the police in a 12-month period. This corresponds to a rate of roughly 2 million individuals stopped per year, or almost 7000 per day¹⁹. The rate of being frisked or searched isn't much lower (16.7%), and the rate of physical abuse, of 2.3%, corresponds to well over 200,000 individuals per year. In addition to being highly active, the police are also selective. Young males are clearly more heavily targeted than their older counterparts. While one in five people in the general population have had some form of contact with the police in the past year, 58% of the males between 16 and 25 years old have experienced the same. In contrast, 12% of women in the same age group and 19% of men over the age of 40 were stopped by the police. More young males suffered physical aggression at the hand of the police (8.5%) than women in the same age group were searched (5.9%). Being stopped by the police is probably experienced as a relatively normal event in the lives of most men living in the city.

Table 3 presents the findings for how policing is associated with race. Here too we see systematic patterns. Blacks and *pardos* are more likely to experience any one of the forms of police contact than are whites. The racial disproportionality increases with the seriousness of the interaction—while only 25% or 29% more likely to be asked to show identification by the police

¹⁹ The actual rate of police-civilian interaction is almost certainly higher than this estimate, since many of the same individuals are probably stopped more than once per year.

than are whites, blacks and *pardos* are respectively 113% and 150% more likely to be physically assaulted. If we examine the intersection of gender, race, and age (not shown in the table), we find that 10% of young male blacks and 12% of young male *pardos* have been physically assaulted by the police in a 12-month period.

In addition, it should be noted that *pardos* seem to be slightly more likely than blacks to experience any given type of policing. However, the differences between these two groups pale in comparison to the difference between whites and nonwhites. This finding is consistent with the argument that *pardos* and blacks are homologous to blacks in the US with respect to being targeted by the penal state (Wacquant 2004).

Regression Results: The Effects of Policing and Neighborhood Criminality on Racial Identity

Before examining the key variables of interest, we first turn to the control variables we use in the regression models. Here we find that gender did not show itself to be important for racial identity, at least not net of controls for age, status, region of origin, and the racial makeup of the neighborhood. Further controlling for proximity to a *favela*, crime rates, or police contact did not change this finding.

Also, age was significantly and positively correlated with identifying as white rather than brown in both sets of models that looked at this boundary. Furthermore, younger individuals were marginally more significant to identity as black over brown. These findings are inconsistent with the theory that race in Brazil has been polarizing towards a more dichotomous classification, causing younger generations to identify less strongly with the middle categories (like brown, in this case). Instead, it seems that the older one is, the more likely one is to identify with lighter categories—both white (versus brown) or brown (versus black). Perhaps age operates like a status variable—the older one is, the greater one's claim to more prestigious racial categories.

Across all models, individual status, as measured by the respondent's household income and educational attainment, was not predictive of racial identity, at least not when other controls are included (gender, age, region of origin, and racial makeup of neighborhood). Sensitivity analyses I performed showed that status variables do have meaningful relationships with racial identity outcomes, but these effects are likely drowned out by multiple collinearity in the full models (see below for a more in-depth discussion of the implications of collinearity on the interpretation of regression models). Because these variables are included primarily as controls rather than objects of inquiry in their own right, I do not concern myself with these effects in the interpretations below, and instead choose to leave all these variables in the regression models, as controls for the individual-level effects of status on racial identification.

Region of origin is another such control, though being from the northeast proves to have a robust, statistically significant, negative effect on identifying as white for respondents who have been classified as white by the survey interviewer (see Table 4), and a modest and marginal positive effect on identifying as white for respondents who have been classified as brown by the interviewer, particularly when proximity to a *favela* is taken into account (Table 5). Being from the northeast, however, shows no statistical association with brown or black racial identity for those who were ascribed as either brown or black. In other words, region of origin matters for the white/brown racial boundary, but not for the brown/black racial boundary. And, the way in

which it matters for the white/brown racial boundary varies by phenotype—heightening a brown racial identity for northeasterners ascribed as white, while heightening a white racial identity for northeasterners ascribed as brown. This seemingly paradoxical finding suggests that the São Paulo-based interviewers are using racial categories that are systematically different than those operating in the northeast—particularly when the white/brown boundary is in question.

The racial makeup of the neighborhood matters for all four sets of models. The higher the proportion of white people in a respondent's neighborhood, the more likely s/he is to identify as white as well, regardless of whether they were identified by the interviewer as white or as brown. Meanwhile, for those classified as black or brown, the proportion of white people in one's neighborhood is positively predictive of *also* identifying as black rather than brown. Or, put another way, residence in a whiter neighborhood is predictive of nonwhite people identifying as black rather than as brown.

Living near—but not inside of—a *favela* is predictive of identifying as white for individuals also described as white. However, for individuals described as *pardo*, living near or inside of a *favela* is *negatively* predictive of identifying as white (even if many self-identified whites do indeed live in *favelas*); and living near a *favela* is positively predictive of identifying as black. For individuals described as black, living near a *favela* seems marginally predictive of also identifying as black rather than *pardo*. In sum, we have an interaction effect between one's residential proximity to a *favela* and one's observed race on one's self-identified race. It seems that proximity to a *favela* is predictive of identifying as darker versus lighter—unless one is also seen as white by an observer. In the case of the white-ascribed group, being near a *favela* is actually associated with white identity. Although a seemingly paradoxical finding, São Paulo is a city where the richest of high rises do indeed abut against *favelas*. The city's premium neighborhoods attract not only the elite, but also the labor force that provides them with their services. Given that the richest of all neighborhoods in São Paulo tend to concentrate the demands for luxury services, certain *favelas* are strategically situated close to the high-rent areas in which many residents work. Although these same residents might be able to afford living in a non-*favela* neighborhood on the outskirts of the town, they would then have to face grueling commutes to get to work in the rich areas. The extremely wealthy residents of São Paulo, meanwhile, who enjoy the advantages of relatively cheap and abundant services, have grown accustomed to living alongside the poorest of the city's inhabitants and most debased of living conditions in precariously positioned *favelas*, often built upon government-owned hillsides deemed unsafe for construction.

The murder rate of a neighborhood was not predictive of racial identity for any group.²⁰ However, the rate of economically motivated crime (like robbery and theft) was significant both for white-ascribed and *pardo*-ascribed groups. Those identified as white by an observer were less likely to identify as white if the crime rate was high in their neighborhood. Furthermore, those

²⁰ If one excludes % white from the regression analysis, the neighborhood's murder rate is marginally predictive of respondents classified as black instead identifying as brown. While it seems to be the case that being surrounded by economically motivated criminality is associated with black identification, this is not the case for murder. If anything, the murder rate may be associated with the opposite effect on racial identity, though we should not read too much into this, as the effect is only marginally significant. Although a positive association between a neighborhood murder rate and an identification with brownness over blackness may seem difficult to make sense of, research on racial stereotypes carried out in São Paulo (Almeida 2007) would suggest that it's possible that the Brazilian stereotype for drug lords (who are associated with the public's conceptions of murder and violence) is that they are brown rather than black.

who identified as *pardo* were more likely to identify as black (though the effect on their likelihood of identifying as white did not reach significance).

Finally, history of contact with the police seems to matter for the white/brown divide, but not for the brown/black divide. For individuals described as white, police contact is significantly predictive of identifying as *pardo* instead of white, even when controlling for individual status and region of origin, as well as neighborhood characteristics. For those individuals described as *pardo*, they seem to be less likely to identify as white—though this effect is only marginally significant (p-value is less than 0.1, but greater than 0.05). Police contact has no effect on identifying as black versus brown; this is true both for individuals described as *pardo*, as well as for individuals described as black.

It is likely multiple collinearity issues are obscuring patterns in the data. In an analysis of the inter-correlation among the independent variables, I found five pairwise correlations above 0.3, and two above 0.5. The neighborhood-level variable for percent white was highly and negatively correlated with the neighborhood murder rate (-0.56 correlation with $p \leq .001$), highly and positively correlated with the neighborhood's economic crime index (0.54 correlation with $p \leq .001$), and moderately and positively correlated with the respondent's household income (0.34 correlation with $p \leq .001$). Additionally, the respondent's household income has a moderately high and positive correlation with the respondent's educational status (.31 correlation with having a college degree; $p \leq .001$); and, being male has a moderately high correlation with the police contact severity index (correlation of 0.35 with $p \leq .001$). Collinearity of up to 0.95 may not create problems for regression models with R-squared values of .75 or higher (Mason and Perreault 1991), but social science research rarely sees this kind of R-squared value, and interpretations of regression coefficients, their standard errors, and t-tests can be misleadingly altered by collinearity. Particularly among the models that include both variables for percent white and for criminality, we would expect an increased risk of suppressing the effect of one or both of these variables from appearing—even if they are both important.

It's also worth noting that the full version of the model for the likelihood of white-ascribed people to also identify as white (versus brown) shows a new result: Although insignificant in all prior models, the index for robbery and theft shows a statistically significant negative effect on identifying as white (or, a positive effect on identifying as brown). In other words, the positive correlation between a neighborhood's proportion of white residents and its theft and robbery rate was obscuring the effect of being surrounded by a high degree of economically motivated criminality on one's racial identity. Once that association is controlled for in the fullest version of the model, we can see that the robbery and theft rate of the neighborhood does lessen the likelihood of identifying as white specifically for those people who can likely pass as white. Again, the criminality of a given neighborhood—even when controlling for the respondent's individual status *and* for the neighborhood's race—limits one's propensity to identify as white. Considering that the inter-correlation between the theft and robbery index and the neighborhood's racial makeup, if anything we would expect the effects of these variables to be understated, which suggests we might view this effect as robust.

And, finally, it's worth noting that the negative effect of police contact on white identity becomes *even stronger* in this fullest of models, pointing to the robustness of this result as well.

Overall, people identified as white by a classifier are most likely to identify as white if they are older, are not from the northeast, live in a whiter neighborhood with a lower crime

rate—and if they don't have a history of contact with the police. People classified as brown follow a similar pattern for their probability of identifying as white—though there are important differences too. The effect of living near a favela is flipped across these two groups, as is also true of the effect of being from the northeast. So, although the same groups of variables seem to matter for the white/brown boundary in both directions, the ways in which these variables matter are qualitatively different depending on the direction. It's not the case, for instance, that living near a *favela* has a straightforward effect on racial identity—for one group (those classified as white), it's predictive of identifying as white, while for another group (those classified as *pardo*), it's predictive of identifying as nonwhite.

People classified as brown are more likely to identify as black if they live in a less white neighborhood, a neighborhood with a higher crime rate, or if they live in a *favela*. Meanwhile, those classified as black are more likely to identify as black if they live in a whiter neighborhood—which is the opposite effect on racial identity when compared to their counterparts who were observed to be lighter. As is the case for the white/brown boundary, the relationship between the variables we analyze and their effects on racial identity across the brown/black boundary points to a complex story. It does not seem to be the case that we can summarize the racial logic at play with simple linear effects.

Discussion

Racial identity in Brazil does indeed seem to be impacted by being targeted by the police. Crucially, these effects are true even when we control for ascribed race. Although observer-ascribed classification may not be as objectively specific as the complex phenotypically oriented system used by some to study racial attribution in Latin America (see Telles 2014), it does have the advantage of allowing us to separate our sample into three meaningfully distinct racial groups. For those who have externally been classified as black, or as white, or as *pardo*, within each group we can ask—how is one's racial *identity* additionally impacted by being targeted by the police, or by living in a criminalized neighborhood?

The impact of policing on racial identity is not uniform. Instead, there seems to be a strong interaction effect with ascribed race, which suggests that contact with the police may be constructed in qualitatively different ways, depending on one's position in the racial order. For those described as black, contact with the police makes no difference for their racial identity. For those described as brown, contact with the police doesn't change the odds of identifying as black either. However, both for individuals described as brown, as well as for individuals described as white, contact with the police seems to have implications for one's racial identity. Contact with the police—even with various controls—decreases the odds that one will identify as white, and increases the odds that one will identify as *pardo*.

It seems to be the case that the police as an institution are more important for the white/nonwhite division in society than for the division between blacks and *pardos*. The targeting of *pardos* by the police might potentially be understood as state management of a group that, possibly by virtue of a growing identification with blacks, represents a rising threat to the stability of white supremacy.²¹ The police may itself be contributing to this emerging racial

²¹ For a discussion of the state's potential "war against the black urban poor," also see Alves' (2014) analysis of urban governance policies and spatial politics, as well as Smith's (2013) discussion of death squad murders in Salvador.

division. One might expect that increased policing of *pardos* may in fact hasten the alignment of their racial identity with blacks as a politically repressed group. And, in reinforcing a regime of racialized violence, the state may also be acting to shore up its own legitimacy in the eyes of the populace, in the absence of being able to provide other bases thereof (Wacquant 2004), particularly within a context of highly competitive and highly concentrated political power (Hoelscher 2015). By policing the racial order through the use of violent spectacle (Larkins 2013), the state may also earn “white loyalty to the state” (Alves and Vargas 2015).

Like the educational system (Telles and Pachel 2014), the military police is a major Brazilian institution that seems to be reinforcing a binary racial order, even as official police records continue to use the census-based categories of white, *pardo*, and black. Contact with institutions like the police may be in part how racial identity is constructed emotively, as a feeling of belonging to a particular category (Morning 2017)—or, in the case of whiteness, of exclusion. Contact with the police might be even seen as a boundary-making ritual (Durkheim and Mauss 1963). As identities shift, it is possible that some people previously identified as *pardos* will come to be re-classified as white, as they make use of a new (and closing) “white escape hatch.” It is in the interest of whites to prevent this kind of re-alignment as much as possible. Heavily policing *pardos* could be one mechanism for ensuring that *pardos* experience their identity as repressed and dishonored. This process could potentially encourage them to align with blacks rather than whites as the racial terrain shifts. However, the extent to which Afro-Brazilians represent a meaningful group politically or culturally remains an empirical question (Loveman et al. 2012).

It may be in whites’ political interest to maintain a sharp boundary between whites and non-whites, thereby retaining a greater share of resources and privileges by keeping *pardos* dominated along with blacks. However, it is also in their interest to maintain a system where blacks and *pardos* remain divided (Marx 1998). Perhaps policing is one mechanism by which the white vs. nonwhite boundary is maintained. “*Pardo*,” as the border category, would be the natural target for symbolic policing. Meanwhile, other mechanisms may operate to enforce the boundary between *pardos* and blacks (such as the census categories or access to white-collar jobs).

Not only is direct contact with the police relevant, but also living in certain kinds of neighborhoods. Living in a high-crime neighborhood seems to make one less likely to identify as white. Living in a high-crime neighborhood is *also* predictive of identifying as black (rather than as *pardo*). So, while direct contact with the police might not be important for black versus brown identity outcomes, neighborhood criminality does matter. More generally, we might think of race as potentially having multiple boundaries, each reinforced by different mechanisms. The Brazilian military police is one of many institutions that may be involved in the boundary work of racialization, and is most active at the white/nonwhite boundary. Different institutions and processes may correspond to different boundaries. The degree to which any boundary may correspond to a group need not be uniform (Brubaker 2002, 2004; Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov 2004), and the degree of groupism itself may vary by context (Barth 1969; Wimmer 2012). The racial segregation of housing in Brazil may very well operate according to a more gradated logic than policing.

Living near a *favela*, while predictive of white identity for those described as white, is predictive of brown identity for those described as brown. It may seem confusing for the same variable to simultaneously have opposite effects for the same racial boundary. Clearly, there is a significant and meaningful difference between the two separate samples used to examine this

racial boundary. Those who are identified as white by the observer are, on average, probably more likely to be phenotypically lighter—and therefore more privileged, on average—than those who are identified as brown. For this relatively higher-privileged group, it makes sense that living near a *favela* might actually be something of a status symbol, as the richest pockets of the city are in fact typically located near at least one *favela*. However, when examining a relatively less privileged sample, living near a *favela* may not correspond to living near one of these desirable high-rent pockets of the city. Although it is true that the most luxurious addresses in São Paulo tend to be located near *favelas*, it is not the case that all *favelas* are located near luxurious areas—in fact, most are not. In other words, the racialized meaning associated with living in the proximity of a *favela* seems to qualitatively vary by one’s position in the racial order. All in all, the evidence suggests that it is not possible to think of racial categories as fixed in their relationships to each other.

Overall, this analysis serves as an example of how we might use quantitative statistical techniques to identify where the boundaries of a category may lie, of “mapping and measuring racial boundaries” by studying racial identity contestation (Vargas and Kingsbury 201). The liminal cases are the ones where we’ll see the most statistical action, and they are therefore like the bright markers that draw a discernable—even if sometimes fuzzy—periphery around a category. Here we see the white-ascribed people who have been targeted by the police are less likely to claim whiteness. This policing matters less—is less impactful—for the not-so-white people (phenotypically), whose non-whiteness is probably less likely to be questioned in any circumstance. The identity-shaping impacts of policing matter even less for those people who have little chance of ever claiming whiteness under any circumstance. This finding helps us not only understand the effect of policing on identity, but also gives us insight into where the line is *de facto* being drawn in terms of who has access to the kind of privilege that it takes to escape the incredibly violent and invasive institution that is the Brazilian military police. Non-whiteness seems to disqualify you from this kind of privilege, as it is where the line is drawn in terms of where policing has traction on identity. Individual identity serves as a mirror into society in this way. In a sense, we can look into Cooley’s looking glass to see what self is reflected there, and from there, we can extrapolate to the rules of refraction and reflection—the rules of vision and division (Bourdieu 1998) in society. As we map the racial boundary-making of each institution within a society, bit by bit we can construct an overall picture of the particular structure of white supremacy within the society, and who has what kind of privilege, depending on the institutional context. In Brazil, we may very well see many privileges bifurcating at the white/nonwhite divide, with several more actually mattering for gradations within nonwhite as well. And, within whiteness, there are likely gradations too, ranging from the unquestionably white with light hair and light eyes on one end of the whiteness spectrum, to those who may only be inconsistently white, depending on the context, on the other end of the whiteness spectrum. The “all-access pass” of the unquestionably white perhaps can be thought of as the highest degree of racial privilege. Furthermore, it may be that attaining varying levels of whiteness on the overall hierarchical ladder is what keeps the system intact. Without the binary logic of the American racial system, people are less likely to identify with their racially oppressed brethren. Such questions can only be answered with further research.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

VARIABLES	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
self-ID white	4707	0.60	0.49	0	1
self-ID brown	4707	0.30	0.46	0	1
self-ID black	4707	0.10	0.30	0	1
ascribed white	4707	0.61	0.49	0	1
ascribed brown	4707	0.30	0.46	0	1
ascribed black	4707	0.09	0.29	0	1
age	4707	37	16	16	92
male	4707	0.53	0.50	0	1
household income	3790	4.3	1.6	0	8
high school degree	4707	0.36	0.48	0	1
college degree	4707	0.07	0.26	0	1
from the northeast	4707	0.25	0.43	0	1
reside near a <i>favela</i>	4707	0.31	0.46	0	1
reside in a <i>favela</i>	4707	0.12	0.33	0	1
police contact severity	4703	0.5	1.0	0	5
neighborhood proportion white	4707	0.57	0.15	0.29	1
neighborhood murder rate	4707	0.41	0.34	0	1.37
neighborhood robbery theft index	4707	16.0	10.8	2	102

Table 2. Contact with military police, civil police, or armed forces in 12 months in Sao Paulo: age and gender (percentages)

	16 to 25 yrs		26 to 39 yrs		40+ yrs		
	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	
asked for identification	49.7	9.1	34.9	6.5	16.2	2.9	19.1
frisked or searched	53.5	5.9	33.2	2.1	10.0	0.3	16.7
threatened or disrespected	19.5	3.6	8.8	1.8	2.4	0.6	5.9
imprisoned or detained	4.0	0.3	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
physical aggression or abuse	8.5	1.1	3.3	0.4	0.6	0.1	2.3
Total	57.7	11.9	39.3	7.6	19.2	3.2	22.2

Table 3. Contact with military police, civil police, or armed forces in 12 months in Sao Paulo: race (percentages)

	White	Pardo	Preto	Total
asked for identification	18.5	23.9	23.2	19.1
frisked or searched	15.1	23.7	21.5	16.7
threatened	2.1	4.0	3.6	2.6
disrespected	5.0	7.9	6.3	5.6
imprisoned or detained	0.7	1.8	1.3	1.0
physical aggression or abuse	1.6	4.0	3.4	2.3
Any contact	21.6	27.3	26.7	22.2

Table 4. White Identity among White-Ascribed Individuals: Logistic Regression

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
male	-0.0417 (0.153)	-0.0500 (0.153)	-0.0451 (0.153)	-0.0473 (0.153)	-0.0571 (0.153)	0.0790 (0.165)	0.0651 (0.165)
age	0.0225** (0.00573)	0.0222** (0.00576)	0.0225** (0.00572)	0.0237** (0.00575)	0.0233** (0.00578)	0.0195** (0.00589)	0.0203** (0.00594)
income	0.0566 (0.0530)	0.0493 (0.0535)	0.0566 (0.0531)	0.0631 (0.0531)	0.0553 (0.0537)	0.0571 (0.0530)	0.0557 (0.0537)
educated	0.214 (0.172)	0.187 (0.173)	0.214 (0.172)	0.224 (0.172)	0.196 (0.174)	0.218 (0.173)	0.201 (0.174)
northeasterner	-0.515** (0.172)	-0.477** (0.175)	-0.507** (0.172)	-0.528** (0.173)	-0.482** (0.176)	-0.513** (0.173)	-0.485** (0.176)
% white	2.121** (0.566)	2.380** (0.597)	1.809** (0.653)	2.781** (0.641)	2.695** (0.755)	2.172** (0.568)	2.812** (0.758)
near <i>favela</i>		0.396* (0.187)			0.397* (0.189)		0.396* (0.189)
in <i>favela</i>		-0.338 (0.225)			-0.346 (0.227)		-0.351 (0.227)
murder rate			-0.242 (0.249)		-0.222 (0.257)		-0.184 (0.258)
econ crime rate				-0.0177* (0.00757)	-0.0168* (0.00777)		-0.0174* (0.00778)
police contact						-0.161* (0.0730)	-0.163* (0.0732)
Constant	0.112 (0.391)	-0.0506 (0.439)	0.394 (0.489)	-0.0434 (0.396)	0.0743 (0.530)	0.210 (0.396)	0.131 (0.533)
Observations	2,315	2,315	2,315	2,315	2,315	2,313	2,313

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.01, *p<0.05, +p<0.1

Table 5. White Identity among *Pardo*-Ascribed individuals: Logistic Regression

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
male	-0.0907 (0.186)	-0.0703 (0.187)	-0.0906 (0.186)	-0.0875 (0.186)	-0.0650 (0.187)	0.0406 (0.196)	0.0537 (0.197)
age	0.0215** (0.00649)	0.0201** (0.00659)	0.0215** (0.00649)	0.0215** (0.00649)	0.0200** (0.00660)	0.0178** (0.00675)	0.0168* (0.00685)
income	-0.0224 (0.0664)	-0.0535 (0.0684)	-0.0235 (0.0666)	-0.0146 (0.0668)	-0.0447 (0.0691)	-0.0192 (0.0667)	-0.0404 (0.0692)
educated	0.144 (0.226)	0.132 (0.226)	0.146 (0.227)	0.155 (0.227)	0.141 (0.227)	0.122 (0.228)	0.121 (0.228)
northeasterner	0.307 (0.192)	0.342+ (0.194)	0.307 (0.192)	0.309 (0.192)	0.348+ (0.194)	0.285 (0.192)	0.326+ (0.194)
% white	2.950** (0.735)	2.483** (0.762)	2.872** (0.849)	3.385** (0.828)	3.050** (0.957)	2.916** (0.736)	2.983** (0.957)
near <i>favela</i>		-0.454* (0.223)			-0.472* (0.225)		-0.451* (0.225)
in <i>favela</i>		-0.538* (0.274)			-0.561* (0.275)		-0.535+ (0.275)
murder rate			-0.0599 (0.328)		0.0674 (0.332)		0.0511 (0.332)
econ crime rate				-0.0131 (0.0116)	-0.0151 (0.0117)		-0.0144 (0.0117)
police contact						-0.213+ (0.115)	-0.195+ (0.116)
Constant	-4.422** (0.503)	-3.781** (0.557)	-4.351** (0.633)	-4.511** (0.511)	-3.934** (0.677)	-4.245** (0.507)	-3.777** (0.680)
Observations	1,241	1,241	1,241	1,241	1,241	1,240	1,240

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.01, *p<0.05, +p<0.1

Table 6. Black Identity among *Pardo*-Ascribed individuals: Logistic Regression

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
male	-0.141 (0.206)	-0.165 (0.207)	-0.141 (0.206)	-0.154 (0.207)	-0.182 (0.208)	-0.267 (0.228)	-0.294 (0.228)
age	-0.0145+ (0.00872)	-0.0121 (0.00879)	-0.0145+ (0.00872)	-0.0145+ (0.00877)	-0.0118 (0.00883)	-0.0113 (0.00899)	-0.00897 (0.00908)
income	-0.0102 (0.0744)	0.0255 (0.0771)	-0.0108 (0.0746)	-0.0208 (0.0747)	0.0169 (0.0778)	-0.0121 (0.0741)	0.0161 (0.0777)
educated	-0.0707 (0.241)	-0.0528 (0.241)	-0.0690 (0.241)	-0.105 (0.241)	-0.0792 (0.242)	-0.0613 (0.240)	-0.0708 (0.242)
northeasterner	0.184 (0.216)	0.0939 (0.220)	0.184 (0.216)	0.179 (0.216)	0.0815 (0.220)	0.199 (0.217)	0.101 (0.221)
% white	-0.847 (0.908)	-1.116 (0.947)	-0.894 (0.995)	-1.856+ (1.000)	-2.401* (1.152)	-0.824 (0.908)	-2.376* (1.154)
near <i>favela</i>		-0.220 (0.251)			-0.162 (0.255)		-0.173 (0.255)
in <i>favela</i>		0.433+ (0.260)			0.519* (0.265)		0.504+ (0.265)
murder rate			-0.0395 (0.343)		-0.161 (0.358)		-0.155 (0.360)
econ crime rate				0.0289* (0.0113)	0.0324** (0.0117)		0.0317** (0.0117)
police contact						0.129 (0.0895)	0.118 (0.0896)
Constant	-1.356* (0.574)	-1.427* (0.646)	-1.311+ (0.694)	-1.189* (0.575)	-1.145 (0.760)	-1.486* (0.584)	-1.257 (0.767)
Observations	1,241	1,241	1,241	1,241	1,241	1,240	1,240

Standard errors in parentheses
 ** p<0.01, *p<0.05, +p<0.1

Table 7. *Pardo* Identity among Black-Ascribed individuals: Logistic Regression

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
male	-0.124 (0.252)	-0.107 (0.255)	-0.123 (0.253)	-0.150 (0.254)	-0.134 (0.257)	-0.202 (0.271)	-0.206 (0.275)
age	-0.00624 (0.00844)	-0.00649 (0.00857)	-0.00644 (0.00845)	-0.00628 (0.00845)	-0.00702 (0.00860)	-0.00415 (0.00880)	-0.00499 (0.00898)
income	0.00305 (0.0898)	0.0275 (0.0913)	0.00550 (0.0899)	0.0140 (0.0909)	0.0476 (0.0931)	-0.000978 (0.0899)	0.0426 (0.0934)
educated	-0.187 (0.293)	-0.173 (0.295)	-0.182 (0.293)	-0.180 (0.293)	-0.152 (0.296)	-0.183 (0.293)	-0.146 (0.296)
northeasterner	0.416 (0.287)	0.423 (0.299)	0.412 (0.287)	0.422 (0.288)	0.435 (0.301)	0.406 (0.288)	0.430 (0.301)
% white	-3.498** (1.196)	-4.182** (1.264)	-3.251** (1.255)	-3.073* (1.286)	-3.298* (1.407)	-3.569** (1.203)	-3.363* (1.414)
near <i>favela</i>		-0.496+ (0.293)			-0.545+ (0.297)		-0.547+ (0.297)
in <i>favela</i>		0.0964 (0.343)			0.0637 (0.344)		0.0434 (0.346)
murder rate			0.265 (0.391)		0.462 (0.405)		0.445 (0.406)
econ crime rate				-0.0180 (0.0198)	-0.0233 (0.0206)		-0.0238 (0.0206)
police contact						0.102 (0.122)	0.0953 (0.123)
Constant	0.868 (0.726)	1.268 (0.781)	0.606 (0.826)	0.854 (0.729)	0.856 (0.865)	0.831 (0.730)	0.841 (0.867)
Observations	376	376	376	376	376	376	376

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.01, *p<0.05, +p<0.1

Conclusion: Race as a Dependent Variable

The composition and boundaries of ethnic categories are mutable, contested, and context-dependent (Barth 1969). While a burgeoning literature has brought to our collective attention that racial classification is even more inconsistent than heretofore imagined by US sociologists, we are only beginning to piece together the ways in which this variation might be patterned (see Roth 2018 for a recent overview). One task we have before us is to clarify what we mean by racial classification, as it is not a single dynamic; in fact, it is complex and multi-faceted enough that we risk talking past each other by getting confused by terminology that often refers to multiple concepts simultaneously. In this overview, I describe what we mean by racial classification; and in breaking racial classification out into its various components, I also attempt to situate my dissertation research within this framework.

Racial Classification Is Both Fluid and Bounded

Racial categories have been shown to be fluid and malleable, shifting dynamically as relationships unfold. The same person may identify as one race in one context or point in time, and a different race in another (for instance, see Jenks 1916; Waters 1990; Davis 1991; Nobles 2000; Saperstein and Penner 2012; Saperstein and Gullickson 2013; Loveman 2014; and see Morning 2018 for an overview of recent work). And yet, classification is not a tether-less free-for-all—at every moment, classification is constrained and shaped by obdurate social structure, as can be seen in the fate of the Rachel Dolezals of the world, who cannot successfully make a claim to blackness (Brubaker 2016a). While “whitening” has been documented in Latin America (Wade 1997; Telles 2002; Telles 2014; Telles and Paschel 2014), it is also the case that not just anyone can make successful claims to whiteness. Some boundaries may be more rigid than others, or more status-dependent, even within a single racial order. As scholars of race, we seek to understand both the fluidity of race, as well as the concrete—and often rule-bound—ways in which this fluidity is constrained by and contingent upon social structures and institutions.

In thinking about the fluidity and rigidity of race, we must also keep in mind that racial systems operate at different social levels, and we may very well see fluidity at one level of analysis, and rigidity at another. As Barth noted (1969: 21), while an ethnic system does depend on the relative stability of the cultural features and interactional rules associated with a given ethnicity, it does not depend on a similarly stable or rigid ascription pattern at the individual level. We must be careful not to assume that instability in ascription correlates with instability in the racial order overall. In fact, the instability of ascription can itself be a factor in the reproduction of that order. It has long been noted that the quintessential feature of Brazilian racial fluidity, the “mulatto escape hatch” (Degler 1971), may in fact serve as an ideological barrier towards racial solidarity among the structurally oppressed (Marx 1998).

As a field, we have moved on from simply classifying this or that national classification system as more or less fluid or rigid. Instead, we are beginning to specify the concrete *ways* in which a given system is fluid or rigid. In this dissertation, I take a detailed look at how different social traits (especially various indicators of status, both at the individual and neighborhood level, as well as criminal justice contact) correspond to variation in racial classification. We find that different racial boundaries vary in their relative rigidity or fluidity, and that the factors that predict that variability are different for different boundaries.

Ascription and Identification Are Separate Processes of Racial Classification

Scholars have productively argued that racial classification is relational (Barth 1969; Jenkins 1997; Bailey 2009)—that is, dependent on the interaction between both the ascriber and the ascribee, and therefore the social position of each person in question. So, we must distinguish between ascription and self-identification. On one hand, we have ascription—or, in Wendy Roth’s language (2018), “appraisal.” On the other hand, we have self-identification. Racial appraisal is more germane to gate-keeping mechanisms than is self-identification. And, on the flip-side, we know that racial identification matters separately from ascription for important outcomes. Identifying strongly with a racial group is both predictive of psychological well-being (Smith and Silva 2011), as well as of susceptibility to stereotype threat (Hughes et al. 2015). These are two separate processes, and yet they are also both relational in nature when examined individually.

For the sake of simplicity, let us consider ascription in isolation from identity. When we consider ascription, in order to understand how a given person will be classified in an interaction, we must look at both sides, including the individual characteristics—and social position—of both the appraiser and of the person being appraised. Both the Latin American tradition of studying racial fluidity, as well as the latest research on racial ascription in the United States, have tended to emphasize the social position of the person being classified—and not of the classifier—so we have much more empirical territory mapped out for the second side of this dyad than for the first. Interestingly, in a recent review of the literature and a call for research on racial ascription (Roth 2018), there was no mention of studying the individual-level characteristics of the ascriber. This just goes to show that our understanding of how to study racial classification is still in its infancy, and we are still surveying the terrain to be covered.

The first dissertation paper, “Seeing in Color,” attempted to demonstrate how we can go about studying the ways in which ascriber characteristics matter for racial ascription outcomes. By using a quasi-experimental design to manipulate and control for the target photograph’s phenotype and social status, I isolated the ascriber-related effects, and showed that being more highly educated was associated with seeing whiteness at a greater rate.

Meanwhile, self-identification is a racial classification process that we are well aware is analytically and empirically separable from ascription (see Vargas and Kingsbury 2016). And, when we consider racial identity, much as is the case with ascription, we must remember that identities are formed in relationship to other people too, who reflect back our identity to us (Cooley 1902). One’s individual characteristics matter for shaping one’s identity, but so do the characteristics of the people and institutions with which one interacts. The third dissertation paper, “Policing Racial Boundaries,” attempts to examine one’s self-identified race as a function of contact with the police, while controlling for ascribed race. I find that having had contact with the police significantly decreases the probability of identifying as white, even when controlling for ascribed race, various demographic and status indicators, and neighborhood criminality.

Racial Classification Systems Involve Contestation

While ascription is one process, and identification is another, the two processes can and do converge. When one’s self-identified race is different from another person’s racial attribution,

we have an instance of classificatory contestation (Roth 2016). Such is the design for the bulk of recent studies examining racial classification, and such is design for the second dissertation paper, “Seeing in Boundaries.” Ethno-racial classifications represent “struggles over the monopoly of the power to make people see and believe, to get them to know and recognize, to impose the legitimate definition of the divisions of the social world” (Bourdieu 1991: 221). Any given system of racial classification is both caught up in and the result of such a struggle.

It is important to note that there is no “true” race at stake here. If one self-identifies as black and an observer says you’re white instead, then we can talk about this as an instance of “self-blackening.” However, we could just as easily describe this process as “observer-whitening.” Similarly, we could either talk about racial contestation in terms of one’s self-classification being challenged by an observer, or we could talk about it in terms of individuals challenging imposed categories. Neither framing is more correct than the other, though we should be careful to not mistake this analytical interchangeability for such interchangeability in the social world—actors vary in their level of power to define the situation and in their ability to impose their classifications as legitimate. So, while as analysts we can think about classification struggle claims as a dyad of positions-taking, these struggles are often not played out among equals, so some positions can be more legitimate—or more socially “real”—than others.

Studies that use datasets where observers made racial attributions *after* being informed of the target’s racial identity, as is the case with the second paper (also see Vargas and Kingsbury 2016), may be leveraging a uniquely contentious moment to study classificatory processes. It seems to be a basic structural feature of face-to-face interaction that participants are allowed to save face by not having the roles and identities they take on directly challenged (Goffman 1967). People who are routinely classified by others into a category other than the one with which they primarily identify in fact are subject to greater psychological stress (Campbell and Troyer 2007) and lower feelings of belonging (Vargas and Stainback 2016). So, if an observer insists on classifying the individual in question as a given race even though it is known that it is not how the said individual identifies, the willingness to disrupt another’s face (even if only in the abstract while checking a box, rather than confronting directly) seems to be an indication that a racial boundary is at stake. While one person is staking a claim to a given category, the other person, in overriding their identity choice, may be described as policing the boundary of the racial category, perhaps in reference to some idealized general other who would make a racial attribution more “objectively” than the individual in question. In other words, these kinds of datasets don’t simply allow us to see instances of racial classification mismatch—they allow us to see actual boundary-policing—actual struggle—in action. The research may be particularly telling when the policing happens in a context where the ascribers (and the researchers) have a wealth of background information about the person they are classifying, as was the case with the second dissertation paper, on “Seeing Boundaries.” Such data allow us to systematically examine the ways in which other social traits may factor into struggles over racial classification.

As research has revealed, contestation is not monolithic across all boundaries within a given system. For example, those classified as Hispanic or Asian (Vargas and Stainback 2016), Native American (Boehmer et al. 2002), or multi-racial (Croll and Gerteis 2017) experience the highest rate of contestation in the United States, whereas whites have the most uncontested classification. In São Paulo, I found (in the second dissertation paper) that whiteness is also the least contested self-identified category (6% challenged), followed by *pardo* (22% challenged),

and black (31% challenged).²² In comparison to US rates of contestation (for instance, 6-14% reported by Vargas and Stainback 2016 for the most contentious categories), Brazilian rates are quite high. So, we can say that classification varies in contestation levels both *within* individual classification systems, and *between* them. In other words, both individual boundaries within a given system vary in their contentiousness, as well as the degree in contentiousness overall between systems across societies.

Morning (2018) gives us a useful way of conceptualizing degrees of contestation. She makes the important point that racial contestation in society is a reflection of the fact that we have competing bases for racial membership, and these bases are sometimes at odds, and are not seen as universally legitimate. She suggests there are eight dimensions of racial attribution that compete for legitimacy: descendant (ancestry), somatic (phenotype), status (socioeconomic), affiliate (cultural), and then four new ones; genetic, cosmetic (altered body), emotive (feelings of belonging), and constructed (designating people who reject that race is real, and who choose to see their own identity through a constructivist lens). The legitimacy of a given racial claim may depend on the classification norms of the particular society or institution (Roth 2018), as well as on the claimants' ability to make claims more generally--which of course is based on status. The key take-away, however, is that affiliation with any given racial category has so many competing bases in modern society that degree of membership to any given racial category takes on a spectrum-like quality, both at the individual and the social level. Depending on how many bases upon which one can make claims to membership, one's claim is more or less solid, and one is correspondingly more of a core or a periphery "member." Her analysis suggests that some societies (like Brazil) have a more actively contentious set of claims over racial category membership than does the United States, perhaps reflecting differences in degree of hegemony over what "counts" for making a successful identity claim.

In the first and second of the dissertation papers, about ascription and about racial identity challenges, I look at how racial contestation is impacted by one dimension in particular—status—and show that it not only impacts the degree to which a racial claim about oneself is successful, it also impacts what kinds of racial claims one might make about another person. It is also the case that people of higher status may be shown greater deference when it comes to their chosen race, whatever it may be. So, status might operate in confusing ways. On one hand, a high-status person claiming nonwhite status might be accepted out of deference—or, on the other, they might be challenged by an observer who feels the high status does not seem to mesh with the chosen racial identity.

Furthermore, status impacts racial contestation in ways that are not straightforward. Status (education) may make one more likely to identify as black over *pardo*, as I show in the second dissertation paper. On the other hand, it can make one more likely to identify as white too. These findings are consistent with the argument that racial categories may be polarizing in Brazil, perhaps driven by affirmative action policies, and/or by the more highly educated, who may be responding to the US-influenced movement in Brazil for nonwhites to identify as one group, as *negros* (Telles and Paschel 2014; Miranda 2015). The United States may be seeing a shift in the opposite direction, towards greater fluidity and fracturing between categories (Morning 2018). These observations serve as a reminder that while individuals may struggle at the individual level over racial classification, we can think of struggle as unfolding at the society-

²² These rates are more or less consistent with other reports (see Muniz 2012).

wide level too, as struggle over the racial norms (Roth 2018), or over the relative legitimacy of any given avenue by which we may claim any given membership.

Racial Classification Is Relational—In More Than One Way

The first way in which racial classification is relational is in the way outlined above, as premised on face-to-face interactions between individuals, where the characteristics of both parties matter for the classificatory outcome.

The first two dissertation chapters address this question of social position, though they examine separate aspects. The first paper examines the effect of the social position of the ascriber (controlling for ascribee's social position) on ascription, while the second paper examines the effect of the social position of the ascribee (in a design that more or less controls for ascriber social position) on racial identification challenge. The second paper also looks at the effects of context (the neighborhood's characteristics) on identity challenge. Overall, higher status, both on an individual and neighborhood level, is predictive of being whitened by an observer. Higher status is also predictive of seeing others as whiter.

We can also think of the *social distance* between the two individuals in question as another relational property of the racial classification moment that is analytically separable from the absolute social position of each person. So, for instance, while a high-class person may classify other high-class people one way, they may classify low-status people using a different set of rules. It should be noted that none of the papers examined the question of relative social distance, however. To test such a hypothesis would imply examining the interaction effects between an observer's and an ascribee's social status on racial classification outcomes. Putting together this kind of dataset is methodologically challenging, but promises significant payoff in empirical advancement and theory-building.

Although my research broadens the scope of typical face-to-face research on ascription by introducing the contextual effects of neighborhood-level measures of status and criminality, I still deal entirely with individual-level classification. While most research (including my own) has primarily focused on racial classification at the individual level, it is important to keep in mind that we can think of racial classification processes at the aggregate level as well, and study racial classification norms (Roth 2018) or articulated bases for membership (Morning 2018) directly, perhaps by investigating how people see a public figure. For instance, in a study of how Americans see Obama's race, we see that most believe he should have identified as multiracial, even if told beforehand that he identified as black (Citrin, Morris, and Van Houweling 2014).

A final way in which racial classification is relational is in the fact that the categories only make sense in reference to each other—or at the very least, in reference to insider and outsider groups (Barth 1969). This point is mostly to say that relationality is a property of how meaning is constructed around categories and boundaries, and should not be confused with the relational property of interactions. These are all related—and yet still quite separate—ways of thinking about racial classification as “relational.” On the one hand, we can think of race in terms of reified categories, and on the other, we can think of it as grounded in and the product of concrete social interaction. As we shall see in the next section, however, in neither instance does racial classification necessarily entail the existence of racial groups proper.

Racial Classification Refers to Categories, Not Groups

Classification is a cognitive process, while group-making plays out in broader social structures. Whether or not a racial category corresponds to a group is an empirical question, and should never be assumed *a priori* (Loveman 1999; Brubaker 2002; Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov 2004). Barth (1969) argued that one need not have a group—in the sense of a shared culture and social closure—in order to have a set of systematic rules governing inter-ethnic behavior (including classificatory behavior), as well as governing in what settings inter-ethnic interactions are allowed to take place in the first place. For Barth, ethnic status is a sort of meta-status—like rank—that preconditions the set of possible ancillary statuses available to the individual. At the same time, ethnic membership status is itself contingent on the situation.²³

Whereas some scholars have a tendency to reify racial groups as the chief protagonists in inter-group struggles over resources, those who see races as relational cognitive categories instead urge us to turn our analytical focus to mechanisms of boundary-making and social closure. The tendency to see the social world in terms of quasi-natural races is a key part of what we want to explain, not what we want to explain things *with* (Brubaker 2002). Bailey (2009) argues that group identity formation is both internal and external, and that the convergence of the two signifies a higher degree of groupness. He applied these ideas to Brazil, and examined the discrepancies between self-identified race and ascribed race as an indicator of the degree of groupness of the racial category in question. He concluded that the high rates of disagreement in Brazil suggest that the racial categories don't correspond to true groups. Meanwhile, the United States can be described as having more robust racial groups, because disagreement rates are much lower.

However, disagreement over classification may say more about the strength of the category boundaries than it does about whether or not it makes a group *per se*. There may be more to a group than agreement over cognitive boundaries, including shared structural interests, forms of association and social connection (including, but not limited to social closure), forms of mobilization, moral or normative structures, and affective ties. Categories' degree of institutionalization may impact the extent to which collective identities are formulated (Hacking 1996). The transformation of categories into groups involves cultural, social, and political projects (Brubaker 2002), like the transnational Afro-Brazilian movement (Paschel 2016).

The relationship between processes of categorization, forms of social closure, and the construction of collective identities is multi-faceted and historically contingent, and quantitative survey analysis alone will never suffice to uncover these relationships. In my research, I am able to bring evidence to bear on some of the rules of racial classification in modern-day São Paulo—but the extent to which the categories correspond to groups (Loveman 1999; Brubaker 2002) is a question my research—like all research on classification proper—cannot directly address.

That said, cognitive approaches are inherently valuable, and studies on classification have much to offer us. Focusing on cognition can help us understand *how* ethnicity is constructed rather than simply stating that it is constructed. Cognitive processes can link up to social identity and perhaps even group formation, but it is certainly not a given. All of these are empirical questions, and we must be careful to not conflate the study of racial categories with the study of racial groups themselves, including in thinking about core and peripheral racial members (Morning 2018). We simply need to be clear about how our theories, our research agendas, and

²³ See Barth 1969:11, 13, 16

our data match up. And, in doing so, we gain analytical power. Bracketing the question of classification as separate from group-making processes invites us to further specify our theoretical thinking in terms of the properties of categories and classification systems. For example, can we productively think about race in terms of nominal, cardinal, and ordinal classificatory judgment (Fourcade 2016)?

Generally, perhaps we can think of a racial categorization system as having several general dimensions: 1) the types and number of categories; 2) criteria for category membership (descent, phenotype, culture); 3) stability of categories across social spheres;²⁴ 4) permeability of category boundaries; 5) rules governing relations between members of different categories (ordinal, nominal, cardinal); and 6) the extent to which official and everyday categories correspond. Furthermore, we can think about all these dimensions as varying over time.

We Can Use Racial Classification Patterns as Evidence on Society-Wide Racial Structures

Although we must be careful not to overgeneralize our examination of classification processes, that doesn't mean we can't use these data to make greater claims about a society's racial structures. Although racism is institutionalized in society's structures, it operates on the level of individual cognition as well. Vargas and Kingsbury (2016) specifically point to identity contestation between observers and self-identifiers as a way to map the contours of societal racial boundaries. Even in a society where racial classification is highly contested, the fissures of disagreement are likely not to be random. Instead, because classification struggles are based in large part on relative social position, the largest classificatory oppositions should tend to align with structural oppositions across social space. We might say that the differentiated ways in which race is contested—based on class, compartment, and context—is the very stuff that makes up the racial order.

In the second dissertation paper, I engage in such a strategy, and leverage classificatory disagreement at the individual level to make claims about how the boundaries between racial categories are constructed in São Paulo. Citing my evidence that education and income are relevant for having one's whiteness challenged or for being whitened by an observer—with no similar pattern for the *pardo*/black boundary—I argue that the boundary between whites and nonwhites is tied to status in a way that the boundary between *pardos* and blacks is not.

Classificatory studies may perhaps be leveraged to study social stratification by focusing on the cognitive processes of gatekeepers. Because the ways in which institutions sort individuals have incredibly high-stakes consequences for their life chances and for quality of life in general, how key gate-keeping agents ascribe race is of paramount concern. At these gatekeeping positions in the social structure, we see a merging of what it means for race to be institutionalized, on one hand, and for race to be seen as cognition, on the other. How a given society or institution is racially stratified depends in part on the rules governing the slotting of people into categories. Though never in a one-to-one straightforward way, the cognitive structures of the gatekeeper reflect the structures of society. We might make use of this insight to more systematically focus our attention on the ascriber side of the ascription equation, as I attempt to do in the first of the dissertation papers. The experimental method used there may also

²⁴ Different racial classification systems may operate in different context; Alternatively, racial categorization may be relevant in only some contexts, but not in others.

be used to study specific gatekeeping groups, such as samples of health or census workers, to name just a couple obvious examples.

Studies that make use of classificatory disagreements between observers and respondents are useful (such as the second dissertation paper, or as made well-known by Saperstein and Penner 2012), but they are inherently limited by the fact that it is impossible to pin down for sure that discrepancies in race are in fact conditioned by the target's status (or other indicator), or whether it's the other way around. Again, leveraging the experimental approach allows us to get around this problem. As I demonstrate in my first dissertation paper, fielding such a study is in fact more straightforward than a traditional survey, the integrity of which heavily depends on obtaining a random sample, which can be challenging and expensive. The random assignment to treatment groups gets around the problem of needing a random sample. As long as the effect of interest doesn't depend on a characteristic that does not vary in the sample, a convenience sample is not an issue for experimental methods (Druckman et al. 2011).

In considering how racial classification is both malleable and structured at the micro-level of the face-to-face interaction, we need not constrain ourselves to individual-level traits. By examining the effect of police contact on racial identity, in the third dissertation paper I attempted to explore how institutions play a role in shaping individual racial identity. I also examine neighborhood effects, looking both at how neighborhood status impacts identity contestation (paper 2), as well as neighborhood criminality (paper 3).

All in all, racial classification offers a promising avenue of research, both in Brazil and beyond. It allows us to take seriously that race is a relational, contested, and contingent social phenomenon, with complex, contingent boundaries that may operate according to different criteria from one another, even within a single classificatory system. Now that race has officially become a "dependent variable," the study of how racial categories are constructed and maintained may very well be entering its heyday.

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