TD22: Debating Race and Human Rights in Brazil

"Perceptions of Race Discrimination in Brazil: Beyond the Dualistic Paradigm"

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Abstract: Studies on racial discrimination in Brazil have been chiefly based on methods that seek to determine its effects on the labor market. Researchers have sought to detect differences in occupation and income among individuals of different skin colors controlling for indices of human capital. This method, however, has limitations, since it might cause researchers to overlook the variations in the ways that people of different classes and levels of education experience discrimination. In the present work we adopt a different methodology to study discrimination: we analyze the variations in the perception of discrimination among different color groups controlling for their level of education. We found that in Brazil discrimination is felt more harshly by more educated blacks, and that blacks and browns present different patterns of perception of discrimination. Our results show that grouping browns and blacks together, a procedure that has become standard in race relations research in Brazil, might not be always appropriate. We also discuss possible explanations for the increased perception of discrimination among more educated blacks.

Keywords: Discrimination; Race; Brazil
Introduction

Data from Brazil’s 2010 census shows that while only 7.6% of the population declared to be preto (black) and 47.7% branco (white), 43% chose pardo (brown) among the five categories presented in the census questionnaire.1 This marks an increase of five percentage points in the number of pardos from the previous census (2000), and an equal decrease in the number of whites. What is the meaning of such numerical change? Does it represent a change in the way Brazilians identify themselves in terms of race? Can it be considered the product of race-conscious social policies recently implemented in the country? All these questions and others were raised by the media debate that ensued after the publication of the Census results. Instead of trying to answer them directly, we would like to step back and ask a set of more basic questions: who is the pardo? Does this category correspond to a particular ethnic identity? What is the pardo voice in contemporary Brazilian society and politics?

Despite the importance of the pardo category in numerical terms throughout the Brazilian census series, it has not received much attention from social scientists working on race relations in Brazil, be them Brazilian or foreign, quantitative or qualitative, with a few noteworthy exceptions that we will examine ahead. This paper aims at contributing to bridging this gap in a manner that has been uncommon in the literature: bringing together qualitative interpretations and statistical analysis, trying to make them converse with each other. We intend to show that pardos have been represented by different discourses in Brazilian society, each one with its own political project, each one presenting a somewhat different image. At the same time their own voice has rarely been heard. Thus, in an exploratory manner, we will first identify the most significant discourses on the pardos and then try to tune our hearing in search of their voice.

Before we start, however, some methodological aspects of our enterprise must be clarified. Pardo is a category used in Brazil’s census since the late nineteenth century. Until then it was employed in common language to designate indigenous peoples, people of mixed descent (Indians plus whites or blacks plus whites) or even free blacks. With time passing the category altered its meaning, coming to designate a color between black and white. At the same time, and despite being used repeatedly in the statistical polls, pardo never became a hegemonic native2 category to denominate those “in

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1 The Brazilian census has a closed question on “race/skin color” with five alternatives: branco (white), pardo (brown), preto (black), amarelo (yellow), and indigena (indigenous).

2 By native here we understand everyday language.
between”, the mixed-race. In a recent nation-wide statistical survey with an race/skin color open question, 16% of respondents chose pardo while 25% chose moreno, a category that also means “darker than white but not black”. Thus, pardo is widely used as a census category, it has some currency as a skin color identity but shares with moreno the function of representing such identity. Other surveys confirm this state of affairs (ref).

This state of affairs does not pose a methodological problem to the present essay given that the study of any category must avoid the pitfalls of extreme forms of idealism and “linguism”. The idealist position would correspond to assuming that there is in fact one mixed-race identity in Brazil and that this mental state can be studied regardless of the linguistic forms through which it is expressed. What we call here “linguism”, for lack of a better term, corresponds to the naïve notion that the study of the meaning of a single term, such as pardo, would be enough to illuminate a social phenomenon such as mixed-race identity in Brazil. Here we will opt for a more sophisticated mid-level approach that takes into account the study of different meanings, or discourses (semasiology) together with the study of related terms used to express these meanings (onomasiology). This methodological insight is borrowed from Reinhard Koselleck’s theory of conceptual history {Koselleck, 1972-1997 #9679}, which is well captured by his image of concepts as hinges between words and experience {Koselleck, 1996 #181}. This works as a pragmatic solution to the two extreme approaches cited above. Taken it seriously, thus, entails also examining concepts that convey meanings shared by the term pardo, such as moreno and mestiço, and also discourses such as the ones on branqueamento and “miscegenation”.

For the purposes of this paper no exhaustive analysis of these concepts and discourses can be produced, but we will try to cover some key loci of discourse production on racial mixing in Brazilian society, namely:

1. State institutions, chiefly statistical agencies and their use of race related categories.
2. Popular culture, chiefly the image of the mixed-race in Brazil’s popular music.
3. Social movements, chiefly the black movement and main lines of its discourse on miscigenation.
4. Academia, and its main lines of interpretation of this subject matter.

We intend to show that while these loci of enunciation speak of the pardo, of the mixed race, they can hardly be considered as channels for the voice of mixed race individuals
and groups themselves. If that is true, then would it be correct to suppose the existence of an unequivocal mixed-race identity, or identities, in Brazil? Although we won't be able to satisfactorily answer this question in the paper, we intend to start to map out the various discourses that take on racial mixing in Brazilian society. In the conclusion, we will bring in the analysis of statistical data on perceptions of discrimination which reveal some interesting differences between pardos, pretos, and whites. Although this methodology does not grant us direct access to a discursively articulated pardo identity, it sheds some light on how pardos perceive social interactions that are directly related to racial representations among other variables such as class and education.

The state
Brazil figures in comparative studies on race as a key example of a country that had African slavery but refrained to adopt racial discriminatory policies after abolition {Marx, 1998 #7370}. That picture has been put in perspective more recently, since the country did limit the entrance of African and Asian immigrants during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (ref). However, that does not compare to the explicit segregation laws adopted in countries such as the United States and South Africa. But this debate about race and the state often focuses on law, leaving aside important aspects of governmental activity such as the production of official statistics on demography, including the employment and stabilization of racial categories.

The first census conducted by the Brazilian government took place in 1872, still in the monarchical period, and already included data on skin color. The survey employed four categories: branco (white), preto (black), pardo (brown), and caboclo, which was used to designate the population of Indian descent (native Brazilians). These terms represented a simplification of the vocabulary then used to identify people based on their perceived race or skin color, and thus excluded a myriad of terms that conveyed (1) different tones of skin, (2) the ethnic origin of slaves and former slaves, (3) and their position in the system of slavery. Only preto and pardo (black and brown) could be used to identify the color and race of slaves. But pardo was not a category restricted to slaves, as freemen also opted for it. The word pardo, which had been already employed in demographic surveys at least from 1798 (OSORIO, 2003), was also used in everyday language and carried a negative evaluation of racial mixing, a practice condemned by
popular and scientific beliefs around the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth.3

In the second national census, of 1890, the category pardo was replaced by mestiço. However, after that date the censuses suppressed the question on racial and color identification until 1940. The census of that year, already under IBGE, adopted the categories preto e branco (black and white), replaced mestiço by pardo, thus returning to the older categories, and added the category yellow, which was aimed at identifying people of Japanese descent who immigrated to Southern and Southeastern Brazil in the early twentieth century.4

The categories branco, preto, and pardo were used by IBGE in nation-wide surveys from 1940 to 1960. The question on race identification disappeared again in the 1970 Census questionnaire, under the technical excuse that the data it produced was too unreliable (Araújo, 1974, p. 99). The question would return in the 1991 Census, mostly due to political pressure from the BM and scholars, but now two changes were introduced. First, its title became “classification according to color or race”, and second, the category indígena (Indian) was added to the list. Since then, the list of categories employed by the state in its censuses has consistently been: branco, preto, pardo, amarelo, and indígena, that is, white, black, brown, yellow, and indigenous.

The Black Movement

For the most part, the Black Movement, or Black Movements in the plural, given that in Brazil there is a variety of social movements that address racial issues, nowadays are highly critical to the image of Brazil as a mixed-race country, as a dark skinned society whose chief characteristic is racial mixing. In consonance with this criticism, they reject the category pardo, and also related categories such as moreno and mulato, adopting negro or afrodescendant as the only valid ethnic-racial categories. But the most significant thing for our present purposes is to notice that when confronted with

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3 See, for example, Nina Rodrigues {Nina Rodrigues, 1932 #58; Nina Rodrigues, 1935 #59; Nina Rodrigues, 1938 #55}.

4 The categories branco, preto, and pardo from 1940 to 1960. In 1970, the military in power decided to eliminate once again the question on color from the census questionnaire, under the pretense that Brazil did not have race discrimination or racism, and thus, there was no use in collecting data on race. The question would return again in the 1991 census, after the promulgation of the 1988 constitution and the return of liberal democratic institutions, but now two changes were made. First, its title became “classification according to color or race”, and second, the category indígena (Indian) was added to the list. Since then, the list of categories employed by the state in its censuses has been: branco, preto, pardo, amarelo, and indígena, that is, white, black, brown, yellow, and Indian.
statistical data, which only have information on pardos and pretos, BM activists and sympathizers assume explicitly that both are negros. In other words, they pontificate that pardos are indeed all negros (blacks). Still according to this line of criticism, the emphasis on the Moreno or Pardo character of the Brazilian population is an ideological move which suggests that Brazil solved the problem of racial prejudice through mixing. Brazil, thus, would have become a racial democracy through the dilution of alleged racial differences in the Moreno character of the population (Bernadino).

Racial democracy advocates sometimes go as far as to suggest that given the mixed nature of the population, and the infinite gradation of skin color hues generated by mixing, it is impossible to apply racial categories to indentify people in Brazil (ref base mídia).5

Another criticism raised by BM activists is that the glorification of “morenidade” is a discourse that euphemistically underplay racial prejudice in yet another way. Calling a person pardo or moreno is a way to deny her blackness. An act of condescendence associated to an ideal of whiteness.

It is an attitude that we face systematically in personal interactions. It seems as something politically correct to treat an afrodescendant as “Moreno”, a word that is strongly rooted in the Brazilian culture. This is a symbolic means of evading a reality in which discrimination rules (Franklin Ferreira, 2004).

From the perspective of individual identity, BM activists often interpret moreno and pardo as expressions of false consciousness. By adopting one of these categories as an identity a person would be denying his or her true racial and ethnic belonging. In a society in which whiteness is favored and blackness is looked down upon, mixed-race categories are means that the subaltern with a false consciousness adopt in an effort to move toward the ideal of whiteness (Munanga; Silva, CIDINHA da; Silva,). Thus, the adoption of the negro category by the BM works as a political pedagogy aimed at raising consciousness about racial prejudice and against the racist and silent ideology of whitening.

In the 1980 the organizations of the BM focused part of their efforts on influencing the design of the national census. On top of demanding the return of the question on skin color, which had been scraped from the 1970s census, they also proposed replacing the categories preto and pardo by negro. That last demand was rejected by the public statistical agency IBGE under the rationale that the adoption of new categories would

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5 Trata-se de um raciocínio que não deixa ele próprio de ser racista, posto que supõe a existência de raças biológicas e sua mistura (Nobles,).
interrupt the series and turn comparison of results between censuses impossible (Silva). Nonetheless, according to Melissa Nobles, a group of researchers working with IBGE after some discussion decided to keep the categories preto and pardo for reasons that were not purely technical. They argued that if the options were limited to black or white this would undermine the possibility of a Brazilian meta-race, with a variety of skin colors. In case the binary system were used, the idea of an egalitarian society would be replaced by one of social division (Nobles).

In sum, there was a marked difference between the BM and IBGE in this period: while the movement demanded a classificatory system that would turn prejudice and discrimination evident, and reorganize racial identities around this theme, the public agency wanted to keep a system that expressed a conception of nationality based on racial mixing. Another datum interpreted by the BM as evidence that pretos and pardos can be subsumed under one sole category, negro, is the similar socioeconomic profile shared by pretos and pardos as it is expressed in nation-wide demographic surveys (Graziella and Leão).

The Brazilian government has adopted the practice of aggregating pretos and pardos as negros since the launch of the National Human Rights Program in 1996. On top of recommending the use of the category skin color in all statistical data produced by public agencies, the Program mandated that IBGE could keep the traditional classificatory system to produce raw data but had to adopt negro in the analyses it produced (Nobles).

It is important to call attention to the fact that BM militants stopped rallying for the substitution of the category negro for preto and pardo as soon as they realized that this procedure would drastically reduce the size of the black population measured by the surveys. In the 2010 census self-identified pretos and pardos add up to 54,9% of the Brazilian population while other nation-wide surveys with open racial identification questions show that only 5,6% of the population spontaneously identify as negro (PERLA, 2010).

**Academia**

Racial mixing is interpreted in different ways depending on the normative and methodological leanings of the academic who studies it. In order to organize these different takes on the matter we would like to propose a typology made up by the
combination of two binary variables: the first pair, populist-authoritarian, is related to
the normative position of the author regarding her subject matter; the second pair,
empiricist-culturalist, expresses the methodological choices made by the scholar. The
first pair of categories is borrowed from Nancy Fraser who employed them to describe
two opposite attitudes that scholars might adopt in face of categories adopted by social
movements {Fraser, 2003 #9008}. The populist attitude is the one that reproduces the
categories adopted by the social movements themselves, deeming deviations from this
pattern a form of denying recognition to the ones who need it most. The authoritarian
attitude assumes that the scholar has the capacity to produce or authorize categories that
better describe and explain the subject of study.
Orthogonally crossing the populist-authoritarian axis we would like to add a
methodological one varying from the empiricist to the culturalist poles. The term
empiricist is here used not in the derogatory sense of theoretically naïve, as it is often
done, but only for the purpose of highlighting the systematic analysis of empirical data,
be it socio-economic or identity related. The culturalist approach almost exclusively
opts for qualitative analysis of race relations, focusing particularly on the construal of
individual and collective identities.
The combination of the two pairs of categories hypothetically would generate four
hyphenated categories. Nonetheless, the category empiricist-authoritarian does not make
much sense because the attitude of empiricists who reject the populist approach is
usually not normative, at least in the sense of expecting to impose their concepts and
findings onto social movements and society at large. Far from assuming that total
axiological neutrality is possible, we separate authors who have an explicit normative
position from those who don’t. These last type of author usually focus on the study of
native categories. Therefore, our classification system would be the following:

a. Non-normative empiricists
b. Populist empiricists
c. Non-normative culturalists
d. Populist culturalists
e. Authoritarian culturalists

Non-normative empiricists
Two generations of researchers fall into this category. The first one has Carlos Hasenbalg and Nelson do Valle as its main references. The second is more diverse and congregates scholars such as Carlos Antônio Ribeiro, Jerônimo Muniz, Graziella Moraes Silva, and Edward Telles, among others. Despite conducting research on a number of different topics, these scholars have in common the recourse to data analysis of large, often nation-wide, surveys.

**First generation**
The fact that pretos and pardos have a similar socioeconomic profile was already hinted at by some authors, but it was only in the 1970s that this was demonstrated through the statistical analysis of nation-wide surveys, now made easier by the employment of computers (Osório). Carlos Hasenbalg and Nelson do Valle pioneered these studies, which not only showed strong correlations between race and socioeconomic inequalities, but also the gap in social mobility that separated whites from pretos and pardos. Instead of focusing on values and attitudes, they emphasized the class structure in terms of occupation and income and deduced racial discrimination through controlling for intervening variables. Nelson do Valle found out that on average pretos and pardos had a very similar socioeconomic profile, measured in terms of income, wealth, occupation, and years of schooling. And this profile was significantly inferior to that of whites. Thus, he concluded that the most meaningful aspect of socioeconomic inequality in Brazil when race is considered is a gap between whites and non-whites. In other words, do Valle conflated the categories pardo and preto into non-white. Hasenbalg and do Valle also showed that 1) non-whites have on average less educational opportunities than whites with the same occupation; and 2) non-whites had more difficulty in converting education into income and occupational upward mobility than whites with the same level of education. In sum, non-whites were exposed to cumulative disadvantages in all life stages. A number of statistical and sociological studies produced after their initial contributions started to subsume the pardo group by the larger non-white. Hasenbalg and do Valle made it clear that for them, non-white equals pretos plus pardos, and do not include indigenous peoples or Orientals. Hasenbalg and do Valle are often seem, both by scholars and activists, as responsible for producing sound material proof of the existence of racial discrimination in Brazil. In

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6 Measured in years of study completed.
terms of racial categorization, by calling the aggregation of pretos and pardos by the negative name “non-white” they tried to escape the political and normative debate about racial identity. According to them, non-white is a descriptive analytical category. It does not exist as a lived identity. In other words, despite the important contribution of their work to the deconstruction of the myth of racial democracy, both refrained from engaging in the cultural aspects of race relations in Brazil. Hasenbalg has written:

It must be said that when we study inequalities opposing whites and non-whites (pretos and pardos), we refer only to processes of socioeconomic stratification. When we examine other dimensions of social life such as, for example, marriage and friendship, this pattern does not apply, and we see pardos splitting from pretos and getting closer to whites (Hasenbalg & Guimarães, 2006).

**Second generation**

The second generation of the non-normative empiricist approach is different from the first in some important aspects. Despite continuing with the analysis of socioeconomic inequalities, scholars started to question the consistency of the variable skin color, instead of just using as a independent variable. Race and skin color stop being considered as a natural attribute of the individual to which other social phenomena are associated and start being treated as a dependent variable, in a way similar to that that some critics of racial statistics, such as Zuberi, have advocated.

Although Hasenbalg and Do Valle were aware that racial identities in Brazil, and also the categories that capture them in surveys, are not devoid of ambiguities, it is only in the second generation that these issues became themselves objects of investigation. Carlos Antônio Ribeiro, Jerônimo Muniz, Stan Bailey, and Edward Telles, among others, have explored these ambiguities in different ways. Ribeiro, por exemplo, shows that when racial identities are unpacked through analytical strategies such as combining an open question on racial identification with one using the IBGE system, the similarity between pardos and pretos give place to something more similar to a color continuum covarying with income and years of school attainment. Thus, for example, the debate about whether “money whitens” in Brazil (ref).

While interviewing people who answered pardo to the IBGE question, Graziella Silva e Leão have found a great variety of racial identities. When facing an open identification question, some people chose “negro”, expressing a politicized racial identity, others showed more hesitation, changing their own identification as the interview progressed,
and others still identified themselves as pardos throughout the interview. Thus, Silva and Leão argue that

Although categories such as negro and non-white might still be relevant for stressing the permanence of racial inequalities, pretos and pardos have different racial perceptions as they attribute different symbolic and economic meanings to their racial identity vis-à-vis whites (Graziella Silva e Leão: 22).

Marteleto, in turn, identified changes in the auto and hetero-classification of subjects through time. According to her, nowadays parents that attained higher levels of education tend to classify their children as pretos more frequently than in the past. She tentatively attributes this change to a new appreciation for negritude in a country that has recently started to recognize the existence of racial discrimination and also started to implement social policies aiming at mitigating it.

Approaching the same subject through a different methodology, this time quantitative, Jerônimo Muniz arrives at similar findings. He deploys multiple racial classification schemes in order to test their level of agreement through the statistical analysis of confidence intervals, and finds out that only half of the people would maintain their identity regardless of the classification scheme. The author concluded that “color of skin” should be taken as an imperfect marker that should be used carefully rather than a causal factor.

The work of Carlos Antonio Costa Ribeiro is yet another example of current research that explores the complexity of racial identification in Brazil. Ribeiro strives to propose a scheme to correlate race with inequality that would be more precise than the dichotomy white/non-white (or white/negro), which has been predominant in studies of social mobility until now. Ribeiro shows that the whiter a person is the greater the chance she has of experiencing an upward mobility, and that this trend in present throughout the skin color continuum.

The research done by the second generation of non-normative empiricists has in common the focus on the complexity of race identification categories in Brazil, particularly that of pardos, exploring the ways according to which this complexity interacts with variables such as income, schooling, geographical region, darkness of skin, among others.

**Populist empiricists**
In this category we identify those scholars who, while producing quantitative analyses of statistical socioeconomic data adopt the classification scheme of the social movements, particularly that of the BM. Some of them do recognize the complexity of racial identification in Brazil, but, at the same time, embrace the argument that since the most relevant racial inequalities exist between whites and pretos and pardos, this would justify aggregating those last two categories in the category “negros”.

This attitude in fact denies the specificity of the pardo category, giving support to the BM interpretation that negros are the majority of the Brazilian population – an interpretation that is often repeated rather uncritically by American scholars and activists. According to the 2010 Census, 47.7% of the population is white, 38.5% pardo, and 7.6% pretos. Therefore, if we add pretos and pardos and call then negros we arrive at the conclusion that 50.7% of the Brazilian population is negro (black), a finding that would turn Brazil second only to Nigeria in the ranking of the largest black population in the world. This interpretation allows the BM to speak as if it were the legitimate representative of more than half of Brazil’s population.

Researchers of the Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), a public agency dedicated to the analysis of the economy and public policy, give three reasons for bunching together pretos and pardos in the category negros: Ricardo Henriques, for example, while working at IPEA published works on racial inequality opposing whites and negros, by simply aggregating data from pretos and pardos. Sometimes he calls them afrodescendants. Another IPEA researcher, Osório, summarizes well their approach to racial classification in the following manner:

The aggregation of pretos and pardos has some advantages. It makes analysis simpler given that it reduces the population to two groups, whites and negros. Since pretos and pardos are subjected to the same type of discrimination, differ from the white phenotypical ideal, have similar socioeconomic profiles, no relevant information is lost in this operation. Such aggregation also avoid the statistical problem of treating pretos separately. There is also the advantage of disappearing with the problem of establishing the limit between preto and pardo (Osório: 90).

Non-normative culturalists

In this category we include authors such as Antônio Sérgio Guimarães e Lívio Sansone, who tend to prefer qualitative analysis (although Guimarães is no stranger to
quantitative also) and emphasize the way in which schemes of racial classification express cultural and identity constructions. The anthropologist Sansone criticizes the procedure of treating race as a fixed attribute of the individual. According to him, it should be seen as a dynamic process that contributes, together with other elements, to the formation of multi-stratified social identities. Depending on the subject matter, Sansone uses different racial categories, borrowing from IBGE’s scheme, native terms, and politically charged categories such as negro and afrodescendant. This strategy works as a statement against the idea that scholars should strive to produce one correct and well-defined scheme of racial categorization.

According to Sansone, neither IBGEs five category scheme nor the binary system adopted by IPEA and BM NGOs are effective in explaining ethnic and racial identities in Brazil. Nonetheless, he concedes that sometimes in order to stress social injustice “it might be useful to divide Brazilians in groups according to skin color, or even in two groups, whites and non-whites (Sansone: 76). His qualitative and ethnographic approach often focus on the ways in which other social aspects such as age group, level of education, employment situation, social class, gender, neighborhood, among others, interact with the racial self perception of individuals and groups.

Similarly to Sansone, Antônio Sérgio Guimarães denies that racial classification can be objective proposing to treat race as a sociological concept.

If we take “raça” as a category that expresses a classification scheme based on the idea of race, we can then affirm that we are dealing with a sociological concept, certainly not a realist one in the ontological sense, given that it does not reflect something that actually exists in the real world, but an analytical nominalist concept, in the sense that it refers to something that guides and organizes the discourse about the social life (Guimarães: 103).

Guimarães argues that the category negro, taken as the aggregation of pretos and pardos, is neither analytical nor native. That is, on the one hand, this move is not supported by sociological or biological analysis. On the other, negro does not have this meaning for the majority of the Brazilian population. He calls attention to the need to observe everyday language and treat the issue of skin color and race in a careful manner, even getting to the point of calling the aggregation a “scientific heresy”.

First, [the BM] adopted as the identity criterion no self identification, the way it is advocated by modern anthropology, by biological descent; second, it completely overlooked the fact that in many regions of Brazil the population that
self identify as pardo might be of indigenous origin and not African (Guimarães, 2002: 57).

Despite their criticism, both Sansone and Guimarães recognize the political importance of the BM and have publicly come in favor of race-based affirmative action.

**Populist Culturalists**

For populist culturalists such as Kabengele Munanga pretos and pardos should be grouped in the category negros in the political and academic discourse not only because those groups present socioeconomic similarities, but also due to a political and identity imperative. According to this author, pardos characteristically display low levels of solidarity toward pretos and a desire for getting whiter. The separation between pretos and pardo would be, thus, an expression of the alienation of the negro identity, and this alienation should be opposed. If classificatory ambiguity and the ideology of whitening have worked as strategic instruments of upward social mobility for some non-white people in Brazil, only by erasing the division between pretos and pardos is that a collective solution can be achieved.

The vast majority of the afro-Brazilian populations live today in this vague and uncertain place. The dream of one day succeed in passing harbored by them weakens the feeling of solidarity with the undeniably negros. Those, in turn, have accepted the negative stereotypes that were forged against them and project their salvation in the assimilation of cultural values from the world of the whites. Hence this alienation that hampers the expression of a sentiment of solidarity that is crucial in any process of identity formation, collective or not. (Munanga: 83)

While the work of populist empiricists give a great deal of support to the demands of the BM for the creation of policy focusing on mitigating racial inequality and discrimination, the work of populist culturalists are the voice of the movement in academia, given that it expresses not only a concern with equality but also demands for the recognition of black culture and the identity.

**Authoritarian culturalists**

A defining trait of this trend in academia is a defense of racial mixing as the key element of Brazilian nationality. This perspective is radically opposed to the interpretation the BM and populist culturalists have of the pardo, including its subsumption under the category negro. Authoritarian culturalists affirm that
“morenidade” (the glorification of having brown skin) and the several hues of skin color produced by mixing are a cultural heritage that should be preserved against attempts at introducing dichotomous schemes of racial identity and classification in Brazil.

The most influential author that falls in this category is Gilberto Freyre, followed a couple of decades later by Darcy Ribeiro. Both celebrate the encounter of the “formative races” through mixing as the defining element of the Brazilian culture and national identity (Damatta; Ortiz). In the voice of one of their followers, Roberto da Matta:

If on the social and political levels Brazil is ridden with hierarchies and conflict, the myth of the three races unifies society on a “biological” and “natural” level, an unitary domain, confirmed everyday by the rituals of Umbanda, cordiality, carnival, the food, the beauty of the women (and of the mulatta) and the music (Damatta, xxxx: 70).

Da Matta is not the only one. Echoes of this interpretation can be found in the works of scholars such as Yvonne Maggie, Peter Fry, Bolívar Lamounier, and Simon Schwartzman. They all argue that the dissolution of the pardo into the category negro, the way it is advocated by the BM, is a crime against Brazil’s national identity. They also add that by producing a gamut of skin tones, race mixing avoids the frontal opposition between blacks and whites, thus dissolving racial hatred and conflict. The United States, represented by these authors as a society structurally divided between two opposing races, is almost always used as an example not to be emulated. While arguing against the adoption of the binary categories negro and branco, Simon Schwartzman declares “one cannot interpret Brazilian society through American lenses (Schwartman: 109).

José Murilo de Carvalho, a prestigious political historian, has branded the disappearance of the pardo in the works of populist empiricists and in the discourse of the BMs “statistical racial genocide”. Carvalho adds the procedure of calling all pardos negros ends up excluding indigenous peoples and their descendants given that many of them choose the option pardo when faced with IBGE’s closed question.

We are witnessing in Brazil an attempt to perpetrate a racial genocide through statistics. This campaign is lead by activists of the BM, sociologists, economists, demographers, NGOs, and federal research institutes. The strategy is rather simple. IBGE has decided since 1940 that Brazil’s racial categories are preto, white, pardo, yellow, and indigenous. The perpetrators of genocide add up pretos

7 Not coincidentally, all militantly opposed to the implementation of race-based affirmative action.
Looking for the pardo

Our survey on the production of discourses on the pardo in Brazilian society has shown an interesting picture. The Black social movement take it as a form of bad conscience, trapped by the ideology of whitening and racial democracy, and thus incapable of establishing solidarity with pretos. The chief state statistical agency, IBGE, employs the term in its demographical surveys, with the veiled support of the BM, which came to the conclusion that adding pretos and pardos after the survey results are published is a better option than adopting the category negros directly in the surveys, given that the latter procedure would drastically decrease the percentage of negros in the population. IPEA, another governmental agency that produces analyses but no primary data, on the other hand, frequently replace pretos and pardos by negros in their publications, revealing, thus, a certain influence of the BM agenda – some of their researchers were classified by us as populist empiricists.

The academic field ends up by not being a field in the Bourdiesian sense, with its autonomous rules of operation, at least in considering the normative and methodological orientation of scholars. Academics are divided in their assessment of the pardo and its place in the overall scheme of racial identification in Brazil. While fundamental establishing the existence of race discrimination in Brazil, authors of the first generation of non-normative empiricists did not focus on the specificity of the pardo identity, on the contrary, they were the first ones to propose the aggregation of pardos and pretos, under the synthetic category “non-white”, due to similar socioeconomic profiles of those groups. In the second generation of non-normative empiricists we witness a shift toward the problematization of race categorization itself, thus bringing to the front the question of the pardo and other mixed-race identities.

Populist empiricists replace the category non-white by negro, following the interpretation of the BM according to which pardos are in reality negros. Race categories are hardly problematized by these authors. On the contrary, the simple fact that pardos and pretos have on average similar socioeconomic profiles is sufficient, in their opinion, to bunch them together as negros, a move that is not devoid of problems given that the words negro and preto are synonyms in current everyday Portuguese.
Even more committed to defending the point of view of the BM, populist culturalists spell out the condemnation of the pardo identity as a form of false racial consciousness that reinforces white-centric racial hierarchy, thus blocking solidarity towards pretos. Like second generation non-normative empiricists, non-normative culturalists explore, chiefly through qualitative analysis, the meanders of ethnic and race identification in Brazil, revealing its non-binary nature but, at the same time, not denying the existence of racial discrimination and hierarchy and the white-centric nature of Brazil’s race relations.

Authoritarian culturalists, on the contrary, at most affirm that there exist racial discrimination in Brazil as a disclaimer which is followed by a passionate defense of mixing as the cause of shifting and plural racial identities. These authors go further to affirm that mixing is the core of Brazil’s national identity, often opposing the country to the US, which is seen as a society where racial identities are rigid and binary. These are today’s followers of Gilberto Freyre and the myth of racial democracy. Such academics have been militantly against affirmative action or any other policy based on race or ethnicity. In their view, for supporting affirmative action, the BM, its sympathizers, and part of the political left are unpatriotic.

But who is the pardo, after all, the quintessence of Brazilianness, or a self-hating black plagued with false consciousness? Does the pardo identity have any coherence via-a-vis whites and pretos? Would the pardo identity be stable or rather shifty? In order to start to answer these questions we will present a brief analysis of the data on perceptions of discrimination in the Survey on the Social Dimensions of Inequality – a nation-wide probabilistic multi-stage survey conducted in 2008.8

We took into account the answers to 9 questions which cover several situations of everyday life were discrimination can potentially occur.

- Do you feel other people treat you less politely in comparison to others?
- Do you feel other people treat you with less respect in comparison to others?
- Do you feel that you are not treated as well as other costumers in stores or restaurants?
- Do you feel other people act as they fear you?
- Do you feel other people see you as dishonest?
- Do you feel other people act as if they were better than you?

8 See annex for details on the survey.
Do you feel that doormen treat you with suspicion?
Do you feel that people in stores treat you as a potential shoplifter?
Do you feel that the police treat you with less respect in comparison to others?

In the analysis we used the standard color/race information available from the survey, which follows IBGE’s classification. The result is statistically controlled for the variables sex, region, age, education and an index that represents a proxy for household income.

**Graph 1 – Predicted probabilities of having felt discriminated at least once / years of schooling**

Graph 1 shows the probability that a whites, pretos and pardos have of feeling discriminated at least in one of the situations captured by the survey in relation to their years of schooling, a variable that is strongly correlated with income. Once compared with some established interpretations in the field these results yield some interesting insights, which beg for further investigation.

1. The procedure of bunching together pretos and pardos would work only for the three first groups, that is, for people with 11 or less years of schooling. Indeed, the perception of discrimination of pretos and pardos are very similar in
intensity in people with less formal education. In contrast, in the group of people in college or with a college degree pardos responded much like whites, both with levels of perception way below that of blacks. The perception of discrimination voiced by pretos is approximately twice that of pardos.

2. Although not shown in the graph above, the pattern commented on item 1 is present in the results of all questions but one. That is, pardos consistently perceive discrimination in an intensity similar to that of pretos until they achieve a higher level of education, then shifting to a perception very similar to that of whites and significantly smaller to that of pretos.

3. In the group of people with no formal education the perception of discrimination is very similar across the groups – whites feel as discriminated as pardos, with pretos showing only a slight tendency of feeling more discriminated than the other two groups. This finding confirms previous works on inequality which show that among the poorest, racial inequality is the smallest (Costa Ribeiro).

4. Contrary to the expectations of the BM, the more education non-whites receive, the greater the probability of pardos perceiving social interactions in a way different from that of pretos, a fact that turns group solidarity harder to achieve.

5. There are two possible interpretations for the pattern shown by pretos. One is that given the dismal presence of pretos in environments where schooling or income are exclusionary factors, pretos with higher education interact mostly with whites and thus are more prone to feel different situations as discriminatory. The second interpretation has to do with Brazil’s present-day cultural environment. Racial inequality, affirmative action, and access to tertiary education have become hot public debate topics in the last decade. The BM has been very successful in putting race-based policies, including affirmative action for higher education admissions, in the agenda. Thus, we can hypothesize that for having more resources to reflect about race relations and discrimination, pretos with higher education have a greater probability of perceiving social interactions as discriminatory. In fact, both interpretations are not at all contradictory.

But if 5 is true, why pardos don’t follow the same trend? Why pardos with higher education do not tend to perceive more discrimination than those less educated? That is something that begs for further research.
Annex - Methodology

The data analyzed here is from a survey called Pesquisa das Dimensões Sociais da Desigualdade (a free translation from Portuguese would lead to a name close to Survey of the Social Dimensions of Inequality). The survey was carried out by Ibope Inteligencia, one of the most respected public opinion institutions in Brazil. It is a probabilistic multi-stage, area probability sample of persons that named themselves as responsible for that particular household, as well as their partners. The interviews were completed in 8048 households in 2008. Post-stratification weights are employed to make the survey a representative sample of the Brazilian population for that year.

The survey contained a special section aimed to investigate the perception of discrimination among Brazilians. We are not aware of any other national database that has available this type of information in a national level of representation. This survey puts us in an unique position to investigate the relation between the perception of discrimination and race/color in Brazil.

The dependent variables are self-report indicators of perception of discrimination: if the person felt that she was discriminated in 8 realms of their everyday life. Respondents were invited to say if they felt that they were always, almost always, frequently, almost never or never discriminated with the following questions.

- Do you feel other people treat you less politely in comparison to others?
- Do you feel other people treat you with less respect in comparison to others?
- Do you feel that you are not treated as well as others costumers in stores or restaurants?
- Do you feel other people act as they fear you?
- Do you feel other people see you as dishonest?
- Do you feel other people act as if they were better than you?
- Do you feel doormen treat you with suspicion?
- Do you feel that people in stores treat you as a potential shoplifter?
- Do you feel that the police treat you with less respect in comparison to others?

The answers were dichotomized combining the options always, almost always and frequently in one category and almost never and never into the other. We modeled each
realm of discrimination mentioned with logistic regressions. For the sake of simplicity, we will discuss results that synthesize all the models. We added all the variables and then dichotomized the resulting index. At the end of these steps, we have a variable that represents if a person felt discriminated in at least one of these dimensions.

In the analysis we use the standard color/race information available from the survey, which follows IBGE’s classification. As controls, we use sex, region, age, education and an index that represents a proxy for household income.

**Independent variables**

We are interested in the relationship between race and the perception of discrimination in Brazil. We use the standard color/race information available following the IBGE classification. As controls, we use sex, region, age, education and an index that represents a proxy for household income.

We follow two strategies in the modeling of the data. First, we fit several models adding one independent variable at a time. This allows us to understand how the effects of race/color are mediate by the other sociodemographic variables. Our second step builds on these results using an interaction term between education and race/color. We follow this strategy to investigate how race/color is moderated in different educational levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 - Distribution of dependent and independent variables</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perception of discrimination</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Never felt discriminated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt discriminated at least once</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td>Norte</td>
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<td>Centro Oeste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

We start with Model 1, which adjusts the perception of discrimination and race. As expected, pretos and pardos have a different perception of discrimination in relation to whites (the base category). Pretos have almost twice the probability of saying they have felt discriminated at least once and pardos have 50% more chances of saying that, in comparison to whites.

We are not interested in particular relationships that the controls bring in perspective. Our strategy was developed to check if the relationship identified in the previous paragraph is maintained after the addition of the sociodemographic variables. As Table 2 shows, none of the variables added to the model mediates the effect of race and perception of discrimination. This is the main finding of our exercise.

The only effect that the sociodemographic controls brought to our attention relates to the education variable. The results show that people with all levels of education do not differentiate from those with no formal education, the base category. The exception are those with more than 12 years of education. This group has a strong negative differentiation, their perception of discrimination is 30% less strong than those with no formal education.

To further investigate this result, our final model adds an interaction term between education and race color. Due to difficulties involving the interpretation of interaction effects, we illustrate them with a graph. This graph illustrates predicted probabilities of the interactions, holding all other variables constant (or in their means).
With this strategy, we illustrate a result that, in our opinion, synthesizes many aspects of Brazilian racial relations. The graph shows that more the relationship between education, race and perception of discrimination is constant. Whites, pretos and pardos that have none, 1 to 8 or 9 to 11 years of formal education have similar probabilities of having felt discriminated. But the group with 12 or more years of education has a very different pattern. Pretos that belong to this group have much more probability of reporting the perception of discrimination, almost twice the value of other groups.

This result condensate the complexity of Brazilian racial relations. We have to be careful with its interpretation because of our study design. We think this result represents two different mechanisms. One is the fact that pretos have more than 12 years of education in Brazil are, unfortunately, a minority. They probably expose themselves in environments that, on average, other pretos are not present. Probably, the social pathways they choose in their everyday lives brings them the unpleasant and unacceptable situation of being discriminated in the realms they were asked by the survey. The second mechanism is related to the contemporaneous cultural environment.

The last decade has been one of candent debates around race, affirmative action and access to tertiary education. The group that had more resources to reflect about racial relations and develop something around “racial consciousness” is the same that is reporting a bigger probability of being discriminated, in our opinion.

Table 2 - Logistic Regression of Perception of Having Been Discriminated at Least Once on Race, Sex, Region, Age, Income and Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
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<td>b</td>
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<td>b</td>
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<td>0.1728</td>
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<td>Education, 9 to 11 years</td>
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<td>Education, 12+</td>
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Table 2 (continuation) - Logistic Regression of Perception of Having Been Discriminated at Least Once on Race, Sex, Region, Age, Income and Education

<table>
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<th>Model 5</th>
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<td>Black*Education, 12+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pardo*Education, 1 to 8 years</td>
<td>1.5851**</td>
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<td>Pardo*Education, 9 to 11 years</td>
<td>4.9418***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pardo*Education, 12+</td>
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</table>

Source: PDSD
pvalue: * 0.10 ** 0.05 *** 0.01

Graph 1 – Predicted probabilities of having felt discriminated at least once
Probability that felt discriminated at least once

[Bar chart showing the probability of feeling discriminated at least once for different groups, with bars for 'zero', '1 to 8', '9 to 11', and '12+' categories.]

- Zero: Mean of whites, mean of pretos, mean of pardos
- 1 to 8: Mean of whites, mean of pretos, mean of pardos
- 9 to 11: Mean of whites, mean of pretos, mean of pardos
- 12+: Mean of whites, mean of pretos, mean of pardos