

# RACE-MAKING AND THE NATION-STATE

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W. E. B. Du Bois described "the problem of the color line" as a central concern of this century, and indeed in the United States and South Africa the era has seen the elaboration of postslavery segregation and protest. These experiences have confounded the expectations of Marxists and modernization theorists alike that racial identification and mobilization were merely archaic residues and would disappear. If anything, industrialization, class conflict, and rising nationalism have reinforced racial domination and conflict.<sup>1</sup> Although these processes appear to be interconnected, the situations that have shaped racial discourse and practice, produced legally encoded racial identity, and provoked conflict remain to be fully specified. The end of the century may be a particularly opportune time for such an assessment.

Any analysis of racial ideology, domination, and conflict must begin with the prior question of why race becomes salient at all—it is not sufficient to argue that certain social factors polarize race relations, for this assumes race as a preexisting category. Thus, although racism and images of primordial difference do seem to be pervasive where peoples of varying ancestry come into contact, this similarity does not account for the different ways in which race has been constructed. Race is not found, but "made" and used. Therefore, we must shift from describing race "as a tool of analysis" to considering it "as the object of analysis."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Robert Miles, *Racism* (London: Routledge, 1989); Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989); John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory* (London: Routledge, 1970); William Julius Wilson, *Power, Racism and Privilege* (New York: Free Press, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> Rupert Taylor, "Racial Terminology and the Question of 'Race' in South Africa" (Manuscript, 1994).

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Why and how do social distinctions and conflict come to be projected in terms of physical differences of color or purported race in the first place? More precisely, why were blacks in particular so categorized and subjected to race-specified domination, provoking conflict, or not?

I propose to examine the causes and consequences of official "race-making" by means of a comparative analysis of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil, the most prominent cases in which European settlers dominated indigenous and slave populations of African origin.<sup>3</sup> In each of these major regional powers, social and economic measures indicate significant and persistent disparities between black and white that built on the legacy of slavery. But the different contexts set them apart and therefore make them useful for a comparative study of the dynamics of official racial domination. Dutch, British, and Portuguese settlers brought varying practices, religions, and traditions to their colonies, making for economic development and state consolidation that followed divergent paths. Unlike in South Africa, the United States promised equal rights in its Constitution, to which African Americans could and did appeal. Demographics also differed: those of African descent are a minority in the U.S., indigenous Africans constitute the majority in South Africa, and those of African and European ancestry are roughly equal in number in Brazil.

While racial discrimination was pervasive in the early history of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil, postabolition state policies encoded very different racial orders. All three cases faced extended "moments" of relative indeterminacy and an unhappy repertoire of possible racial configurations in the aftermath of slavery, at the time of emerging state consolidation. In both South Africa and the United States the result—with significant differences—was official racial ideology, imposed categories of segregation and conflict, and only recent dismantling of legal discrimination. In contrast, postabolition Brazil avoided legal distinctions based on race and instead projected an image of "racial democracy." Despite the commonality of early racism and continued inequality, Brazil did not enact anything equivalent to apartheid or Jim Crow. These alternative outcomes pose a useful puzzle for comparative analysis.

I begin by assessing earlier explanations of race-making as being

<sup>3</sup> For other comparative studies of these cases, see Pierre Van den Berghe, *Race and Racism* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967); Stanley B. Greenberg, *Race and State in Capitalist Development* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1980); George M. Fredrickson, *White Supremacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); John W. Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black nor White* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).

based on differences of slavery, culture, colonial rule, miscegenation, and economic development. While such influences must be incorporated into the present analysis, I dispute the argument that these legacies and interests preordained a more tolerant racial order in Brazil. Brazilians may have retrospectively interpreted their past to reinforce an image of racial tolerance, but in fact racism was as evident early on in Brazil as it was in the United States or South Africa (though it differed in form), and the inequality in Brazil continued. By contrast, in the United States and South Africa past discrimination was embraced and used to justify segregation and exclusion. This difference in kind is not explained by comparable degrees of discrimination or exploitation.

The official projects of Jim Crow in the United States and apartheid in South Africa were shaped by distinct paths and challenges to building the nation-state. Disputes over the treatment of blacks and slaves had contributed to tensions among whites that culminated in the Civil War and the Boer War, respectively. Consolidated by these conflicts and their commitment to labor coercion, Southerners and Afrikaners had proved themselves a threat that had to be reckoned with if stability and development were to be restored. Blacks had not proved comparably disruptive, had already been distinguished by earlier racism, and could be excluded to appease Southern and Afrikaner demands. Agreement on a racially defined "other" as a common enemy defined and encouraged white unity. Thus, the same issue of race that had exacerbated prior conflict was used to heal it, as racial domination gradually transformed a potential triadic conflict among white factions and blacks into a more manageable dyadic form of "white over black." Such strategic adjustment can be described schematically as bolstering unity. But policy that appears functional in retrospect actually emerged from ongoing conflict, competition, and maneuvering of actors seeking solutions to real problems. Although intrawhite tension remained, it was contained within a unified polity. Racial domination was repeatedly reinforced to consolidate the nation-state.

Brazil provides an essential comparison, for there no equally violent ethnic or regional conflict impeded nation-state consolidation. Unity did not require a racial crutch of formal discrimination; rather, "racial democracy" emerged there as an ideological project of a state anxious to unify popular support without formal exclusion. As a result, explicit categories of racial domination were not officially constructed and images of past tolerance were encouraged.

I will conclude by discussing how state policies provoked and shaped black protest, eventually forcing the abandonment of official discrimi-

nation where it had been enacted. In South Africa and the United States racial domination unifying whites proved double-edged, having the unintended consequence of inciting black protest. Efforts to resolve one conflict exacerbated another. Apartheid and Jim Crow were then ended, as black protest replaced intrawhite conflict as the most pressing threat to the nation-state. In Brazil, with no clear target of state ideology and segregation policy to organize against—no apartheid or Jim Crow to challenge or reform—little Afro-Brazilian protest emerged, and racial conflict was largely avoided despite considerable socioeconomic inequality.

#### HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL EXPLANATIONS OF RACE

The lack of explicit racial categorization, domination, and conflict in postabolition Brazil has been explained as the result of racial tolerance imported by Portuguese colonialists. The imposition of racial domination and conflict in the United States and South Africa would then be explained by the extent to which the British and Dutch had a contrary set of influences. To assess this argument about colonial influences, one must look to the historical record. Did the Portuguese in fact import racial tolerance to Brazil, or is this claim an instance of *ex post* interpretation?

In Brazil, the U.S., and South Africa slavery begun under colonialism established the fundamental pattern of race relations. Gilberto Freyre in the 1930s and other analysts have suggested that slavery in Brazil was relatively benign, a tradition they contend was carried over into more tolerant postabolition race relations. According to the "Tannenbaum thesis," Brazilian slavery was notable for its recognition of the slaves' humanity: they were allowed to marry, own property, and even buy their own freedom.<sup>4</sup> Contrary to this argument, however, was the fact that Brazilian slavery was particularly brutal. Slaves were guaranteed the right to buy their own freedom only after 1871 (and even then the practice was difficult), marriage among slaves was rare, property held by slaves was in constant jeopardy, and manumission of less productive slaves meant that the elderly and sick were abandoned to their fate after years of work.<sup>5</sup> Compared with other slave powers, Brazil remained longer and more fully dependent on continued importation of new slaves because the harsh conditions under which slaves lived did not allow for reproduction of their numbers. Mortality among slave

<sup>4</sup> Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (New York: Knopf, 1946). See van den Berghe (fn. 3), 67.

<sup>5</sup> Degler (fn. 3), chap. 2.

children was estimated to be 80 percent, with slaves working in the mines generally surviving for only seven to ten years.<sup>6</sup> Having no free region to which they could flee, Brazilian slaves revolted in dramatic numbers.<sup>7</sup>

Tannenbaum's thesis rests on an overly generous interpretation of the real conditions of Brazilian slavery. It is true that the Portuguese did establish a somewhat less strict divide between slave and free than was enforced in the U.S., but they also established a particularly deadly form of bondage. The image of a Brazilian "benign master" was a myth. Tannenbaum also ignored the comparable imagery of paternalism toward slaves in the Southern United States.<sup>8</sup> Such paternalism did not preclude postabolition racial domination in the U.S., as it purportedly did in Brazil. Nor did early abolition in South Africa preclude segregation and exclusion. Though slavery took different forms in Brazil, the U.S., and South Africa, in all three it fostered attitudes of a primordial black inferiority and established patterns of domination and inequality. This similarity cannot account for the difference in postabolition racial orders.

A specific feature of the argument about Brazilian slavery concerns the influence of Catholicism. Tannenbaum argues that "the Catholic doctrine of the equality of all men in the sight of God" produced better treatment of slaves and generally greater racial tolerance than did the more exclusive Dutch or British Protestantism.<sup>9</sup> The hierarchy of the Catholic church also purportedly militated against an exclusively biracial divide. Of course, when one considers the history of the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the rapacious colonialism pursued by the Spanish and Portuguese with the support of the church, it is difficult to avoid skepticism about official Catholic tolerance. The church also enacted its own internal policies of racial discrimination in Brazil. Furthermore, as the Catholic church in Brazil was not strong enough to force abolition, it "could never live up to its early promise as a force against the slave regime."<sup>10</sup> That Catholicism projected a more inclusive or toler-

<sup>6</sup> Robert Conrad, "Nineteenth Century Brazilian Slavery," in Robert Brent Toplin, ed., *Slavery and Race Relations in Latin America* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974), 150; Clóvis Moura, *História do Negro Brasileiro* (São Paulo: Ed Atica, 1989), 14.

<sup>7</sup> Moura (fn. 6), 15-32.

<sup>8</sup> See Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1972).

<sup>9</sup> Tannenbaum (fn. 4), 53. The same argument is put forward in Louis Hartz, *The Founding of New Societies* (New York: Harcourt, 1964), 152. For a discussion of the role of Calvinism in the emergence of racial discrimination in South Africa, see Jonathan N. Gerstner, *The Thousand Generation Covenant* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991).

<sup>10</sup> Genovese (fn. 8), 177; Caio Prado, Jr., *The Colonial Background of Modern Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 327; Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 206.

ant image is therefore more a reflection of retrospective interpretation than of historical reality.

Colonialism in Brazil was most distinguished by the direct role of the Portuguese state. Whereas the Dutch and the British relied on private companies to develop their colonies, the Portuguese crown invested on its own behalf.<sup>11</sup> Portuguese colonialism developed early, before a strong private sector had emerged in the home country. Indeed, Portugal's own economic development consistently lagged behind that of the Dutch and the British, so there was never an equally strong private sector. The Portuguese crown had little choice but to use its own resources, establishing a pattern of strong state consolidation and centralized power.

Did the greater degree of direct, centralized state involvement in Portuguese colonialism produce early racial tolerance? The historical record suggests not. It was after all the Portuguese state that engaged in one of the greatest slave trades in history. The early abolition of slavery within Portugal in 1773 explicitly did not preclude the much more pervasive, stubbornly maintained slavery in its colonies. The slave trade to Brazil was ended only under pressure from Britain, leading to gradual but late abolition. The Portuguese state enacted its own "color bar" at home and abroad, with the result that there were relatively few "darker-skinned" state officials.<sup>12</sup> Portuguese colonialism in Africa was similarly discriminatory: with its use of forced labor, it produced "the absolute literal nadir of African misery."<sup>13</sup> Perry Anderson concludes that "the falsity of Portuguese claims of special tolerance is evident," with the myth of such tolerance having been deliberately projected to obscure "economic and social retardation."<sup>14</sup> The Portuguese colonial state was stronger than its private sector, and it used that strength to project an exaggerated image of tolerance.

The absence of official racial domination in postabolition Brazil has been explained as the result of Portuguese colonial policies—"humanitarian" slavery—or of Catholicism. But Portuguese colonialism and Brazilian slavery were vicious, the early Brazilian state was not color blind, and the Catholic church was at best ambivalent toward blacks and certainly unable to force better treatment of them. Brazil's early

<sup>11</sup> Perry Anderson, "Portugal and the End of Ultra-Colonialism 2," *New Left Review* 16 (July-August 1962).

<sup>12</sup> C. R. Boxer, *Four Centuries of Portuguese Expansion, 1415-1825* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 42.

<sup>13</sup> Anderson (fn. 11), 93. See also Gerald J. Bender, *Angola under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

<sup>14</sup> Anderson (fn. 11), 110, 113.

racism was distinctive but still comparable to that of the U.S. and South Africa. The latter two justified their explicit racial domination on the basis of early beliefs and patterns of slavery and discrimination. After abolition Brazilians abandoned the official discourse of racism, and embraced historical interpretations consistent with "racial democracy." The historical legacy of inequality in Brazil was merely camouflaged, and quiescence among Afro-Brazilians thereby encouraged. Earlier racism was not wiped away, for as Edward Said has suggested in another context, images of inferiority and the reality of inequality remained beneficial to whites.<sup>15</sup> But unlike elsewhere the past was reconceived into a benign image, one that did not reflect historical fact. Instead, varying interpretations and outcomes were shaped by subsequent processes building upon the past, in a conjunctural process.

### THE MISCEGENATION ARGUMENT

Carl Degler provides one of the most widely held explanations of differences in how race has been socially constructed. He argues that Brazil could not develop a biracial ideology or formalize rigid racial classification and domination because of the high level of mixing between races. Miscegenation had purportedly also provided for greater social fluidity in Brazil, with people of mixed race able to move up to a higher socioeconomic status via a "mulatto escape hatch." As a result, race relations were less polarized and conflictual than in the U.S., or for that matter than in South Africa. In those cases, more stark physical differences supposedly provided the basis for official race categories reinforcing socioeconomic discrimination.

The strength of Degler's argument rests on the historical fact of significant miscegenation in Brazil. Portuguese colonialists came to Brazil for trade more than to settle, particularly as compared with the Dutch and British who came to the U.S. and South Africa. And as compared with the other two cases, Portuguese colonialists included few women.<sup>16</sup> As a result, Portuguese men engaged in significantly higher levels of miscegenation. Social mores and sexual tastes and practices developed accordingly, producing a population that remains notable for its continuum of physical variation. By 1872 the Brazilian census registered 42 percent of the population as mulatto, with this group

<sup>15</sup> Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978).

<sup>16</sup> Prado (fn. 10), 119; E. Bradford Burns, *A History of Brazil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 37.

relied on to serve intermediary functions of control over "darker" slaves.<sup>17</sup>

Although miscegenation in Brazil is a historical fact, Degler's critics have disputed his interpretation of this fact. Even during slavery, mulattoes remained subject to reenslavement and discrimination.<sup>18</sup> With a few notable exceptions, mulattoes were and remain largely underprivileged. Either the escape hatch has closed or it never existed. Indeed, Degler himself did not provide any statistical evidence of black mobility, beyond simply demonstrating the level of miscegenation. Recent scholarship has established that the difference in socioeconomic status between mulattoes and blacks is insignificant in comparison with the relative privilege of whites. "The average income for whites was found to be about twice that for nonwhites both in 1960 and in 1976."<sup>19</sup>

Brazil constructed an informal racial order that was highly discriminatory against "blacks and browns," such that earlier patterns of inequality were maintained. Only a few mulattoes advanced—enough to encourage belief in mobility. Thus, continued popular belief in the mulatto escape hatch appears to be based less on material conditions than on an ideological project encouraging assimilation. Miscegenation in itself did not produce the myth of mobility, but this image did dilute potential conflict.

In the United States and South Africa, people of "mixed race" were classified according to varying categories and policies. Miscegenation never approached the levels of Brazil; indeed it remained illegal in the United States and South Africa until recently. Nevertheless, miscegenation did occur in large numbers, with varying outcomes. In the United States, 13 percent of blacks in 1860 were categorized as mulatto, rising to 21 percent by 1920. This category eventually disappeared with the refinement of the "one drop of blood" rule, with whites confident that they could impose biracial domination over a "black-brown" minority.<sup>20</sup> Recent scholarship has demonstrated that the majority of

<sup>17</sup> Charles H. Wood and J. A. Magno de Carvalho, *The Demography of Inequality in Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 141; Marvin Harris, *Patterns of Race in the Americas* (New York: Walker, 1964).

<sup>18</sup> Robert Conrad, *The Destruction of Brazilian Slavery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 12; Thomas E. Skidmore, "Bi-Racial U.S. versus Multi-Racial Brazil: Is the Contrast Still Valid?" (Manuscript, June 1992), 15.

<sup>19</sup> Nelson do Valle Silva, "Updating the Cost of Not Being White in Brazil," in Pierre-Michel Fontaine, ed., *Race, Class, and Power in Brazil* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California, 1985), 54. See also Nelson do Valle Silva and Carlos A. Hasenbalg, *Relações Raciais no Brasil Contemporâneo* (Rio de Janeiro: Rio Fundo, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> Genovese (fn. 8), 414; Fredrickson (fn. 3), 134; F. James Davis, *Who Is Black? One Nation's Definition* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 40; Abdias do Nascimento, *Brazil: Mixture or Massacre?* (Dover: Majority Press, 1979), 65.

African Americans have a significant proportion of white ancestry, with those having "lighter" skin marginally better off economically.<sup>21</sup> In South Africa a "colored" population of more than three million attests to significant miscegenation and immigration.<sup>22</sup> Explicit rules were required to demarcate coloreds, who did enjoy some greater privilege than Africans, thereby diluting the "black threat" to the white minority. Such privilege was eroded as white power was consolidated.

Miscegenation was celebrated and mulattoes assimilated in Brazil, but this pattern was not followed in the other two cases. In the U.S. and South Africa, mobility was officially blocked, provoking "non-white" unity and resistance. According to Degler, miscegenation in itself diminishes the possibility of such strict racial domination, discrimination, and resulting conflict. Instead, South African and U.S. authorities, resolved physical ambiguities by drawing strict racial boundaries, limiting mobility, and stirring up antagonism. Substantial miscegenation did not preclude the development of apartheid or Jim Crow as it purportedly did in Brazil. Even the white South African minority eventually alienated its potential colored allies.

Though people often believe and act as if race is physically determined, shifts of beliefs, categories, and practices demonstrate the contrary. No doubt, Brazil's higher level of miscegenation would have made it more difficult to impose strict categories of domination over mulattoes. Without such a demarcation conflict was less likely. But the U.S. and South Africa did impose such categories on their mixed populations, and conflict was accordingly provoked. Physical differences, mixing, and demographic proportions were significant but did not preordain specific racial categorization, domination, and conflict, or lack thereof. To explain these divergent outcomes requires looking beyond the biological fact of miscegenation, to why continuous physical variation was interpreted as such or forced into strict categories of race.

### ECONOMIC EXPLANATIONS OF RACE

Race-making cannot be disentangled from the process of economic development. Industrialization, coming in tandem with increased immigration and urbanization, also coincided with the rise of formal segregation in the U.S. and South Africa. The development of Jim

<sup>21</sup> Verna M. Keith and Cedric Herring, "Skin Tone and Stratification in the Black Community," *American Journal of Sociology* 97 (November 1991).

<sup>22</sup> Central Statistical Services, *South African Statistics, 1988* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1988), table 1.7, 7.7.

Crow and apartheid has been described as an effort to protect whites from black competition. Lesser economic development and competition would then account for Brazil's lack of similar policies.<sup>23</sup> More specific economic explanations have suggested that racial categorization and segregation served the interests of capital in providing for cheap black labor, or served the interests of privileged white labor by reserving better jobs and ensuring higher wages.<sup>24</sup> The implication is that state policies regarding race were not autonomous but were determined by particular class interests.<sup>25</sup> Comparative analysis of the U.S., South Africa, and Brazil allows for an assessment of these arguments.

In South Africa segregation and apartheid fed the process of economic development and proved highly profitable. British capital first provoked the Boer War in order to gain control over the country's riches and then encouraged state policies of racial domination to ensure a supply of cheap black labor in the mines.<sup>26</sup> But persistent segregation cannot be attributed to varying and divided business pressure. Beginning with the fall of gold prices in the early 1920s, mining capital was eager to relax segregation in order to displace more expensive white labor. By the 1970s manufacturing capital advocated the end of apartheid in order to ensure more skilled black labor and an expanded market among blacks.<sup>27</sup> But capital's pressures for reform were rebuffed by the state, which acted to protect the interests of white, largely Afrikaner labor. Indeed, after the 1922 Rand Revolt of emerging Afrikaner capital and of Afrikaner miners protesting business efforts to replace them with lower-paid blacks, Hertzog's new government reinforced the color bar preferential to white workers.<sup>28</sup> The National Party government in power after 1948 remained dedicated to such protection of Afrikaner workers as the majority of the electorate. Fearing a repeat of the Rand Revolt by white workers protecting their privilege, capital acquiesced, appeased by continued profits.<sup>29</sup>

Neither the interests of South African capital nor general economic

<sup>23</sup> See van den Berghe (fn. 3), 27-30; Cell (fn. 3), 104; Susan Olzak, *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1992).

<sup>24</sup> Edna Bonacich, "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market," *American Sociological Review* 37 (October 1972).

<sup>25</sup> Michael Burawoy, "The Capitalist State in South Africa," in Maurice Zeitlin, ed., *Political Power and Social Theory* (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1981), 2:282.

<sup>26</sup> Cell (fn. 3), 62-67; Harold Wolpe, "Capitalism and Cheap Labor Power in South Africa," *Economy and Society* 1, no. 4 (1972).

<sup>27</sup> Deborah Posel, *The Making of Apartheid* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).

<sup>28</sup> Fredrick A. Johnstone, *Class, Race and Gold* (London: Routledge, 1976).

<sup>29</sup> Francis Wilson, *Labour in the South African Gold Mines, 1911-1969* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 11; Greenberg (fn. 3), 129, 151.

rationality were as determinant as the interests of white labor. The South African state reinforced segregation while still under formal British rule and despite later business pressure for reform. After 1948 the state pursued apartheid despite the tremendous cost of regulation and the manifold inefficiencies. Throughout, white workers' demands for privilege were met. To keep development going, however, the interests of white labor had to be balanced against the demands of capital, efficiency, and black labor. Various "reforms" were implemented over the objections of white labor, for instance, with cheaper black labor gradually filling more jobs and with black unions legalized in the late 1970s.<sup>30</sup>

The overriding conclusion is that "the principle function of segregationist ideology was to soften class and ethnic antagonism among whites, subordinating internal conflicts to the unifying conception of race."<sup>31</sup> Class antagonism did reinforce the conflict between English capital and Afrikaner workers. But the state was not in the exclusive service of either side of this overlapping class and ethnic conflict in which it was embedded. Instead, the state imposed varying forms of racial domination to unify whites and to diminish conflict, compromising between conflicting interests. Stability was thus encouraged, and economic development proceeded, providing revenues to the state.

In the United States "the golden age of racism" paved the way for industrial expansion.<sup>32</sup> Capital benefited from segregation, employing cheap black labor to increase profits and to break strikes by white workers. But profit alone cannot explain why Jim Crow was elaborated before the greatest spurt of industrialization and in the less industrialized South.<sup>33</sup> Apparently segregation more directly served the interests of white labor, especially where blacks were more numerous. Yet many Southern white workers understood that their interests might be better served by working-class unity across race lines, as advocated by the Populist movement.<sup>34</sup> This movement was defeated by white planters' racism, embraced by workers. Poor whites, including immigrants in the North, were "prepared to pay the price of their own distress in order to keep the Negro still lower."<sup>35</sup> Labor's narrowly defined interests were not consistently served by segregation, but the relative social status of its white members was bolstered.

The American racial order appeased white workers and Southerners,

<sup>30</sup> David Yudelman, *The Emergence of Modern South Africa* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983).

<sup>31</sup> Cell (fn. 3), 234.

<sup>32</sup> Wilson (fn. 1), 56.

<sup>33</sup> Fredrickson (fn. 3), 215-16.

<sup>34</sup> Olzak (fn. 23), 110-11; David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness* (London: Verso, 1991).

<sup>35</sup> Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper and Row, 1944), 457.

while also meeting the general interests of Northern capital in maintaining order. "Disorder and violence destroys business altogether,"<sup>36</sup> after all, and Jim Crow helped to contain such conflict. Racial domination encouraged cross-class white unity, rather than exclusive loyalty to one's own class interests. Intra-white conflict was diminished, and growth proceeded.

Brazil appears to confirm the more general pattern of economic explanations. A lower level of economic development and competition coincided with the absence of apartheid or Jim Crow.<sup>37</sup> But if "racial democracy" reflected the early lack of economic development, then rising industrialization should have produced more explicit patterns of racial domination, at least in the more developed Southeast and during times of economic boom.<sup>38</sup> But that did not happen.

Rather, the interests of white workers and capital were both advanced under Brazil's "racial democracy." The relative privilege of white workers has been maintained by higher wages without an official racial order and segregation. For instance, in 1960, in the relatively developed area of Rio de Janeiro, the average monthly income of blacks was Cr \$5,440; for mulattoes it was Cr \$6,492; and it was almost double that, Cr \$11,601, for whites.<sup>39</sup> Once the pattern of inequality had been established, such privilege did not require explicit racial domination to sustain itself. Business also profited from cheap black labor. Moreover, absent official segregation poor blacks could believe that advancement was possible. The image of racial tolerance thus encouraged cross-class unity, stability, and growth, in this instance, by avoiding explicit racial domination and conflict altogether.

The racial order in each of the three cases certainly reflected and enhanced economic development, but in complex ways. Apartheid and Jim Crow diluted intra-white competition that threatened stability and growth, yet growth and competition did not lead to such policies in Brazil. In South Africa capital's interests were not unified or consistently served. Business was forced to comply with apartheid as the demands of white labor for racial preferences were more consistently met. But resulting working-class division by race was economically disad-

<sup>36</sup> Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 250. See also Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon, 1994), chap. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Emilia Viotti da Costa, *The Brazilian Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 55; Cell (fn. 3), 11; Harris (fn. 17), 96-98.

<sup>38</sup> Degler (fn. 3), 99; Carlos Hasenbalg, "Race Relations in Post-Abolition Brazil" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1978), x, 240.

<sup>39</sup> Nelson do Valle Silva, "Black-White Income Differentials: Brazil, 1960" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), 99.

vantageous to labor, for instance, when blacks were used to displace whites or to break strikes. By the 1930s many American trade unionists advocated cross-race working-class unity and organization, which employers resisted.<sup>40</sup>

Since capital and white workers often had contrary interests, both could not be served exclusively. In South Africa and the U.S. varying state policies sought to reconcile conflicting interests among whites by unifying them as a race. If racial domination served to unify whites across class lines, then narrow class interests by themselves cannot explain this outcome. Nor can class assertions in Brazil by themselves account for "racial democracy," which also appealed such interests. Brazilian capital profited from low black wages, higher wages for whites were maintained, and the prospect of black mobility was exaggerated.

In all three cases, real or potential class conflict had to be resolved to ensure stability—the most fundamental requirement for both economic development and consolidation of the nation-state. Class interests had exacerbated the ethnic division in South Africa and the regional tension in the U.S., and they posed a potential threat to national unity in Brazil. In all three cases, states were not simply captive of one interest, but instead acted with relative autonomy to contain and respond to conflicting interests. To explain how conflict was so diminished or avoided within distinctive racial orders requires analysis of the political dynamics.

### RACE-MAKING AND THE NATION-STATE

The construction of racial domination requires clearly established boundaries of physically distinct categories. History, physical differences, and economic development may reinforce such categorical domination, but they do not preordain it or the form it will take. It is state policy that officially categorizes people as black, white, or mulatto and that enforces legal discrimination. As Justice John Marshall Harlan asked rhetorically in 1896, "What can more certainly arouse race hate, what more certainly create and perpetuate a feeling of distrust between these races, than state enactments[?]"<sup>41</sup> Indeed, recent scholarship has pointed to the state as the central actor in race-making.<sup>42</sup> Of course, ar-

<sup>40</sup> Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1973* (New York: Praeger, 1974), chaps. 14-16.

<sup>41</sup> As quoted in Burke Marshall, *Federalism and Civil Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 85.

<sup>42</sup> I am here applying arguments about ethnicity to the more specific case of race. See, for example, Crawford Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976); Cynthia Enloe, "The Growth of the State and Ethnic Mobilization: The American Experience,"

guing that it is the state which defines and enforces racial boundaries does not explain why the state should or should not do so. The state may have the capability of "making" races, but it remains to specify the situation that may or may not lead the state to exercise its power in this way.

In all three of the cases examined here, the state faced an extended historical moment during which modern race relations were configured, with divergent outcomes. For the United States and Brazil that moment came with the abolition of slavery. Earlier racial discrimination was formally reinforced in the U.S. and not so enacted in Brazil. Slavery (or abolition of it) cannot in itself explain these divergent outcomes. For South Africa, where slavery was abolished earlier amid continued discrimination, the comparable moment came when the country was unified for the first time and national race policies were enacted. In all three cases the consolidation of a postabolition or united state raised the dilemma of whether and how to incorporate those of African descent. This dilemma had to be addressed to avoid or at least diminish conflict that could divide the nation and thereby disrupt central rule and development. Policies evident in transitional moments were then later refined.

The history of South African racial domination began with the first arrival of whites on the Cape in the seventeenth century. Religion was used to justify discrimination against "heathens." However, most historians agree that explicit and formalized racial discrimination was elaborated two centuries later, forged by the conflict between two European "fragments."<sup>43</sup> After their victory in the Napoleonic Wars, the British took control of the Cape Colony from the descendants of the Dutch, the Afrikaners. The British enforced early abolition and more liberal racial policies of selective discrimination.<sup>44</sup> Citing their "determination . . . [to] preserve proper relations between master and servant,"<sup>45</sup> thousands of Afrikaners trekked north to escape British rule, establishing their own republics during the 1850s, reinforcing racial domination and labor coercion. No single policy toward the natives could emerge under such circumstances, although discrimination was prevalent.

The uneasy stasis of a divided country was soon disrupted. Britain's

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*Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4 (April 1981), 123-36; Joanne Nagel, "The Political Construction of Ethnicity," in Susan Olzak and Joanne Nagel, eds., *Competitive Ethnic Relations* (Orlando, Fla.: Academic Press, 1986).

<sup>43</sup> Hartz (fn. 9), 3.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas Karis, "South Africa," in Gwendolen Carter, ed., *Five African States* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963), 480-81.

<sup>45</sup> W. A. de Klerk, *Puritans in Africa: A History of Afrikanerdom* (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1975), 23. De Klerk is here quoting Piet Retief, from 1837.

aspirations expanded, fed by the discoveries in the north of diamonds in 1877 and of gold in 1886, and by resulting pressures for a unified railroad system.<sup>46</sup> The ensuing conflict between the British and Afrikaners came to a head at the turn of the century, with the costly British victory in the Boer War. This conflict solidified distinct English and Afrikaner group solidarity, both of which had been riven by internal divisions. In the war's aftermath exacerbated Afrikaner-English animosity threatened to undermine British efforts to shape a militarily and economically coherent united South African polity.<sup>47</sup>

The British impetus to reconcile with the Afrikaners after the Boer War set the terms for the segregation of blacks that was to become central to South African state making. As the British high commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner, argued as early as 1897, "To win over the Dutch . . . you have only to sacrifice 'the nigger' absolutely and the game is easy. . . . (S)elf government . . . and colonial loyalty . . . (required) the abandonment of the black races."<sup>48</sup> Encouraging white unity and peace took precedence over English liberalism, for the Afrikaners had proved themselves capable of protracted violent disruption, while blacks remained divided. The British concluded that Union was achievable only on the "Boers' terms," contrary to expectations among the colored and African populations that a British victory would consolidate reforms.<sup>49</sup>

The historical record preserves a symbolic moment revealing the implications of the whites' nascent coalition. The first draft of the 1902 peace treaty between Afrikaner and British forces promised the subsequent extension of the franchise "to natives." This clause was crossed out by Boer Generals Smuts and Hertzog and replaced by a vague commitment to later discussions of the issue.<sup>50</sup> This amendment was accepted by the British, apparently without discussion. Having grabbed South Africa, the imperial hands of liberal uplift were withdrawn to a regal posture, clasped in back.

Exclusion of the "natives" and later of the "coloreds" would be reinforced during subsequent decades of continued political competition

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, J. A. Hobson, *The War in South Africa* (London: George Allen, 1900).

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, Basil Williams, ed., *The Shelburne Memorandum* (London: Oxford University Press, 1925); Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (New York: Avon, 1979); Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, eds., *The Oxford History of South Africa*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

<sup>48</sup> G. H. L. LeMay, *British Supremacy in South Africa, 1899-1907* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 11-12.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 16. See also Ian Goldin, *Making Race: The Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa* (Cape Town: Longman, 1987), 32; Gavin Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1987), 15; Donald Denoon, *A Grand Illusion* (London: Longman, 1973), 4, 111.

<sup>50</sup> J. D. Kestell and D. E. van Velden, *The Peace Negotiations* (London: Claj, 1912), 112.

between English and Afrikaners. Nevertheless, the "game" was not as "easy" as Milner had expected. Policies varied, as different "solutions" were tried and divergent interests acceded to, depending on who was in power. Some "natives" would still be advanced, and "coloreds" enjoyed some preferential treatment, both as instruments of a policy of divide and rule. But these exceptions were subject to overarching discrimination. Still many Afrikaners were not appeased, as indicated by continued Afrikaner nationalism, suspicion of English liberalism, and efforts to further racial domination. By 1936 Afrikaners forced the removal of African voters from the common rolls in the English-dominated Cape. After 1948 the Afrikaners imposed apartheid and then sought to further unify whites against communism and "the black threat." For all this variation, the original "deal" was elaborated, establishing the pattern that "the process of pact-making between the whites [was] at the expense of the blacks and browns."<sup>51</sup> English-Afrikaner competition continued but was contained in a single polity of racial domination.

Much as South African state consolidation faced the impediment of ethnic conflict, state consolidation in the United States faced a corresponding impediment of regional conflict between North and South. The indigenous population of Native Americans would be largely wiped out, but slaves remained numerous and their fate a bone of regional contention. This conflict was initially finessed in the Constitution. The future of Southern slavery was deliberately left unresolved, with the South able to insist on a compromise.<sup>52</sup> Slaves were not freed or given the vote. The South's representation was bolstered by including each adult slave as three-fifths of a person—a political incentive as well to maintain profitable slave labor.<sup>53</sup> Sectional tension over the future and extension of slavery remained but was contained by a further series of compromises and concessions to Southern interests. The Dred Scott decision of 1857, for example, deemed formal guarantees of equality and citizenship rights inapplicable to blacks.<sup>54</sup>

Regional conflict over the future of slavery came to a head in the mid-nineteenth century. The North sought to strengthen and use the federal government to support its early industrialization, to extend the railroads, and most significantly to limit the expansion of slavery.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Pakenham (fn. 47), 612.

<sup>52</sup> Jordan (fn. 10), 332; Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice* (New York: Knopf, 1980), 33.

<sup>53</sup> Dwight Lowell Dumond, *Anti-Slavery* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), 45.

<sup>54</sup> Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 292–93.

<sup>55</sup> Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon, 1966), 125, 136; Paul Lewinson, *Race, Class and Perry* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1932), 26.

Abolitionists joined in pressing for greater political centralization as a means of forcing the end of slavery. The South defended the federalist division of power, which had preserved states' rights, including those regarding slavery and its extension to ensure agricultural profits.<sup>56</sup> As John Quincy Adams had predicted, this conflict could be "settled only at the cannon's mouth,"<sup>57</sup> after institutional accommodations had failed. America's "genius for compromise and conciliation" was cut by the "bloody gash" of the ensuing Civil War, the most violent domestic conflict in American history.<sup>58</sup> The North's victory opened the way for a shift toward more centralized federal power. Indeed, mobilization in the Civil War was a turning point in the state's consolidation, control, and exercise of resources as an emerging global power.<sup>59</sup> In the process, both the North and the South had become increasingly united internally, and that exacerbated the interregional conflict.<sup>60</sup>

The North's victory ensured the legal preservation of the Union sought by Lincoln, but "binding up the nation's wounds" required resolution of the regional conflict and of the status of freed slaves. An effort to deport blacks was attempted but abandoned as impractical. Black enfranchisement under Reconstruction exacerbated regional conflict, raising fears of a renewed Southern rebellion and encouraging another shift of federal policy in search of a "solution." By 1877 compromise had reemerged. The imposition of blacks' rights was abandoned and federal troops were withdrawn from the South, which reduced resistance to national unity.<sup>61</sup>

After Reconstruction a coalition of North and South was fostered by reinforced racial domination, as Fourteenth Amendment guarantees were effectively ignored. Further appeasing the South, the Plessy decision of 1896 reaffirmed states' rights to enact their own rules of racial exclusion applicable also to mulattoes. Jim Crow segregation was enforced throughout the South by the 1890s, in particular after the defeat of the Populist movement. Later, Southern Democrats used their electoral power and vetoes to continually reinforce states' rights in issues of

<sup>56</sup> Kenneth M. Stampp, ed., *The Causes of the Civil War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), 63.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>58</sup> Moore (fn. 55), 113.

<sup>59</sup> Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 30; Richard F. Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), ix; Ira Katznelson and Aristide Zolberg, eds., *Working-Class Formation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 212; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 23.

<sup>60</sup> See, for instance, V. O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Knopf, 1949).

<sup>61</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *Reunion and Reaction* (Boston: Little Brown, 1951); Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," in J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson, eds., *Region, Race and Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

race. The North also practiced de facto segregation. As in South Africa, "the Negro paid a heavy price so that whites could be reunited in a common nationality."<sup>62</sup> More than four thousand blacks (and some whites) who were seen to violate Jim Crow were lynched, while the federal government stood idly by.<sup>63</sup> As described by W. E. B. Du Bois, "All hatred that the whites after the Civil War had for each other gradually concentrated itself on [blacks]."<sup>64</sup>

Comparison of South Africa and the United States suggests important dissimilarities. South Africa's newly forged state authority, bolstered by the strength of the British Empire, enforced segregation from the center in varying and increasingly harsh forms. The potential threat from the African majority impelled such strong intervention. Neither Afrikaner nor English disputed racial domination or centralized power—rather, they competed for control over such power. In the United States the division of power continued to be contested and entangled with disputes over racial domination. After the Civil War the North confidently foisted reforms on the South, but by the end of Reconstruction the North conceded that the Union was still too weak to impose its will and it was unwilling to provoke further conflict by interfering in locally enforced segregation. With "no real fear of a military threat from the black (minority) population,"<sup>65</sup> appeasing the South by tolerating Jim Crow was preferable to the prospect of continued Southern resistance. The federal balance of power was shifted back toward the states, which were left to impose their own racial order. Mobs in turn reinforced that racial order when states did not or could not. Constitutional guarantees of equality were unenforced, whereas in South Africa no such guarantees existed and the state acted with force and impunity.

The reinforcement of racial domination in South Africa and the U.S. followed different paths, but the result was remarkably similar. Major conflict had reinforced distinct solidarity among Afrikaners and English, South and North. The conflict between these ethnic fragments or regions was gradually contained at the expense of blacks, in

<sup>62</sup> Fredrickson (fn. 3), 191. See also C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 65; Moore (fn. 55), 132, 146.

<sup>63</sup> Williamson (fn. 36), 85.

<sup>64</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Athenaeum, 1992), 125.

<sup>65</sup> George Reid Andrews, "Review Essay: Comparing the Comparers: White Supremacy in the United States and South Africa," *Journal of Social History* 20 (1987), 589; Richard M. Velely, "Party, Coercion, and Inclusion: The Two Reconstructions of the South's Electoral Politics," *Politics and Society* 21 (March 1993).

accordance with Denoon's "golden law . . . that every white bargain must be sealed by an African sacrifice."<sup>66</sup> In the "moments of madness"<sup>67</sup> capping cataclysmic and violent change, racial segregation was enforced or allowed. Racial distinctions imbedded in the past were prominently "available" to diminish the regional or ethnic conflict that impeded consolidation of the nation-state. Reinforcing legal discrimination encouraged the unity of whites as dominant over blacks. Continued intrawhite tension reinforced this "solution." The potential for a coalition among progressive whites and blacks was ignored or abandoned.

The contrast with Brazil is here particularly useful. Portuguese colonialism had imposed on Brazil a more unified central authority than that which developed in South Africa or the United States. The withdrawal of Dutch invaders after 1654 left no competing European fragment akin to the Afrikaners in South Africa. Emerging nationalism and tensions within Brazil were muted by the arrival in 1808 of the Portuguese court, forced to flee from Napoleon. Popular descendants of the Portuguese crown continued to rule over Brazil for eighty years, overseeing a peaceful transition from colony to independent empire and appeasing British interests enough to avoid direct conquest. Economic development remained slow, elites retained their centralized focus, and nationwide slavery was gradually and peacefully abolished. As a result, there was relatively little impetus for conflicts that might otherwise have undermined state consolidation and capacity. The occasional small provincial revolt was contained by compromise. "Clientalist" and "patrimonial" rule was never seriously challenged.<sup>68</sup>

In Brazil a prefabricated central state was in place when the winds of modernity hit. As a result, "Brazil is famous for its 'white,' or peaceful revolutions," having managed smooth transitions from empire to republic, and from slavery to abolition, in 1888-89.<sup>69</sup> Race did not become a political football in regional or ethnic conflict. There was no cataclysmic internal war comparable to that of the United States or later South Africa. Indeed, Brazilians were eager to avoid the sort of conflict over slavery and race that they had seen nearly tear apart the United States. And having avoided such a conflict, there was no need for the sort of reconciliation elsewhere encouraged through a white coalition and an explicit ideology of racial discrimination.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Denoon (fn. 49), 158.

<sup>67</sup> Aristide Zolberg, "Moments of Madness," *Politics and Society* 2 (1978).

<sup>68</sup> See Riordan Roett, *Brazil: Politics in a Patrimonial Society* (New York: Praeger, 1984).

<sup>69</sup> Gilberto Freyre, *Brazil: An Interpretation* (New York: Knopf, 1945), 120.

<sup>70</sup> See Donald Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 335.

The postabolition Brazilian state eschewed legal discrimination and encouraged unity among Brazilians of any color (ostensibly including native "Indians"). Having experienced larger slave revolts, the Brazilian elite was more fearful of blacks than their U.S. or South African counterparts. They were eager to submerge potential racial conflict under the myth of "racial democracy" and images of an inclusive nation and corporatist state.<sup>71</sup> This process was debated and blacks were excluded from immigration.<sup>72</sup> But within the country, no rules of racial exclusion were imposed. Rather than reinforce past images of racial inferiority and domination, this legacy was reinterpreted as a benign Luso-tropical tolerance. Inherited and continued racial inequality was denied or camouflaged as reflecting unavoidable but fluid class distinctions.

In the absence of formal segregation, accommodation was encouraged. A few Afro-Brazilians were able to advance themselves. Further miscegenation was encouraged to "whiten" and unite the population. Mulattoes were not forced into black unity by official segregation. Racial categories were removed from the census and studies of discrimination were outlawed, so as to obviate any challenges to the myth of racial democracy. Many blacks were deprived of the franchise, but on the basis of illiteracy, not race per se. Eventually this voting qualification was abandoned, after literacy rates had risen. Racial discrimination was later outlawed, although no violations were prosecuted. Conflict was avoided and development proceeded.

It is worth noting that the Brazilian idea of "racial democracy" was advocated for adoption in the United States during the early twentieth century, but found inapplicable. No less a figure than Teddy Roosevelt traveled to Brazil, noted that the U.S. and Brazil both had "mixed" populations, and commented on "the tendency of Brazil to absorb the Negro. . . . [T]hese white men draw no line against the Negro." Roosevelt approvingly cited the remarks of a Brazilian: "You of the United States are keeping the blacks as an entirely separate element. . . . They will remain a menacing element in your civilization. . . . [The alternative] we Brazilians have chosen will in the long run, from the national standpoint, prove less disadvantageous."<sup>73</sup> But the United States was not then free to choose this alternative, for the die had already been cast in a bloody mold. Abandoning the ideology of racial domination might very well have reopened the wounds that had already once torn apart

<sup>71</sup> See Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

<sup>72</sup> Celia Marinho de Azevedo, *Onda Negra, Medo Branco* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1987).

<sup>73</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, "Brazil and the Negro," *Outlook* 106 (February 21, 1914), 409-11.

the republic and then threatened to do so again during Reconstruction. Poor whites insisted on asserting their racial superiority, and elites in the North and South were eager to avoid class conflict by projecting white racial unity. Acceptance of the "disadvantages" of explicit racial domination had been established by the trajectory of American history, as it also had been in South Africa.

### MOBILIZATION RESPONSES TO RACE-MAKING

The primary focus of this paper is to demonstrate that official postabolition racial domination or the absence of it was prominently connected to the impetus for building the nation-state. But if such an analysis is to prove robust, it should also help explain variations in resulting mobilization and conflict; that is, social construction of explicit racial domination and social movements by the victims of such domination should logically be connected. I will now consider whether that indeed is the case—whether mobilization and conflict "from below" can be explained according to policies of domination imposed "from above."

Institutionalized domination setting legal boundaries of race also consolidates subordinated racial identity as a potential basis for resistance. Imposed discrimination encourages group solidarity among blacks whose fate is so linked.<sup>74</sup> This process of identity formation logically precedes and then shapes the logic by which resources and political opportunities are acted upon.<sup>75</sup> In Karl Marx's terms, a group must self-consciously exist "in itself" before it can act "for itself."<sup>76</sup> State policy helped forge such group self-consciousness among blacks, establishing the "who" that then interpreted and responded to structural conditions accordingly. But even when race becomes a salient identity, it does not necessarily lead to mobilization. And its form varies wherever or whenever such mobilization emerges. Such uncertain and fluid responses are connected to variations in racial domination.

Racial exclusion beneficial to whites in the short run may provoke countermobilization in the long run, whereas lack of such formal exclusion curtails mobilization and leaves inequality unchallenged. For instance, apartheid in South Africa and Jim Crow in the United States encouraged black solidarity, with forms of protest varying according to

<sup>74</sup> See Michael Dawson, *Behind the Mule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>75</sup> See Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>76</sup> Karl Marx, "The Poverty of Philosophy," in David McLellan, ed., *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 214.

shifts in state policy. Reforms invited more moderate mobilization, often aimed at integration. The reversal or absence of reforms provoked more militant protest and often separatism. "Racial democracy" in Brazil elicited more muted racial identity and mobilization, even during periods of reform and despite evident inequality, resources, and opportunities for protest. Yet even in Brazil limited forms of protest reflected changes in state rule. The previous dependent variable of official racial domination can be reconfigured into an independent variable to explain such emergence and various forms of mobilization.

In South Africa early and less rigid forms of state discrimination produced limited and moderate mobilization, with more militant popular opposition emerging only with the increasing reinforcement of segregation. Before Union, indigenous resistance remained divided. The African National Congress (ANC) was founded to unify Africans shortly after the newly created Union began to refine discrimination. But the ANC remained small, elitist, and polite in its petitioning. Continued conflict between English speakers and Afrikaners ushered in a more strictly segregationist government in 1924 under Hertzog, who later deprived coloreds of much of their relative privilege. Like later Afrikaner nationalists, Hertzog sought to trump the racial segregation of the English and their allies in order to further consolidate Afrikanerdom. Tightening segregation unified Africans and coloreds across class and region as common victims of racial domination, provoking greater resistance.

After 1948 the Nationalist government formalized Afrikaner rule and even stricter segregation under apartheid, further solidifying subordinate racial identity. The ANC and its more radical offshoot, Pan Africanist Congress, gained massive support for more militant protests aimed at defeating, not just reforming, the state.<sup>77</sup> In the 1970s the Black Consciousness movement responded to a tightening of apartheid with calls for black separatism that would unite "Africans, coloreds, and Asians." In the 1980s the United Democratic Front responded to halting reforms with more integrated mass mobilization. With no constitutional guarantees to appeal to, opponents of the state demanded more radical change. In 1990, under pressure from continued mass mobilization, internal splits, economic dislocation, sanctions, and the end of the cold war, the state announced its intention to abandon apartheid. The

<sup>77</sup> See Saul DuBow, *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919-36* (Hampshire, England: Macmillan, 1989); Tom Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1983).

majority of the opposition took up the invitation to engage in negotiations.<sup>78</sup>

Racial mobilization in the United States followed a similar overall pattern, though with complex differences. Early post-Reconstruction discrimination provoked limited mobilization. Regional differences remained, unaltered by relatively constant federal policies of neglect. Repression in the South encouraged Booker T. Washington's accommodationism, while deprivation in urban areas of the more liberal North evoked the militant views of W. E. B. Du Bois. Disappointment over the lack of reforms after the First World War provoked the mass movement of Marcus Garvey in the North but nothing comparable in the South.<sup>79</sup> With the New Deal and the Second World War, the central United States authority expanded its social intervention, raising the prospects of reform. The cold war also raised concerns about the international reputation of the U.S.

U.S. federal reform at midcentury encouraged black solidarity across class and region. Having developed the capacity to impose its will, federal authorities hesitantly began to revisit the contentious issues of reforming Jim Crow. The most notable signal of this shift was the 1954 Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*. Such state action provided an opening for the civil rights movement, which gained its initial mass following in the legally segregated South. Calling on the nation to live up to the ideals of the Constitution, relatively moderate forms of mobilization pushed for further federal intervention against Jim Crow. Southern activism then inspired blacks in the North. Their anger at continued deprivation, less easily alleviated by federal intervention, led to riots and more militant forms of black nationalism.<sup>80</sup>

The Brazilian case is striking for its lack of significant race-specific mobilization. Socioeconomic inequality and informal discrimination according to physical differences continued after slavery but were not sufficient to engender strong subordinate racial identity or massive protest. The lack of an official ideology and policy of racism was crucial. However, within that constraint, even the limited forms of Afro-

<sup>78</sup> See Anthony W. Marx, *Lessons of Struggle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>79</sup> See August Meier et al., eds., *Black Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).

<sup>80</sup> The literature here is vast. See Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Free Press, 1984); John T. McCartney, *Black Power Ideologies* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

Brazilian mobilization responded to shifting state policy. In the 1930s the Vargas regime reconsolidated central state authority, which had diminished during the Federal Republic after 1889. Vargas affirmed his commitment to racial democracy. The relatively moderate Frente Negra largely supported the regime. In the 1970s, when continued socioeconomic deprivation among blacks flew in the face of the official doctrine of "tolerance," images of the U.S. civil rights and black power movements spread to Brazil. The more militant Movimento Negro Unificado emerged, though it still had only limited popular support.<sup>81</sup>

### "UNMAKING" RACIAL DOMINATION

The recent demolition of the legal edifice of racial discrimination in South Africa and the United States also can be explained, albeit briefly, by reference to the dynamics of race-making. Economic costs of discrimination, changing international pressures, and most prominently popular protest all contributed to forcing the end of legal segregation. However, in both cases reform would have been stymied had militarily strong, central state authority retained an ideological and strategic commitment to enforcing or allowing racial domination. With the greater resolution of prior regional and ethnic conflict, the impetus to encourage white unity via racial domination had become less pressing. Defusing the resulting "black-white" conflict became more pressing. The end of legal subordination thus came despite continued white resistance, but only after the logic of race-making was reversed by further developments.

In the United States the South had been appeased by allowing formal racial discrimination on the local level. By midcentury industrialization and prosperity had begun to spread to the South,<sup>82</sup> which had earlier regained its political foothold in Washington and abandoned all thought of secession. The South had been "Americanized."<sup>83</sup> This process had allowed for greater central state consolidation and white national unity to be largely achieved. The federal balance of power was gradually reconfigured toward the center. Meanwhile, despite Southern resistance, increased black protest encouraged by and pushing for fur-

<sup>81</sup> See Lélia Gonzalez and Carlos Hasenbalg, *Lugar de Negro* (Rio de Janeiro: Marco Zero, 1982); Michael Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>82</sup> U.S. Department of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), series F-297-348, pp. 243-45, 295; Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

<sup>83</sup> Myrdal (fn. 35), 1011.

ther reforms, pressed for the application of central power against localized racial policies.

By midcentury the centralized American polity had become strong enough to intervene in the historically most contentious and last bastion of states' rights. The Union victory in the Civil War was finally consolidated a century later with a "second Reconstruction," in which the die of racial order was remolded. Black Southerners recognized this shift toward renewed federal action, welcoming representatives of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in 1958 with the remark that at last "the Big Government has come."<sup>84</sup> Regional tensions that had encouraged a white supremacist coalition remained. But this conflict among whites was gradually diminished by racial domination and replaced as the most pressing threat to national unity by the "black-white" conflict it had engendered. To curtail the rising political and economic disruption of black protest, official racial domination was ended by strong action from the center; social discrimination persisted, however.

Conflict among whites also diminished in South Africa, albeit later than in the U.S. Post-1948 Afrikaner control of an increasingly strong South African state had reinforced Afrikaner culture and language. State intervention and employment (to administer apartheid) brought greater economic parity with the English. For example, the proportion of Afrikaners working in white-collar jobs rose from 29 percent in 1946 to 65.2 percent in 1977.<sup>85</sup> As a result, "the Afrikaner had acquired more self-confidence; English and Afrikaner have grown together," thereby diminishing Afrikaner "fear of the English using non-white votes to strengthen their position."<sup>86</sup> Conflict between Afrikaners and English thus lessened as a central political concern, which had previously encouraged the use of segregation as a means of unifying whites.

As the costs of legal segregation rose, white South Africans eventually agreed to end apartheid, requiring a more fundamental political transition than in the U.S. Major black protest, elite division, sanctions, and lost opportunities for market growth had all taken their toll. With whites increasingly dependent on blacks, these costs became unbearable. By 1992 F. W. de Klerk was able to win an astonishing 68.7 percent of the combined Afrikaner and English vote for a referendum supporting negotiations aimed at ending minority rule. Whites em-

<sup>84</sup> Harris Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1980), 467.

<sup>85</sup> Heribert Adam and Hermann Giliomee, *Ethnic Power Mobilized* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 169-75. See also Donald L. Horowitz, *A Democratic South Africa?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 79-81.

<sup>86</sup> Author interview with Gerrit Viljoen, Pretoria, April 28, 1994.

braced the reassuring prospect of a de Klerk-Mandela "partnership," with English voters increasingly supporting a reformist National Party.<sup>87</sup> The white coalition had taken hold, and white privilege was further consolidated. Black protest had by then replaced the English-Afrikaner conflict as the dominant threat to peace. Official racial domination had worked and then backfired, and was finally abandoned, despite white right-wing resistance. Furthermore, because the South African state had been more explicitly designed on the basis of racial domination, this transition required a new constitution. By contrast, United States central authority had imposed reform according to constitutional interpretation and edict.

The same process of ending racial domination was not applicable to Brazil, because no comparable racial order had been constructed. Subordinate racial identity had no unifying target of official policy against which to mobilize, and no formal racial domination had to be reformed. This does not mean that social discrimination or economic inequality was less evident in Brazil. To the contrary—the lack of an official racial order that might have provoked stronger mobilization has left such discrimination largely unchanged.

#### IMPLICATIONS

Race-making had no single determinant, but its origins and consequences can be specified. In the three cases compared here, pervasive inequality and images of primordial inferiority were the heritage of slavery but were encoded in varying forms after abolition. Miscegenation influenced racial distinctions and the potential for conflict, but a continuum of skin colors was subject to shifting official categories. Competing class interests were appeased by various forms of discrimination. Race then appears less fixed than if it were preordained by culture, slavery, ancestry, or specific economic interests. Interpretations of historical legacies and interests have varied according to evolving racial orders reinforcing nation-state consolidation, stability, and development. Racial domination, categories, and conflict appear to be as fluid as those emerging dynamics of coalition building that shaped them.

The power of this explanation of race-making lies in its ability to help account for extensive variations in social constructions of race. In Brazil the lack of regional or ethnic conflict is consistent with the rela-

<sup>87</sup> Adam and Moodley (fn. 78), 2; Timothy D. Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 137.

tive absence of racial ideology, official categorization, or conflict. For South Africa and the United States, the state's elaboration of racial domination was shaped by conflict among whites, who gradually sought to reconcile their conflict by unifying as whites and reinforcing exclusion of blacks. "War (was) continued by other means." To instill "peace in civil society, . . . political powers . . . re-inscribe . . . inequalities," in these instances along lines of race.<sup>88</sup> Continued iterations of "intra-white" political or economic competition repeatedly reinforced racial domination. These processes played themselves out during the century-long era of nation-state building, amid variations of policy.

These dynamics follow more general patterns. For instance, Rogers Brubaker has argued that historical German disunity was resolved through the construction of an exclusive ethnic citizenship. Earlier French state consolidation allowed for a more inclusive civic form of nationalism, evident in state policy if not current social practice.<sup>89</sup> In South Africa, the United States, and Brazil, colonialism, slavery, and geography had left a substantial and historically differentiated black population. Race then figured prominently in the definition and consolidation of the nation-state. Disunity in South Africa and the U.S. was resolved through exclusive race-specific nationalism and citizenship, which did not develop in relatively unified Brazil. War played a central role in these processes. In Europe, foreign wars requiring conscription produced demands for the expansion of citizenship.<sup>90</sup> Resolution of internal wars in the U.S. and South Africa similarly extended citizenship rights for whites in a unified polity, but it also reinforced black exclusion.

The state emerges as a central actor in race-making, as it is the subject of contestation and responds to various challenges from the society in which it is embedded. To dilute internal conflict and encourage national unity, racial domination was officially reinforced in South Africa and the U.S., and racial antagonism was consistently avoided in Brazil. Apartheid or Jim Crow then provoked the antithesis of black protest. Conflict among whites had gradually diminished at the cost of rising black-white conflict. To contain this new conflict, the state then moved to synthesize a more inclusive racial order, abandoning official racial domination. Throughout, these states acted with relative autonomy, responding to assertions of interest with appeasement, compromise, or

<sup>88</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 90.

<sup>89</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

<sup>90</sup> Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990).

co-optation. The state-led process of nation-building (and the defining of citizenship) shaped and reshaped the racial order. Amid missteps, local and national division, and unintended consequences, state actions reflected intentional responses to pressing concerns.

I hope not to be misunderstood about the implications of this analysis. That intrawhite conflicts encouraged an explicit ideology and rule of discrimination against blacks does not mean that with the greater resolution of such conflict racism has disappeared or will do so. Whites in South Africa and the United States benefited from defining themselves as such, with the state reinforcing racism in varying forms of postabolition segregation. But once race has been so constructed, the state cannot easily dismantle its awful creation. "Social structures, types and attitudes are coins that do not readily melt. Once they are formed they persist."<sup>91</sup>

Racial identities, ingrained through painful experience and imbedded in everyday life, do not quickly fade even if the conditions that reinforced them change. In the United States legal discrimination has ended, but discrimination remains and race reforms have recently come under threat as a concomitant of resurgent states' rights. Racial identities have remained salient, not least because the African American minority views its solidarity as a vital resource. The same may now come to be true in postapartheid South Africa. The previous ideological project of interpreting culture, ancestry, and economic interests according to race has left deep scars. Even in Brazil nascent racial identity and conflict encouraged by information about the former two cases remains evident. That whites constructed race as a means of domination does not mean that racial identity cannot then be embraced by subordinates for their own advantage. Indeed, that has been the case.

What emerges is a consistent pattern of efforts at conflict resolution and coalition building as a central component of racial dynamics. Nation-state builders in the United States and South Africa sought to resolve conflict among whites by building a coalition of domination over blacks, thereby diminishing the most viable threat to the state and economy. Boundaries of racial category and enforced discrimination were constructed and historical legacies interpreted accordingly. The nation emerged as an "imagined community."<sup>92</sup> Who was included or excluded did not emerge spontaneously, however, but rather was reinforced by official policy. The unintended result was heightened mobi-

<sup>91</sup> Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1947), 12-13.

<sup>92</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

lization by blacks unified by their exclusion, with black protest eventually forcing a reconfiguration of the nation-state as inclusive, albeit still torn by the legacy of racial antagonism. Institutions of domination reinforced assertions of racial identity, which then forced a reconfiguration of institutions. But resulting identity remains. Brazil confirms this pattern by its relative lack of "intra-white" conflict, its avoidance of racial domination or conflict, and the lower salience of racial identity. Strategic calculations differed, either encouraging racial domination and conflict or not, but the imperative of nation-state consolidation was evident in each situation. The evolution of Du Bois's "problem of the color line" during this century was inextricably connected to the political dynamics of conflict resolution or avoidance framed by the ideal of the nation-state.