

The Moving Target: Brazilian Pardo Identity and its Constitution of Racial Space

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Abstract

In the field of Critical Race Studies, Brazil continually proves to be a unique case with its diverse population, incredible nuanced racial classification system, and claim to “racial democracy” and transcending its history of racism and slavery. At the heart of these claims is a large pardo, or mixed race, population that is often characterized as the apex of Brazilianness and multiraciality. The mixed-race body is romanticized and the entire Brazilian populous is placed in a racialized “third space” beyond the recognized system of Black and white identities. How do pardo people conceptualize themselves in this idealized world of racial democracy?

How do the systems of Brazil’s history and national identity formation impact the modern understanding of mixed identity? Where do mixed-race people fit in the spectrum of racialized space— if they even do? This project will examine the history of miscegenation, critical race theory, media discourse, and Brazilian census data to evaluate the space that pardo bodies take up in Brazil. Through analyzing and contextualizing these components with the experiences of pardo people, this work will put into focus the moving target that is mixed-race identity in Brazil. As a result, the study will contribute a new perspective of spatiality to mixed-race discourse as well as question our perceptions of racial identity and who it benefits.

Keywords: critical race theory, critical mixed-race theory, Brazil, Gilberto Freyre, multiracial

INTRODUCTION

For decades Brazil has claimed to be the “racial paradise” of the world due to its racially mixed populous, which supposedly creates lack of racism in Brazil. The pardo (general term for mixed person of any descent), is thus a symbol of racial thought as it is the realization of the notion that all of Brazil’s people are mixed from Portuguese colonizer, colonized indigenous, and enslaved African that become

members of one, united Brazilian race. While the image of the pardo is idealized, pardos are also the second largest population in Brazil behind whites, so they are not simply a symbol of Brazilian racial unity but a large, diverse people with lived experiences which are too often overlooked (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística). The pardo population is in a unique situation racially since their position on the color line is both unclear and unfixed as there are no requirements for lineage to be pardo. The result is a clouded view of the pardo community—who belongs, who does not, and how to dictate this line is uncertain, even to most pardos themselves. The pardo identity is essential to demystifying our understanding of race and power to make progress toward equity, as it occupies a theoretical “third space,” which exists outside of widely understood racial binaries. It is a microcosm for the growing sentiment that we are in a postracial society as we continue to become more racially mixed, when in fact, the ideology of post-racialism is in fact rooted in racism itself. Instead of being a symbol of progress for racial equity, mixed race identity in Brazil is appropriated by the nation as a sanitized form of unity, exotic appeal, and nationalism. This work will examine the identity of mixed-race Brazilians from historical, political, and social lenses to deconstruct the image of the pardo along with the myth that Brazil is a racial paradise which avoids the horrors of racism. Rather than focusing on a single lens to analyze racial thought, this work will add to existing literature on Brazilian race by providing a perspective from every angle to focus in on the moving target that is mixed-race identity.

PREFACE

Before I can discuss the history of race mixing in Brazil, I must briefly discuss the nuances of racial terms used in Brazil. The system of racial classification in Brazil is highly nuanced to the point that so many different terms exist, it would be impossible to define them all in the scope of this investigation. Furthermore, there is often debate as to which terms are the appropriate ones. I will be using the term *preto* in this study to refer to Black Afro-Brazilians who do not identify as mixed as it is the racial term that is used in the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) census. However, I also recognize that the term *negro* is growing as an alternative to *preto* as *preto* is often linked to societal color bias. *Preto* is most commonly used in official contexts such as government census, while *negro* is

often used colloquially as a self-identifying term. Both terms can be contextually considered offensive and at the time of writing there is no universally agreed upon term. I have chosen to use *preto* as it will more clearly demonstrate the contrast between personal identification and IBGE census data. As for racial terms used for mixed-race people, the term *pardo* will be used in general for mixed-race people as it is also the official IBGE term. If I am referring to a specific mixture of races, the appropriate term will be used.

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

To understand the dimensions of the many *pardo* identities, it is first necessary to understand the historical background of miscegenation and slavery in Brazil so that the context for Black heritage in so many Brazilians is clear. At the initial point of colonization for Brazil, most enslaved people were indigenous and acquired either through trade or war (Fragoso and Krause 2). The mixture of indigenous and European and indigenous identities marked the new racial identity called *mestiço*. However, in the second half of the sixteenth century, slave labor made the transition to enslaved African labor both to keep up with the demand of the sugar boom and assuage the objections made by Jesuits to enslavement of indigenous populations (de Almeida 5). As a result of this transition, there was a large population of African enslaved people in Brazil that could also produce another mixed race with Black roots.

The enslavement of Africans and new Black presence bore two new colonial racial categories of mixed people: the *cafuzos*, a mixture of African and indigenous ancestries, and the *mulatos*, a mixture of European and African ancestries. *Mulatos* specifically grew in large numbers after the sixteenth century as enslaved African women were often the victims of extreme sexual abuse by Europeans; for these women, systemic rape was an often occurrence as a form of slave punishment, sex-power gratification, or sometimes simply to produce more labor since slave status was traced through the mother (Aidoo 1). Miscegenation was prevalent in Brazil more so than other colonies in the Americas due to the sheer number of African people in the country, with Brazil importing the most enslaved people of any nation (SlaveVoyages.org). The result was that Brazil's population was largely mixed throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During this period, Brazil began to form its nuanced racial hierarchy

as mixed identities had children with one another, which produced even more obscure racial categories with different power dynamics. The high population of *mulatos* led to Brazilian racial classifications becoming increasingly intricate, relying on phenotype and color (de Almeida 6). This contrasted with other colonized nations at the time, like the United States, where less mixing occurred so less racial categories were recognized. The U.S.'s "one drop rule," for example, is on the opposite extreme of racial categorizing as Brazil's system. The racial thought of Brazil regarding mixed-race people was quite peculiar as no other colonized nation had nearly as many Africans and miscegenation was not conceptualized as shamefully as it was in other countries at the time. The result of this period of colonial history is a highly diverse population with a uniquely developed racial classification systems by dictated almost entirely by skin color.

In 1850, the slave trade was effectively ended in Brazil (Bethell 114-5). As a result, the population of enslaved people was doomed to decline as there was not a supply of new enslaved people coming in to replace any that had passed away, and the population of enslaved women was too low to repopulate (Bethell 115). The overall population of Black and mixed-race people, however, did not decline as they continued to live on and have children of their own that were increasingly born free. At the turn of the century, the emancipation of Brazil shook up the racial dynamics the country had previously known as free *pretos* and *mulatos* began to integrate into society. Yet, this was not as ideologically progressive as it was politically. Scientific racism, the viewpoint that Black and mixed people were biologically inferior to whites, was still prevalent at the closing of the nineteenth century (Costa 40). As a result, racial mixing was not encouraged among most Brazilians for fears of racial degeneration. Still, miscegenation was not as taboo as it was in other countries due the perceived "willingness" of *mulata* women (Haberly 35). At the same time, elite circles found race mixing to be a major issue. The *pardo* image was largely shrouded in suspicion nearing the onset of the twentieth century as *mulatos* specifically were perceived as a mischievous threat to white society which resulted in a political and cultural turn toward "whitening" Brazil. European immigrants were encouraged to come work in Brazil in hopes that the population would whiten over time (Owensby 327). Brazil's highly nuanced, color-based racial hierarchy

allowed for gradual whitening as a solution to supposed population degeneration since miscegenation was not forbidden, and because the *pardo* population was largely socially mobile based on the gradation of their skin.

These conceptions of race, color, and miscegenation all shifted in the 1930s as a new image of the *pardo* emerged in Brazilian culture: idealization. Internationally, for example, Brazilian *mulatos* became to be known as the picture of success for miscegenation for their beauty and supposed symbolism of the end of racial prejudices (da Cruz Brito 112). This international tokenism of the *mulato* became a sense of pride for Brazilians as sociologist Gilberto Freyre released his famous work, *Casa-grande e senzala* (The Master and the Slaves), in 1933. Freyre argued that miscegenation made a stronger race of *mestiços* and *mulatos* who adopted the biological and social advantages of both races in their lineage (*Casa-grande e senzala* 87). Through his theories, Freyre also popularized the concept of *democracia racial* (racial democracy) as a way of understanding race relations, which was the idea that Brazilians do not view each other through the lens of race because they are all so mixed that they unify into one superior race. The conclusion Freyre drew from the *democracia racial* theory is that Brazilians are not racist due to their history of miscegenation, mixed heritage, and superior understanding of race relations—in essence, it is a racial paradise (New World in the Tropics 8-9). *Democracia racial*, though widely recognized as factual at the time, is entirely based on historical erasure and whitewashing; for example, it is based on the historical inaccuracies that Brazilians do not view each other through the lens of race, that they are not racist, and that *mulatos* were born out of a divine conception. The rhetoric resulted in a complete overhaul of national identity for Brazil. The bodies of people of mixed-race descent, especially *mulatos*, were appropriated as an image of Brazilian racial progressivism and equality. Miscegenation, which was previously regarded on the international stage as a national shame, became a source of pride. In the eyes of racial democracy, miscegenation—often caused by sexual exploitation and rape—was a divine act between two consenting parties that birthed a new race. Whites were able to justify their superiority through their skin color since Brazil's racial thought was based on phenotype while at the same time appropriating mixedness into a new form of Brazilian pride through *democracia racial*.

Freyre's ideology of racial democracy was realized in national culture in the first dictatorship of the century headed by Getúlio Vargas from 1930-1945. Through the nationalist rhetoric of *mestiçagem* (miscegenation), the Vargas regime pushed for cultural iconography through samba, carnival, and soccer to further construct the myth of racial paradise (Eakin 80). The government connected the ideology of racial paradise to samba, carnival, and soccer by marking them as a uniquely Brazilian mixture of other cultures—which of course has racial undertones—so that everyone could celebrate *mestiçagem*. The connection between samba, carnival, and soccer with racial paradise was also noteworthy as they are all forms of performance and can be consumed by an international stage. Racial democracy culture put the *pardo* identity on display by idealizing it as integral to these cultural activities and while at the same time benefitting from the labor of *preto* Brazilians that also participated but were still marginalized. In this way, the Vargas dictatorship appropriated these activities as uniquely Brazilian and solidified the Freyrian ideology of racial paradise into the culture of Brazil for decades to come as the three traditions became synonymous with Brazilian national identity—and thus, Brazilian racial identity—not just for Brazilians but around the world. This continued when during the second dictatorship in the 1960s, the fascist military government amended the constitution to legislate the ideology, by way of “[reintroducing] the prohibition of race distinctions” to promote the notion of a single Brazilian race, as well as outlawing racial discrimination to punish those who believed in racial difference (Htun 65).

As the dictatorship neared its expiration in the 1970s, identity-based social justice campaigns began to popularize in response to the military government such as the Movimento Negro (Black Movement), a feminist wave, and a reconstruction of the indigenous *quilombo* ethnicity which coincided with a fortified indigenous movement (Costa 45). Identity movements were in direct contradiction to racial democracy and the rhetoric of the military dictatorship. This uprising rejected the government rhetoric of the multiracial character of Brazil which suggested the decomposition of black, white, and indigenous identities to fully actualize to a racial paradise (Costa 46). Since the fall of the dictatorship, Brazil has become increasingly self-aware of its racist past, the harm that racial democracy

ideologies caused, and the concerning way the mixed body was idealized. Racial democracy ideology was increasingly and is now widely recognized as a myth both in and outside of Brazil, as it is based on the false conclusion that racism is eroded by racial mixing, such as the misconception that mixed people are a sort of “savior” of post-racialism. It attributes and simplifies racism, power, and social progress to the presence of “mixed” people, which relies on a biologically essentialist viewpoint of race and misunderstands social constructions of identity. With this understanding of why the previously held ideology was a national myth, the Brazilian government, as well as its people, looked to amend their race relations through various forms of reparations. Still, though racial democracy itself is explicitly considered a myth, it implicitly persists in self-identification of Brazilians and national politics. At its core, Brazil had not given up its attachment to racial democracy, nor its color-based racial hierarchy. Although Brazil claims to be reckoning with its racist past, many *pardo* Brazilians still identify as white to earn a better standing in the racial hierarchy. The *mulato* is also still idealized. As radical reparations, affirmative action, and antiracism integrate themselves into Brazilian politics, racial thought in Brazil is often pushed in a dichotomous direction so that the recipients of these reparations are easier to determine (Htun 67). This proves to be highly problematic for not only mixed identities, but also the Black community as the image of blackness grows progressively murkier as they are awarded more reparations. The history of racial identity in Brazil combined with current media and politics sets the stage for modern *pardo* identity formation.

MIXED RACE SCHOLARSHIP AND THEORY

Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS) approaches theory with an understanding that mixed-race people will share a social and psychological struggle having a foot in multiple camps when it comes to racial identity. Brazil is a unique case when examining the theory and otherization of mixed-race people from their heritage racial groups because the Brazilian mixed-race identity has formed its own distinct and incredibly nuanced set of identities. For this reason, this work will review theoretical scholarship both general and specific to the Brazilian context. These works will be put in conversation to refine a theoretical perspective as to how the mixed-race body moves and is moved through space in Brazil, and in what ways this is advantageous and taken advantage of.

General Theory of Mixed-Race Identity

Critical Race Theory (CRT) understands racial identity of any type from a social constructionist perspective. That is, (1) race is created by humans rather than natural forces, (2) race is integral to a society's social fabric in tandem with other social constructs, and (3) racial meanings are changing rather than fixed and do so quickly (Haney Lopez 969). This naturally proposes a conflict for mixed-race identity as well as for the ontology of the term "mixed-race." Philosophers such as Charles Mills arguing for racial constructivism find that the impact of race as a social category still has immense power over society even if races themselves do not exist concretely (Parker and Song 5). The social category of mixed-race faces a particular struggle in that it often coincides with racial rejection from the heritage racial groups of the individual. Neither group sees the mixed-race person as fully a member of their identity as they are perceived to be unfamiliar with its experience in some integral way. For this reason, mixed-race people develop a "mestiza consciousness," which is the cognitive navigation of multiple allegiances and racial spaces at the same time, and how those allegiances may communicate, intersect, and conflict (Anzaldúa). This consciousness is developed at the borderland of such identities and encompasses their similarities and differences as well as its own unique pieces all at the same time (Anzaldúa). It is these borderlands that mixed identity lives in and must navigate. Multiraciality can encompass all racial identities that it is composed of, while at the same time none of them and constitute its own unique identity. Mixed race identity can thus be interpreted as moving through space, transcending into its own space, and as I will argue in the context in the context of *pardo* Brazilians, taking up all space at the same time.

Some scholars do not see mixed-race people as being a part of the racial space that is the black-white binary at all. This ideology, which could coincide with Freyre's view of *mestiçagem*, places mixed-race people in a paradoxical space, completely outside the space of racial binary, in which they transcend the socially acceptable norms of racial hierarchy. This scholarship focuses most heavily not on marginality, where mixed-race people feel out of place, but rather where they feel in place and what paradoxical spaces constitute this feeling of place. According to theorist Minelle Mahtani, multiraciality is "an emanci-

patory geography” which “examines new relationships between power, knowledge, space and social action” (180). This theory of transcending space argues that because multiraciality does not exist in the racial binary system, it liberates the person to create identity on their own plane of existence that is unique to their experience. Put simply, people who are perceived to be mixed-race experience different racial relationships with the world around them than anyone who is perceived to be monoracial, therefore they transcend into what is labelled paradoxical, or third space. In the context of Brazil, this theory may be understood as a *mulato* individual seeing themselves as *mulato* and completely separate from being white and Black.

Brazilian Racial Theory and its Impact on Multiraciality

Prior to the twentieth century, Brazil’s theory of multiraciality revolved around anthropologist Raymundo Nina Rodrigues’s theory of mongrelization, in which mixed people eclipsed upon whiteness (Eakin 52). This theory was overhauled in 1933 when Gilberto Freyre published his groundbreaking work, *Casa-grande e senzala* and ruptured the entire Brazilian discourse about multiraciality. Freyre’s works fell in line with third space theory, arguing that Brazilian identity was based in miscegenation and hybridity, and the resulting people were uniquely Brazilian, occupying a space outside of race as the rest of the world knew it (Eakin 63). Key to Freyre’s *democracia racial* theory was that all Brazilians were included in this third space of multiraciality. This concept of *brasilidade mestiça* (mixed Brazilianness) theorized the nation of Brazil to be unified in its diversity because everyone was included in this mixed identity (Costa 42). Mixed bodies were appropriated to fit a nationalist narrative that assuaged white guilt by allowing everyone into the third space of multiraciality but at the same time forbade Black bodies from this third space due to their dark skin. Freyre’s ideology of mixedness, which became the narrative of Brazil, was that all Brazilians had transcended into this romanticized third space where they surpassed the antiquated society of racism and entered racial paradise.

In the early 1970s, United States historian Carl Degler challenged Freyre’s theory of racial democracy with his own theory—the mulatto escape hatch. This theory followed the conceptualization of “betwixt and between” by placing mixed-race, particularly *mulato*, people on the Black-white racial binary in the middle yet argued that they could

navigate and mobilize toward whiteness. Degler contended that because *mulatos* in Brazil were distinguished from Blacks, they held more social mobility and thus the “mulatto escape hatch” allowed them to break out of the racial polarization that countries like the United States faced (Winant 177). This theory of multiracial identity rose as the military dictatorship fell and the ideals of racial democracy fell along with it. The question of class was often conflated with race in this argument, blaming dark-skinned *pretos* for their own marginalization by arguing that they could just improve their class standing while at the same time blamed lighter-skinned *pardos* for their own marginalization by arguing they had social mobility.

Identity-based groups like Movimento Negro were at the forefront of challenging the dictatorship. They often challenged the *democracia racial* ideology of the state with racialized identity politics to recognize difference and promote Black consciousness and pride. The return to democracy in the 1980s marked a lot of political change which reflected changing ideologies about race in Brazil, often through cultural recognition, radical reparations, and affirmative action for Afro-Brazilians in legislative environments (Htun 66). Mixed-race people were included in these efforts and considered to be part of the *preto* community rather than their own separate one. The closing decades of the twentieth century were marked by a push to reformulate Brazilian racial ideologies into a binary system. For example, “[t]he National Human Rights Program... suggested that the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) adopt a dichotomous definition of race” (Htun 67). This suggestion reflected shifting attitudes about race and multiraciality in Brazil—instead of distinguishing *pardos* into a third space outside the binary or even in their own space on the binary, they were considered to occupy the space of blackness exclusively. During this period, the Black-white binary was encouraged. The dichotomous theory of race problematizes the mixed-race identity as a form of diluting Black heritage and proposes that Black heritage be a definite, determining factor in one’s identity. As a result, the post-dictatorship new millennia multiracial ideology in Brazil was largely placed in blackness.

With an understanding of the theoretical background regarding mixed-race identity in general as well as in Brazil specifically, it is now possible to introduce a theory as to what racial space *pardos* in Brazil

occupy. I propose that in the context of Brazil, the mixed-race identity constitutes not only a movement amongst the racial binary, but also a placement in its own paradoxical third space; therefore, the *pardo* identity constitutes all racial space at all times. This work will take an interdisciplinary approach to evaluate relevant CMRS theories while also positing them with one another to create a new perspective on the condition of being mixed-race in Brazil.

THE TRUE MEANING OF RACIAL AUTO-IDENTIFICATION

In this section and the next, I will be examining two primary objects of study to argue that mixed-race people occupy all spaces of racial identity in Brazil. These objects of study are (1) IBGE census data in contrast with personal racial identification narratives, and (2) images and expressions of race in popular media. The result will be a comprehensive viewpoint of what Brazilian society maintains as their racial identity after the decline of racial democracy, as well as how this affects individual Brazilians' perception of their own identity.

In my objects of study, I will be excluding the census categories of *amarela* (Asian), *indígena* (indigenous) as well as color terms related exclusively to those categories from consideration. This is because, in terms of popular discourse surrounding racial space in Brazil, *amarela* and *indígena* people are rarely mentioned, except for *indígena* people as a source of mixing for races, more as an ingredient to race rather than one itself. While they are foundational categories of identification for many Brazilians, and in fact are identified as such throughout national census data, they are removed from the cultural identity of race in Brazil. This is not to underscore the importance of these identities in Brazilian culture; rather, it is to make explicit and problematize their exclusion from racial discourse. The racial categories are largely ignored and often removed from racial space entirely or are simply placed in the fringes of Black racial space. As a result, this study will focus primarily on the ways that mixed-race Brazilians navigate through the racial spaces which are related to the *branco*, *pardo*, and *preto* categories and hopes to see investigation of *amarela* and *indígena* identities in future scholarship.

Furthermore, it is crucial to note the difference in precision of language for “race” and “color” in Brazilian Portuguese. While Brazilians often argue that their classification system is based on color

rather than race, the two terms of *raça* (race) and *cor* (color) are used in the same way. According to Edward Telles, “the Brazilian notion of color (*cor*) is equivalent to race because it is associated with a racial ideology that ranks persons of different colors... color captures the Brazilian equivalent of the English language term race” (qtd in Monk 414). While Brazilians argue that “color” better describes their census and contextual categories, I will continue to use the term “race” as the two are the same in their implications. IBGE has also notably used the phrase “color or race” in their data collecting meaning that the two are the same in practical use even if Brazilians argue otherwise (“Lessons from Brazil” 310). In this section, I will analyze the trends in IBGE national racial census data and synthesize it with self-described identity that exists outside the context of government documents. This comparison will highlight the impact of racial identity on different facets of one’s life, and more specifically, the impact of *pardo* identity and remnants of racial democracy in different parts of Brazilian society.

Census Data of Branco Brazilians

I will be referencing the 2010 census as the 2020 census has yet to be conducted at the time of this study due to the coronavirus pandemic. The census lists five racial categories to choose from: *branca* (white), *preta* (Black), *amarela* (Asian), *parda* (mixed), and *indígena* (indigenous). Brazilians identifying as *branco* account for 47.7% of the population, which is an 11% decrease from the previous census data of 53.7% in 2000 (IBGE 2010, 2000). In the context of racial democracy, this change is suspect to white Brazilians wanting to identify with third space multiraciality. This conclusion is consistent with other recent data on white Brazilians as well; one study found that the number of *brancos* in the 1980 census was 9% and 6% lower than projected for white men and women respectively and found a suggested net movement of people out of the *branco* category and into the *pardo* category (de Carvalho et al 335). Clearly, even before considering the disparity in personal racial identification outside of the official census, there is already a demonstrated decrease in white identification and increase in identification with a sense of multiraciality. This movement suggests that the myth of racial democracy and the romanticized *mulato* are still prevalent in Brazilian society as whites demonstrate a desire to reposition themselves in this racial identity. It

is particularly compelling that rather than indicating a desire to maintain its locality in whiteness as an institution, the *branco* populace of Brazil is instead choosing to forgo the racial benefits of *branquitude* (whiteness) and proximate itself within mixedness instead. The migration speaks to the influence that third space raciality has over white institutions as the *pardo* identity begins to occupy white space.

Census Data of Pardo Brazilians

As for the *pardo* identity, it is unsurprising that the census data reflects the trends hypothesized by the decrease in Brazilians identifying with *branquitude*. In 2010, *pardo* Brazilians made for the second-largest racial group in the country at 43.1%, which was about a 13% increase from previous census data (IBGE 2010, 2000). In the short span of 10 years, there was a significant increase in the mixed population, which suggests that *brancos* are associating more with *pardo* identity than whiteness. This is consistent in the previous years of data from the 1991 census when there was a net loss of all racial categories, but a net gain in the *pardo* category for both men and women (de Carvalho et al 336). It is not only *branco* Brazilians who are positing themselves near multiraciality; it is all Brazilians of many identities that are still buying into the myth of racial democracy. The influence of *pardo* identity and racial democracy in all racial space is clear in its growing prevalence amongst multiple racial groups.

Census Data of Preto Brazilians

The final set of census data to analyze is the *preto* category, which constitutes 7.6% of the 2010 census (IBGE 2010). The *preto* population actually increased between the 2000 and 2010 census, with a 22.6% increase in population over just ten years (IBGE 2000). Though the population of *pretos* is overall a small percentage of the total population, the increase of *preto*-identifying Brazilians between the two census periods is quite significant. Examining a longer period further solidifies this trend as the *preto* population increased about 30% between the 1991 and 2000 census, which was “due to racial reclassification alone,” meaning the increase is solely attributed to Brazilians already counted in the census as a different race changing their own identity to *preto* (Miranda 63). This reclassification is due to *pardos* moving into the *preto* category from the impact of Movimento Negro pushing for Black pride and a more dichotomous view of race

in the 1980s and 1990s, as discussed in the historical background section. As a result, this increase is due to *pardo* people occupying blackness. While this data alone does not demonstrate the positing of *preto* Brazilians closer to mixedness, I will reiterate that this would not prove my hypothesis that *pardos* occupy all racial space because people of color will always posit themselves closer to lighter shades to racially benefit from higher status. Thus, this fact alone is insufficient to prove that *pardos* occupy Black racial space. It is more important to this study that *pardos* are choosing to identify with Black space which they are doing in increasing numbers. Third space multiraciality is undoubtedly important to *preto* Brazilians, however, the key takeaway from the census data of the *preto* population is that it is growing, and it is growing due to *pardo* reclassification into the *preto* category. Therefore, *pardo* identity occupies the racial space blackness, in addition to the other spaces it occupies.

The Influence of Morenidade

The most prominent disparity between census identification and personal identification is the use of the term *pardo* (mixed) instead of *moreno* (tan) in the census. *Moreno* is a catch-all term that many people of all racial groups could fit into. It is an ambiguous category that can range in meaning from “white person with brunet hair” to ‘black person,’ often depending on locality” and what descriptor is attached to it such as *morena-clara* (light tan) on the whiter side *morena-escura* (dark tan) on the darker side (Telles 1610). Many Brazilians argue that *moreno* is a more appropriate census category for their identities as *pardo* indicates that a person is of mixed descent rather than what their skin color is. The term is connected closely to Freyre’s racial democracy as it refers to *morenidade* (tannedness, mixedness) as key to the Brazilian racial identity. Even after the fall of racial democracy, it is not uncommon to hear that *moreno* is the color of Brazil (“Brasil quer ser chamado de moreno”). As a result, there is a large push to modify census terminology so that it reflects the popular usage of *moreno* in place of *pardo*.

This disparity in census and personal identification is telling of not only the legacy of racial democracy, but also the authority that third space multiracial identity still has over all racial spaces. One study examining the discrepancies between free choice self-identifica-

tion and forced-choice reidentification based on census categories found that:

...only 37.4% of our free-choice morenos [reidentified themselves as pardos] ... our sample of freely self-identified morenos seem almost as likely to reidentify themselves as brancos or pretos as to reidentify as pardos...using the moreno instead of the pardo option leads to approximately 25% to 60% fewer whites in the so-called white category... 31% of free-choice morenos switch to calling themselves brancos in the forced-pardo option. (Harris et al 458-9)

This study demonstrates that most who identify as *moreno* in the context of their personal lives do not actually identify with the government official census identity of being mixed-race that is *pardo*. White Brazilians appropriate the identity of third space multiraciality by using obscure race-color terms such as *morena-clara* and *morena-castanha* (cashew-like tan) while Black Brazilians are positing themselves near *morenidade* by describing their dark color as *morena-escura* and *morena-fechada* (very dark) to try to gain privilege. *Moreno* is an identity that all Brazilians, no matter their race, can participate in so that they can claim to occupy the racial space of mixedness. The usage of *moreno* and associated terms is a desperate cling to participate in the third space *morenidade* that was idealized in the Freyrian era.

The prevalence of *moreno* identity and push for its inclusion in the Brazilian census to replace *pardo* demonstrates the command that mixed racialism still has over Brazilian culture. While *pardo* more specifically refers to mixed descent individuals, *moreno* refers to an ambiguous sense of brownness, which is historically associated with the Freyrian concept of *mestizaje* and *brasilidade*. As a result, the *moreno* identity is more popular among Brazilians outside of the census because it allows them access to *mestizaje* without having to be of socially acknowledged mixed descent. White Brazilians' usage of *moreno* identity evidences the influence that multiraciality has over white racial space. Though it would make more sense in the racial hierarchy for whites to identify as such, the general preference is still to access the mixed-race paradoxical space through obscuring the term *moreno*. As a result, mixed-race identity occupies the racial space of whiteness.

On the other hand, *pardo* identity also manifests itself within the space of blackness. This is expressed through recent movements to

broaden the definition of *negro* and through contextual identification dependent on the color of one's surroundings. *Pardo*-identifying Brazilians on the census identifying as Black colloquially are key to understanding the occupation of Black space, albeit less common than the other way around. As there exist more Black consciousness movements aimed at changing Brazil's view of race to that of a dichotomy, many *pardo* people are beginning to change their self-perception in settings apart from official government censuses. There is a population of mixed-race *pardo* people who prefer identifying as Black in personal identification to create solidarity among Black Brazilians and to destigmatize the concept of Black blood. One study found that regardless of census identification, "with every 10% increase in the proportion of African ancestry, the odds of self-declaring as black increased 14 times" meaning that identifying with blackness is especially common amongst darker-skinned *pardos* (Chor et al 1). This idea of collective blackness has allowed *pardo* Brazilians to access the racial space of Black identity outside of census-based government documentation so that they can still reap the benefits of being officially classified as *pardo*.

The mixed-race identity occupies the space of blackness as *pardos* describe themselves as *negros* outside of the census. Even though it is more racially beneficial for multiracial individuals to identify with *pardo*, some continue to self-identify with the *negro* community as they can access this space through their phenotypical disconnect from whiteness. Mixed-race people are most certainly not white, and are also not by most Brazilian definitions Black, but are able to identify as such by navigating rhetorical and physical spaces of dichotomization and find themselves closer to blackness. As a result, the mixed-race identity also occupies the racial space of blackness through its opposition to whiteness, supported by new waves of binarism.

THE VISIBILITY OF RACIAL IDENTITY IN BRAZIL

This section will consider the Brazilian media as a crucial object of racial identification for Brazilians of every shade. I will compare images and discussions of race and mixed-race in contemporary Brazilian society to unravel the constructs of race in popular media. This work will analyze racial space in popular media via three different avenues: (1) expressions of racial identity by famous Brazilians, namely, soccer stars, (2) demonstrations of race in popular television shows,

and (3) popular rhetoric surrounding race in debating the concept of affirmative action and quotas.

Racial Identity Representation in Soccer

In Brazil, soccer is king—not just among sports, but also among the entire national culture and the identity that has formed around it. Since it is such a popular cultural phenomenon, it is crucial to consider how racial space is represented by the players. This analysis will question why famous individuals relate to certain racial spaces more than others, and what these relations symbolize for different racial communities.

Neymar da Silva Santos Júnior, or simply Neymar, is a mixed-race soccer player that is largely regarded as one of the best in the world. However, as Neymar rose to fame, his racial identity became increasingly important to his presence on the Brazilian national stage. In a 2010 interview with *O Estado de São Paulo*, a reporter asked Neymar if he had ever experienced racism, to which he replied: “Never. Not in the field, nor outside of it... It’s not like I’m black, you know?” (dos Anjos). In his response to questions of racism, Neymar chose to distance himself from blackness. While it is true that Neymar might not see himself as *preto*, he denies racism altogether and does not even identify himself as *pardo*. It was in the same interview that Neymar detailed his “hair care regime, which involved getting his locks chemically straightened every few weeks, then bleached blonde” (“Is Neymar Black?”). The juxtaposition between denying being Black, not claiming third space multiraciality and then in the same interview discussing bleaching processes akin to whitening is telling. Neymar is communicating his racial identity as closer to whiteness. He is proximate to whiteness due to his status and wealth and furthers this by embracing phenotypical whitening while denying African heritage. As a result, mixed-race soccer star Neymar communicates his racial identity through a lens of whiteness. Through Neymar’s expression of racial identity, *pardo* people have a place within whiteness. A common notion when analyzing racial mobility in Brazil is that “money whitens” which describes Neymar. As Neymar has access to money and

status through his mega stardom from soccer, he can proximate his own identity closer to whiteness as he gains other privileges. He can deny his Black roots and discuss the “whiter” parts about himself in a way that a darker, *preto* or *negro*-identifying player would not be able to do. This reflects Brazilian society as *pardos* do have the ability to move into *branco* racial space dependent on their presentation and actions.

Another case of a *pardo* soccer player placing themselves near whiteness is soccer legend Ronaldo Luís Nazário de Lima, commonly known as Ronaldo. In a 2005 interview with *Folha de São Paulo*, when asked about racism, Ronaldo identified himself as *branco* to reporters (Rangel). Additionally, in a 2011 interview with *Financial Times*, Ronaldo discussed the fatphobic comments made against him by distancing himself from the space of blackness: “There are mobilizations for many things. If you’re black or gay, they defend you. I don’t remember anyone defending me when they called me fat” (qtd. in Travae). By connecting the word “black” to “you,” he was clearly implying that he himself is not Black, which is why he was not being defended from fatphobic comments. Ronaldo continually places himself within the space of whiteness publicly, and like Neymar, can do so because of his white heritage, lighter skin, money, status, but also his juxtapositioning himself as contradictory to blackness.

With Ronaldo’s proclamation of whiteness on top of Neymar’s disassociation from blackness, expressions of racial identity by Brazilian soccer stars are especially white. *Pardos* especially can assimilate into this white space because many are justifiably connected to white heritage in ways that other nonwhite racial identities are not. In Ronaldo’s case, some even claim whiteness as a racial identity—full stop—because of their status and pigmentation. Through social whitening cues, it is entirely possible for *pardo* identity to manifest itself within whiteness as demonstrated by mixed-race soccer stars.

Demonstrations of Race in Brazilian Television

Another form of media that easily reaches Brazilians across many

different states, races, and economic backgrounds is that of television. Reigning queen of televised media in Brazil is the *novela* (roughly, soap opera); however, in general “television in Brazil has become the main medium available for society to think about itself, to learn about itself, and to discuss itself” (Faria & Potter 255). In this section, I will analyze the demonstrations of race in Brazilian *novelas*, while also considering other genres of popular television, namely, through a serial comedy, *Mister Brau*, which is noteworthy in Brazilian culture for its casting of two leading characters that are not only Black, but also affluent.

Brazilian *novelas* are a crucial source of identity formation and localization for not only individuals, but also for the nation at large, and even internationally. In fact, Goulart argues that:

‘...soap operas are responsible for the elaboration and spread of identity models.’ In other words, Brazilian soap operas permeate all levels and instances of Brazilian society, having an impact not only on how Brazilian people view their own society, but also in other aspects such as policy planning, political alignment, etc. (30).

Soap operas are a method in which Brazilians define not only their racial identities, but also the spaces and movements in which those identities may participate in. Brazilian soap operas are a white-dominated space which makes roles for *preto* and *pardo* Brazilians extremely sparse; often, there are not roles available for people of color other than “in subservience, such as maids, janitors, and criminals” (Marshall). As a result, the few people of color who grace the screen are often lighter-skinned, mixed-race, *pardo* people who are made to represent the racial space of blackness as a whole.

Rather than separate the racial spaces of *pardo* and *negro*, *novelas* dictate that *pardo* identity occupies the space of blackness and uses the mixed-race identity as a stand-in for dark-skinned Afro-Brazilians. For example, one study found that out of the twenty-two *novelas* aired on the popular *Globo* network, only four had leading roles portrayed by a Black actress (notably, none with Black actors) and all three of the leading actresses in the *novelas* were *parda* —nearly passing as white (Goulart 41). These *novelas* are a reflection, and at the same time a blueprint, for the ways in which mixed-race people may occupy racial space. Rather than casting *preto* or *negro* identifying in-

dividuals to represent blackness in *novelas*, producers instead opt for the lighter-skinned *pardas* to do the job. On one hand, this is a clear-cut case of colorism and is commonplace in countries with other more dichotomous racial identification systems. However, in those countries, this colorist practice is a demonstration of the racial space that mixed-race people occupy—that they are simply Black. Though in Brazil it is considered a separate identity, *pardo* people still manage to occupy the space of blackness in popular media. *Pardo* identity commands Black identity as it solely represents it in *novelas* without hesitation.

Ideology behind multiraciality and space is also demonstrated through the recent serial comedy *Mister Brau*. The show is unique in that it not only casts two Black leads, but also that these characters are affluent and do not represent Black service to white prosperity. One scene in the second episode demonstrates the usage of Black bodies as vehicles for Freyrian propaganda and the occupation and replacement of *pardo* identity over Black space. In the scene, Mister Brau, who has darker skin, is questioning the “skin-colored bandages” because they are much lighter than what most Brazilians racially look like (Carter 350). Mister Brau contends that the bandages should be of many skin tones, opposing the viewpoint of his friend Lima, who is also darker-skinned and Black, and argues for understanding skin color in Brazil as exclusively dark (Carter 350). The dialogue turns when Mister Brau begins to argue for the antiquated ideals of racial democracy. Mister Brau creates new bandages with a varying range of skin tone shades and sums up his opinions on both the bandages and multiraciality by saying, “[our] intention, my intention, was to always mix the different colors. Mixing is always more healthful” (Carter 351).

This scene is interesting because it is such a blatant display of support for ideals of racial democracy. At first, the show’s protagonist is arguing with another Black man—both of whom fit the description for *preto/negro* racial identification—about the skin color of Brazil being multiracial versus being Black. While it is true that Mister Brau’s description of Brazil being a multicolored nation is technically

a more accurate representation of the country, it is quite jarring put in contrast with the opinions of the side character, Lima, who is of a darker skin tone. As a result, the juxtaposition between the two viewpoints of the Black men makes the viewer consider why it is important for Brazil to demonstrate its multiraciality rather than its blackness in the market of bandages. The mixed-race identity overwhelms the Black racial space as the two Black men discuss and debate the inclusion of multiraciality.

Mister Brau is being used as a vehicle to propagate the occupation of racial space by the *pardo* identity. He specifically argues that “mixing is always healthful”—perpetuating the old racial democracy rhetoric that miscegenation improves the Brazilian people into one genetically superior race. By pushing this rhetoric, he acts as a vessel for promoting the mixed-race identity. *Mister Brau* thus demonstrates the occupation of racial space by not only using Black bodies to discuss the significance of multiraciality in market goods, but also by using them to promote the general concept of miscegenation and mixed-race people. In this way, the mixed-race identity literally occupies Black space as it is explicitly being expressed through a Black man.

Pardo Identity in Conversation with Affirmative Action

Affirmative action was first adopted by most state agencies and ministries in the 1990s and in the early 2000s was adopted by most universities (Htun 68-72). Today, affirmative action programs and racial quotas are a widespread practice in Brazil throughout its government, and media, and universities which has sparked a debate over “who is Black,” how Black one must be to access the policies—which inherently centers the *pardo* identity. This section will examine popular discourse and debate surrounding affirmative action to discern what space the mixed-race identity may take up in racial space that is official in terms of being policy and political yet exists outside of the national census.

Pardo identity and its place in racial space are under intense scrutiny through affirmative action as it questions the limits of whiteness, blackness, and third space multiraciality as each function in society. For example, anthropology professor at Universidade de Brasília José Jorge de Carvalho argues that the quota systems should be imple-

mented by color and phenotype rather than heritage since:

...a light-coloured person standing in the 'wrong' queue would certainly be called to account 'by word, gesture, or a sideways look' from 'phenotypically black' fellow applicants, leading to... [possible] exclusion of the applicant from the entire process... he

[de Carvalho] is concerned that [*pardo*] people might misassign themselves. The language used... shows that he sets aside as irrelevant the cast area of doubt represented by *mestiços*, *morenos*, and *pardos*. (Lehmann 85)

Pardos "misassigning" themselves is a demonstration of some parts of the *pardo* identity belonging to the space of whiteness. As de Carvalho and others argue, some *pardos* may belong to the racial space of whiteness due to their skin color, hair, eyes, status, and class among other things. This perspective of the affirmative action debate considers the *pardo* identity as flexible and variant; certainly, the identity may occupy the space of blackness if the person looks phenotypically dark, but it may also occupy whiteness or its own third space of multiraciality if the person phenotypically presents as such.

This argument is based purely on phenotype and disconnects entirely from the concept of heritage-based racial identity, resulting in mixed-race identity belonging to multiple spaces depending on phenotype. The argument demonstrates that multiracial identity in Brazil can move throughout racial space, but also occupy all of it at the same time. If this purely phenotypical perspective of race is used to evaluate quota eligibility, some *pardo* people may modify their appearance to "pass" as Black or white, as some did to receive affirmative action benefits, which means that *pardo* identity can migrate through racial space ('Race Fraud'). The identity occupies all the racial spaces at once since *pardos* with different skin tones can occupy multiple realms of racial identity, while an individual *pardo* person can also manifest their identity in multiple racial spaces at once depending on context and surroundings.

Conversely, to many progressive activists looking to destigmatize the presence of Black blood in one's lineage, the preferred way of judging whether one receives affirmative action benefits and is considered Black is through their own self-identification of African heritage without regard to phenotypical appearance. These advocates, such as

researcher Renato Emerson dos Santos, argue that binaristic views of race to determine affirmative action status is important since the:

“...positive connotations of blackness could be undermined” [because] ...students who were excluded from the black quota by the means test would not develop a consciousness of their black identity because of their exclusion from the benefits of affirmative action, even though they themselves may have suffered discrimination on account of their colour. (Lehmann 91)

They argue that excluding mixed-race people from the quota policies would disconnect them from the blackness that they belong to and that it would continue to disgrace African descent. Even though *pardo* people constitute a wide range of skin colors, it is still quite easy to determine who has Black roots and who does not by appearance. Jocelino Freitas, a student at Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) argues: “Ask the police. I bet they can tell you who is black... We may not spend a lot of time talking about who is black and who is white, but we live in color everyday” (Jeter). It is quite evident in any society that anti-blackness is at the core of how we understand and theorize racial identity, though the Brazilian myth of racial democracy says otherwise, and such anti-blackness does not discriminate *pardos* from its terrors, even while they enjoy privileges of their white heritage. Freitas finds that although some *pardos* are of significantly lighter shades than *pretos*, they still face a similar type of discrimination due to their heritage, albeit on a different scale.

Through this perspective, the mixed-race identity occupies the space of blackness. Although phenotype matters in some forms of discrimination, it does not prohibit multiraciality from existing within the space of blackness. Black Consciousness advocates who want to remove the negative association from Black identity believe that the inclusion of *pardo* people into Black racial space is not only justified due to their heritage, but also integral to expanding the Black community and making it stronger to fight against racist institutions. As a result, the *pardo* identity is welcomed into blackness as a form of solidarity and an expression of dichotomy. The affirmative action debate demonstrates that multiraciality occupies the racial space of blackness while it also occupies the third space and whiteness according to the opposing side of the argument.

The media has a large impact on the racial space that different bodies may occupy. From examining the expression of identity from Brazilian soccer stars, the *pardo* identity can manifest itself in whiteness depending on the circumstance. Wealth, fame, status, and light skin give some *pardo* people access to migrate throughout the racial identification system into the whiter side of the spectrum. Representations of racial identity in television media, such as *novelas* and serial comedies, demonstrate that *pardo* identity is often viewed as a more palatable replacement for Black identity. Rather than viewing the two identities as part of separate racial spaces, Brazilian television sees the *pardo* identity as a sexier representation of blackness. This form of media replaces dark skin with light while conflating the two as interchangeable parts of the same whole. Finally, in the affirmative action debate, the *pardo* identity is constantly under scrutiny for its placement in racial space. According to some, it can occupy all racial spaces, dependent solely on one's phenotype. This viewpoint understands these spaces as fluid for *pardos*, so one person can move through multiple spaces at different times or exist in any and all at the same time. The opposing argument views *pardo* identity as a facet of blackness—full stop. The heritage of African ancestry is enough to definitively incorporate multiraciality within the racial space of blackness. Through studying the different representations of racial identity within the media, *pardo* identity can manifest within multiple racial spaces, not only overall, but also at once.

CONCLUSIONS

Brazilian racial space is quite complex. Its history combined with its racial identification system lead to a skewed and inconsistent understanding of what racial bodies fit where in Brazilian society. Matters are complicated further when the individual is of mixed-race descent. Mixed-race Brazilians not only come from many different backgrounds, but also descend from those backgrounds in various proportions, resulting in numerous skin tones. This created a virtually infinite number of race identifying color-based terms which divide the mixed-race community into numerous sub-communities, that all see themselves as different. Nearly all of these communities accumulate into one census-based category known as *pardo*, which has been the primary focus of this study.

To identify what Brazilian racial spaces are available for occupation, it is necessary to identify which spaces were historically available

in the Brazilian racial hierarchy and why. I established this background in my first section which examined the history of racial identity formation in Brazil. Throughout history, the racial space system changes from an intricate spectrum of many spaces and shapes into its modern form of two spaces on the spectrum and one outside of it in a paradoxical space. It is through different ideological developments in Brazilian history that each racial space is made available for multi-racial identity to occupy. However, it is through political and social avenues that racial bodies express the spaces in which they reside. Official census data gives a political perspective of how identities occupy racial space, but this still lacks a complete context for how they identify. As a result, social representations of identity are also necessary to paint the full picture of how mixed-race identity exerts its spatial occupancy. The occupation of racial space is manifested in different ways depending on what sphere of Brazilian life is being examined. For example, mixed-race identity, in a more official political setting, is commonly expressed through the *pardo* identity option, while in a more casual setting, is more often expressed through numerous, obscure color-identity terms. Media representations often contrast both the political and the casual social sphere's expressions of racial identity, and as a result, the racial space that mixed-race identity occupies is found through a comparison of all these realms.

There are blatant gaps between census identification and casual self-identification. Most Brazilians do not use the census categories to describe themselves colloquially, and the most robust example of the disparity between official and self-identification is the term *moreno*. The term is so often used by people as a color description that most who self-identify as *moreno* are more likely to identify in the census as *preto* or *branco*, rather than *pardo* even while *pardos* make up such a large percentage of the population (Harris 458-9). As a result, the term is a clear example of the impact of racial democracy on Brazil: although most Brazilians no longer believe in racial democracy or the idea of a nation of one race, many have still internalized the romanticization of third space multiraciality and use the *moreno* identity to proximate themselves to it. At the same time, this demonstrates the influence that mixed-race identity has over racial spaces and particularly white ones. The usage of *moreno* by those who reclassify themselves as *branco* in the census is counterintuitive in a racial

hierarchy. These individuals would be, in a sense, forfeiting their white racial power in favor of proximity to the third space. However, as they are white, they manage to both benefit from this symbolic racial identity while still maintaining their privilege. Multiraciality has a considerable influence over the racial space of whiteness and occupies it through that influence.

When examining the modern era of racial space in Brazil, it is imperative to analyze the representations of racial space through popular media. According to Brazilian soccer stars, it is wealth, status, and colorism that often allow mixed-race individuals in Brazil to assimilate into white racial space even if they cannot justify it through their racial heritage which demonstrates that mixed-race identity has a place within whiteness. Brazilian television tells a different story. In *novelas* for example, mixed-race bodies are used to represent blackness in place of *preto* or *negro* identifying individuals. These representations force the darker skin out in favor of lighter skin while employing a dichotomized view of race and deem Black spaces appropriate for multiraciality. Brazilian television often perpetuates dichotomous views of race in Brazil, but in doing so, minimizes the existence of dark-skinned Black voices. Finally, multiracial identity is expressed in racial space in a highly inconsistent way when examined through the lens of affirmative action. The affirmative action debate centers around definitions of race dictated by phenotype or heritage. On one side, phenotype is considered most important, so mixed-race people fit into whatever racial space they appear to be— even if they do not necessarily identify that way— viewing multiraciality as able to occupy any given racial space depending on one's appearance. On the other side, supporters of Black advocacy movements argue for affirmative action based on descent: if you are Black in any amount, even if you look phenotypically white or mixed, you deserve to receive reparations via affirmative action so *pardos* do occupy Black racial space no matter what. Again, the *negro* and *preto* experience is decentralized in the conversation about reparations to make room for mixed-race identity. Mixed-race identity, as demonstrated by the affirmative action debate, can occupy multiple racial spaces in different contexts.

Multiraciality in Brazil is a difficult concept to unravel because it has developed from a unique perspective on miscegenation that was later romanticized, resulting in a racial system which has recently fa-

vored what would normally be considered the pollution of races. In the years since the military dictatorship fell in 1985, Brazilians have been reshaping the ways in which they conceptualized mixed-race identity. However, as the legacy of racial democracy is deeply ingrained Brazilian society, so much of the idealization and fetishization has had lasting effects even if many Brazilians recognize the ideology of racial democracy to be false. The only question remaining is: where does this leave the mixed-race population of Brazil? As they occupy all realms of racial space, *pardo* Brazilians often live with constant racial paradigm shifts depending on the context of their interactions. To some, they exist in the space of whiteness or third space multiraciality by their lighter skin and the benefits they reap from it. To others, their Afro-Brazilian heritage will always define them within the space of blackness no matter what—which saddles them with whatever consequences come from that perception of race. Multiraciality, as a concept, is still idealized to some degree, but these attitudes often do not apply to actual multiracial people in the same way that they apply to white people. It is trendy and exotic for white Brazilians to approximate themselves near the third space, demonstrated by their use of the term *moreno* for their identities, while those of actual mixed descent often try to move away from the third space and into whiteness, as was demonstrated by Brazilian soccer stars. Mixed-race Brazilians are moved throughout racial space—by themselves and by others—as racial props to support whatever narrative is being pushed at the time.

Thus, the question of the third space remains. Often, the third space does not benefit *pardos* other than not being read as “fully” Black. The third space is an idealized, paradoxical realm which holds more expectations than reality in Brazil. Mixed people were glorified for their image and what they represented, which led to their tokenization and fetishization in this space. It is not at all helpful or beneficial for promoting racial justice to be racially idealized; in fact, it works in the opposite direction as another form of racism. The third space is a division between the *pardo* and *negro/preto* communities of Brazil as it centralizes whiteness as key to escaping the social ill and discrimination that comes along with the space of blackness. In essence, the third space is both figuratively and literally above the racial spectrum. It exists above Black space in a literal sense since the lighter

skin that is often characteristic of multiracial people is favored in Brazilian society, while it exists figuratively above white space as *brancos* are constantly appropriating it by trying to reach the nationalized ideals of racial perfection. It is this spatial placement above blackness which strategically tore down and continues to tear down Afro-Brazilian solidarity.

The current racial system makes it extremely difficult to navigate an already complex racial identity. To truly commit to racial justice and adequately address the ways that racism operates structurally in Brazil, the system of racial space needs to bring third space multiraciality “back down to Earth” on the “normal” racial spectrum so that Afro-Brazilian solidarity may be used to combat racism. As long as mixed-race people occupy a racial space that exists above the racial spectrum, the legacy of racial democracy will never truly die. It is true that multiracial identity may still occupy multiple racial spaces even if the paradoxical third space is lowered. However, removing the exaltation attached to mixedness will open the door for bringing together a larger Afro-Brazilian community, even if *pardos* and *negros* and *pretos* still identify as racially different. This would also effectively end the white appropriation of multiracial third space as it would no longer be idealized to be mixed since it would exist within the “normal” realm of raciality. This is no small feat, and to many activists’ credit, Brazilians across the country are working to this end and have made admirable progress.

While this change is a sign of momentum for de-romanticizing third space multiracial identity, there is still progress to be made as these changes do not yet fully address the scope of racial identity in Brazil. Until that point, however, pardo Brazilians continue to constitute all racial spaces at all times, including a third space multiraciality which brings them back into a Freyrian racial dictatorship. It will take the work of Brazilians across the racial spectrum to surmount this legacy and work toward the racially progressive society that they have been claiming to be for decades.

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