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READING RACE:

ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN BRAZIL

By

Jennifer Judith Manthei

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As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Jennifer Judith Manthei entitled Reading Race: Adolescent Girls in Brazil and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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I would like to thank

The Manthei and Jürgens families
for their perennial encouragement and support

~

Shelly Adrian, for her personal and professional support

~

Ida Feldman and The Jacobs Foundation for their generous contributions
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated,
with love and appreciation, to

Quinn, Rowan, and Paul
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This dissertation investigates the roles of color, class, and gender discourses in the lives of adolescent and post-adolescent girls in Brazil. Specifically, it examines girls' multiple perspectives, embedded in diverse social locations, and the ways in which girls interpret and deploy particular elements of color and class discourses in their projects of self-making. The results of the study provide insight into the diverse ways in which identity discourses may be experienced and contributes to qualitative analyses of color identity and relations in contemporary Brazil.

Disaggregating the data according to the participants' color and class reveals distinct views on color classification, perceptions of racism, and the role of color in partner preferences. Whereas the lighter/wealthier girls (re)produce discourses of systematic racism, the darker/poorer girls (re)produced discourses of color equality and individualism. A holistic approach to their ideological systems reveals that each group selects discursive elements that grant dignity, self-worth, and personal integrity to their particular social location.

The manner in which girls interpret and deploy color images is also variable. For example, the lighter/wealthier girls tended to dismiss the national image of the sexy *mulata* (female of both African and European heritage) as a product for export, whereas
darker/poorer girls appropriated the *mulata* as a positive model of attractiveness and self-worth in their daily constructions of self.

Furthermore, this research discusses how partner expectations and career aspirations are mutually constructive and lead to an ideal life trajectory culminating in financial independence. Although the ideal shared by all young girls, their ability to pursue the trajectory varies, patterned by color and class. The fact that poorer and darker girls cling to high professional goals in an unsupportive environment, bolstered by the ideology of individual willpower, is interpreted as a specifically adolescent discourse of hope.

In summary, this dissertation illustrates multiple ways in which discourses of identity may be experienced, interpreted, and deployed in daily life and self-making. Investigating how color discourses are invoked by these adolescent girls representing particular social locations contributes to a more complex, heterogeneous understanding of color identities and relations in contemporary Brazil.
"A white woman to marry, a black woman to work, and a mulata to screw."

This traditional expression, which peppers the literature on race in Brazil, is a rich resource for analyzing configurations of color and gender within a complex matrix of identity and social relations. It harkens back to the social structure of slavery, describing a tripartite system consisting of: the white woman, model of virtue and beauty, appropriate for marriage and procreation, and deserving sexual protection and surveillance; the black woman, undesirable, and appropriate only for manual or domestic labor; and the mulata (female of both African and European heritage), hypersexual, attractive, and appropriate for illicit relations but not marriage. These color/gender stereotypes originated under slavery and survived after abolition, supported by laws prohibiting men from marrying women of lower class or darker color, Church policies that expressed lower expectations of marriage or premarital virginity for women of color, and other social practices that contributed to the differential sexual roles and social functions of the three categories of women.

The images of the color/gender system were crystalized in the works of Gilberto Freyre, who has provided the cornerstone of Brazilian theories of national identity since the 1930s. Freyre was concerned to overthrow theories of scientific racism; he accomplishes this through asserting that miscegenation has led to a superior culture and race, national unity, and racial harmony. He is generally credited for the discourse of 'racial
democracy’ that dominated 20th century constructions of national identity. The *mulata* is central to his project; she represents not only the product but also the vehicle for racial and cultural mixing, as well as proof of ‘racial democracy.’ Thus her sexual availability is instrumental to the construction and merit of the nation.

Other members of the literati developed highly elaborate images of the *mulata*. In rebelling against European ‘decadence,’ many Modernist and regionalist writers drew upon the underclasses—the poor, indigenous peoples, and blacks—as fresh symbols of the nation, distinctly Brazilian. In elaborating on these populations, they effectively created and perpetuated stereotypes. Among them was the *mulata*, who was portrayed as animalistic, nonintellectual, dependent on sex/seduction, sexually available, less marriageable, and appropriate for illicit relations. This sexy *mulata* is not merely an instrument; rather, she is imbued with an inherent hypersexuality, and depicted as a willing participant in her own exploitation.

Writers of extremely varied political persuasions have used color\(^1\)/gender constructions as part of their toolkits in describing their visions of national identity and social order. The *mulata*, in particular, has been described as a “wood for all works” [Fonseca 2000:213], an image easily adapted to fit multiple projects. For decades, the formal

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\(^1\) In this dissertation, I generally use the term ‘color’ rather than ‘race.’ As explained in Chapter 3, ‘color’ indexes specific discourses as well as common usage in Brazil. However, in a general sense, color is closely related to ‘race’ as defined by Faye Harrison as “an ideologically charged distinction in social stratification and as a social and often legal classification applied to people presumed to share common physical or biological traits... Sometimes the racially designated populations are believed to share, at least
discourses of 20th century literature were dominated by the concept of racial democracy. However, with the end of the military dictatorship and gradual transition to democracy, writers have increasingly problematized this vision of race and the nation.Indeed, in the late 20th century, the literature on race in Brazil has turned toward deconstructing the suppressive nature of 'racial democracy' discourses and demonstrating systematic racism in such areas as education, employment, and residence patterns. These new discourses now compete with traditional stances in contemporary Brazil.

The purpose of this dissertation research is to investigate images and discourses of color identity and relations in contemporary Brazil, with attention to gender and class. Despite the large body of literature and quantitative analyses of race in Brazil, qualitative studies are scarce; in fact, Michael Hanchard has declared that “Brazil may be one of the most understudied multiracial polities in terms of everyday racism” [1999:27]. Furthermore, there has been a general taboo that limits analysis of race and gender in relation to one another; this proscription has only recently been superceded by a handful of recent studies in Brazil. This dissertation responds to the call for more qualitative work, as well as the importance of soliciting multiple perspectives, grounded in the lived experience of individuals of diverse social locations, in constructing a more complex, heterogeneous understanding of social relations [Pratt 1997].

\[\text{in part, some socially salient ancestry... construed to be of social significance and consequence to the dominant social order}^\text{2} [2002:145].\]

\[\text{2 See, for example, Goldstein 2000 and Twine 1998.}\]
This study of color images and discourses grants special attention to the image of the *mulata*, a particularly salient intersection of color and gender image, embedded in broad issues of identity. The primary participants are adolescent girls and young women, ages 10-25. The girls represent a wide range of colors and socioeconomic classes, providing a diverse sample for investigating perspectives and patterns in relation to social location.

The dissertation begins with a literature review, which serves as a base for the questions addressed in the chapters: How is color constructed by girls of different social locations? What are the girls' perceptions and discourses surrounding racism/color prejudice? What color and color/gender images exist, and how are they perceived and deployed? And finally, what are the ramifications of the girls' own color and class on their aspirations, expectations, and experiences in the life trajectory—including relationships (dating, marriage, sexuality), education, and employment? The chapters are broken down as follows.

Chapter 1. *Writing Race* describes the historical construction of color/gender construction, with particular attention to the *mulata*, through a literature review of colonialism and sexuality, predominant discourses of Brazilian national identity, and literary visions of Brazil. Each area illustrates how the figure of the *mulata* has been elaborated as part of a race/gender system. The images produced in the literature serve as a starting point for the study, shaping research questions designed to elicit multiple perspectives and discourses regarding color and gender identities and relations in contemporary Brazil.
Chapter 2. *Meninas de Minas: Methods* explains the research methodology—site and sample, as well as the content of the interviews. This qualitative study was carried out in Juiz de Fora, a medium-size city in the state of Minas Gerais (but near Rio de Janeiro), in 2001. The primary sample consisted of 78 girls ages 10-25 representing a broad spectrum of colors and socioeconomic classes, with a focus on poorer populations. Supportive interviews included adult women, boys, men, and health professionals for context and comparison.

Chapters 3-5 are based on participants’ discourses elicited in response to questions explicitly related to race. They address the basic building blocks of color terms and classification systems, overt descriptions of racial meanings, covert meanings and color/gender stereotypes, and the symbolic functions and interactions of stereotypes on a discursive level.

Chapter 3. *Who’s Who, Says Who: Color Terms and Classification* interrogates the color terms and classification systems used by participants. This analysis explains the basic units of analysis used in investigating correlations between color and other variables. The chapter establishes the significance of participants’ own color and class in using color terms and classifications, introduces differential perspectives based on social location (according to color and class), and leads into issues of symbolic meaning and color relations.
Chapter 4. Reading Race: Manners and Taste expands on the different perspectives introduced in Chapter 3 in describing perceptions of racism and the importance of color in partner preferences. This chapter demonstrates how participants draw on diverse discourses of color in constructing positive self-identities, characterized by dignity and personal integrity, within particular social locations. The process illustrates how discourses of color may be subverted, transformed, perpetuated, and appropriated as part of these projects of self-making.

Chapter 5. Hot Mulatas (and Sexy Blondes) delves into the more elaborate meanings of the *mulata* for different populations in contemporary Brazil. The chapter investigates the girls' interpretation and deployment of the *mulata* image, as well as its relevance to daily self-making and issues of national and international identity. Again, the discursive function of the *mulata* is patterned by the girls' own color and class. For some, the *mulata* indexes the commercialization of a national symbol. For others, the *mulata* serves as a positive self-identity, based largely on attractiveness and social worth.

Chapter 6. 'These Days' and Life Trajectories assesses responses to questions regarding participants' aspirations, expectations, and experiences regarding dating, sexuality, marriage, education, and employment. The data are analyzed with attention to color and class. This strategy reveals that expectations regarding partners and careers are mutually informative, and result in ideal life trajectories that are shared across color and class.
However, the girls' ability to pursue the ideal varies widely, patterned by their color and class, largely due to differentials in social support, racism, and class structure. The girls' life goals and strategies speak to a particularly adolescent discourse of hope.

The Conclusion summarizes the results from each chapters, highlighting the cross-cutting discourses of dignity, self-esteem, personal integrity, and hope. The dissertation describes how, in the process of self-making, adolescent girls of diverse social locations draw upon a variety of color, class, and gender discourses. These multiple perspectives contribute a more complex, nuanced understanding of color identity and relations in contemporary Brazil.
CHAPTER ONE
WRITING RACE

The peculiarities of race relations in Brazil have captured the attention of a wide range of writers through several generations. There is an enormous national and international literature theorizing the origin, nature, and politics of race in Brazil, and a recent surge in quantitative studies among Brazilian and foreign scholars (see Chapter Three). However, there is very little in the way of qualitative race research. A primary aim of this research is to demonstrate how interdisciplinary, qualitative studies contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex social mechanisms that give rise to the correlations found in quantitative studies. The qualitative sources, in this instance, are a combination of historical, literary, sociological, and ethnographic investigations. The goal of this chapter is to introduce existing literature on race—with special attention to the mulata—in order to ground the results of ethnographic work presented in the following chapters.\(^3\)

In this chapter, I braid selective strands of research into a reconstruction of ‘the mulata,’ a paradigm of race/gender relations in Brazil. First, the literature on colonization describes the centrality of race and sexual control in maintaining social hierarchies. The practical roles of the Church, the law, and various social practices worked in tandem with

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\(^3\) Other contemporary researchers have undertaken interdisciplinary investigations of race/gender constructions and nation-building in Latin America. There are many parallels between the Brazilian and Cuban mulatas. For a thorough discussion of the stereotype of the mulata, national identity, and Cuban society, see Kutinska 1993, Martinez-Alier 1974, and Ana Ortiz (unpublished). The centrality of race and gender to nation-building is also seen in Argentina, although the symbolic product contrasts with the
discourses of moral identity that naturalized a hierarchy of race/gender constructions, including the sexually accessible *mulata*.

Second, this image was crystallized in discourses of national identity. In the works of prominent nationalist ideologue Gilberto Freyre, the *mulata* is highly instrumental, providing the very means of national integration and value, as well as the rationalization of colonization and social hierarchy.

Third, the *mulata* and other race/gender constructions appear in popular literature, where they are elaborated—imbued with particular, ostensibly innate characteristics. The *mulata* is not only a symbol or instrument but becomes inherently sexual. Popular novels—most notably in the works of Jorge Amado—demonstrate how the image of the sexy *mulata* may also be used as a vehicle for advancing very different national ideals.

Taken together, studies of colonialism, nationalism, and literature reveal how race is written—how racial identities and relations are asserted and naturalized—and how the *mulata* is deployed in decreeing a particular social order or vision of the nation.

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*mulata*, as discussed by Hanway (2003). For a discussion of honor, purity, sexual control, gender roles, and power in Mexico, see Alonso 1997.
FAIR GAME: THE COLONIAL/POST-COLONIAL
CONSTRUCTION OF THE MULATA

As a Portuguese colony (1500-1822), Brazil was structured by latifundary monoculture based on slave labor, and absorbed an enormous portion of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Today, Brazil represents the largest African diaspora in the world. Brazilian history is monotonously touted as the great meeting of the three races (European, African, and Indigenous). However, the terms of encounter are often elided. Colonial scholarship indicates that colonization is a project of power and inequality, and requires the constant construction, maintenance, and justification of hierarchies. Stratification is pluralistic, predicated on race, class, gender, and sexuality, which function simultaneously [Hall 1982; Madden and Hyde 1998; Stoler 1995]. The purpose of these categories is to maintain clear divisions between the colonizer and colonized; restricting membership is a means of safeguarding the privileges and power of the colonizers.

Restricting membership requires restricting new members—not letting power and wealth be dissipated by recognizing the offspring of colonizer/owner with colonized/slaves as legitimate heirs. Thus sexuality and reproduction are central to constructing and maintaining categories. “The regulation of sexual relations was central to the development of particular kinds of colonial settlements and to the allocation of economic activity within them. Who bedded and wedded with whom in the colonies… was not left to chance” [Stoler 1995:636-637]. Thus it is not surprising that “[s]exual prescriptions by
class, race and gender became increasingly central to the politics of rule and subject to new forms of scrutiny by colonial states” [Stoler 1995:635]. Throughout colonization, “the sexual sanctions and conjugal prohibitions of colonial agents were rigorously debated and carefully codified” by major power brokers advocating the settlement patterns that best served their interests [Stoler 1995:637]. In Brazil, laws and church policies restricted marriage to partners of equal (and higher) status. Laws, Church policies, and discourses and practices (including the dowry system) helped protect against the infiltration of the darker skinned and/or poor through marriage [Nazzari 1996].

The maintenance of borders was also supported by discourses of moral identity. Race and gender were taken as biologically exclusive categories, ordering mechanisms that had to do with defining European identities in contrast to colonized Others. They were ideologically protected through “language of difference that drew on images of racial purity and sexual virtue” [Stoler 1995:10]. Discourses of moral identity ascribed differential gender roles and sexual natures according to race, class, and gender [Madden and Hyde 1998]. In a historical analysis of affection and relationships, Linda-Anne Rebhun [1995b] describes how marriage and extramarital relations were marked by class and race. Only the rich (light skinned) could afford or had practical reason to marry legally, because marriage was generally about economic and social consolidation. It was not based on love, but rather mutual economic interdependence; hopefully, a degree of affection would develop. Male sexuality was both a biological imperative expressing power and a source of pleasure. Female volition was irrelevant to sexual relations. Upper-
class women’s sexuality was a commodity associated with inheritance and confined to marriage. The upper-class wife was emotionally isolated—her role was merely to produce heirs—while slaves provided for the physical and emotional needs of the family [1995b]. The white woman were to bear as many children as possible, starting at a young age, which led to premature aging and shorter life expectancies [Freyre 1986: 361-366; Queiroz 1975:28]. Thus the white woman was highly secluded and her sexuality rigorously guarded through early marriage and severe penalties for extra-marital relations, flirtations, or signs of independence [Queiroz 1975:27-28; Saffioti 1976:106-107; Silva 1991:164]. She was inculcated with submission and the cult of motherhood and virginity, and deviance was treated as insanity, resulting in incarceration in a convent [Silva 1991:164].

Slaves and lower-class women’s sexuality belonged to powerful men in a different way [Rebhun 1995b]. As part of their powerful patrimony, the white sons of slave owners were socialized for an early sexual initiation with slave girls [Nascimento and Nascimento 2001:123]. Since white females were supposed to preserve their chastity, how could white males prove their virility through premarital sex? With slaves, who represented a “guaranteed means of extramarital adventures with impunity” [Queiroz 1975:26]. Thus the rape of slaves preserved white male virility and white female chastity. Mulatas were preferred over negras, judged closer to the white beauty ideal [Queiroz 1975:27-29].
The sexual exploitation of the darker woman was rationalized and naturalized by attributing the relations to her own hypersexuality. According to some racist discourses, Africans are inherently hypersexual. According to others,

slavery distorted the slaves' sexuality, and the racists justified such distortions by inventing the myth of the sadistic sexuality of the black man, the immorality of the black woman, and the promiscuity of the mulata [Fraginal in Ruf 1997:90].

The process Ruf describes in Cuba is the same in Brazil: "the mulata came to be associated with illicit pleasures that were rationalized on account of the mulata's supposed hedonism" [1997:90]. The blame is shifted to the woman, who becomes the seductress, through the argument of the "irresistibility and immorality of the woman of color as effective justifying elements for male extramarital impulses, without any moral risk on the part of the conqueror" [Queiroz 1975:26]. The combination of her sexual availability—with no moral inhibitions—and ascribed lasciviousness combined to form the mulata as an object of desire.

Defining divergent sexualities along the lines of race reinforces beliefs in nonwhites' inferiority and helps to justify their political and economic subordination [Irvine 1995:59]. The construction of sexuality is actually a major component of the construction of race [Stoler 1995:20]. Thus the historical production of the highly sexualized mulata stereotype exemplifies how sexuality is a central domain of both race and gender power relations. The Brazilian mulata, like the Cuban mulata, "is a symbolic container for all the tricky questions about how race, gender, and sexuality inflect the power relations" in the colonial and postcolonial nation [Kutzinski 1993:7]. The traditional saying 'A white
woman to marry, a black woman to work, and a *mulata* to screw' is part of a racist
discourse developed to naturalize, justify, and support an economic order based on
slavery [Medeiros 1984:69]. It also illustrates how desire, sexuality, and sexual behaviors
are culturally and historically constructed [Irvine 1994; Stoler 1995].

Due to their socioeconomic position and supposed nature, women of darker color were
likely to be considered 'fair game'—lacking the protection afforded by a related male
who ensures her reputation by controlling her sexuality. As Janice Irvine notes, a
common consequence of slavery is that women of color are considered "unrapeable and
instead always sexually available" [1995:5, 58]. The characterization of women of color
as sexually accessible leaves them extraordinarily vulnerable [Irvine 1995:50]. Rebhun
considers Brazilian *mulatas* categorically fair game—having no social right to refuse
sexual advances [1995a:5]. This system of racial roles and privileges persisted long after
abolition (1888). Upper-class men continued to use their power to attract or coerce lower-
class women into affairs [Rebhun 1995b] (the vast majority of women of color were
lower class). These identities and relations were perpetuated through a law against men
marrying women of lower status (racial or economic), and the Church's diminished
expectations of marriage and premarital virginity for darker women [Myscowski 1998;
Nazzari 1996]. These factors supported cultural taboos against interracial marriage, and
encouraged interracial sex outside of marriage—that is, extramarital relations of white
men with darker women [Degler 1971; Nazarri 1996].
Thus legal and religious elements contributed to historical practices that created “a reserve of unmarried and sexually available women” by limiting mixed-race women to consensual unions, concubinage, and clandestine or coercive sexual relations with married men [Myscofski 1998:334-335]. Brazilian race historian Degler asserts that “extramarital sexuality between races effectively reduces a whole race to the level of prostitutes” [1971;190]. Though overstated, his point is taken. Concubinage generally occurred between a more powerful white man and a lower-status woman. This was a highly attractive situation for the man, and he had full support. Only women were prosecuted (by the state) for adultery. Men were only forced to marry concubines if they were of the same status. As long as he chose a woman of lower status (darker skinned and/or poorer), he had no financial obligation to her. “Men consciously chose to establish two different relationships with women, concubinage and marriage, usually choosing them sequentially, the former before the latter” [Nazzari 1996:118]. Presumably, the woman had no choice in the relationship or chose it for the benefits it afforded her (gifts). “Concubinage was therefore a relation of much power for the male and conscious submission for the female, in which the determining factors were the inequalities of race, class, and gender between the partners” [Nazzari 1996:119].

From review of the laws, Church policies, and everyday discourses and practices, a central image emerges: the powerful Portuguese male and the sexual African female in

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4 Evidence may be seen in the fact that in 1798 São Paulo, 46% of households were headed by single women [Myscofski 1998:335].
sexual relation. It is not surprising that so many point to the symbolic dualism of conqueror/conquered, man/woman, white/black in this dyad. As Stoler writes about colonial scholarship, "sexual domination has figured as a social metaphor of European supremacy" [1995:636]. And bell hooks says:

Race and sex have always been overlapping discourses in the United States. That discourse began in slavery. ... black women's bodies were the discursive terrain, the playing fields where racism and sexism converged. Rape as both right and rite of the white male dominating group was a cultural norm. Rape was also an apt metaphor for European imperialist colonization of Africa and North America. Sexuality has always provided gendered metaphors for colonization [1990:57].

However, it is important to remember that this dyad is not just a convenient metaphor. Sexuality—mutually constructed with race, class, and gender—is not just a symbol but an instrument of power [Stoler 1995]. Discourses and practices are mutually constructive. The symbolism in the dyad has an actual referent in social organization and lived experience. Discourses are descriptive and prescriptive, and they are power laden. Images are deployed within a particular political economy for particular purposes. There is a flow among the State, the Church, various power brokers, and the literati. Although there isn't seamless confluence of interests, they respond to each other, build on each other's discourses and policies toward mutual, parallel, or even conflictual goals.

The following sections describe how colonial laws, practices, and discourses of moral identity formed the base for the 20th century representations of national identity. Indeed, the mulata has been dramatically instrumental in expressing notions of the nation. She has been and is a "wood for all works" [Fonseca 2000:213], presenting certain stable
elements yet constantly renegotiated to meet present needs. Although members of the literati have different goals, they share a common method: the deployment of the highly sexualized *mulata* image in asserting and naturalizing ideal social orders predicated on race, class, gender, and region. The symbolic versatility of the *mulata* is reflected in the persistence and pervasiveness of her image across time and ideologies.
BRAZILIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY: THE INSTRUMENTAL MULATA

The colonial/post-colonial and post-abolition construction of the mulata and other race/gender images provided a base for 20th century discourses of race and national identity. The most influential agent of the Brazilian literati was sociologist Gilberto Freyre. The manner in which Freyre reinterprets and crystallizes the master/slave image and locates it at the center of national identity has had enormous ramifications for 20th century discourses, policies, and social relations. In 1933, Freyre published what amounted to a manifesto of race and national identity in Brazil. His treatise *The Masters and the Slaves* [1986] and other works represent the cornerstone of racial thought domestically as well as determining international perceptions of race relations in Brazil. Freyre, like other writers in Latin America at the time, developed his treatise on national identity in an attempt to write a new identity and role for Brazil in international relations. This endeavor centered on reinterpreting the issue of race, and his works have had long-lasting effects on the perception and representation of race relations in Brazil. At the core of Freyre's theory is the issue of miscegenation, from which flow (1) a superior Brazilian race, nation, and future, (2) democratic or harmonious race relations; and (3) the sexually accessible mulata as a symbol of national identity. In order to understand how and why Freyre used race and miscegenation, some context is necessary.
The National/International Context and Scientific Racism

The late 1800s to 1930 saw major economic, political, and social changes in Brazil. Slavery was abolished (1888); there was political disruption, resulting in coups, the fall of the Old Republic, and the installation of the New Republic (1930). World War One wreaked economic and political havoc in Europe and interrupted relations with peripheral nations, which broke out of their import/export focus and developed domestic markets [Roseberry 1989:109]. From 1920-1930, Brazil experienced the turmoil associated with new urbanization, industrialization, and the growth of the middle class and urban proletariat [Ortiz 1985; Skidmore 1964, 1993]. The fall of Europe, new economic independence, and the confidence gained from participating in the war raised the perception that Brazilians could change the role assigned to them by Social Darwinism and European culture and could control their own destiny [Skidmore 1993].

For the first time the mainstream of Brazilian thought learned how to rebel against the framework within which European ideas had straitjacketed it—most important, to reject the determinism of racist thought [Skidmore 1993:146].

The major stumbling block to negotiating a new national identity and international role was scientific racism, developed in Europe in the 19th century. As Wilson points out, economic and political change go hand in hand with ideological production as dominant classes struggle to naturalize and legitimate a social order that supports them [1996]. Abolition represented a major change; thus, as Europeans campaigned for abolition, they were simultaneously developing ideological justifications for their continued economic dominance. The theory of scientific racism became the vehicle through which European
elites sought to legitimate their role as core nations and other countries' role as peripheral [Munanga 1996; Skidmore 1993].

In short, the premise of scientific racism is that European success was due to superior racial heredity (particularly Anglo-Saxon and Germanic) coupled with a uniquely favorable climate. Thus countries with large nonwhite populations and 'inferior' climates could never achieve their level of civilization but rather were doomed to underdevelopment, backwardness, and dependence on Europe [Brookshaw 1986; Skidmore 1993]. Since miscegenation was widely considered degenerative (the mixing of races leads to a biologically inferior species), the presence of *mulatos* was a sign of Brazilian inferiority. In fact, the racial and moral degeneration assumed to accompany miscegenation was considered a disease of the Brazilian social body [Borges 1993]. Brazil, with its subtropical climate and large nonwhite population, was destined to remain a primarily agricultural nation, inferior to and in service of Europe. Thus scientific racism expounded a 'natural order of inequality' [Wilson 1996] that legitimated and perpetuated exploitative relations through a discourse of racial hierarchy.

Because the legitimating ideology for European dominance was articulated through a discourse of race, racial theory became the forum for the contestation of exploitation as well as justification for a new order in which Brazil was not subjugated by Europe. The race problem for Brazil was seen primarily in terms of the population of African descent—the indigenous population was more marginal. As Ianni states, "[t]he problem
of the formation of the Brazilian people appears most frequently and obsessively in terms of the *negro*” [Ianni 1991:20]. The question of race and national identity had come to the fore on two previous occasions: the Declaration of Independence (1822) and the Abolition of Slavery (1888). The historical rupture preceding the Revolution of 1930 represented another decisive moment in which the literati’s thought returned to considering the presence of *negros* in Brazilian society [Ianni 1991:20-23].

During the early 20th century transformation, the new Brazilian reality required an adaptation in thought and image. This demand was met, in 1933, by Gilberto Freyre’s *The Masters and the Slaves* [Ortiz 1985]. Freyre was not the first to propound many of the themes in his works,5 but he managed to consolidate various elements of national thought and combine them in a very attractive package. His works have been so influential that “[m]any Brazilians will tell you that, in the future, the history of their country will be chronicled in two parts; that before and after Gilberto Freyre” [Tannenbaum in Davis 1999]. The broad acceptance enjoyed by Freyre’s work is not surprising in that he offered a positive image of Brazil, even a feeling of superiority, at a time when the elites were struggling to escape an inferiority complex vis-à-vis Europe [Medeiros 1984]. He reinterpreted each element of Brazilian racial identity in such a way as to assert cultural superiority and a bright future. As Ortiz states, “in reworking the problematic of Brazilian culture, Gilberto Freyre offers the Brazilian an identity card”

5 For discussion of the history of Brazilian race theory, see Hanchard 1999; Munanga 1999; Ortiz 1985; Skidmore 1993.
Race was a forum for providing a supportive ideology for a changed economic order.

The Three Races: A New Racial History for a New Future

In his work, Freyre reinterprets Brazil's racial constitution in a positive manner, allowing for the potential development of the nation. Critics generally refer to this new interpretation as the 'myth of the three races,' which led to the claim that Brazil is a racial democracy. First, Freyre asserts that each race—Portuguese, African, and Indian—has made significant and positive contributions to Brazilian society. Second, he claims the superiority of the founding races. The Portuguese are superior to other Europeans in that they are more 'plastic' and adaptable; less puritan than the English and less orthodox than the Spanish. The Africans weren't 'typical' Africans but rather "blacks of a white race," from advanced Islamic cultures [Fleischmann 1986:94]. Furthermore, they had a great disposition for survival in the tropics; they possessed superior hygiene and cuisine; and their technical and artistic skills often exceeded those of the Portuguese [Freyre 1986; Medeiros 1980, 1984]. (Indigenous populations are somewhat marginalized in Freyre's works; he considers them the worst in the Americas, but they still made important cultural contributions.) Third, Freyre claims that these three races came together through biological and cultural miscegenation, each contributing its best attributes, to form a new Brazilian race and culture, well adapted to the tropics. Thus, through miscegenation, Brazil became the home of a superior race. With the race question solved, Brazil had the
potential to advance from peripheral status to a core nation. In Brazil, as in other Latin American countries, the 'new race' represented a bonding identity, an important unifying and homogenizing factor in developing nationalism [Gellner 1983; Ortiz unpublished; Vasconcelos 1979, 1997].

**Racial Democracy and Suppressing Dissent**

Freyre’s discourse of inclusion is part of a project of national unification, which was consolidated in the 1930s. Ideas regarding national identity—particularly the idea of Brazil as a melting pot—established a discourse of nationalism and patriotism that would define racial discourse until the 1980s [Blajberg 1996; Davis 1999] and, I would argue, beyond. For decades, Freyre was lauded for inverting scientific racism and valorizing African Brazilian and (to a lesser extent) indigenous cultures along with the Portuguese. The ideological mainstay of Brazilian national identity—‘racial democracy’—is strongly associated with his work. I have seen ‘racial democracy’ defined/deployed in different manners in the literature: lack of racial consciousness, lack of racism, racial harmony, equal economic opportunity regardless of race, and equality in multiculturalism.

In any case, notwithstanding decades of homage, critics have thoroughly lambasted the discourse of racial democracy. As many have pointed out, claiming that Brazil’s unique history has resulted in a lack of racism that is central to national identity has been an effective means of suppressing dissent. That is, since Brazil was officially—and as a

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* The idea of miscegenation leading to a superior nation was put forth in José Vasconcelos’ treatise on the
matter of national pride—a racial democracy, any discussion of racism was considered racist and anti-nationalist [Degler 1971:184; Ortiz 1985]. The national ideology of racial democracy made any discussion of race suspect—anything based on race was considered racist. The 1930s were a time when “[t]he Negro could not open his mouth but that he was denounced as a racist” [Degler 1971:184]. Those who decried racism become, themselves, the racists. “The usual argument was, the only racial ‘problems’ in Brazil result from the agitation of those who claim there are problems” [Skidmore 1985:15].

Thus the majority of contemporary writers assert that racial democracy is a myth, part of an authoritarian state/elite project to suppress discussion of racism and silence dissent.

Skidmore describes the function of Freyre’s miscegenation:

Gilberto Freyre wrote the ‘apologia par excellence for the virtues of miscegenation... But in the end Freyre’s eloquence served primarily to reinforce the whitening ideal by showing how the overwhelmingly white elite had acquired valuable cultural assets from their intermixing with the non-European, especially the African. For both Brazilians and non-Brazilians, Freyre became the high priest of racial assimilation in the Portuguese-speaking world. He has remained to this day the intellectual talisman to whom the Brazilian elite turns when refuting any suggestion their society might be racist’ [1992:13-14].

The supposition of nonracism through ‘racial democracy’ was an attractive discourse for elites and governments throughout the 20th century because it exonerated their lack of attention and action. If racism is not recognized, then there is no need to develop corrective policies. In the literature, racial harmony has been debunked as a 'myth' that has served as a powerful legitimating tool, “critical to maintaining the status quo to this Mexican ‘cosmic race’ (a mixture led by the Spanish) and was adapted to other Latin American contexts.
day" [Brookshaw 1986:119]. Note the vehement denunciation of racial democracy in the following quotes:

- “The scholarly and political consequences of Freyre’s exceptionalist beliefs are encapsulated in the following question: Why bother to study or presume racial inequality in a place where it is nonexistent? Why should nonwhites struggle for civil rights in a society based on miscegenation and racial egalitarianism?” [Hanchard 1999:5].

- “What truly distinguishes Brazil... is not so much the nature of social injustice as the ideological dance of deception. Traditionally, analysts have been so enamored of the idea of harmony among races in Brazil as to largely ignore racial inequalities” [Nascimento and Nascimento 2001:111].

- There was no recognition of blacks’ greater disadvantages; “to offer or even suggest... social aid implies that the Negro suffers disabilities no other group does. It requires the admission of color prejudice, which the national myth explicitly denies” [Degler 1971:271].

- In simultaneously justifying racial hierarchy and suppressing dissent, the myth of racial democracy found in *The Masters and the Slaves* ended up being the perfect discourse for the defense of the dominant racial elite’s interests [Medeiros 1984:82].

According to critics, the lack of racial discourse reduces racial consciousness, hides racism, and impedes activism. Calls to nationalism required conformity, the repression of difference; thus racial debate and activism were stifled [Brown 1992:227; Davis 1999:10; Reichmann 1999:1]. As Hellwig states,

> The lack of racial consciousness stifles efforts to identify racist behavior and policies and retards the creation of organizations dedicated to the protection and advancement of black and brown citizens. Thus, critics of the myth of racial paradise claim, the racial status quo is effectively maintained [1992:10].

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Some authors have asserted that, rather than possessing a less racist society, Brazil’s hidden racism is the worst form of racism to combat. They evoke Sartre’s assertion that one cannot struggle against what does not (ostensibly) exist [Guimarães 2001:162], and Martin Luther King’s statement that “[i]t’s better to have an outright enemy than be fooled by someone of ostensible good will” [Degler 1971:271]. The pretty picture of racial democracy is a way of controlling people of color “without exercising visible violence... Here the violence is invisible...” [Valente 1987:27]. Silva deems ‘racial democracy’ a social control strategy par none:

As strange and paradoxical as it may seem, the most incredible and insidious existing racism in the Americas was implanted in Brazil through the pompous name of ‘racial democracy.’ Using this tactic of chameleon colors (hypocrisy), no other modality has managed to be as disguised. No other type achieved more internal and external prestige. No other species masked itself better in democratic and liberal status. And no other strategy of domination and immobilization managed to install itself more effectively and permanently [Silva 1984:177].

In short, critics decry the discourse of racial democracy as an ironic means of disguising racism. In a parallel manner, the discourse of miscegenation works to maintain a white cultural ideal.

**Whitening and The White Cultural Ideal**

Many critics have asserted that, underlying the theory of racial democracy through miscegenation, the prevailing ideal of national whitening continued. Very few Brazilian racial theorists in the early 1900s rejected the framework of scientific racism outright (as

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did Bomfim and Torres). Indeed, many adhered to the premise of degenerative miscegenation, in which case the presence of *mulatos* was a sign of national inferiority. However, there was a tendency to compromise with scientific racism through theories of whitening. That is, they accepted the premise of racial superiority but denied that it was innate or unchangeable. Furthermore, they asserted that Brazil stood a chance of overcoming its inferior stock through natural selection resulting in whitening. As Brown points out, "the miscegenation idea was ironically based on the notion that the greater the incidence of racial mixing, the closer to a pure white society, hence an adequate resolution to the race question" [Brown 1992:228]. Proponents of the whitening theory argued that the poor living conditions of African Brazilians, higher morbidity, preferences for white partners (to 'clean the womb' and 'improve the family'), lower birth rates, social disorganization, and naturally stronger white genes would eventually eradicate the darker population.  

Thus miscegenation was not meant to promote egalitarianism but rather to celebrate the disappearance of blacks as they were absorbed into an ever whiter society [Davis 1999:10; Skidmore 1976:211]. *Mulatos* were reinterpreted in the early 1900s as proof

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9 Many authors have also pointed out that the policies promoting immigration of Europeans at various times and the marginalization of African Brazilians in the economy are evidence (often quite explicit) of state/national support of whitening [Hellwig 1992; Nascimento 2001; Nascimento and Nascimento 2001; Silva 1996; Skidmore 1990, 1993].

10 In a report for the Minority Rights Group, Davis states that "Brazil wanted to become a country of white people. If that could not be attained demographically then Brazil would project an image of whiteness" [1999:10]. This statement reflects Ana Ortiz' assertion that the discourse of miscegenation is primarily symbolic, not material [1985:38]. The fact that the majority of Brazilian *mulatos* resulted from *mulato-mulato* unions, not white-black unions, also points to the metaphoric nature of the miscegenation arguments. Some may go as far to say that 'racial democracy' is but one of Brazilians' desperate compromises in an attempt to fit *negros* and *mulatos* into Brazilian history and society [Ianni 1991:21].
that the population was in the process of whitening, turning from black into white [Skidmore 1990, 1993]. "Instead of 'mongrelizing' the race, racial mixing was 'whitening' Brazil" [Skidmore 1992:8]. The celebration of miscegenation, linked to the discourse of racial democracy, was actually based on a preexisting white cultural ideal that was consolidated in the 1920s-30s. Indeed, 'racial democracy' can be considered merely a new term for whitening [Silva 1984:184], “a conciliatory ideology to promote whiteness under the guise of a pretended 'racial harmony'” [Blajberg 1996:36-37]. As Nascimento asserts,

Miscegenation was elevated to the status of a national ideal, then, not as an antiracialist proposal but as a tool of social engineering based precisely on the racialist notion of biological inferiority of Africans and their descendents [Nascimento 2001:514].

Africanness and Indianness are devalued, whereas European cultural and physical dimensions are considered superior and are highly coveted [Brown 1992:229; Hellwig 1992:9-10]. The white model is everywhere—at home and on the street—and represents the point of cultural reference. Whiteness is associated with reason, moral values, civility, and humanity. The nonwhite is always marked as different—emotional, ugly, bad, dirty, potent, exotic, and poor. All of the negro's supposedly positive attributes—rhythm, strength, sexual potency—are 'irrational' and 'primitive' qualities [Souza 1983]. Africanisms are considered "vestiges of the past" [Hellwig 1992:9] to be eradicated from Brazilian culture.11

11 Brazilian race theorists have discussed various facets of the *mulato* and the whitening process. Some authors have written about a 'mulato escape hatch,' a process by which *mulatos* reject black culture in favor of white culture as part of socioeconomic ascension. In order to ascend, they must demonstrate only the 'good' characteristics of whites. The possibility of ascension is an important element in the illusion of
Critics locate Freyre in the camp of whitening/white ideal proponents.

... in the mixture of whites and negros, producing the mulato, prevailed only the so-called prodigious and fascinating virtues incorporated by the blood and culture of the white model, thus only the magic and esoteric values of this model remained, because that would mean the slow elimination of all the problems represented exclusively by the negros—inferior beings—who were to blame for national backwardness. It was through this lens that Gilberto Freyre tried and managed, apparently, to valorize the negro... [Silva 1984:183].

They point out that his argument is based largely on miscegenation and the special contribution of the Portuguese male. Freyre claims that the Portuguese had a long history of racial mixing, which contributed to their lack of racial bias; "[a]t home he had known the charms of dark-skinned Moorish women, and thus it is not surprising that in the New World he succumbed to the Indian, and later African, women" [Skidmore 1985: 13]. With their lack of bias—and the lack of Portuguese women in colonial Brazil—the Portuguese male's superior sexuality could be channeled into "voluptuous contact with exotic women" [Freyre 1986:185]. Thus the "Portuguese libido would 'solve' Brazil's race problem" [Skidmore 1985:13]—miscegenation was inevitable. The great Brazilian propensity for miscegenation (based on Portuguese male supersexuality and the female slave's sexual availability) meant that blacks would be incorporated and the population would whiten, so that Brazil had the potential to eugenically outstrip the US, where the races remained more separate [Brookshaw 1986]. A primary contribution of the racial democracy. Because of the 'escape hatch,' mulatos may turn their backs on negros and a common platform for consciousness and activism is lost. Some discuss the difficulties of being a mulato, not quite accepted by blacks or whites, and always having to prove themselves. Others refute the idea of the escape hatch, asserting that mulatos suffer just as much racism as blacks, or that racism against African Brazilians
Portuguese male is his supersexuality; the slave woman provides sexual availability. This dyad introduces how Freyre combines valorization of African Brazilian and indigenous contributions with a white cultural ideal: through the (ostensibly harmonious) hierarchization of contributions.

Harmony and Hierarchy

The white cultural ideal is seen in Freyre's construction of different roles and contributions for different races. Although Freyre claims that each of the three races has made significant contributions to Brazilian society, in *The Masters and the Slaves* he demonstrates, in effect, that some are more important than others. The nature of each race's contributions reflects a hierarchy of social place. It is the Portuguese who provide economic leadership and ownership (of land and labor), and sexual prowess leading to miscegenation; the white man is still the true and only citizen in Freyre's work [Medeiros 1984:19]. Despite their supposedly superior technical and cultural stock, Afro-Brazilians merely provide brute labor, cuisine, and methods of daily hygiene, as well as passive sexual accessibility. As Needell observes, Freyre may turn to Afro-Brazilians for his analysis, but only to return them to 'their place' [1995:65]. The Indians are marginalized in his vision because they are not involved in the Big House of the plantation [Fleischmann 1986:99]. Free African Brazilians and poor whites are also excluded from his vision of the Brazilian Family, the core of national identity, because they are not part of the master-slave relationship force [Freston 1987:41; Medeiros 1984:64]; rather, they increases as their socioeconomic situation improves (as they leave their 'place') [Degler 1971; Hanchard
represent the threat of the modern free labor. Even the male slaves and white females (both considered sexually inadequate) are marginalized, as Freyre locates the core of national identity in the gendered and racialized sexual and power relations between the active ('sadistic') white male owner and the passive ('masochistic') female slave [Fleischmann 1986].

Many contemporary writers assert that Freyre's inclusion of indigenous and African Brazilian culture in his thesis is a prime example of cultural appropriation and insidious means of suppressing of dissent that continued throughout the century. The process weakens subaltern groups in two ways.

First, subaltern groups lose a platform for cultural identity. Literature on the state and nationalism describes a common process of appropriation, whereby elements of cultural diversity are homogenized, aestheticized, commodified, and transformed into neutral symbols of national identity [Alonso 1994; Gellner 1983]. For example, many types of African Brazilian music, dance, and religion have been appropriated, integrated, and deployed as national symbols. Appropriation separates race from culture, devaluing the links between social groups and their 'contributions.' Thus cultural elements may be incorporated in nationalism while the actual population group remains excluded [Pereira 1996:77]. The construction of national identity depends on intellectuals, who detach

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1999; Silva 1984; Souza 1983; Valente 1987].

12 According to Radhakrishnan, the imagined community of nationalism subordinates all groups [1992:78]. The project of nationalism is to forge from many identities a unified identity to work for the common
cultural manifestations from their private spheres and articulate them with a totality that transcends them [Ortiz 1985]. It is through the mechanism of reinterpretation that the State, through its intellectuals, appropriates popular practices to present them as expressions of national culture. Elements of African Brazilian culture are appropriated by the discourse of the State, which comes to consider them manifestations of Brazilianess. Tourism does the same thing [Ortiz 1985:140]. As Ortiz describes it, "[a]s the society appropriates manifestations of color and integrates them into a univocal discourse of nationality, they lose their specificity. There has been much emphasis on the difficulty in defining what is black in Brazil." [Ortiz 1985:43]. This poses a problem for black movements; how to retake cultural manifestations of color that have been designated 'Brazilian'? As Munanga states (building on Ortiz' argument):

The myth of racial democracy, based on the double biological and cultural mixing of the three originating races, has had a deep impact on Brazilian society: it exalts the idea of harmonious relations among individuals of all social classes and ethnic groups, allowing the dominating elites to mask inequalities and prevent nonwhite members of the community from perceiving the subtle mechanisms of exclusion of which they are victims in the society. That is, it conceals racial conflict, making it possible for all to see themselves as Brazilians and distancing subaltern communities from becoming conscious of their cultural characteristics that would have contributed to the construction and expression of their own identity. These characteristics are 'expropriated,' 'dominated,' and 'converted' into national symbols by the ruling elites [Munanga 1999:80].

Second, appropriation mimics representation, nullifying claims to marginalization or devaluation. Once separated from actual populations, cultural artifacts are harmless. In fact they are convenient, providing testimony for racial harmony and democracy [Pereira...]

cause. Nationalism is not for the people; rather, "[t]he people become a necessary means to the ends of nationalism" [1992:89].
Gilberto Freyre is not exclusively responsible for the discourse of racial democracy or its ramifications in Brazil. However, he was able to justify the interests of ruling elites in an exceedingly attractive discourse of national identity. In parts of his works, Freyre asserts that all three races made valuable contributions. However, in the course of *The Masters and the Slaves*, he effectively attenuates (at best) the value of indigenous and African Brazilian contributions. The result is an emphasis on hierarchy; specifically, social harmony through hierarchy, a common theme in Brazilian race literature. But why does Freyre use the master-slave dyad as the base for his harmonious hierarchy? The answer lies in the national/regional context in which Freyre wrote.

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13 Thus we see evidence of “racism as inherent to the inclusionary myths and exclusionary practices of democracy and freedom” [Stoler 1995:24].

14 In my fieldwork, I interviewed the elderly president of a private university (which was named after a racial theorist of the 1920s who used degrees of inferiority to discuss Brazil’s racial evolution). The president echoed the harmony-through-hierarchy position when he claimed that there was no racism in Brazil, and “that’s why all of the social classes get along so well.”
The National/Regional Context

Freyre, a Northeasterner, was influenced by a major shift in economic and political power from the Northeast (sugar) to the Southeast (coffee and industrialization) of Brazil beginning in the second half of the 19th century. Whereas there was considerable crossover between the coffee planter and industrial elites of the Southeast, the sugar planters of the Northeast failed to capitalize their wealth and expand into mechanized sugar refinery, leaving the planters dependent on refinery owners [Brookshaw 1986; Freston 1987]. When the import/export economy collapsed and Brazil shifted to an increasingly industrialized domestic market, the economic and political seat remained firmly in the Southeast. The Northeast became increasingly marginalized, and the sugar planter elite lost its semiperipheral status. Freyre, a descendent of the sugar patriarchy, and other members of his falling elite, saw sugar production shift from a family to a corporate business, from plantations to refineries owned by foreign companies. They witnessed the disappearance of the old sugar aristocracy and the rise of a new ruling class that was capitalist rather than patriarchal [Brookshaw 1986:133]. Freyre was "a man who represented the values of a civilization now in the process of sharp transformation—the principally agrarian civilization of the Northeast" [Freston 1987:23]. His own family had, "[i]n a matter of a month or two, Freyre had gone from a position of power and patronage to one of genteel penury" [Needell 1995:63].

These radical structural changes had a corresponding movement in intellectual production: the strong Regionalist Movement of the 1930s located principally in the
Northeast. Freyre was a leader in this movement, which existed in counterpoint to the Modernism of the Southeast. Both were against imitating European models, but with different purposes. Regionalists were against modernity, the New Republic, and modernization, which imply cities, class conflict, and bourgeois values [Needell 1995:73]. On the contrary, Regionalists celebrated and sought to preserve regional cultural heritage [Araújo 1994; Brookshaw 1986; Needell 1995; Ortiz 1985; Sánchez-Eppler 1992:468]. Specifically, Freyre and others were concerned to defend the cultural heritage of the Northeast against modernity infiltrating from the south; this stance often led to a positive evaluation of the patriarchal system of relations between owner and slave, a system in rapid decline at the time of writing [Brookshaw 1986:119]. They wanted to preserve the old, the provincial, the rural planter elite [Needell 1995:60].

They also wanted to recover their childhood [Needell 1995:61]. Freyre’s attachment to a patriarchal planter mythology and espousal of political authoritarianism was a reaction against the dramatic, ‘modern’ changes threatening the constructed world of his childhood [Needell 1995:51]. Indeed, Freyre and other Regionalist writers are described as ‘romantic realists’ who turn their backs on rational thought, choosing something between popular fiction and surrealism to capture the fluid and fleeting world of

15 According to Needell, The Masters and the Slaves is also about Freyre’s attempt to define his own sexuality. He is rejecting his cosmopolitan sexual experimentation (homosexuality in Europe) and returning to the sexual use of the mulata, who was his first experience [1995:69]. For Freyre, sexual activity and racial domination are metaphors for one another, and they form the matrix for Brazilian society. By generalizing a dominant sexual role associated with mulatas as the essential act of national creation, Freyre was affirming his own ambiguous heterosexuality and legitimizing his enduring taste for a relationship he first experienced as an adolescent, a nation between a privileged white male and an accessible woman of color... In short, Freyre was affirming his
childhood [Souza 1995:35]. They try to recreate themselves through reconstructing the past; as Needell states, “Freyre focused on self-discovery through the recovery of a lost childhood” [1995:63]. Sánchez-Eppler asserts that “[b]oth the need to ground an identity and an antimodernist nostalgia structure Freyre’s intimate narrative about home” [1992:468]. Freyre is mourning the loss of empire that would have been his inheritance; he wants to recover his lost patrimony, including the mulatas that would have been his.

As Freyre tells his story, how does he reconstruct the past? What elements does he invoke? What does he ‘salvage’? [Sánchez-Eppler 1992:485]. Roseberry notes that displaced elites often “come out with their own projects, their own sense of their place in a community or region or ethnic group, at times with their own language, their own sense of history” [1989:117]. They may use selective tradition, choosing certain elements of history, reinterpreting and reconstructing them, then weaving them into a historical myth—a process often used in creating an ideology that supports a particular social order [Roseberry 1989; Williams 1977; Wolf 1982]. Freyre, like many sociologists of his time, was concerned to construct a stable and harmonious image of national identity that would restore a sense of order during a time of rupture and change [Arroyo 1993:41]. “Against the trauma of ‘modernization’ so palpable in the 1920s and 1930s, Freyre offered only a profoundly reactionary mythology of the past” [Needell 1995:72].

nationality, his family status, and his heterosexuality all at once in his sexual relations with mulatas [Needell 1995:71].
He makes ample use of common tropes found in great narratives of national identity: space, time, and family [Alonso 1994]. The space that Freyre selects is clearly the Northeast, and the time is slavery. The order he desires is located in the social relations of the Northeastern sugar planter's Big House, symbol of latifundary patriarchal monoculture, and the slave quarters. He promotes an "anti-liberal authoritarianism attached to an idealization of benevolent, autocratic hierarchy" [Needell 1995:71]. Thus his imagined national community, his vision of national essence based on this socioeconomic order, requires significant justification. To this end, Freyre employs an extremely selective version of history with a liberal dose of nostalgia. Stylistically, his works are lyrical, sensual, epic, grandiose [Loos 1968:719]. The narrative he gave is powerful, rooted in ideas of home, nostalgia, serenity. An imagined community without conflict. A positive national essence. His call for harmony and order, "nostalgia for a world in which everybody knew his place" [1987:41], is so successful that Clovis Moura describes *The Master's and the Slaves* as a "proslavery utopia" [Silva 1984:180].

'Family' is a common trope in nationalist discourses, a metaphor for social place, or social structure with a strong naturalizing effect. For Freyre, family is an essential founding space of nationality [Arroyo 1993]. The Northeast patriarchy becomes the model for the Brazilian 'family,' a means of harmonious integration of racial heterogeneity [Munanga 1999:79]. Needell describes the 'natural' and 'harmonious' picture Freyre paints:

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16 The Brazilian title of *The Masters and the Slaves* is Big House and Slave Quarters (*Casa Grande e
On this plantation, a cruel paternal figure begat heirs by his pedigreed child-bride and sired the Brazilian masses on his women of color. Men of color performed the gang labor in the fields, singing all the while. African women brought this culture its exotic music and food, Amerindian women its wise folkways about the enveloping rain forest and rivers. Class and racial conflict did not exist... It was a complete society, devoid of conflict—creative, aristocratic, authoritarian, in organic, natural harmony with a special, exuberant nature [1995:73].

In Freyre’s selective history, the three races came together in a positive, harmonious manner via Northeastern patriarchy. It is a national origin myth [Munanga 1999:79].

_The Masters and the Slaves_ has lasted: it is a myth—but it’s our myth. Somehow he builds an image that people would like to be true. This image, as a myth, deforms. Like other myths, it is based on simple binary oppositions. He created an identity that the reader does not reject. It’s not about a mirror of horror, showing a face that we wouldn’t like to have. It’s a narcissistic mirror... Whoever looks at it finds our face beautiful and pleasant to look at. [Cardoso 1993:25].

His history of Brazil elides conflict and power relations and emphasizes order, asserting that the “various ethnic groups always lived together in harmony, within a friendly relation of exchange” [Medeiros 1984:77].

Thus _The Masters and the Slaves_ is an example of syncretism, a blend of national and regional peculiarities. The ideology of syncretism describes a world devoid of contradictions. The Brazil melting pot expresses the contact between peoples as a harmonious acculturation of symbolic universes. This

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17 Touted as a matter of national pride—especially in comparison to the United States and South Africa—Brazil was depicted as having a more benign slavery, a peaceful transition after abolition, no segregationist laws, and racial democracy. The purported harmony of race relations in Brazil has been well examined. Contemporary writers have debunked each element, demonstrating that Brazil’s historical race relations—horrendous slave treatment, practical segregation, racism in the law, education, employment, marriage, etc.—were not so different/different but as bad/worse than in other countries [Blajberg 1996; Degler 1971; Dzidzienyo 1971; Hanchard 1999; Hasenbalg 1998; Hellwig 1992; Ianni 1991; Lovell 1991; Nascimento 2001; Nascimento and Nascimento 2001; Reichmann 1999; Silva 1996].
analysis of cultural contact (and acculturation) divorces culture from society; one doesn’t consider the socio-historical context in which the contact came about [Ortiz 1985:93-95].

In constructing the nation, the printed word is used to erase/cleanse any discrepancies. It is about establishing/maintaining order. It's all about using the word to make order out of chaos [Arroyo 1993]. Cardoso likens Freyre’s work to a mural, and attributes his lasting power to his ability to synthesize. Of course, at the moment of synthesizing—poof—a lot vanishes, fading away like smoke [1993:25]. In this case, the nature of contact, the primary elements of the master-slave relationship, are part of what disappears.

Freyre does decry slavery, but he also transforms it, as he does in discussing cultural contributions. There, the conflict was between valorizing contributions and asserting a white ideal; he resolved it through an implicit hierarchy of contribution values. Here, Freyre must resolve the conflict between decrying slavery and basing a national utopia on it. In this case, he uses a process of attenuation, whereby the ills of slavery are mediated and ultimately outweighed by the benefits. This is a type of theocratic argument, in which the small evils involved are lamentable but necessary to the greater good of the nation. The minor evils of slavery and sexual coercion result in a gentler form of slavery, harmonious social relations, and a superior nation.

In the first place, Freyre asserts that slavery was necessary to colonization and thus the very development of Brazil:
Let us have the honesty... to recognize that only great landholding and slaveholding colonization could have been capable of resisting the enormous obstacles that were raised against the European civilization of Brazil. Only the big house and the slave hut [Freyre in Needell 1995:67].

In the second place, Freyre argues that “the lubricating oil of miscegenation” attenuated relations between masters and slaves, reducing the social distance between them; this zone of fraternization lead to a gentler form of slavery, and thus became the cornerstone of democratic racial relations in Brazil [Degler 1971; Freston 1987; Medeiros 1980; Munanga 1999]. In Freyre's words:

The cross-breeding so widely practiced here corrected the social distance which otherwise would have remained enormous between plantation mansion and slave quarters. What the large-landholding, slave-owning monoculture produced in the way of aristocratization, dividing Brazilian society into classes of masters or slaves... was in great part neutralized by miscegenation’s social effects. Indian and African women, at first, then mulatto women, the yallers, octoroons and so on, becoming the white master's domestics, concubines and even legitimate wives, played a powerful role in Brazil's social democratization [Nascimento & Nascimento 2001:124].

Freyre bases his argument for the superiority of Northeastern patriarchy on the necessity of slavery and miscegenation, which in turn are based on the core of the Brazilian Family: the male Portuguese owner and the female African slave. National essence is based on the intersection of the bodies of white men and black women. Miscegenation is the key; from miscegenation flow sexuality, gender, and race relations. The master-slave dyad at the core of Freyre's work is not a model for the union of equals; master-slave coitus becomes “a metaphor for racial and social hierarchy” [Needell 1995:68]. In other words, “sexual activity and racial domination are metaphors for one another, and they form the matrix for Brazilian society” [1995:71].
Thus Freyre’s Brazil is a “society that legitimizes miscegenous rape as its initial and ongoing basis” [Needell 1995:71]. According to Freyre, it is a peaceful, harmonious domination; indeed, Medeiros refers to Freyre’s work as ‘praise of domination’ [1984]. Freyre’s discursive accomplishment has not gone unnoticed:

Sexual abuse against subordinated women is a matter of domination, whether in war... or the maintenance of rule by force in colonial or authoritarian regimes. Miscegenation as its fruit says little about comprehension or attraction among human beings, but speaks eloquently of violent control over women. The genius of the Brazilian ideology is to make this violence the meat of self-laudatory discourse in which the white elite purges itself of responsibility for its excesses of oppression. Gilberto Freyre... is its master [Nascimento and Nascimento 2001:123].

The Instrumental Mulata

Through Freyre’s work we can understand basic contradictions of Brazilian race discourse—how racial discourse is central to national identity and yet taboo, and how the discourse of racial democracy is predicated on whitening and a white cultural ideal. His work exemplifies the hidden nature of racism in Brazil.

Freyre accomplishes his ideological feats through miscegenation. The sexual availability of the mulata is the nexus of his arguments. She is the very site of cultural contact, which is reduced to a sexualized encounter between the powerful white male slave owner and the enslaved woman of color. The sexual nature of this contact is responsible for harmonious race relations. She represents both the product of and vehicle for cultural and
biological mixing (whitening), thus she is the key to a positive national identity and future.

In his treatise, Freyre builds on existing theories and practices—he is certainly not exclusively responsible for the sexualized image of the *mulata*. But in his work, she is crystallized as a salient cultural entity. Freyre's *mulata* is a tool, an object, constructed as the highly sexualized symbol of national identity. It is important to note that for Freyre, the *mulata*’s own sexuality is largely irrelevant—she is merely the object of the supersexual Portuguese men. The institution of slavery may encourage a certain sexual masochism in her, but by nature she actually has extremely little sexuality [Freyre 1986:322-324]. Freyre asserts that she is no more responsible for sexual relations with her masters than the domestic animals that bear a similar fate with the owners’ young sons [Freyre 1986:395]. In this sense, Freyre differs markedly from other members of the literati, whose elaborations of the *mulata* and her inherent sexuality are discussed below.
LITERARY STEREOTYPES: ELABORATING THE MULATA

Race and Literary Visions of the Nation

In the 1920s and 30s, preoccupation with national identity swept the arts in the forms of Southeastern Modernism and Northeastern Regionalism. Marotti captures the mood of the period, declaring that the 1930s were “really decisive years for Brazil, years in which everything was truly possible, years in which the form of development and the future social order of the country were to be decided” [1987:334]. Visions of Brazilian national essence varied substantially; however, there were commonalities in discursive resources. Modernist writers, in breaking away from slavish imitation of European styles [Skidmore 1964:495], sought to differentiate themselves by celebrating something distinctly Brazilian. That ‘something’ was symbolized by The People, who made their appearance in order to popularize literature and describe ‘Brazilian reality’ [Sampaio 1996; Santos 1993]. Ideas surrounding both race and class were central to nationalist thought, and there was some disagreement over which should be emphasized [Degler 1971:183]. Thus The People were represented by (lower) class and/or race; the primary racial symbols were African Brazilians and indigenous people.\(^1\)

In the late 19\(^{th}\) century, representations of African Brazilians followed the discursive needs associated with abolitionism and the post-abolition period. David Brookshaw, preeminent literary theorist, provides a comprehensive review of race in Brazilian literary

\(^1\) For analyses of portrayals of indigenous populations, see Brookshaw 1986, 1988; Ianni 1991; Silva 1984.
movements [1986, 1987, 1993]. According to Brookshaw, racial stereotypes in literature expressed the changing socioeconomic order of the times: the passive, Faithful Slave became the resigned, vanquished Negro; the violent Demon Slave evolved into the passionate, rebellious mulatto; and the Immoral Slave lived on in the lascivious mulata—whereas the black woman and man were relegated to passivity, biological defeat, and complete social abandonment [Brookshaw 1986:41-42]. According to Brookshaw, abolition did not truly change the stereotypes; literature merely adjusted the stereotypes to match the new situation. The Naturalist style, which appeared after abolition, animalizes and sexualizes blacks and mulattos (emphasizing their bestiality and exoticism). The racial stereotypes found in literature affirmed theories of racial inferiority; thus literature helped perpetuate the perception of the Negro as subhuman [Brookshaw 1986:42]. Since racial inferiority would lead to extinction, the ‘racial problem’ would be resolved of itself. In this sense, the literati contributed to the national desire to whiten and justified the exclusion of blacks from the new economy.

These stereotypes were transformed when Brazilian Modernists—following a European Primitivist trend—seized on the image of the noble savage as the antithesis of failing, neurotic European culture [Brookshaw 1986:85-86]. Brazilian primitivists reinterpret the Noble Savage as the Irreverent Savage, a symbol of counterculture who is ruled by nature, instinct, and feeling rather than false European culture [Brookshaw 1986:91]. Primitivists used the stereotype to criticize European culture and express a yearning for the return to an innocent, spiritual, exotic, sensual, pagan world [Brookshaw 1986:10].
Writers no longer looked ‘up’ for inspiration but rather ‘down’ to the lowest social rungs, whether indigenous or African Brazilian. Nativist writers were anti-establishment white who sought inspiration in the colonized (in this case, African Brazilians) in order to reject the culture and social values of their own class [Brookshaw 1986:10]. But this transformation of taboo into totem, the reversals of anthropophagy (cannibalism), were more theoretical than practical. That is, the Indian or the Negro was valued as a symbol, “not a real human being of flesh and blood to defend socially” [1993].

The Modernists’ rehabilitation of the non-European element in Brazil was essentially an artistic one. They were not concerned with the adverse situation of the mass of the black population which formed the social substratum, or with Indian tribes faced with future exploitation or extermination... The Negro, like the Amerindian, was exploited as a symbol of a zest for life and artistic freedom, which the white intelligentsia in Brazil... extolled in its struggle against the intellectualism of its own culture, and against the general social values of the established bourgeoisie [Brookshaw 1986:106-107].

In fact, the various movements fortified pernicious stereotypes of the lascivious mulata and childish, dependent black. Like Freyre, these writers used the colonized for their symbolic value but simultaneously kept them ‘in their place.’

This technique was used regardless of political purpose; the conservative, authoritarian Freyre shared the symbolic value of the colonized with the socialist writers of his time, who were also concentrated in the Northeast [Duarte 1996; Paes 1991; Vieira 1986]. During the 1930s, the novel was used as an instrument of social critique, particularly in denouncing capitalist exploitation. These so-called ‘proletarian’ novels took workers as
main characters, heroes fighting for social transformation. Northeasterners tended to use African Brazilians as symbols of The People.

An outstanding example in this trend is Jorge Amado, the most popular Brazilian novelist both domestically and internationally. Like Freye, Amado stands out in pioneering and crystallizing images of Brazilian national identity through race and class. His enormous success has been ascribed to many stylistic elements, including his compelling combination of history, legend, myth, fantasy, the supernatural, and illusion [Vieira 1986, 1989]. Both authors were able to write larger than life, negotiating and naturalizing a vision of Brazilian essence; such is the stuff of nationalism.

In the 1920s-40s, like many other Northeastern Regionalists, Amado believed that Brazil’s future lay in the type of socialist revolution found in Eastern Europe and fought for his beliefs both through direct political involvement and his writing. Like other Friends of the Revolution, Amado followed party formulae to incite people to socialism by ‘speaking to the masses’ and ‘raising consciousness;’ the idea was to “dramatize the life of those who are submitted to capitalism and to ‘show the way’ that leads to overcoming it”[Duarte 1996:18]. Most consider his early novels a form of utilitarian art—‘proletarian novels’—with a political purpose [Duarte 1996; Marotti 1987; Paes 1991; Santos 1993; Vieira 1986]. Amado is often described as a champion of the Brazilian People, the poor and oppressed; his intent is to serve as their spokesperson to raise middle-class consciousness [Curran 1981; Roche 1987; Vieira 1986, 1989].
However, there is some debate regarding Amado's status as a ‘man of the people’ and his commitment to class struggle [Coutinho 1980; Marotti 1987; Ortiz 1985; Paes 1991; Patai 1983; Sampaio 1996; Santos 1993; Tavares 1980;]. As a young man, his literary milieu was “a powerful group... made up of young people from rich families, a group of intellectuals from the great bourgeoisie” [Santos 1993:64]. While some applaud his stark, realistic portrayal of the hardships faced by the poor, even if rendered in a somewhat naïve fashion [Chamberlain 1990; Sampaio 1996; Táti 1961], others find that his lyricism belittles social problems, merely creating a picturesque idealization of the People that glorifies poverty [Brookshaw 1986; Galvão 1976; Patai 1983].

Where Alencar had indianismo, Amado has xivisf—his nostalgic cultivation of the people, the povo. Amado offers his readers—who cannot themselves be considered part of the povo—a romantic, affectionate, and condescendingly humorous representation of their fellow Brazilians, who thus become, in yet another way, objects of consumption [Sampaio 1996:141].

Like other elements of ‘popular culture,’ Amado’s works may be seen as part of a political project in which intellectuals ‘make themselves’ povo in order to talk to and for the povo, but their gaze is really external and their characters mere stereotypes; “the povo is the main character in the artistic plot, but in reality he is absent. The characters have no internal lives, the individual dimension is diluted” [Ortiz 1985:73].

The lack of complexity in Amado’s characters is matched by shallow socioeconomic analysis. A political economic analysis of his works suggests that he does not effectively capture the class relations that result in poverty [Manthei 2000]. In fact, there are far
more references to the parties, booze, music, and dancing of the happy poor than their struggles to survive or the socioeconomic mechanisms that create poverty. Despite their harsh environment, Amado’s blacks remain light-hearted, fun loving, lazy, and dependent on whites [Brookshaw 1986; Manthei 2000; Tâti 1961], engaging in “that delightful life of doing nothing” [Amado 1987:282]. Thus they bear a likeness to Freyre’s stereotype of the African slaves, who were able to withstand their situation due to their “extraordinary reserves of cheerfulness and animal robustness” [Freyre 1986:88].

The weakness of Amado’s socioeconomic analysis has drawn strong criticism from literary historian Alfredo Bosi, who accuses Amado of being “a populist at heart, more interested in exploiting the picturesque aspects of Bahian life, and more prone to the portrayal of social stereotypes than concerned with illustrating the real causes and effects of social tension” [in Brookshaw 1986:154]. According to Patai, Amado’s works are merely part of the culture industry that sells nostalgia for a better time—before industrialization, before capitalism (and abolition) [1983:140].

Amado, like Freyre, is both highly celebrated for valuing African Brazilian culture [Chamberlain 1990; Marotti 1987] and accused of cultural appropriation. Critics point out that he consistently selects elements of African Brazilian culture and claims them as pan-Brazilian, whereby they lose their specificity (as discussed above) [Rabassa 1965:285].

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19 Freyre also describes Negroes as extroverted, easy-going, plastic, adaptable, vivacious, merry, lively, loquacious, expansive, sociable, and full of tense, vigorous, youthful energy [1986:88, 179, 283, 284].
The nativism of Modernists and Regionalists is merely part of the nationalization of culture.

Its slogan of cannibalism (anthropophagy) is an appropriate image of how white Brazilian society and culture metaphorically 'ate up' and digested what they defined as Native American and Afro-Brazilian traditions, producing what they defined as a new 'syncretic' modern culture [Nascimento and Nascimento 2001:110].

Furthermore, Amado explicitly grants primacy to class over race (as a socialist); in his vision of Brazil, race is subsumed by class, and class struggle will produce the social leveling necessary to a brighter future for Brazil. The manner in which race is eclipsed by class effectively reduces the platform for racial consciousness and activism.

This denial of the specificity of race grants support to those who decry his use of African Brazilians as purely symbolic. In fact, the claim that Amado's works display not even "the least trace of racism nor any other type of discriminatory prejudice" [Tavares 1980:183] has been contested emphatically by critics who assert Amado's deep-seated racism. According to Brookshaw, his works are replete with racial stereotypes associated with Naturalism, Primitivism, and Nativism, depicting African Brazilians as nonintellectual, naïve, animalistic, instinctual, strong, violent, and highly sexual; in short, they are made to embody all that is not 'European' or 'white' [1986]. The fact that Amado is celebrating these characteristics makes the stereotypes all the more pernicious. His African Brazilian characters may also be described as violent against women, childish, gullible, jealous, vindictive, exploitative, and untrustworthy. Thus his works may preserve elements of African Brazilian culture (particularly religious events) but also
preserve and reinforce myths regarding African Brazilians as individuals, despite his good intentions [Brookshaw 1986:154]. The white cultural ideal is also supported in that leadership and beauty are strictly associated with whiteness [Manthei 2000].

**Elaborating the *Mulata***

Of particular interest are the stereotypes of the *mulata* that appear in Amado’s works and Brazilian literature at large. The highly sexualized social construction of the *mulata* has been a ubiquitous theme in Brazilian culture, reinforced through the media and other forms of popular and erudite literature [Queiroz 1975]. “She is not allowed to exist either as a wife or mother, for she is a symbol of sexual license” [Brookshaw 1986:164]; rather, she is ever the mistress. She is generally portrayed as an object for male consumption. Her only power lies in her sexuality; she is a seductive temptress with an animal sexuality and sensuality. Thus she may be interpreted as immoral or amoral, but certainly irresponsible and improvident. She is also naïve, simple, playful, and happy [Brookshaw 1986; Chamberlain 1990; Coutinho 1980; Marotti 1987; Queiroz 1975]. Teofilo Queiroz [1975] analyzed the stereotypes of the *mulata* through major Brazilian works, producing the following list of repetitive images:

- Beautiful body, especially high/firm/pointed/abundant breasts, and slim
- Delicate feet and fingers
- Flowing, wavy, luxurious hair
- Beautiful eyes (sometimes green, black) and white teeth, fat lips, smiling mouth
- Musicality (speech and singing), especially melodious, soft, passionate voice
- Dance—light movements, flowing hips, sensuality, primitive dance
- Sweet smell (like plants), good hygiene and health
- Happy, easy smile, rich laugh
- Likeable, playful, good hearted, shows solidarity, hard worker, brave
• Hot body, bewitching, sensuality, animal sexuality, a temptress, irresistible
• Lacking restraint, sexually active, promiscuous, immoral/amoral, vulgar
• Outside of social mores, independent, will not be owned yet centered on men and passes from one to another
• Apolitical, speaks little (nonintellectual, animalistic)
• Jealous, arrogant

Queiroz also analyzed the portrayal of the *mulata* over time through carnaval songs, yielding the following central features (which also appear in literature):

- Good cook
- Good hygiene, health, physical resilience for labor
- Solidarity
- Perturbing beauty, irresistible sensuality
- Seductive crafts (used when singing, dancing, dressing up)
- Lack of morality, irresponsibility, squandering

In short, the written *mulata* is animalistic, nonintellectual, dependent on sex/seduction, fair game, sexually available, less marriageable, and appropriate for affairs. The *mulata* stereotype is crystalized in Amado's *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon*. Arguably Amado's most famous work, *Gabriela* was written after Amado visited eastern Europe in the late 1940s/early 1950s and consequently became disillusioned with Soviet socialism [Marotti 1987:334]. Amado is typically described as losing his political dogmatism and turning to a more picaresque, playful, satirical critique of social relations—particularly bourgeois mores regarding sexuality.

Gabriela, fleeing a drought in the Northeast, ends up in Bahia, where she is chosen as a cook/maid by restaurant owner Nacib. Gabriela proves unsurpassable in the kitchen and
the bedroom, and soon receives further offers. Nacib insists on marrying her to secure her; however, Gabriela is miserable as a wife. The confines of marriage (restricted social life, fidelity) do not suit her. Eventually, Nacib discovers her infidelity and, as a modern man, merely divorces her (rather than killing her). He then hires her back as cook and takes her back as a lover (without exclusivity) and they live happily ever after.

Throughout the story are parallel themes of economic, political, and social modernization.

As Chamberlain notes, “perhaps more than any other female personage in modern Brazilian literature, [Gabriela] incarnates the quintessential exotic mulata, often held up as the sexual ideal of Brazilian males” [1990:101]. What characteristics does this mulata par excellence possess? Queiroz points out that Gabriela calls irresistibly to the senses with her smell of cinnamon and color of cloves. She is beautiful, tall and thin, with flowing hair, high breasts, green eyes, and a smiling mouth. Her animality is emphasized through repeated emphasis on her smell, her sensuality through dance and song, and plant similes. Her passionate nature is demonstrated through bravery and solidarity. Her nonintellectual nature is demonstrated through her devotion to simple pleasures and incompatibility with social mores—she is irresponsible, amoral, and immodest [Queiroz 1975]. She is ingenuous, ignorant of commitment, outside of all rules, outside of all the conventions invented by society [Sampaio 1996:162]. She does not even have a last name or birth certificate, impositions of established society [Brookshaw 1986:160]. She is a

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20 Gabriela, Cravo e Canela, originally published in 1958.
creature of the moment, purely instinctive, spontaneous, without calculation, and totally lacking ambition [Marotti 1987: 364]. She is nature in its pure state [Táti 1961:161]. She is ignorant of the notion of sin in sexual love, has a minimal sense of past and future, and avoids of intellectually complex structures [Brookshaw 1986]. Obviously, the fact that she is often touted as a symbol of The Brazilian People may be seen as both praise and condemnation.

Like many literary mulatas (and mulatos), Gabriela represents a change agent, a catalyst to social evolution [Chamberlain 1990:47]—in this case, the fall of conservative sexual mores and the ‘cruel law’ (that men must kill unfaithful wives to preserve their honor). However, she herself is static. “Attitudes change all around her, but she herself, unlike her partner Nacib, remains unchanged: her purity of soul, if not body, needs no transition; she is from the outset ideal” [1987:108]. But whose ideal does she represent?

Some authors celebrate Gabriela as a symbol of female liberation, breaking the bonds of bourgeois marriage and morality and celebrating female sexuality. Sampaio describes Gabriela and other female characters as affirmatives of female heroism, fighting for liberation from masculine or patriarchal domination. They point out the hypocrisy of marriage versus the exaltation of free sex and free love. They are fighting false morality, mediocrity, and hypocrisy [1996]. Amado’s women demonstrate how female role alternatives were changing with the shift from feudal to early capitalist society [Chamberlain 1990:48]. Paes asserts that Gabriela, with her animal sexuality, “embodies
mythically women's yearning for independence and sexual freedom” [1991:XXXIII]. For Marotti, the courageous, freedom-loving Gabriela cannot bear the obligations associated with the role of the married woman; she hates cages, bonds, and chains. Nacib is jealous, wants to make her a canary, and therefore loses her. She belongs only to herself and to love [1987:336].

Other critics point out that Gabriela is more appropriately described as a male ideal of female identity: she is not only sexually available but highly desirous and desirable. She lives to cook, clean, and have sex, and even brings in some money [Queiroz 1975; Táti 1961:162]. At the same time, unlike a wife, she makes no demands—indeed, she refuses marriage, is unmarriageable. Her ‘independence’ is only a lack of demands; in reality, she depends utterly on men, on serving men. Amado’s ‘liberation’ merely makes her more accessible to men, with no strings attached, and the onus of sexual responsibility is hers. Amado “seems to want his women to be even better, lustier partners to his men” [Patai 1983:139]. And all that Amado’s mulatas care about is always being ready for sex [Batista 1964:32-33]. As Patai notes, even within Realism, an author may simultaneously reflect and critique reality, shed light on or merely caricature their subject [1983:136-137]. Regardless of Amado’s intent, his female characters are superficial stereotypes, and his works represent mere caricature of women’s problems. In fact, men like Amado’s novels because they are about male domination, including titillating accounts of highly eroticized rape [Galvão 1976; Patai 1983].
Furthermore, it is important to remember that Gabriela is a *mulata*, and the "*mulata* is always the same, the incarnation of the white man’s sexual fantasy" [1986:165]. Despite Amado’s theme of emancipation, Gabriela is faithful to the stereotype [Chamberlain 1990:101]. Gabriela is a *mulata*—insistently so—and a *mulata* cannot symbolize all Women. Nor could a *branca* or *negra* woman. There are no female identities unmarked by race; race is structured by divergent gender roles (and vice-versa). Combining the question of feminism with analysis of the *mulata* stereotype yields the conclusion that Amado is not emancipating Women; he is merely reinscribing the sexuality and unmarriageability of the *mulata*. As Queiroz notes, literary *mulatas* are almost never associated with family, either as wives or mothers. They are alone, “caught up in a world of masculine lust” [1975:85]. At some point they marry but, like Gabriela, they are morally inadequate and end up in free unions. Gabriela was born to have sex; “[b]ecause no other could compare to her, so fiery and humid, so crazy in bed, so sweet in love, so born to do it” [Marotti 1987:355]. But she is not for marriage–she does not consider herself worthy, and it goes against her nature. Queiroz points out that stereotypes such as Gabriela “affect the position of the *mulata*, contaminating her with defects that distance her from marriage opportunities, and at the same time don’t free her from being qualified as having attributes that make her the target of lust and lasciviousness” [1975:86].

The manner in which Amado describes Gabriela is not daring or antiestablishment; it is entirely consistent with the stereotype of the sexually exploited *mulata*. In fact, their relationship harkens to Freyre’s master-slave dyad. According to Marotti, the relationship
between Nacib and Gabriela illustrates the two forms of sexuality/love at the basis of Brazilian civilization: the possessive, jealous, and overexcited men who keep their women shut up in the house (traditional Latin, Arab, and Lusitan cultures) versus the mulata, who "has in her blood the innocence and the erotic vitality of her African ancestors, who never tied love to the concept of sin. Love for her is an innocent delight, like picking and eating the marvelous tropical fruit in her garden" [pace Marotti 1987:366].

The difference between Freyre and Amado's mulatas is the onus of responsibility; whereas Freyre describes the mulata primarily as the passive victim, the literati assign responsibility for sexual availability to the eroticized Other woman herself. Thus Queiroz asserts that the literati's representations of mulatas not only reflect but contribute to the persistence of the mulata stereotype, a symbolic composite of inegalitarian race relations [1975].

Amado used the mulata as a central vehicle in describing and critiquing Brazilian society, and his stereotypes reflect different moments in his career. Ironically, the mulata of his later works came to resemble Freyre's mulatas after the military coup of 1964 introduced an era of repression. Whereas Freyre supported the dictatorship, Amado resumed his more overtly political voice to combat it [Marotti 1987]. His work Tent of Miracles\(^2\) was

\(^2\) *Tenda dos Milagres*, originally published in 1969.
written during the darkest hours of the dictatorship, and is a strong indictment of the new regime and its methods of social control [Vieira 1989:8-9].

_Tent of Miracles_ is a diachronic novel, shifting from the protagonist’s life in the early 1900s to the centennial of his death. Pedro Arcanjo (Peter Archangel) was a brilliant, self-taught mulatto who studied and published works refuting the scientific racism of his times and documenting the cultural contribution of Afro-Brazilians and praising the process of miscegenation. He lived in poverty, rejecting opportunities for social ascension that would cost him his cultural identification with the common people, particularly Afro-Brazilians. On the centennial of his death, an American scholar calls attention to this little known scholar, setting off a chain reaction in which the government, scholars, media, and advertisers battle to appropriate and commodify his name as a symbol of national identity, simultaneously establishing him as a hero, rewriting his life story, and suppressing the content of his controversial works.

Amado’s treatment of Afro-Brazilian culture is far more sophisticated than in earlier works and better integrated into both the plot and lives of the characters. Furthermore, the links between The People’s culture (Afro-Brazilian) and politics is very clear, as Amado chronicles the State’s perception of a threat to a white national identity and the subsequent violent repression of religious ceremonies [Marotti 1987:376-379]. The primary themes are the repression of Afro-Brazilian culture and religion, the hypocrisy and violence of the Establishment, and racial mixing as the solution to uniting and
leveling Brazilian society [Marotti 1987; Sampaio 1996; Vieira 1989]. Arcanjo represents, simultaneously, Amado’s voice and the voice of the mestizo people [Curran 1981]. As a mulato, he embodies whiteness and blackness simultaneously, a symbol of the nation [Sampaio 1996; Brookshaw 1986]. As Arcanjo states, “I am mulato, I am black and white, I am Brazilian” [Marotti 1987:386]. Miscegenation is touted as the solution to uniting Brazil, that is, through the ‘browning’ of Brazil, social gaps will be closed [Vieira 1989]. Arcanjo anticipates the day that Brazil is thoroughly mixed, when it is racially and culturally darkened [Brookshaw 1986:162-163]. In this work, Amado uses race as a metaphor for economics and politics; “the Afro-Brazilian experience of racial oppression becomes an extended metaphor for identifying and condemning socio-economic inequality and political repression” [Vieira 1989:9]. Comparing Freyre and Amado’s works clearly demonstrates how discourses of race, such as miscegenation, may be invoked in projects of nationalism, regardless of the political stance of the author.

Miscegenation is not without conflict, however. For example, Arcanjo holds a high African Brazilian religious position—confesses that he himself does not believe due to his learned materialism. Not only does Arcanjo refer to Afro-Brazilian religion as ‘primitive,’ but his statement that it is a “blessing for the people” [1987:315] is condescending. Another example of conflict due to miscegenation is the issue of social ascension. In Tent of Miracles, Amado describes the so-called ‘mulato escape hatch,’ which refers to the idea that mulattos can rise socially on an individual basis due to certain desired attributes but at the cost of any identification with African Brazilian
culture. Arcanjo's rejection of this option is contrasted with his godson's use of this social mechanism, as he abandons Arcanjo, friends, and community to marry into a wealthy, white family and move to the Southeast in pursuit of a lucrative engineering career [Brookshaw 1986; Queiroz 1975]. As Brookshaw points out, Arcanjo and Gabriela are both mulattos and therefore symbols of social change but must remain in their stations to be valued [1987:166-167].

Race and social ascension are much more subtly described for female characters and reveal a persistent complex of racism and sexism in the form of mulatas. In Tent of Miracles, the range of mulatas portrayed demonstrates a hierarchy of appearances, in which the lightest mulatas may ascend due to intelligence or education but the darker mulatas only ascend through their sensuality and excellence in things sexual [Queiroz 1975:111]. Brookshaw describes the difference as a color progression, in which the mulata gains more respectability the further she is from her African ancestry [Brookshaw 1986:165]. The difference could also be viewed as a lighter/darker system, in which the lighter mulata makes the 'good appearance' line and can ascend. Brookshaw refers to the darker mulata when he says that she "is respected neither as a woman nor as an individual. Her function is to attract men, to be exploited by them, and to exploit in turn by obtaining her own ends through sex" [1987:164]. As long as she stays in the proletariat, she is viewed sympathetically and romantically. Otherwise, if she aspires to more, her nonsexual talents are ridiculed and destroyed [1987:165].
As part of his ‘return to politics,’ Amado appears to abandon even superficial interest in the plight of women in the hands of womanizing, often violent men. Rather, as he takes up the banner of miscegenation, his *mulatas* become Freyre’s products of and vehicles for procreative racial mixing. As Arcanjo notes, “[t]he beauty of the women, the simple women of the lower classes, is an attribute of our mestizo city, of love between the races, of a bright and unprejudiced morning” [1971:21]. The *mulata*’s role is “to act as a passive intermediary between a disappearing Negro and a modified white” [Brookshaw 1986:167]; Brookshaw also argues that Amado’s miscegenation favors a European ideal [1986:167]. The fact that Freyre and Amado, with their contrary political stances, should dovetail on the issue of race and gender is not surprising. Both are engaged in nationalism discourses, and “the advent of nationalism signals the subordination if not the demise of women’s politics” [Radhakrishnan 1992:78]. In fact, Amado’s stereotypes are more egregious in some manners. Rather than a hypersexual Portuguese male and a passive African slave, he posits miscegenation on the animalistic sexuality of the African Brazilian man and woman in the Naturalist style. The lighter Arcanjo fathered more than 20 children (all sons) with his ‘powerful tool;’ it “broke in virgins, it seduced married women, it was God’s gift to whores... Pedro Arcanjo helped populate the world” [Amado 1971:44]. His hypersexuality is met by the (presumably darker) *mulatas*’ own sexual insatiability. Amado’s *mulatas* vie to have sex with Arcanjo, and the fact that these women, living in poverty, end up with children and no paternal support is actually considered a blessing. Whereas Freyre describes passive, victimized slave women,
Amado places the onus of sexuality (and miscegenation) on the *mulata*'s shoulders, as she actively participates in her own exploitation.

Perhaps Amado is throwing the discourse of racial harmony—long a tool of the State—in the military dictatorship's face. Perhaps this represents a positive effect of the discourse of racial democracy—that it exists and can be brought up as a reminder. Vieira, for example, has claimed that Amado, in another context, has used 'racial democracy' subversively to force the issue [1989]. Nonetheless, it is disconcerting how pernicious, pervasive, persistent constructions of race and gender come full circle, over half a century and across the political spectrum.
CHAPTER SUMMARY: WRITING RACE—READING RACE

During colonization and slavery, differential social roles were constructed along the lines of race, class, and gender. These markers were used to produce, for example, a tripartite system of female identity in which white women were deemed virtuous and merited protection and surveillance, black women were considered unattractive and appropriate only for labor, and *mulatas* were constructed as attractive, sexually available, and appropriate for affairs, not marriage. These roles were perpetuated through laws, church policies, and various social practices.

The images of this race/gender system were crystalized in the 1930s by Gilberto Freyre, a conservative northeasterner who, like other Latin American writers of his time, was concerned to overturn theories of scientific racism. In his theory of national identity, Freyre asserts that miscegenation has led to a superior culture and race, national unity, and racial harmony. The *mulata* is central to his project; she is not only the product but also the vehicle for racial and cultural mixing. In essence, her sexual availability is critical to Freyre’s vision of the nation. What emerges in Freyre’s works is the image of the white, male, dominator over the nearly powerless woman of color, who serves an instrumental function in the history of the nation.

Other members of the literati developed far more elaborate images of the *mulata*. In their rebellion against European ‘decadence,’ they drew upon the underclasses—the poor,
indigenous peoples, and blacks—as fresh symbols of the nation, distinctly Brazilian. In elaborating on these populations, they effectively created and perpetuated stereotypes. The *mulata*, for example, became known as animalistic, nonintellectual, dependent on sex/seduction, sexually available, less marriageable, and appropriate for illicit relations. This sexy *mulata* is not merely an instrument but rather she is imbued with an inherent hypersexuality and is portrayed as a willing participant in her own exploitation.

This chapter has described the historical politics of invoking race in Brazilian literature. The literati are integral agents in the project of nation building, leaders in the perpetual struggle for power through the control of meaning. These authors, like their contemporaries in other Latin American nations, understood writing to be a political business; with specific nationalist goals in mind, "they conceived of the novel as both a history-making and nation-building enterprise" [Hanway 2003:3]. Whether authors work to maintain a status quo or propose change, they constantly reinterpret images in a political economy of signification. Simply stated, in Brazil, literature and politics go hand in hand [Duarte 1996:19].

Culture, race, gender, and sexuality are always important elements in (re)constructing the nation, and stereotypes are powerful tools in controlling, disseminating, and reinforcing meaning. As Queiroz asserts, literature lends itself to preserving attitudes and values that serve the interest of maintaining ethnic categories. Brazilian writers are also notoriously conformist. Writers from different times and contexts perpetuate the image of the *mulata*
as sexually available and unmarriageable. Like popular phrases and music, erudite literature is a highly persuasive medium for maintaining the racial status quo [1975:80-88].

The power of ideologies lies in ability to span the gap between discourse and everyday life, to be naturalized and form part of common sense; ideologies have to be cohesive and convincing on a formal level, but they also have to transform the everyday consciousness or popular thought of the masses [Hall 1982:20-21]. Intellectuals are symbolic mediators because they construct the link between the private and the universal, the singular and the global [Ortiz 1985:139]. Nationality is a product of the cultural imagination of an Intelligentsia that is able to formulate narratives that, through the press, become national truths [Anderson in Arroyo 1993:32]. Thus ideologies are not insignificant epiphenomena of economics, but rather have real consequences for people’s social and economic possibilities [Stoler 1995].

For decades, the racial status quo in Brazil was characterized by concepts such as ‘racial democracy’ and harmony. However, with the end of the military dictatorship and gradual transition to democracy, writers increasingly problematized this vision of race and the nation. Indeed, in the late 20th century, the literature on race in Brazil has turned toward deconstructing the suppressive nature of ‘racial democracy’ discourses and demonstrating systematic racism in such areas as education, employment, and residence patterns.
These new discourses now compete with traditional stances in contemporary Brazil. The question is, how do these formal discourses—for or against 'racial democracy'—function in lived experience? Do both represent discursive resources in everyday life? Who employs them, when, and why? How do the competing discourses influence the construction of the *mulata*? Is the *mulata* a salient social category? How is she embedded in broader discourses of race and gender? Given the historical association with national identity and sexual availability, what does the *mulata* index today? When is the image deployed, by whom, and why? And, quite specifically, does the *mulata* image have ramifications for girls' aspirations, expectations, and experiences regarding relationships (dating, marriage, sexuality), education, and employment?

The purpose of this dissertation is, in short, to address the image of the *mulata* within the context of how people read race in contemporary Brazil. Chapter Two lays out the methods used to approach these issues—the site, the sample chosen to represent multiple perspectives, and the specific topics of investigation.
CHAPTER TWO

MENINAS DE MINAS: METHODS

An explicit focus of this research is to compare patterns in racial discourses through eliciting multiple perspectives among participants representing a wide range of classes, colors, and ages. However, the emphasis lies in representing girls and young women who are from the economic majority (very poor and poor) and who are most likely to be more intimately engaged with the mulata image. This chapter explains how I chose my site and sample, and the topics of discussion. This qualitative study was carried out in the city of Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais, Southeastern Brazil, from January to August, 2001.

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22 Meninas de Minas means the Girls of Minas Gerais. It describes the sample and site, and it also refers to a series of articles published in the major regional newspaper (Tribuna de Minas) during the fieldwork entitled 'Meninos de Minas' (Children of Minas). This series was intended, I infer, to raise consciousness among readers regarding the plight of poor children in Minas. However, the individualistic, simplistic, and apolitical style in which it was written suggest an enormous class rift—as if the (middle- to upper-class) readers had previously never considered that there may be poverty in their home city.

23 This research was funded in part by generous donations from the Jacobs Foundation and Ida Feldman.
Brazil is a very large country with enormous variation in climate, economics, cultural features, and population composition; certainly, no part can represent the whole. In choosing a research site, the main criteria were (1) racial/ethnic/cultural diversity; (2) economic diversity; (3) a medium-size city; (4) a city with very little tourism. This last, because most social research has concentrated on Rio, São Paulo, and Bahia, which have very high rates of international tourism not experienced in most Brazilian cities. The search yielded the city of Juiz de Fora in the state of Minas Gerais.

Minas Gerais

Minas Gerais (General Mines) is located in the Southeast region of Brazil. It is a central state, sharing many social and physical characteristics with the neighboring Southeast, Northeast, and Center-West regions. Minas also demonstrates health, infrastructure, and education statistics that are very close to national averages.

In the 1700s, the vast majority of the population was urban, male, involved in mining activities, and included a large proportion of slaves (Bantus and Sudanese). During this period, the New Road (Camino Novo) was built in order to facilitate the transport of gold to Rio de Janeiro (as well as Portuguese control and taxation). The mining industry increased communication throughout the region and led to urbanization. Into the 1800s,

Statistical and historical information are derived from the Statistical Yearly Report for Juiz de Fora by the Center for Social Research at the Federal University at Juiz de Fora [Salomão 2000], based on data from 1999, directed by Maria Margarida Martins Salomão, as well as the following websites: BrasilChannel.com.br and www.pjf.mg.gov.br/conheca.htm.
as mining waned and economic activities diversified, the population in the region became more rural, focusing on coffee for export, livestock, agriculture, and continued deep mining. Sex disparities evened out [Silva 1991]. Although the percentage of freed blacks was rising, in the early 1870s, Minas Gerais had the second largest number of slaves (235,155); Rio de Janeiro had 304,744 [Dzidzienyo 1871:3]. Also, the overall percentage of blacks in the region diminished. In the second half of the 19th century, government incentives brought large numbers of German, Italian, and other European immigrants, who were involved in mining, agriculture, and industry (particularly textiles). By the turn of the century, the economic and political seat of power had shifted from the Northeast to the Southeast. As of 1900, national politics were aggressively controlled by the Republicans of São Paulo and Minas Gerais in what is known as ‘coffee-with-milk’ politics (política café-com-leite). Policies favored coffee production and industrialization of the Southeast, marginalizing the agricultural (especially sugar) Northeast.

O Mineiro

Brazilian states are known for their personality stereotypes. Mineiros are known as conservative, religious, and mistrustful. Also, according to an adult male participant, Minas’ mining history has great influence on personality; he characterizes mineiros as sitting on their gold, trying to avoid theft and taxation. Mineiros are reputed to be mistrustful and suspicious of people’s words and intentions, naïve, careful, gossipy, and reticent with strangers/about themselves; they are known to hide what they’re doing, and keep their own business quiet. They are tight lipped and don’t show their cards. Popular
expressions include 'one foot back' (testing with only one foot forward, while the other remains on firm ground), 'quiet in the corner.' They are also known to 'eat quietly' (do things without calling attention to themselves). Consider an old poem from Ouro Preto:

"Being a Mineiro"

Being a mineiro is not saying what you are doing
Nor what you are going to do
It's pretending not to know
It's speaking little and listening much
It's pretending to be dumb and being intelligent
It's selling cheese while owning banks.

A good mineiro doesn't lasso a bull with embira
Fall for tricks, step in the dark, walk where it's wet, talk long to strangers
He only believes in the smoke when he sees the fire
Only takes a risk when he's certain
Doesn't trade a bird in the hand for two on the wing.

Being a mineiro is saying uai, being different
It's having a registered trademark, it's having history
Being a mineiro is having simplicity and purity, humility and modesty
Courage and valor, nobility and elegance

Being a mineiro is seeing the sun rise and the moon shine
It's hearing the song of the birds and the lowing of the cattle
It's feeling the awakening of time and the daybreak of life.

To be a mineiro is to be religious and conservative
To cultivate literature and the arts
To be a poet and a learned man
To like politics and love liberty
To live in the mountains, to have inner life
To be "HUMAN"

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25 Embira is a fiber used for making nets and ropes.
26 Whereas most Brazilians use the exclamation we, mineiros say uai. This singularity is a prominent marker of being mineiro. For fun, they translate: “Uai é we, we. Ue é uai, uai.”
27 ‘Human’ here is gente, meaning a person, people, a human being. In this case, it means an important, valuable person who deserves respect. People who are not gente are worthless, with no rights. In other words, people who are not People are not really people, not really human beings. For example, racists do
The third stanza describes mineiro pride in character and style, the fifth pride in culture, and the fourth represents a call to unity based on the tropes of land and time. The first two stanzas are particularly telling, expanding on mineiros’ low-profile modus operandi, and their great care not to fall for tricks. Another (more humorous) version of the poem focuses exclusively on mineiros’ eminent care not to do anything foolish or fall for tricks:

“To Be a Mineiro”

To be a mineiro is to wait for the color of the smoke
To sleep on the floor so as not to fall out of bed
To plant unripe and harvest mature
It’s not falling for tricks or traps (not gambling)
Not taking steps longer than one’s legs
Not tying up a dog with a sausage...
Because a mineiro doesn’t do anything that doesn’t pay off
He doesn’t sew without tying a knot.

A good mineiro doesn’t lasso a bull with embira
Fall for tricks, step in the dark, walk where it’s wet, talk long to strangers
He only believes in the smoke when he sees the fire
Only takes a risk when he’s certain
Doesn’t trade a bird in the hand for two on the wing.

A mineiro doesn’t miss the train but he buys the streetcar
and sells it to whoever wants to buy it...
A mineiro says tui and has history.

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not consider darker people to be gente; they have no value and no rights. Gente may also exclude the lower classes.

28 “Porque mineiro não prega prego com estopa.” Pregar prego com estopa means to fasten a nail with a scrap of cotton. It means to do nothing without expecting a reward or advantage [Michaelus 2000: 1472].

29 This plays on comprar bonde, to buy a streetcar, which would be like buying the Brooklyn Bridge—falling for a trap, making a bad deal.)
A contemporary pop song both pokes fun at the stereotype and transforms it; that little
mineiro in the corner is a cool character, secretly up to exciting business and (of course) a
hot lover.

“Little Mineiro”

It’s not my fault I eat quietly
In my corner, I go crazy/smash things up
I live my life just my way
I’m the type to do it, not talk

Do you want to know what I have for you
You’re going to love it
It tastes like cheese with a sweet
My darling, you’ll enjoy it

That uai is so cool
It’s great, no doubt about it
My spice, uai, mineiros make it

No doubt about it, do it, do it
Take a plunge

Combing participants’ descriptions yields a portrait of mineiros as ingenuous country
folk, afraid of being tricked in some way, who therefore take enormous care to conceal
what they are doing (to avoid interference) and not fall for tricks or fast talk. This
stereotype represents a stark contrast to their carioca (and Bahian) neighbors, who are
known to be open, friendly, spontaneous, and extremely tricky. It is important to keep
these stereotypes (which also represent significant discursive cultural differences) in
mind when analyzing data on mineiros and comparing them to studies carried out in Rio
(and Bahía).
Juiz de Fora

Juiz de Fora (Judge from Out of Town) is very mountainous, a high altitude tropical city (467-1,104 meters; average 800 meters). It has two seasons—hotter, wetter summers and cooler, dryer winters. Although the average humidity is high, during the fieldwork there was a drought. Since most electricity in Brazil comes from hydroelectric dams, the country was dealing with rising power shortages.

Originally the Arraial de Santo Antonio do Paraibuna (encampment or small village on the Paraibuna river), the city achieved the status of township in 1850, due to popular nomenclature (the judge with jurisdiction did not live in the city), the name was formally changed to Juiz de Fora in 1865. The town arose as a travel point along the New Road, and grew as an urban center in the shift to coffee production. The first Brazilian railway linked Juiz de Fora with Petrópolis in 1861, and the first hydroelectric dam (1898) in Latin American was located just outside of the city.

In 1999, the population of Juiz de Fora was generally cited around 410,000-450,000. It is highly urban (99%, compared to 78% in Minas Gerais and in Brazil), but draws rural immigrants. It boasts a large downtown area, an industrial park, several museums and cultural organizations, a federal university, and a handful of private post-secondary institutions. Population density is high, with most inhabitants living in high rises or the

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30 A traditional mineiro dessert is a soft cheese with raw brown sugar (rapadura).
dense shacks of slums. The northernmost area of the city is more sparsely populated. The city includes 81 neighborhoods, which are used as basic units of analysis for generating population statistics. The neighborhoods generally represent class categories, separated by as much as a river or major street, or as little as a few transitional houses. Poverty generally rises, but there are also mountaintops taken over by small, wealthy communities. In general, neighborhoods of different classes are interspersed, suggesting their interdependence, but there are also areas (especially on the outskirts) where several slum neighborhoods cluster.

According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), racial composition in Juiz de Fora (1991) breaks down as 67% white, 20% mixed, and 12% black. Although overall statistics show slightly more women (52%) than men, and a longer life expectancy at birth for women (71, compared to men’s 67), an age-graded breakdown shows that women’s slight population advantage in childhood evens off by 20 years and, after 35, men have an increasing advantage. The increasing percentage of households headed by single females (23% in 1991) is noticeably higher than in Minas Gerais (18.5%) and Brazil (18%). The age distribution is lower for children and young adults, and higher for older groups, reflecting a pattern found in Minas and Brazil in general.
Table 1: Population Distribution in 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Juiz de Fora</th>
<th>Minas Gerais</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-29 yrs</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49 yrs</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+ yrs</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Health, infrastructure, and educational statistics are better than state and national averages; in fact, Juiz de Fora was ranked #6 among 20 major cities in Minas Gerais in the mid- to late 1990s. The city actively courts businesses, and attracts a wide range of outsiders looking for work. There is also currently a national trend valorizing medium-sized cities for quality of life. However, almost all of the lower-class participants in the study complained that unemployment is extremely high and increasing, that factories close or leave, and many juizforanos (residents of Juiz de Fora) leave for Rio de Janeiro or commute. There was certainly no shortage of poor and very poor populations for sampling.

Juiz de Fora has a mixed economy. It relies heavily on commerce and a large service sector but also has significant industry (clothing, shoes, and textiles), construction, metallurgy, agricultural production (especially corn, coffee, fodder cane), cattle (milk and beef), and some mining (mostly quartz, feldspar (clay), and mica). The Federal University of Juiz de Fora supports almost 9,000 students and 816 professors (51% adjunct).

Despite this economic activity and touted cultural development, there is no tourism in Juiz de Fora to speak of. Visitors are limited to a few Brazilians traveling on business,
and the reasonable crowd that gathers yearly for the Miss Gay Brazil pageant. There was no tourist office, nor was there a map of the city available (except in the phone book) while I was there.

Juiz de Fora is located in Minas Gerais; however, it is much closer to Rio de Janeiro (180 km) than the capital of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte (272). In some ways, the population is very mineiro (of Minas)—more conservative, traditional, closed. In other ways, it is more carioca—following fashions in clothing, music, dance. Cariocas often accept juizforanos as “backwater cariocas” (cariocas do brejo), and juizforanos refer to Belo Horizonte disparagingly as the “Great Illuminated Ranch” (Grande Fazenda Iluminada). Certainly, the vast majority root for Rio soccer teams. In all, there are interesting tensions in Juiz de Fora’s identity—big city/small town, coast/interior, cariocal/mineiro. Some participants suggested that Juiz de Fora has the style of a big city and the heart of a small town. The degree to which different classes combined mineiro and carioca elements—and which elements they choose—deserves further study.

**Neighborhoods and Class**

The neighborhoods selected for the sample reflect economic diversity. Existing studies of adolescents focus almost exclusively on either wealthier university students or street youth. The purposes of this study required emphasis on the largest segments of the Brazilian population—the poor and very poor. Thus I selected three primary
socioeconomic groups, mostly within walking distance on the mountain on which I lived. Chapter Six provides a more complete portrait of the three groups.

**Very Poor**: For the purposes of this study, Very Poor refers to people who often worry about their next meal and may lack safe, sanitary housing. Very Poor neighborhoods tend to have low education rates (residents in general do not complete elementary school), high unemployment and underemployment in the informal sector, and higher birth rates. The VP participants in the study were drawn from two neighborhoods: Poço Rico and Vila Olavo Costa.

**Poço Rico**: Poço Rico is a smaller slum tucked behind a low-end commercial/light industry area, on the train tracks. The nonresidential element of the neighborhood contributes to a low population density figure (42/ha), but housing is actually quite crowded. The homes are crude, but most have electricity and plumbing. I was brought there by a health post nurse to attend a session for adolescents in their community room. I set up group interviews that included almost all of the teens in the neighborhood. I did not do extensive work there because it is so small and I felt my introduction was too formal and high profile, which could reduce the teens' comfort level on sensitive issues. However, I did develop lasting friendships with the community leader and a young mother that continued throughout the fieldwork and proved invaluable.
**Vila Olavo Costa:** A notorious slum, known for its size, poverty, drug trade, and violence. Olavo Costa has approximately 4,500 inhabitants and ranks third highest population density in Juiz de Fora (153/ha), despite its extreme hillsides. There is a range of housing, with most living in crude, unfinished cement dwellings. Nicer houses are mostly owned by drug dealers and some long-term residents that settled when it was a rural area. Three years ago, the city paved most roads, and streets were recently named (although there are still no signs). The neighborhood is highly marginalized, with no school, no community center, and a health post (shared with other neighborhoods) only on the outermost border. Community Health workers venture in in pairs, and recommended that I at least wear a white coat (I did not, feeling it was misrepresentative and socially distancing).

Due to the dire warnings on all sides, I had not planned to work in Olavo Costa. However, I was introduced to the neighborhood by my landlord’s maid, a 15 year old girl. I developed an enduring friendship with her, seeing her at least weekly for seven months. She introduced me to a few friends and neighbors, and let me rent her room (by the day) to conduct interviews while she was at work. I met the majority of the participants while on the street. I became friends with another young woman who also let me rent a room (by the day) for interviews. On occasion, I conducted interviews on the street or in other people’s houses.
Poor. For the purposes of this study, Poor refers to those who generally have regular access to food and reasonably safe, sanitary housing but still live hand-to-mouth, have better employment rates but low wages. The study focused on one neighborhood with additional participants from scattered neighborhoods.

Furtado de Menezes. Furtado reflects a range of economic situations that mostly fall within my criteria for 'poor.' The neighborhood has more than 3,100 inhabitants and, according to some sources, the highest population density in Juiz de Fora (162/ha). In most houses, at least one family member is employed. Houses are simple but mostly finished homes (tiled floors, closing windows, livingroom furniture). The neighborhood boasts a centrally located health post, community center, and school. At first, I rented an abandoned house across the street from these services and interviewed girls that I met on the street, at the grocery store, etc. Sometimes they referred friends or acquaintances. Toward the end of my work there, some neighbors became concerned for my safety and the propriety of the location, and I was invited to conduct interviews inside the health post. I continued to meet girls on the street, but also drew from those hanging out at the health post and neighboring community center. I maintained a friendship with my previous neighbor, a woman in her 40s, as well as a health post nurse.

31 The borders between neighborhoods are not always clear or accurately represented in statistics. The nurse at the Epidemiology Center warned me in particular that some of Furtado’s inhabitants are probably represented in neighboring Vila Ideal’s statistics.
The higher rates of employment among older teens and young adults made it more difficult to meet them on the street. Thus I also recruited participants of this economic class based on occupation (waitresses, receptionists, shop attendants) in other areas of the city.

**Not Poor.** In this study, Not Poor refers to people who have no trouble procuring basic necessities, can generally afford private schools, and have some amount of disposable income. The participants in this category could be classified as anywhere from lower middle class to upper class. For this portion of the sample, I worked primarily in one neighborhood, supplemented by individuals and groups from other areas.

*Bom Pastor:* A wealthier neighborhood with a mix of houses and apartment buildings, population density 54/ha. Girls of the middle-upper class are highly protected, rarely on the street even in their own neighborhood. Thus I recruited participants with an information table during the neighborhood recreation club's June Fest, and conducted the interviews inside the club. I also obtained permission to interview students at a private school, both casually and through presenting myself to a class and asking for volunteers.
As mentioned above, the research goals called for an emphasis on girls and young women who would be more likely to have an intimate relationship with the *mulata* image. The adolescent/post-adolescent group (ages 10-25) is compelling in that they are grappling with identity issues, dating, education, and future plans. Within the group, there were significant age characteristics that granted diversity. The youngest girls have inchoate discourses, more difficult to bring out and analyze—but fresh, not so neatly embedded in the more pat discourses that develop with age. On the other hand, the young women are more articulate, have more experience, and have developed more coherent discourses. The age range also represents a cross-sectional sample, capturing the trajectory of adolescence and post-adolescence.

The vast majority of the girls represent the largest segments of Brazilian society—the Very Poor and Poor. However, supplementary interviews with Not Poor girls allowed for comparisons among three classes. Interviews were conducted with individuals and groups (up to eight participants, but most commonly two). In total, I spoke with 78 (58 poor) girls and young women in 51 interviews. I also talked to 20 adult women of different classes, for a total of 98 females.
Table 2: Girls By Age and Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Not Poor</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>29 (37%)</td>
<td>29 (37%)</td>
<td>20 (26%)</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combining the Very Poor and Poor, 74% of the girls who participated were poor and 26% were not.

In Brazil, color and class are highly correlated. In my methodology, I was able to disaggregate color and class, thus allowing analysis of patterns across color, class, and age. Further information regarding racial classification in Brazil in general and the racial composition of the participants specifically will be presented in Chapter Three, which analyzes color terms and classification systems and establishes the basic units of analysis used to discuss racial meaning and establish correlations.

The literary and cultural analyses presented in Chapter One represent an important methodological contribution toward contextualizing issues of race, class, and gender in Brazil. An explicit research goal is to compare specific elements of the literature with contemporary social relations.

Context and comparative data were also generated through interviews with boys, men, adult women, and institutional representatives (teachers, community health workers, nurses, doctors, and government representatives). The interviews with males focused on
Very Poor and Poor boys and young men (30 in 14 interviews) as potential partners and peers of my primary female sample, and wealthier young and adult men (8 in 8 interviews) both as potential partner and also to elicit more formal discourses. I also interviewed four health workers (one doctor, two nurses, one epidemiology center research nurse), a teacher, a volunteer tutor, and the local authority on minors.

Observation and participant observation in public spaces included the streets and squares/parks in various neighborhoods, commercial areas and malls, school and university grounds (public and private), community centers, health post waiting rooms, funk concerts, carnaval, and a social club.
THE INTERVIEW

The primary research instrument was the interview, carried out with individuals or groups. Interviews generally lasted an hour, ranging from half an hour (reticent) to six hours (expansive). Most participants were interviewed once. However, one very expansive group required three meetings, and I had a continuous relationship with three of the participants, as described above. The majority of the interviews were tape recorded. I photographed most of the participants (to help me remember them and to have an artifact regarding color). As a gesture of appreciation, which also became an attraction that facilitated recruitment, I gave all of the girls and young women Polaroids of themselves to keep.\(^{32}\)

The interviews generally covered topics on an interview schedule,\(^{33}\) which may be broken down into Part One, a Transition, Part Two, and an Exit. I organized the topics in such a way as to establish rapport, gradually work into more sensitive issues, transition, repeat the process, and end on a light note. Part One focused on school, future goals, and relationships. Part Two addressed color, stereotypes, and racism.

\(^{32}\) The vast majority of participants were thrilled to receive Polaroids. Poorer participants rarely had pictures of themselves or their children, and the wealthier girls found picture-taking to be commemorative. On rare occasions, participants were wary of photographic negatives remaining in my care (due to *macumba*), and opted out. Having Polaroids ensured that they could still comfortably receive their consideration.

\(^{33}\) The interview schedule is included in Appendix A.
Part One: School, Friends, Future Goals, Relationships

The interview schedule begins with basic information, including age, level of schooling, and chosen pseudonym. I then ask how they feel about school (what they like and hate, whether they stopped going, when, and why). Where do they make friends, what do they do for fun? Do they have chores? Have they ever earned money? These introductory questions provided interesting comparative information and gave participants a chance to get their bearings.

Next, I asked about their dreams for the future: Would they like to work in or out of the home; what career would they choose? Would they like to live together or get married? Would they like to have children? When? How many? For each, I asked for ideal ages and sequences, as well as obstacles. The participants tended to engage more deeply during this section, either communicating a dream or sharing their distress.

From the topic of future family goals, I segued to relationships. The issue of partner fidelity (causes and consequences) was an enormously evocative subject, eliciting elaborate discursive and experiential information. I then backtracked to solicit information on dating—types of dating (ficar, namorar), preferences, and the age ranges and norms for each. The topic of dating led into issues of sexuality—female and male desire, incentives and deterrents to intercourse, first coitus, and the context of relationships. I also asked where people learn about sex, pregnancy, and prevention and whom they can talk to. Specifically, I was interested in the messages they receive from
different sources, especially parents and their childrearing strategies. Issues surrounding pregnancy included paternal and familial support as well as the ability to continue studying and/or working.

Because the research focuses on discourses, and I met with most girls only once, I handled matters of sexuality in a delicate manner. I explicitly elicited general, discursive information—what usually happens, what most girls think, what guys tend to do. Any personal experience was shared at the participant’s initiative.

I completed the section by asking about attitudes toward current clothing styles and what boys and girls find attractive.

**Transition: Beauty/Sexy Contests**

Following the questions on clothing, I asked participants to cast their votes for the most beautiful and sexiest women among a variety of models. The models I used are photographs cut from beauty magazines and glued on both sides of a large, foldable piece of cardboard. One side is a beauty contest, with smiling models. The other side is a sexy contest, with nonsmiling models wearing come-hither looks. The models represent a range of skin colors and features. For each contest, participants chose first and second place. The contests generated interesting statistical information to compare with qualitative data. This exercise, with the tape recorder off, introduced the models and generally provided a relaxed, gentle transition to the next section.
Part Two: Color, Racism, and Relations

With the models introduced (and the tape recorder still off), I moved on to explain that color designations in the US are different, and asked them to teach me how things are in Brazil by identifying the color of each model. During the classification, I asked questions about the importance of hair and facial features. I asked for definitions of racial categories, and an explanation of the boundaries between them. I pointed out discrepancies. I paid attention to the participants' reaction to the task—whether they were at ease or embarrassed, self-assured or indecisive. I also paid attention to group dynamics—whether they worked for consensus or presented me with different answers, the reasoning they used in disagreeing with each other, and silences.

They generally realized that I was simply ignorant, and were often intrigued by the contradictions they themselves created. On occasion, a participant would remain uncomfortable discussing color. For some, recognition of color was equated with racism. Others appeared overwhelmed or uncertain. There was a significant amount of escapism using the nondescript category *morena*, which can be used to designate a wide range of colors. But for the most part, participants were comfortable with and even enjoyed the exercise.

Having gone through 29-32 models, the stage was generally set to ask them to classify themselves. However, on some occasions I did not ask. At times, I thought it might make
an individual too uncomfortable. Other times, the conversation jumped into the meanings attached to racial categories, after which I was no longer comfortable asking for their self-designation, being too overtly value-laden. Now and then, we got so caught up in conversation that I forgot to ask.

The purpose of using the models was to learn about participants' classifications schemes in general and stimulate discussion. The process also revealed distinct trends in classification according to participants' own color and class, which represents interesting data for discussions of racial 'fluidity.' The literature on race in Brazil discusses the fluidity of color principally in terms of context—that is, how a person's color classification may change depending on her social class, education, or present company. This research, on the other hand, was designed to hold the object’s class constant (the models are equally glamorous) and addresses how the participant’s (subject’s) own color and class influence their classification of others.

After classification, I moved into exploring the meanings attached to terms and categories, particularly regarding women (with the tape recorder on). I asked about the primary categories: branca, morena, mulata, and negra (roughly: white, tan, mixed, and black). This was difficult information to elicit, and it took a while for me to develop a repertoire of angles to explain what I was asking, especially among the poor. For example, I would ask what brancas are 'famous for,' what the 'jeito' (manner, style) of the mulata is, 'what people say' about negras. With the wealthier girls, I found I only needed
to ask about the 'stereotype' or 'image' of each to elicit this information. I asked whether men have preferences for women of certain skin colors, whether women have preferences in men. I used a current *telenovela* (popular type of serial television program) to ask whether there are *mulata* characters and what makes them *mulatas* and not others.

After meanings, we discussed racism/color prejudice. I asked for definitions and examples, whether it exists in Brazil, where it is seen, and whether it is changing.

**Exit: Magazines and Juizforanos**

I ended with two very neutral, comfortable areas. I showed them magazine covers and asked what they like to read/look at. This pleasant exercise indicated what type of content and reading level interested them, as well as their familiarity with titles and ability to read them. Finally, I ask whether *juizforanos* are more *mineiro* or more *carioca*, and why.

The interview schedule was designed to generate various types of data: descriptive data regarding color terms and classification, as well as evaluations of beauty; qualitative information overtly related to race, including color terms, classifications, stereotypes, and other meanings; and future-oriented discourses regarding relationships and careers that may be analyzed indirectly in relation to race and class.
In short, the methodology chosen for this research focuses on locating and eliciting multiple perspectives on race in contemporary Brazil, and relating these to adolescent girls' identities, relationships, life goals, and trajectories. The mix of methods is designed to provide broad context and in-depth material. Triangulation is achieved both through multiple methods and, within the interview schedule, generating a rich, multifaceted base of information.
CHAPTER THREE

WHO’S WHO, SAYS WHO: COLOR TERMS AND CLASSIFICATION

Quantitative studies on race establish correlations between certain colors and social factors. Whether they draw on census materials or recruit participants for a study, these research projects are predicated on established color categories—generally white/black or white/brown/black. However, color functions on different levels, in different contexts, for different people. The famous ‘fluidity’ of color in Brazil has often been cited as an impediment to research. An alternative approach is to consider the rich, nuanced nature of color as a highly productive site for investigation. This dissertation explores the multiple functions of color on different levels for various social actors. The first step is to discuss color terms and categories themselves—that is, what terms exist, who uses them, when, and why. In other words, this chapter begins with problematizing the basic units of analysis and locating them in broad social, historical, and political contexts.
COLOR TERMS IN THE LITERATURE

I, for example, consider myself a *mulata*. It’s not that I’m a *branca*. My hair is curly, my color is more *morena*. Curly hair is something *mulata* have. I’m also very *branca*, [but] with curly hair, bad hair. [What’s the difference between a *morena* and a *mulata*?] A *morena* is lighter than a *mulata*. I, for example, consider myself a *morena*. A *mulata* is a little darker than me. Not as dark as a *preta*, but... a little darker.

This excerpt from an interview with a Poor young woman is a particularly rich illustration of ambiguity and fluidity in Brazilian color terms and categories. At one moment, she identifies herself as a *mulata* (mixed blood, generally darker skinned), a *morena* (tan skin), and a *branca* (white). She is saying that she considers herself white (*branca*) because her skin tone is light, but she is not a ‘pure’ white because her hair is not straight or light; having dark hair makes her a *morena* (which may mean brunette). She is a mixture (*mulata*) in the sense that she has curly/kinky hair, not in the sense of the skin-color spectrum (which runs *branca-morena-mulata-negra*).

In other words, having light skin and dark, curly/kinky hair makes it difficult to classify herself on the color spectrum, which tends to correlate skin color with hair color and type. On the level of identity politics, she is also balancing modesty (not claiming to be the highly admired ‘white’) yet not willing to fully classify herself in the darker (and more stigmatized) categories. Thus analyzing this quote reveals the importance of hair type to ‘color’ and the different frames of reference for deploying terms; also, although
the color system is ample and complex, this example illustrates that there are certain hair-
color combinations that do not fit in.

Some have used the fluidity and complexity of color terms as an excuse as to why racial
data cannot be collected and correlated with other social factors in Brazil. They argue that
there are too many terms, and that meanings change too much. The analysis presented in
this chapter demonstrates the value of qualitative projects investigating terms and
classifications, and how they may be used in relation to other aspects of social relations.
The most pronounced directive in race research in Brazil is for more qualitative studies
and attention to the mechanisms of everyday racism [Castro & Guimarães 1999;
Damasceno 1999; Goldstein 1999; Hanchard 1999; Mendonça 1994; Reichmann 1999].
Hence the dual approach of my ethnographic research: I am concerned to investigate
terms and classification systems themselves—in context—before invoking them in
associations or correlations with other factors.

Myriad color terms in Brazil are sometimes invoked as ‘proof’ of a racial democracy
(evidence of mixing, not bipolarity\textsuperscript{34}). However, contemporary researchers argue that the
fluidity of color terms reflects a tendency of both the government and society at large to
avoid darker classifications. Nascimento and Nascimento cite multiple terms as evidence
of the Brazilian ‘flight from darkness’—an attempt to distance oneself (or one’s country)
from Africanness [Nascimento and Nascimento 2001:124; Reichmann 1999:8]. In 1980,
the national census included a write-in for color; as a result, they elicited 136 terms. As Silva argues, this "total of 136 terms demonstrates clearly how the Brazilian flees from his true ethnicity, attempting, through this symbolic flight, to locate himself as close as possible to the model considered superior" [1984:159]. In other words, the multiple terms allow individuals to choose the whitest category possible for self-identification.

Researchers have also accused the government of hiding behind the fluidity of terms in order to elide issues of social inequality; indeed, activists claim that the government and other powerful social agents' support of term fluidity amounts to "an elitist ploy to reconfigure markers of social relations constantly, thereby impeding race-based policies or measures" [Reichmann 1999:10].

The Brazilian government has also been accused of outright suppression of color data collection. Evidence of this suppression includes the purging of the São Paulo School in 1950 for studies that demonstrated systematic racism, and subsequent repression of such

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34 To state the counterargument in a simplistic manner, several writers have pointed out that people of mixed color are generally the product of *mulato-mulato* unions, not black-white unions.

35 In the 1990 census, respondents listed 140 terms for their color: acastanhada, agolegada, alva, alva escura, alvarenta, alva rosada, alvineira, amarela, amarelada, amarela queimada, amarelosa, amarelo, avermelhada, azul, azul marinho, baiano, bem branca, bem clara, bem morena, branca, branca avermelhada, branca melada, branca morena, branca pálida, branca queimada, branca sardenta, branca suja, branquinha, branquinha, louro, melada, mestica, miscigenação, mista, morena, morena bem chegada, morena bronzeada, morena canelada, morena castanha, morena clara, morena cor de canela, morenada, morena escura, morena fechada, morenão, morena prata, morena ruiva, morena trigueira, moreninha, mulata, mulatinha, negra, negrolha, pálida, paraíba, pardão, pardão clara, polaca, pouco clara, pouco morena, preta, pretinha, puxa para branca, quase negra, queimada de praia, queimada de sol, regular, retinha, rosa, rosada, rosa queimada, roxa, ruiva, russo, sapeca, sararé, saraihã, tostada, trigo, trigueira, turva, verde, vermelha [Silva 1984:159].
Another example is the fact that color was left off the census altogether in 1970 (a time of intense socio-political repression); according to the government, color data would be 'distorting' [Silva 1984:158-159; Skidmore 1990:27-28]. The elite would avoid a demonstration of darkness in the nation, much less enable color-quality of life correlations that demonstrate racial inequality.

A third allegation is that the government chooses census terms that have the effect of 'whitening' the nation. Currently, the government census and major statistical research organizations use five color categories. Two independent categories are ‘indigenous’ (indígena) and ‘yellow’ (amarelo). ‘Yellow’ is ostensibly meant to denote Asian; however, my participants used it consistently to denote light, almost white skin (on the white-to-black scale). The census uses three spectrum categories: branco (white), pardo (brown), and preto (black).

Critics suggest that this selection whitens the census because the term pardo is associated with a darker color than mulato; thus the people choosing the census terms thought that (1) lighter people would avoid it, preferring branco, which would then increase; and (2) darker people would be more likely to choose it over preto (or negro), increasing the mixed category and reducing the preto/negro category results [Nascimento and Nascimento 2001:125; Silva 1984:158-159].

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36 In the early 20th century, Brazil was touted as a racial paradise. In reaction to Hitler and WWII, a team of researchers set out to "study Brazil's harmonious race relations and share Brazil's secret with the world" [Skidmore 1985:13]. However, their study actually demonstrated systematic racism in Brazil.
The spurious employment of the term *pardo* as a major category is demonstrated in my research. Only a handful of participants (usually Not Poor and lighter) used the term *pardo* to mean brown or mixed race. The vast majority did not recognize or did not know the meaning of the term. Almost all of those who did recognize it (most commonly because it appears on their identification card or birth certificate) defined it as meaning light, almost white. This was also true of health workers who assign colors for birth certificates. This lack of correspondence reflects the assertion that the "category *pardo*, a catchall group used since 1940 to accommodate the extremely subjective classifications used by Brazilians, is widely recognized as awkward and artificial" [Nascimento and Nascimento 2001:125].

The plasticity of the term *pardo* was described by the local head of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, who explained that in the 1980 census, *pardo* meant curly hair—as opposed to the *branco’s* straight hair, the 'pure foreigner' with no African or indigenous blood. But now it is used to denote a cross between Portuguese and *negro*, just like *mulata*, a darker category of mixture. According to a Community Leader/Community Health Agent (Very Poor, self-identified *negra*), *pardo* is "a nonexistent color... The bureaucracy invented it... It was never used."

I think, because of this racist situation, they thought that putting *negro* could bring problems... they are afraid that it would bring constraints/embarrassment for the person. So, to soften it, they invented the color *parda*, without a definition. Because the color *parda* doesn’t exist.
Certainly none of the participants in this research agreed with or were comfortable with their official designation of *parda*. The Community Leader also said that, in general, there is no regularity in the way terms are assigned. Some people just use *negro*/*branco*, others specify minutely (*morena clara, morena escura*, etc.). Furthermore, there are enormous differences in the perception of color from state to state.

The term *preto* was ostensibly chosen as a ‘softer’ word than *negro* [Silva 1984:157]. However, Skidmore notes that *preto* is more restrictive than *negro* [Skidmore 1992:PG], which would have a whitening effect by encouraging people to chose *pardo*. According to Silva, not using *negro* in the census was merely another way that the government ‘disappears’ *negros* from Brazilian society. Like including *pardo*, choosing the term *preto* impedes the development of *negro* identity and consciousness [1984:157-158].

Researchers have been skeptical of the validity of using just a few categories, as collected in the census and most major organizations, to form correlations with socioeconomic indicators. Since Brazilians describe so many color terms, these crude categories may lose important distinctions between gradations. They have also questioned the impact of fluidity—especially the tendency to lighten their self-identification as their economic situation improves—on the reliability of such studies [Lovell 1994; Wood 1991]. The census bureau conducted a study to check for validity, and the literature I have seen indicates that researchers are satisfied that limited categories are “not perfect but valid enough to warrant further use” [Lovell 1994:13]. Using their own methods, researchers
who select a three-category system (white-brown-black) have documented the difficulties of assigning participants to these categories in order to assess correlations [Piza and Rosemberg 1999].

Despite struggles with a limited number of categories and category boundaries, statistical studies have found significant correlations between color and other socioeconomic factors. The research demonstrates that darker Brazilians achieve lower educational levels (controlled for class), have lower rates of employment, earn less money at the same jobs (controlled for education), and are less likely to be promoted (regardless of performance or education). Color is also shown to be a significant factor in residence, political organization, and reproductive issues. Thus, after decades of repression, this new, growing body of race research is a powerful tool for demonstrating systematic racism in Brazilian society.

Some of these studies show a graded effect along the tripartite (white-mixed-black) spectrum. However, the trend has been to further reduce the number of categories. Researchers often collapse pardo and preto into a single category, generally termed negro, nonwhite (não-branco), African Brazilian (afro-brasileiro), or African Descendent (afro-descendente). Many researchers assert that studies show no substantive differences between the pardo and negro groups [Guimarães 1999, 2001; Hanchard 1999;}

Silva 1999]. Whereas there is considerable cross-over between the *pardo* and *negro* categories as people reclassify themselves, the “stability of the color line between white and Afro-Brazilian categories provides a compelling methodological rationale for collapsing *pardo* and *preto* into a single category” [Lovell 1994:13]. Indeed, Nascimento and Nascimento argue that the distinction between *pardo* and *preto* “has proved so arbitrary and subjective as to be essentially useless” and leads outsiders to believe that the small *preto* population represents all Brazilians with any African descent [2001:108]. The black movement has ardently advocated the use of a *branco/negro* system and campaigns to encourage people to assert their African ancestry rather than whiten themselves [Guimarães 2001; Nascimento and Nascimento 2001].
INVESTIGATING COLOR TERMS AND CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

In my research, I set out to explore the various meanings of terms, who uses them, and why. In the interviews, I asked participants to categorize pictures of models according to color, as described in Chapter Two. I also asked for a description of the color spectrum, definitions of each category, category boundaries, and the influence of hair and other physical traits. My purpose was to investigate patterns in term fluidity.

I found that the terms used by participants generally fit into a five-category system. That is, I found that the definition of terms was fluid, but when I asked for definitions of each term and boundaries among them, participants described underlying color categories. The column on the left lists terms grouped according to their definitions, forming categories. The column on the right shows the labels I have chosen to represent the categories (based on participants’ language used in describing the terms). The categories are listed from lightest to darkest because that is the way the participants describe the spectrum—always starting with the lightest, which was sometimes associated with ‘up,’ and progressing to the darkest, ‘down.’
Table 3: Color Terms and Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERMS</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>branca, clara, morena clara</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amarela, parda, morena clara, branca forte, branquinha, jambo</td>
<td>Almost White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mulata, mestiça, morena escura, parda, jambo, amarrom, cafusa</td>
<td>Morena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negra, preta, morena, morena escura, criola, meianoite, morena passada do ponto, tissão, azulão</td>
<td>Mixed (darker)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Darkest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants used many qualifiers within each category. To lighten the term assigned to a model, they used light (as in color, *clara*), light (as in weight, *leve*), and open (*aberta*). To darken the term selected, they used dark (*escura*), strong (*forte*), closed (*fechada*), and *puxada* (literally, ‘pulled,’ connoting forcefulness). Diminutives could be used to either lighten or darken; for example, *moreninha* could mean just a little bit dark or be a polite way of saying the model was quite dark.

Investigating the terms and categories used by participants raised several issues regarding racial identities and relations in Brazil.

**White & Almost White: Broadening to 'Light'**

The category *branca* appears in all censuses, studies, and informal color schemes. Although *branca* means ‘white,’ what counts as white may vary. *Branca* may refer to a very narrow range or a broader spectrum of appearances. The Almost White category plays a role in explaining the narrow/broad concept of white in Brazil. When asked

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38 This scale does not include Indigenous, Asian, or mixes involving either. There are very few
“What does amarela mean?’ or “What does branca forte mean?’ the participants indicated that the person was ‘almost white;’ the subject usually has darker hair (brunettes) or light tan skin. The effect of the Almost White category is inclusive, a broadening of the White category. It does not function to exclude people from the White category but rather allows people to approximate and expand the White category; in a two- or three-category system, Almost Whites would certainly be considered/consider themselves White.39

Morenas: Ambiguity, the Color Line, and Cor

Morena is by far the most ambiguous category. It may (1) refer to white brunettes, (2) refer to people with tan (or tanned) skin, (3) mean simply darker, or (4) serve as a euphemism for the darker/darkest categories. Nascimento and Nascimento sum up the term moreno:

Undoubtedly, hegemony belongs to moreno, a term that gives full rein to the subjective wanderings of Brazilian color consciousness. It can be used to describe very dark black people or very light mestizos, depending upon the point being made. Generally, the point is to get around saying ‘black’… even if the person in question can be placed in a range of color variations that most certainly indicate African origin [Nascimento and Nascimento 2001:125].

Thus it is not surprising that some of the participants chose to categorize the models almost exclusively as morenas, a strategy intended to avoid offense and conflict. Some participants using the morena strategy used lighter/darker adjectives to distinguish representatives of these populations in Juiz de Fora, and the issue rarely arose.

39 Whereas terms such as amarela and branca forte were described by juizforanos as ‘almost white,’ the terms branco da terra (home-grown white person) and branco baiano (Bahian white) in Salvador mean ‘not really white’ [Gillian 1988:526].
shades, others simply used *morena*. In short, *morena* can be so vague as to be meaningless, an unwieldy category. Thus I used the participants' descriptions of each term to whittle down the category *morena*. For example, when participants who used light *morena* (*morena clara*) were asked to describe the term, they described the White or Almost White categories. And when the term dark *morena* (*morena escura*) was used, it was described in a way that fits the Mixed/Darker or Darkest categories. Once light *morenas* and dark *morenas* are removed, what remains are those whose descriptions do not fit other categories; I call them middle *morenas*. In my sample, this was an extremely small category. Thus, ironically, the broadest original category was actually almost empty.

The expansive *morena* category is critical because it is the site of the color line—light *morena* and dark *morena* mark a significant social divide by color, most often referred to obliquely as 'good appearance' (*boa aparência*). Good appearance has everything to do with traditional beauty standards in Brazil (not to be confused with sexiness). It is not only appropriate dress, grooming, and language; it also includes various physical features. One lighter, wealthier woman (an international lawyer with interests in social relations) defined good appearance as "the *branco*, just with a tanned skin color, pretty hair, but darker skin. ... Fine features, of a *branco*.

To achieve good appearance, a person must first have fairly light skin—white, almost white, or *morena clara* (tan). Second, she must have 'good' features. 'Good,' 'light,' or
‘delicate’ features (small nose, thin lips) are contrasted with ‘bad,’ ‘heavy,’ or ‘strong’ features (wider nose, fuller lips). Third, she must have ‘good’ hair. The participants emphasized the importance of hair to color classification; as one stated, ‘you see color through hair’ (se ve a cor pelo cabelo). There is a cut-off line between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ hair; ‘good’ hair can be straight to wavy, but tight curls or kinky hair are considered ‘bad.’

The participants consistently described a color/hair progression, assuming the convergence of lighter skin with straighter hair and darker skin with curlier hair. Hair type was important to defining category limits: “A person with straight hair is considered lighter, the same person with bad hair is more negra.” Of course, there are always people with certain combinations of features that defy the categories. In some cases, there are lateral categories in the spectrum. For example, the terms índia and caju describe women who have darker skin and hair yet very straight hair. The light skinned woman with dark, loose curls quoted earlier demonstrates the ambiguity of this combination; for most, she would be a branca or a morena (in the sense of brunette). The problem intensifies as the contrast increases: One of the models had very light skin, an Afro hairstyle, dark hair and eyes, and a mix of facial features. There is no term for this combination among my participants, and she caused considerable confusion for the participants. She was

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40 When asked outright, a few participants denied the importance of facial features and hair to color classification; however, in the actual process of classifying the models, most used these attributes explicitly.

41 According to Gillian, people in the city of Salvador (Northeast) use saruaba and sararé to refer to a person with light eyes, skin, and hair, but African facial features and fluffy hair [1988:526]. This combination did not come up in my research, although there was reference to a friend with light skin and African features, who they referred to as an ‘albino monkey.’
designated as anything from a *branca* to a *negra*, and some participants could not classify her at all.

The expression ‘good appearance’ is an index for race and can be used to dissemble discrimination. Employment advertisements may stipulate good appearance as a prerequisite for hire or require a photo with the application; this may be read as ‘no negros’ [Valente 1987:34]. The ‘good appearance’ prerequisite is a very effective economic barrier. It is often invoked for positions such as bank teller, receptionist, secretary, waiter/waitress, and store clerk [Reichmann 1994:186]. Since these are precisely the type of job that represent a step up from domestic employment (maids) and physical labor, it is not surprising that Guimarães asserts that the ‘good appearance’ requirement is “responsible for the reproduction of most racial inequalities in occupations and income” [2001:166].

‘Good appearance’ is perfectly legal, and an employer may say s/he was not thinking of color at all, even though it means white or near-white [Dzidziienyo 1971:12]. One might ask how the criteria of ‘good appearance’ could not be considered blatantly racist. The answer lies in the construction of *cor*[^42] (color) in Brazil. As the idea of racial difference was squelched, racial discourse was replaced with color discourse. *Cor* is the same as race in that it refers not only to skin color but a variety of physical features (hair color and texture, facial and body features, eye color) as well. The difference between *cor* and

‘race’ is that cor ostensibly refers to appearance—the way a person just happens to look—rather than their ancestry (blood), which is linked to ‘race.’ So a person just happens to have kinky hair, or a broad nose, or dark skin, and these individual features just happen to be considered ugly. Blonde hair, light skin, and thin lips just happen to be pretty. Thus the individual elements involved in constructing ‘race’ are fragmented, and racism is cloaked in a discourse of aesthetics. Obviously, it’s a thin guise. One participant reported that to work in a shop, “they want appearance, pretty, speak well, single.” When asked whether this is about race, she replied, “Yes, because today it’s possible for a well kempt pretinha to get a job, but the employer will always prefer a branca.” Nevertheless, the discourse of cor is an important element in disguising racism, and has powerful effects in girls’ lives, as discussed in the following chapters.43

Mixed & Darkest: Beauty, Fluidity, and Bipolarity

The Mixed category (in which mulata predominates) and the Darkest category (in which negra predominates) raise interesting issues regarding beauty, fluidity, and bipolarity. For example, the differences between mulatas and negras are problematic. Participants asserted that the main differences between mulatas and negras are skin tone and hair—tight curls or kinky hair determine a negra, wavy or straightened hair determine a mulata. Kinky hair is associated with unkemptness and slavery; wavy or straightened hair are considered more beautiful or attractive. For many darker girls, achieving the mulata status is critical to their social identity, and they may invest considerable time, effort, and

43 Guimarães also asserts that the mark of color isn’t about heredity but is used to ‘explain’ the inferior
money working to achieve *mulata* status. Beauty products and procedures have had an effect on the *mulata/negra* border; as one participant stated succinctly, “[h]air straightening can change a *negra* into a *mulata* or even a *morena.*” A few times, participants mentioned the ‘traditional *mulata,*’ sometimes they meant lighter women with straighter hair who qualified as *mulatas* without any hair products; sometimes they meant darker, heavier women, prior to current fashions. In any case, there has been significant change in the category in recent years due to the availability of products, creating new fluidity in the categories *mulata/negra.*

Thus despite the hair and color distinctions between *mulatas* and *negras* described by almost all participants, there was considerable practical fluidity. In fact, the categories were effectively blended into one (thus creating a binary color system) through other processes, although the manner of blending varied. When asked to describe the color spectrum, the poorer/darker girls differentiated between *mulatas* and *negras* by skin color. However, when assessing models, they were so hesitant to use Darkest category terms (*negra, preta*) that *mulata* became the darkest term used, which has a lightening effect on the spectrum. Wealthier/lighter girls differentiated between *mulatas* and *negras* but then proceeded to combine *mulatas* and *negras* in the category *negras,* a darkening effect. For these girls, the difference in skin color wasn’t significant:

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44 Girls may use different types of extensions for longer hair. They may straighten their hair with a curling iron and/or blow drying (escovar). They may use a chemical straightener (less strong) or a relaxer (stronger). They may get a *piastra* at the beauty salon, but it can’t get wet. The newest method is to wave hair with straightener or a permanent, which will hold even if it gets wet. All of these methods require significant investments of time and money.
“*Mulata* is the same as *negra*. In general, there are *brancos* and *negros*. The division lies within *moreno*. *Moreno claro* is part of *branco*; *moreno escuro, mulato*, and *negro* are all *negros*.”

“... they’re all the same thing... There are two types. Putting them all together, they are all *negros*, you know.”

“A *mulata* is a *negra escura*. The *morena* is lighter. *Mulata* and *morena* are both kinds of *negras*. But some *morenas* aren’t; you have to look at their parents.”

“I think there isn’t much difference between a *negra* and a *mulata*. *Negra* and *branca*, that’s where there’s a lot [of difference].”

Also, darker/poorer participants tended to distinguish between *mulata* and *negra* hair (straight-to-wavy, good versus curly, bad); lighter/wealthier participants were more likely not to differentiate this way, considering both to have ‘bad’ hair. Thus the darker/poorer participants tended to pay more attention to the physical intricacies of color.

The real distinction between *mulata* and *negra* for the lighter/wealthier girls lay not in color but in beauty, wealth, and politeness—a *mulata* is “a *negra* with straight hair,” a well-off *negra*, a pretty *negra*, a polite term for a *negra*, a way to flatter a *negra*. “She’s pretty. Because an ‘ugly *mulata*’ is impossible.” *Mulata* is a safer, less offensive term. “When in doubt, you say *mulata*.“ This perception of the *mulata* was elaborated by Maria Eduarda, a 23 year old shopgirl (Poor, lighter):

[What’s the difference between a *mulata* and a *negra*?] I think it’s just the expression. I think *negra* is the same thing as *mulata*. It’s just that, instead of saying *negra*—*negra, negra, negra...* *Negra* is that person that comes from slavery, that ancestry, you know. And *mulata*, you can say, I think they’re the same thing. Like Bombom da Xuxa [a dancer on television], she doesn’t say she’s a *negra*, she says she’s a *mulata*. ... High society, living the good life, why would she say she’s a *negra*, you know? And she is dark, she is *negra*. It’s just that they prefer to call her a *mulata*. I think it’s the same thing, at
least from my point of view. It's an expression. Maybe a little more value, for the *negras*. Because when you say *negras*, you're reminding about the time of slavery, those poor people. And *mulata*, no. Then you're saying something more affectionate. With less offense. That's why they don't like to be called *negras*. There are people who don't like to be called *negras*. There are people who turn to you and say, “I really am a *negra*,” they have nothing to hide. There are others who say, “I'm a *mulata*, but a well kempt *mulata*.” But I think it's the same thing. Just a form of expression.

According to one woman (lighter, wealthier), your feelings for the person are important:

> When you want to classify/describe [a person], it depends on how you like them... The description depends on your feelings. When you like somebody, she can even be darker, but you say “No, she’s lighter.” Your own feelings... [have an impact].

Brazilian national identity is formally predicated on a color spectrum, not bipolarity. This distinction from one-drop race systems of the US and South Africa has been both a point of pride and a means of obfuscating Brazilian racism. However, contemporary researchers point out that the white elite has always employed a bipolar classification scheme. As one wealthier, lighter woman stated: “If she escaped from *branca*, she’s *negra*, and that’s that.” Others argue that the race relations in Brazil and the US are becoming increasingly similar. The black movement in Brazil works hard to encourage people from a broad range of colors to self-identify as *negros* in order to form a more cohesive platform, eliminating the fractiousness wrought by multiple categories and the whitening ideal. At first glance, it seems ironic that the black movement should dovetail with the racist elite's bipolar classification system. I would argue that the ‘blackening’

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approach grants formal discursive recognition to existing racism that has been veiled by discourses of neutral color spectrums.

As discussed earlier, researchers frequently use bipolar and tripartite classification systems to show powerful correlations between color and education, employment, income, and residence. The sample in this research did not support the use of a tripartite system. Participants described five categories; however, a five-point system would be unduly complicated for such a small sample. There was enormous fluidity between the two lightest categories and the two darkest categories, and the remaining middle category ('middle morenas') was nearly empty. Thus, without any claim to the superiority of a particular system, I will employ a binary\(^\text{46}\) system in analyzing the sample. The next question is how to label the categories.

\(^{46}\) Heretofore I have followed the literature in using the term 'bipolar,' however, 'binary' more adequately describes the two ranges.
THE SEARCH FOR RESEARCH TERMS

Finding appropriate terms to describe a binary color categorization system is difficult. My goal was to use terms that are both polite and in keeping with those used by the participants, which proved a difficult task.

'People of color' was mentioned by only one participant, who immediately dismissed it as ridiculous—"We all have color." The white/nonwhite system used in much of contemporary literature neatly describes the social function of color. However, 'white' is not necessarily inclusive of the lighter side of the spectrum (Almost Whites), and 'nonwhite' is a definition by absence (which reinforces the primacy of whiteness). Preto is a fairly common term, but it is generally used to denote only the darkest category; also, preto is generally considered derogatory (and even illegal, by some).

'Negro' is used by the black movement and often in social science literature to denote the combination of mulatos/pardos and negros/pretos, and many of the participants considered it a 'proper' term. However, like preto, it denotes the darkest category; and again, many participants of all classes considered it a pejorative term, with connotations of slavery. The term negro as used in the literature is not meant to index blood or ancestry, but rather the shared experience of inequality [Nascimento 2001:511-513]. Ironically, some have also used negro in a purely cultural sense, such that whites are included [Piza and Rosemberg 1999]. Popular rejection of the term negro is seen as
another indication of the internalization of the social devaluation of the group; thus researchers and activists believe the term should be used as part of a project of revaluation. I take their point; indeed, there can be no truly neutral term for a stigmatized group (darkness is stigmatized so there is no positive way to refer to it; new terms become stigmatized). Nevertheless, I choose not to use negro as a composite category in this research because of the connotations expressed by my participants.

The case is similar for ‘Afro-Brazilian’ and ‘Afro-Descendants,’ which occur occasionally in the literature. I find that they have connotations of ancestry and culture that are irrelevant to my participants’ self-perception. Neither was ever used by participants. The only time I heard either one in Brazil was on a telenovela, when ‘Afro-Brazilian’ was expressed in exaggerated political correctness by a racist character.

Thus, for the purposes of this analysis, I have selected ‘lighter’ and ‘darker.’ ‘Light’ and ‘dark’ would not work, because they can be synonymous with ‘white’ and ‘black,’ ends of a spectrum. ‘Lighter’ and ‘darker’ are not so exact, describing two ranges of color rather than endpoints. Of course, these categories merely represent a ‘best attempt’ constructed for the purposes of this study. There are few participants that do not fall easily into the binary system—those I refer to as ‘middle morenas,’ morenas who are not claras or escuras. Since only a few participants are ‘middle morenas,’ I found the binary system worked well in disaggregating my data. ‘Lighter’ and ‘darker’ are common terms and considered polite by my participants. However, it is important to note that I did not
test the 'lighter/darker' scheme (or any other pre-set categories) as a means of soliciting self-identification.

Using the lighter/darker scheme yields the breakdown of girls and young women who participated in this research shown in Table 4. The correlation between class and color is obvious. The three-class, two-color matrix (six groups) will be used to disaggregate responses and draw correlations throughout the analysis. The classes Very Poor, Poor, and Not Poor are crossed with the color categories Lighter and Darker; for example, groups are represented as Very Poor Lighter, Poor Darker, etc. At times, groups are merged in order to compare color versus class effects; for example, all Darker participants across class may be compared with all Lighter participants. Similarly, all poor girls (Very Poor and Poor) regardless of color may be compared with all Not Poor girls. In the case of group interviews involving girls of different colors, responses are disaggregated whenever possible; alternatively, they are described as a mixed-color group (for example, Poor Mixed).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Not Poor</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lighter</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darker</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM/ND*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Middle Morenas or No Data
Excluding the MM/ND, 56% of the girls were lighter, and 44% were darker. As the tables show, there is a high correlation between color and class—darker colors with lower classes, lighter colors with higher classes. When the Very Poor and Poor are collapsed into poor, the correlation is even more striking.

Table 5: Percentage of Girls By Color and Three-Class Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Not Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lighter</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darker</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Percentage of Girls By Color and Two-Class Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Poor &amp; Poor</th>
<th>Not Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lighter</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darker</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SAYS WHO: FLUIDITY AND COLOR/CLASS PERSPECTIVES IN ASSIGNING COLOR

As the literature so often asserts (yet rarely describes), racial categorization in Brazil is fluid. That is, an individual’s color is contingent upon not only physical markers but also economic status, education, regional origin, and the other people present in a particular situation. Thus an individual’s color status, or at least the color term used by/for the individual, depends not only on physical features but to some extent upon context, and is changeable. In my research, I controlled for context and studied, instead, how a person's own color and economic status influence their assessment of other people’s colors. As described in the methods section, I created beauty/sexy contests using cut-outs of glamorous models from beauty magazines. I controlled for external markers as well as possible (showing only their heads). My participants assessed the color of each model, and I analyzed their responses according to the participants' own color and economic status. What I found was a striking difference in assessments by class and especially by color.

First I noticed differential rates of use of the terms morena, mulata, and negra/preta. The rates were related to the girls’ own class and color. Very Poor and Poor lighter participants have high usage of morena like Very Poor and Poor darker participants (hence a class correlation), but also use negra/preta more often like Not Poor, lighter

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participants (a color correlation). Thus the *mulata* category was eaten away at both sides by *morena* and *negral/pretas*. The use of *mulata* by wealthier, lighter participants is high because they use *morena* less frequently. The use of darker categories than *mulata* increases with higher class and lighter color. A darker, poorer participant would find, among the models, either none or one to classify as Darkest, whereas a lighter, richer participant would find seven.

In other words, there were differences in color assessment according to the participants’ color and class, whereby lighter/wealthier participants used darker terms to classify the models, and darker/poorer participants used lighter terms. The darker/poorer participant’s *morena* is the lighter/wealthier participant’s *mulata*, the former’s *mulata* is the latter’s *negra*. To check this effect, I assigned a numeric value to each of the five color categories and found that the participant’s class and color, but especially color, consistently affected color assessment of the models, lightening or darkening them. Even in mixed interviews where assessments were given separately, the difference was apparent. Thus the research demonstrates a pattern in the fluidity of classifying others’ colors, based on the participants’ own color and class.
‘PROPER’ TERMS, NAME CALLING, NICKNAMES, AND JOKES

Fluidity was also evident in response to choosing a ‘proper term’ based on the participants’ personal attitudes and social motivations. For example, among the poorer, darker populations, almost all participants in a group provided a self-designation that the others accepted without comment. The exception was a group of two rather rowdy girls, who exchanged racial and other insults throughout the interview in a friendly, boisterous manner. When asked to self-identify, the younger one chose a lighter term and was immediately shot down by her older friend. The older girl made her examine the colors of the models and her own, and the younger girl eventually conceded that she was a mulata (but refused negra). This was the only case I witnessed where a participant darkened a co-participant.

The dynamics among lighter, wealthier girls were entirely different. They tended to select darker terms for themselves in a show of modesty, but their co-participants immediately rallied to lighten them. Whether darkening or lightening their co-participants, their reactions clearly reflected a color value system that favors lighter skin. Their responses also demonstrate how ‘other people present’ and the ensuing social context (such as maintaining a friendship) are implicated in the fluidity of racial categorization.
Darker participants in the main Very Poor neighborhood were the least comfortable discussing color. Two subjects inferred indirectly that recognizing/labling color is in itself racist. They said ‘Each individual is different,’ and ‘Everybody is different.’ (Categorization was dropped). The politeness of the participants (based on their general attitude toward me and each other during the interviews) was a significant factor in color assessments. The louder, rowdier girls were decidedly not careful to avoid offense and used many more color descriptors. The rowdiest group used 11 descriptors, including many derogatory terms, such as negra feia (roughly, ugly nigger), azulão (bluie), branco sujo (dirty white), cor de peido (fart color). The most common color spectrum described was branca/morena/mulata/negra. However, they did not actually use negra in categorizing the models. In practice, mulata was the darkest category for both the models and self-designation. Many girls were concerned to communicate the importance of using ‘proper’ terms—escura or moreninhas rather than negra or preta. [Which is the darkest skin?] “Mulata.” [You don’t say negro?] “No. Here one can’t call anybody preto. It has to be morena, those things, you know.”

The more polite the girls were, the fewer terms they used in designating color categories for the models, and the narrower the spectrum. They tended to use a morena system, relying on the multiple meanings of morena to avoid offense. As mentioned earlier, morena can refer to branca brunettes, a middling color (tan), or be used as a euphemism for mulata or negra. Some participants simply said morena, others qualified the term—morena clara, morena escura, even morena pouquissima (a tiny bit) escura, morena um
*pouco escurinha* (a little bit slightly dark). In the extreme of politeness, one classified all models as *morena*, save one *branca* and one *branquinha* (here, a slightly darker white). Other rather polite girls used a *branca/morena* split. For these girls, not only *negra* and *preta* but also *mulata* was off limits.

Here you can’t call anybody *negro preto*, anything like that, it leads to jail. [Is the term *negro* also ugly?] Yes, it’s ugly. You have to say *morena*. [Can you say *mulata*?] No. One should never call a woman *negra, mulata*. We have to call them by the name *morena*. [Do some people say *mulata* anyway?] Yes, But we should never say that. *Morena escura*, like that, we have to say.

The use of ‘proper’ terms mentioned above tied in with the Very Poor girls’ understanding of racism, which in turn was linked to their perception of Brazil’s antiracist law.48 For the Very Poor girls, racism/color prejudice is equated with racial epithets, which they understand to be forbidden by law. For them, the terms *negra* and *preta* are not only offensive but also illegal. Thus the majority of the Very Poor participants used *mulata* exclusively in designating the darkest color category. In a small sample from another Very Poor neighborhood, three of the participants were daughters of the Community Leader—an activist with a fairly sophisticated level of racial awareness and discourse—who had taught them to refer to themselves as *negras*, which they dutifully did when self-identifying. However, they did not use *negra* when discussing the

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48 Antiracism laws have been on the books since 1951. However, according to an international law professor, prosecution under the antiracism law is very recent (the past few years). Prosecution is probably restricted to Rio, the Southeast, and a few famous cases have been given considerable media exposure. It is free, but without money for a private lawyer, clients don’t stand much of a chance. The professor said that she has not seen any research on the outcomes of cases, which would involve investigation case by case, region by region. For more information on the history of the antiracism laws, see Brown 1992; Hanchard 1999; Hasenbalg et al. 1998; Davis 1999; Nascimento 2001; Nascimento and Nascimento 2001; Reichmann 1999; Silva 1996; Turra et al. 1995.
models but rather *mulata* as the darkest category, like the other Very Poor girls. This suggests that what mom said did not coincide with what they learned outside the home.

The assessment of the terms *negra* and *preta* as illegal in and of themselves was specific to the Very Poor participants. Poor girls of all colors and all neighborhoods were more likely to use these terms in both self-designation and model classification. They considered *negra* more polite, nicer than *preta*. One specified that *negra* is just a color (not a derogatory term); another offered that *preta* is a color, *negra* is a race and therefore the more appropriate term. Nevertheless, *preta* is still used frequently in conversation.

The participants recognized, however, that others could take offense at the simple use of *negra*:

- "Lots of people say this, that it's *morena escura*, you know, but our real color is *negra*. [But some people don't like to say negro] No. [Why? Is it ugly?] No, it's not ugly like that. At least I don't think it's ugly. But it makes people uneasy, embarrassed. People say *morena* more... 'darker *morena*'"

- "... here you don't say negro, you say *escurinho*. That is the word. Not negro. I think there are lots of people who don't like it. It has to be *escurinho*."

- "*Morena escura*, like that, one has to call them."

- [Is it ugly to call a person *negro*?] "Ah, it depends. It depends on what you're saying at the moment. If you say... 'That woman is *preta, negra*, I don't know, she gets sort of... irritated. Now if you come up and say, 'Look at that pretty *negra*, that's different.'"

As the last quote demonstrates, the context of color terms is very important. Using the terms *negro* and *preto* in anger, in an argument or fight, or disrespectfully, is considered racist (by all participants) and can lead to prosecution under the law.
Now, when you're fighting, and call somebody pretê, then it does offend. And that, here in Juiz de Fora, in Brazil, is a crime. It's a crime now to call somebody a negra, pretê, like that, to humiliate them because they have dark skin is a crime now.

Other common terms\(^49\) used in such a situation include negão,\(^50\) carvão (coal), macaco (monkey), negro\(^51\) pretô, criô/criolo (creole), and beicudo (thick lipped). They are pejoratives in themselves, and may be used in conjunction with other insults: 'creole, wretched scoundrel' (desgraçado), 'negro, son of a whore' (filho da puta), 'dirty black' (pretê safado). Terms for insulting brancos include branquela (whitey), leite ácido (sour milk), macarrão de Santa Casa (a brand of very white pasta), and lombriga (roundworm). These are considered less common, less offensive, and less illegal.

On the other hand, participants maintained that many terms are allowable when spoken with affection. For example, if you call somebody pretênhô, or negunha, even negão or carvão with affection (com carinho), it doesn't offend. Some participants claimed that these terms are not associated with color but purely terms of endearment; however, in their examples, there was always a racial context.

The assertion that racial slurs and racialized nicknames are acceptable among friends is a strong discourse. This is compounded by the fact that nicknames, which are very

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\(^{49}\) For an assessment of the terms negro, negunha, negão, moreno, morenita, morenô, etc. in the Northeast, see Gilliam 1988.

\(^{50}\) Negão derives from negro. The -ão ending is a strengthen, here meaning very dark and large. It is offensive and common. There are similarities with the term 'nigger' in the US.

\(^{51}\) Negro is also a derivative of negro but in diminutive form. In conjunction with pretê, it is offensive. On its own, it may be used as a term of endearment, as discussed below.
common in Brazil, are indeed intended to ridicule the recipient a good deal of the time. (I have not seen derogatory terms assigned to the more powerful social players of a group.) The recipient is expected to bear it good naturedly. For example, a young man (lighter, wealthier) described a member of his group of friends with light eyes and skin but ‘African features’ who considers himself *branco*; his friends call him ‘albino monkey’ to infuriate him. This is how nicknames are created. Any display of anger or irritation is met with delight and satisfaction—and the nickname sticks. During one interview (Not Poor), a participant bemoaned her nickname (Blondie), arguing that she is *morenaça* (very *morena*). To provoke her, her friends kept teasing her and calling her Blondie and found her irritation extremely amusing. Even if the recipient tries to cover his/her irritation, friends often see through the ruse. Color is not the only basis for nicknames; they often refer to other physical characteristics (such as weight, as in ‘Cork’) or an embarrassing incident (hence the nickname Vomiter). It is very common for the darkest (male) member of any group to be nicknamed something akin to ‘Blacky,’ even if he is not very dark. Similarly, it appears common for siblings to be differentiated by color in their nicknames; most common in the interviews and popular press is the father who calls his daughters *Branca* and *Negra*.

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52 Issues surrounding color designation and family context were not integrated in the study. In designing my methods, I heeded advice that, in working with adolescents, it is best not to have contact with authority figures in their lives; the teens may suspect that I will share information and thus become reticent. Since parents are authority figures, I did my best to minimize contact with participants’ families. Nevertheless, issues of family context arose in a number of instances. First, there is a tendency to compare the colors of siblings, as mentioned above and in a later example of brothers’ nicknames. Although my participants did not suggest favoritism of lighter offspring, this phenomenon has been observed [Nascimento and Nascimento 2001]. Second, there is evidence that Brazilians do consider family in designating color (supporting a hereditary rather than spontaneous concept of color). For example, when I asked a nurse how she chose color designations for birth certificates, she said, “It’s hard; you really have to look carefully at the mother.” Third, in discussing the colors of television actresses, I noticed that one was consistently
Participants were often eager to describe the permission of racialized terms in contexts of ‘affection’ and teasing or joking (brincadeira):

- “It’s fine to call people negro. Negão is also fine affectionately. It’s only nego preto, insulting, that is a problem.”

- [Is it ugly to call a person negro?] “I think if the person wants to offend, yes. It depends on their attitude. If you are close to a person, you can say, ‘Oh, negão, come here,’ and he won’t care.”

- “You can use negão, neguinha with affection. It’s just when it’s a form of insult. If I call my friend negão, he won’t take it wrong. But if I say to somebody, ‘You’re a negão safado,’ then…”

- [Is nego preto ugly?] “If it’s joking, it’s pretty much ok… it’s not ugly.” [What if you say it in anger?] “But up here everybody says it, it’s a joke (brincadeira) (laughing).”

Lighter, wealthier participants were more comfortable discussing racial nicknames and name calling, and found it more humorous.

[Can you say negro with affection?] Yes! Yes! [Laughing throughout] My sister’s friend, he’s really dark… we run into him and we say, ‘Ah, negão, come here, you dirty black!’ He plays with us, like this, ‘Come here, fatty.’ Like that, really affectionately. We play with him, ‘Ah, you preto:’ He plays with us too. We play with him like this, ‘Ah, you preto, safado, come here you negro safado.’

Sometimes groups laughed uproariously during the discussion, competing for funny names:

- “My sister calls them black chocolate!”

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labeled a mulata although she had the same color and features of two others labeled morenas. As it turns out, she is labeled a mulata because her father is a negro and she has publicly asserted her blackness. 53 ‘Preto safado.’ In my experience, safado is a very strong term. It can refer to playing a dirty trick on somebody, or to perverted sexuality. It is often used in conjunction with negros.
• People at school call them Nescau [chocolate milk]!
• "My sister calls them Coca [from Coca Cola]!"
• They call the darker brother Coca Cola, so they call the lighter brother Sprite\textsuperscript{54}

The participants did stress that friendship was required—others may be offended—but that a friend almost always accepts it. "When it's a friend, and you don't mean anything by it, they accept it." Despite the discourse of acceptability, there are suggestions that the offense can be too great for some people: "This guy, negão, he's called Big Black. He accepts it, no problem. But there are people who don't." This may be interpreted as miscommunication:

'You're a nega preta.' Sometimes people get sad when they are called that. It doesn't happen so much here in the neighborhood. There are people who call you nega preta but they're just playing. It's a brincadeira, but there are people who think it's true.

Only one participant stated flat-out that nobody likes to be called negro, not even affectionately.

Often the groups included one participant darker than the rest, and I was careful to note their reactions to the assertion that racial nicknames and name calling are acceptable. One young woman, who was otherwise moderate in her participation in a more overtly racist group, actively picked up the subject and told jokes, laughing too loud; she swallowed the fire to avoid passive humiliation. Another woman became very quiet; when she did speak, she did not contradict the assertion but steered it back toward unacceptable
situations: "If it’s a friend that comes up and says... you take it as a joke. But if just anybody... that you don’t even know, comes up and... it’s degrading.” The most common reaction among the lone darker participants was silence; even boisterous participants became quiet, averted their eyes, lowered their heads. It was apparent that those who bear the brunt of these ‘jokes’ do not find them humorous, but the discourse is so strong that they are unable to contest it directly.

51 Actually, Cinarand, a light-colored soda.
CHAPTER SUMMARY: PATTERNED PERSPECTIVES
AND MULTIPLE MULATAS

The purpose of this chapter has been to investigate the social, historical, and political contexts of color terms and categories. Using a qualitative approach, with no preestablished categories, the data suggest significant differences in the ways that color terms may be deployed.

On an official level, the government has been accused of suppressing the collection of race information as a means of hiding systematic racism in Brazilian society. Critics also claim that the government has promoted certain census terms as a means of 'lightening' the nation. The politics of which terms are used, when, and by whom, are also present in everyday discourses of color. The term employed within a given context may reflect individual goals of friendship, teasing, formality, or exclusivity. In other words, at the level of the nation or the individual, color terms are not neutral but rather systematically deployed in particular projects of identity and social relations.

The choice of terms also reflects underlying differences of perspective, particularly between lighter and darker participants. This division became evident while investigating color terms and their underlying categories. Although color terms are fluid, the process of defining them and establishing their borders reveals five basic color categories, which I have termed White, Almost White, Morena, Mixed/Darker, and Darkest. Further analysis
demonstrates that White and Almost White may be collapsed into 'lighter.' Subjects assigned to the broad Morena category may be redistributed, leaving the Morena category virtually empty. Finally, the Mixed/Darker and Darkest may also be collapsed into 'darker.' However, the way in which these two categories collapse varies according to the color and class of the participant. For lighter participants, mulata is primarily a polite term for a negra; they are all negras. For darker participants, Darkest terms such as negra and preta are unacceptable; they are all mulatas.

What emerges is a binary color system—lighter/darker—which describes not only the line of 'good appearance' but also a divergence in perspectives. That is, lighter and darker participants' responses fall into two distinctive groups. For example, lighter participants tend to use darker terms than darker participants when describing the same models; also, as mentioned, lighter participants found terms such as negra acceptable, whereas darker participants did not.

This binary system of color and color perspective will be used to analyze data in the chapters to follow. Chapter Four defines the two groups more carefully and demonstrates how the split color perspective permeates discourses of racism as well as color in partner preferences.
CHAPTER FOUR
READING RACE: MANNERS AND TASTE

In Chapter Three, an analysis of color terms and categories revealed that the participants' ideas about color were patterned by their own color and class. This chapter provides analysis of participants' perceptions of racism with attention to the perspectives of different groups. The first section, Part One: Perceptions of Racism, discusses responses to direct questions about racism, such as: What is racism/color prejudice? What are some examples? Does it exist in Brazil? The second section, Part Two: Color and Partner Preferences, addresses the discourses elicited in discussing color preferences for partners (for sex, dating, and marriage).

Analysis of participants' responses in both areas revealed distinct patterns in information and attitudes regarding color. The division lies principally along color line—between lighter and darker participants. For the most part, the shared discourses cross class categories. However, there is also a slight class or neighborhood effect, in that the Very Poor lighter may share perspectives either with lighter participants of other classes or with the (darker) majority in their neighborhoods. Because the class effect is limited to a few participants in the Very Poor sample, I will acknowledge this divergence but, for the sake clear presentation, I will hereafter refer to the two groups as lighter participants and darker participants, following the preeminence of color in the patterns of perspective.
Interviews involving both lighter and darker participants demonstrated a combination of discourses, elements from each group.

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate not only the distinctive perspectives of the lighter versus darker participants but also the specificity of the discourses in which each group engages. In Brazil, there are multiple discourses of color, each with its own political history. As described in Chapter One, the existence of racism in Brazil has been practically and discursively obfuscated in many ways. Many contemporary researchers have exposed the laws, policies, and practices that blatantly or surreptitiously maintain the racial status quo. Others have discussed how racism is hidden through a variety of formal discourses, including:

- **Class primacy**: There is no racism, only class impediments, and the color-class correlation is merely a hangover from slavery.

- **Idiosyncratic racism**: Racism is an individualistic anachronism, not a common or structural element in Brazilian society.

- **Individualism**: There are no structural impediments to social ascension, Brazil is a meritocracy, individuals rise or sink according to their own ability and effort.

Also mentioned in Chapter One is the tension between traditional discourses of ‘racial democracy’ and late 20th century discourses deconstructing the same. This chapter

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55 For information on how information regarding race relations was systematically manipulated and suppressed, and how contemporary researchers have exposed this information, see Hanchard 1999; Hasenbalg 1985, 1998; Kahn 1999; Mendonça 1994; Davis 1999; Nascimento 2001; Nascimento and Nascimento 2001; Lovell 1994; Reichmann 1999; Silva 1984; Valente 1987.

presents data describing lighter and darker girls lived experience and how they draw on multiple discourses of color in constructing and managing their moral identities in daily life.
There were significant differences between the discourses of racism volunteered by the two groups. The darker participants were guarded in their responses, providing a very limited discussion of racism that centered explicitly on name calling and the antiracism law, and made frequent references to nonracism, while implicitly indexing a discourse of individualism. The lighter participants, on the other hand, had a lower awareness of the antiracism law, and openly acknowledged systematic racism while asserting their own lack of racism.

**Darker Participants: Name Calling, Nonracism, and Individualism**

The darker participants demonstrated limited recognition of the term ‘racism,’ and ‘color prejudice’ elicited a narrow range of associations. Most stated that there was not much racism in Brazil, that they never experienced it, and that it was improving due to a new antiracism law that prevented people from using racial epithets. Indeed, racism/color prejudice was primarily and consistently defined as name calling (see Chapter Three).

Only when asked explicitly about employment did participants volunteer employment discrimination as an example; a few confirmed that there is job discrimination (by companies, and maybe factories or people hiring maids—the responses conflicted with each other). A number of participants also said there was prejudice against people from their neighborhood—not because of color, but because the neighborhood has a very bad
reputation. Three said that they had seen racism on television reports—famous legal cases involving a darker skinned woman using the ‘social’ elevator and restaurants or bars in Rio that do not admit darker people. Only one said that you see it on the street. The group with the daughters of the Community Leader was the only one to state that racism is everywhere and that it is changing little: “It can change, it can diminish, but it will always exist.” However, they also defined racism as any type of prejudice, so this statement is somewhat ambiguous.

The Community Leader herself (37, Very Poor), who is darker but has extensive contact with lighter middle and upper class populations and their discourses, stated that people's consciousness was being raised, and that people are getting along better. She blames darker people for holding themselves and each other back. She asserts an ideology of personal agency and individual responsibility, claiming that “[t]he capacity of a person is up to how they go out and do things.” At the same time, she combines a structural (rather than individual) argument in that she blames darker people themselves, as a group. She implies that negros internalize racism and hold themselves back—they refuse the term negro, they feel small and do not even try to take on challenges. She claims that they

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57 Occasionally, among both darker and lighter participants, the term ‘racism’ was conflated with social prejudice in general, a usage discussed by Munanga [1998]. For instance, the daughters of the Community Leader (Very Poor darker) cited prejudice against overweight and underweight people as ‘racism.’ Their mother, as well as one other adult woman (Not Poor lighter), bemoaned the fact that people think ‘racism’ is just about skin color, when in fact it encompasses factors such as grammar and economic class. Also, one group of adolescent girls (Not Poor lighter) talked about racism of color, racism of culture, religious racism, and racism of sexual preference. However, this broad definition of racism only occurred in these four interviews.
resent *negros* who do take on challenges; they do not respect *negros* who speak out or hold higher positions, accusing them of showing off.

The most evocative data on racism came in hints of personal experience:

- One young (10) but savvy girl expressed a color hierarchy and dissatisfaction with darker skin color when defining prejudice as jealousy. "It's like this: *pretas* are jealous of *brancas*, of *morenas."

- The same girl talked about feeling refused, repulsive due to her skin color. When I asked whether some people treat darker people badly, she said yes. "For example, we go to ask for water at a rich house, the rich person says, 'Ah, there's no water, you can leave.' They even think we're beggars. [Because of your skin color?] If you're white, they treat you very well."

- Another girl expressed this feeling of being refused, repulsive; she said that people didn't hire *negros* because "they are disgusted by us."

- Another participant expressed feelings of degradation and powerlessness when she said "...they just love to have fun at our expense. They just love to make fun."

However, these few examples were exceptional. The vast majority of darker participants gave the impression that racism is something distant, unrelated to their lives. There was no ready discourse of racism that they shared with me—only glimpses, such as the quotes above illustrate. On the contrary, there was a strong discourse on *nonracism*—how skin color is not significant. There was no reference to the term 'racial democracy,' rather, the idea of nonracism was usually expressed in such terms as "we are all one," "we are all the same under the skin," and "it's all one race."
The presence of a strong antiracist discourse suggests the contrary—a discourse of nonracism would not be necessary if nonracism were really taken for granted. I suspected that participants either were not comfortable talking about racism with me or talking about it at all—it can be embarrassing to represent oneself as a victim or powerless. Thus to supplement my information on racism in this area, I asked my primary participant, a 15 year old, darker girl who worked as a maid, to conduct a brief, informal survey on the streets in her neighborhood (Very Poor and predominantly darker) to ask about stereotypes:

[What good things do people say about darker people?]
- They have samba in their feet
- They are more resilient (*resistente*)
- They have more strength (*força*)
- They are hard workers

[What nonsense do racist *brancos* say about darker people?]
- Color and appearance (they are ugly).
- They are good for nothing (*não valem*).
- They can't have a better life, nothing good, better jobs. They don't deserve it. They should be poor. Poor *pretos* have to be slaves, really.

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58 This discourse was also reported by many lighter participants. For instance, one lighter woman stated that "*Pretos* are human beings just like us *branca* people. Everything we have, he has too. The color, from the skin out, is different. But inside, it's all the same."
• They aren't for marrying.

• Only pretos do things wrong. If it's something bad or illegal (drugs, robbery, everything bad), they say 'it had to be a preto.'

These quotes indicate a general awareness of racist discourses, although they may not be reproduced in an elaborate manner. The lack of cohesive discourses decrying racism may be a function of fragmentation—incidences of racism are subverted, reinterpreted, and transformed into other discursive explanations. For example, a darker person's experience with a racist may be considered exceptional (idiosyncratic racism) rather than normative, and a darker person's inability to get a job may be blamed on their own shortcomings (individualism).59

The lack of discourses of systematic racism may also be a case of self-censorship—belonging to a stigmatized group, openly recognizing racism against oneself, may be so demeaning that it is largely unspoken. This impression is supported by contemporary studies in Brazil by France Winddance Twine and John Burdick, who "investigate how everyday racism and racial identities are experienced and interpreted among people for whom racism is often a taboo topic of discussion, even within their families" [Harrison 2002:158-159]. This recent qualitative research northwest of Rio demonstrated that participants tended toward an individualistic interpretation of racism rather than acknowledgement of systematic racism:

As Twine demonstrates, Afro-Brazilians do not completely deny the realities of racism. They acknowledge the hurtful rejections they experience in social

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59 Further instances of personal agency and individual responsibility are discussed in Chapter Six.
situations, and they avoid those painful incidents through patterns of self-seclusion which protect them from being humiliated by 'mundane forms of racism' such as verbal abuse. However, experiences with racism are usually interpreted as individual problems not to be openly discussed or confronted. Unfortunately, this avoidance allows the fallacy of racial democracy to be sustained [2002:160].

Nascimento and Nascimento also assert that the black movement has trouble recruiting because to black people, it sounds like 'the language of losers.' That is, "according to popular thought, when one does not have the strength to change a situation, it is better to remain silent than to expose oneself to demoralization by way of impotent complaint" [2001:170].

If recognizing systematic racism is perceived as a 'language of losers,' then avoiding such discourses may be seen as contributing to a positive self-identity. Furthermore, discourses of nonracism, espousing an ideal of racial equality and validating self-worth, may be seen as a discourse of dignity.

**Mixed Groups—Mixed Discourses**

The focus groups involving both lighter and darker participants provided a blend of discursive styles. It should be noted that the lighter participants in these groups often spoke the most. On one hand, the mixed groups reflect the darker participants' tendency to conflate racism with name calling and embed it in general prejudice. Also, none reported personal experiences of racism. On the other hand, they had a more open discourse on racism, as did the lighter participants (discussed below). For example, they
state strongly that racism is everywhere—in name calling, violence, and employment. One participant said that employers look for ‘good appearance,’ which is recognized as a color line. And one mixed group did mention stereotypes:

If you’re downtown and a negro comes near, people are already saying he’s going to rob them. That’s what they think right away. It could be a branca person, even dressed badly, and they don’t worry. It could be a negro, he could be well dressed, and right away they think, Let’s pay attention, he could rob us.

Lighter Participants: Islands of Racial Democracy

The lighter participants provided significantly different data on racism. They rarely conflated racism with name calling. Only one young (13 yrs) Very Poor girl was unsure of the terminology, and defined racism as a “darker woman” (demonstrating that she had picked up the color association). The rest equated racism with color prejudice and gave examples or definitions. “I think that racism is a person who… criticizes people. For example, the color preta, the person starts to criticize, ‘Pretos are good for nothing, pretos do this and that.’ That’s racism.” One broke down the root meanings of pre-judice (pre-judgement in English, pre-concept (preconceito) in Portuguese), forming an opinion prior to knowing a person; “You imagine a person in a certain way, and that’s that. You don’t want her with you, you don’t want to get near her, you don’t want to know if she’s… she could be different.” And two discussed ‘discrimination’ as well.

They were quite clear that significant racism was by brancos against negros: “racism is mostly against negra people. It’s rare to see a negro discriminating against a (light person)” and “It can go the other way—somebody might not like brancos—but usually
it’s brancos that don’t like (negros).” Like the darker participants, their examples come primarily from television, but with more detail than in the other groups. Racism in employment was mentioned—advertising for ‘light people’ in the paper. The preference for brancos in employment was stated consistently among lighter, wealthier women as well. Like the darker participants, girls cited famous examples from television (with more detail). However, they stated that racism is local and widespread, and decried a number of racist attitudes:

- “Or, for example, if a negro man has a good financial situation, and he drives a good car, people think he’s a drug dealer, a soccer player. Or a pagodeiro. Or a funkeiro.60.

- “Yes, that business about negros being... hard workers. Branca people are more refined, less arduous, less heavy. There’s still a lot of people who think like that.”

- “[Racist people say] that they’re poor, that the ‘re different... Because negros used to be slaves, so... there’s that tradition. It’s over now, but people still have it in their heads. They think that’s why they’re poorer, different. Lazy. That negros are stronger.”

- “It’s absurd... To think that all pretos are lazy. My father says that. [What other things do racist people say?] That they like to show off. For example, if a negro is driving a fancy red car, decorated with soccer teams, my father says, ‘It could only be a preto.’ Exaggerated. Flashy. ‘If something is badly done, it must have been a preto.’ People don’t say it out loud so much, but it’s understood that negros are good for work. Resistente. Physical labor, carrying 50-kilo sacks, security, they get a negro.”

- “[So relations between negros and brancos here are difficult?] Very difficult. There are negros that come into the shop and are well treated, but there are neguinhas that are not well treated. No sooner do they come into the shop, security looks at them suspiciously. Because of their clothes. Neguinhas generally come into the shop to steal. So you’re already suspicious. And brancos steal and they don’t even notice... They don’t realize that with brancos it’s the same thing. But they go after negros. It’s difficult, very complicated. At the shop, they don’t hire negros to work. Why? They’re afraid to trust them. Most employees... the best maids I know are negros. They work really well. They are our friends. There (at the shop), no. They prefer to hire brancas—brancas cheat/screw you! They don’t work properly. Brancas are not

60 Musicians of Pagode and Funk, styles of music associated with darker skinned/poor Brazilians.
your friends."

- "But my uncle says that negros are just to be slaves. That’s his prejudice. Most of his employees on the ranch are negros. But they do their jobs well. He’s an ignorant guy. People have to evolve, to have a heart. They are human beings."

Although the lighter participants were less aware of the antiracism law, their assessment of its effects was more ambivalent. One felt that racism was worsening, "maybe because there are so many people who don’t like negra people." Another felt that racism was diminishing because “people talk more, with each other. So they start to open up, start to get to know negros and morenos better.” One found the antiracism law less than effective because it requires considerable money, information, and humiliation on the part of the aggrieved party:

[Does the law have an effect?] Only when the negro exposes himself.\(^{61}\) When he shouts it to all the world, talks, denounces it. Says it’s wrong... declares/ confesses. And negros aren’t well off. There are negros that have money, but the majority don’t. You have to pay the lawyer and lots of things, to win. He who has money wins the case. [So most negros don’t...] No, they don’t even put up a fight. They don’t go to court, they don’t do anything. Racism is a crime, but... power is above everything else.

An international law professor was surprised that girls were so aware of the antiracism law because it would be so inaccessible to them to prosecute:

I didn’t know people were so aware of it.... Now, it’s hard for just anybody to sue somebody. Because the judges themselves... ‘Oh, they just called you a negro.’ So the most common suit is by a rich negro that lives in a condominium that was mistreated by another. That’s easier, because he can hire more lawyers than what the state provides. I think it’s easier for somebody with more money to bring a suit because the neighbor called him negro with a prejudiced connotation. A poorer person doesn’t have such access... He doesn’t find it as important...

\(^{61}\) "Se expone." Expor: To expose, exhibit, display; declare, report. Expor-se: To expose oneself to danger, run a risk.
‘Ah, let it be.’ He’s already been negro so many times. So the most common is when a rich person is mistreated. When a poor person is mistreated, he is mistreated in all ways, so it’s just one more.

When discussing the antiracism law, two lighter participants asserted that the antiracism law only serves to hide racism. Lighter people may not say it, but they still do not like negros, and they make comments behind their backs. They cannot say it in front of darker people because it is against the law, but racist discourse is still very much alive behind the scenes.

- [What do racists say about negra people?] “These days they don’t say so much. They show it in their gestures, manner. They rub their arm” (meaning dark skin).

- [Does racism exist in Brazil?] “It exists, yes. [Where do you see it?] Right here in the neighborhood you see a lot of people say things. In front of preta people, people don’t criticize so much; they say it behind their backs. If they say it now, say it in front of them, that person... it’s a crime. Just because of that. So they accept it [not saying it in front of darker people due to the law]. [But behind their backs...] Yes, they say it behind their backs.”

It is interesting to note that the hidden discourse of racism was pointed out by a lighter Very Poor girl and a lighter Poor girl. Indeed, poorer, lighter people are more likely to have contact with darker people than wealthier, lighter people, and are thus well positioned to hear the double discourse of racism. Three lighter, wealthier, adult women also mentioned the hidden nature of racism. One said that racism is camouflaged—you don’t see it on the street, but you see it in education and employment. Another said that it is disguised—people are more polite, but they still don’t accept them in higher positions. The third said that “[p]eople get along, but, in your thoughts you are discriminating....
We get along, he's your friend, he comes to your house. But when he starts dating your daughter, we don't like it.”

In general, lighter participants painted a bleaker picture of racism in Brazil but were far more comfortable discussing it than darker participants. However, their comments reflected enormous ambivalence, a struggle between antiracist discourses and prevalent racist attitudes.

On one hand, poorer participants frequently made a point to assert their own whiteness and refusal to be labeled darker.62 One very light participant in a Very Poor neighborhood inserted mention that she was white—like me—several times before we even discussed color. Another lighter Very Poor woman said she considers herself a branca even though her birth certificate says pardã (to her, Almost White). Three lighter Poor participants also emphasized their identification with whiteness. One downplayed her current status as ‘yellow’ (Almost White), twice mentioning that she was branca as a child, hence her father’s nickname of Branca. One admitted that some people call her a morena, but that she considers herself branca. And another says that she calls herself ‘yellow’ (Almost White) like her friend, but she’s ‘really’ branca. She was blonde when she was little, but then it got darker so she dyes it blonde because that is the way she sees herself. These

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62 This tendency to claim whiteness contrasts with the wealthier lighter participants, who darkened themselves and lightened each other in group interviews, as seen earlier. I believe that the difference lies in the fact that a wealthier person's whiteness is not contested but rather taken for granted.
comments suggest that distancing themselves from darker skin (and approximating lighter skin, such as my own) is important to their identities.

On the other hand, denouncing racism appears to be important to the girls’ moral identities, and there were frequent assertions of their own nonracism and distancing from racist discourses:

- “I’m not racist, I [myself] have curly hair.”
- “I’m not prejudiced at all, nothing. I treat them the same.”
- “I have no kind of prejudice, so I don’t say preta, negra, charcoal.”
- (After hearing a racist joke) “I’m not racist, not even a little bit.”
- “White women are more—I’m talking about other people—they like to call others preto just because they’re brancos.”
- “… Like my grandfather said once, I was shocked, my grandfather is racist, you know…”

The lighter participants seem intent on recognizing and decrying systematic racism as part of their moral identity as modern, intelligent, educated, and humanitarian individuals. At the same time, they do not wish to be implicated (as lighter people), and are careful to distance themselves personally from this abomination. The result is the underlying assertion that ‘everybody is racist except for me.’ As Hasenbalg et al. describe the phenomena, “[a]ll Brazilians present themselves as an island of racial democracy surrounded by racism on all sides” [1998:96].
On occasion, lighter participants also distanced themselves from blame by turning it back on darker people. Thus they acknowledge racism in society (in education and employment), but claim that darker people are the worst racists:

- "Even negros themselves, they're ashamed to say [negro]. Not them, that word for them isn't the name of their race. I think they even resent the name a little. They are not proud of this name."

- "So I think that [interracial marriage] will be the end of the negro race... But I think they are rooting for this. I think that negros, racism comes more from them than us."

- "At home we say, 'racism comes from negros themselves'" [finished in chorus].

There was enormous tension between discourses of nonracism and prevalent racist attitudes. One way some participants let off steam was through racist jokes. As with name calling, racial jokes are considered by some as 'ok' (politically correct) because they are just in fun, just playing, just jokes. In one interview, a few participants competed in telling racist jokes and repeating racist sayings; others simultaneously denounced and enjoyed the jokes. They included: "If a preto doesn't shit on the way in, he shits on the way out" (pretos always screw up/screw you over); "A negro is only a person when he's in the bathroom, somebody comes and knocks on the door, and he says 'there's a person'"; "Negros only rise in life when their shack explodes;" "What's the difference between a bucket of shit and a negro? The bucket!"

Those who write about racist jokes (brincadeiras and piadinhas) in Brazil are concerned to assert that they are not 'just jokes' but rather have real consequences for the rights and

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63 Tem gente ('there's a person') means 'occupied.'
opportunities of those they touch [Guimarães 1999:67]. They constitute yet another thinly disguised means of expressing racism, which Brazilians are loathe to admit [Valente 1987]. According to Fonseca, racist jokes are a manifestation of jeitinho, through which Brazilians manage to express racism through ridicule and socially exclude negros with impunity— that is, without being considered a racist. Through the racist joke, hidden prejudices are revealed; “Brazilians... express their prejudice against the Other principally in an informal manner when they produce and reproduce jokes, especially against negros” [1995:45]. Through anti-negro jokes, which began as an exclusionary practice around Abolition, the ruse of ‘racial democracy’ is belied [1995:46].

On this quicksand terrain of relations between negros and brancos in Brazil, the joke and laughter manipulate, with extreme skill, jeito, and ginga, the false and artificial stage set of ethnic-racial harmony... Jeitinhos and jokes put a mask of tolerance and generosity while maintaining hegemonic practices and the dominant ideology [Fonseca 1995:46-47].

At times, the conflict between participants’ claims to nonracism and their actual expressions of racist attitudes was striking (for an outsider). According to Blajberg, the myth that there is no systematic racism in Brazil is so strong, and racism is so hidden through alternative discourses, that discriminatory acts are often accompanied by the affirmation ‘I’m not racist.’ [Blajberg 1996:37]. ‘I’m not a racist, but...’ is also a

64 Although the scenario did not occur in my fieldwork, it is important to note that, according to Valente, racist jokes tend to arise in moments of competition and are intended to humiliate negros in front of others [1987:25].
65 Jeitinho comes from jeito, which means 'skill' as well as a 'means'—that is, a means of getting something done. Jeitinho generally refers to a clever, innovative, or tricky way of getting something accomplished despite obstacles. Brazilian jeito and jeitinho are a matter of national pride.
66 Fonseca also discusses how negros may respond to racist jokes, including strategies of appropriation.
67 Jeito and jeitinho: see footnote 9. Ginga refers to a bodily ‘swing,’ a specific move of capoeira (a martial art), or something akin to pizzazz or spice [Chamberlain and Harmon 1983:267].
common introduction to a racist remark. The participants certainly demonstrated ambivalence; note how participants in this group oscillate between renouncing and expressing racism:

Oh, it's not that I'm racist, but I think that pretos have to get beaten (apanhar).
They have to suffer, to scrape by (ralar).
[It's his place?] Yes, something like that...
As if he were...
... inferior, a slave.
Like, he has to fight (bater), he has to get beaten (apanhar), he has to suffer to see whether he manages to get somewhere.  
There's a lot of that— I'm not usually racist, but it's so ingrained that you go around saying 'That's a preto thing.' If something is badly done, 'Wow, that's a preto's work,' you know.
Like it's badly done because it was some negro who did it.
This is contradictory, in a way. Because negros are known to be hard workers, doing hard work, and everything.
There's a woman I know. She had a maid. The girl was young, too, but she was really a mulata. I turned to her, 'I don't know why you're doing this work, you're aren't preta, you're branca!'
That isn't racism, it's an attitude.
Negros are strong. They have strong health, they have strong blood, you hear it all the time. They're stronger than us.

This ambivalence is reflected in an interview with a Poor young woman who denounces her uncle's racism and the shop's racism (cited above). She says that negros are good workers. She goes on about how much she loves negra maids, how wonderful they are. How they do everything with more heart. "I have a lot of affinity, people like that, but I

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58 One lighter, wealthier adult woman also stated that a person's lot depends on his karma. For example, people born as black Africans are paying off bad karma from previous lives.
also mistrust them. I'm scared to death of them. But I like them.” She expresses great fear of negros:

The negros on the hills, they’re aggressive with us. If they were a little more polite... if they didn’t scare us, maybe the people could live in the same society as us. ... You think about going up that hill, that hill of negros, really, a lousy place, you get scared. Because you know its reputation. So there you have that question X, if they didn't make us scared, maybe... Here in Brazil, the negros of the hill screw/cheat us a lot. They rob, there there’s drugs, guns. You could go in and never come out. You’re scared. I think that's what it’s about.

(Talking about funk concerts) And who generally goes to these dances? Negros. But negros are very aggressive. They fight. ... Not that there aren’t fights where we go dancing, there are, but they happen with more civility. There, they fight like dogs. That’s where you see prejudice, racism. ... But they do it themselves. If they didn’t hurt themselves (automachucar), this wouldn’t happen.

The ability to claim a nonracist stance and at the same time make racist statements may be explained in part by the hidden nature of racism. That is, for many Brazilians, the definition of racism may be narrowed to discrimination. Thus a person may be prejudiced—have a racist mentality—but if they hide it from darker people and do not offend them, then they are not being discriminatory and therefore are not racist.

In a situation where it is not considered advisable to indulge in overt discrimination, refuge may be taken in the explanation that it is prejudice, not discrimination, that exists. In the Brazilian case in particular, although it is often admitted that a certain amount of prejudice is felt against dark persons, it is claimed that such prejudice does not involve actual discrimination [Dzidzienyo 1971:7].

This is referred to as ‘cordial racism’ in the literature. As one author puts it, cordiality is described in the popular expression, “In the home of a hanged man, one doesn’t talk about rope” [Pereira 1996:76]. It’s a matter of manners, etiquette. Turra et al., in their study of contemporary racism, describe being cordial as a way of hiding one’s true
attitudes. "The vast majority of Brazilians demonstrated having or being inclined to have prejudiced attitudes in relation to negra people, but they wanted to minimize them. A demonstration of cordiality, perhaps, so as not to offend even more those who are being discriminated against" [Turra et al. 1995:12]. Thus Fonseca describes Brazilian cordiality as hidden racism: racial harmony "is expressed through the 'cordial man' who conceals, disguises the conflicts arising from social, individual, and collective relations" [1995:47].

Thus it makes sense that many lighter participants could state that the proper terms were 'darker' and negra but actually use the term preta consistently throughout the interview without considering it a slur—it is only a slur if used to a darker person's face. When lighter participants talk about racism, they may not conflate it with name calling per se but their definition is often closer to overt discrimination. They believe what they want and say what they want in light company; as long as they do not affront a darker person directly, they can preserve their moral identity as nonracist. This is also why they were relatively comfortable discussing racism with me, a branca.

Definitions aside, the vast majority of participants clearly rejected the moral identity of being a racist. Only a very few participants—adult, lighter, Not Poor women raising children—rejected racism but acknowledged the internalization of racist attitudes:

- [Is there much racism in Brazil?] "I think that in our hearts, we are. It's something that has been around a long time, and hard to get rid of. But we have to grow, because..."

For further reading on 'cordiality,' see Cardoso 1993; Dzidzienyo 1971; Fonseca 1995; Pereira 1996.
it shouldn't exist. I tell my children... But it's funny that even children—my nephew said 'Why are all pretos poor?' He already has that, he already has the idea."

- "So [racism] is something I'm getting past, maybe even in my evolution, my maturity too. But not before. I never remember, when I was in my 20s, in a bar, looking at a guy, and thinking he was good looking... feel an attraction for him. But it wasn't that thing 'I won't look at a negro.' And in my family there are negros, cousins, aunts married to negros. I get along well with them. But it's their thing, not mine. When my daughter started to, began her adolescence, she had some little friends that were good friends... Just play. But I think it's rooted in her too. When it came to serious dating (she chose brancos). And for me it will be easier to accept. But all of (my children), already, prejudice is still strong. It's not stamped, not acknowledged... It's not that. We are conscious that we are equal. There shouldn't be distinctions. But we still hold onto that old thing. Most of our population is negro, or comes from negro descent, because of slavery. We came... who dominated was the branca race. That's where we still are. Things don't change quickly, no matter how hard you fight for it."

In short, the lighter participants were intent on recognizing and decrying systematic racism as part of their moral identity as modern, intelligent, educated, and humanitarian individuals. They also clearly assumed or asserted membership in the valued white category. The resulting tension is expressed through distancing techniques, 'jokes,' spreading the blame, hiding racism, and attenuating shades of racism. The vast majority claimed either not to hold or to act on prejudiced beliefs (or, at the least, not to approve of their own attitudes or behaviors). The fact that people can so thoroughly embrace a discourse of equality while simultaneously subverting it does not offer much solace to those who would seek the positive aspects of an official ideology of racial democracy.

'Racial Democracy' and Moral Identities

The participants did not use the formal term 'racial democracy' itself; nevertheless, their responses demonstrated significant exposure to discourses of nonracism. Girls and young
women of all colors and classes rejected ideologies of racism and embraced a discourse of racial equality. However, the manner in which racism is denied follows color and class patterns that reflect projects of moral identity based on the social location of different groups.

The darker participants provided a limited and fragmented definition of racism. They tended to downplay its (humiliating) existence, and were silent on the issue of systematic or structural racism. Instead, they highlighted the ideal of racial equality as a discourse of dignity. The lighter participants, on the other hand, had fairly well developed ideas about racism, and decried and rejected its existence. They sought manners to distance themselves from the racist category (although some simultaneously expressed attitudes that could be construed as racist) as part of a modern, progressive identity.

Thus for both groups, nonracism is a matter of moral identity: the lighter would not be racist, and the darker would not be victimized. In effect, both groups illustrate the multiple ways in which racism may be denied, hidden, manipulated, and transformed. Nevertheless, each group experiences the discourse of nonracism as empowering. The differential deployment of racial discourses by lighter and darker groups finds a parallel in discussions of color, beauty, and partner preferences in Part Two.
The traditional litmus test of racism among whites in Brazil is the question, "Would you let your daughter marry a negro?" In order to investigate different types of racism and the issues of social place described by "A branca to marry, a negra to work, and a mulata to screw," the interview included the question, "Do people have preferences regarding the color of their partner?" The resounding answer was "Yes," across all colors and classes. Appearance and attractiveness are enormously important to the girls' choice of partners (and their perceptions of male preferences), and color matters.

In fact, the discourses of color preference are so strong that participants almost never mentioned the importance of affect in choosing a partner. Of all of the interviews with girls and adult women, only three participants made reference to liking or loving one's partner regardless of color. One Very Poor darker young woman said that some people say she's racist because her boyfriend is branca, but she would marry a black man if he assumed responsibility for her children and if she liked him. "There has to be love or there's nothing." One girl from the Poor mixed group said that to date, you have to like the person. And one adult woman mentioned that there are attractive people of different colors, and that sometimes you just start to like somebody because they are a good person.
Another exception to the dominant discourse of color preferences stems from economics. Two participants said that the importance of color is diminished when money is the issue for women. One Very Poor lighter girl said that girls “go after who has more money…. Money and a house.” And one Poor darker woman said that “a man has to have money, he has to have money. If he doesn’t, she doesn’t want him. … Girls don’t choose the color, no.”

The importance of color may also be suspended when men look for casual sex. Two of the Poor, darker girls suggested that men take what they can get: “It’s all the same, light or dark,” and “Men don’t have preferences at all. Whoever comes in front of him…” One adult woman also said that for casual relationships, color does not matter to a man—“If it falls in the net, it’s a fish.”

Aside from these few examples, the vast majority of participants, across color, class, and age groups, expressed the primacy of color in both men and women’s preferences for partners for casual sex, dating and marriage. However, the manner in which preferences are described and the discourses in which they are embedded vary, patterned by color and class.

Darker Participants: Reading Race as Taste

The darker participants are fairly cohesive in their view of color and partner preferences. The principle discourse is that people have individual tastes and desires, which include
color preferences. Personal preference is used to explain everything, and is generally not problematized; ‘there’s no accounting for taste’ (gosto não se discute). People seek partners of a particular color they happen to consider good looking or sexy. Their personal choice or taste may be for any color—whatever they find prettiest, and any color can have good-looking people. “There are lots of branca women who are prettier than pretas, and there are lots of pretas that are prettier than brancas. It’s about taste. … I think it’s really about taste, desire.” Some say brancas are prettier/sexier, others say muletas are prettier/sexier. “It’s relative. Preferences are relative. Those who like blondes go after blondes. Men who like morenas go after morenas.”

The existence of ‘aesthetic preferences’ can lead to mixing: “I think branco men prefer a darker woman. And darker men prefer brancas.” The mixing is described in terms of neutral personal taste: “There are lots of moreno men who like light women. And there are many light men that like morena women. They switch like that.” The mix itself may be aesthetically pleasing, in that it “makes for a prettier couple.” Certainly, the discourse of taste and references to mixed couples support the extremely attractive image of Brazil as nonracist in romance (or at least sex).

However, one could also read-in a degree of surprise, the sense that ‘these days everything goes.’ “But, like, lighter women, more branca, they like negãos. This happens a lot in Juiz de Fora, in our city. We see many dark negãos with a blonde, really branca. And you see dark women with white men… It’s like that, all mixed.” In this sense,
mixing may be described as a sign of urban modernity: “Many branca women get a more negro guy to show off.” Thus mixing and showing off may not be considered ‘normal’ or close to their own experience. One participant asserted that branco men generally prefer brancas, although it’s “alright for her to be branca or a morena (tan).” She clarified that you see mixed couples (branco men with negra women) more downtown (not here at home, in daily life).

The assertion that ‘anything goes’—people of different colors are free to mix romantically—may be more of a discursive reaction to remarkable, uncommon behavior than a neutral element of daily life. Running counter to the ‘everything goes’ argument is also a prevalent discourse of an overall preference for lighter people (brancos, or tan morenos), who are the most coveted. “Men prefer branca women. Morenas [Women] prefer a branco man. Or morenos.” “Branco men only want brancas.” This preference is not limited to lighter people: “And there are lots of dark women who don’t like dark men, who only go after brancos... And there are pretos that don’t like pretos. They only go after brancos, like brancos. [Why?] I don’t know, I think it’s really about taste, desire.”

The attractiveness of brancos was broken down into components by two very young, guileless participants. One said that girls go after brancos because they have straighter hair. Another said that white boys have smoother skin, and that brancas are coveted because they have long hair. The girls’ comments reflect the reigning white model of
beauty, which was corroborated by male participants who consistently chose the lightest models (with fine, blonde hair and blue eyes) as the prettiest and sexiest.70

The girls’ comments also demonstrate the function of ‘color.’ As discussed in Chapter Three, a common theme in race literature is that Brazilians perceive a spectrum of color (rather than bipolar categories) that has nothing to do with heredity and everything to do with appearance. That is, people have argued that Brazilians have no prejudice of origin (blood, race) but rather a prejudice of appearance (color), prizing certain physical features that a person ‘just happens to have.’ ‘Color’ includes these features (hair type, eye color, shape of lips and nose, etc.) and may be considered a neutral means of expressing personal or general aesthetic preferences. Characteristics that are considered attractive include straight or flowing hair, narrower nose and thinner lips, light eyes, lighter skin, etc. People may deem individuals with these characteristics more attractive without being considered racist; the idea is that lighter people just happen to be more likely to exhibit these valued traits. Thus ‘color’ and ‘good appearance’ function to fragment the concept of race and ostensibly deracialize the white model of beauty.71

70 The underrepresentation of darker women in popular beauty/fashion magazines is astounding. In a one-month sample of major beauty/fashion magazines, an average of 92% of advertisement models and 99% of models chosen by the magazine were clearly White (not even Almost White). Indeed, this posed problems for finding models for my ‘beauty’ and ‘sexy contests.’ I was only able to find darker models in one Brazilian magazine, Raça Brasil, the only beauty magazine in Juiz de Fora that targets darker readers. Even there I rarely found representatives of the Darkest category.

71 For further reading on the white model of beauty, see Gillian 1988; Davis 1999; Nascimento 2001; Nascimento and Nascimento 2001; Rice 2002; Valente 1987.
Through 'color' and 'good appearance,' beauty becomes a proxy for race. Once again, race is suppressed, transformed, and elided in an alternative discourse. Once again, the discourse is attractive not only to lighter people who would conceal their racism but also to darker people who would avoid such an explicit equation: I am black and black is ugly. The fact that darker girls emphasize personal preferences, matters of taste, does not mean they do not perceive the color-beauty.

A mulata may achieve pretty/sexy status, at least for some men. But not all men. Men may "love their color... their bodies. Some men like them, others do not." There is a hint that mulatas are sexy for men who like 'that kind of thing.' It's the negro who is really out of the running; participants clearly expressed that negras/os are discriminated against, that people consider them ugly and do not seek them out as partners.

- "[Guys] like mulatas a lot, they think they're pretty. And brancas. So it's the negras they discriminate against. It's more the mulata and the branca, you know? Very popular. Blondes too, they like them a lot. They never go after negras, right? Lots of people are prejudiced. [Why like brancas/mulatas/louras?] Because they're pretty."

- "Girls go after lighter boys. They have straighter hair. They think pretos are ugly. I don't think pretos are ugly—I'm preta myself—but some people think so. Because of their bodies, you know, their style."

- "There are men who don't like negras... I don't know why. Some are embarrassed to date a negra. Or a branca is embarrassed to be the girlfriend of a negro."

- "There are some [boys] that say when they grow up they won't ever choose a dark woman. But they end up with one. One should never throw it in somebody's face that he doesn't want a negra woman."

It is clear that girls perceive a hierarchy of attractiveness that favors lighter girls, which may cause resentment on the part of those whose features do not match the aesthetic
ideal. Again, the most telling statements come from very young girls: "Brancas get men's attention. This makes mulatas jealous." "Negras are known to fight. Mulatas less. They more than others because of jealousy. They are jealous of the brancas who get the men's attention." The correlations among race, beauty, and partner preferences is so strong that the 10 year old mentioned earlier actually defined racism as jealousy: "As far as I know it's jealousy. It's like this, pretas are jealous of brancas, of morenas."

The darker participants demonstrated awareness of color-beauty correlations and discrimination in partner color preferences, just as they recognize the existence of other racist discourses. However, there is again a tendency to downplay systematic racism that would admit a general devalorization of their own physical features. In other words, there is a parallel function to discourses of nonracism, as seen above. Darker girls tend to embrace a discourse of personal preference (based on the mystifying construction of color and aesthetics) as a discourse of dignity. The argument tends toward individualism—not only is partner color preference personal, but being born with 'bad' hair is also one's own dumb luck. As one of the adult participants pointed out, girls who inherit their darker mother's 'bad' hair instead of their lighter father's straight hair curse their luck and blame their mothers.

The issue personal preference in color and partner selection is particularly significant given the long tradition of eugenics movements in Brazil, which encouraged women to 'clean the womb' and 'improve the family' through marrying a lighter man and having
lighter children. This discourse has been found among other contemporary populations [Twine 1998 and in modified form Goldstein 1999]. However, it was not mentioned as a strategy by my participants. In fact, it is in direct opposition to their discourses for a number of reasons. First, partner preferences are couched in terms of aesthetics, not instrumental/utilitarian motives. Second, acknowledgement of such a strategy would imply a racist attitude—a systematic, differential valuation according to race. And third, it would imply an obvious devaluation of themselves (dark = ugly, bad), which would be demeaning and abhorrent. In their discursive realm, ‘cleaning the womb’ would not fit. The discourse of personal preference, in which individuals happen to prefer isolated physical characteristics, does fit. If poor girls, especially in dire circumstances, end up with older, lighter men, it need not be by design, or even a cultural script; if they develop a relationship with a man who is ready for a more serious relationship and more able to support them, it is simply more likely that he will be older and lighter.

Mixed Groups—Mixed Discourses

The Poor mixed groups’ responses corresponded primarily with the discourses of the darker participants. They tended to express the discourse of individual taste, which can show preference for whites or lead to mixing, and mixing is a more recent phenomenon, today’s ‘style;’ they did not use to mix. However, this group also raised an issue that is predominant among the lighter participants—the idea that different types of relationships are appropriate with people of particular colors. For example, boys may not care about

72 For further reading on eugenics and partner choices, see Gillian 1988; Goldstein 1999; Nascimento and
color for casual relationships, but prefer somebody ‘normal’ (closer to them or to an ideal) for more serious relationships.

**Lighter Participants: Taste as Race in Place**

The majority of the lighter participants also referred to color preferences according to taste; however, preferences become more overtly related to race relations, recognition of social stratification, color associations, and appropriate relationships.

For these participants, racial mixing exists but is limited due to social pressure and racism. “Everything exists. It's just that it's really rare for people to [go after] negros, pretos.” “I think there’s a little bit of prejudice, you know, branco with negra. It’s not a common thing to see.” When lighter people do date darker people, they tend to hide it—or suffer social approbation. Lightness is valorized, but darker people tend to stay close to their own color; a negra might date somebody a bit lighter, but not a branco, because that could lead to problems with his family. France Winddance Twine’s recent research in rural Rio de Janeiro also points out the white community’s disapproval of serious relationships across color [1998:49-53].

Thus the norm is segregation, and exceptions are met with surprise: “A branco, in general, prefers a branca. [A branca] prefers a branco. So much so that when there's a blonde branca with a darker guy, people find it strange.” “Or when sometimes a branca

woman dates a negro man, when she goes on the street with the guy, everybody stares.”

“Many people look.” “People find it strange.”

Mixing is not considered appropriate for all relations. Lighter people may consider darker people ‘okay for friendship but not dating.’ “There’s still a lot of prejudice. Like, a negra can be your friend but not your girlfriend. It’s fine to have them in your house, have negro friends, but so say you’re going to date?” The implicit racism may be elided through taste: “I’m not prejudiced, I don’t have racism. I get along well with [darker people]... Now, I don’t like them for a relationship, that’s not my taste. ... Friendship, that’s normal.” Another young woman prides herself in having called the quiet negra girls to work in her group work at school, they were “practically her best friends,” but said she would not be ‘interested’ in dating one.

Although brancos may prefer brancas to date seriously or marry, color may not matter for casual sex or affairs. Brancas may be the true model of beauty and respectability for Brazilians, but mulatas may be good for sex because they are considered ‘loose’ and ‘good in bed,’ ‘not ashamed of anything,’ good for parties and taking advantage of. Negros may also prefer negras to marry and brancas for an affair—for ‘variety.’ But for brancas, generally, color always matters—brancas may only want brancos for any type of relationship, or be considered hypersexual: “My cousin likes negros. She’s perverted. Her parents would freak if she decided to marry one.”
The existence of interracial sexuality is often touted as proof of Brazil's racial democracy [Goldstein 1999; Twine 1998]. Donna Goldstein has rejected the assertion that Brazil is a racial democracy, in that blackness is not valued outside of commodified sexual relations. According to Goldstein, Brazil is more of a 'color-blind erotic democracy' [1999]. Anani Dzidzienyo also cautions against judging by appearances, which can be misleading. People tend to interpret mixed couples on the street as proof of racial democracy, when there is actually a whole politics involved in these relationships [1971:9]. The patterns behind the relationships are reflected in the girls' scenarios and actual situations, but described much more concretely in interviews with adult women of all colors and classes. The women consistently stated that people of all colors prefer brancos. Mixing exists but is not random. The most common instance of mixing involves a branco man with a darker woman. The darker woman, like everybody else, wants a lighter man. The lighter man may want a darker woman (mulata) because she is sexy. Or he may want to show her off, as a trophy. When the mix involves a lighter woman and a darker man, it is presented in terms of darker men coveting blondes.

The lighter girls, as well as adult women, demonstrate that there are politics that limit the apparent 'erotic democracy' in Brazil, a politics of desire and moral identity that limit certain types of relationships for certain people. The discourse of personal preference is minimal, whereas the rules governing color and relationships are clear. Taste is race in place—different colors are appropriate for certain relationships and functions. For the
white man, it’s still the *branca* to marry, the *mulata* (maybe) to screw, and the *negra* is out of the dating game.
CHAPTER SUMMARY: PATTERNS AND POLITICS

The racial discourses elicited from the girls and young women of this study revealed dual perspectives patterned closely by the binary color system—lighter versus darker participants—described in Chapter Three. These contrastive points of view became apparent in discussing perceptions of racism and the significance of color in partner preferences (for casual sex, dating, and marriage).

The darker participants had limited associations for 'racism' or 'color prejudice.' These terms were generally correlated with racial slurs, which were thought to be decreasing due to a new antiracism law. The girls were aware of racial stereotypes, but tended to downplay the existence of structural racism in Brazil. Only three girls cited personal experiences or feelings of suffering discrimination. For the most part, participants only cited famous cases from the media in Rio, and rarely volunteered evidence of systematic racism (such as in employment). Thus the data support researchers' theory that racism is a taboo subject among darker populations in Brazil, a 'language of losers.' The fact that the darker participants highlighted a discourse of nonracism may be interpreted not as a lack of awareness but rather a discourse of dignity and self-respect.

The lighter participants, on the other hand, (re)produced highly sophisticated discourses of systematic racism in Brazil, as seen not only in the media but in their everyday experiences with friends and family. They decried the racism that surround them, and
attempted to distance themselves from these attitudes. Their responses reflected a certain level of ambivalence as they negotiated a nonracist identity in a racist surroundings, a tension that sometimes found release in socially sanctioned racial jokes and teasing. Nevertheless, it was apparent that their moral identities are caught up in recognition and mastery of nonracist discourses that are highly articulated in their environments.

The contrast in perspectives between lighter and darker participants was also evident in discussions of color and partner preferences. Although girls of all colors emphasized the importance of color in choosing a partner, the discourses in which color preferences are embedded are very different. The darker participants present color as a matter of individual taste; there is a tendency for people to prefer lighter partners, but only because they are more likely to possess particular traits (straight hair, light eyes) considered aesthetically pleasing. These girls recognize that *negras* are considered unattractive, but the links between color and beauty are subverted through fragmenting individual traits, much as acknowledgement of systematic racism is subverted through discourses of personal color preferences. Again, the darker girls tended to draw on discourses that allow space for self-valorization and avoid equations such as 'I am dark and dark is ugly.'

In contrast, the lighter girls asserted that color is important in choosing a partner due to systematic racism. That is, there is a broad social taboo against mixing and darkness is devalued, although color is not as important in terms of casual sex as it is for dating and
marriage. In other words, the lighter girls are aware of and readily report discourses of social stratification in which certain colors are appropriate for certain relationships.

Initially, the discourses chosen by lighter and darker participants may seem ironic. That is, it may seem surprising that the lighter participants, who on the whole represent a dominant color and economic group, would be so ready to recognize and decry systematical racism. It may also seem striking that darker participants, doubly burdened by color and class, would so consistently deny systematic inequality. However, once we consider the level of lived experience, it is apparent that the discourses they choose to highlight are attractive because they are instrumental to the moral identity work in which each group is engaged.
CHAPTER FIVE

HOT MULATAS (AND SEXY BLONDES)

As discussed in Chapter One, the image of the *mulata* permeates Brazilian history in the form of laws, Church policies, social practices, theories of national identity, and popular literature. The *mulata*, and her sexual availability, are central to a range of visions of social identities and relations. This chapter investigates contemporary discourses of the *mulata*, her cultural space in relation to other race/gender constructions, and how the image is deployed by different populations. In other words, the underlying questions of this chapter are: What is a *mulata*? According to whom? When and where is she invoked? By whom, and why?

Although participants’ definitions of the *mulata* reflect commonalities across color and class (as well as continuities with the historical image), the significance of the image in the lives of different populations is markedly variable.
WHAT IS A MULATA?

Discussions of the meaning of the term reveal that the mulata is both embedded in and differentiated from the broader category of darker women, who are contrasted with lighter women in general and compared with blondes specifically. Across color and class, the principle themes associated with the mulata revolve around heat, sensuality, and beauty. However, there are significant differences in attitudes toward the mulata, patterned by the color and class of the participants. First, the lighter participants are more likely to challenge the positive characteristics attributed to the mulata (over other women). Second, the importance of the mulata in everyday life was strikingly different for lighter versus darker participants.

Heat: The Hot Mulata

One of the most common attributes associated with the mulata is ‘heat.’ There is a strong association of darker people in general, both male and female, with ‘heat,’ which has a number of interrelated meanings.

Temper. Heat is associated with emotions, especially anger, as it is in English (hot-headed, heated arguments, low boiling point, fiery temper). A few participants (mostly lighter) said that darker women are considered to be more hot (quente), meaning argumentative and even violent. “’Hot’ means somebody more brava (fierce, savage, angry, ill-tempered). A negra, negra, you see it, when she walks down the street, you see it, most of the fights between women are by negros. Because negros are hotter, more
bravo ... They are stronger.” “Negras are known to fight” and “they like to talk bull, they like to pick fights with everybody, you know, they're known for lots of things like that.”

However, the participants (and the media) differentiated between negras and mulatas on this point (at least for females). As one participant stated, “Negras are known to fight. Mulatas less. Them [negras] more than others because of jealousy. They are jealous of the brancas who get the men's attention.” Although the mulata, as a darker woman, is occasionally included in this connotation of heat, the stereotypical mulata carries the meaning of being congenial (simpática—congenial, attractive, engaging, charming). Congeniality is an important part of her attractiveness. Mulatas are known to be fun, good company. They are good friends, open, people like them right off, they are “good for dancing, taking a walk, talking,” and “they know their place.” “You can see it in her face—she’s happy, vibrant, congenial.” To be a mulata carnival queen, congeniality (simpatia) is a requirement; asked her secret to success, Kissia Gallo answered “A lot of simpatia and samba in your feet” [Silva and Louchard 2001:56]. They are easy-going and remain composed even when called racial slurs. Thus the mulata is distanced from the general category of darker women for not being considered fiery in terms of temper (just as she is removed for not being considered ugly).

Resilience. The stereotype of darker women being hot is part and parcel of darker people's reputation for being resilient and strong (resistência and força) and having stamina. This strength and resilience lets them work hard, endure difficult conditions, and
stay healthy. They are preferred for heavy physical labor: “People don’t say it out loud so much, but it’s understood that negras are good for working … They are resilient. Physical labor, carry a 50-kilo sack, security, they get a negão.” “African blood is stronger” is a common sentiment. “Negros are strong. They have strong health, they have strong blood. You hear it all the time. They’re stronger than us.” Their endurance has further advantages, according to an adult woman (Poor middle morena):

You see [darker] people my age, and they still like to go out. I just like to sleep. Not them, they go out. Across the street, there’s a woman, 60, she goes out dancing forró. She dances, goes out, has a good time. It seems like negros have, like, more desire to want to live. A tighter grip. They want to live, they want… This is strength for them. I don’t have strength for anything, and they do. They do. I think the color negra is more… resilient.

These few quotes demonstrate the persistence of the historical literary construction of the negro who could survive slavery and slums and still celebrate life.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the term ‘strong’ (forte) is so highly associated with darkness that it is used when describing phenotypes associated with darker women (more salient lips, broader nose), in contrast to ‘delicate’ or ‘fine’ features. ‘Strong’ is also used to darken a color term, as in mulata forte or branca forte.

Sexuality: Fire and Stamina. Heat and stamina come together in the mulata’s association with sexuality and sexual stamina. This is the most common usage among the participants. Some had not heard that darker people are hotter but thought it was true; most had heard of the association before, and most of them agreed. Darker participants
were more muted in volunteering, recognizing, or agreeing with the association. The association was somewhat stronger among lighter participants, who were more likely to either elaborate on how hot darker women are (in a positive manner) or explicitly limit/contest darker women's exclusivity in hotness.

'Heat' has a connotation of sexuality (as in English—hot to trot, in heat, being hot, hot and bothered, burning with desire, steamy sex). This was a much more common usage in my study. Being 'hot' (quente) or 'good' (boa) means you are good in bed. Being hot/good in bed means that you know how to show interest in the man, which boosts the man's ego and improves his performance and enjoyment. "I think you have to give your all with love, tenderness... I think they have a lot of initiative." As explained by Sueli, a Poor, 24 year old morena who worked as a receptionist:

I think the main thing is what a man does with a woman so she can show him what she's feeling, right. Doing things is also important. But it's like this, the person shows interest in what they're doing. Kiss, pet, feel that it's good, take an interest... that really satisfies.

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73 Darker men are considered hot too due to their large penises and sexual stamina. One adult woman (Poor middle morena) said: "They say that sex with a negro is stronger, more potent... They have relations, like, stronger, with more strength. They say negros are like that. I tested it out, I dated an Italian and a negro. I prefer the negro over the Italian." And as one lighter young man said, when a branca goes out with a darker man, they say she must be very hot and wild—how else could she be his match, meet his huge sexual need?
Sexual heat is associated with women with darker skin; they have more sexual appetite, are fiery and have stamina (fogo, foguentia) for bed. Carolina, a Poor, lighter, 20 year old dental assistant was very enthusiastic about the mulata’s prowess:

[Are darker women hot?] They are. Boy, are they! Very hot. [What does that mean?] They are electric, they’re... they dance, they’re... they even say that darker people are better in bed than... they say.

According to an adult woman (morena, Poor), it is a continuum, from colder brancas to warmer morenas to hot mulatas and negras. She also reported that people say that darker women “are very strong, too. More resistant, have more potency, more... hot. They are hotter. They have more potency. They are women that like sex, are more fiery/have more stamina, they are stronger.”

The role of the hot mulata as the superlative sex partner was described explicitly by two men (both Not Poor lighter). One paralleled the expression ‘A branca to marry, a negra to work, and a mulata to screw’ in his summary: “The mulata isn’t in the kitchen, nor in society. She’s in the bedroom... [She’s] wild, sexually insatiable, physically stronger.” The other stated that the mulata is the Brazilian's dream, sex object, fantasy. She is very sexy. He explained that part of men's attraction to mulatas is their facility to have pleasure. Yes, they are hot, good in bed, but the main thing is that they really enjoy sex, and they show it. Her pleasure becomes his pleasure. It’s a man's dream to feel like the

74 In one case, a lighter, wealthier man asserted that the mulata’s body temperature is actually hotter. This makes her vagina hotter, more engorged (due to the greater blood flow), tighter, and thus makes him hotter, more engorged, larger, so the sensation of intercourse (vaginal or anal) or oral sex is more intense.
greatest lover, to cause the woman so much pleasure. Mulatas have so much pleasure that it’s a real ego boost for the man.

Being considered hot is generally desirable: “It’s good to be considered hot. [Men] like it. I’d like to be considered hot. It’s good for the ego. It’s not considered bad, it’s cool.” “I don’t know. But all men like a hot woman. So it must not be bad!” One very light, blonde young woman (Very Poor) contested the darker woman’s exclusivity in sexual hotness:

I’ve heard that [darker women are hot] but I wouldn’t trade myself for any morena. I think I’m really hot too. They do say it though. Same as my husband. He used to think so too, and I asked him about it, since he had experiences with morenas, and he said the same thing. He wouldn’t trade me for them. Not all morenas are hot, some are even cold. So he’d never trade me for one of them.

However, it can be a disadvantage as well. A ‘hot’ woman is not always well spoken of—she may be considered conceited or get a bad reputation:

It’s a compliment [to be considered hot] but... If you go around saying... The guy goes and says, ‘Wow, that one over there is really good in bed,’ it would be praise, but at the same time it’d be sort of [bad] for the woman. Like he just got her to screw her and that’s it. It's good and bad at the same time.

‘Hot’ women are not always considered appropriate for serious relationships:

[Is it good to be hot?] It depends on the situation. Sometimes people think it’s good; depending on the situation, it’s good. But in other situations it’s really bad. Because the person may think badly, you know, depending on the person, the man you’re with, can think bad things, you know. But there are others that don’t, there are others that do like it. ... There are men—men that are better off (social), more quiet... that don’t like rowdiness (bagunça)... They call those women something else, women with more fire/stamina like that—hot women are fiery/have sexual stamina, are ostentatiously sexual—he thinks the person is more provocative, an easy lay. But there are also others that don’t, that even like women to be even more like that. Some like a woman to be quiet/reserved, others like her to be more provocative.
Only one participant elaborated on the *mulata/negra* herself as having an out-of-control sexual appetite. This adult woman (Not Poor lighter) blamed darker women’s heat for overpopulation:

> The *mulatas*, the *negras*, are the hotter women. More sensual... Here, the *mulata*, the *negra* are the most prevalent. So much so that you see... there are more in the slums... you see that the quantity of children is greater. Because (laughter)—my daughter says she’s going to write a thesis to find out why the poor—because the poor are more the ones of color—have so many children that *brancos* don’t have. If maybe they have the same conditions of information and everything, ... it can only be heat! It can only be that part. And the *brancas* don’t have it. ... It’s the proliferation of the race by means... the lack of information, and they are really like this, they don’t think about tomorrow, about giving the best to their children. No, they live for today. ‘Let’s make a child, tomorrow we’ll see how we support it,’ you know? And there, on the street, they don’t have the same worries as we do. ... It’s the lack of information, as they say, and their entertainment, no? They don’t have the means to go out, they don’t have the purchasing power to go out. So their pleasure is sex. ... It really increases the population, no?

The ‘hot *mulata*’ stereotype was more strongly expressed by lighter, wealthier populations. The *mulata* has the strength (and thus sexual stamina) of the darker woman but is spared her temper—indeed, she is clearly differentiated from *negras* in being extremely *simpática* as part of her idealization. Her heat is directed toward sexual stamina, which is valued mostly in terms of pleasing men. Although she herself may have more sexual appetite and feeling, the advantages of these qualities fold back in to pleasing men.
Samba: The Sensual Mulata

The ability to dance samba is the characteristic most frequently associated with *mulatas*. Samba requires both stamina and sensuality. "About *mulatas* really knowing how to dance, they really do know how to *sambar*." "The *mulata* is really something, quite an impression, a cultural being. Samba is her strength, she shows the world. It is her spice."

Darker women in general are known for being good dancers, especially samba; they have 'samba in their feet,' in their blood: "It's really in *negros* feet. The thing *pretos* do best is *sambar*." "It's hard for a *branca* to *sambar*. For a *morena*, it seems like they already have that swing, that something sensual." "Yes, you hardly ever see *brancas* dancing like (*mulatas*). They really have that characteristic. It seems like they (are born with) that talent."

The connotation is highest when it is a 'mulata,' because she is considered attractive, sensual, in a way that other darker women are not. It is when *mulatas* samba that women are impressed and men aroused. "There are *brancos* and *negros* that can *sambar*, but I think it's more the *mulata*." "*Negras* too. But it's really more the *mulatas*." Darker girls themselves associated *mulatas* with samba and asserted/defended their own ability to dance samba as a matter of pride. "I think *mulatas* have a lot of samba in their feet. It's skin color—like I'm a *mulatinha*—and having samba in your feet. *Sambar* is a talent. You learn it at home, growing up. Like at my house, there's lots of parties."
The ability to dance samba was highly valued among many participants of different classes and colors, and strongly correlated with *mulatas* and *negras*. However, some lighter participants contested darker women’s exclusivity in samba: “*Mulatas* sway their hips, gyrate. They dance easily. They are famous for it. But it’s not true.” Another denied exclusivity: “*Negras* have samba in their feet. But some whites can dance too.” And a third claimed samba for herself: “They say that *brancas* don’t know how to dance samba. But I samba great!”

Nevertheless, samba belongs to darker women; it is in their feet, in their bodies. The link between movement and body type were strongly associated.

Usually, if you take 30 people, 15 *brancas* and 15 *morenas*, you’ll see the difference in their bodies. It makes a difference. I don’t know about genetics, but it makes a difference. The defined body. The swing of the person.

Physically, *mulatas* are judged to have more body (heavier, more curvaceous), bigger breasts, and no cellulite. *Mulatas* are known to swing their hips and wear tight, short

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75. The traditional ideal female body type in Brazil includes medium to small breasts, a flat stomach, full thighs, and shapely bottom. In recent years, ideal breast and bottom sizes appear to have grown (across class and color), while the rest of the body is expected to be more toned than previously.

76. The issue of scent/smell arose on three occasions. In a group interview (Not Poor, mostly lighter) women, the participants asserted that *negros* do not show age because they are preserved by their sweat, which stinks (no matter how often they wash). Not all of the participants were comfortable with this assertion/its disclosure to me. A lighter, Not Poor man said that he did not share the attraction to *mulatas* because *mulatas* and *negras* have a bad smell that makes him nauseous, so he cannot get close; he likes the light scent of *brancas*. However, one darker, Poor woman said that what distinguishes the *mulata* from the *negra* is her scent, which emanates from her armpits and crotch, and cannot be washed away. She said that men find it delicious. She called this scent *catinga*. (According to the dictionary [Michaelis 2000:934-935], *catingar* means to stink. Botanical terms include *catinga de mulata*, *catinga de negro*, *catinga de bode* (goat), and *catinga de tamandua* (anteater).)
clothes to show off their bodies. These features are part of what set her apart from negras as attractive.

**Beauty: The Pretty Mulata**

Although darker women as a group are considered hot and good at samba, the mulata stands apart because she is also considered pretty, which makes her sexy, attractive. As one young man (Not Poor lighter) put it, the mulata has “the strength of the negra and the beauty of the branca.” Negras are considered hot and good at samba, but not pretty, so men do not go after them:

> When you talk about the mulata, you always think of that ideal mulata, pretty, with pretty hair, a pretty body, that skin. When you think of mulatas, you never think about an ugly mulata. Now, when you say ‘negra,’ you immediately think of that negra... of slavery, in the time of slavery, the kitchen, fat, all that... The mulata is like a quality of the dark race. A differentiated portion of the dark race.

Most people consider mulatas to be pretty, well kempt, and sexy. One lighter young woman sang the mulata’s praise:

> There’s a mulata here in JF, I don’t know her name... my mouth hangs open. She is really pretty, very well sculpted, her face, very painstaking. There are really pretty Brazilian women, but these days, those girls who use a ton of makeup are wrecking themselves. And mulatas don’t need any of that. If they are well kempt, their hair and everything, they don’t need makeup. Just lipstick is enough. They are very careful/well kempt.

Although many of the darker girls categorized themselves as mulatas, and the vast majority considered mulatas beautiful, they rarely made any overt connection. This is not

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77 In another section on styles, some of the darker girls/women clarified that they used to wear clothes like that but now dress more conservatively on the street—especially if they were dating or married, because
I, for example, like being [a mulata]. Because everybody on the street thinks, when I get near them they say, ‘Wow, what a pretty mulata.’ Everybody likes them, because here in Juiz de Fora, a mulata is a very pretty thing, it’s a very pretty color.

However, the attractiveness of the mulata was tempered by color prejudice. One darker participant mentioned that some lighter men do not find the mulata sexy because they are racist: [Are mulatas sexy?] “Yes, for some men. But there are a lot of racist men.” This factor was suggested more often by lighter girls, who tempered the attractiveness of the mulata. She is pretty, but only as far as negras go; men may like darker women for sex, but “I think that, for beauty, they look for somebody lighter.” She is sexy, but not enough for men to pursue them actively: “They say that they’re really hot. They react more. And the man can do it more times. Men do not necessarily go after darker women for this reason. But if they end up with one, they like it.” And the subtle implication is that they are not for everybody, only men who are into ‘that sort of thing’—a more adventurous/perverted sexuality: “But in general the negra’s blood is hotter. I think they awaken more desire in men, for those who like... for those who are interested in negras.”

In other words, there are restrictions on the domain of the mulata.

eighty: first, because it would be immodest to say “I am a beautiful mulata,” and second, because self-identification of color along a spectrum (branca-morena-mulata-negra) and the more elaborate associations of the mulata image (hot, resilient, pretty) function in two distinct realms. However, there was an exception:

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their boys/men do not like them to look too sexy or available.
HOT MULATAS AND SEXY BLONDES

As discussed above, the *mulata* is defined in relation to the category of darker women in general and in contrast to the *negra* specifically. That is, the *mulata* shares characteristics common to the broader category of darker women, such as strength, stamina, sexual heat, and the ability to dance samba. However, the stereotype of the *mulata* sets her apart as congenial, pretty, and sensual in ways that *negras* are not. She is the sexy darker woman.

The *mulata* is also defined in relation to the *branca*. Traditionally, *brancas* are considered models of formal beauty, appropriate for marriage (to *brancos*), procreation, and public presentability (social status). Their sexuality was strictly protected/surveilled. *Brancas* are sometimes referred to as ‘cold’ (or even ‘frigid’), especially by darker participants. A common theme among darker participants was the claim that *brancas* are snobs.

However, the darker participants also tended to differentiate between *brancas* and blondes (*louras*), and sometimes clarified that blondes are worse than *brancas*. When I asked about the snobby *branca* image, one said “Yes. It’s mostly blondes. They are more *patricinhas*.″ 78 Another explained that blondes are worse “[b]ecause most blondes are much more snobby. They want to be noticed, show off.” Their conceit knows no bounds:

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78 *Patricinha* is a term that appears to have originated in the middle class (Patricia was a very popular name among this population) to describe wealthy, conformist, superficial, trendy girls. Among the Poor, it has retained the association with showing off (not necessarily the money).
Those girls that maybe don’t have that much but put themselves above others because they have light hair, they have light skin, light eyes, they feel very superior. And sometimes they even say, ‘I really am better.’ They think they’re better just because of the color of their hair.

Lighter participants, on the other hand, have little recognition of the snobby branca stereotype. Furthermore, they dismiss the stereotype of the blonde as a fairly innocuous media product. For them, the stereotype is the ‘dumb blonde,’ a joke from a popular song that caught on and which they find quite humorous. One participant stated that “Men prefer blondes but only marry brunettes.” Another said that “[b]londes are dumb, brunettes are intelligent. Blondes are pretty, but hollow. Brunettes don’t call attention to themselves, but they are informed, intelligent. There are exceptions.” These girls are more likely to be blonde or have blonde friends and relatives and, despite a certain level of resentment for the blonde’s success with boys, the stereotype of the dumb blonde seems to make little impression on them.

Gradually, a theme emerged. For lighter girls, the ‘dumb blonde’ was a limited media image, but for darker girls, the blonde—the loura—was a significant social entity in daily life. The loura does not represent the traditional formal beauty and sexual reserve of the branca. In fact, the loura functions in relation to the branca category almost as the mulata in relation to the negra. The image of the loura, described by the darker/poorer girls, is the cheap bottle blonde—easy, ostentatiously flirtatious, forward, and an object of sexual desire.
The new *loura*, the 'sexy blonde,' is probably inspired in the media—the hegemony of movies and plethora of sitcoms imported from the US promoting the blonde bombshell. The imported nature of the *loura* was cited by a number of participants, and linked to a national obsession with things American. As mentioned earlier, the boys interviewed consistently chose blondes as both the prettiest and sexiest. As one adult man [Not Poor lighter] stated, "[I]t’s the Brazilian way to copy and perfect!" In this case, the major modification—Brazilianization—of the American blonde is that she must *popozuda* (possess a large, shapely bottom).

Besides movies and television, pornography may also be a major factor. Although pornography was only discussed with a few participants, they indicated that most Brazilian pornography—which is the highest selling type of video—is American, and almost always involves blondes performing daring sexual acts (especially oral sex in cars). According to the Community Leader, men see *louras* as "women who, in bed, submit themselves to any kind of whim."

Thus the *mulata* stands apart from the *negra* and the *loura* stands apart from the *branca* as sexualized objects. Both are seen as party girls. Both have bodacious bums. Both are known to purposefully call attention to themselves by wearing short, tight clothing; both fundamentally change their hair to achieve a new level of attractiveness. Both offer an exciting sexual experience. According to the Community Leader [Very Poor darker], they are both associated with more adventurous/perverse practices, such as anal and oral sex:
"So there exists this thing of women or men thinking that the bottle blondes and provocative [darker women] do this type of sex. It’s not done at home, it’s not usual at home with your wife." However, according to the Community Leader, there is a difference. The bottle Blonde is associated with prostitution; she is willing to do ‘everything’ to please a man—for money. The mulata, whether or not she is a prostitute, is assumed to do these things for her own pleasure (as well).  

In other words, the loura has significantly invaded the cultural space of the mulata. She is even encroaching on samba. As one participant noted, the loura (unlike the branca) can samba “because the rhythm that they dance... they are bottle blondes, it’s a hot rhythm. And only they have the ‘know how.’” Louras may now join the ranks of the sensual: “Louras, negras, mulatas, are more... are better at samba, pagode. And the brunettes, redheads, they don’t like it much.”

Modern products and beauty work also function to reduce the particular cultural role of the mulata:

I think that in the past, mulatas had attributes—thighs, bum—that men liked. Now everybody looks like that. Back then, there was a big difference between the skinny white Europeans and the tropical mulatas—naturally. Today, if you’re white, you get a tan. If you’re skinny, you work out. If your breasts are small, you put in silicone.

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79 The question of whether the mulata is ‘hot in the blood’ (by racial nature), unlike the loura (who is merely sexy), deserves further attention.
Changing sexual norms have also diminished correlations regarding color and sexuality.\footnote{These changes will be discussed further in Chapter Six.} According to many of the participants, the home/street dichotomy of appropriate sexual relations is breaking down. In particular, wives/girlfriends are much more likely to perform oral and anal sex to keep their men/keep their men home. The cross-over was expressed by an adult participant who stated: “These days there isn’t much difference. ... Differences are disappearing. Prostitutes dressing like patricinhas, patricinhas dressing like prostitutes.”

In summary, many traditional elements of the hot mulata stereotype persist in contemporary Brazil—particularly the connotations of sexuality, sensuality, and beauty. However, there are now many challenges to her exclusivity in these categories, not only by the sexy blonde but also shifting behavioral norms in the general population.

Globalization (particularly through the media) and shifts in social relations have the effect of modifying race/gender constructions and effectively curtail the cultural space of the mulata. Given these changes, and the limited, contested arena of today’s mulata, one wonders when and why she would still be invoked, and by whom? What is the discursive location of the mulata in contemporary Brazil?
WHERE IS THE MULATA?

The location of the *mulata*, her appearance and significance in everyday life, is
differential for participants, and patterned by the girls' own color and class. The *mulata*'s
presence in daily discourses, the instances in which her image is invoked, and the
importance of these moments to identity construction are highly contrastive for lighter
versus darker girls and women.

Canned Mulata: Export Quality

While categorizing the models, an adult woman (Not Poor lighter) did not use the term
*mulata* at all. When asked, she responded: “It’s funny. I don’t use the *mulata* category
much... Here, in general, in daily life, it’s rare to say ‘*mulata.*’” Indeed, for the
lighter/wealthier, the term *mulata* has a limited space. First, *mulata* is a polite term for
*negra*, which they may have little occasion to use. Otherwise, the *mulata* is an image
removed from daily life, a media commodity and symbol of national identity restricted to
carnaval and tourism. For these participants, the mulata is a product—canned and
bland.\(^1\)

The prevalence of the white model of beauty is apparent in the media, which is
dominated by *brancas*. Several participants (of various colors, classes, and ages) pointed

\(^1\) Stuart Hall describes the process through which the cultural industry appropriates a cultural symbol,
renegotiates its social significance through new symbolic juxtapositions, and produces a commodity that is
‘canned and neutralized’ [1981].
out how explicitly racist the media is, and made the common pronouncement that darker women are rarely depicted in telenovelas, and then only as maids [Moore in Fiola 1990:35]. During the course of the fieldwork, a law was passed that a certain number of actors in any telenovela had to be negros. This law was brought up by a participant (Very Poor darker) who said that Port of Miracles, a telenovela based on the works of Jorge Amado, was supposed to have seven. She joked that she's been counting and only sees a handful—they must be counting crowd scenes. Another participant talked about a darker woman on this telenovela:

It's rare to find a mulata on novelas, but she's in the novela because... she's very careful, she takes a lot of care of herself and is very pretty. There's that prejudice—besides being negro you have to be pretty to achieve, get anything. If you are a negra and not very pretty, it's hard to get anything on TV. Always have to be more.

There are exceptions to the brancas-only media rule. For example, Oswaldo Sargentelli made a career out of mulata shows. His cabarets, traveling shows, and television programs are largely responsible for consolidating contemporary media images of the mulata within Brazil and abroad starting in the late 1960s. Sargentelli, the 'mulatologist,' had up to 40 mulatas working for him at the peak of his career in the 1970s. According to his definition, "mulatas have thin waist, thick thighs, naughty little-girl face, good teeth, wide laugh, and very good smell; they shake and jiggle, making everyone’s mouth water" [Dalevi 2002]. He had a lifelong love for the mulata, who surrounded him at work and at home. "No one convinces me that white TV beauties know more about samba than a

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82 The telenovela is an extremely popular television show format, often of export quality, in which a story is told over the course of a few weeks to several months.
mulata. And I'm blond with blue eyes. I adore white women, even those American ones with their amazing mammaries, but the mulata has no match when she sambas. She kills" [Dalevi 2000]. Perhaps this explains his 21 children besides the seven he had with his wife.

Older participants do not remember Sargentelli being accused of racism and exploiting black women in the 1980s. Rather, they remember how he popularized the mulata—as a consumer product, for example. One adult woman (Not Poor lighter) stated clearly that the image that they sell of the mulata is the pretty mulata, not the poor mulata.

So people think of her that way. Because it is the image that is sold. Completely commercial. Because there used to be Sargentelli and His Mulatas. Sargentelli was a businessman with more than 10, 20 mulatas—but only marvelous, pretty women, and only mulatas. So 'Sargentelli and His Mulatas' was an attraction everywhere. So that's how it started...

Another exception to the whites-only media rule comes every February when the mulata is trotted out for carnaval, the yearly celebration of national identity for which she is appropriated. During the year, the mulata does not sell products or represent a media model of beauty; her presence is muted. But during carnaval, she is suddenly visible in the media, as there is an invasion of mulatas for their entertainment and symbolic value.

On TV, they talk more about blondes. But now that it's carnaval, there's only morenas. Morena and negra in the samba schools, mulatas, like that. Floats, especially, they say on TV: 'Ah, here comes the Beija-Flor mulata,' you know. They really say that. 'Full of samba in her feet.' They say things like that.

83 For a description of how darker people have to "be more" to succeed, see Souza 1983 and Valente 1987.
As Rufino writes, "the media only recognizes them the three days of carnaval as an invitation to bed" [1995:145]. The association mulata-carnaval-sex is strong:

Here in Brazil, if you say mulata, you immediately think of carnaval. More sensual, more sexual. Really good at samba. More fiery/stamina. [Good in bed, hot?] Yes, hot. [Do guys like that?] I think it really appeals to their fantasies. Mainly because of carnaval. The concentration of mulatas without clothes, I think it stimulates their fantasies.®

The correlation can be quite blatant. During the fieldwork carnaval, a television commercial for condoms featured a branco walking happily down the street during carnaval, he sees a very sexy darker woman leaning against a building and broadcasting a won’t-somebody-come-hither message. The man’s little devil says “Yes,” his angel says “No,” but they both say “Forget it” when they realize he doesn’t have any condoms. Not only does the advertisement portray carnaval as sexual playtime for brancos, with mulata toys laid out, but the darker woman-promiscuity-disease correlation is stark; it’s not the mulata demanding a condom.

Although there is an element of sexual adventure for Brazilian brancos with mulatas during carnaval, the majority of lighter/wealthier participants were very clear in describing the mulata as a product for foreigners. Brazilians themselves do not appreciate the mulata; they prefer blondes. As one particularly eloquent woman (Not Poor lighter, 27, professor of international law) explained:

® The charges, brought by the Commission for the Valorization and Political Integration of the Black from Rio Grande do Sul, were dropped.
®® There are many types of roles in carnaval processions, which involve more or less elaborate costumes. The level of nudity (particularly toplessness) on the floats or on the ground depends on the customs of the
There is also an issue, the taste of Brazilian men is very associated with a more American culture than... our African roots, the mulata. These days, the blue-eyed blonde is more attractive, as far as I can see, than the mulata herself. The mulata is for the foreigners. Especially in Rio... Now, the Brazilians want blondes. ... The mulata became more associated with foreigners that come here, who want to meet a mulata.

[The space of the mulata] I think it is more restricted. More restricted to prostitution, restricted to foreigners, tourist cities. (Mulatas) use this—the part of being a mulata and pretty—they value it. But in the day-to-day, I think she isn't valued, for being a mulata. I think they value the blonde a lot more. And some mulatas end up dying their hair and trying to approximate this stereotype that is more foreign than Brazilian.

The mulata is more associated with carnaval in Rio de Janeiro, in Bahia, and the foreigners that want to see a mulata. So she ends up a tourist attraction at certain times of the year for certain groups of people. (It does not help her in daily life.) I think that the image of the mulata is very worn out. These days a new image of beauty is being formed, not associated with the mulata, for Brazilians. [How long?] I think about 15, maybe 10 years. The youth want that Americanized image of the girl. I don't know whether it's associated with prejudice, but it is certainly associated with an assimilation of foreign culture.

"Among the social and economic roles permitted for negras from slavery to the present, we should add one more: sexual bait for tourists" [Rufino 1995:144]. Among the lighter/wealthier participants, the association of mulatas with tourists was very strong. In fact, when I asked them about the mulata and beauty, some quickly segued to foreigners...
that come for carnaval or popular tourist destinations (particularly Rio and Northeastern beach towns).

[Do people consider mulatas pretty?] Yes, they do. When foreigners come to Rio... they adore a mulata. [Have you heard anything about race in the US?] I’ve heard that they really like mulatas.

Advertisements for travel to Brazil are full of darker women in ‘dental floss’ bathing suits, often associated with tropical dishes [Rufino 1995:144]. The national image is so tied up in the mulata that mulata and brasileira may be used synonymously: "The Brazilian woman is the mulata is the Brazilian woman. It's a symbol." And foreigners come for the Brazilian experience—sex with a mulata:

It seems that out there, they think of Brazil very much as the mulata and carnaval. ... Tourists really go after mulatas. We hear this a lot, see it a lot. They like to... it seems like they come already with the idea that the mulata... [is the Brazilian experience] Exactly.

Naturally, the mulata experience is not restricted to the visual stimulation of carnaval or shows. The mulata industry also caters to sexual tourism [Rufino 1995]. Frenette notes: "dark meat, as we all know, is the preferred dish for gringos that feeds our sexual tourism" [2001:70]. As one participant noticed: “I was in a restaurant in Copacabana and there were some foreigners, so they passed around those photo albums with prostitutes—all mulatas. So they want mulatas.”

Nor is the mulata experience restricted to Brazil. Although lighter/wealthier participants joke that Brazil’s primary export is samba, carnaval, and mulatas, the truth in this statement is serious business. Rufino discusses the exploitation of darker girls and young
women not only in the nightclubs and sexual tourism industry within Brazil, but also the traps set to lure them into prostitution abroad, especially in Europe. For example, advertisements to work as dancers or au pairs in Europe turn out to be mafia-controlled prostitution rings. There is also a marriage market, which may place them in abusive relationships [1995:144].

The market command of ‘export-quality mulatas’ would appear to valorize negra beauty. However, the recognition of their beauty is not accompanied by commensurate wages. They continue to represent cheap labor, earning only the wages of daily bread, shelter, and a chance to “escape from invisibility” [Rufino 1995:145].

Furthermore, it is clear that the valorization of mulatas is highly conditional. As Goldstein points out:

Black female sexuality is valorized and considered erotic because it is suspended in a web of power relations that make it available in a particular way. Blackness becomes valuable only in specific situations where sexual commodification is the operational framework [1999:570].

The mulata’s attraction lies in her position as product for sexual consumption and her availability to white men, be they Brazilian, American, or European.

In summary, for lighter (and especially wealthier) participants, the mulata is not generally a part of daily life. She still has salience as a symbol of national identity, but primarily as a product for entertainment, a media image, commodified for carnaval and tourism.
Furthermore, she is commodified mainly for foreigners, not a domestic market. Brazilian men prefer blondes. As a professor of international law stated succinctly:

The _mulata_ is losing her place to the blonde. I don’t know if it was like this before, but I think it’s a change. The _mulata_ is not at all valued in Brazil. In reality, the foreigners value her. Not the Brazilians. For export, preferably. Brazilians want to consume the white.

**Making the Mulata Self**

In contrast to the distant, canned _mulata_ described by the lighter (and wealthier) participants, the darker girls’ image of the _mulata_ is an immediate, important, integral element of daily life. She is here and now, not there and then. Participants never said, in so many words, that they are/want to be _mulatas_ because they are pretty and sexy and men go for them. Nor do they state explicitly that they themselves transition between the categories. However, the elements are all there. And they are stated explicitly by lighter participants; for example, “[h]air straightening can change a _negra_ into a _mulata_ or even a _morena_.” Darker girls spend time and money trying to achieve the beauty line of the _mulata_. It is a fluid color line, and girls may transition during the day (through the beauty work of hair, clothing, and makeup). This transition is usually accomplished for the ‘street’ (public). For example, a primary participant would dress moderately well for the street to get to work (as a maid), dress down for work, then dress up again for the return home. But if she and her friends were going out socially, they spent hours in preparation to ‘produce’ themselves (_produzir-se_)—hair, make-up, clothing, accessories.
The transition was illustrated in concrete terms in one interview with a rowdier girl (less inhibited). We were at her house, and she was in her ‘home’ appearance. When I asked her to explain the difference between a *negra* and a *mulata*, she showed me a picture of herself dressed up for her son’s baptism and said, “I’m going to show you something that you can say, ‘Look, it’s a *mulata*’ (showing the photo). The way I am now is *preta*, ugly *nega*, a real monkey (laughing).”

Appearance is critical to adolescents. As Rice states, “[i]n adolescence, a girl’s body becomes her currency, its value measured according to heterosexual standards of beauty.” Pervasive social messages regarding race, beauty, intelligence, and value often intensify fears regarding her social worth. They may learn to hate and do battle with their bodies for limiting their dating options and economic opportunities [Fonseca 2000; Rice 2002].

Thus it is hardly surprising that darker girls engage in extensive beauty work, most of which centers around hair. Hair is almost an obsession, loaded with symbolism, all indexed by the term ‘bad hair’ [Fonseca 2000:218]. For Brazilians, hair is a major differentiation between *mulata* and *negra*—between pretty and ugly. In the constellation of color components, it is also the element most easily acted upon.86

The girls’ beauty work is certainly not about valuing African heritage; indeed, one participant said that a woman wearing an Afro would be laughed off the street, and the

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86 See Chapter Three for hair treatment methods.
darkest model (with a very short Afro) was frequently the target of ridicule. Hair straightening may be interpreted as an attempt to approximate whiteness. However, the link between beauty and whiteness is not necessarily so blatant. Rice suggests that color itself is not foremost in girls’ minds.

Beauty rituals that enable women to conform to mainstream ideals have been labeled ‘integrationist’ beauty practices. Trying to conform to dominant ideals does not mean that a woman wants to be white. The emphasis on fair skin, straightened hair, or a small nose is less about Black or South Asian women wanting to be white and more about them wanting to be attractive [2002:168].

This is a useful way of interpreting beauty work in Brazil, where the elements of color have been fragmented as individual elements of beauty. Girls pursue individual attributes of attractiveness in and of themselves; the link to whiteness exists but is a step removed.

Furthermore, this beauty work is not usually about the color/beauty line of ‘good appearance,’ which is beyond their reach in whiteness. Rather, it is a second color/beauty line that offers a positive self-image for darker girls. In fact, in the beauty/sexy contests, darker girls generally picked darker models—images of themselves with the proper resources for beauty work. Through this image they can see themselves as sexy, attractive, coveted by men. In fact, the Community Leader had an entirely different take on Sargentelli’s mulatas:

Oswaldo Sargentelli, he exports mulatas. I always see it on TV... They turn into professional mulatas. It’s a discovery. It’s like this: They are negras that don’t value themselves. They have an inner beauty, a tremendous force to succeed, to be somebody. So this man, he went deep into them, brought this out. Got them to show it on the outside. Raised their self-esteem. When I lived in Rio, I went to lots of shows. So I saw how, on the first day there they were quiet. On the second day I’d see her on the stage, dancing, all pretty, marvelous. So it was really a
spiritual thing. He managed to discover the *mulata* that existed inside those *negras*. He awakened them. So they turned into professional *mulatas*. Many people here in Brazil see the work of these *mulatas* as exhibitionism. They are pretty, they are marvelous. They know how to dance, they know how to move their bodies, gyrate. She has a very special swing to her. But that was work. They already had it; the man just encouraged them. That way they managed to become *mulatas* that work, they made this a profession. [Abroad or here in Brazil too?] Here in Brazil. [Who goes?] Normally, the highest society. It's like a private carnaval. Because that middle-upper class also goes a lot. Because the lower class, even if they had the opportunity to attend a show, they wouldn't understand. Those *mulatas*, for them, would be prostitutes.

In other words, the *mulata* may be seen as a positive goal. Even the fact that wealthier (read also lighter) men are the principle audience is positive for her.

In analyzing Brazilian literature, Queiroz [1975] describes the *mulata* image as ‘insidious’ because it is such a pervasive and ostensibly positive image that masks exploitative social relations. Put succinctly, if a *mulata*’s only power lies in her sexuality, which functions to oppress her, then exercising her power reinforces her oppression.

When considering the commercial/export *mulata*, it is not difficult to theorize her complicity in her own exploitation for limited rewards. But what of the girls who are far removed from these industries, who are not ‘professional *mulatas’? Shall we say that they suffer from ‘false consciousness’? Do they have a ‘partial view’? Are they ‘surveilling’ themselves? Are they ‘investing in their own unhappiness’? Social theories that engage in theoretical closure by assuming a ‘view from the top’ or a ‘complete view’ imply that there is one ‘truth’ or ‘reality’ that supercedes the agency as expressed by low-status populations negotiating lived experience. According to Mary Louise Pratt, it is
precisely this assumption of higher authority that academics need to eschew in order to develop more democratic and heterogeneous understandings of social relations:

What the new approaches show is that there is a big picture, and everyone sees it, not just the intellectuals. But everyone, including the intellectuals, sees it from where they are” [1997:600].

Indeed, Pratt highlights the importance of qualitative methods that elicit multiple perspectives, because “[w]hat is important and revealing... is not necessarily how metropolitan intellectuals assess a situation... but what the actors in the situation think” [1997:599]. This research demonstrates how the *mulata* is a ‘wood for all works,’ serving different purposes for populations of diverse social locations and goals. In the girls’ perspective, based on their everyday, lived experience, mulaticity is empowering. Their *mulata* shares elements with the elite/tourism model, but she does not represent the same cultural entity. As seen in Chapter Six, these girls’ idea of mulaticity is not about ‘sex/sexuality to get ahead.’ Rather, they plan to get ahead through hard work and determination. Being a *mulata* is not merely accommodating oneself to received identities—adopting a ‘class taste.’ On the contrary, the girls want to be lawyers, doctors, dentists, veterinarians, psychologists.
CHAPTER SUMMARY: TODAY'S MULATAS

This chapter has interrogated the meanings and functions of the *mulata* image among a range of participants in contemporary Brazil, with attention to commonalities and differences patterned by color and class. The data demonstrate that the *mulata* is a salient social entity in contemporary Brazil, and there are certain elements of the *mulata* image expressed to some degree by participants of all colors and classes. Eliciting definitions of the *mulata* evoked comparisons with *brancas* and *negras* that echo the tripartite system of female identity discussed in Chapter One.

The data suggest that the *mulata* is embedded in the broader category of darker women, yet within that category she is differentiated from *negras*. For example, both *mulatas* and *negras* share are associated with strength, stamina, sexual heat, and sensuality—particularly in their ability to dance samba. However, the stereotype of the *mulata* sets her apart as congenial, pretty, and sensual in ways that *negras* are not. In short, the *mulata* is described as pretty, sensual, and hot. She is man-pleasing in that she is *simpática* (congenial) and good in bed (shows sexual initiative, sexual appetitie, and less shame). Her identity is also highly corporeal, characterized by larger breasts and bottom, flowing hair, and swing in her movement; she often shows off her body through short, tight clothing. Thus the *mulata* is a mixture of appearance, attitude, and style.
Brancas, mulatas, and negras are reported to have differential value in the relationship market. The branca continues to represent the primary model of beauty and is considered more appropriate for marriage for brancos. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the negra is reported as undesirable and out of the running for relationships. The mulata lies somewhere in between. She is highly sexualized; however, her appeal to Brazilian men is limited due to racism; according to lighter participants, the mulata is less appropriate for a serious relationship because racial mixing is not common. Brazilian men are said to prefer the sexy blonde, imported through American mainstream media and pornography. Indeed, there appears to be a new image of a sexually available bottle blonde that competes with the mulata's sexy image. Sexual mores have changed, and some of the lighter participants challenged the exclusivity of the mulata's prowess in samba and bed.

In short, the cultural space of the mulata described by participants was quite restricted. When the image is invoked, and by whom, varies dramatically. For lighter (and especially wealthier) participants, the mulata may be a symbol of Brazil, but she is only trotted out for carnaval and (sexual) tourism, a product for export in a global economy—she is there and then. These participants may use the term mulata in everyday life as a euphemism for negra, but the full mulata image is artificial and distant. For the darker (and especially poorer) participants, on the other hand, the mulata is here and now—in daily practices of self-making. These girls evoke the mulata image in everyday life as a positive model of identity; girls who cannot reach the line of 'good appearance' engage in
beauty work to achieve the *mulata* status of beauty and desirability. In other words, darker girls claim 'mulaticity' for themselves as an image of social and self-worth.

Thus the girls' perception and employment of the *mulata* image is consistent with their discourses of nonracism and personal color preferences in partner selection; they are experienced as positive, enabling, hopeful, and dignified. The contrast in lighter and darker girls' discourses regarding color terms, categories, and images illustrates how exploring multiple perspectives—grounded in lived experience—contributes to a more complex, heterogeneous understanding of social relations in Brazil. The roles of color and class in girls' expectations and experiences regarding dating, marriage, sexuality, motherhood, education, and employment, are discussed further in Chapter Six.
CHAPTER SIX
'THESEDAYS': LIFETRAJECTORIES

Previous chapters analyze discourses that shape the meaning of color in Brazilian girls' lives; they are based on data generated in response to questions explicitly dealing with color. In contrast, this chapter investigates topics not explicitly related to color, and the data is analyzed with attention to class and color in order to investigate discursive and experiential patterns. The emphasis lies in assessing the girls' life goals and trajectories, particularly in terms of romantic relationships, motherhood, education, and employment.

In this section of the interview, participants were asked:

• What types of dating there are, and their positive/negative aspects
• Whether they want to get married or live with a partner, and when
• Whether they want to have children, how many, and when
• What happens when a girl becomes pregnant out of wedlock
• Where they learn about sexuality, birth control, and disease prevention
• How far they are/went in school
• How they feel/felt about school (teachers, materials, students)
• What their career plans are/were at different times

The data demonstrate that the girls' goals regarding family and career are mutually constructive; together, they inform ideal life trajectories. The first section of this chapter addresses contemporary attitudes and experiences regarding relationships—dating, sexuality, and socialization; pregnancy and fathers; and marriage/living together. The second section addresses the girls' educational and employment goals and their differential experiences in pursuing the ideal. The comparison of early, mid-, and late
adolescence is used to capture changes in the course of adolescence. As in previous chapters, the data is analyzed using binary color and tripartite class systems.
RELATIONSHIPS, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

Frameworks: Sex and Gender Relations in the Literature

Richard Parker describes sexuality in Brazil as constructed through different frames of reference or subsystems that are overlapping and contradictory, and have many layers of meaning. They all impact on each other, and all serve as tools with which "social actors are able to shape and mold the contours of their own sexual universe" [1991:5]. Parker describes how traditional, patriarchal gender relations and the influence of the Catholic Church have interacted with the social hygiene movement of the 19th century, modernization in the 20th century, and the sex-positive discourse of national identity.

A salient element of sexuality in Brazil is that male desire is constructed through a fascination with the forbidden, danger, and transgression. Thus "the act of sedução (seduction) is central not simply because, as in the ideology of gender, it implies a kind of conquista (conquest) or dominance, but because it overcomes some resistance or restriction" [Parker 1991:111]. This compulsion goes far in explaining preoccupation with anal and oral sex. The prominent male identity emphasizes domination and control—the machão—constructed in contrast to the corono (cuckold) or vicado (faggot); fathering children is also important [1991:43-54]. Barker and Loewenstein relate the Brazilian machão to the Latin American macho and universal masculinity [1997]. They point out that men are not rewarded by peers for sensitivity but rather for "bravado, sexual prowess, protecting one's honor, and a willingness to fight danger" [1997:160].
They compete with peers in boasting sexual experiences that describe their adventurousness and use violence to defend their honor and show bravery.

LA Rebhun [1995a, b] also describes historical and contemporary gender identities and relations, emphasizing shifts in the meanings of love and marriage. When marriage was primarily economic, passionate love lay outside. With modernization, marriage was incompletely transformed into a both economic and passionate union. The underlying themes are the distinction between sexually available and sexually protected women, and how women are forced into a role of sexual brinkmanship [Manthei 2000]. Male transgression is predicated on female boundary setting; what women resist is what men want. Goldstein describes how sexuality is a point of power in gender relations in that “male transgressive behavior can be seen... as part of a complex set of eroticized practices of disempowering women [1994:922]. Girls and women are drawn to competing discourses valuing virginity and modern sexual freedom, and trying to avoid becoming ‘damaged goods’ [Rebhun 1995b]. Traditionally, the “long list of essential female qualities emphasized innocence, shyness, purity, modesty, delicacy, absolute virtue, fidelity, submission, and resignation” [Besse 1996:77]. ‘Good girls’ are virgins, constructed in contrast to lesbians, sluts, and whores [Parker 1991]. They are supposed to disown desire and sexual knowledge [Goldstein 1994].

Traditionally, the ideal life trajectory for Brazilian women centered on marriage and homemaking, and outside work was often considered a threat to female virtue and marital
stability [Besse 1996:80]. However, it is important to note that not all women have the same likelihood of approximating the ‘norm’ or ideal; darker women, less educated women, and women with children from previous unions are more likely to be involved in informal unions (rather than married) [Goldani 1999; Greene and Rao 1995];

In all, the literature describes highly differentiated male and female identities, and suggests that relationships are predicated on conflict. This dissertation research investigates the frames of reference that girls use in negotiating identity, sexuality, and relationships in contemporary Brazil. How do girls describe dating? How do they negotiate sexuality? What messages do they receive regarding appropriate behavior, and from whom? What happens if a girl becomes pregnant? What are their attitudes and expectations regarding long-term relationships or marriage? What do they expect from their partners in terms of dating, fatherhood, and marriage? Do their responses describe commonalities and/or differences patterned by color and class?

'These Days': Dating

A striking theme in the participants’ discourses of sexuality and relationships was the ubiquitous reference to ‘these days,’ which incessantly began responses in which participants expressed the feeling that the world has become chaotic, immoral, and uncontrolled regarding social mores. Many of the 18 year olds would say ‘these days’ as if the world had changed dramatically in the three years since they themselves started
dating formally. Even 11 year olds would say 'these days' and roll their eyes to communicate the enormity of contemporary sexual abandon.

Careful examination of participants' ages and responses indicates that there have indeed been some changes. Certainly, as marriage has become delayed, the dating period has expanded significantly; new forms of dating have also emerged. In particular, namorar and ficar represent two forms of relationships that index traditional and modern mores and issues of control and freedom in contemporary dating.

According to the participants, 20-25 years ago girls were supposed to marry as virgins in their mid- to late adolescence to men who had established themselves sufficiently (thus generally a bit to a lot older). Courtship consisted of namorar, a serious type of dating in which the boy had to ask the girl's father's permission to date her. For more conservative families, namorar consisted of a girl and a boy in the living room with mom and dad, preferably sitting between them. More permissive families allowed couples to go out on group dates or with a chaperone. Namorar was usually followed by noivar (to become engaged) and marriage.

Namorar still exists—in fact, the poorer girls reported that boys still often ask the father's permission to date his daughter (an embarrassing moment). Namorar does not seem to

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87 Namorar: Verb, to date, go steady. Namoro: Noun, the relationship of dating, going steady (just as marriage is the relationship of being married). Namorador: the boyfriend in a namoro. Namorada: the girlfriend in a namoro.
lead so inevitably to marriage now. Rather, it is akin to the old American 'going steady.'

It is characterized, above all, by commitment (comprimento), requiring reliability and exclusivity. You are assured of a date—your namorado will take you out every Saturday night—neither is supposed to see others, which would constitute cheating.

A major change in the mode of dating has been the introduction of ficar, an alternative to namorar. In talking to participants of different ages, I found that the term ficar seems to have emerged in the mid-80s. The main quality of ficar is lack of commitment—there is no reliability or exclusivity involved. You meet somebody at a party, you're both interested, you ficar with them; the next day, you have no obligations to them (similar to a 'one-night stand'). You may not even acknowledge each other or that it happened. Or you might ficar again. In fact, if you continue to ficar with a person (your ficante), it could turn into a namoro. The sexual content of ficar varies. The girls very consistently asserted that the norm is hugs and kisses ('making out'). Of course, all kinds of things can actually happen, depending on the girl's resolve and the heat of the moment (or the boy's pressure), but the norm for adolescents, across color, class, and age ranges, is hugs and kisses.

Ficar is often misunderstood by older people (especially those without adolescent children in the past 15 years), who associate it with very early sexual relations, especially intercourse. The discourse of these days' and sexual abandon is heavily sensationalized in the media. A particularly pervasive story during the study was the 11 year old girl who
went to a funk concert not wearing panties and got pregnant. This media tidbit from Rio grants concreteness to discourses of ‘these days’ and highly influenced responses in my research. When asked about the average onset of desire, *ficar, namorar*, and intercourse (*transar*), girls tended to report the earliest ages they had heard of. Thus, after establishing that these were the youngest ages, they went on to clarify the norms. For example, after we established that there are some girls who start to *ficar* at 7-10, they clarified that the norm is 11-13, especially 12. There are girls who start to *namorar* ‘late’ (18, especially if their parents forbid it) or ‘early’ (13, especially if it is hidden); the most common age is 15-16. The reported norms reported showed remarkable consistency across color and class. There were only slight differences between older and younger girls’ age norm responses. In fact, one woman in her early twenties even took back her assessment that everything happened earlier these days and decided that she herself just had not been like her peers.

*Namorar* and *ficar* each have their advantages and disadvantages. As mentioned above, one nice thing about *namorando* is that you are assured of a date on Saturday night. However, for many girls it also means that she cannot go out unless he is with her (which would make her appear available), so she may get stuck at home sometimes. Exclusivity is also nice, but it implies the right to accountability, which is more exacting of the girl. That is, the boy has the right to demand accountability of the girl’s whereabouts and company at all times. Boyfriends may also restrict girls’ clothing, forbidding short or

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88 *Dar satisfação* (give satisfaction) or *cobrar* (demand).
revealing clothes. Short clothing is associated with availability— to date and/or for sex;
more conservative boys consider girls who wear short/tight clothing appropriate only for
ficar, not namorar.

The deeper emotional commitment that may accompany namorando is highly desirable
for many girls. In fact, a younger girl may prefer an older guy who is more ready for this
commitment and who will provide her more consistent attention. However, since the
boyfriend cares about her, he has a vested interest in her social identity. Consequently,
the girl experiences a considerable loss of freedom as the boy demands a high degree of
control. Thus girls sometimes describe namorar as a 'responsibility,' which they do not
always want. More than one said she had broken up because her namorado was too
exacting and controlling.\(^{89}\) A Very Poor darker girl notes the difference:

*namorar* seriously, you have to account for yourself, where you go... account for
yourself, who you go out with, who you don’t go out with, or sometimes you
can’t go out alone, you have to go out with him. *[ficar is] without commitment,
you can go where you want, without giving accountability.

*Ficar* has the advantage of freedom. *Ficar* lets a girl experiment, build her ego, feel
desired. However, with freedom comes insecurity. *Ficar* can get lonely.

Sometimes in my head I even don’t want to just *ficar* anymore. I want a guy who
likes me, who I like. So, there you go, he comes up, it happens, you get all happy.

\(^{89}\) Men can be controlling even without dating. For example, one 15 year old girl (Very Poor darker) was in
a difficult position because a powerful drug dealer in her neighborhood wanted to date her. Although she
was flattered (there are many girls and women interested in him) she decided against it because of the
indirect way he handled himself with her (sending messengers) and because of the social problems entailed
by dating such a prominent local figure. There was no clear communication between them, but he chased
away any other guys who showed an interest in her with threats of violence or violence. In effect, she was
unable to date at all.
Then comes the moment you realize he just wanted to kiss and that’s it, it’s over, you know. That, for me, gets depressing.

She is not assured of a date on Saturday night. Also, she may feel hurt. The girls reported that the girl often like the ficante boy more than the boy like the girl, so she is hurt if he does not want the relationship to continue or grow. He can see other girls and she cannot say anything because he will point out that they were only ficando. The existence of ficar allows the opportunity for casual sexual experience without commitment; as a consequence, girls may feel taken advantage of. Thus girls say that ‘guys are dogs’ in that they just use girls. Boys like to ficar, and ficar with as many as possible. As one girl says, “Women generally want something serious,” to which her friend responds, “Women generally don’t find it.”

On the other hand, some girls are reportedly competitive amongst each other about ficando, vying for who can get the cutest boy, steal a boy away from another girl, or get the most ficantes. But with ficar, a girl’s negotiation of moral identity can become complicated. Ficar too often, or with too many boys, or with too many boys who know each other, and a girl can get a bad reputation. She will become the kind of girl that is just for ficar, not for namorar; in other words, she will become damaged goods. Boys do not run this risk. Thus ficar has a differential impact on girls versus boys due to persistent different gender moral identities. This effect begs the question: To what extent does this new ficar mean sexual freedom for women? Rebhun has suggested that the ‘sexual revolution’ in Brazil is less about women taking control over their sexuality and more
about increasing the number of sexually available women [1995b: 12]. Certainly, the girls' role in sexual brinkmanship is still prevalent. Also, discussion of ficar and namorar raised several issues of traditional gender, sexuality, and moral identity.

"Lock up your ewes, my ram is on the loose." The majority of participants report markedly different parental standards of sexual behavior for female and male children. The Not Poor girls are familiar with (and vehemently condemn) the concept of machismo. The son's sexuality is a matter of pride; the daughter's is repressed: "For mothers in general, like, if the boy is thinking about women, it shows that he's a man, that he's on the right track. But if it's a girl, she's depraved, a whore." If a little boy touches himself, his mother thinks he's clever, she encourages him. If a little girl touches herself, she is yelled at for doing something dirty. There is no reason to hold back a boy's sexuality through curfews or limiting the age when he can date or where he can go. Rather, fathers are anxious that their sons initiate their heterosexuality, the earlier the better:

Fathers incite their sons, it's a question of machismo. 'You're really a man,' right? They try to push them along. In terms of (sons), I think that parents really push them to have sex. To see if he's a man, so he won't be any _____ [gay], right?

The way in which dominant masculinity is constructed in contrast to homosexuality is apparent. "I think it's even fear that the son, not to be branded as a homosexual, or

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90) *Prende suas cabras; meu bode está solto.* Literally, 'secure your nanny goats, my billy goat is on the loose.'
something like that. So he wants to show right away that it's guaranteed that he's really

* macho, you know." Thus proof of a boy's heterosexuality is openly celebrated:

Generally, it's an honor for the boy (to have sex)—there are even fathers that tell their boys all the time, put pressure on them, you know. When the son comes, starts saying that he isn't a virgin anymore, the father is like, 'Oh, I want to tell my friends!'

Any sign that they are behaving like machos is encouraged:

When I was about 14, on a school graduation trip, 10 boys went along, they went to a house of prostitution. When we got back, the father of two of them—they were twins—instead of a good scolding, what did he do? He took them to whores in the city. To teach them. 'Go ahead, my son. Go ahead, you're doing the right thing, keep going.'

To avoid uncertainty, Brazilian men have traditionally taken their adolescent boys to prostitutes. Although this practice has diminished (primarily due to more readily available casual sex), it was mentioned by a number of participants, who found it anachronistic: "My uncle is just like that with my cousin. He took him to a brothel to initiate him. I think it's absurd. ... Yes, there's incentive."

Girls’ sexuality, on the other hand, is often repressed—particularly by fathers.

It's like that, society, like... It's a source of pride for the father that his son already lost his virginity. For his daughter, who loses her virginity, he'll... think 'Jeez, what will my friends say?'"

The girls reported that fathers are quite open in their double standards:

One time my friend's brother told their father, 'Hey, I *fiquei* with a girlfriend today,' and he supported him. And my friend went up and said, 'Hey Dad, I *fiquei* yesterday too' and her father reprimanded her. He said, 'No, you can't... you're a
girl.' They really treat them differently. That's machismo. The man can, the woman can't.

There is danger to her reputation, and the danger of pregnancy:

I think (the son's) upbringing is different because women run the risk of... the woman can get pregnant, things like that. So the daughter always has to be a little more careful, because if you let her too loose... she can end up with a bad reputation. Not guys.

The danger of pregnancy and diseases do not appear to threaten boys and girls equally, a differential that irked many participants: "The girl can't. She'll get pregnant, she'll get a disease... But not boys. He'll never get a girl pregnant, he'll never get a disease."

Fathers' faulty reasoning was blamed squarely on machismo:

Because of machismo. Society is really machista. Just as the girl could get pregnant, the boy could get somebody pregnant too. But since society is machista, pregnancy is (badly received) for the girl because she's the one with the big stomach.

Since their daughters' sexuality is a source of danger (reputation, disease, pregnancy), parents attempt to control it through restricting and monitoring the age of dating, boyfriends, destinations, and times of departure and arrival.

My father, my mother tried everything possible (to hold me back). ... For me to go out with my namorado, I had a curfew, I had to say where we were going, and there was always somebody checking to see that I actually went there. I couldn't sleep at his house, or he at my house. They left us alone to namorar, but not really close, like, glued to each other.
Through these strategies, parents try to hold back their daughters (segurar, prender)\(^91\) but not their sons. "I think that parents don’t worry about holding back the guys. They think, ‘Other parents aren’t going to hold their sons back, so their sons are on the loose, I’m not going to let my daughters loose.’" Girls of all colors and classes refer to the manner in which girls are raised presa\(^92\) (prisoners) and boys are raised solto\(^93\) (free).\(^94\)

Daughters are very presa. Women are very presa. There’s always a lot of stuff [they can’t do]. Not men. That’s how parents think. Boys can go out, they don’t have curfews. Boys can go places, girls can’t. Daughters can’t. The upbringing is different. Men grow up with more freedom than women.

Again, the blatant double standard—especially expressed by fathers—is a source of outrage, particularly for the Not Poor girls. "My father says ‘a man is a man, you can’t compare yourself with him, he’s a man and you’re a woman.’"

On the other hand, several participants warned that holding a daughter back too rigidly can cause problems, such as hiding what they are doing: "Mothers try to hold them back but it doesn’t help. Holding them back is worse. They just do everything hidden." For example, some start to namorar hidden (escondido), which generally means that they are having sex and the parents have no idea. One 13 year old said she had been namorando hidden for a year and a half because she was afraid to ask permission. In others, it

\(^91\) **Segurar**: To secure, make safe or secure, to firm, fasten, bind, pin, brace, hold, clamp, or cling. To hold tight. Catch, grasp, hold, seize. Insure, assure, guarantee.  
**Prender**: To fasten, tie, bind, fix; seize, grasp, grip; catch, capture, imprison, lock in; detain, retain, keep. [Michaelis 2000:1575]

\(^92\) **Presa**: Prisoner, convict, captive, jailbird. Captive, imprisoned, arrested, jailed, confined [Michaelis 2000:1475].

\(^93\) **Solto**: Free, unattached, unbound, untied, unfastened, unfixed, released, liberated, slack, loose, dissolute, licentious [Michaelis 2000:1599].
provokes an all-out revolt: “So they always want to do the opposite of what their parents say. Then they’re really going to end up on the wrong path.” Furthermore, participants reported that when girls are under such pressure, the moment the control is removed, they go wild: “They don’t let her go out. But holding her back is worse, because when they let go, girlfriend...”

**Sex and Mother Talk: Mineiros Eat Quietly.** Individual participants reported first coitus norms starting at 11, and some were 20 year old virgins. The ‘normal’ range is wide, but the most common age is 14-15 years old for first coitus, across color and class. Whereas *ficar* is associated with hugs and kisses, intercourse is highly correlated with *namorar* (they generally have sex within a relationship). However, when girls plan to *ficar* things can get out of hand. Or an opportunity may present itself. And, despite the distinct categorical definitions, there is, of course, a lot of interplay between *ficar* and *namorar*.

Girls describe the driving force behind intercourse, particularly first coitus, in mixed terms of desire, intentionality, pressure, and coercion. Due to the 11-year-old-funk-concert-pregnant discourse, the data overrepresent why very young girls do it (as opposed to why most girls do it).

First, female desire is clearly acknowledged and, for the vast majority, starts at 12 (sometimes 11, sometimes later). Thus sexual urges can lead to intercourse anytime.

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94 See Roberto da Matta’s analysis of Brazilian correlations between the house and the female, the street.
thereafter—a 12 year old can already start to ‘release the beast’ (soltar o bicho). Dating can arouse desire, too. And even if they do not have much physical desire yet, they may be curious; they may also do it for fun, as a type of entertainment.

Second, intercourse can happen by accident (unplanned). “For most of my friends, it just happens, a thing of the moment.” Sometimes it’s just that the opportunity presents itself.

Often, sexual passion (his, hers, theirs) takes over and they get carried away in the heat of the moment:

> These days, there isn’t an age for it anymore, because of the little kids. [Why so young?] That business about grabbing, grabbing, then they start to pet, all those things... There are girls that don’t care, no? They let the guy pet, and everything, they go on that way until... it happens. And it happens.

Being swept away may be considered romantic; even if they are dating, the actual moment is supposed to be spontaneous, not a set time or place.

Third, girls see/hear about other people having sex—sisters, cousins, peers, older kids. They may become curious and want to imitate them and appear more adult:

> Girls do it because of influence. People talk a lot of crap around children, start to influence their heads. ... Even relatives. They start this business of talking crap in front of children, they want to learn, uai, they want to know what it’s like. That’s why they start early. ... Curiosity. They want to imitate adults.

Girls may also feel peer pressure: “These days I think that girls have their heads full of what their friends say... I don’t think she wants to do it. I think it’s the influence of her

and the male [1985].
friends.” If they can brag that they are no longer virgins, they feel more mature. Having intercourse for these reasons is considered problematic because they are doing it ‘too young’ and not for themselves: “To seem more adult. They see their older sisters namorar. But they’re older. They should think of themselves first.” Engaging in intercourse due to pressure or false posturing of maturity conflicts with the idea that intercourse is supposed to be born of desire: “Sometimes it’s like, ‘Oh, my friend said it’s great, I want to too.’ That happens a lot. ‘Oh, my neighbor did it, I’m going to do it.’ It’s not even pleasure; sometimes they don’t even feel anything.”

Fourth, girls have sex because they are trying to get or keep a guy (to ficar or namorar with them). The participants emphasized that girls will do anything: “When you like a guy, you do anything,” “To namorar, women do anything.” Boys may put considerable pressure on girls to have intercourse. This is problematic because girls may have sex with them when they are too young, and/or without their own desire, just to please (often older) boys. “Both should want to, when they really like each other. But most girls really just (do it) to please.” Boys make it clear that they expect intercourse: “That’s what they want most. They wait a week; if she doesn’t have sex with them by then, the namoro is over.” Boys can be good talkers, know how to coax a girl. They may employ emotional blackmail—requesting a ‘proof of love’ (intercourse) was very popular. If a girl refuses to put out, some boys argue, some threaten to ‘jump the fence’ (get sex elsewhere), and some threaten to break up.
Although putting out is seen as the number one way to get or keep a boyfriend, it is by no means guaranteed to work. Many girls “do it for fun, because they really like the person, and they want to try to ficar with him... To keep hold of the guy. But there are lots that... it’s something of the moment, and after, it’s over.” Once boys get it, they may lose interest or respect, and move on. The girls fear sexual remorse in general, but particularly if the boy breaks up with them afterward.

According to the participants, girls are supposed to break up with boys who try to coerce them in whatever way. They are supposed to take responsibility for themselves—“we are not ingenuous, we know what we’re doing, right?” However, it is also understood that girls are not made of stone—they have physical and emotional desires—and girls who succumb are not an object of scorn. If anybody is, the boys are.

The capacity for girls to take control of sex in relationships was closely related to their primary source of sexual orientation/education, which in turn was highly patterned by class. The Very Poor and Poor girls of all colors (with very few exceptions) reported that they learned about sex primarily ‘on the street.’ Most felt comfortable learning this way, and found it very helpful the way people pass around information. However, a few said that you do not learn things properly on the street; in fact, you may learn everything that is wrong on the street.
In second place is school, although instruction is extremely limited. Only some schools have it, only some grades have it (a grade many girls do not reach), and the material itself is very limited, usually not new to them. Furthermore, some teachers are too embarrassed to be effective; they may even pretend not to hear questions. A primary problem was the fact that boys and girls are taught together, which caused enormous discomfort and impeded questions. "They talk about it a lot at school... It’s sort of awkward. Boys and girls together. Embarrassment. Boys acting like tough guys, macho, studs. But inside, deep inside, they’re dying of embarrassment too." When asked whether it would be better with the girls separate, most said they would feel more comfortable.

A handful of girls said they learned about sex and relationships from television, magazines, videos, public lectures, the gynecologist, the act itself, or seeing their parents do it.

The source of sexual orientation/information that starkly distinguished the poor from the not poor was communication with mothers. Almost none of the poorer girls were able to discuss sex with their mothers; ‘most mothers don’t.’ Participants whose mothers did talk to them said that they were a rare case. The girl who said "if I have a question, I go to my mother and ask her. My mother says it’s better I know from her mouth than from the street" affirmed that most mothers do not talk about sex.
Some girls were actually afraid to raise the issue of sexuality with their mothers. One girl asked her mother about sex and got yelled at, another said her mother would call her names if she asked. One 16 year old said “[m]y mother does not give me that freedom. I'm scared to ask, she might hit me.” A minority of girls said that some mothers do not care or did not make the effort:

Many mothers won’t talk about sex. They learn everywhere, on TV. It would be better to learn from parents, the correct way. But some parents don’t care, don’t worry. My mother never talked to me.

These few girls make it clear that they cannot depend on their mothers: “If it were up to my mother, I would have broken my face95 a long time ago.” One 15 year old was enormously resentful: “Other mothers sit down and talk to their daughters, tell them what’s right and wrong, what she should or shouldn’t do. My mother always said, ‘Do what you want. It’s your problem.’”

But for the most part, girls report that poor mothers are just terribly uncomfortable and embarrassed and do not know how to broach the subject. “They should ask their mothers, mothers should explain. But many mothers are too embarrassed, uncomfortable, like my mother, to talk about this.” They may manage limited comments, such as ‘Oh, be careful;’ that is, they warn them not to get pregnant but do not teach them anything or sustain an actual conversation. The mother’s discomfort is passed on to the daughter:

95 To break one's face (quebrar a cara) means to be disgraced (e.g., to get pregnant outside of a proper relationship).
My mother knows, right, that I’m more of a young lady, but she doesn’t mention it, doesn’t talk about it. I’ve never talked to her about it. I get embarrassed. I talk about it with others on the street, but with my mother I don’t mention it, I get embarrassed.

This embarrassment drives them to their friends and to the street for information. [Can you talk to your mother?] “Oh, no, that doesn’t work. It’s better between friends. Then you can talk. … Since your mother doesn’t talk to you… you’re embarrassed.”

According to Parker, the traditional silence regarding all aspects of sexuality and reproduction is intended to keep girls ignorant and therefore protect them; silence, ignorance, and prohibitions are considered ways of controlling female sexuality. The effect is that girls end up with fragmentary, partial, and contradictory information [1991:56-58].

As described in Chapter Two, the expression ‘mineiros eat quietly’ refers to a tendency to conceal what one is doing, not call attention to ones actions. ‘To eat’ is also a common colloquialism for having sex. The fact that so many of the darker mineira participants have sex ‘quietly’ indicates problems such as incomplete and inaccurate information regarding sex. Furthermore, it is important to consider that communication is a two-way street: where mothers are not talking, neither are daughters. Given this lack of communication, it is not surprising that some mothers are unaware of what is happening.

with their daughters. One participant said that her mother did not talk to her about sex until she knew she was not a virgin—now she does, to prevent anything worse from happening. Another said that by the time her mother realized she was not a virgin, she was already pregnant. In other words, communication does not come or comes ‘too late.’

Two of the young women—both Poor lighter—attributed the lack of communication with their mothers to traditional/conservative/religious families. One 20 year old from such a family said that her parents never talked about sex or even menstruation—not even the basic biology:

I never understood why I couldn’t do this, why I couldn’t go to his house. I only got a full understanding of what a (sexual) relationship is recently. In high school, they talk more, show films. That’s when I found out better what it is between men and women. Because, if it depended on my mother, no. Friends are great to talk about it. I talk to them a lot.

These women were carefully shielded. One 23 year old who was raised in the country was absolutely unable to talk to her mother. “When we saw something on a novela, my mother would tell me to be careful. Just lightly. And jokes.” When they visited relatives, they’d joke about their sons dating her, and her mother would say “’only later, let’s study first, life is so hard,’ and we picked up on that. But nothing about sex.” Like the woman above, she turned to friends: “I was always interested. My friends told me about it. I never hid anything. I was trying to find out, and my parents closed up.” She warns that “[I]f parents don’t talk to their kids, the kids will think their parents are ignorant.”
The girls’ responses regarding mothers and sex/relationship talk demonstrated a striking class division. Whereas Very Poor and Poor girls reported a lack of dialogue, most of the Not Poor girls emphasized open and extensive communication with their mothers. This data was corroborated by Not Poor women, especially those under 50, who described a radically different relationship with their daughters. These women explicitly distinguish the way they are raising their daughters from the way they themselves were raised. It is testament to their success that most of the Not Poor girls felt very close to their mothers on sexual and relationship matters; contrast and disagreement was expressed in relation to their grandmothers. Their main goal is to teach and guide in a nonjudgmental manner, to grant freedom and decision-making skills. In terms of sexuality, the emphasis is communication and empowerment. Their daughters are taught to own and appreciate their sexuality. Sexuality is considered a wonderful gift and a central element in life. A girl’s sexuality is her own; nobody else can tell her when she is ready. Each girl is different and only she herself will know when her time comes. Since girls always remember the first time, it is important to make it special. She needs to be emotionally, physically, and practically prepared; mothers encourage birth control and facilitate not only their availability but the girls’ discretion in purchasing it. Contrast the poorer girls with the following Not Poor young woman:

I was with him three months before it happened. I knew it would happen, and I’d decided to let it happen. If I hadn’t, it wouldn’t have happened. I looked at myself in the mirror a lot and asked myself, will you feel good about it? I thought about it...

97 One participant, a 42 year old, Not Poor, highly educated man, suggested that the difference may lie in proximity to the women’s movement and the sexual revolution of the 1970s. He pointed out that these movements belonged largely to the urban middle and upper classes; rural and poor women did not have the same access to discourses of empowerment. See also Muraro [1983] for a discussion of class and the women’s movement.
so much that the first time, in a motel, I wasn’t embarrassed to take off my
clothes. He asked, ‘Aren’t you embarrassed?’ and I said ‘No, of course not,’
because I was prepared. I knew what I wanted to do. I think the right time had
come.98

The discourse of carefully choosing the right time—‘only you yourself will know when
you are ready’—was also prevalent in magazines for young teens. Over and over, they
emphasize that girls need to take control of their own sexuality and recommend how to
handle situations with boys. These magazines were not so appealing to the Not Poor,
perhaps because they already had the message first hand at home, and perhaps also
because they were more media literate and had progressed to more adult fashion
magazines. However, the teen magazines were highly coveted by the poorer girls, who
had very limited access to either the magazines or the messages.

In a world in which the media, peers, boys, and biology all urge sex, only the Not Poor
girls (who are almost exclusively lighter) and a few Poor lighter girls reported having the
steadying voice of a mother who is not embarrassed or condemning but rather provides a
discourse of empowerment in relationships and sexuality. Although all girls face
insecurities, mother sex talk is one of a number of differentials in girls’ perceived support
systems, including the consequences of pregnancy.

98 “Chegou a hora certa.”
Pregnancy and Fathers

The consequences of pregnancy for girls lives vary sharply. Although personal circumstances are important, there are also distinctive color and class patterns in the ramifications of motherhood. The differences lie in the level of support that girls expect from both her family and her partner (father of the child), which determines to a large degree her experience of motherhood and ramifications for her education and career trajectory.

Kicked Out. In the research sample, 15 of the girls, all currently in their late teens or early 20s, were pregnant or had had a baby. This represents almost 20% of the girls and young women in the sample, and almost 29% of girls ages 15-25. The youngest became pregnant at age 15. In terms of class, nine were Very Poor and six were Poor (none of the Not Poor girls reported a pregnancy). In terms of color, eight of the girls were darker, and seven were lighter. Table 7 shows the number of girls ages 15-25 that were pregnant or had given birth and the percentages within their groups (for example, 42% of Very Poor darker girls were pregnant/had given birth). As this table demonstrates, the Very Poor had higher rates than the Poor, but the rates of darker and lighter girls were comparable. All of the pregnancies were unintentional, save two lighter women ages 21

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99 Another effect of class is that the Very Poor girls were more likely than girls of other classes to know local girls who had become pregnant in early adolescence, and the Poor girls were more likely to know girls who became pregnant in mid-adolescence, but these were considered exceptions, abnormal behavior.
(Poor) and 24 (Very Poor), who were in relationships and felt it was the right time to have a baby.100

Table 7: Motherhood Ages 15-25 by Color and Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darker</td>
<td>5 (42%)</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>8 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighter</td>
<td>4 (67%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>7 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9 (50%)</td>
<td>6 (35%)</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>

The Epidemiology Center in Juiz de Fora [2000] generates pregnancy statistics according to a number of factors, including education and neighborhood. Although information on skin color is collected, it is not analyzed or correlated with any other criteria. As noted earlier, there are some problems with neighborhood boundaries, and population mobility is also a complicating factor. Nevertheless, the trends are significant. According the data from 1996-2000, the neighborhoods showed the following:

Table 8: Age of Documented Pregnant Residents in 1996-2000

<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bom Pastor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furtado de Menezes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vila Olavo Costa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As this data demonstrates, pregnancy in early adolescence is not commonly reported. The Not Poor girls of Bom Pastor have only a handful of later teen pregnancies (6% of all

100 The level of unintended pregnancy is corroborated by a small study performed by a nurse in Juiz de Fora, in which 91% of the participating pregnant teens did not plan to get pregnant [Tavares 2001].
pregnancies); the reproduction of these women is focused in the twenties and thirties—particularly the early thirties. The Poor girls of Furtado de Menezes, on the other hand, have a significant percentage of later teen pregnancies (22%), and their reproductive years are focused in the twenties (56%). Most striking are the Very Poor later teens of Vila Olavo Costa, who account for 28% of all pregnancies, and the reproductive focus in the early twenties (31%). In other words, girls and young women who should, according to the ideal, be focusing on education, account for almost 60% of the pregnancies in their neighborhood.

Parental responses to teen/unwed pregnancy were fairly uniform across lighter and darker participants among the Very Poor and Poor. The vast majority of parents do not kick their pregnant daughters out. However, they may threaten their daughters in order to control them: “Lots of parents say like this, ‘If you get pregnant, I’ll kick you out, I won’t help you with your child.’ But when it actually happens, they don’t.” “Lots of parents say they will put her on the street but they don’t really have the heart to. A few do it, but rarely. They just speak in anger.” “When she tells them she’s pregnant, they threaten to kick her out, swear at her, but in the end she ends up staying home.” “They talk, throw it in her face, but throw her out, no.” “They are upset at first, but then they get used to it. What can you do?”

Although most girls end up staying home, not all do. Some of the poor girls who got pregnant were put on the street, sent to live with the father, or had to move in with
friends. For example, when Estaphani was 15, she had a hidden namoro with a 22 year old man. When she became pregnant, her parents emancipated her and she became his ward. Tais (16) was raised presa and always wanted to go far and see something new.

Her boyfriend took her to a party far away, at his sister's house they put them in the same room...

His dream was to have a child with me. He always wanted to. He wanted to so much, I didn't really want to, even doing it I said so, but he wanted to so much we ended up getting pregnant. But if I had stayed home in Juiz de Fora, it never would have happened. It was because I traveled, was alone, away from my father, feeling free... I always said no, but it didn’t do any good.

Now she has to live with his family, unmarried; she found the situation difficult to get used to, but it does allow her to stay in school.

Although it is not the norm for pregnant girls to leave home, poorer girls must consider the possibility that they may not be able to stay home. Pregnancy for poorer girls almost always means the end of schooling as well. In contrast, Not Poor girls say that those who do get pregnant are never put on the street. Nor are they expected to live with the father or get married; the attitude is 'just because you make one mistake, why make two?' The parents may be upset at first, but the daughter is expected to continue living at home, and the family does not allow her pregnancy to interfere more than briefly with her education or career. She has access to childcare by family members, daycare centers, and/or a nanny.
Fatherhood: “They don’t take it on; they just take off.”101 When a child is born out of wedlock, the father can assume responsibility to various degrees. He can informally acknowledge the child, he can register (formally acknowledge, give his name), he can acknowledge the child and pay monthly support, and he can take on a broader role (assume financial and emotional responsibility). The majority of the poorer participants were concerned that most guys do not take on the responsibility of fatherhood. They do not assume responsibility for their children by acknowledging them and providing monthly support, although it is only a pittance (40 reais/month102).

The discourses surrounding paternal support, generally referred to as 'assuming' (assumir), are patterned by color and class. On one end of the spectrum, Not Poor (lighter) girls take it for granted that guys will assume, hopefully in a very full sense; however, as mentioned above, they do not get married or live with the father but rather remain with their parents and continue their education.

The Poor lighter girls also pretty much take for granted that the guy will assume, as long as the girl acted within certain parameters—as long as she is not a prostitute, or a woman who had sex too early in the relationship (easy), or who is known to ficar with many guys. In other words, boys are likely to assume their children in the context of namorando. Sometimes they provide more affection than money: “But most guys

101 “Não assumem; somem.”
102 According to the official exchange rate, this would be $20/month. However, practically speaking, 40 reais bought about as much in Brazil as $40 would in the US.
assume. They give us money when they can, and adore their kids, even if they aren’t with
the mother.” However, most only assume the minimum; they only assume the child on
paper—legally—and/or financially, not affectively. “It’s easy for men to be fathers—just
register, pay a monthly pittance.”

The responses of the Very Poor lighter and Poor darker girls represent another gradation,
acknowledging that some guys assume. However, for the most part they shared the
sentiment most consistently voiced by the other end of the spectrum, the Very Poor
darker girls: Guys do not assume.103 “No, not at all. They go around saying it wasn’t
them.” In fact, they usually leave. [Do guys assume?] “Here? No. They usually take off.”
If a man gets a woman pregnant, “he’s out of there” (cai fora). “It’s hard to find a man
who assumes his child. Very hard. So she has to assume it without a father. Like my
friend who got pregnant; the first day... he disappeared.”

According to the Very Poor darker girls, guys’ attitudes vary. Some are lackadaisical:
“He assumes if he feels like it.” Others are indifferent: Some guys do it with girls in other
neighborhoods. They do not know whether they get them pregnant, do not want to know,
do not care. Some are thoughtless: Sometimes he has a girlfriend, she does not want to,
he sleeps with another girl and gets her pregnant, takes off and forgets about it. And some

103 The sample is very small—only 15 men fathered children with the participants. Nevertheless, it is
interesting to note the effect of color: among lighter women, a full 94% of fathers assumed their children,
whereas among darker women, only 38% of the fathers assumed.
are downright malicious: "Guys usually like to make lots of children, desert the mother, and get another woman... I think it's for fun. To betray women."

Girls may be hesitant to tell the child's father at all. One participant did not bother, since she knew he would not assume: "No, I didn't ask him to... It's men's attitude, you know." Two complained that when the father finds out she's pregnant, he leaves (so she loses the relationship). Another said that "Some boys you can tell, others you can't. Sometimes when you tell a boy he's the father, he hits you." Often the father is older; sometimes he is in a more powerful position. For example, one participant got pregnant by a wealthy, lighter politician. Another was pregnant by a minister, who refused to use a condom. Neither of the men would assume their children, and the women felt powerless.

The abandoned mothers often feel tricked, desperate, and depressed. This was especially the case for girls who were raised presa, with high expectations for marriage and family life, such as Eduarda and Marisa:

- Eduarda (24, Very Poor lighter, son age 2) was raised very strictly; she could barely leave the house without her mother. She left school at 14 to work in a factory. She fell in love with a negro, but people broke them up. She dated another man and became pregnant. Her pregnancy came as such a shock that her parents almost put her on the street. The father will not assume because they had broken up before they knew she was pregnant, and taking her back would be 'going back on his word.' Nor will her first boyfriend—the love of her life—take her back because the child is not his. Now she is stuck at home, under pressure to work but unable to due to lack of childcare. She feels degraded and depressed.

- Marisa (25, Very Poor darker) was also raised presa, and wanted to become a nun. At 18, she met a coroa (older man—41 years, white). He was divorced, wealthy, running for city council. People warned her he was seeing another woman but she did not believe them because he took her out every Saturday. He told her to stop taking the
pill because he had had a vasectomy. He 'really tricked her.' When she got pregnant, “he turned his back on me,” denied the children (twins). “He said if I was pregnant, it was my child, because it wasn’t his.” She was upset, had a ficaute, so he says they’re the other guy’s kids. He won’t give her anything. She hopes that he will provide support later, when he sees how much the kids look like him. Even his ex-wife says he needs to support his kids ‘down there’ (in the slum). She is angry; “Sometimes I wish he’d die, get hit by a truck. A real desire. Then I think I want him to live a long time, to see the kids grow up and take their revenge on him.” And she is depressed. Once, her dream was to become a nun. Now she’s afraid to live, afraid to die—afraid of how God will receive her.

Poor single mothers are often frustrated. Not only do they feel abandoned, cheated, and depressed, but they feel helpless and trapped. Due to lack of childcare, they cannot go to school, they cannot work, they cannot improve their situation.

On the other hand, when guys do assume their children, it isn’t always a picnic. If namorando signals loss of female freedom and increased male control, living together and marriage are even more confining. Two of the poor young mothers in the sample were living with boyfriends (actually brothers) who assumed their children. The women were barely allowed out of the house, unable to attend school or work even if they had childcare options, and felt dependent and frustrated:

- Renata (22, Very Poor lighter) did not know much about sex or protection and got pregnant at 15. The father took off. Her mother let her stay home, but the teachers told her not to come to school, saying that a pregnant belly at school sets a bad example. So she left school at 15, in the 5th series (already 3-4 years behind). When she got pregnant again, her mother kicked her out on the street. The father is one year her junior (21); he works and goes to school. He assumed the child and his mother helps them out. He is very controlling, but he does not hit them. He does not want her to go to school, does not want her to leave the house. The doctor has to write down the time she leaves the health post. “When he finds out that you depend on him, that’s when he steps on you.”Whenever you get in a fight, he slaps his pocket and says “’But the money is mine, it’s in my pocket, I’m the one that works, and the money is mine.’ And what can you say? You can’t say anything, it’s true. So we end up diminished. He feels on top, and you have to bow down, because this is really what
happens." She never wants to live with another man; she has been through too much. "Prince Charming doesn’t exist."

- Luana’s (21, Very Poor lighter) mother died when she was three, so she was raised by an aunt who openly favored her own children. She was unhappy. She got pregnant at 17 and the father assumed. She left school (5th grade) and was happy to move in with him. They have two kids. But he beats her out of jealousy. She hits him too. She is afraid of being a single mother, she does not feel she is strong enough. But she will never marry again either, because then she would have to have more children, which ruins the relationship. When they fight, he waves a bill in her face, and she knows she will go back to him because she does not want her children to go needy. She would be afraid to love again—look what she puts up with now, the ways he hurts her.

In short, poorer and darker girls have reason to be more insecure about the consequences of pregnancy—whether their parents will keep them at home, whether the father will assume the children, and whether they will be able to attend school or work. Another insecurity, shared by girls of all colors and classes, is that they cannot rely on the permanence of marriage, as discussed below.

'These Days': Marriage

Across color and class, the girls in the sample voiced enormous mistrust of people around them, particularly their partners. Women are mistrustful of their men and other women, and men are mistrustful of their women. Women are also wary of men’s control in relationships. These perceptions have ramifications for expectations regarding marriage and long-term relationships in general.

'Fitting for a Man' (Digno de Homem). The participants routinely reported that the foremost quality of ‘the ideal man’ is ‘that he doesn’t cheat.’ However, girls believe that there are very few faithful men, and that the likelihood of finding one is slim. Thus the
ideal man is naught but an illusive dream. When asked whether Brazilian men are faithful, participants responded consistently:

- "That doesn't exist. They are shameless."
- "No. These days? It's hard to find a faithful man."
- "Here in Brazil, I think it's hard to find."
- "Very rare."
- "Il! If you could find five, that would be a lot!"
- "Only at night when they are at home sleeping with you!"

According to the participants, men cheat for many reasons. Some of the girls—particularly the Not Poor participants—blame gender differentials in upbringing, saying that parents stimulate their sons so much that they effectively train them to cheat: "I think it's the way they are raised. The fathers are, they stimulate this type of thing, looking at pretty women. Girls are in the house, studying." "The father goes out, daughter on one side, son on the other. He shows the girls to his son, 'Look, my son, you've got to get that one there!' The daughter he hides in his overcoat."

A few of the participants say that men cheat when they are not satisfied at home—the wife is tired from working and does not cater to him, she does not give him sex, or she does not give him the kind of sex he wants (anal, oral, group).
However, most girls say that men cheat no matter what. They are ‘dogs.’ They are never satisfied with what they have. They can have a wonderful wife at home, working hard, and they are out there on the street, chasing skirts. They crave novelty, adventure. They are weak—they cannot fight peer pressure (especially from single friends), nor can they fight their biological urges. According to the girls and women, men argue that this behavior is fitting for a man, his right.

Envy and ‘Seeing is Believing’ (Só Acredito Vendo). The girls were also mistrustful of other girls. The participants repeatedly asserted that other people generally ‘don’t want what’s good for you;’ rather, each is out for his/herself. When somebody else has something you want, you become envious. Envy (inveja) is a complex term in Brazil, denoting a “painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage” [Michaelis 2000:1274]. Based on the participants’ definitions, envy should include an element of ‘dog in the manger.’ ‘If I can’t have it, neither can you.’

Here in Brazil it’s like this: If you like somebody and the person finds out, that person starts to hate you because here in Brazil almost nobody wishes anyone well. So she starts to hate you, you’re dating a guy, she does everything to ficar with him, so he fica with her, ends up screwing her, he breaks up with his girlfriend to be with her.

Envy is cited as a major reason for the failure of relationships. The most common discursive scenario is that a person sees a happy couple and becomes envious because he/she does not have such a relationship. Thus the person (usually a woman) attempts to break up the relationship, often by telling the man or woman (usually the woman) that the
other has been unfaithful. Consequently, women are extremely mistrustful of other
women who tell them that their husband is cheating. They may be jealous of the
relationship, or they may want the man for themselves, which leads them to lie. A few of
the participants pointed out how sometimes a person is passed over for the longest time,
but as soon as s/he starts to date somebody, suddenly everybody becomes interested in
them—people tend to covet what others perceive/demonstrate as valuable. Hence the
saying that 'when you date, you become more beautiful.'

In any case, the woman does not want to risk her relationship by accusing her husband of
an infidelity he may not have committed. Therefore, they do not generally trust
messengers; rather, they have to observe the infidelity firsthand. As they say, 'I only
believe it when I see it' (Só acredito vendo). They do not trust other women because they
may be against you—sleeping with your boyfriend to hurt you or show you that they are
better than you—or because they want him themselves:

Even if you have a namorado, there's always a girl who throws a sack over his
head, does everything to be with him, convinces his friends that he should go with
her...

Despite the popularity of the 'seeing is believing' creed, there were some differences.
First, older, Not Poor, lighter women—unlike the younger Not Poor—were more likely
to suggest that women do become suspicious whenever they hear an accusation of
infidelity. They may follow up on it, or they may use 'seeing is believing' as part of a
strategy to not acknowledge or deal with the consequences of their man's infidelity.
Second, the Poor lighter participants were, by far, the most vehement in blaming other women for breaking up relationships. They have very extensive discourses about loose women, how women are abusing their freedom these days, how they do not care about wrecking homes, and how they tempt weak men into sin. The Poor lighter women are also likely to blame the wife for her husband’s infidelity, if she were performing her duties properly (working outside and keeping house cheerfully, as well as providing an endlessly stimulating marital bed) he would not be tempted. If not, whose fault is it when he cheats? “Who didn’t take proper care of her husband?” This attitude reflects traditional discourses of women’s responsibility for maintaining marriages, regardless of their husbands’ behavior [Besse 1996].

Thus many women—but especially Poor lighter girls and women—are so mistrustful that it is difficult for them to have girlfriends—they may be ‘jaguar friends’ (amigas da onça, false friends):

It’s hard to trust your friends... They may be a saint in front of you and behind you they’re going for your husband, boyfriend, or say bad things about you. You always have to keep one foot back (pé atrás, be cautious).

However, if women’s mutual mistrust seems harsh, bear in mind that she went on to say:

With men, you have to keep both feet back!

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104 The Poor, lighter women in the sample were generally more conservative regarding gender roles than the Very Poor or Not Poor. This phenomenon has also been observed by Paine, who posits that the poorest women are more likely to share ideologies with wealthier women due to maid-employer relationships [1992]. In support of this theory, both lighter and darker Very Poor and darker Poor participants were likely to work as maids or nannies, whereas the lighter Poor were not.
Jealousy and Control (*Ciúme*). Men’s mistrust of partners (which has ramifications for their honor) usually shows in jealousy (*ciúme*). *Ciúme* is generally defined as jealousy or ambitious rivalry [Michaelis 2000:959]. However, the participants used it in a very specific context. Their definition of *ciúme* is fairly equated with men controlling their women. For example, participants defined *ciúme* as ‘when a man doesn’t want a woman to talk to other men.’ *Ciúme* may be interpreted as a type of caring—taking an interest, showing that they care. The idea is that ‘a little bit is nice.’ Without it, it seems like they do not care about you, are not paying attention. But too much is *ciúme doenil*—it becomes a sickness, an obsession. One participant had a cell phone (despite being Very Poor) specifically so that her husband can check up on her. (During the interview in her home, he called periodically from work to ask whether I was still there and what I was asking.)

Demonstration of affection aside, some of the participants see *ciúme* specifically as a means of controlling women. Ostensibly, it is about controlling her sexuality—as mentioned, girls and women who are *namorando*, living with a man, or married cannot wear short clothes outside the house. This is as much a marking of control as a practical means of avoiding conflict introduced by other potential suitors. Beyond this, *ciúme* is the excuse men give as to why women have to stay home, not work, not go to school. In this case, it is more clearly about maintaining the women’s dependence on the men; if they cannot study or work, they cannot become self-sufficient.


*Ciúme* reflects the traditional desire to control women; it also reflects discomfort with increased sexual freedom. Women do not cheat as much as men, but some do cheat—"90% don’t, 50% do." According to the participants, they usually cheat because the husband has cheated and they want to ‘pay him with the same coin.’ Or they cheat because he mistreats them and they want some affection. Or they cheat because he does not satisfy them sexually. But it is not ‘fitting for a woman;’ rather, many feel that the woman that cheats ‘loses her value.’

When couples find out about each other’s infidelity, they usually fight. Traditionally, a cuckolded man was required to kill his wife to save his honor. The media still plays it up in *novelas*. The discourse of violence against women was much stronger among the poorer/darker girls. On occasion, they mention men killing women; generally, they described beating women as a more common response. They agreed that men’s reaction is stronger. One explanation is that men ‘feel it more’ when they are betrayed. As Barker and Loewenstein point out, one element of machismo is the tendency for men to funnel emotions into anger and violence [1997:171]. Any form of violence was rarely reported by Poor lighter and Not Poor participants, although one Not Poor girl said that her father hit her mother when he found out she had been unfaithful; the mother divorced the father, and one daughter has never forgiven him.

When a woman finds out that her husband is cheating, she may ignore it—usually because she feels dependent on him, especially if she has children, but also if she ‘really
loves him." She may decide to give him another chance, if he seems genuinely contrite. But there is a very strong discourse that women should separate/divorce men when they cheat. This has consequences for expectations regarding marriage.

"Marriage isn't Forever." Marriage is still an ideal for the vast majority of the participants. For darker/poorer girls, a 'proper' marriage is a civil marriage, contrasted with living together. For the lighter/wealthier girls, a 'proper' marriage is not only civil but also in the church—the white wedding is 'every girl's dream.' However, the ideal of marriage is not uncontested. For many, the idea of living together (amigar or amastar) is more attractive, particularly to darker/poorer women.

As seen throughout this analysis, many of the participants fear or dislike the way men's control increases in tandem with the seriousness of the relationship. Some of the darker/poorer girls prefer to live together (amigar) for this reason. In fact, one 10 year old reported that her teacher had taught them that living together is better: "Most people amigar. ... I learned in school, people don't like to marry because the man bosses the woman around, beats her... So they don't like to marry."

A number of participants suggested that marriage can ruin a relationship. Darker/poorer women were more likely to point out how a couple can live together for years, but as soon as the woman asks to get married, he leaves, or after they get married they start to fight and he leaves. As one woman, living with a man, explained: "Let's suppose, I've
been with him for four, five years. I think, if I tried to marry him on paper, I think we
would separate, we wouldn’t get along any more. I think so, so it’s better to stay like this,
the way I am.”

For women across colors and classes, a major problem with marriage is that even if the
woman is working outside the home, she is still responsible for taking care of the children
and running the house. Thus she does not have enough energy left over to satisfy her
husband, who becomes dissatisfied, has an affair and/or leaves her.

In any case, marriage, and relationships in general, are considered very delicate and
unreliable. There is a high expectation that they will fight, he will cheat and/or leave her,
or he will cheat and she will have to divorce him to preserve her self-respect and social
identity. As Maria Eduarda (23, Poor lighter) explained, “I think these days people go
into marriage knowing some stuff is going to go down.” Given the high probability of
divorce, poorer/darker women often prefer living together rather than marriage: divorce is
expensive. [Do people prefer to marry or live together?] “More live together, because
marriage isn’t for me, no way. Oh, no. You break up, each goes his own way, you don’t
have to go to court, doing paperwork, oh no.” Although most of the younger girls say
they want to marry, the majority of poor participants do not. The discrepancy between
ideals and reality is somewhat smoothed over by the expression ‘living together in faith is
marriage’ (amigado com fé, casado é).
Thus there are some girls (mostly darker/poorer) who would prefer to remain single or live together when they are older, and there are young women who would prefer to get away from partners and be single. There are also lighter/wealthier girls who say they would accept living together if that were what he preferred. However, the vast majority, across color and class, still hope to get ‘properly’ married and have two children (a boy and a girl). How does this life goal articulate with the high expectation of divorce?

The solution lies in careful adherence to a basic rule: delay marriage so you can get set up before you get married. The ideal life trajectory is to finish school, get a good job, buy a house, and set it up before becoming seriously involved and having children. That way, when the marriage is over—if he leaves her or she needs to leave him—she will have financial security and independence.

I also plan to graduate first, if I get a job after. Because the way the world is these days, not all men stay with a woman forever. They leave these women and children and take off. So how are you going to end up if you’re not working?

If the men (or the children) happen too early, the plan will be ruined. “If you get married, you end up fighting, you don’t graduate.” Some will not even namorar until they graduate: “Namorar and studying doesn’t work.” [When would you like to get married?]

When I’m already working, have my own house. You’re namorando, suddenly you’re pregnant, then you won’t have anywhere to put the child, you won’t have anywhere to live. So I think, I think about marrying after I have my own house, my studies are all competed, I’ve graduated, all that. After that, then yes, I’ll think about it.
Renata and Luana, the two young women whose children had been assumed by the fathers (who are brothers), lamented having failed to follow the ideal trajectory. Renata, in particular, was struggling against her husband and childcare problems to get back into school; the idea was to prepare for a better job before the relationship ended and she was on her own. "We’ve got to study and get out of here, because we won’t have husbands for the rest of our lives... Husbands are not permanent."

A House of My Own. This section has discussed the varied and conflicting messages that girls receive regarding dating and sexuality, the tensions involved in gender identities and relationships, the roles of class and color in differential expectations and experiences of social support, and a general mistrust of the traditional female reliance on marriage. In this atmosphere of insecurity, the girls respond with a strategy: to secure a house of their own. Not only do they not rely on men and marriage, but they plan to actually avoid serious relationships and children until they have established their financial independence and security.

To what extent are girls able to put their careers ahead of marriage and motherhood? Data from the Epidemiology Center in Juiz de Fora [2000] demonstrates clear patterns according to class. The center collects data on the level of schooling of pregnant girls and women, disaggregated by neighborhood, a proxy for class. It is important to take into account that these pregnancies are of women of all ages, and that the data is fairly
incomplete (many pregnancies have an unknown educational level of the mother).

According to this data, between 1996 and 1998, the neighborhoods showed the following:

Table 9: Education Levels of Pregnant Girls/Women by Neighborhood, 1996-99

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>&lt; Elementary</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Post-Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bom Pastor</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>72 (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furtado de Menezes</td>
<td>168 (75%)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vila Olavo Costa</td>
<td>282 (89%)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Not Poor girls and women of Bom Pastor generally had post-secondary education (46%) or at least secondary education (32%) for a combined total of 78%. In contrast, among the Poor mothers of Furtado de Menezes, the majority had not even completed elementary school. The trend was even stronger for the Very Poor of Vila Olavo Costa, where 89% of mothers had not completed elementary school, only 7% had completed elementary school, and only 3% had a secondary education.

The 2000 data are presented in a different format, and distinguish between stages of elementary school. Third grade is a milestone toward literacy, and the percentage of girls and women who did not achieve it before motherhood is higher in Olavo Costa (16%) than in Furtado (5%).

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105 The number of mothers with less than an elementary education in Bom Pastor is probably overstated, as the statistic for one year is inordinately high and probably erroneous.
Table 10: Education Levels of Pregnant Girls/Women by Neighborhood, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&lt; 3 years</th>
<th>4-7 years</th>
<th>8-11 years</th>
<th>&gt;12 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bom Pastor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furtado de Menezes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vila Olavo Costa</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus local quantitative information shows that class is a major factor in girls’ ability to complete their education before becoming mothers. The factors behind these statistics, the role of color, interruptions to the ideal life trajectory, and the ability to recover from divergences are discussed in the following section.
EDUCATION AND CAREER TRAJECTORIES

As discussed above, the contemporary ideal life trajectory described by the participants is to finish school, get a good job, buy and set up a house, and then marry and have two children. Among the young teens, regardless of class or color, there is a strong sense of ambition, as the girls plan to become professionals (doctors, lawyers, veterinarians, pediatricians, psychologists, dentists, etc.). However, looking at the mid-teens, late teens, and early adults, it becomes clear that the vast majority do not succeed in following this trajectory. What goes wrong? Who falls off the career train, when, and why?

Who Drops Out, When, and Why?

According to the ideal trajectory, almost all of the girls in the sample would be in the education phase, whether primary school, high school, advanced training, or university. The Brazilian system involves a complex web of public schools (federal, state, and city) as well as private schools. Primary school consists of grades 1-8; ideally, students complete the 8th grade at 15 years of age. Secondary school consists of grades 1-3; with no lost time, students graduate at 18 years. Public schools generally last a few hours per day, and may be available in morning, afternoon, or evening shifts. On rare occasion, public schools offer condensed courses so that students who are behind may progress more rapidly. According to a UNICEF report, evaluated in relation to per capita income, Brazil has the worst rates of nonattendance and absenteeism in the world, where one would expect 80% completion of primary school, only 39% finish [1994].
In this sample, almost all of the Very Poor and Poor were attending or had attended public schools, whereas the Not Poor attended private schools. Those who can afford to—and many who must struggle to do so—send their children to private schools, for both social and educational reasons. Public schools are simply not competent to prepare students to compete for entrance to universities. Brazil has a large federal university system; these universities are not only the best in the country, but also free. Thus even those who could afford to attend a private university would prefer the public. The enormous competition at federal universities, particularly in certain programs, requires excellent preparation through private schooling and/or special supplemental courses through private institutions. The net effect of the school system is to advertise free education at all levels while effectively blocking the socioeconomic ascension of the lower classes.

Indeed, it was the Not Poor girls in the sample who made it to university. All of the Not Poor girls attended private school; they were generally well integrated, enjoying an active social life with their schoolmates at school and through outside activities. None had dropped out or were even a year behind. Around 16 or 17, they tended to focus on a specific field of interest. They graduated on time, and took private preparatory courses for college entrance exams. If they could not gain a spot in their field at the federal university, they either switched their major to a less competitive field or paid for a private university. Although none of the Not Poor girls in the sample reported a pregnancy, they
reported that for peers, pregnancy/motherhood was a challenge and a major emotional experience, but generally a minor disruption to their studies. They lost little time during pregnancy and returned promptly. They lived with their parents, who supported them as they continued on their educational and career trajectory. In short, even with obstacles and modifications, the Not Poor girls were still pursuing their professional dreams.

The structure of the public/private school system would explain why poorer students do not make it from secondary school to university. However, the problems start earlier, with finishing primary and secondary. Among the Very Poor, the question is whether they manage to finish primary school (grades 1-8). In this sample, only two of the participants old enough to have completed primary school had done so; both were lighter. In contrast, among the Poor, all but one lighter and one darker participant had finished primary school by age 16. Thus the class difference in education between the neighborhoods is marked. Among the Poor, the question is whether they manage to finish high school (three years). Among the Poor participants old enough to have graduated, half of the lighter participants, compared to one fifth of the darker participants, had done so. In other words, there are both class and color effects for educational achievement.

One of them (a very fair blonde) had even gone on to law school (two years), banked by a wealthy boyfriend. When she broke up with him, her educational career ended, and she returned to the slum.
Table 11: Education by Color and Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Poor: Primary School</th>
<th>Poor: Secondary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lighter</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darker</td>
<td>0-10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 11 shows, the Poor lighter girls make it the furthest in school. In the best case scenario, they graduate from college, without becoming pregnant, and try to gain a space at the federal university. Here they tend to hit an impasse. They cannot easily afford the private courses they would need to take the exam and gain a space at the federal university, and private universities are financially out of the question. Since they are lighter, some are able to secure employment in the formal sector. For example, they worked as receptionists, sales attendants, barmaids, and dental assistants. These jobs involve customer service and require ‘good appearance.’ They are more likely to provide formal proof of employment (job cards) and pay better than domestic work. However, without family support, the pay may still be insufficient for private preparatory courses. Even if they can manage economically, they may not have enough time or energy to study while working full time. They tended to be very vocal about their situation:

- Cheila (18, Poor lighter) is a temporary bar worker at a private club. She works Sundays and goes to high school at night, but she will need a better job to pay for a course to get through the entrance exam. Her parents cannot even pay for the prep course (83 reais/month\(^{108}\)), much less a private university (680 reais/month).
  It would only work if I managed to reconcile working with studying... I would have to work full time, 8-5, and then study 6-10 at night. A time comes when you can’t manage to do one or the other, tired of both. The course is

...\(^{107}\) One participant said she left school in 8\(^{th}\) grade; if she actually finished 8\(^{th}\) grade, she would be the only participant in this category to do so.

...\(^{108}\) While I was in the field, the exchange rate was one real = 50 cents. However, in practical spending value, one real went about as far as one dollar.
tiring, so the next day you are tired at work. You work all day, and you don’t have a head for studying at night. You end up not doing either one properly. So then you have to choose, work or study. You end up quitting school.

- Jessica (20, Poor lighter) graduated secondary school and is holding onto her dream of going to university and becoming a teacher. She is in a competition to get a better job to pay for the prep course. Her job at the private club does not pay enough, and the hours conflict with studying.

  We work mostly on weekends. I want to find a job during the week so I could study on the weekend. Working here, there’s no way I’ll pass the (entrance exam). I won’t have time to study. And the exam is really hard. But I want to do Literature, be a teacher.

- Maria Eduarda (23, Poor lighter) has lived in many cities. She moved to Juiz to make money and put herself through university (psychology). She has also tried to get a visa to the US to work and save enough to open a clothing shop, but was denied. After over two years here, she has not managed to save anything or study. She has lost her apartment—her roommate could not pay the rent. She will have to move in with her aunt for a month, then go back to her family in a small town where she has no freedom, to take over her sister’s job while she is on maternity leave. She feels terrible, having failed in Juiz. This is compounded by her father’s attitude; he always said she could not make it on her own.

- Carolina (20, Poor lighter) has paid for her prep course working as a dental assistant. She is very tired and rushed. She gets home around midnight, then bathes and eats. She sleeps all day Saturday. She passed the exam in psychology at a private university, and will start soon. She makes 234 reais/month, school costs 324, so her father will make up the difference. So she is looking at five years of this pace, working days and studying nights.

These young women have carefully played by the rules and still lose out; their frustration is very clear. They will not give up their dreams, but they become desperate as they try and try and get nowhere. Other lighter girls who do not make it this far in school also feel stuck. A few of them dropped out of school in order to work, which proved risky:

- Luana (24, Very Poor lighter) left school at 14 years (5th grade) to work. She has worked in a factory, as a nanny, and as a maid. Now she has a baby and cannot work.
• Jessica (17, Poor lighter) left school at 15 years (1st year of secondary school) to work as a nanny. The job lasted a year. Now she cannot find work and there is no space for her at the school.

The majority of lighter girls who drop out of high school do so in their later teens due to pregnancy. Pregnancy forces them out, and motherhood keeps them out. Most of the girls and young women in this situation claimed they liked school and intended to return. However, they found it extremely difficult due to time, labor, financial, and emotional constraints. The local daycare centers were full, too expensive, or unacceptable, which meant they could not study (or work). Although very few parents put their pregnant single daughters on the street, there was some variability in residence after becoming a mother. As mentioned earlier, particularly among the Very Poor, getting married or living with a partner (even without children) also precluded any type of study, as partners would be ‘jealous’ of them—the partners did not like them out in the world and worried that education would empower the girls/women to leave them.

The darker girls (both Very Poor and Poor) also tended to become pregnant in their late teens. However, they were more likely to drop out of school earlier—in their mid-teens—before becoming pregnant. Two of the darker participants reported leaving school in order to work. Like their lighter counterparts, they found the benefits short lived:

• Joise (16, Very Poor darker) left school at 13 years (4th grade) to work as a maid. The job lasted three months. She found another maid job that lasted nine months. Now she cannot find any work at all.

• Cristiane (22, Very Poor darker) left school at 18 years (5th grade) because she was working and it was too tiring to do both. Then she had a baby and had to stop
working. Now she has a child and cannot study or work.

The participants in general reported that jobs are increasingly scarce. Factory work is preferable to domestic, but many factories have shut down, moved to another city, or cut down on the number of employees. The level of education required for government jobs, even for manual labor (for example, street sweeping), have been raised. Also, they emphasized that domestic jobs are increasingly scarce, and that maids are no longer allowed to bring their children to work with them. Domestic work is informal, unreliable, and generally pays less than minimum wage. Nevertheless, it is the primary source of employment for darker participants, who are generally unable to break into the formal sector due to educational level and 'good appearance.' Thus the lack of domestic work hits the darker population particularly hard, and many of the participants were searching for—and not finding—work as maids. There are exceptions:

- Estefani (22, Very Poor darker), pregnant at 15, became her husband's ward. She now desperately wishes she could escape, return to school in order to get a job as "anything but a maid."

The majority of darker girls who dropped out of school were not seeking employment. Those who dropped out often said they hated school. Sometimes they said they did not like to study. Many who cited a specific dislike hated a particular teacher; there seemed to be a highly personal factor about teacher treatment. Others were vague as to why; in another section of the interview, some also indicated that students frequently used racial slurs/nicknames at school. A number of studies have shown how the white ideal
permeates Brazilian school systems, with a negative impact on darker students. The implicit/explicit racism in schools reported in other studies may be a factor in the darker participants' negative experiences.

The difficulties faced by poorer, darker girls takes its toll. In their mid-teens, some are still struggling to pursue the ideal trajectory:

- Jennifer (15, Very Poor darker) is just holding on. She works part-time as a maid, the only one working in her family (mother and seven younger siblings), and goes to school. She was able to get this job because all of the other maids had left—the workload was fierce and the pay very low. She was hoping to get into a space in a rare public condensed courses, but there is high demand and her application was delayed (her mother charged her five reais to go register her). Despite exhaustion, being behind in school, her dislike of school, an unsupportive mother and an absent father, she was still in school. She was still holding onto her dream of becoming a lawyer, and rejecting other opportunities (such as living with a relatively well-off local drug dealer). But she was tired, depressed, and nearing the end of her rope.

By 16 or 17, many darker girls had already lost hope, given up on their dreams:

- Joise (16, Very Poor darker):
  I don't even have a dream. I'm like a bird in a cage... My 'fun' is walking back and forth without rest, picking trash... Working. Searching the streets. You never get to rest. You go to one place, it's no good; you go to another, it's worse.

**Ambition, Willpower, and Hope**

The young adolescent girls in this study expressed uniformly high career aspirations. However, as the girls progressed through adolescence, the vast majority diverged from the ideal trajectory. The timing and causes for their departure are patterned by both class and color, and the net effect is that of social reproduction. The professional ideals are

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fairly reasonable for the Not Poor girls, who stated that the major impediment they faced was competition for spaces at the university in their chosen field. The goals were less reasonable for the Poor lighter girls, who discussed obstacles such as time and money, but also emphasized personal effort and often managed to work toward their dreams into late adolescence and beyond.

Most striking is the level of ambition among the Very Poor and darker girls. Where do these dreams come from? I asked whether they had any role models, or knew of anyone who had achieved similar career goals; the consistent answer was “No.” Nor did they mention messages from the media, peers, parents, teachers, or other sources. Their ideals contrasted starkly with the poverty and low levels of education of their environment.

Furthermore, the poorer and darker girls did not mention any external barriers to their ambitions whatsoever. They consistently insisted that all they needed was willpower (força de vontade). “You just have to want it.” When I asked Caroline (Very Poor darker, 15, one year behind in school) whether it would be difficult to achieve her goal of becoming a lawyer, she responded, “No. I have willpower, I will get there, God willing.” In other words, the girls expressed no recognition of the socioeconomic obstacles

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110 A possible source, cited in the literature but not by my participants, would be the model of the ‘mulatto escape hatch’ [Degler 1971], whereby enterprising mulatos are able to achieve socioeconomic ascension. Dzidzenyo points out that there are pin-ups—people of color who have made it, “the implication being of course that the rest could follow suit if they would only try harder. Ignored here is the fact that had these few black Brazilians not been exceptionally gifted or fortunate, they would not have attained success” [1971:6].
(gender, class, and race) that affected their ability to pursue the ideal life trajectory and achieve their goals. Their success or failure was attributed solely to their individual merit; their discourses express the idea of meritocratic individual achievement [Segato 1998].

Although I was unable to locate the source of the girls' aspirations, the fact that they could cling to them despite a lack of supportive evidence in their environments is compatible with theories of adolescent development, which describe how young teens' beliefs are not necessarily swayed by contradictory empirical evidence. As Keating describes the stage, young adolescents "tend to be dominated by their naïve theories. Evidence that goes against their belief is either ignored or transformed" [1990:67].

Regarding the mismatch of social location and aspirations, it is also important to keep in mind that adolescents are in the process of identifying themselves in social context—who they are and what role they will play in society. They are just learning to see themselves abstractly, and there is a mixing of perceived reality and desires in their tentative constructions of identity. They receive varied forms of feedback from friends, peers, and parents that are difficult to integrate. In short, adolescent conceptions of self tend to be rife with contradictions. In mid-adolescence they may begin to detect inconsistencies, which may cause confusion and distress. Only in late adolescence are most adolescents able to begin integrating them [Harter 1990].
Thus the lack of evidence of people in their social location achieving goals does not interfere with their theory that they will succeed. The ability to distinguish and integrate theory and evidence develops through adolescence—new evidence starts to alter their theories—but is still tenuous. In any case, the girls appeared to hold fast to their dreams until they were fairly beaten out of them by experience.

Developmental stages of adolescence allow them to construct ideal or imagined selves, hypothetical selves that are often oriented toward the future—both positive and negative images. As Harter states, “possible selves represent both the hoped-for as well as the dreaded self and function as incentives clarifying which selves are to be approached and which avoided” [1990:361]. Although Harter focuses primarily on personal attributes, the argument may be extended to the girls’ visions of themselves in the future as self-sufficient professionals (positive goal) or unemployed/domestics (fear to be averted). As Nurmi et al. point out, adolescent future orientations are guided not only by their dreams but also by their fears, and these fears may lead to certain coping strategies [1994].

Thus the girls’ aspirations may be interpreted within a developmental framework as an experiment in identity oriented against their fears and toward their ideals. The discourse of willpower could be interpreted as part of an attempt, in mid-adolescence, to rationalize contradictions between these ideals and the empirical evidence provided in their surroundings. That is, the girls appropriate willpower as an escape hatch, an asset that will allow them to avoid the failures evident in their local environments. In sum, the
girls' professional career goals may be seen as another element of adolescent discourses of hope; the element of willpower functions to allow the girls to dream a bit longer.
CHAPTER SUMMARY: SOCIAL LOCATION AND LIFE TRAJECTORIES

In summary, through a discourse of 'these days' the participants expressed an atmosphere of social chaos and uncertainty. Patterns of dating and sexual norms have shifted and conflict with traditional mores (particularly sexual double standards), such that girls receive contradictory messages regarding sexual behavior and relationships. The Not Poor girls have an advantage in negotiating the situation as they tend to receive empowering discourses of sexual ownership from their mothers. Teen pregnancy also highlights differential social support. Not Poor girls are less likely to become pregnant, but if they do, they assume the father will take on a degree of responsibility, and feel sure they will remain with their parents, who will help with childcare and support them in continuing on the desired educational and career trajectory. For darker and poorer girls, social relations and supports are less reliable. They cannot count on remaining home or paternal support, and motherhood almost always signals the end of their education.

Participants of all colors and classes shared low expectations regarding partners' behavior and the durability of long-term relationships. The girls expected their partners to cheat on them, to leave them, or to leave their partners. They envisioned a future in which they would be left on their own, most likely with children to support. Their coping strategy is to achieve financial independence. Thus their partner/marriage expectations—or rather lack thereof—are at the heart of their career goals. The literature describes a traditional ideal life trajectory for Brazilian women centered on marriage and homemaking (not
work outside the home), to which women had differential access [Besse 1996; Goldani 1999; Green and Rao 1995]. These days, at least among these participants, there is a new cultural story of the ideal life trajectory that crosses class and color. Across the board, girls want to finish their education, get a good job, buy a house, and set it up. Only after these prerequisites are established do girls intend to get seriously involved with a man and have (two) children. Dating, marriage, and children at the wrong time may disturb the trajectory and interfere with financial independence.

However, girls' ability to pursue this ideal trajectory varies significantly; the net effect is the reproduction of class and color inequality. There were distinct reasons why poorer and darker girls made less progress toward educational and career goals. Although the Not Poor girls did not all become doctors and lawyers, they generally had the financial resources and social support to pursue a professional degree. Some Poor lighter girls were able to complete high school, but many were then unable to proceed because they could not afford private college preparatory courses, or could not manage full-time employment and studies. Other Poor lighter girls became pregnant in late adolescence and had to leave school due to a lack of childcare. Darker girls on the whole tended to leave school earlier, in mid-adolescence, due to negative experiences, most likely related to racism, and were constrained in their desire and ability to return to school.

In short, expectations of partners and marriage provide a jumping-point for career aspirations and an ideal life trajectory that is more compatible with the Not Poor girls'
social location. The fact that poorer and darker girls cling to these same ideals, despite an
utter lack of evidence as to their viability in their local environments, may be interpreted
as a specifically adolescent discourse of hope. As these girls progress through adolescent
stages of development, they construct identities oriented away from fears (poverty) and
toward ideals (financial independence). In mid-adolescence, as the contradictions
between these dreams and their social location come into conflict, the tension is resolved
through discourses of willpower, appropriated as a personal asset that will preserve their
ideal trajectories. Gradually, the empirical evidence of lived experience dominates, and
the dream fades.
CONCLUSION

This dissertation investigates the roles of color, class, and gender discourses in the lives of adolescent girls and young women in Brazil. Specifically, it examines girls' multiple perspectives, embedded in different social locations, as well as the ways in which girls interpret and deploy particular elements of color, class, and gender discourses in their projects of self-making. The results of the study provide insight into the diverse ways in which identity discourses may be experienced and a range of perspectives to contribute to qualitative analyses of color identity and relations in contemporary Brazil.

The impetus for this research came from literature on the historical construction of differential gender roles according to color, with particular attention to the mulata (female of both African and European heritage). As discussed in Chapter I, Writing Race, the literature describes a tripartite system, consisting of: the white woman, model of virtue and beauty, appropriate for marriage and procreation, and deserving sexual protection and surveillance; the black woman, undesirable, and appropriate only for manual or domestic labor; and the mulata, hypersexual, attractive, and appropriate for illicit relations but not marriage. These color/gender stereotypes originated under slavery and survived after abolition, supported by laws prohibiting men from marrying women of lower class or darker color, Church policies that expressed lower expectations of marriage or premarital virginity for women of color, and other social practices that
contributed to the differential sexual roles and social functions of the three categories of women.

The images of the color/gender system were crystallized in the works of Gilberto Freyre, who has provided the cornerstone of Brazilian theories of national identity since the 1930s. Freyre was concerned to overthrow theories of scientific racism; he accomplishes this through asserting that miscegenation has led to a superior culture and race, national unity, and racial harmony (generally referred to as 'racial democracy'). The *mulata* is central to his project; she is not only the product but also the vehicle for racial and cultural mixing. Thus her sexual availability is instrumental to the construction and value of the nation.

Other members of the literati developed more elaborate images of the *mulata*. In rebelling against European 'decadence,' many drew upon the underclasses—the poor, indigenous peoples, and blacks—as fresh symbols of the nation, distinctly Brazilian. In elaborating on these populations, they effectively created and perpetuated stereotypes. Among them was the *mulata*, who was portrayed as animalistic, nonintellectual, dependent on sex/seduction, sexually available, less marriageable, and appropriate for illicit relations. This sexy *mulata* is not merely an instrument; rather, she is imbued with an inherent hypersexuality, and depicted as a willing participant in her own exploitation.
Writers of extremely varied political persuasions have used color/gender constructions as part of their toolkits in describing their visions of national identity and social order. The *mulata*, in particular, has been described as a “wood for all works” [Fonseca 2000:213], an image easily adapted to fit multiple projects. For decades, the formal discourses of 20th century literature were dominated by the concept of racial democracy. However, with the end of the military dictatorship and gradual transition to democracy, writers have increasingly problematized this vision of race and the nation. Indeed, in the late 20th century, the literature on race in Brazil has turned toward deconstructing the suppressive nature of 'racial democracy' discourses and demonstrating systematic racism in such areas as education, employment, and residence patterns. These new discourses now compete with traditional stances in contemporary Brazil.

The question is, how do these formal discourses, including color/gender images and the nature of race relations, function in everyday life in contemporary Brazil? The purpose of this dissertation has been to investigate multiple perspectives regarding images and discourses of identity and social relations. A central theme involves color and color/gender constructions, particularly the *mulata*, and how they are interpreted and deployed by adolescent girls and young women speaking from diverse social locations. The analysis also focuses on how girls invoke various discourses of color as part of their projects of identity construction, and how these selective discourses relate to their own color and class. Finally, the study investigates the significance of color and class in girls’
life trajectories, including their aspirations, expectations, and experiences regarding relationships (dating, marriage, sexuality), education, and employment.

Chapter III, Who's Who, Says Who: Color Terms and Classification, questions the basic color units of analysis—how the *mulata* and other color categories are defined, and by whom. Analysis of the girls' responses demonstrates that underlying highly variable color terms are five basic categories, which I have labeled White, Almost White, *Morena*, Mixed/Darker, and Darkest. The White and Almost White categories are closely related, and collapse into what I term 'lighter.' Using the data of this sample, the rather vague category of *morena* may be emptied. The Darker and Darkest categories may also be combined (into what I term 'darker'); however, the manner in which they collapse differs according to the color of the participant. For lighter participants, Darker and Darkest (most commonly referring to *mulatas* and *negras*) are all *negras*; *mulata* is merely a polite term. For darker participants, *mulatas* and *negras* are combined as *mulatas* because the term *negra* (as well as *preta*) is unacceptable. This analysis provides a more complex understanding of a binary system of color, divided along the lines of 'good appearance' (*boa aparência*) often employed in contemporary research. Thus this chapter explains the lighter/darker categories used in disaggregating the data. It also introduces a dichotomy of color perspectives based on this binary system that find parallels in the following chapters.
Chapter IV, Reading Race, Manners, and Taste, reveals significant differences between lighter and darker girls' discourses regarding racism and the significance of color in partner preferences. The darker participants provided a very limited discussion of racism, centered on name calling, which supports the theory that racism is a taboo subject among darker populations in Brazil, a 'language of losers' avoided by the girls. The girls tended to emphasize discourses of nonracism, which is interpreted not as a lack of awareness but rather a discourse of dignity and self-respect. Darker participants also attributed the importance of color in partner preferences to issues of individual taste, personal preference. They recognized a tendency for people to prefer lighter partners, but only because they are more likely to possess particular traits considered aesthetically pleasing (e.g., straight hair, light eyes). Thus color is fragmented and veiled in discourses of beauty. This process, as well as the emphasis on personal preference rather than systematic racism, may be interpreted as discourses that allow space for self-valorization by avoiding such explicitly negative equations as 'I am dark and dark is ugly.'

The lighter girls also invoked discourses of color that contributed to a positive self-identity, but by rather different means. These participants reproduced highly sophisticated discourses of systematic racism in Brazil, observed in the media and everyday life. They also asserted that color is considered important in choosing a partner, and that certain colors are appropriate for certain relationships. For example, lighter people may be friends with darker people, or a lighter man may have casual sex with a darker woman, but generally would not marry a darker person. The lighter girls' moral identities as
modern, urban, educated individuals appear to be caught up in recognition and mastery of nonracist discourses that are highly articulated in their environments.

As discussed in Chapter V, Hot Mulatas (and Sexy Blondes), the rift between lighter and darker girls' perspectives is present in more elaborate meanings of the mulata as well. According to the study participants, the image of the sexy mulata does have cultural salience in contemporary Brazil. She is described through markers of heat, sensuality, and beauty in ways that distinguish her from both brancas and negras. She has the strength, resilience, and sexual heat of negras, but not their tempers—rather, she is simpática (congenial). Unlike negras, she has a certain beauty, sexuality, and manner that please at least some men. However, according to lighter participants, she is not a paradigm of beauty, which is embodied by brancas, or appropriate for serious relationships. Whereas darker participants described brancas as cold, some lighter participants challenged the mulata's superiority in sexual heat and sensual samba ability. This challenge may be seen as part of a general shift in sexual mores, which erodes the traditional mulata image and social role. The mulata is also losing cultural space to the new sexy blonde, a stereotype involving lower-class bottle blondes who are willing to perform risqué sexual practices for a price.

The contrast in lighter/darker perspectives is particularly significant when considering the role of the mulata image in daily life. For lighter/wealthier participants, the mulata is a symbol of national identity associated primarily with carnaval and tourism. She is a
product for consumption, targeted increasingly at foreigners while Brazilians opt for blondes. For lighter girls in general, the *mulata* is remote, except as a superficial, polite term. For darker/poorer girls, on the other hand, the *mulata* is a model of beauty and desirability. Whereas the color/beauty line of ‘good appearance’ is out of reach, achieving *mulata* status represents a tangible goal through beauty work, especially hair straightening. Thus ‘mulaticity’ plays a vital role in daily life and identity construction of darker girls. The *mulata* is appropriated as an intimate and positive model of identity in everyday life, an image of social and self-worth.

Chapter VI. These Days: Life Trajectories, addresses issues not explicitly related to color; the responses are then disaggregated according to participants’ color and class. The topics center on girls’ aspirations, expectations, and experiences regarding relationships (dating, marriage, sexuality), education, and employment. The girls describe a sense of deteriorating social and sexual mores, as well as conflicting messages regarding appropriate behavior. The Not Poor girls appear to have an advantage in that they receive empowering discourses of sexual ownership from their mothers. Teen pregnancy also highlights differential social support. Not Poor girls are less likely to become pregnant but if they do, they can rely on paternal and parental support in caring for the child and continuing their educational and career trajectories. For darker and poorer girls, social relations and supports are less reliable; they cannot count on parental or paternal support, and motherhood almost always signals the end of their education.
Participants of all colors and classes mistrust the permanence of marriage; they expect partners to cheat and/or leave them, or to leave their partners. They expect to end up on their own, with children to support. In response, they are centered on achieving financial independence. Across color and class, the participants describe a new ideal life trajectory: finish school, get a good job, buy a house, and set it up before becoming seriously involved with a man and having (two) children. Relationships or children at the wrong time may disturb the trajectory and interfere with financial independence.

However, girls' ability to pursue this ideal trajectory varies significantly; the net effect is the reproduction of class and color inequality. The Not Poor girls generally had the financial resources and social support to pursue professional degrees. Some Poor lighter girls completed public school but could not afford private college prep courses, or could not juggle work and studies. Others became pregnant in late adolescence and had to leave school due to a lack of childcare. Darker girls tended to leave school in mid-adolescence due to negative experiences (e.g., racism), and had difficulty returning. In short, the ideal life trajectory is more compatible with the Not Poor girls' social locations. The fact that poorer and darker girls cling to this ideal in an unsupportive environment, bolstered by an ideology of individual willpower, may be interpreted as a specifically adolescent discourse of hope, which gradually crumbles.
In summary, this research reveals how perspectives and experiences regarding color may be patterned by specific social locations. The color and class of the adolescent girls who participated in the study proved to be a significant factor in the perceptions and discourses they contributed. These differential perspectives are evident in their perceptions of color, discourses of racism, and interpretation of color/gender images such as the *mulata*. Furthermore, the girls' aspirations, expectations, and experiences of the life trajectory across adolescence are patterned by color and class.

Across each domain, the girls select elements from a range of color, class, and gender discourses that serve as resources in negotiating their self- and social identities. Their choices may at first seem ironic—for example, the way that darker, poorer girls emphasize nonracism and individualism, and the fact that lighter, wealthier girls emphasize systematic racism. However, a holistic approach to their ideological systems reveals that they interpret and deploy these discursive elements in such a way as to contribute to the construction of a positive self-identity within their particular social location. In each case, their selections reflect an attempt to create discourses of dignity, self-worth, personal integrity, and hope. Thus this ethnographic research demonstrates the multiple ways in which discourses of identity may be experienced, interpreted, and deployed in daily life and self-making. Investigating the ways in which color discourses are invoked by these adolescent girls in particular social locations contributes to a more complex, heterogeneous understanding of color identities and relations in contemporary Brazil.
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW WITH GIRLS

PART ONE: SCHOOL, FRIENDS, FUTURE GOALS, RELATIONSHIPS

Age

Favorite girl’s name (for pseudonym)

Who do you live with?

Do you go to school?

What year are you in? OR

When did you stop? Why? Can you read or write any?

Do/did you go to a private or public school?

Do/did you like school? What did you think of the teachers?

The subjects?

Do you make friends more in school, on your street, in your neighborhood?

What do you do for fun?

Do you have chores at home? What about your brothers/sisters?

Have you ever earned money? How?

What is your dream in life?

Would you like to stay home/work outside? What kind of work?

Is it hard to accomplish? What do you need?

Do you know anybody who has managed to become a ___?

Is it harder for women or men to get a good job? Why?
Would you like to have children? (how many, when)

Would you like to live together/get married? When? Which is better? Why?

What do most people do these days? Why?

Does the relationship change after marriage? How?

What would the man of your dreams be like?

Are men, in general, faithful? Why/not? What do they look for outside?

Are women, in general, faithful? Why/not? What do they look for outside?

What can happen if the woman finds out? If the man finds out?

What’s the difference between ficar and namorar?¹

What’s good/bad about ficar? What’s good/bad about namorar?

At what age (in general) do girls start to ficar? To namorar?

Do girls usually ficar/namorar boys the same age/older?

Do boys go after girls, or girls after boys?

If a girl likes a boy, how can she get his attention?

Simpatia²

Short clothes (do boys like them? Is it fashion? Can it be looked down upon?)

Does sex go more with ficar, namorar, or doesn’t it have to do with that?

Once dating, does it take long?

Do boys pressure girls for sex?

¹ Ficar is to make out with somebody with no commitment. Namorar is steady dating.
In general, at what age do girls start to have sex?

At what age does desire begin in girls?

Do parents try to hold back their daughters? How?

Is it the same for sons and daughters?

At the big moment, do guys think about pregnancy, illnesses?

At the big moment, do girls think about pregnancy, illnesses?

Do people do anything to avoid them? What can you do?

Do people use the pill or condoms more?

Do guys mind using a condom? If the girl asks, will he use one? Do girls mind buying condoms? Do guys mind if a girl has one?

If the girl gets pregnant, what can happen?

Can she try to get rid of it? How?

Do parents throw her out?

Does she stay in school?

Does the father usually assume responsibility/recognize the child?

Does it depend on whether they were *ficando* or *namorando*?

Where do you learn about sex? (parents, school, the street, church, presentations, television?)

In school, is it well done or just a little? Are the boys and girls together or separate? What would you prefer?

Has your mother talked to you about sex? About relationships with boys?

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2 *Simpatia* is a type of folk magic.
TRANSITION

Beauty Contest (participants select models from a montage)

Sexy Contest (participants select models from a montage)

Skin Colors (participants assign color terms to models in a montage, and explain the meanings of the terms)

Self-Classification (participant assigns herself a color term)

PART TWO: COLOR, RACISM, AND RELATIONS

What’s the difference between preta, negra, mulata, morena, branca?

What does pardas mean?

Are there words that are ugly?

Can you use them affectionately?

Are women of different colors known to be different ways?

What do people say about the branca/morena/mulata/negra?

What is a mulata? A color/way of being?

Do people say that women with darker skin have more sexual appetite?

What does hot mean? Is it good/bad to be hot?

Do men have preferences for women’s skin color? Does it depend on his color?

Do women have preferences for men’s skin color? Does it depend on her color?
Have you ever heard the expression: 'A white woman to marry, a black woman to work, and a *mulata* to screw'?

Is there a *mulata* on Port of Miracles?³

Have you ever hear of racism? Color prejudice? What does it mean?

Is there much racism/color prejudice in Brazil? Where do you see it?

Have you ever experienced it or seen it?

Is racism changing—improving, getting worse—or is it staying the same?

**EXIT: MAGAZINES AND JUIZFORANOS**

Are Juizforanos more Mineiros or more Cariocas?⁴ Why?

What are Mineiros like? What are Cariocas like?

Magazines

Do you like to read magazines? Which ones? (Show samples)

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³ Port of Miracles is a popular television show.
⁴ Juizforanos are residents of Juiz de Fora, the city where the research was conducted. Mineiros are residents of the state General Mines. Cariocas are residents of Rio de Janeiro.
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Segato, RL

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RE: DISC AND LIFE CONTINGENCIES AND THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AMONG MULATAS GIRLS IN BRAZIL: NAVIGATING CURRENTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE AND EXOTIC REPRESENTATIONS.

Dear Dr. Nitcher,

We received your above cited research proposal. The procedures to be followed in this study pose no more than minimal risk to participating subjects. Regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46.104(b)) authorize approval of this type project through the expedited review procedure, with the condition(s) that subjects' anonymity be maintained. Although IRB Committee review is not required, a brief summary of the project procedures is submitted to the Committee for their endorsement or/and consent, if any, after administrative approval is granted. This project is approved effective 25 January 2000 for a period of one year.

The Human Subjects Committee (Institutional Review Board) of the University of Arizona has a current assurance of compliance, number 14-1283, which is on file with the Department of Health and Human Services and covers this activity.

Approval is granted with the understanding that no further changes or additions will be made other to the procedures followed in the context and/or used (copies of which we have on file) without the knowledge and approval of the Human Subjects Committee and your College or Departmental Review Committee. Any research related physical or psychological harm to any subject must also be reported to each committee.

A university policy requires that all signed subject consent forms be kept in a permanent file in an area designated for that purpose by the Department Head or comparable authority. This will ensure their accessibility in the event that university officials require the information and the principal investigator is unavailable for some reason.

Sincerely yours,

David G. Johnson, M.D.
Chairman
Human Subjects Committee

cc: Departmental/College Review Committee
This periodic review is required by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations.

1. How is the present status of this project?  
2. If continuing, recommend:  
   - Closed to new subjects  
   - Completed (all subject participation and follow-up completed)  
   - Not begun (withdraw from active files)  
   - Other (please specify)  
   - [ ] Yes  
   - [ ] No  

2. Number of subjects active or being followed at last report  
   [ ] Yes  
   [ ] No  

3. Number of new subjects enrolled since last reporting period  
   [ ] Yes  
   [ ] No  

4. Number withdrawn from consent since last reporting period  
   [ ] Yes  
   [ ] No  

5. Number of subjects active under the protocol, being followed or at present  
   [ ] Yes  
   [ ] No  

6. Is the research being approved by the human subjects committee?  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   - Other (please specify)  

7. Consent obtained for all subjects?  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   - Other (please specify)  

8. Was consent obtained at the subject's home?  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   - Other (please specify)  

9. Were there any problems obtaining informed consent?  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   - Other (please specify)  

10. Number of subjects refusing enrollment  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

11. Consent on refusal, was consent signed by subject and others after next of kin consent form?  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

12. Are any new problems arising to the participation and safety of subjects in the project?  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

13. Anticipated adverse events?  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

14. During the past 5 years, were adverse events reported to FDA?  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

15. Are IRB or IDE applications involved?  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

16. Are there subjects exposed to any source of radiation?  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

17. Are subjects exposed to any source of toxicity?  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

18. Are any serious adverse events reported?  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

19. Have all protocol changes been submitted and approved by the human subjects committee?  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

20. Have all new case reports been submitted and approved by the human subjects committee?  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

21. Are any new information known since the date of original report that may affect the risk-benefit ratio or that would influence the willingness of the patient to continue in the study?  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

22. Are the any new information known since the date of original report that may affect the risk-benefit ratio or that would influence the willingness of the subject to continue in the study?  
    - Yes  
    - No  
    - Other (please specify)  

23. COMPLETE BOTH SIDES
PERIODIC REVIEW (continued)

Conflicts of Interest Statement:
Do any of the investigators serve as consultant to
the sponsor, the manufacturer, or to the owner of the test article?

☐ Yes ☐ No
Do any of the investigators (or their immediate family)
have an equity and/or royalty relationship with the sponsor,
the manufacturer, or to the owner of the test article?

∅ Yes ☐ No
Has a disclosure statement ever been filled with the institution?

SUMMARIZE STUDY ACTIVITIES TO DATE: [Include available research analysis or report(s); include information pertaining to enrollment of women and minorities; special issues and/or problems]

None

REMEMBER: SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING WITH PERIODIC REVIEW FORM:
- COPY OF M.I. VETERANS OF CONSENT DOCUMENTS AND/OR DECLARER FORMS USED DURING CURRENT REPORTING PERIOD (INDICATE DATES EACH VERSION WAS USED)
- CLEAN COPY OF EACH CURRENTLY APPROVED CONSENT DOCUMENT/DECLARER FORM TO BE USED IN NEW APPROVAL PERIOD (UPDATED TO CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS) FOR RE-APPROVAL NOTE: ONCE RE-APPROVAL IS GRANTED, THE APPROVAL STAMP MUST APPEAR ON EACH CONSENT DOCUMENT SIGNED BY SUBJECTS AFTER APPROVAL DATE.

[Signature of Investigator]

[Signature of the Departmental Review Chairman]

Date: 12/15/86

Please return to:
University of Arizona
Human Subjects Committee
1350 N. Vine Avenue
PO BOX 245157
Tucson, Arizona 85724-5157

IRB COMMENTS: Previously approved subject permissions to be translated into Portuguese and used for enrollment during this approval period.

Thank you for verifying that the procedures in the above named project have not changed since last approval and that no physical or psychological harm has come to any participating subjects. This proposal is resubmitted for the one-year period ending on the date stamped below. Resubmission is granted with the understanding that no changes will be made to the project's procedures or consent forms without the knowledge and approval of this Committee and the College's and Departmental Review Committee. Any physical or psychological harm to any subject must be reported to each committee within five (5) days of occurrence or reportage thereof.

PETRILLO, M.D.

EXPIRATION DATE: JAN 23 2002

David G. DeGuzman, M.D. (Chairman)
This periodic report is required by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations.

1. What is the present status of the project?
   - [ ] Continuing
   - [ ] Cessation
   - [ ] Change to new subjects
   - [ ] Closed (subject participation, follow-up completed)
   - [ ] The regimen withdraw from active trial

   Comments:

2. Number of subjects actively being followed or being followed at last report at present:
   - [ ]

   Number of new subjects enrolled since last report:
   - [ ]

   Number completed since last reporting period:
   - [ ]

   Number withdrawn from study since last report:
   - [ ]

   Number of subjects active at this time:
   - [ ]

   Malignant disease rates of total enrolled subjects:
   - [ ]

3. Is the consent form as approved by the Human Subjects Committee still being used? (If not, please explain):
   - [ ]

   Other notes or advice (Med, storage, etc.):
   - [ ]

   Were there any problems in obtaining informed consent?
   - [ ]

   Number of subjects refusing enrollment:
   - [ ]

   Comments on refusal:
   - [ ]

   Was consent signed by subject and/or legal guardian?
   - [ ]

   (If yes, please explain):
   - [ ]

   Number of subjects receiving treatment:
   - [ ]

   Anticipated adverse events (known or total):
   - [ ]

   Were adverse events reported to FDA?
   - [ ]

4. Are any unusual medical/behavioral issues:
   - [ ]

   Is the OIR still in use?
   - [ ]

   Is the OIR under study?
   - [ ]

   Are there any other issues of concern?
   - [ ]

   Are there any psychological or physical injury to any subject?
   - [ ]

   Have all adverse events been submitted and approved by the Human Subjects Committee?
   - [ ]

   Have all adverse events been submitted and approved by the Human Subjects Committee?
   - [ ]

   Have all adverse events been reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Committee?
   - [ ]

   Have all adverse events been reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Committee?
   - [ ]

   Have all adverse events been reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Committee?
   - [ ]

   Have any new information become known since the last report? (If yes, please explain)
   - [ ]

   Has any new information become known since the last report? (If yes, please explain)
   - [ ]
PERIODIC REVIEW (Final Wolf)

Conflict of Interest Statement:
Do any of the investigators serve as consultants to the sponsor, the manufacturer, or to the owner of the test article?
Do any of the investigators have an immediate family member who is employed by the sponsor, the manufacturer, or to the owner of the test article?
Has a disclosure statement been filed with the institution?

SUMMARY OF STUDY ACTIVITIES TO DATE (Attach Additional Pages If Necessary)
In the past 12 months, the project was conducted in 305 E. First Ave., Miami Beach, Fl., 33139.
Participants (20 males and 20 females) were evaluated in a variety of settings. The project is now at the stage of data analysis.

RESEARCHER: Submit the following with periodic review form:
- Copy of all versions of consent documents and any disclaimer forms used during current or preceding period (include date of each version used in parentheses).
- Clean copy of each currently approved consent document (with a copy to be used in new approval). (Please refer to CORRECTED INSTRUMENTAL STANDARDS FOR RE-APPROVAL. NOTE: Only the document that is currently approved by the subject's statement approval date.

[Signature]

University of Arizona
Human Subjects Committee
135 N. 6th Avenue
P.O. Box 210673
Tucson, Arizona 85724-5087

[Signature of Department Chair]

Please return to:

[Address]

Date

[Date]

Study Concluded as of

MAY 14, 2007

[Signature of PI]

[Address]