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Stanley R. Bailey. *Legacies of Race: Identities, Attitudes, and Politics in Brazil*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009. 304 pp. \$70.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8047-6277-9; \$24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8047-6278-6.

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## From Racial Democracy to Racial Struggle: Legacies of Race in Brazil, Theories and Practices

In *Legacies of Race*, Stanley R. Bailey brings the reader into the challenging debate of race in Brazil. His work is based on sound empirical research and a firm theoretical framework. The focus of the book is threefold: a discussion of the concept of “racial democracy” when applied to Brazil, seen by many as the myth responsible for the lack of Brazilian racial consciousness; the nonexistence of racial boundaries and racial “groupness,” a concept that the author borrows from Rogers Bribaker and Mara Loveman, which suggests a “scale of racialized population cohesion and subjectivity, high to low” (p. 20); and the prospective results of progressive racially targeted policies in Brazil, aiming to promote positive discrimination based on race.

The book assumes a comparative approach of racial theories framed and informed by the U.S. and Brazilian experiences. By doing so, Bailey provides the reader with a grasp of both the American and Brazilian literature on the subject. The result is a theoretically refined, thoughtful, and analytical book, with a solid scientific background aimed mainly at an academic readership, but with a structural, and hence, interpretative problem.

Based on analysis of the results of three major Brazilian surveys on racial attitudes spanning the years from 1995 to 2002, the study stresses the ineffectiveness of the predictive nature of dominant theories when applied to

Brazilian attitudes toward race. The brief chronological scope of the samples is obvious, although occasionally the study uses data from a 1986 survey, referring to the state of São Paulo, or presents some flashes, which run up to a more recent date. Still, the book mainly deals with the attitudes captured during an eight-year period, which does not permit to project evolutionary configurations of racial attitudes in Brazil. This is a problem, since one of the main hypotheses put forward by the author is that attitudinal stances in Brazil are in flux.

What it lacks in temporal scope the book offers in analytical depth: Bailey covers a significant number of topics. He also presents concepts, and debates theories, which have long been discussed by scholars of race in Brazil. The nonexistence of racial group boundaries; the myth of racial democracy; and the notion of a Brazilian meta-race, independent of color, ethnicity, and racial background are only some of them. The book also covers anti-racial behaviors, the claimed nonexistence of racial discrimination, and the apparent socially transversal anti-racist mobilization or the reasons for the absence of visibility and impact of “Negro” movements in Brazil.

After crossing the lion’s share of racial theoretical models, Bailey acknowledges that in Brazil the recognized racial inequality and discrimination do not allow predictions of group racial attitudes. He claims that so-

cial boundaries run along a groupness continuum, as self-identification moves along a color continuum. Furthermore, his study asserts that in Brazil, ideologies do not fall along the lines of color or race.

According to the main assumptions of social scientists and other field scholars, individuals identify with their own racial group, racial groups always compete according to their own racial interests, and dominant groups develop ideologies to justify and legitimate their hegemony. This book begs to differ by presenting evidence that in Brazil, race does not determine strong racial boundaries, racial groupness, or group conflict. So, Bailey attempts here to demystify any pretension of universal application of racial identity theories. In its place, the author rehabilitates a theory that has long been labeled by Brazilian social scientists as responsible for the lack of racial consciousness in Brazil. Such a proposition is the “myth of racial democracy,” promoted first by Gylberto Freyre’s theory of Luso-tropicalism. According to Freyre, the intense miscegenation that the Portuguese colonization helped produce in Brazil led to a meta-race consciousness. This collective self-perception has supposedly helped to overtake prejudices of race as well as to tame conflictual racial attitudes. This is only one of the ways in which this book apparently goes against the tide of current/mainstream scholarship.

Bailey is convinced of the efficacy of symbolic power in the construction of identities. In the last chapters, he predicts, then, that political power, racial movements, and the dichotomic conceptualization used by social scientists in Brazil will actively contribute to an undesirable binary racial identity. The author analyzes the scope and the implications of recent race-targeted policies promoted by Brazilian universities and governmental organizations, which lead to a classification and a self-classification of social agents between “white” and “negro” labels. Based on analysis whose main point is Pierre Bourdieu’s “theory-effect” mechanism, the author states, finally, that “Brazilians will learn to believe in the existence of races because of the racist treatment” (p. 21). It is clear that the author subscribes to the belief that we can effectively predict group and racial identity formation. He tries to convince the reader, based on a prospective analysis, that Brazilian attitudinal stances toward race will soon approach the black and white U.S. polarity.

The list of forty-five color denominations by which adults identify themselves in a self-categorization survey does not matter to Bailey (table 3.6, p. 61). It does not matter to him either that in the 1995, 2000, and 2002 cen-

suses, only 3 to 5 percent of the population classified itself as *preto* (black) and 3 to 9 percent as *negro*, with 50 to 54 percent preferring other more ambiguous designations, such as *moreno*, *pardo*, *mulato*, or *mestiço* (table 3.2, p. 53). It does not matter that Afro-ancestral culture is, in fact, transversally assimilated by Brazilians. More than 60 percent of those surveyed did not perceive effective divisions or differences between black and white cultures (table 4.1, p. 78). At the end, the author succumbs to the ultimate expectation of a social scientist: make the reality fit the theory. “Hence, I posit that I have captured a period in the history of Brazilian racial attitudes that is, indeed, in transition. With state, social movement, and science race making in negro and white, the framings that I have found inefficient for the Brazilian context using the 1995 through 2002 survey data may slowly begin to fit. That is, the round pegs of Brazilian racial dynamics will be whittled and planed in such a way that the square holes of existing U.S.-based theories of racial attitudes may eventually seem a ‘natural’ fit” (p. 224).

The book has some more drawbacks. In the first place, it totally forgets the historical definition and evolution of the racial composition of Brazilian society, which would explain most of the ambiguities and weaknesses of group boundaries, racial identity, and racial groupness in present-day Brazilian society. Even when analyzing “race making in black and white” (chapter 9), it is the U.S. evolution of race categorization that stands out, rather than the Brazilian one. This lack of historical background also prevents the author from pursuing further comparisons with Latin America, which he does only occasionally, and in an inconsequential way. It leads, simultaneously, to the second major drawback of the book in sorting out the racial question: the analysis of this issue is literally made in terms of black and white. The issue of the indigenous population, indigenous ancestors, and indigenous culture is totally excluded from the analysis. Knowing the Brazilian reality and history one understands why, but the subject calls for some reflection, mostly from a work centered on identities, attitudes, and politics toward race.

Last but not least, the book never acknowledges, by the nature of the surveys used and the kind of analysis pursued, that with regard to racial attitudes, there are several Brazils, and not only one. Studying race in northeast Brazil will certainly not lead to the same results as doing the same in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, or Rio Grande do Sul. A geographical differentiation of the analytical scope would be needed in order to answer a key question: how does the historical background of racial

construction and racial/social hierarchy interfere with identities, attitudes, and politics in Brazil? We should never forget Bourdieu's equally strong "theory of practice."

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