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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,  
IRVINE

Jamaican Ethnic Oneness: Race, Colorism, and Inequality

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Sociology

by

Monique Deeann Asandra Kelly

Dissertation Committee:  
Professor Ruben Rumbaut, Co-Chair  
Professor Stanley Bailey, Co-Chair  
Professor Francesca Polletta

2019



## **DEDICATION**

To

my mother

this dissertation is an embodiment of your sacrifice, strength and love  
thank you for supporting me unconditionally

AND

To

my grandmother  
love you and may you rest in peace

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### Manuscripts under Submission

**Kelly, Monique D. A.** (revise and resubmit). "Identity Correspondence: Influences on the identities of Second-Generation Adolescents." *Self and Identity*.

**Kelly, Monique D. A.** (revise and resubmit). Race and Skin color Inequality in Jamaica." *Sociological Perspectives*.

**Kelly, Monique D. A.**, and Janelle Levy. (under review) "Racial and Ethnic Boundaries: Chinese-Jamaica and the Hegemonic Theater." *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*.

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**Kelly, Monique D. A.** "The Raced Nature of Nationhood: The Centering of Hybridity in Contemporary Interpretations of Jamaican Nationhood."

**Kelly, Monique D. A.** "Racial Inequality in the Anglo-Caribbean: An examination of Socioeconomic Well-being and Educational Attainment."

## **ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

Jamaican Ethnic Oneness: Race, Colorism, and Inequality

By

Monique Deeann Asandra Kelly

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Irvine, 2019

Professors Ruben Rumbaut and Stanley Bailey, Co-Chairs

My dissertation analyzes racial and skin color stratification in Jamaica, the impact of an ideology of racial mixing on Jamaican's explanation for that inequality, and racial and nation-based identification. Using the Americas Barometer social survey on Jamaica (a comprehensive and nationally representative dataset), the census, and original, qualitative, semi-structured interviews, I examine: (1) the parameters of Jamaican national identity, (2) Jamaican nationalism and its influences on perceptions of racial and color prejudice and discrimination, and (3) the structuring of socioeconomic well-being along racial and color lines. I find that the ideology of racial mixing/fusion or creolization strongly influences understandings of Jamaican national identity and of race. While issues pertaining to both race and colorism are not blatantly denied, race is generally viewed as a "U.S. problem," while colorism is considered centrally an issue of the nation's past. Instead, Jamaicans overwhelmingly focus on class for explaining social inequality rather than skin color or race, despite my research revealing dramatic racial hierarchies in both wealth and educational attainment.

## INTRODUCTION

Inequality in the Caribbean country of Jamaica is substantial. As measured through its Gini coefficient, the country reports a Gini index of 45.5 with approximately 20 percent of the population living below the poverty line (World Bank 2013). However, this inequality is solely attributed to class factors by state actors due to a combination of deep income stratification and perceived ethno-racial homogeneity - fully 91.6 percent self-identify as black (or black-mixed race), 6.2 percent self-identify as mixed-race, and the remaining 3 percent as Chinese, East Indian, white, or ‘other’ (World Bank 2013). Additionally, the nation views itself as the amalgamation of creolization<sup>1</sup> both in its people<sup>2</sup> and culture, as achieved through the nationalist ideology of Creole Multi-Racialism (Thame 2017), like tenets of *mestizaje* or racial mixing in Latin America.

This ideology of mixing cultural forms, accompanied by the belief of extensive and prominent miscegenation, characterized the inhabitants of Jamaica as largely being of mixed-racial ancestry has further coalesced into the national motto, “Out of many, one people.” This purports the belief that there is no racial distinction between the peoples of Jamaica, hence further supporting claims of racial equality. As Norman Manley, the first Vice Premier of the island who helped coined the motto states, “We have in Jamaica our own type of beauty, a wonderful mixture of African and European” (Manley 1939:109), “[We] are made up of peoples drawn from all over the world, predominantly Negro or of mixed blood, but also with large numbers of others, and nowhere in the world has more progress been made in developing a non-racial society in which also color is not psychologically significant” (Nettleford 1970:23-24).

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<sup>1</sup> A fusion of diverse cultures represented by the varying racial groups on the island which perfectly coalesced into a distinctive Jamaican culture that was neither European nor African (Braithwaite 1971).

<sup>2</sup> The word creole refers to a person of European and African ancestry - “a mixture or blending of various ingredients that originated in the Old worlds” (Bolland 1998:1-2)

Thus, the assumption is that inequality would not be structured along categorical race and/or skin color in such a society.

In the U.S. it is not surprising that race would predict socioeconomic well-being (Carnevale and Strohl 2013; Conley 1999; Diamond 2006; Fryer, Pager, and Spenkuch 2013; Massey and Denton 1993; Oliver and Shapiro 2006; Pager 2003). Additionally, colorism research shows that skin color shapes educational attainment (Hunter 2007; Keith and Herring 1991; Monk 2014), health outcomes (Monk 2015), and job market outcomes (Allen, Telles, and Hunter 2000; Bodenhorn and Ruebeck 2007). In Latin America, where ideologies of creolization are also concretized into nationhood, scholars have argued that such ideologies obfuscate and perpetuate racial discrimination (Bonilla-Silva and Glover 2005; Warren and Sue 2011; Winant 1999) and have found that social inequality, encompassing education, income, health, and discrimination, is heavily structured along race and skin color (Andrews 2004, Canache, Hayes, Mondak, and Seligson 2014; Flores and Telles 2012; Gravlee and Dressler 2005; Monk 2016; Perreira and Telles 2014, Sue 2013, Telles 2004; Telles, Flores and Urrea-Giraldo 2015; Telles and Lim 1998; Villarreal 2010).

Likewise, for the case of Jamaica, scholars have long contended the role of race/color in the nation (Brown-Glaude 2007; Charles 2003; 2009; Gordon 1991; Johnson 2004; Johnson 2005; Kelly and Bailey 2018; Wallace 2010) and nation building, especially in that of Creole Multi-Racialism (Austin-Broos 1994; Cooper 2012; Meeks 2000; Thames 2017; Thomas 2002; 2004). Given these scholarly assertions and the fact that all societies that have been colonized by European powers hold legacies of race-making ideology, how does socioeconomic well-being map onto measures of race and skin color in Jamaica; an Anglo-Caribbean nation in the Americas which like the U.S., was colonized by the British Crown, however, unlike the U.S., an

ideology of racial mixing is contiguous to some regions of Latin America? I first explore the interpretations and constructions of Jamaicanness in contemporary Jamaican society. I then investigate the influence of levels of nationalism on perceptions of racial and color discrimination as important explanations of black poverty. By providing an understanding of Jamaicans unique form of racial democracy and its connection to perception of the causes of poverty, offer a fuller picture of what racial and color inequality looks like in the majority Afro-descent country.

### *Distinction between Categorical Race and Skin Color*

While categorical race and skin color often overlap, they should not be conflated. Skin color and categorical race are analytically separate and can have different relationships with inequality, and so we need to examine them separately. Race has no basis in biology and represents a social, political, and economic constructed image of humankind (Omi and Winant 2014) who's meaning varies across context and time (Banton 2012; see also Bailey, Loveman, Muniz, 2013; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999; Hirschman 2004; Loveman 1999; Monk 2013; 2014<sup>3</sup>). U.S. racial classifications are pan-categories that remove skin color differences between individuals and group them as a collective based on ancestry, language, religion, and/or geographical location (Dixon and Telles 2017). For example, not all individuals racialized as 'black' are dark-skinned (especially given use of hyperdescent in the U.S.) nor is someone of dark skin from Southeast Asia racially classified as 'black', even if they have darker skin than someone labelled as African American in the U.S. The context provided by literature in the U.S. has skin color generally conceptualized as gradients along a color continuum subject to racial

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the contextually of race see also: Bailey, Fialho, and Penner 2016; Bailey, Saperstein, and Penner 2014; Campbell, Bratter, Roth 2016; Johnson 2004; Monk 2016; Roth 2016; Saperstein 2008; 2012; Saperstein and Penner 2012.

categories. As such, racial categories tend to be explicitly defined, so that color is only analytically utilized to differentiate members within the same racial category<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, studies that examine skin color and racial self-classification as predictors of outcomes of inequality usually find multifaceted relations between the two (Bailey, Fialho, and Penner 2016; Bailey et al. 2014; Telles 2004, 2014; Telles et al. 2015; Telles and Lim 1998). For example, Bailey and colleagues (2014) in their analysis of household income inequality, using both racial self-identification and perceived skin color in Latin America and the U.S., found that income inequality can best be understood in some countries using either measures or both. In their analysis, both skin color and self-identified race significantly explained variations in household income for some countries including the U.S. However, in countries such as Brazil, Panama, and Costa Rica, racial identification better accounted for inequality. Conversely, they found that for countries like Colombia and Uruguay variation in household income was better explained by differences in skin color alone (Bailey et al. 2014). Moreover, some studies have shown skin color to be a stronger predictor of inequality than categorical race (see Monk 2016; Paredes 2018). Thus, while both categorical race and skin color are assigned characteristics, the two may not be easily interchangeable or equally efficient in capturing inequality structured by phenotype (Bailey et al. 2016).

### *Race and Skin Color in Jamaica*

Race and skin color have shaped relation of power, status, and identity on the island of Jamaica from its colonial era (detailed in chapter 1) and continue to do so present day. Studies that have examined race and color in Jamaica do so through its interaction with class and cite

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<sup>4</sup> For example, there have been numerous studies on the intra-group difference between African Americans (Allen, Telles and Hunter 2000; Bowman, Muhammad and Ifatunji 2004; Goldsmith, Hamilton, and Darity 2006; Hughes and Hertel 1990; Johnson, Farrell and Stoloff 1998; Keith and Herring 1991; Monk 2014; Seltzer and Smith 1991), Asians (Ryabov 2016), whites (Hannon 2015), and Latinos (Allen, Telles, and Hunter 2000; Hunter 2007; Roth 2010).

several ways in which inequality manifest as a result of these. Douglass (1992) in her ethnographical analysis of the relationship between structure and practice of power, juxtaposes a naturalized hierarchy of race (introduced as a “color hierarchy”) to beliefs in "meritocracy" and "egalitarianism" which manifests in a group of (white) elite families which remain largely color and class endogamous over the several generations (see also Austin-Broos 1994). Additionally, Gordon (1991), in his work on educational outcomes, found that despite improvements in the position of darker-skinned, lower-class children in relation to their lighter-skinned counterparts, lighter-skin children still outperform them. More recently, Kelly and Bailey (2018), using the 2001 Jamaican census, reported that of the population aged 25-65, 40.7% of white Jamaicans had completed university level education compared to only 2.4% of Afro-Jamaicans. Chinese, East Indian, and mixed-race Jamaicans also had much lower percentages of college completion than whites, though significantly higher than Afro-Jamaicans.

Even with some recognition of both covert and overt racial tension in contemporary Jamaica, the privilege associated with lighter skin color is still widely embraced and sought after as evidenced by the skin-bleaching epidemic in Jamaica (Charles 2003, 2009; Johnson 2004). It is embedded in colorism: the notion that lighter or being closer to whiteness is better (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich 2008; Harris 2008; Hannon 2015; Kinsbrunner 1996; Sue 2009; Telles 2004). Individuals who engage in practices of skin bleaching or lightening are mostly portrayed in popular media and documentaries as from working-class backgrounds, and the most common explanation given by these individuals is that being of a lighter skin color offers better life-chances and/or preferential treatment (Blay 2011; Brown-Glaude 2007; Charles 2003, 2009; Wallace 2010). However, skin-bleaching is often framed as pathology: a form of mental illness or the manifestation of self-hate (Brown-Glaude 2007; Charles 2003, 2009). This framing



effectively delegitimizes overarching claims that there are privileges and advantages associated with lighter skin in Jamaican society (Wallace 2010). In addition, skin-bleaching is framed exclusively as a class struggle, which is used to support the idea that Jamaica is free of racial problems (Henke 2001). In sum, there is little doubt that race and skin color continue to stratify contemporary Jamaica.

## DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

The context of Jamaica's racial dynamics is generally understood from the class-dominant ideological perspective of racial mixing (or creolization), at least in official or elite discourse, thus viewed as non-racial by virtue of its racial homogeneity. This believed non-racial framing operates on the island in the form of loose racial categorizations and colloquial skin color designations. Additionally, there has been little quantitative research on racial inequality in Jamaica. Considering these factors, I first contend that Jamaican nationalism, while purported to be nonracial, was and is raced. From this position, using the *Americas Barometer* social survey on Jamaica (a comprehensive and nationally representative dataset), the census, and original, qualitative, semi-structured interviews, I examine I then ask three central questions: (1) what is the role of race in contemporary constructions and interpretations of Jamaican nationhood, (2) how does Jamaican nationalism influence perceptions of racial and color prejudice and discrimination, and (3) how is socioeconomic well-being structured along categorical race and skin color in such a context? Thus, my dissertation analyzes racial and skin color stratification in Jamaica, the impact of an ideology of racial mixing on Jamaican explanation for that inequality, and racial and nation-based identification.

My dissertation engages with and builds upon theories of group conflict and hybridity<sup>5</sup> which holds that in contexts where there exists embedded racial hierarchy, this should theoretically provoke either significant race-based mobilization or a generalized denial of racial discrimination among the minority racial population. This dominant perspective attributes that denial to entrenched ideologies of mestizaje or racial democracy that obfuscates the structural causes of ethno-racial inequality. These ideologies are alternatively conceptualized as ‘color blindness’, ‘race-blindness’ and ‘false consciousness’. Researchers assert that across Latin America non-whites lack understanding of how race operates in both historical and contemporary forms and its correlation to the labor market, educational opportunities, and so forth. While cognizant of challenges to this group conflict perspective, given that it is a dominant approach, I use it to explore the Jamaican context.

Many scholars have looked to Latin America and the Spanish speaking Caribbean to test this theory and examine the effects of the ideology of racial mixing or ethnic fusion. While there is evidence to support both sides of the debate on the effects of such an ideology on a population’s propensity to deny racial discrimination, the effects of this ideology have not been analyzed in Anglo-Caribbean countries. As robust generalizable studies of social stratification by skin color and/or categorical race are generally lacking with regards to the Anglo-Caribbean. The case of Jamaica is theoretically important particularly because it is an English-speaking society in the Caribbean, which like the U.S., was colonized by the British Crown. However, unlike the U.S., an ideology of racial mixing is salient, similar to some regions of Latin America.

Additionally, Jamaica is an overwhelmingly Afro-descent population, hence, overt privileging of non-black ancestry is constrained, and a color hierarchy is not always explicitly visible. Unique characteristics in those setting may influence the application and role of

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<sup>5</sup> Referred to as creolization, racial mixing, and racial democracy; I use the terms interchangeable throughout.

ideologies of racial mixing in issues of colorism or race-based inequality. Thus, considering the colonial past and diffused ideologies of racial fusion, I investigate how Jamaica's unique iteration of an ideology of racial mixing affects the likelihood that Jamaicans recognize racial prejudice and discrimination. My work makes use of categorical race and skin color, analyzed as two distinct dimensions of the construct we call "race." A more nuanced examination of racial inequality is provided from the use of both measures. Additionally, it highlights the heterogeneity within a majority Afro-descent population, oftentimes treated as a monolith. Furthermore, it challenges the non-racial frame and rhetoric dominant in Jamaica, the region at large, and U.S. conceptualizations of race.

My dissertation utilizes mixed methods; two of my chapters are solely quantitative in nature. They use data from the 2001 Jamaican Census, a 10% sample accessible at IPUMS-International (Minnesota Population Center 2015), and the 2008 and 2014 waves of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) on Jamaica, also known as the Americas Barometer social survey (Americas Barometer 2010; 2012; 2014). I have written the three substantive chapters as stand-alone papers. Thus, I repeat some of the descriptions of the data and methods as well some of my argumentation. Additionally, I use original, qualitative, in-depth semi-structured interviews of 25 Jamaican citizens.

Chapter One, "Jamaica: The Historical Context and the Construction of Nationhood", provides a historical background of Jamaica. In this chapter, I first detail the beginning of each racial group on the island. I then highlight the role of race in structuring not only power and status, but also national identity. Lastly, I discuss the ways in which race and color maintained as an orienting factor in Jamaican society while being presented as nonracial, thus, motivating my research questions.

Chapter Two, “The Raced Nature of Nationhood: The Centering of Hybridity in Contemporary Interpretations of Jamaican Nationhood,” uses original qualitative, semi-structured interviews to examine the influences nationalist frame of Creole Multi-Racialism and its accompanying ideology of Jamaican Exceptionalism on conceptions of nationhood in contemporary Jamaican society. Given the complex history of Jamaica discussed in the previous chapter, I explore what defines Jamaican nationalism and how race treated in the construction of group boundaries in contemporary Jamaica. Thus, in this chapter, I examine: (1) the parameters of Jamaican national identity and (2) the dynamics of race relations on the island. I argue that interpretation of contemporary nationalism still obscures the conflation of race and class while all the while elevating brownness or hybridity as the quintessential to nationhood.

In Chapter Three, “Racial Inequality and the Recognition of Racial Discrimination in Jamaica,” I: (1) examine the extent of Jamaica’s contemporary racial inequality using national census data; (2) use nationally representative data from the 2008 Americas Barometer social survey to determine the extent to which a recognition of racial discrimination characterizes Jamaican public opinion; (3) explore the salience of an ideology of racial mixing in Jamaica; and (4) test whether that ideology affects the likelihood that Jamaicans acknowledge contemporary racial discrimination. The chapter’s findings document dramatic social inequality by skin color in Jamaica and suggest that a majority embrace an ideology that racial mixing is negatively associated with Jamaicans’ recognition of racial discrimination.

Chapter Four, “Race, Skin Color, and Social Inequality in Jamaica”, investigates how social inequalities are structured along racial and color lines in Jamaica. Using data from the 2010-14 Americas Barometer social survey, as well as 2001 census data on Jamaica, I investigate the effects of categorical race and skin color on socioeconomic well-being: availability of basic

household amenities (BHA), household crowdedness, per capita household income, and educational attainment. Results show that socioeconomic well-being across all dimensions is starkly structured along race and skin color lines.

Chapter Five concludes the dissertation with a summary of the main findings, implications, and directions for future research. I contend that my dissertation thus makes important advances in our understanding of racial dynamics in patterning overall socioeconomic well-being and the variation of the utility of both race and skin color across contexts. It also complicates race inequality discourse by highlighting the heterogeneity within the black diaspora as it moves beyond common sense notions of race. It also illustrates how the use of both quantitative and qualitative analyses to interrogate the complexities of race can leverage important insights.

## CHAPTER 1

### **Jamaica: The Historical Context and the Construction of Nationhood**

Jamaica is marked by an extensive history of population movement, including ethno-racial admixture, from the colonial period forward. What is more, common-sense beliefs about the extent, meaning, and results of that movement and admixture often coalesce around a myth of national origin of a people once divided, but now united, if not fused, in nation-based kinship (e.g., Braithwaite 1971). A particularly illustrative example of the contemporary salience of this national origin myth is Jamaica's nation-state motto: 'Out of Many, One People.' The motto is inscribed on the country's coat of arms. Like a visual menagerie of national belonging, the coat of arms is further adorned with figures of male and female members of the Taino (Arawak) tribe and a Jamaican crocodile mounted on the royal helmet of the British Monarchy.<sup>6</sup> This symbol dates to long before Jamaica became independent within the British Commonwealth in 1962; Jamaica was granted its coat of arms under Royal Warrant in 1661, designed by William Sancroft, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.

#### THE HISTORY OF RACIAL GROUPS IN JAMAICA

##### *Conquest and Indigenous Annihilation*

Despite romanticized myths of national origin and their potential to mine certain social boundaries in order to fuse diverse populations for nation-based kinship, historical records often contain disenchanting realities that challenge those narratives. Like so many other countries in the Caribbean, the Jamaican island territory was 'discovered' by Christopher Columbus in 1494. At that time, it was primarily inhabited by the Arawak, indigenous to the island for at least a millennium before Columbus' arrival. Acting on behalf of the Spanish Crown, who had

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<sup>6</sup> <http://jis.gov.jm/symbols/jamaican-coat-of-arms/> (accessed on 9-10-2016)

commissioned Columbus' voyage, the invading forces occupied the island using superior weaponry and advanced war strategies. Those not killed by Spanish war dogs and crossbows during initial phases were enslaved. In tandem with war violence, forced labor and imported disease soon annihilated the Arawak population.

### *The African Slave Trade*

In response to the loss of labor, the Spaniards brought in African-origin, first from Spain, and later directly from West African ports. In fact, during the transatlantic trade era, the Caribbean was a regional market for slaves, and it is reported that approximately 11 million African slaves disembarked there between 1514 and 1866 (Voyages: Assessing the Slave Trade 2008). After a century and a half of Spanish occupation, the British Crown seized Jamaica in 1655. The new owners took possession of a population of 1,500 African slaves—human war booty—that it steadily grew for its island plantocracy to supply and enrich Europe. According to Sio (1976), the average ratio of 'slaves to whites' from 1770 to 1820 was 10:1; by 1832, that ratio had nearly doubled (p. 6-7). This was not a society with slaves; rather, it was a 'slave society' (Wacquant 2002) centered on profit extraction, mostly through the cultivation of sugar for export.

The British Crown abolished chattel slavery in 1833. British plantation owners, however, were reluctant to relinquish their mode of capital accumulation; thus, the African slave trade to its Jamaican colony continued until 1838. The presence of free 'negroes' (henceforth free blacks) in the Jamaican colony, nonetheless, dates to much earlier times, perhaps to the very first years of colonization. For centuries, blacks with a free status were a very small population compared to that of enslaved blacks. In addition to their status difference with black slaves, free blacks were also often distinguished from 'free colored,' the progeny of European and African

admixture. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, free coloreds outnumbered free blacks several times over; for example, Sio (1976) estimates that in the year 1793 there were 2,000 free blacks compared to 8,000 free colored. In fact, the free colored population began to outnumber whites in the 1820s, and in 1830 there were an estimated 36,000 free coloreds in Jamaica.

The free colored population obtained that status either through birth right or manumission. To suggest that free coloreds were ‘free’ in the sense of equal in status and rights to whites, though, would be far from correct. Free coloreds were granted not rights as such, but ‘privileges’ (Sio 1976). Importantly, they were not confined to, or very often worked on, plantations; instead, they worked for wages in various activities outside the plantations. They could also own property, including black slaves.

In this system, degree of population admixture, often gauged through skin color variation, was closely tracked. The 18<sup>th</sup> century classification scheme that sorted some of these degrees of admixture was as follows (Higman 1976; Sio 1976; James 1992):

Negro:	child of negro and negro
Sambo:	child of mulatto and negro
Mulatto:	child of white and negro
Quadroon:	child of white and mulatto
Mustee:	child of white and quadroon
Mustifino:	child of white and mustee
Quintroon:	child of white and mustifino
Octoroon:	child of white and quintroon

These distinctions played a role in sorting status at birth:



*'After 1733, those lighter than mustee were legally defined as white on the principle of generation and received the full rights of citizenship. Those darker than mustifino were defined in the law as mulatto. Legally, then, after 1733 the status of free coloured in Jamaica applied to those in the category mulatto. The free coloured group was also divided into free browns (mustee, quadroon, mulatto) and free blacks (sambo and negro)' (Sio 1976:8).*

Hence, skin color as a proxy for degree of admixture held great importance in Jamaica for centuries. Special privileges, such as free colored status, as well as the actual possibility of being legally defined as white, meant that the lighter a Jamaican's skin color, the greater that individual's rights and privileges. Unlike in the U.S. where 'one-drop rule' ideation and segregation became pervasive and was inscribed in law, in Jamaica *'miscegenation and concubinage were practiced and accepted'* and produced clear advantages along a color scale (Sio, 1976:17).

Restrictive laws against free coloreds, or de jure discrimination, were lifted in 1830. This change was not due to any sense of inherent rights finally granted them by whites, but to the need to ensure the loyalty of this population for service in the militia, especially against the Marrons (or 'runaway slave' populations). By 1828, free coloreds were 54 percent of the total militia force in Jamaica. Although it was surely much better to be a free colored than a black slave, actual upward mobility for that population category was not a norm by any means. Of the estimated 18,800 free coloreds in Jamaica in 1826, one report classified them thusly: 400 '*rich*,' 5,500 '*in fair circumstances*,' and 22,000 as '*absolutely poor*' (Sio 1976).

Caste systems (socially ascribed status) in the Caribbean and Latin America were loose enough to provide some social mobility between the groups, but not to most dark-skinned

Africans (Hellwig 1992). In fact, what allowed planters to continually dominate their non-white counterparts was the social creation of 'mulattos' in the Caribbean and Latin America which served to strengthen slave societies. Children resulting from recurrent sexual assaults and concubinage, with white planters, were listed as 'colored' or 'brown' and were often further categorized into quadroon, mestee, and other groupings (Higman 1976; James 1992; Sio 1976; Ward 1988). These off-springs compared to 'un-mixed' Africans had a chance at being treated better. While never equal to their white counterparts; 'free coloreds' held substantially more power and rights compared to black Jamaicans (free or otherwise). Thus, this controlling and organizing mechanism of skin color, used by whites, became an important 'escape route' from slavery for many Africans (Degler 1971).

Most of these privileges were granted based on skin color and this, often regarded as a representation of the degree of population admixture, was closely tracked in Jamaica (Higman 1976; James 1992; Sio 1976). Skin color played a pivotal role in the rights, privileges, and advantages one was granted (Sio 1976) because it was used to perceive, categorize, and rank others. This played a significant role in determining status at birth; which included being legally classified as white or free. Even though 'free coloreds' sometimes resisted alongside fellow Africans, they more frequently aided whites in the subjugation of blacks by sustaining the oppressive system of slavery (Johnson 2004). For example, Sio (1976) notes that in 1830 many restrictive laws against 'free coloreds' were lifted to ensure their loyalty to whites. This was done by offering a place to 'free coloreds' via serving in the militia, especially against the Maroons (the 'free' or 'runaway slave' population). While their position was better than that of black slaves, social mobility was rare until most whites left Jamaican society and previously 'white-only' jobs became available to them. This was then frequently used to further distance

themselves from other blacks and “*lightness, valued as a promise of higher status, became valued for itself...*” (Broom 1954:117).

Overall, at least three factors are central for understanding 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century Jamaican society in terms of distinctions among Africans and their Jamaican-born descendants: status, strata, and color. Most blacks were slaves, and most free coloreds were poor and restricted both officially and unofficially. Nonetheless, there was a middle stratum that over the years replaced some lower- and middle-class whites in various previously white-only occupations. This stratum was the ‘*rising colored urban class*’ (Sio 1976:14). Lastly, there also existed a small upper stratum of free colored, many of whom had accumulated wealth through properties or inheritance. Legacies of that system of status, strata, and color remain today, as will be addressed further below.

### *Indian Immigrants*

After the abolition of slavery in the English-speaking Caribbean in 1834, many blacks moved *en masse* as far away as possible from the plantations, the most enduring reminders of their former bondage. In search of alternate sources of exploitable labor, the colonial government set its sights on India and China. Between 1845 and 1914, about 36,000 East Indians were brought to Jamaica under an indentureship program agreed upon by British colonial governments of Jamaica and India (Vertovik 1995). Despite difficulties, including language differences, religious contrasts, segregation, discrimination, and deplorable living conditions, East Indians in Jamaica eventually formed a permanent community on the island (Sherlock and Bennet 1998). Additionally, as a measure to prevent East Indians and Africans from uniting in resistance against exploitation, the colonial state deliberately enforced policies to segregate Indians from Afro-Jamaicans, exacerbating animosity between the two populations (Sherlock

and Bennett 1998). On one side, Afro-Jamaicans resented Indians who succeeded and threatened their place in the economy, and on the other, Indian-Jamaicans' heritage involved a fixed caste system in which skin pigmentation partly determined social status, a fact that contributed to viewing the darker-skinned Afro-Jamaicans as socially inferior (Sherlock and Bennett 1998).

### *Chinese Immigrants*

After the abolition of slavery went into full effect in 1838, a dilemma presented itself to Jamaica's plantation owners. With the former slaves largely disinclined to remain as plantation workers, they were left without a workforce (Bryan 2004; Ho 1989; Lind 1958). Rather than find some means of enticing workers back to their plantations, the response was to "import" labor from various countries. Anticipating the need for a diversified and free labor force, a Committee of the British House of Commons prepared a report in 1811 deeming the Chinese as prime candidates for recruitment. Lind quotes the report as stating that "the Chinese emigrants have uniformly conducted themselves with the greatest propriety and order and have been peculiarly instrumental in promoting the improvement of those countries to which they have emigrated" (Lind 1958:146). With this endorsement, the Chinese were among the peoples recruited as indentured servants to the West Indies after the abolition of slavery. Between the years of 1854 and 1886, just fewer than two thousand Chinese would make their way to the island in varying shipments (Bryan 2004). This would set Chinese migrants up as the face of opposition to Afro-Jamaican noncompliance to British rule, both literally and figuratively.

However, upon arrival, the realities of their indenture would drastically erode the initial anticipation of their promise as workers. These first arrived via Panama in 1854, where they had been recruited to help construct railroads. Almost 500 Chinese laborers, who were said to be faring badly under the harsh conditions in Panama, were exchanged for Indian-Jamaican labor.

From the arduous journey to diminished health from previous work in other British Colonial enterprises (such as the construction of railroads in Panama), much of this workforce would be lost or infirm before arrival. The profuse violation of their contracts, from discrepancies in pay to withholding of promised healthcare, lead to violent protests by Chinese workers. Bryan (2004) states that “*the prejudiced response of the local Jamaican authorities to the determination of the Chinese to protect their interests was that they were ‘recalcitrant’, ‘turbulent’, ‘vindictive in temper’, and ‘crafty’*” (p. 15). The general displeasure of these workers with their circumstances would lead to several desertions from estates and combined with deaths, this would lead to the population of Chinese in Jamaica dwindling to 481 by 1891 (Lind 1958:148). The remaining Chinese migrants would be characterized as left to “*vagrancy, begging, and threats of imprisonment*” (Bryan 2004:15).

The next significant period of Chinese migration to Jamaica would be between 1900 to the 1940s, with 6,886 Chinese migrants recorded in the 1943 census—with the climax of this migration in the 1920s. Bryan (2004) notes that “*the colonial authorities also favored the immigration of Chinese females in order to reduce the levels of concubinage between Chinese males and ‘native’ Jamaican females that had produced 5,508 Chinese colored by 1943 (2,928 of them female)*” (p. 16). This new wave of immigrants would primarily be entrepreneurial with “*64 percent of Chinese men and 50.4 percent of Chinese women involved in trade*” and only 32 of the 6,886 were laborers (Bryan 2004:16). They were so successful in this economic arena that by 1910, ‘grocery store’ and ‘Chinese shop’ had become synonymous serving the overwhelmingly black lower classes (Bohr 2004; Bryan 2004; Ho 1989; Johnson 1983; Lee-Loy 2015; Levy 1986; Lind 1958; Shibata 2005; Tsang 2015). This success provoked resentment from other ethno-racial populations. Chinese-Jamaican reactions to official and unofficial discrimination

contributed to the construction of parallel Chinese-Jamaican institutions, such as mutual benefit associations and ‘weechen’ (rotating credit association originating in China). Partly through these reactive processes, the Jamaican Chinese could sustain a robust community despite their relatively small numbers (Yin 1963).

It is during this period of upward social mobility that two out of the three major anti-Chinese riots in Jamaica would occur. Johnson (1983) notes that, “*in the early years of the twentieth century complaints began to appear in the press that the Chinese shopkeeper was displacing his Creole competitor*” (p. 55). Coupled with the international recoil over the Boxer Rebellion between 1899 and 1901, Jamaican society leaned quite readily into the “Yellow Peril” narrative with increasing vigor (Lind 1958; Lee-Loy 2015). Regardless of their nation of birth, the Chinese population on the island would frequently be referred to in terms of ‘the alien problem’ by journalists of the time (Lee-Loy 2015:149).

Immigration policy would react in kind. Beginning in 1905 with the Alien Act, registration and references to character were necessary to gain entry into Jamaica (Tsang 2015) and by 1911 (when most parishes featured several Chinese owned shops) a deposit of thirty pounds sterling and the passing of an oral language test would also be required (Lee-Loy 2015). This rhetoric would spur on a 1917 motion by Gordon Tennant of the St. Ann’s Parish Board requesting that ‘native’ shopkeepers and the community-at-large should be protected from what he deemed to be innateness for manipulative business practices, which was in-line with the widely held stereotype that the Chinese were single-minded in their avariciousness. They were perceived as a threat to the moral interests of the island—a sentiment furthered by the perceived lack of contribution the Chinese community in Jamaica offered to the British cause during the First World War. Tennant’s proposed remedy involved the further restriction of Chinese entry to

the island by the colonial government. This sparked debate throughout the island, which was largely favorable towards such discriminatory entry practices (Lee-Loy 2015:151).

Though the motion would ultimately fail to sustain momentum, this increasing public antipathy would be further illustrated by rising acts of aggression, such as the increased burglary and assault of Chinese shopkeepers. By July 1918, the first major organized riot targeting Chinese owned shops commenced. Starting with a personal altercation between a Chinese shop owner and a 'creole' police officer in the town of Ewarton, it would end with bands of hundreds of mainly working-class Afro-Jamaican mobs targeting, looting, and burning Chinese-owned businesses, and stoning dozens of Chinese people across the entire island (Johnson 1983:50-51).

By 1919, further restrictions on Chinese migration would be established with the Immigration Restriction Law, which also required certification for all Chinese people leaving Jamaica with the intent of returning (Lee-Loy 2015). Still, in 1925, Chinese people held 28 percent of trade licenses issued in Jamaica, despite their proportionately smaller number (Bryan 2004; Lee-Loy 2015). This incurred a 1925 Passport Bill requiring strict visa requirement specifically for entering Chinese (Lee-Loy 2015), which further targeted this group based on stereotypes of their perceived business practices:

[T]he Chinese in Jamaica were accused of engaging in unfair practices, like adulterating goods, using unfair scales, and breaking labor laws that pertained to how long shops could be open, for example, or which items could be sold in various establishments. One observer suggested that the Chinese worked sixteen hours a day, often illegally, while other Jamaican shopkeepers who followed the law were able to keep their shops open for only eight hours. It was also argued that the Chinese were willing to live lifestyles that other Jamaicans would or could not in the pursuit of making money, such as living in the back of their shops instead of

maintaining a separate household and working extremely long hours. One member of the Jamaican Legislative Council actually called for a law that would make it illegal for individuals to sleep on the premises of their shops in an attempt to level the economic field of competition between Chinese and native Jamaican shopkeepers by forcing the Chinese to incur the expense of supporting a separate household (Lee-Loy 2015:147-148).

By the 1930s, a Native Defender Committee was formed with the intent of promoting and defending “*the interests of Jamaicans, politically, educationally, commercially, socially, morally and legally,*” as quoted by Lee-Loy (2015:152) from the NDC’s mandate. The subject of this promotion and defense would be ‘native’ Jamaicans. It should be noted that this movement, much like all the other grass-roots, anti-Chinese movements on the island was extremely short-lived, belying a general ambivalence to committing to eliminating this perceived threat. This contention during this specific era is due to resentment towards a perceived prosperous yet legislatively vulnerable demographic during the Great Depression (Bryan 2004).

Although, the restriction of Chinese movement would prove to be more firm with the achievement of the

*“1935 Passport Law, which established stiff visa requirements for entry into Jamaica and the 1933 Law to Regulate the Admission in to and Deportation from Jamaica of Aliens, which set out conditions, such as declaring bankruptcy or being convicted of gambling, under which individuals could be deported from Jamaica”* (Lee-Loy 2015:153).

These laws were noted in their singular attention to Chinese migrants by the local Chinese Benevolent Society.



Concurrently, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century was is a time where various black nationalist and labor movements subverted colonial power. Chinese non-participation in this stoked Afro-Jamaican resentment of their social mobility. Despite concessions to language and religion forced upon them by colonial expectation, the Chinese remained insular. As they were predominantly Hakka Chinese, it was relatively simple for them to form societies and connections based on shared ethnic background. Through various societies and schools (when they did not send their children to be educated in China), they managed to either insulate themselves or only move in predominately non-black elite circles. This non-participation in the black labor movement led them to be the targets of another Anti-Chinese riot in 1938 during a much larger labor strike (Bohr 2004; Bryan 2004; Lee-Loy 2015; Lind 1958). By 1940, all alien Chinese would be banned from entering the island until 1956 (Lee-Loy 2015).

By the time renewed Chinese migration would commence in the 1980's and 90's, there was an acceptance of the Chinese as an entrepreneurial class. New migrants fleeing the hostile political climate of both mainland China and Hong Kong would find no public unrest at their arrival. If anything, there was a distance established by established Jamaican Chinese based on their confirmed space in the Jamaican class hegemony (Tsang 2015). There was, for this period, no market for any organized Anti-Chinese sentiment.

#### *Populations from the Middle East*

Lastly, populations from the Middle East also form part of the Jamaican ethno-racial landscape. A Jewish presence began in the Spanish colonial era through indentured servitude in the sugar industry. Despite initial discrimination, the Jewish population made phenomenal progress, moving from plantations into commerce. As prosperous merchants, Jewish-Jamaicans came to occupy important positions and status in the Jamaican economy; their upward mobility

put them on par with the privileged planter class known to seek financial help from Jewish enterprises (Johnson 2005). Others from the Middle East—Palestinians, Lebanese, and Syrians—followed similar economic paths, moving from peddlers to merchants and traders (Nicholls 1986).

## ETHNO-RACIAL UNITY OR DIVISION

How did this patchwork of ethno-racial populations fuse into a collective Jamaican identity, if indeed it did? That is, how did the high boundaries of ethno-racial populations cemented in conquest, slavery, labor migration, skin color, status, and stratum possibly give way to common kinship as Jamaicans? Scholarship on this question goes in several directions.

### *Kinship through Nation*

A popular lens on ethno-racial population formation in Jamaican history was provided by historian Edward Braithwaite (1971). He advanced a thesis of Creolism to suggest the gradual formation of a unifying nation-based identification beyond ethno-racial particularisms.

Creolization, in its simplest sense, suggests a mixing of diverse peoples that he posits intensified in the 19th and early 20th centuries with the arrival of non-white and non-black labor migrants.

Through admixture (specifically the fusion of diverse cultures), Braithwaite (1971) asserted that a Creole society that was neither European nor African emerged, providing black, white, and colored inhabitants a sense of being distinctly Jamaican.

In the 1930's, though, Jamaica, still as Crown Colony, experienced widespread discontent and social unrest that deeply threatened its tenuous social fabric. On the class front, the unemployment rates of the working-class were high and living conditions continually plummeted. In terms of skin color dynamics, for example, banks and stores (generally owned by

non-blacks) hired mostly only light-complexioned staff to positions that involved face-to-face interaction with customers. To counter these trends and conflicts, social movements arose throughout the island, predominantly led by educated and wealthy ‘mixed-race’ elites. Perhaps most notable among them were Norman Manley (first Vice Premier), Alexander Bustamante (who became the undisputed champion of the working-class) and Michael Manley (of socialist orientation). Bustamante and Norman Manley, cousins, later went on to organize the two principal political parties that came to dominate politics in post-independence Jamaica: the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) and the People’s National Party (PNP), respectively. Both political parties acted as brokers to establish multi-class coalitions to address the interests of divergent social strata on the island (Payne 1988).

*Creole Multiracial Nationalism.* Among the many nationalist frames that emerged in Jamaica throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Levi 1992), Creole Multi-Racialism largely dominated political discourse. This nationalist frame emphasized a form of cultural identity that would legitimate the nation as separate and distinct from the British. As the word ‘creole’ refers to a person of European and African ancestry, it signaled the aspired to identity of the nation. One way in which this creolization<sup>9</sup> was purported to be accomplished was through the fusion of cultural practices by black Jamaicans (Thomas 2002), as well as those by other ethnic groups on the island. Hence, this established a distinct culture (Braithwaite 1971; see also Bolland 1998) in which all Jamaicans, despite racial differences, could participate.

This ideology of creolization was not just conveyed via mixing cultural forms, but also through the belief of extensive and prominent miscegenation. As a result, the inhabitants of Jamaica were purported to be largely of mixed-racial ancestry, specifically that of European and African. Particularly as those advocating a Creole Multi-Racial identity were predominantly

wealthy, educated, 'mixed-race' elites, their mixed racial ancestry was flagged as the culmination and evidence of Jamaica's unique creolized culture. This 'accomplishment' was further showcased by the national motto, "Out of many, one people," which Norman Manley, the first Vice Premier (1955-62), helped to coin. Manley, himself mixed-race, emphasized racial and class unity through his national campaign, despite he himself representing the new brown elite who were separated from the majority black population, not just in color and claims to mixed-race ancestry, but through prestigious education in Jamaica and England (Levi 1992). These claims to the Old World, especially European ancestry, in the conception of the nation, was critical as it was only through some claims to whiteness or Europe that the country could retain any claims to civility in a global context (Thame 2017); "We have in Jamaica our own type of beauty, a wonderful mixture of African and European" (Nettleford and Manley 1971).

This profession of racial mixedness or hybridity as the desired and represented imagine of Jamaica, elevated brownness as an authentic claim to nationhood. While the assertion of a new 'brown' race<sup>10</sup> (via Creole Multi-racialism), presented in some respects as non-racial as both African and European ancestry were essential. Especially as dominant European culture was being subverted in some ways; as Manley states, "we are not English, and we should never want to be" (Nettleford and Manley 1971). The nationalist frame of Creole Multiracialism then provided a space for the hybrid body as a political object that is neither colonizer nor the other (Thame 2017). Thus, the presence of a colonial authority is made immediately less visible.

However, scholars have long contended the role of race in nation building via Creole Multi-Racialism. Meeks (2000) argues that leaders tended to define the goals of social movements as national, classed, and social, while those of the people were invariably raced. Austin-Broos (1994) and Thomas (2004) explain that nationalist efforts created a Jamaican

identity resembling classical European nationalism, founded on notions of a common history and culture rather than race, thus obscuring the conflation of class with race. Thomas (2002) further argues that this "Out of Many, one People" ideology “deflected active relationships to contemporary struggles in Africa and contained the development of other mobilizing ideologies along class or racial lines within the nationalist movement” (p. 515). While Thame (2017) contends that the meanings of Jamaicanness asserted by Creole Multi-Racial Nationalism were raced by deploying hybridity or brownness as a uniting force which defined Jamaica as a place for a hybrid culture and body. I posit that this belief of hybridity fostered the belief that most Jamaicans share commonalities in ‘blackness,’ whether through racial ancestry or culture. Thus, the project of Jamaica’s elites to form a Creole Multi-racial society under the motto “Out of many, one people,” is re-appropriated to mean “Out of many, one (black) people” (Thomas 2004:1). This “one (black) people,” however, I argue can be understood as blackness essential to creolization - via mixed racial ancestry or culture, not blackness as it relates to political ideology and identity.

***Jamaican Exceptionalism.*** In opposition to this ideal of creolization, there were also other forms of nationalism that empowered blackness (Levi 1992), however, nationalist frames that had explicit black racial ideological narratives were framed as divisive and disparaged by state elites (Hamilton 1978; Johnson 2005; Nettleford 1965, 1970). As Norman Manley stated in a national address that such racial empowerment narratives are “*fertile field for sowing ideas that do not belong to us, and for using powerful and good emotions that cling to the idea of Black Power for purposes that mean nothing to us*” and “*an attempt to dominate whites, divide and segregate the nation*” (Manley 1939:381). Black Nationalist movements were not just framed as divisive but there was governmental action to suppression such movements in the island. For

examples, in 1963, then Prime Minister Alexandra Bustamante orchestrated the “Coral Gardens Incident” in which Rastafarians were rounded up and killed (Campbell and Vallette 2014). Thus, all explicit discussions of race, black pride were framed as divisive and effectively suppressed (Brown-Glaude 2007). Consequently, Jamaica was framed as non-racial (Vickerman 1999) all while making brownness or hybridity the center of not only identity, but for racial discourse and power (Thame 2017).

I argue that one way in which this discrepancy between hybrid identification and non-racialism by leaders, and the desire of the people for a national identity that fully included blackness and the black body, was through the ideology of Jamaican Exceptionalism, a narrative that uplifted blacks without being explicitly racial, as Gray (1991) states, it was an;

*“ideology [that] sought to purge the antagonistic elements from the ideology of the urban unemployment by hailing the subordinate classes as exemplary racial neuters in a world torn by ethnic disorder and strife. The appeal to the overwhelming black population was they were a special people in the world, who lived harmoniously with other domestic ethnic groups”* (p. 82).

The framing of the predominantly black underclass as “*racial neuters*” (Gray 1991) denotes that the nation’s black population are incapable of seeing race or racial differences between themselves or others, thus being effectively color-blind. As Vickerman (1999) explains, this ideology of Jamaican Exceptionalism supported the idea of Jamaica as “*a multiracial society in which a variety of groups coexist so amicably that the society is effectively non-racial*”<sup>11</sup> (p. 37).

Along with this movement in the political sphere, in the social arena, non-racial framing was further illustrated in the ambiguity of racial classification and the use of skin color epithets

reflective of Jamaicans' understandings of race. This ambiguity of racial classification and the use of skin color epithets reflect the permeability of racial boundaries.

*"I had never ever heard anybody either call themselves, or refer to anybody else as "Black." Never. I heard a thousand other words. My grandmother could differentiate about fifteen different shades between light brown and dark brown."* (Hall 1997:53).

*"For a Caribbean person to call or (nick-) name a fellow islander of Chinese background "Mr. Chin," a mixed person a "browning" or "red skin girl," a white person "whitey," or a black person "Blacka" is usually not a show of disrespect but rather a neutral observation turned into a form of address... Whereas in the United States the category white generally means to exclude all those who have any "non-white blood," in Jamaica "white" has been an inclusive category that embraces not only Anglo-Saxons, but also Jews, Syrians, and even some people with multiracial or Chinese background."* (Henke 2001:56).

This all led to bolstering non-racial forms of belonging. As a result, many Jamaicans of the post-independence era who support this non-racial narrative are quick to point out that since independence; questions of race have seldom been raised explicitly in Jamaican politics (Sherlock and Bennet 1998).

This supposedly all-inclusive, non-racial nation-building frame in Jamaica stands in contrast, for example, to its Caribbean neighbor, the Dominican Republic. Its national ideology was developed partly through an openly exclusionary framing that targeted Haiti, Haitians, and resident populations in the Dominican Republic perceived as Haitian. Political leaders such as

Trujillo and Balaguer played pivotal roles in the emergence and maintenance of this anti-Haitian, and in extension, anti-Afro-descent/anti-black ideology (Sagás 2000). Sagás' (2000) assessment is made more compelling by Ruling 0168-13 of the Dominican Constitutional Tribunal in 2013 that essentially granted permission for the mass deportation of anyone born in the Dominican Republic after 1929 without at least one parent who was a Dominican citizen (Archibold 2013; De Castro 2013). Even amidst strong condemnation from CARICOM, the Dominican Republic has continued to deport thousands of Dominican-born Haitians (Amnesty International 2016; Ruiz 2015).

This creolization ideology -similar to that of *mestizaje* or racial mixing in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean- ultimately served as a “*legitimizing framework*” upon which light-skinned, mixed-raced, middle strata Jamaicans could dominate post-independence politics (e.g., Norman Manley and Alexander Bustamante) (Nas, et. al. 2009), and essentially served as a tool of conflict control. The campaigns of nation-building elite’s pushed class to the forefront; Alexander Bustamante known as a champion of the working-class and Norman Manley had strong socialist leanings. Thus, race and skin color inequality in Jamaica was framed as solely a class issue despite the historical and continued presence of a race and skin color hierarchy.

### *Ethno-Racial Division*

In Jamaica, there are plenty of critics of the creolization and/or the non-racial lens on in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They point out, for example, that it is highly improbable that the country’s ethno-racial dynamics could have been so easily channeled into a sense of non-racial, nation-based kinship ideology. Although something akin to creolization may have manifested itself through evolving mixed cultural forms in, for example, the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,



sharp ethno-racial boundaries surely persisted. Thus, for example, beginning in the 1930's there was the rise of Garveyism that closely resembled U.S. Black Nationalism. Parts of this movement and ideology later evolved into the race- and color-conscious Rastafarian movement.

The search for a national cultural identity between the 1940's and 60's would be consolidated through Creole multiracial nationalism that would legitimate Jamaica as a modern and progressive state: accomplished through the development of a version of cultural specificity stemming from fusion of secular and sacred practices by black Jamaicans before and after emancipation from slavery. Yet, the intellectual emphasis on racial equality from a new creolized image would nevertheless reproduce aspects of colonial class/color/cultural hierarchies (Thomas 2002). Rather counterintuitively, the intellectual elite would continue class domination by acting as the cultural and political gatekeepers of the nation over the lower classes (Thomas 2002).

This focus on class-dynamics ignored the historical and continued ways in which race and color were intertwined in the class dynamics evidenced on the island. There was an attempt to bring this race/color focus into the public's sphere by Marcus Garvey through his organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, and the establishment of Rastafarianism. Additionally, the 1930s and 40s would also cultivate a small but elite sect of influential intellectuals seeking to incorporate Marxist praxis into the nationalist movement through the People's National Party (PNP) (Thomas 2002).

While this gained some steam with some sects of the population, the middle classes would largely view emphasis towards public racial consciousness as regressive, in contrast to those inspired by the sanctification of their African roots through Rastafarianism (Brodber 1987; Brodber and Greene 1988; Chevannes 1976; Nettleford 1970). Social and political consciousness through Black Nationalism was not only the domain of the urban poor, as the professional

middle classes faced an ideological conundrum post-independence. Independence had provided them with political power and social mobility, but they still faced economic exclusion due to colonial era distributions of land ownership which dictated the access to the growing industries of manufacturing and tourism. As such, the middle classes did not experience any growth in wealth.

*“In February 1972, the Manley-led PNP [People’s National Party] became the government and began a policy of growth with redistribution within the dependent capitalist structure”* (Bernal 1984:59). The PNP, after seizing power after the 1972 general election, would use the heightening of black consciousness, especially mobilizing the Rastafarian movement, which emphasized African roots, social awareness, and black redemption, a symbol around which they could push their rhetoric. Newly radicalized members of the PNP would attempt to circumvent the old elite power structure through consolidating the public sector, thus allowing the new rising elites of the middle classes access to economic and political power. Manley’s administration would develop and initiate many new social programs, as well as nationalize pivotal sectors of the Jamaican economy (Stephens and Stephens 1986). Joining the Non-Aligned Movement promoted the country’s identification with Africa and the rest of the Third World over an emphasis on the British Commonwealth and Jamaicans were encouraged to organize in accordance with increased international consciousness around race and feminism towards local development. However, Black Nationalism was not explicitly a national focus, as despite this heightened racial consciousness, Jamaica’s struggles during this period were primarily posited as conflicts of language and class. Universalist interpretations of socialism would subsume these conflicts under a need for working-class comradeship over black consciousness (Thomas 2002).

However, as the Jamaican government, the PNP who had a democratic socialist agenda, was unable to sustain consistent economic growth, coupled with increases in violence, it resulted in the mass flight of local elites and middle-class in the face of such economic decline in the 1970s (Bernal 1984). Because of renewed ties with Cuba, the opposition party, the JLP, ventured on an anti-communist spurred by U.S. unrest which initiated a CIA campaign to destabilize the Manley administration (Bolles 1996). With this, the PNP's reign came to an end, including the country's ties to Cuba and all the social programs planned by Manley. Thus, this shifted Jamaica's economic focus from democratic socialism to free-market capitalism, which motivated the return migration of the elite minorities which would result in the displacement and desolation of fledgling black owned businesses which had arose in their absence (Stone 1991; Thomas 2002).

Seaga's collaboration with Ronald Reagan on the Caribbean Basin Initiative would also reform Jamaica's foreign relations with the United States and lead to the country's involvement and subsequent dependency on the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank which resulted in increased poverty. The island's increasing economic disparity would inflame social and political violence and encourage emigration. All of this would converge in to a reestablishment of a hegemony of whiteness and a "*quiet ridiculing and denigration of blackness*" (Robotham 1993:12). Subsequently, the local population would be signaled an intimation that nonalignment, democratic socialism, and blackness brought the country to ruin. The JLP's economic policies would, as such, foster the restoration of the old class/color hierarchies (Thomas 2002).

So it was that in post-independence Jamaica, a whole class of 'radical' intellectuals arose to challenge the establishment construction of a non-racial Jamaica (Dupuy 1996). Reflecting

that critical lens on non-racialism, Cooper (2012) argues, for example, that the nation's motto ('Out of many, one people') "*marginalizes the nation's black majority by asserting that the idealized face of the Jamaican nation is multiracial.*" This assessment suggests support for Chatterjee's (1995) theoretical assertion that the construction of 'one people' through processes of national consciousness and nation-building often undermines the struggle of subaltern populations (see also James, 1998). Austin-Broos (1994) too counters the suggestion of a mixed, non-racial Jamaica, asserting "*the enduring pre-eminence of "race" as the meaning that specifies Jamaican experience. Racialized notions of ethnicity as rendered in the color categories become the central content of Jamaican culture*" (p. 215).

Hence, in the post-independence era, both race-focused and non-racial frames co-existed (Nettleford, 1970), and both continue to do so today. The salience of both perspectives is apparent in Jamaica's 2010 report to the UN's International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (ICERD):

*"Racism does not manifest itself as it does in other countries. The greater challenge for Jamaica is overcoming the residual impact of slavery on the society as skin color is sometimes approximated with opportunities for upward or social mobility. The data that is available and the policies being implemented by the Government are not aimed at addressing specific racial groups. The focus of the Government's policies and programs is also on ensuring that measures are in place to address the needs of economically and socially disadvantaged groups, particularly those who are impoverished or living in depressed communities"* (UN Doc. CERD/C/JAM/16-20, p. 3).

*“There are no institutional policies or laws in Jamaica that serve to encourage racial discrimination. All racial groups enjoy equal status before the law”* (p. 4).

Even though an acknowledgement is made that skin color is perceived as a determinant for upward mobility, the report nonetheless emphasizes that all racial groups enjoy equal status and offers no suggestion on how the Jamaican government might address the situation of Afro-Jamaicans. This is despite numerous observations of discriminatory dynamics in Jamaica made by the CERD.

A striking example of continuing racial and skin color tensions in contemporary Jamaica is the ongoing debate on the island surrounding dancehall music. Dancehall is a genre of music in Jamaican society that was invented and popularized by the working- and under-class (Thomas 2002). This style is primarily done in Jamaican creole or Patois and centers on topics of sex, violence, and life ‘in the ghetto’. In 2009 there was a ban placed on dancehall music and what could be played on radio. Supporters of the ban cited that the lyrics were too vulgar and incited violence, especially among the young. However, opponents state that this ban did not stem from a concern for inciting violence among the masses, but it was a display of power and class (Cooper 2009). Dancehall in and of itself is a display of working-class and, to a significant degree, African/Afro-centered culture in the use of creole over English, the fast beats, open sensuality, and political and socioeconomic protest discourse regarding colonial power (Cooper 2004; 2012). It constitutes a type of counter-culture in resistance to Anglo-centric culture. Hence, the disdain for dancehall music is interpreted as a remnant of colonialism, a desire to control or constrain blackness by presenting it as vulgar, brutish, and uncivilized. Specifically, with the global popularity of dancehall music as popular culture, cultural identity is no longer

firmly under the influence of the nation's elites. Though, this debate is focused mostly on class differences, there is an obvious but understated race dynamic.

Therefore, though creolization presented itself in the emergence of mixed cultural forms; racial distinctions persisted similarly as it did in Latin America after centering nation building around an emphasis on mixed-race individuals (Telles 2004; Telles and Sue 2009). Thus, creolization and/or the non-racial lens, in the late 19th and 20th century, was criticized in Jamaica for the improbability of channeling a sense of non-racial, nation-based kinship ideology. Even with some recognition of both covert and overt racial tension in contemporary Jamaica, the privilege associated with lighter skin color is still widely embraced and sought after as evidenced by the skin-bleaching epidemic in Jamaica. This practice is representative of the vestiges of colonialism left behind in Jamaica (Charles 2009; Johnson 2004). It is embedded in colorism: the notion that lighter or being closer to whiteness is better (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich 2008; Harris 2008; Hannon 2015; Kinsbrunner 1996; Sue 2009; Telles 2004). Individuals who engage in practices of skin bleaching or lightening are mostly portrayed in popular media and documentaries as from working-class backgrounds.<sup>7</sup> The most common explanation given by these individuals is that being of a lighter skin color offers better life-chances and/or preferential treatment (Blay 2011; Brown-Glaude 2007; Charles 2003, 2009; Wallace 2010).

However, bleaching is often framed as pathology: a form of mental illness or the manifestation of self-hate (Brown-Glaude 2007; Charles 2003, 2009). This framing effectively delegitimizes overarching claims that there are privileges and advantages associated with lighter skin in Jamaican society (Wallace 2010). In addition, skin-bleaching is framed exclusively as a class struggle, which is used to support the idea that Jamaica is free of racial problems (Henke

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<sup>7</sup> For example, see: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmY0\\_l6BNPc&index=26&list=WL](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmY0_l6BNPc&index=26&list=WL)

2001). In sum, there is little doubt that race and skin color continue to stratify contemporary Jamaica. As a group of scholars' write, "*business and politics [were and arguably still are] being dominated by lighter skinned Jamaicans, including ethnic groups of Middle Eastern, Asian, and Jewish descent*" (Nas, et. al. 2009:100).

It becomes clear, then, that there is substantial debate regarding the salience of a transcending national identity I label *ethnic oneness* in Jamaica that might efficiently subsume largely irrelevant ethno-racial boundaries through a lens of admixture or fusion. Moreover, if an ideology of ethnic oneness is indeed a salient, generalized framing in Jamaica, does it still structure perceptions of nationhood and does it provoke a denial of racial discrimination?

## CHAPTER 2

### **The Centering of Hybridity in Contemporary Interpretations of Jamaican Nationhood**

These frames of Creole Multiracialism and Jamaican Exceptionalism support each other by presenting Jamaica as a non-racial society and politicians attempts to foster a ‘one people’ national identity effectively functioned as a “*legitimizing framework*” upon which mixed-race and/or light-skinned, middle strata Jamaicans could dominate post-independence politics (Nas, et. al. 2009). The inclusion, and integrally the elevation of hybridity, represented by the country’s motto and supporting ideology, formed the nation’s face as ‘brown’ – the embodiment of creolization. Hence, hybridity, whether through culture or the body, a requirement for group or ethnic inclusion.

Considering Jamaica’s diffused and unique iteration of an ideology of racial mixing or creolization via the nationalist frame of Creole Multi-racialism, I ask: are these beliefs reflected in contemporary perceptions and boundary construction of nationhood of Jamaican citizens? Given the historical centering of hybridity as the image of what Jamaicanness comprises, is this still the case? Using in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 25 adult Jamaican citizens, I examine (1) the role of race in the construction and interpretations of nationhood as evidence through the continued use of a creole multiracial nationalist frame. Thus, examining the raced parameters of Jamaican national identity, (2) the dynamics of race relations on the island, and (3) perceptions of racial and color prejudice and discrimination. I argue that interpretations of contemporary nationalism still obscure the conflation of race and class while simultaneously elevating brownness or hybridity as quintessential to nationhood.



## DATA AND METHODS

The central mode of data collection used for this study was semi-structured, in-depth interviews, which were conducted with 25 adult Jamaican citizens (see Appendix A for interview guide). Along with this, I used an amended version of the Bogardus Social Distance Scale (see Appendix B) to assess group boundaries. The Bogardus Social Distance Scale is a psychological testing scale created by Emory S. Bogardus to empirically measure people's willingness to participate in social contacts of varying degrees of closeness with members of diverse social groups, such as racial and ethnic groups. The scale comprises of seven situations that asks people the extent to which they would be accepting of each group, which were amended to reflect the racial group in Jamaica. Additionally, vignettes were used to garner responses on issues of nationalism, colorism, and practices in Jamaica that may be perceived as prejudice or discriminatory.

Lastly, to ascertain ethno-racial status, I used the race question from the Latin America Public Opinion Project or Americas Barometer on Jamaica. This question asked, “Do you consider yourself black, Indian, white, Chinese, mixed or of another race?” Furthermore, the Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA) skin color palette (see Appendix C) was used to rank respondents skin color starting from very light (1) to very dark (11) (presented as SCR – skin color rating). Skin color, in addition to ethno-racial classification was necessary to analyze as Blay (2001), Charles (2009), Stone (1973) and Wallace (2010) all cite skin color as important in terms of perceptions of privilege and better life outcomes. Therefore, differences in skin color, and possibly linked experienced differences in treatment, may affect whether one employs a nationalist or colorist frame to discuss issues of color discrimination. To more stringently test this, I ensured that respondents were all the same educational level; because of

networks it was easier to sample those who had a college degree or more. Hence, interview participants are not representative of the Jamaican population.

To identify participants for the study, I initially approached personal contacts and a high school alumni organization. A recruitment message was posted in this alumni association's social media account on Facebook. This recruitment post detailed the topic of the study, types of questions to be asked, time frame of interview, and medium through which interviews could be conducted. From these initial contacts, interviewees were recruited via snowball sampling. Interviews were conducted from April to August of 2017. IRB Guidelines for anonymity and confidentiality were followed. Interviews ranged from 30 to 120 minutes and questions consisted of open-ended questions about four broad topics: (1) racial and skin tone classifications, (2) race relations in Jamaica, (3) perceptions and experiences of colorism/racism in Jamaica, and (4) perceptions and experiences of colorism/racism while living aboard.

As respondents were required to provide retrospective accounts in some of the questions asked, the subjectivity and unreliability of memory may introduce reconstructions of the past (Snow and Machalek 1983). Regardless, contemporaneous narratives incorporating the past (Polletta, Trigoso, Adams, and Ebner 2013) are pertinent to current perceptions and should not be disregarded. Finally, social desirability biases are recognized in the study as motivators for individuals to provide more optimistic accounts, though the opportunity for someone, even if a stranger, to listen to their experiences and perceptions may also encourages honest revelations in the recall of the experiences (Morrill, Snow, and White 2007). Although findings from the sample cannot be generalized to the Jamaican population, interviews offered fruitful insight into beliefs and understanding of Jamaican nationalism, parameters of group membership and the

subsequent perceptions of racial and color inequality for a cross-section of the population (largely middle-class females). Table 2.1 includes a sample description of the 25 interviewees.

**Table 2.1.** Demographic Characteristics of 25 Interview Respondents

<u>Demographic Characteristics</u>	<u>Categories</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Country residing in at time of interview	Jamaica	13	52
	the United States	8	32
	Britain	2	8
	South America	1	4
	Europe	1	4
Race	Black	14	56
	Mixed-race	10	40
	White	1	4
Sex	Male	5	20
	Female	20	80
Highest level of Education	Completed college	13	52
	Graduate school	12	48
Employment Status	Unemployed	1	4
	Self-employed	3	12
	Students	9	36
	Part-time worker	1	4
	Full-time worker	11	44
Marital Status	Married/cohabitating/Common law	10	40
	Single	15	60
Location	Rural	7	28
	urban	18	72
Age	Min/Max/Mean	25/46/31	
Skin Color	Min/Max/Mean	1/10/6.5	
Total 25			

## FIDINGS

By exploring the four topics covered in my interview guide - (1) racial and skin tone classifications, (2) race relations in Jamaica, (3) perceptions and experiences of colorism/racism in Jamaica, and (4) perceptions and experiences of colorism/racism while living aboard - several themes emerged. However, as this paper focuses on the construction of nationhood for contemporary Jamaican citizen, only four themes will be expounded upon. These four themes are: Achieved Creolization, The Centering of Hybridity in National Identity, Raced Group Dynamics, and Perceptions of Race/Color Prejudice and Discrimination.

### *Achieved Creolization*

To assess the prevalence of this ideology of creolization amongst Jamaican citizens in contemporary society, interviewees were asked to provide rough estimates of the ethno-racial composition of the population. Respondents reported at least 10%, or at most 50%, of the population was of mixed race; higher percentages were most common among the interviewees. For these estimates, no distinction was made by respondents between black or non-black mixed race. When attempts were made to disaggregate this, respondents stated that it was hard to do because being of mixed racial ancestry is not always visible but did not dispel the possibility that someone could be racially mixed. However, from this assessment it can be surmised that most respondents assumed that African ancestry was a forgone conclusion in interpretations of what being mixed race meant on the island. Additionally, respondents cited the white, East Indian and Chinese population as exceeding 10% of the total population. This conflicts with official statistics as the 2001 Jamaican census note that 6.2% of Jamaica's population self-identify as non-black mixed-race, with the remaining 3%, Chinese, East Indian, white, or 'other' (World

Bank 2013). Claims that Jamaica is a racially mixed society is exemplified by Amelia's comment:

*"I also tend to think everyone at this point is mixed in some way. Even though it might not show physically on your skin, like I think I'm mixed. I would consider myself mixed in terms of my blood and my heritage, but it doesn't really show overtly in my skin color. If I did a DNA test, I'm sure you would find some Irish blood in there somewhere, maybe some Indian, you know what I mean? So, I do tend to think everyone, at this point, I don't think anyone is strictly African anymore. I think we're all mixed, but in terms of the physical appearance how it manifest[s] on our skin, that puts me in that block, that says I'm black. But if you're lighter and have features like a bigger nose, I would say you're mixed."*

*– Amelia, 28, black, SCR 9*

All respondents expressed similar beliefs to Amelia that Jamaica is a largely racially mixed country, with African ancestry being central to that racial mixture. And while majority Afro-descent, there is a sizable group of racial others despite global perceptions of the country being "just black". All but one respondent stressed that this racial mixture is based on how Jamaicans think of themselves and not necessarily what exists, as in a different context, like the U.S., they all would just be seen as black. This perception of high levels of miscegenation on the island reflects the acceptance of a creolized or hybrid nation. Most respondents saw the country as a true melting pot where the establishment of the hybrid body is so complete that it is indistinguishable. Thus, there is an understanding that being Jamaican on some level means being mixed; blacks themselves can be mixed, even if dark-skinned (Nettleford 1965, 1970;

Thame 2017), like Amelia. Hence, brownness or the hybrid body is centered in the perception of nationhood as most respondents believed that the population is mixed in some way.

### *The Centering of Hybridity in National Identity*

As so many respondents perceived Jamaica to be a racially mixed society led me to discuss boundaries of Jamaicanness. In assessing this, I asked respondents to detail what the national motto meant to them as well as to describe their thoughts on who an ideal representation of what it means to be Jamaican is. Seven of the 25 respondents stressed that the national motto meant that everyone can have equal share in nationhood despite skin color and ethnic background and that the ideal Jamaican was someone who simply participated and appreciated the culture. Other respondents stated that the motto meant to them that Jamaica was a mixed country; both in its people and culture. Thus, the ideal representation of the country had to be 'black' in some way. When pressed about the racial and/or skin color representation of this individual, it was stated that the individual had to be 'black,' whether phenotypically or culturally.

*“I think being Jamaican also means that you kind of have black in you. I guess I sort of feel like if you're white Jamaican that you're not really Jamaican...I think when you asked to describe the ideal Jamaican it should be somebody that's black and that's successful... they embrace the culture, but they also embrace other cultures, as well. They are a real ambassador for Jamaica, you know. Well, I wouldn't say a good ambassador for Jamaica is a white person... I think other races that are not black [don't also fit the ideal image of being Jamaican].”*

*– Amelia, 28, black, SCR 9*

More specifically, 9 respondents stated explicitly that the ideal representation of a Jamaican was someone who was racially mixed “who wasn’t too light or too dark” (ranking roughly a 6 on the PERLA color palette). Only one respondent stated that this person had to be dark-skinned (roughly a 10 or 11 on the PERLA color palette).

*“I think the ideal Jamaican is someone who is mixed, like me. That’s what being Jamaican has meant to me, it was what I saw in my family, the friends I had. They all were mixed in some way even if it didn’t show outright on them, like in their hair or in their skin. They were all mixed with something.”*

– Colleen, 39, mixed, SCR

Additionally, all respondents stressed that they ideal Jamaican should represent the creolized culture. This stress placed on the embrace of Jamaican culture by respondents illustrates a Jamaican Exceptionalism frame, as this adaptability signifies harmonious living amongst all ethnic groups on the island. But there is also the undertone of a signaling of ‘blackness’ as requirement for membership. This “blackness”, whether racially mixed or not, does not mean having dark skin - as only one respondent stated this - but, as part of a racial or hybrid mix. The elevation of mixed racial ancestry as the center of national identity and belonging showcases the ideals of Creole Multi-racial nationalism. Respondents, especially those who identified as racially mixed themselves, discussed this hybridity found it tenets of creolization in terms of the body. This hybrid body was understood and discussed as the projected vision of the nation’s people, particularly given the national motto. Hence, mixed racial ancestry signaled the ideal of Jamaicanness.

Another way in which this hybridity was discussed was in way of culture; the ability to speak Patios well in addition to Jamaican Standard English. This is framed as racial and cultural

hybridity as indigeneity and distinct to Jamaican culture as separate from that of the British but still requiring a measure of civility (Thame 2017).

*“Aside from this [being racially mixed], I would also say that you have to know how to chat patwa<sup>8</sup>, of course not just patwa, you should be able to speak Standard Jamaican English as well, but patwa is a must. You can’t be a real Jamaican and not know how to speak patwa, you have to represent and partake in the culture and language is a big part of it.”*

*– Colleen, 39, mixed, SCR 7*

Jamaican cultural distinctiveness (a sentiment was echoed by all respondents), a coalescence of European (Jamaican Standard English) and African (Patos) (Bolland 1998; Braithwaite 1971), was further illustrated in the names of individuals presented as ideal representations of the nation. Two of the names repeatedly offered were Louise Bennett-Coverely, a Jamaican folklorist, poet, writer and educator (referred to as the ‘mother of Jamaican culture’), and Oliver Samuels, a Jamaican comedian and actor (referred to the Jamaican ‘king of comedy’). These were and are cultural figures who have worked towards the popularization of Patois in the Arts. However, both were educated in England, which aided in the perceived qualifications since their overt use of Patois was not seen as an inability to speak ‘properly’ or a lack of civility. This hybridity of culture illustrates a convergence of race/color with class as Jamaican Standard English creates respectability while Patois authenticates an individual. This was highlighted by statements by respondents that anyone could be Jamaican if they grew up and participated in culture; for which the ability to speak Patios was used as a measure.

As Thomas (2002) argues, the Creole Multi-Racial Nationalism that existed in Jamaica up until independence in 1962 was not one that reflected a shared destiny for those of Afro-

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<sup>8</sup> The phonetic spelling of Patios (Cassidy).



descent, rather, Jamaican identity was based on common history and culture, and this seem to still be the case This ‘one (black) people’ consciousness (Thomas 2004) is widely perceived as the commonality in blackness among its people, that is, again, blackness as it relates to a creolized body and culture:

*“I also think that because Jamaica is rooted in a creolized culture, which is also rooted in black culture, African culture, there is a tendency for people who are not black to identify as such... You grow up in a black majority country and you ascribe to a black culture, that's part of what being black is, outside of skin tone, obviously.”*

*-Elizabeth, 33, mixed, SCR 8*

In Elizabeth’s quote the channeling of a “one people” narrative is seen, or more specially, as Thomas (2004) states, the redefining of a “out of many, one (black) people” (p. 1). The elevation of the nation’s black population through the ideology of Jamaican Exceptionalism, along with tenets of Creole Multiracialism creates an idealized face of Jamaica that is black multiracial in the perceptions of Jamaican citizens. Therefore, ‘blackness’ in way of mixed racial ancestry, skin color (i.e. brownness), and/or language capabilities is made a requirement. Thus, this shared Creole Multiracial Nationalist identity remains part of the country’s legacy in continuing racial hierarchy as Jamaicanness is understood as mixedness (Thame 2017).

### *Raced Group Dynamics*

This was further evidence in discussion of group dynamics on the island. Despite beliefs about the population ethno-racial demographics in Jamaica and sharing in this racially mixed ideology, many presented racist stereotypes about racial/ethnic groups present on the island as well as discussed ways in which racial domination is (or perceived to be) maintained in Jamaica.

To get at this, I asked respondents what some of the things were, both good and bad, that they had heard about the different groups present in Jamaica and if they believed power and respect was allocated differently amongst them. Blacks were stereotyped as physically strong, hardworking, and loud/vibrant; which was also replicated the characteristics respondents cited as representing what being Jamaican meant to them in terms of valued personality traits. This was directly juxtaposed to those who were mixed-race, who were framed as physically more desirable, privileged, and educated. All respondents spoke of the perception that lighter skin automatically signaled mixed racial status, and thus, middle class status.

*“In terms of the jobs, there's still a lot of people who, yeah, they will look at potential employees and think the lighter-skinned person must come from a better background. They must be better educated and must be more intelligent just from seeing the fact that they have lighter skin. Again, I think a lot of that is the assumption lighter skin means more money. If you come from more money, you would have had a better education. Then naturally you're going to be more intelligent, stuff like that. You're going to speak better. I think it's again that tie that we have between skin color and class, where the assumption is if you're lighter skinned, you're coming from a higher class so there's certain things that you have somebody who's darker wouldn't have.”*

*– Faith, 40, mixed, SCR 3*

Though many blacks in Jamaica claim hybridity (being racially mixed in some way; see quote by Amelia above as an example), “the qualification of “light skin” continues to remain the source of status and power” (Thame 2017:122), thus valued for itself (Broom 1954).

‘White’ Jamaicans, which encompasses those of Middle Eastern background as well as some extremely light-skinned mixed-race or Afro-Jamaicans, were overall framed as powerful, wealthy, respected, and exclusive, with many respondents citing some level of discomfort with the group. Similarly, discomfort and perceived exclusion was perceived for other non-black groups on the island. For example, all respondents spoke of the isolation of the Chinese:

*“I think that there is an attempt at a certain level of, I don't want to say segregation, but there is a separation between the groups and an inherent hesitation to integrate heavily amongst Chinese and Asians specifically. Obviously being half Asian, that applies to me personally less.”*

*– Elizabeth, 33, mixed, SCR 8*

But many respondents recognized the economic power the group continues to secure for themselves on the island. This display of economic prowess is both viewed positively and negatively. This monopoly of the retail sector in Jamaica is viewed to have stemmed from the group’s distinctive cultural capital. Thus, Chinese-Jamaicans are business minded and the respect for this specific skillset is denoted in informal forms of address as Jamaicans commonly refer to all Asians (except East Indians) as “Mr./Mrs/Ms. Chin.” While this form of address may be viewed as derogatory in some ways as there is the underlying presumption that all East Asians in Jamaica are Chinese, it still showcases a form of difference as they are the only ethno-racial group on the island that is given a formal title as part of their informal, observational, descriptor (Henke 2001). However, due to the Chinese’s monopoly of wealth - many interviewees stated that the group would rather recruit a distant relative from their homeland to succeed them in their businesses rather than promote any of their black workers to managerial positions - the group is

viewed as “stingy,” “all for themselves,” and “mean” (in reference to money), which is further encapsulated by their perceived aversion to interracial marriage<sup>9</sup>.

*“I would say the Chinese, they can be a little more exclusive, more into themselves, they stick to their culture, and they really don't marry outside their race, from what I've seen, at least.”*

*– Amelia, 28, black/mixed, SCR 9*

Here the continuation of 20<sup>th</sup> century discord between Chinese and Afro-Jamaicans are evidence as the Chinese are still seen as insular (Lee-Loy 205).

This view of exclusion and hoarding of wealth was also attributed to East Indians, who are labeled as ‘coolies’; which again while derogatory, is used as an informal descriptor for the group but mostly for those who are perceived as being “mixed with [East] Indian.”

*“Coolie mentality is a thing I've always heard about my entire life. I've heard it from my parents. I've heard it from friends. I've heard it from people in conversation. They talk about "thieving Coolies" and they're always looking to haggle and try to skimp on spending money... Most people if you ask them about Coolies, that's one of the things they're going to say.”*

*– Faith, 40, mixed, SCR 3*

Here the belief or accusation that was once placed on Chinese as engaging in unfair practices (Lee-Loy 2015:147-148) have been transposed to East Indians. The word ‘coolie’ was historically used to refer to Chinese indentured labor, however as it has been appropriated to address East Indians, the stereotypes surrounding the terms as shifted to the group.

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<sup>9</sup> Also, there were numerous stories from women in my sample about their, a relative, or friend’s personal experience regarding this issue of intermarriage, both between Jamaicans of Chinese and East Indian descent.

Despite the perception of economic success and purposeful isolation from blacks or non-blacks in Jamaica, a third of interviewees did not have extensive, continued, and/or intimate contact with individuals from these groups despite all identifying as middle class. Most interactions with these groups were limited to school (high school specifically) and that was largely due to which high schools' respondents attended. There are schools in Jamaica that are known to have higher percentages of non-black Jamaicans than others. This, inadvertently, was further used as evidence to confirm the exclusivity and isolation of the groups, particularly whites, Chinese, and East Indians, from blacks.

Many qualified these perceptions of racial groups on the island by stressing that this was not what they personally thought, however, when given the Bogardus Social Distance Scale, responses reflected these same feelings. This scale made respondents very uncomfortable, with a few wanting to make it known for the record that rankings were only done because they were asked, and one respondent outright refused to complete the scale. Results from the scale also showed that many felt the least comfortable with Chinese and white Jamaicans; they were often the group chosen when asked which group they would feel most comfortable expelling from the island. When respondents were asked to elaborate, they reiterated the argument that the Chinese<sup>10</sup> are insular and refuse to assimilate and that whites are too far removed from Jamaican culture.

This illustrates that hybridity continues to be centered in Jamaican nationhood. As creolization and/or hybridity refers to the convergence of African and European (Braithwaite 1971) or of the old and new world to create something new (Bolland 1998); it is understandable that that which is too direct a reflection of colonialism (i.e. white Jamaicans) or not a part of this

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<sup>10</sup> A note here is that the attitudes towards Chinese may be largely influenced by current neoliberal and neocolonial activities in Jamaica.

mixture, is casted outside the bounds of nationhood. So, while respondents themselves perceive Jamaica as a racially mixed society where anyone can participate in the culture, views of who fits within nationhood are obviously raced.

### *Perceptions of Race/Color Prejudice and Discrimination*

On the topic of perceptions of race and/or skin color prejudice and discrimination with interview participants, this was explicitly captured in the way respondents discussed the ways in which they thought race and skin color mattered in their treatment or the treatment of others. It was common for respondents to unconsciously equate non-black ethno-racial membership and lighter skin to higher levels of wealth and education.

*“I think my skin tone was less of an issue more so than my being mixed was an issue. I think being mixed kind of gave this connotation that I was from a certain class or that I had a certain amount of money or that I was different from everybody else.”*

*– Elizabeth, 33, mixed, SCR 8*

*“I think a lot of that is the assumption lighter skin means more money. If you come from more money, you would have had a better education. Then naturally you're going to be more intelligent, stuff like that. You're going to speak better. I think it's again that tie that we have between skin color and class, where the assumption is if you're lighter skinned, you're coming from a higher class so there's certain things that you have somebody who's darker wouldn't have.”*

*– Faith, 40, mixed, SCR 3*

Some respondents even cited ways in which this assumption of the linkage between race, and specifically skin color seen in the workplace and other social interactions.

*“I have a friend who is extremely dark skinned. She's also fairly voluptuous girl, you know, she's not slim. She's also one of the wealthiest people in Jamaica. I mean, I'm not going to say her name, but she comes from one of the wealthiest families in Jamaica. She wears a presidential Rolex on her hand every single day and people assume that she is poor, regardless of what arena she's in. We will go to a bar and they'll immediately ask for her card for payment, instead of allowing her to keep a tab.”*

*– Elizabeth, 33, mixed, SCR 8*

Like Elizabeth, some respondents noted how this assumption of level and quality of education was showcased in the workplace and in schools (when respondents were in high school) in terms of who was penalized for what actions. For example, Faith (40, mixed, SCR 3) noted in her interview that she dressed casually at work, but this was not made an issue, nor was she taken less seriously as compared to her darker skinned, female colleague. This was echoed by Collen (38, black/mixed, SCR 8) as she also had observed similar dynamics in the workplace. Further illustrating racial/color stereotypes, Marie (26, mixed, SCR 6) stated that her work colleagues always assumed she was not able to perform domestic tasks and always expressed shock when she did. For example, they would never expect her to perform any physical tasks like being able to cook for herself and so forth.

In relation to school dynamics, Marie also recounted an incident that made national news. The story was about two students who spat in the water they later offered to a teacher. This made national news because while such action would warrant immediate expulsion, punitive action

issued by the school was delayed and menial. This was especially problematic and caused national outrage as this was believed to have only been possible because one of the students involved was from one of the well-known, minority, elite families in Jamaica. Therefore, while skin color and racial biases do not express themselves as explicitly in schools and the workplace as it once did historically (as seen from the past exclusivity in traditional high school attendance and worker selection in the service industry), they still remain very much intact.

However, the acknowledgement of such is conflicted. For example, Faith, 40, mixed, SCR 3, stated:

*“Growing up in Jamaica, you can't miss the fact that a lot of the wealthier people have the fairer skin. That has been the case for as long as I can remember. [later in the interview] The most prejudiced people I do know here in Jamaica are the Jamaicans that have never traveled. They're the ones that they judge everybody that is a little different from them, everybody that looks different, whether dark, light or mixed, whatever. They're the ones, their views are so closed. They're the ones who will make the most accusations of being held down by other people's discrimination and prejudice. They can't actually think around an issue to see if there are other causes or other factors. They'll automatically jump to whatever's the simplest explanation which will be skin color or class difference or both of them.”*

Even though Faith recognizes and agrees that there is racial/color inequality present in Jamaica, she still present a counter class argument that in her view accounts for why would claim the two as central causes for discrimination. Faith's reference to travel reflects a class argument because those who can travel internationally, specifically those who can do so for recreational



purposes, is limited to those who possess the resources to do so, both financially and socially. Hence, the argument regarding race/color prejudice and discrimination becomes cyclical; those who are lighter skin tend to be wealthier, but those who do not have the class capital to travel intentionally lack reasonably foresight to accurately discern the cause of their oppression outside of color and class. This viewpoint is reflective of the sample as many thought social class was a more valid mechanism of why inequality existed on the island and in terms of race, it was viewed as unimportant, subtle, or not as extreme as the U.S. case.

*“I don't think it's overt racism in the same way that we see in the US for example. Again, maybe just because of our heritage, because there has been a lot of mixing, I don't think it's as overt as it was back in the days of slavery. Obviously, there was racism then. They thought black people were nothing and just barely better than animals. I definitely don't think it's anywhere near that level now, but I think there is still subtle racism in that there is still maybe unconscious biases. They think that people who are darker skinned are less educated, less intelligent, less likely to have certain opportunity ... I think because it's still very closely linked to class for us, we have a lot of classism. There's a lot of obvious classism, which again, ends up being very closely aligned to race. It's there, but I don't think it's as overt as in some other places.”*

*- Faith, 40, mixed, SCR 3*

As respondents were using the U.S. or the U.K as their reference point, Jamaica of course would not then have a ‘race problem’; despite explicit recognition that lighter skin and non-black status signals wealth, higher levels of education, and greater command of the English language. Even for those respondents who acknowledged that colorism was still an issue on the island, they

would ultimately return to class as the sole significant element of inequality. This was further illustrated when respondents were asked to state how important they thought particular factors were in contributing to poverty on the island. The factors presented to interviewees were; (a) laziness, little or no ambition, (b) lack of equal opportunity in Jamaican Society, (c) poor money management, and (d) prejudice and discrimination against persons because of their color or race. Despite majority listing lack of opportunity and racial/color discrimination as somewhat important, many still cited individual, behavioral reasonings as just as or more important in explaining poverty.

## DISCUSSION

I began this study asking whether the frame of Creole Multi-Racial Nationalism accompanied by the ideology of Jamaican Exceptionalism used during nation building efforts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was reflected in contemporary understandings of nationhood. I wanted to explore the role of race in orienting understandings of nationhood and the allocation and retention of power. The salience of this question lies in the historical and contemporary ethno-racial inequality in Jamaica (Kelly and Bailey 2018), and the argument by a group of scholars that ideologies of racial mixing, creolization, or ethnic fusion perpetuate social inequality (Bonilla-Silva and Glover 2005; Warren and Sue 2011; Winant 1999). By extending this discussion to the Anglo-Caribbean country of Jamaica that differs from Ibero-America in its colonial past and predominantly Afro-descent population, a more nuanced understanding of such ideology and its relation to social inequality is offered. My analysis of semi-structure, in-depth interviews data suggests three core findings: (1) Jamaicans strongly adhere to creolized or racial mixing ideology, (2) despite this, there are conflicting frames of “one nation or unity,” as

constructions of nationhood are heavily raced, with brownness or the hybrid body and culture placed at the center and (3) Jamaicans overwhelmingly focus on class for explaining social inequality, despite acknowledge of race and color based preferential treatment.

Findings indicate that like Ibero-America there is a strong sense of a racial mixing ideology. This ideology presents a hegemonic ideal that all Jamaicans, regardless of race or racial ancestry, are ‘pure Jamaicans’ despite consensual believe of the existence of a race and color-based hierarchy<sup>11</sup>. However, there is a strong sense that ‘brownness’ is preferable which was reflected in consistent appraisal of what lighter-skin signified in Jamaican society; greater wealth, higher levels of education and language capabilities. The success of the nationalist frame of Creole Multiracialism, which is encapsulated in the nation’s motto, has removed race and/or skin color in the minds of Jamaicans as a substantial and independent variable determining the distribution of resources in Jamaican society, despite all respondents citing behaviors believed to inform inequity as racialized. Since the national motto relies on an understanding of Jamaicanness as mixedness, it obscures the raced nature of inequality (Thame 2017) which marginalizes the black population (Cooper 2012). Unlike Sidaius and Pratto (1999) that found that European was framed as better than African in Dominica Republic, this was no quite the case in Jamaica. Yet, there is still evidence of social dominance as blackness, or more specifically black racial-mixedness, is framed as the ideal and imperative to nationalism.

Based on this finding, I argue that frames of nationhood, coupled with references and comparisons to the U. S. function to relegate the role of race and color in orienting social inequality. While there is a mismatch between the association of race and color to social inequality, with interviewees only linking race and color to attitudes/behaviors rather than institutional, unlike what has been documented in the literature on the effects of racial mixing

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<sup>11</sup> See also Sidanius et al. 2001 for similar finding in the Dominican Republic.

ideology and its ability to obfuscate racial discrimination this was not the case in Jamaica. Racial mixing ideology, as represented by Creole Multiracialism, is not completely color blind. Except for one respondent, all interviewees had travelled or lived outside of Jamaica for several years. Therefore, it can be argued that interaction with the racist structure with countries such as the U.S and UK via travel or media has subsequently shaped understandings of what racism is, in today's society. With the U.S. as the standard, Jamaica with its differential history of nation building (one of racial democracy as opposed to the U.S.'s outright exclusion of non-whites) would therefore not have racism. Though, respondents framed racism as belonging to the U.S. they did recognize that there is colorism in Jamaican society, however, class was listed as a mean through which one can escape the effects of this (money whitening or lightening, is this case).

Another way in which this raced nature of inequality is minimized is by the shift in the class status of blacks during Michael Manley's prime ministerial reign from 1972-1980. During this time period, due to Manley's socialist leanings, many mixed-race and non-black elites left Jamaica (Bernal 1984; Thomas 2002). This naturalization of key sectors within the economy, boosted by the creation of many social programs (Stephens and Stephens 1986), provided space for black Jamaicans to gain social mobility. However, after the Manley's reign came to an end, including the country's ties to Cuba and all the social programs planned by Manley, Jamaica's economic focus shifted from democratic socialism to free-market capitalism. This motivated the return migration of the elite minorities which would result in the displacement and desolation of fledgling black owned businesses which had arose in their absence (Stone 1991; Thomas 2002). What followed was a reforming of foreign relations with the U.S., which then led the country to be dependent on the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. What resulted was increased poverty, social and political violence, and a reestablishment of old class and color

hierarchies in Jamaica (Thomas 2002). Because during this timeframe, the class status of black Jamaicans increased (Gordon 1991), very few recognize how this economic shift in Jamaica reinforced class and color hierarchies.

Additionally, the demographics of the population may also be a factor in why these frames of nationhood are able to have the influence they do in making race and color seemingly inconsequential in Jamaican society. Particularly because of most Jamaicans are of varying degree of African ancestry, the average Jamaican citizen is hypothetically able to find black role models in all spheres of life, from the very rich and famous to the very poor and disadvantaged. This rendering blackness insignificant, hence the nation not read as hierarchized racially. However, relative to much of Latin America, research suggests that Jamaica has not seen as historically high levels of intermarriage between ethno-racial populations (Sio 1976). Hence, Jamaican beliefs about its mixed origins may be more an “*imagined community*” (Anderson 2006) than one in which a key motor of ethno-racial boundary crossing is ethno-racial intermarriage. While it is true that perceptions that a social fact is true may be just as important to it being of consequence, this may be tempered regarding the efficacy of myths of national origins. Relative rates of ethno-racial marriage may indeed be important and need further exploration. Furthermore, the census does group all Jamaicans of Afro-descent as ‘black.’ This grouping ignores the ways in which claims to non-black ancestry and having lighter skin, which is oftentimes viewed as a sign of racially mixed ancestry, denotes and allocates power; an acknowledgement made by respondents.

The privileging of lighter skin and mixed-race status has its historical roots from the structuring of work on plantations. Lighter skinned blacks, usually the progeny of violent and forced sexual assaults between white-owning planters and slaves, were given domestic rather

than manual labor like darker skinned blacks (Altink 2009; Johnson 2004). This privileging was based on proximity to whiteness which resulted in better life outcomes in the colonial racial hierarchy (Johnson 2004; Sio 1976; Thame 2017) and thus positioned mixed-race, lighter-skin, middle-strata Jamaicans ascent to political leadership. Considering the political opposition and subversion of Black Nationalism during the strife for independence (Brown-Glaude 2007; Campbell and Vallette 2014; Hamilton 1978; Johnson 2005; Nettleford 1965, 1970), this privileging was further consolidated by the uplifting of hybridity through Creole Multiracial Nationalism. This continues to be the cases as all but one of my respondents who identified as racially mixed, explicitly cited themselves as being the ideal representation of Jamaicanness, as opposed to my black respondents who cited traits are stated nationally known figures. Therefore, despite the racial composition of the population and documented levels of miscegenation, Jamaican nationhood is heavily raced, with the hybrid body and culture placed at the center. Thus, those who cannot lay authentic claims to this hybridity are placed outside the bounds of nationhood as evidence from the conflicting ways in which respondents discussed who constitutes the nation's "one people".

Also, as all respondents were college educated; those who were not born into middle-class status were able to attain this through education. Consequently, race and/or color has not restricted their social mobility, further relegating the workings of race/color to interpersonal interactions. The class of respondents may also account for the classed nature of how Jamaicanness was framed; language capabilities. The ability to speak both Jamaican Standard English and Patois was used as a mark of authenticity. This showcases the classed element of nationhood, as not only skin color but language use is used to signal and discern class background. Jamaican Standard English creates respectability while Patois authenticates an

individual. The requirement placed on both as signifiers of being ideally Jamaican is another way in which color and class domination is maintained.

However, this dual language requirement may change if the sample was diversified by social class; which is a point of future study and limitation of this study. Overall, responses of respondents reflect the often time scholarly discrepancies between independent effects of race/color and class, but with historical understanding, we see why race/colorblind ideologies fail.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Jamaican Ethnicized Oneness: The Masking of Racial Discrimination<sup>12?</sup>**

The regions of Latin America and the Caribbean have uniquely diverse ethno-racial populations. Their origins span the globe, with a history of European conquest and subordination (including genocide) of indigenous peoples, the importation of millions of African slaves for plantation economies, and international labor migration, including from Asia. In these respects, Latin America and the Caribbean are similar to the U.S. Also similar to the U.S. case, the legacies of these movements of peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean continue to play out in the persistence of significant social stratification along ethno-racial lines. Centuries later, the descendants of European colonizers (often categorized as ‘whites’) are generally at the top of ethno-racial hierarchies. The descendants of the original inhabitants (Indigenous peoples) and of African slaves (individuals of varying degrees of discernible African ancestry, often categorized as ‘blacks’) continue to occupy positions of disadvantage across all of the Americas (Bailey, Saperstein, and Penner 2014).

What accounts for the stability of ethno-racial hierarchy in ‘New World’ societies across centuries? A complete answer to that question is indeed complex and well beyond the reach or intent of this study. Nonetheless, we focus on one element that many scholars view as central to the maintenance of systems of domination pervasive throughout Latin America and parts of the Caribbean in the 20<sup>th</sup> and into the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries: ideologies of ‘*racial mixing*’ (e.g., Hernandez 2016; Paschel and Sawyer 2008; Warren and Sue 2011).<sup>13</sup> An ideology of mixing is a set of ruling ideas that positively characterize a country’s population as being of “mixed” ethno-racial

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<sup>12</sup> This chapter is published as a co-authored article in *Social Identities*, therefore, the language throughout will reflect this.

<sup>13</sup> Although we prefer the concept ‘population admixture’ (cf. Bryc et al. 2015), we use ‘racial mixing’ instead, as preferred by most of the literature we engage.



origin, often undergirding robust nation-based and/or racially ambiguous identifications (Bonilla-Silva and Grover 2008; Sue 2013). Scholarship have identified one of the origins of mixing ideologies in nation-building projects attempting to: (1) unify populations through privileging nation-based kinship over ethno-racial kinship boundaries, and/or (2) counteract the association of modernity with white racial purity, white superiority, and of the supposed error of racial mixing asserted by leading scientists in the U.S. and Europe (Bailey 2009; Loveman 2014).

As scholars note, countries where mixing ideologies are salient are often marked by ethno-racial stratification. How do contemporary scholars assert a causal connection between ideologies of racial mixing with white racial dominance across Latin America? They do so by positing that mixing ideologies produce a generalized denial of racial discrimination (Hanchard 1994; Paschel and Sawyer 2008). This obfuscating effect of mixing ideologies is thought to be particularly strong among individuals or populations who self-identify using racially ambiguous or nation-based categories (Bonilla-Silva and Grover 2008; Twine 1998; Warren and Sue 2011). Examples of the popular terminology that scholars often correlate with a lack of '*racial consciousness*' include: '*morenos*' in Brazil, as in the phrase '*we are all morenos*' (Guimarães 2001), '*mestizos*' and '*mexicanos*' in Mexico, from the idea of a Mexican cosmic race (Sue 2013), and '*dominicanos*' in the Dominican Republic (Sidanius, Peña, and Sawyer 2001).

Robust empirical work on the relationship between ideologies of mixing and the denial of racial discrimination, the latter conceptualized as a '*stratification belief*' (e.g., Kluegel and Smith 1981), is scarce concerning Latin America. Moreover, existing studies on that relationship in Latin America appear to fall into two camps. While one group of scholars argues that ideologies of mixing have produced a widespread denial of racial discrimination across Latin America (Hanchard 1994; Paschel and Sawyer, 2008; Warren and Sue 2011; Winant

1999), another has documented the opposite (Bailey 2009; Telles and Bailey 2013). These existing studies address Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (part of Ibero-America); we know very little about the English-speaking Caribbean (part of Anglo-America).

The Ibero-Anglo divide, conceptualized here as a colonial cleavage between the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns, on one side, and the British Crown, on the other, may be useful for understanding the possible effects of ideologies of mixing on stratification beliefs. The importance of understanding a population's stratification beliefs rests on the association of those beliefs to openness to anti-inequality strategies (Bobo, Charles, Krysan, and Simmons 2012). To begin to explore further the relationship of mixing ideology and stratification beliefs in the Americas, we bring into dialogue the case of Jamaica, an English-speaking country colonized by the British Crown. We explore Jamaican explanations for black poverty, as well as the salience of a national ideology of mixed origins that we term 'ethnic oneness.' We then examine whether or not an embrace of ethnic oneness affects the likelihood that Jamaicans acknowledge racial discrimination as structuring social inequality. We use quantitative methods and nationally representative data on Jamaica from the 2008 *Americas Barometer* social survey.

### *The Effect of Myths of Mestizaje*

Group conflict theory scholars hold that where there is embedded racial hierarchy, there should theoretically exist either significant race-based mobilization (fueled by racial grievances) or a generalized denial of racial discrimination among the minority racial population (Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000). Specifically, in Latin America and some of the Caribbean, in the absence of mass Afro-Latin mobilizations (Telles 2004), group conflict theorists have long held that a denial of systematic disadvantage suffered by racial and ethnic minorities characterizes public opinion (e.g., Hanchard 1994; Paschel and Sawyer 2008). This dominant perspective

attributes that deny to entrenched ideologies of *mestizaje* or racial democracy that obfuscates the structural causes of ethno-racial inequality (Hernández 2016). These ideologies are alternatively conceptualized as ‘*color blindness*’ (Paschel 2010), ‘*race-blindness*’ (Sue 2011), and ‘*false consciousness*’ (Sidanius Peña, and Sawyer 2001; Winant 1999). Moreover, racial mixing ideologies are found to be especially pervasive among the majority masses of non-elites and non-whites (Twine 1998; Sue 2013). In Ecuador, for example, Beck, Miskeski, and Stark (2011:106) write, “*mestizaje, and the wide swath of people who clearly identify as mestizo, produces a perceptual prism in which it is quite easy to ignore, hide, downgrade, and ultimately deny processes of prejudice and discrimination.*” Similarly, Warren and Sue (2011:50) write that across Latin America non-whites have “*scant understanding of how race, both its contemporary and historical forms, is directly linked to the particular configurations of the labor market, social welfare, taxation policies, housing, educational opportunities, and so forth.*”

While cognizant of challenges to this group conflict perspective (to which we return below), given that it is a dominant approach, we use it here to explore the Jamaican context regarding: (1) generalized beliefs about the role of color in structuring poverty, (2) the salience of a national ideology of ethnic oneness, and (3) the analytic association of an embrace of the ethnic oneness ideology to Jamaican stratification beliefs.

## DATA AND METHODS

Our data are from the 2008 Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) survey in Jamaica. It was conducted by Vanderbilt University (home to the LAPOP) and the Center for Leadership and Governance of the University of West Indies at Mona. The project used a national probability sample design of voting age adults; the full sample comprised 1,499

respondents in face-to-face interviews. The sample was stratified by regions (Kingston Metropolitan Region, Surrey, Middlesex, Cornwall) and by urban and rural areas. The estimated margin of error for the survey is  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points.

Our analytic strategy uses multinomial logistic regression and nested modeling on full and subpopulation samples. The core dependent variable represents Jamaican beliefs about the role of skin color/race in structuring disadvantage in that national context, or Jamaican racial stratification beliefs. To operationalize that concept, we used one item from the following multi-item survey question:

*“Now thinking of persons who are poor in Jamaica, I’m going to read to you some possible reasons or causes why people are poor in Jamaica. For each cause, indicate how important you feel that cause is in holding people back, in keeping them poor.”*

Option: *“Prejudice and discrimination against persons because of their color or race.”*

There were three response options to gauge the respondents’ beliefs about the possible role of skin color or race in explaining poverty: (1) ‘very important cause,’ (2) ‘important cause,’ or (3) ‘not an important cause.’ We reversed the coding for our models so that higher values signified higher levels of importance.

The key concept that we hypothesize as associated with a denial of racial discrimination in Jamaica is an ideology of ethnic oneness. We operationalize that concept with the survey item: ‘Despite our differences, we Jamaicans have many things that unite us a country. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?’ Responses for the item ranged on a scale from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree); we recoded these responses into three categories

reflecting different levels of embrace of the ethnic oneness perspective: low (1-4), medium (5-6), and high (7). We posit that this item captures a core element of Jamaica's dominant ethno-racial ideology enshrined in its official country motto from its state seal: 'Out of many, one people.' This belief may act as an originating myth: it asserts an overarching unity and/or kinship among the population ('one people') that supersedes and renders much less important all other characteristics that may mark alternative kinship cleavages ('out of many').

Our models include controls for various socio-demographic factors: respondent's sex, age, ethno-racial status, years of education, and urbanicity. Respondent's sex was measured by a dummy variable (1 = male, 0 = female). Respondents' age was measured as a continuous variable ranging from 18 to 96. Respondents were asked to report their ethno-racial status in one of the following categories: black, white, Indian, Chinese, mixed, other. Due to small sample sizes in non-black categories, responses were dummy-coded as 'black' (about 90%, our reference category) and 'other' (10%).<sup>14</sup> Education was captured by a continuous variable (1-18) representing the number of years of schooling respondents completed. A dummy variable was used to capture location/area (1 = 'rural', 0 = 'urban'). An area was considered urban if it had a population of 2,000 or more persons and provided several amenities and facilities that in Jamaica indicate modern living. To focus specifically on Afro-Jamaicans, we also ran these same models isolating the black subpopulation. Table 3.1 presents frequency distributions of our analysis' variables.

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<sup>14</sup> The specific question asked in the questionnaire was: 'Do you consider yourself black, Indian, white, Chinese, mixed or of another race?'

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**Table 3.1.** Descriptive Statistics for All Variables

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<b><u>Variables</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage</u></b>
Racial Discrimination		
Not important	312	27.7%
Somewhat important	334	29.7%
Very important	480	42.6%
Ethnic Oneness		
Low (1 to 4)	200	17.8%
Medium (5 to 6)	366	32.5%
High (7)	560	49.7%
Female	552	49.0%
Male	574	51.0%
Average Age	43.7	
Black	1012	89.9%
All others	114	10.1%
Average years of education	13.9	
Rural	667	59.2%
Urban	459	40.8%

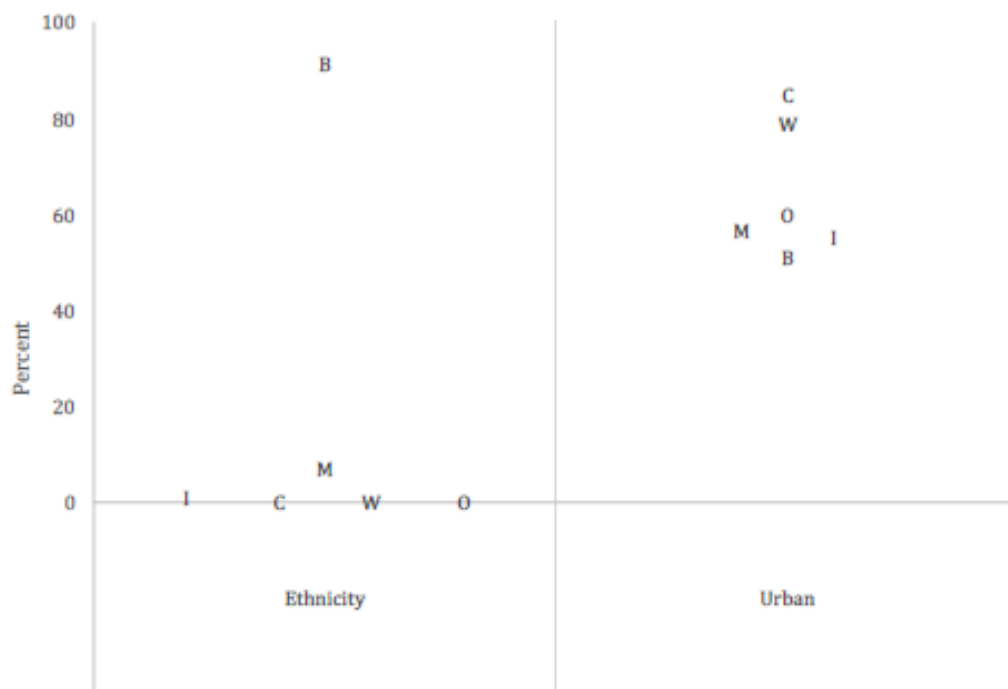
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## RESULTS

We first turn to our descriptive results on ethno-racial diversity and inequality in Jamaica. Figure 3.1, first panel, offers an overview of the ethno-racial composition of Jamaica per its 2001 Census. It shows that Jamaica is overwhelming black, at fully 91.6 percent. The second largest population segment is comprised of those individuals self-classifying as ‘mixed’ (6.9 percent). Each of the remaining categories represents about one percent or less of the Jamaican population in 2001: white, Chinese, Indian, and other. Overall, although Jamaica is diverse in terms of ethno-racial populations, the African descent category makes up its

overwhelming majority, whereas whites are only a very small fraction of Jamaicans, at 0.2 percent. The black majority population, however, does not fare well in terms of socio-economic status. Two summary indicators suffice for revealing Jamaica's dramatic inequalities along ethno-racial lines.

Figure 3.1: Ethnic Composition and Urbanicity by Race, Jamaica 2001



Source: Original data from national statistical office of Jamaica and accessed through IPUMS International.  
 Notes: Ethnic categories are denoted by letters: W=white, B=black, C=Chinese, I=Indian, M=mixed race, O=other.  
 Ethnic composition percentages are out of the total population. Percentages urban are out of the total within each ethnic category.

Figure 3.2, first panel, shows educational attainment in Jamaica by ethno-racial category in 2001. Whereas 40.7 percent of white Jamaicans (ages 25 to 65) have university-level education completed, only 2.4 percent of Afro-Jamaicans attain that level. Chinese, Indian and mixed Jamaicans also have university completed at much lower percentages than whites, though significantly higher than Afro-Jamaicans, at 13.9, 6.0, and 7.6, respectively. Figure 3.2, second panel, lists Jamaica's most prestigious occupations—managers, professionals, and top officials—by ethno-racial category in 2001. It shows that fully 16 percent of the small white population attains jobs in that highest prestige category, whereas only 3.1 percent of the majority Afro-Jamaican population does so. Interestingly, though, it is the very small Chinese-Jamaican population that is most successful in attaining these highest prestige occupations in Jamaica; although they make up only 0.2 percent of the national population, almost 40 percent of that segment is positioned at the top of the occupation hierarchy. In sum, Figure 3.2 acts as a visual representation of Jamaica's ethno-racial inequality in education and occupation; it starkly suggests that although that nation's motto tells a tale of 'one people,' the reality of glaring ethno-racial inequality tells a very different story.



Figure 3.2:

University Completion and Managers/Top Officials by Race, Adults ages 25-65, Jamaica 2001



Source: Original data from national statistical office of Jamaica and accessed through IPUMS International.  
 Notes: Ethnic categories are denoted by letters: W=white, B=black, C=Chinese, I=Indian, M=mixed race, O=other.  
 Percentages completed university and managers and top officials are out of the total within each ethnic category.

Amid stark ethno-racial hierarchy, we turn now to public opinion data on the salience of an ideology of ethnic oneness in Jamaica. The results shown in Table 3.1 suggest that, despite dramatic inequality, this ideology is broadly embraced: half of the population rated the level of its belief in ethnic oneness as a seven (out of seven), and another 32 percent embraced the ethnic oneness orientation at the five-to-six level. This majority embraces of mixing or fusion ideology coincides with its popularity across most of the Americas, except for the U.S., as we discuss below.

Next, we explore whether Jamaicans acknowledge the role of racial discrimination in generating the dramatic ethno-racial gaps in socio-economic well-being that we presented in Figure 3.2 above. Table 3.1 shows that on the one hand, over two-thirds of Jamaicans claim that racial discrimination it is an important element in structuring poverty, including about 43% who claim it is ‘very important’ and 30% who claim it is ‘somewhat important.’ On the other hand, twenty-three percent of Jamaicans do not believe that race plays an important role in structuring poverty. These results are somewhat counterintuitive to group conflict theory (Bobo 1988; Bobo et al. 2012), as we address in our Discussion.

How might the Jamaican ideology of ethnic oneness align with the recognition of racial discrimination in Jamaican? We begin in Table 3.2 with a cross-tabulation of these two measures. The results show that the opinion that racial discrimination is ‘very important’ for explaining poverty is the highest scoring response at all levels of belief in the ethnic oneness perspective. That relationship, however, appears most ambiguous at the ‘medium’ level and most robust at the ‘low’ level of ethnic oneness. Regarding the latter, fully 56 percent of those who show little support for the idea of ethnic oneness opine that racial discrimination is ‘very important’ for explaining poverty in Jamaica.

**Table 3.2.** Ethnic Oneness by Importance of Color/Race for Explaining Black Poverty

<b>Embrace of Ethnic Oneness</b>	<b>Importance of Racial Discrimination</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Very</b>	
Low	24% (48)	20% (40)	56% (112)	100% (200)
Medium	30% (109)	34% (125)	36% (132)	100% (366)
High	28% (155)	30% (169)	42% (236)	100% (560)

Moving to an analytic perspective, Table 3.3 presents the relative risk ratios from a maximum likelihood multinomial logistic regression analysis, modelling predictors of the level of importance that Jamaicans give to racial discrimination for explaining poverty. The table presents the likelihood of choosing the response option ‘very important’ compared to ‘not important.’<sup>15</sup> Our results from model 1 (first column) show that those respondents who reported a lower sense of ethnic oneness are more likely to view racial discrimination as a very important factor in explaining poverty compared to those embracing ethnic oneness at the highest level (reference category). More precisely, the odds of believing that race or color discrimination is ‘very important’ for explaining poverty, versus ‘not important’, were 54 percent higher for individuals who expressed a low level of belief in ethnic oneness than those expressing a high-level belief.

**Table 3.3.** Relative Risk Ratios from Multinomial Logistic Regression Analyses, Importance of Color/Race for Explaining Poverty, 2008 (N= 1,126)

Models	Very Important vs. Not Important					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ethnic Oneness						
Low	1.532*	1.545*	1.544*	1.550*	1.554*	1.552*
Medium	.795	.796	.792	.792	.780	.783
High	-	-	-	-	-	-
Black		.896	.892	.891	.894	.890
Female			1.082	1.083	1.076	1.082
Age				1.001	1.001	1.001
Urban area					2.524***	2.518***
Years of education						.997

Source: Americas Barometer, Jamaica 2008.

\*\*\* p≤.001, \*\* p≤ .01, \*p≤ .05

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix D for full model comparisons.

Models 2 through 6 systematically add variables to better evaluate possible mediating effects. Several important patterns come to light. Firstly, most of the demographic variables are not significantly related to the belief that racial discrimination is a very important factor in poverty. In addition, it is interesting to note the lack of any robust mediating effect of any of these variables on the relationship between ethnic oneness and a denial of racial discrimination; i.e., adding these variables to the models had virtually no effect on the size of the relative risk ratios for the association of ethnic oneness with a denial of racial discrimination.

The finding that education level does not significantly structure attitudes regarding racial discrimination contrasts the evidence of robust educational divides on denials of discrimination in several contexts of Ibero-America (Telles and Bailey 2013). Moreover, the lack of a significant race effect may be more surprising. In societies of robust ethno-racial hierarchy, group conflict theorists find that racial divides generally structure beliefs about racial stratification, as in the illustrative U.S. case (Bobo et al. 2012).

The only significant relationship among the demographic variables to the recognition of racial discrimination in Jamaica is urban residence. Individuals living in urban settings are 2.5 times more likely than those in rural areas to think that racial discrimination is a very important cause of poverty, holding all other variables constant. This effect suggests urbanicity as a central cleavage for understanding Jamaicans' racial attitudes, to which we return below. As presented in Table 3.1, forty percent of Jamaicans live in urban areas according to the 2001 Census. Figure 3.1, second panel, revealed that blacks are the least urban; about 51 percent of that population having urban residence; Chinese and white Jamaicans are the most urban, at 85 and 79 percent of their populations, respectively.

## DISCUSSION

We began this study asking whether, amid a stark ethno-racial hierarchy, Jamaicans embrace a mixing ideology labelled 'ethnic oneness' and recognize racial discrimination. In particular, we wanted to know how that mixing ideology might affect Jamaicans' views about the relationship between racial discrimination and poverty. The importance of these questions is hard to overstate due to: (1) the long-existing social inequality along ethno-racial lines in Jamaica, and (2) the argument by a group of scholars that ideologies of mixing or ethnic fusion perpetuate contemporary social inequality (Bonilla-Silva and Glover 2005; Warren and Sue 2011; Winant 1999). As noted, that scholarship has mostly studied countries of Ibero-America, but not those of Anglo colonial heritage. Do New World countries of Anglo colonial heritage differ in terms of their public's recognition of racial discrimination, the salience of mixing ideologies, and the relationship between them? Our analysis of data from Anglo-American Jamaica suggests four core findings: (1) socio-economic well-being is starkly structured by ethno-racial hierarchy; (2) nonetheless, a majority of Jamaicans embrace a core element of an ethnic oneness ideology; (3) a large majority of Jamaicans also point to the significance of racial discrimination in explaining inequality; and (4) the embrace of ethnic oneness is negatively associated with the belief that racial discrimination causes poverty.

At first glance, our result suggesting a broad acceptance of a mixing ideology fits the Ibero-American pattern (Telles and Garcia 2013). In addition, our finding on a widespread belief in the role of race in structuring social inequality in Jamaica also fits the Ibero-American pattern (Bailey 2009; Bailey et al. 2016; Telles and Bailey 2013). Nonetheless, the specific negative effect of the ethnic oneness ideology on explaining poverty through racial discrimination is

novel; it suggests discordance with quantitative research on public opinion in Ibero-America (Bailey 2009; Telles and Bailey 2013).

This contrast between Jamaica and much of Ibero-America may suggest the relevance of an Anglo-Ibero American divide on the effects of mixing ideologies, though much more research is needed. Do we know anything about other Anglo-American cases to further explore a possible Ibero-Anglo divide? We do to some limited extent: the U.S. case. In relation to the U.S. case, our findings on Jamaica suggest some differences as well as commonalities regarding mixing ideologies and a recognition of racial discrimination.

Regarding the salience of a mixing ideology in the U.S., there is no quantitative study to reference, to our knowledge. Nonetheless, some scholars suggest the negativity of ideologies of racial mixing and/or national fusion for the recognition of racial discrimination in the U.S. (Bonilla-Silva and Grover 2008; Hernandez 2016). If the assumptions in the limited literature on the U.S. case are accurate, the U.S. and Jamaica appear similar in terms of the effects of mixing ideologies on recognitions of racial discrimination.

In terms of other hypothesized determinants of the recognition of racial discrimination in general in the U.S., research finds little or no class effects (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sears et al. 2000). Similarly, in Jamaica we found that class (approximated by education) was not significantly related to the recognition of racial discrimination.<sup>16</sup> Hence, both the Jamaican and U.S. cases strongly contrast with Ibero-America regarding the role of social class; in Ibero-America, scholarship demonstrates that class is a central factor structuring the recognition of racial discrimination (Bailey 2009; Sidanius et al. 2001; Telles and Bailey 2013). Thus, we note some consonance between the U.S. and Jamaican Anglo-American cases.

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<sup>16</sup> We also ran our model on the subsample of Afro-Jamaicans and again found no significant education effect.

Nonetheless, Jamaica importantly differs from the U.S. regarding the very salience of recognition of racial discrimination as structuring social disadvantage. In the U.S., public opinion research shows that only a minority of that country's population views racial inequality as resulting from racial discrimination (Bobo et al., 2012). This is not the case in Jamaica, where a clear majority of general population believes that racial discrimination structures Jamaica's poverty.

What is more, regarding the determinants of recognition of racial discrimination, in the U.S., the core cleavage is race itself (Bobo 1988; Bobo et al. 2012). This is explained in part by a key assumption in U.S. race relations scholarship that blacks and whites view the world from very different lenses (Dawson 2000; Kinder and Sanders 1996). Our analyses, however, did not demonstrate a race effect in Jamaica. Instead, this lack of a race effect in Jamaica is similar to what has been found in many countries of Ibero-America (Bailey 2009; Telles and Bailey 2013). Our results on the effect of race on public opinion in Jamaica, though, should be interpreted cautiously due to the skewed percent distribution of Jamaica's ethno-racial composition, at 90% black. This is specifically problematic for smaller samples.

Overall, the strongest population cleavage we found affecting the recognition of racial discrimination in Jamaica, however, was urban (41%) versus rural (59%) residence. Why might spatial location be so strong in determining affecting recognitions of racial discrimination in Jamaica? One suggestion might be found in the historic rural and urban divide among slaves and free coloreds in colonial times that we noted above. Free coloreds were excluded from plantation work during slavery, and hence much of that population was uniquely important as a formative element in nascent urbanization in Jamaica. This dynamic may have created one early segregating structure among Afro-Jamaicans, between urban areas (free coloreds) and rural ones



(Negro slaves). Also, in post-abolition Jamaica, a substantial segment of Afro-Jamaicans working on the outskirts of plantations rapidly moved from rural (plantation) areas into new urban spaces, again creating distance from rural Afro-Jamaicans. These two structural dynamics could support the idea of contrasting racial lenses formed around urbanicity that is suggested in our findings.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, our findings support continued but cautious scrutiny of the Ibero-Anglo American divide for understanding contemporary beliefs about racial discrimination and the effects of myths of racial mixing or ethnic fusion. A colonial lens on ethno-racial dynamics has been central to the literature for decades. Scholars have posited the importance of numerous factors that may have at times appeared structured by colonial cleavages, including: ethno-racial composition, religion, sex composition, anti-miscegenation laws, systems of slavery, date of slavery's abolition, and influence of U.S. black nationalism and black social movement activism (Banton 2012; de la Fuente 2010, 2015; Harris 1964; Hoetink 1967; Stamatov 2015; Tannebaum 1947). The exact specification of the operative colonial mechanisms that may structure contemporary Ibero-Anglo American divides regarding the effects of ideologies of racial mixing is beyond the scope of this analysis. However, as is always the case in robust theory building, the usefulness of that colonial lens is an empirical question and our results from Jamaica provide leverage for further study.

## CHAPTER 4<sup>17</sup>

### **Race, Skin Color, and Social Inequality in Jamaica**

Through nation building, race and skin color inequality in Jamaica became subsumed under class differences despite the historical and continued presence of a race and skin color hierarchy. This non-racial framing operates on the island in the form of loose racial categorizations and colloquial skin color designations. Additionally, there has been little quantitative research on racial inequality in Jamaica. Considering these factors, I ask, what does socioeconomic well-being along categorical race and skin color look like in such a context? More specifically, I ask, how are: (1) the availability of basic household amenities, (2) household income per capita, (3) educational attainment, and (4) household crowdedness structured along racial and skin color lines? As noted, before, Jamaica is a relatively poor country, thus basic household amenities are used in addition to conventional measures of inequality, income and education, to determine socioeconomic well-being. The added measure of basic household amenities represents the standard in which individuals live. As such, understanding how categorical race and skin color shape ownership of these key assets provide crucial information on how these social characteristics influence inequality in Jamaica.

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<sup>17</sup> This chapter of my dissertation is currently under review (received an R&R) at the Journal of *Sociological Perspectives*

## DATA AND METHOD

The data used to analyze race and skin color inequality are from the 2001 Jamaican Census, a 10% sample accessible at IPUMS-International (Minnesota Population Center 2015), and the 2010, 2012, and 2014 waves of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) on Jamaica, also known as the Americas Barometer social survey (Americas Barometer 2010; 2012; 2014). Vanderbilt University (home to the LAPOP) and the Center for Leadership and Governance of the University of West Indies at Mona conducted these social surveys. The project used a national probability sample design of voting age adults. The full sample is comprised of 1504, 1501, and 1506 respondents in face-to-face interviews conducted in English, respectively. The surveys used a complex sample design, considering stratification and clustering. The samples consist of four strata representing the four main geographical regions: the Kingston metropolitan region, Surrey, Middlesex, and Cornwall. Each stratum was further sub-stratified by urban and rural areas. The estimated margin of error for the survey is  $\pm 2.53$  percentage points.

### *Outcome Measures*

Socioeconomic well-being and educational attainment were the core dependent variables used in analyses of this study. There were three measures of socioeconomic well-being: availability of basic household amenities (BHA), household income per person capita (HIPC), and household crowdedness.

For BHA, the Americas Barometer social survey 2010 to 2014, respondents were asked; “*Could you tell me if you have the following in your house.*” The items used were: television, refrigerator, cellular telephone, vehicle/car (how many), washing machine, microwave oven,

indoor plumbing, indoor bathroom, computer, and internet. These survey items each had a maximum score of 1, indicating that they indeed possessed the item in their home; except for ‘vehicle/car’ which had a maximum score of 3 (having 3 or more cars). A composite score, ‘amenities’, was created by adding numeric responses of the ten items, thus giving the variable a range of 0 to 12. A composite score was similarly calculated for the 2001 Jamaican census. This was based on whether the sample had: electricity, water supply, access to a sewage system, cellphone, internet, computer, kitchen, bath, and toilet. If survey item responses were non-dichotomous, they were recoded so that lack of access was coded as 0 and all other responses, 1. Composite score, also labelled amenities, ranged from 0 to 8. In both cases, higher scores were indicative of possessing more BHA.

The second measure of socioeconomic well-being, HIPC, was calculated by taking the log of the quotient of the household income by the number of persons living in the household at time of data collection<sup>18</sup>. Specific items were:

*“Into which of the following income ranges does the total monthly income of this household fit, including remittances from abroad and the income of all the working adults and children?”* and *“How many people in total live in this household at this time?”*

In treating the variable household income (interval data) as a continuous variable more rigorously, I converted each interval to its midpoint value.<sup>19</sup>

The third socioeconomic well-being measure, household crowdedness, was only used for the analysis of census data (survey items not present in LAPOP data) and represented the number of persons living in the household per bedroom. This variable had a maximum score of 13. I

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<sup>18</sup> In the 2010 LAPOP data, ‘*how many people live in this household at this time?*’ was not asked, thus, ‘*the number of children living in household presently*’ was used.

posit that these items effectively capture a core element of socioeconomic well-being. Examining the availability of basic household amenities and household crowdedness paints a fuller picture of how and in what condition individuals live. This is something that simply investigating individual or household income cannot provide. Additionally, educational attainment was captured by a continuous variable representing the number of years of schooling respondents completed.

*Independent Variables: Categorical Race and Skin color*

Respondents were asked to report their ethno-racial status in one of the following categories: black, white, East Indian, Chinese, mixed, or other. Due to small sample sizes in non-black categories, responses were coded as black (reference category), mixed, and other (10%).<sup>20</sup> For the LAPOP 2010, 2012, and 2014 data, it was observed that an average of 87.4% of the sample self-identified as black, 10% as mixed, and 2.6% as other. Due to the larger sample size of the 2001 census data, racial categories were kept the same and not recoded.

For the LAPOP datasets, interviewers were asked to collect skin color information of respondents. The color palette used ranged from very light (1) to very dark (11)<sup>21</sup>. Again, skin color was used in conjunction with race as explanatory variables because the imposition or direct transference of U.S. racial categories on such societies located in Latin America and the Caribbean is not always relevant when race is not necessarily similarly conceptualized. Additionally, being a majority Afro-descent society, it is imperative to use skin color in assessing social inequality as solely using race would not fully capture the existing disparity.

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<sup>19</sup> See Bailey et. al. 2014.

<sup>20</sup> The specific question asked in the LAPOP 2010-14 questionnaires was: ‘Do you consider yourself black, Indian, white, Chinese, mixed or of another race?’

<sup>21</sup> Only used in analyses of LAPOP data as the census does not collect skin color data.

### *Control Variables*

Models include controls for various socio-demographic factors: respondent's sex, age, ethno-racial status, years of schooling, household income per person capita, and urbanicity. Respondent's sex was measured by a dummy variable (1 = male, 0 = female). Respondents' age was measured as a continuous variable ranging from 18 to 96 for LAPOP data and 0 to 98 for the Jamaican census. A dummy variable was used to capture location/area (0 = 'rural', 1 = 'urban'). An area was considered urban if it had a population of 2,000 or more persons and provided several amenities and facilities indicative of modern living in Jamaica. Years of schooling and household income per person capita (specified previously) were only used as control variables for models when not used as outcome variables.

**Table 4.1.** Mean and Standard Error for Variables Used in Study, LAPOP

Variables	Range	Mean (Std. Err.)		
		Years		
		2010	2012	2014
Skin color	1-11	7.368 (.072)	7.025 (.091)	7.160 (.055)
Male	0-1	.412 (.019)	.560 (.028)	.505 (.016)
Age	18-95 <sup>22</sup>	44.409 (.484)	37.614 (.714)	39.894 (.487)
Years of Education	0-17	10 (.119)	11.816 (.153)	10.248 (.099)
Household Income per Person Capita <sup>23</sup>	5-13 <sup>24</sup>	9.483 (.049)	9.644 (.061)	9.073 (.037)
Location in an Urban area		.520 (.019)	.715 (.025)	.592 (.016)
Amenities Available <sup>25</sup>	0-12	6.059 (.103)	8.728 (.101)	6.390 (.087)
No. of Observations		663	316 <sup>26</sup>	959

<sup>22</sup> Maximum age differed for each year; ranging from 90 – 95 years.

<sup>23</sup> This variable was created by logging the quotient of household income by the number of persons in the household at the time of data collection. However, for 2010 this information was not available, so the number of children living in household was used.

<sup>24</sup> The ranges of household income per person capita for 2010, 2012, and 2014 are: 5.7745 – 12.612, 5.704 – 12.401, and 5.367 – 12.150, respectively.

<sup>25</sup> Composite score of whether or not sample had: television, refrigerator, cellphone, cars, microwave, indoor plumbing, indoor bathroom, washing machine, computer, or internet. Each had a maximum score of 1, except for cars which had a maximum score of 3.

<sup>26</sup> Data for 2012 was a split ballot thus the substantial lower N.

### *Analytical Approach*

I conducted multiple regression analyses of the relationship between race and skin color on socioeconomic well-being and educational attainment using the full sample from the 2010, 2012, and 2014 Americas Barometer social survey, as well as the 2001 Jamaican Census<sup>27</sup>. For analyses using LAPOP data, I present six models for each year (Tables 3, 4, and 5). The first model includes the race variable, with the second model adding controls. The third model included the skin color variable, with the fourth adding controls. The fifth model included both the race and skin color variables, with the sixth model adding controls. In Table 6, I present results for analyses using the 2001 Jamaican Census data. Of the two models, the first presented included race with the second adding controls.



**Table 4.2.** Mean and Standard Error for Variables Used from 2001 Jamaican Census

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean (Std. Err.)</b>
Male	0-1	.491 (.001)
Age	0-98	28.112 (.050)
Years of Education	0-21	20.431 (.070)
Household Income per Person Capita	6.818 – 16.118	13.633 (.004)
Location in an Urban area	0-1	.490 (.001)
Over-Crowdedness		2.313 (.003)
Amenities Available <sup>28</sup>	0-8	5.196 (.002)
<b>No. of Observations</b>		<b>177,217</b>

*Source:* Original data from the national statistical office of Jamaica and accessed through IPUMS International. Means and standard errors (in parentheses) rounded to three (3) decimal places.

<sup>27</sup> The 2001 Jamaican census did not have skin color data.

<sup>28</sup> Composite score of whether or not sample had: electricity, water supply, access to a sewage system, cellphone, internet, computer, kitchen, bath, and toilet.

## RESULTS

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 present descriptive statistics for each year of Americas Barometer data used and the 2001 Jamaican census, respectively. For the LAPOP data, the racial composition of the sample across the three years was approximately: 86 - 88% black, 0.07% Chinese<sup>29</sup>, 9 - 11% mixed, 1.3 - 2.7% East Indian, 0.1 - 0.3% white, 0.2 - 0.5% other, and 0.3% as unknown. For the purposes of analyses, racial/ethnic categories of East Indian, white, other, and unknown were grouped together and labelled 'other', which represented 0.3 - 1% of the Americas Barometer sample. For the census, however, the racial composition was: 91.6% black, 0.2% Chinese, 6.2% mixed, 0.9% East Indian, 0.2% white, 0.1% other, and 0.8% unknown<sup>30</sup>. The average skin color of the LAPOP sample was 7, on a scale of 1 to 11.

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between race and skin color and multiple factors of socioeconomic well-being and education. Table 4.3 presents analyses results of the before mentioned outcome variables and household crowdedness using the 2001 Jamaican Census. While tables 4.4 to 4.6 summarize the analyses results on race (black omitted because it is the reference category) and skin color on the number of BHA, HIPC, and years of education using 2010, 2012, and 2014 LAPOP data.

### *2001 Jamaican Census*

First, I turn to the results of the 2001 Census showing the probability of household crowdedness, BHA, years of schooling, and HIPC as predicted by racial self-classification (Table 4.3). A more nuanced perspective was applied to this set of models as there was no need to cluster racial categories due to larger sample size. Results for BHA, years of schooling, and

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<sup>29</sup> Same for 2012 and 2014; this racial group was not listed for 2010.

HIPC shows that those who racially self-classified as nonblack had significantly more when compared to black Jamaicans. Substantial differences were observed in the average number of BHA and years of schooling white and Chinese Jamaicans possessed in comparison to their black counterparts.

White and Chinese Jamaicans had an average of up to 5 and 7 more years of schooling than blacks, respectively. This is interesting to note, as the number of whites and Chinese in the 10% census sample does not exceed 0.2% as compared to 91.6% of blacks. Kelly and Bailey (2018) also illustrate this severe disparity in education; they found that of Jamaican aged 25-65 years, 40.7% white and 13.9% Chinese Jamaicans had completed university level education as compared to only 2.4% of Afro-Jamaicans. Whites and Chinese also had significantly more HIPC than blacks, with whites having the highest: 0.5 (model 1) and 0.7 (model 2, with control variables). This contrasts Bailey and colleagues (2014) who noted that in the U.S., Asian-Americans have the highest household income per capita, despite having an average skin color darker than self-identified whites. When examining household crowdedness, all racial groups were less likely to experience this than blacks. On average, Chinese experienced 37%, mixed 11%, East Indians 20%, whites 47%, and other 20% less household crowdedness in comparison to blacks (model 1).

Even when controlling for household income per capita and education, the effects of categorical race in structuring household crowdedness was still highly salient. These findings illustrate that race does matter in the Jamaican context. Black or Afro-Jamaicans are dramatically disadvantaged compared to other racial groups in Jamaica despite controlling for socioeconomic status via household income and education. While, this may not be a surprising finding as similar

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<sup>30</sup> 2001 Jamaican census: <http://statinja.gov.jm/popcensus/tables.aspx>. The unknown category was dropped from analyses.

results are noted in the U.S. (Conley 1999; Fryer et al. 2013; Massey and Denton 1993; Oliver and Shapiro 2006; Pager 2003). However, what is important here is establishing that categorical race does matter in a society labelled as racially homogeneous. Furthermore, as stated previously, race is multidimensional, and each dimension may offer differential findings in relation to outcomes of inequality. While it is seen that racial inequality as measured by racial self-classification reveal similar patterns in social inequality as the U.S., race defined as phenotype, specifically, skin color, may reveal different findings. Therefore, I now turn to the results of the Americas Barometer, which uses race as both racial self-classification and skin color.

**Table 4.3.** OLS Regression Coefficients Predicting Over-crowdedness, Availability of Basic Household Amenities, Years of Schooling, and Household Income per Person Capita by Race, 2001 Jamaican Census

	Over-Crowdedness		Amenities		Years of Schooling		Household Income per Person Capita	
Race (reference = black)								
Chinese	-.876*** (.075)	-.523*** (.071)	1.279*** (.077)	.908*** (.071)	4.103** (1.602)	7.089*** (1.557)	.364*** (.099)	.461*** (.097)
Mixed	-.246*** (.013)	-.234*** (.012)	.373*** (.013)	.331*** (.012)	1.442*** (.280)	1.176*** (.272)	.169*** (.017)	.146*** (.017)
East Indian	-.479*** (.033)	-.233*** (.031)	.525*** (.034)	.477*** (.032)	-2.909*** (.713)	.368 (.693)	.016 (.044)	.161*** (.043)
white	-1.104*** (.082)	-.656*** (.077)	1.495*** (.084)	1.204*** (.077)	1.339 (1.736)	5.574*** (1.684)	.538*** (.107)	.706*** (.105)
other	-.467*** (.105)	-.300** (.099)	.943*** (.108)	.873*** (.100)	.552 (2.245)	3.065 (2.176)	-.198 (.138)	-.097 (.136)
Male	-	-.162*** (.006)	-	-.105*** (.006)	-	.516*** (.137)	-	-.268*** (.008)
Age	-	-.021*** (.000)	-	.001*** (.000)	-	-.304*** (.003)	-	-.012*** (.000)
Years of Schooling	-	.001*** (.000)	-	-.0002* (.000)	-	-	-	.005*** (.000)
Household Income per Capita	-	-.093*** (.002)	-	-.017*** (.002)	-	1.187*** (.038)	-	-
Location in Urban area	-	-.154*** (.006)	-	1.081*** (.006)	-	.824*** (.137)	-	.135*** (.008)
Constant	2.339 (.003)	4.489 (.026)	5.160 (.004)	3.816 (.027)	20.350 (.074)	12.004 (.554)	13.620 (.005)	13.932 (.010)
R-squared	.005	.117	.009	.153	.001	.058	.001	.038
Adjusted R-squared	.005	.117	.009	.153	.001	.058	.001	.037
No. of obs	177,217		177,662					

Source: Original data from national statistical office of Jamaica and accessed through IPUMS International.

\*\*\* p≤.001, \*\* p≤.01, \*p≤.05

Note: All regression coefficients rounded to three (3) decimal places with standard errors in parentheses.

*Americas Barometer: Availability of Basic Household Amenities (BHA)*

For 2010, 2012, and 2014, model 1 of Table 4.4 is a multiple regression with race as a predictor of BHA. For all three years, race is positively and significantly correlated with BHA. This means that in comparisons to blacks, individuals who self-identified as mixed or other were likely to possess more BHA. More specifically, in 2010 blacks possessed a mean of 6 or owned 50% of the 12 BHA examined in study. However, individuals who racial identified as mixed or other had 13% and 15% more BHA, respectively. Looking at model 1 for 2012, we get a constant of 8.7, indicating that the average number of BHA for black was 8.7 or approximately 73%. Coefficients for those who self-identified as mixed or other are significant; their mean number of BHA available is significantly different from those of blacks. These individuals had 9% and 15% more BHA than blacks on average. The same basic trend is found for 2014 with those who are mixed and other possessing, on average, 8% and 17% more BHA than blacks, respectively.

For model 2 of Table 4.4, control variables were added and, except for mixed race individuals in 2010, race was again positively associated with the availability of BHA. The mean in model 3 for 2010, 2012, and 2014 is 8.4, 10.8, and 8.8 (respectively), indicating the average number of BHA held by the sample. For the variable skin color (higher numbers signified darker skin colors) coefficients were significant and negative. This indicates that when accounting for skin color, those of the sample with darker skin colors had less BHA than their lighter-skinned counterparts. Therefore, for every unit increase in skin color, there is, on average, 2% to 4% less BHA. Even with the addition of control variables to the model (see Table 4.4, model 4), skin color remained significantly and negatively associated with BHA. When examining both race and skin color as predictors of BHA, race remained positively associated while skin color was

negatively associated. Skin color is significantly associated with BHA over all three years; only in 2014 is race significant (in the comparison of blacks to others). Therefore, in 2010 and 2012, skin color was a more significant predictor of BHA rather than race even when control variables were added to model (see model 6 for each year).

For models 2, 4, and 6 of all three years, for which the control variables of: sex, age, years of schooling, HIPC, and location in urban area were added; all, except sex in 2014, were significantly and positively associated with BHA. For example, in 2012, on average, males possessed at most 32% more BHA than females. Additionally, those who were older and had more years of schooling also possessed more BHA than those who were younger and had less years of schooling. Specifically, for each unit increase in age and years of schooling, there was an average increase of 2% and 26% in BHA, respectively. Also, for every increment change in household income per person capita, BHA available increased by 40% to 171% on average. Additionally, those that lived in an urban area had 37% to 176% more BHA than those who lived in a rural setting (larger end of percentage range observed in model 2 of 2012).

Looking at the R-squared, or amount of variation in the data explained by the models, model 4 explains the variation in the data the best. Approximately 48% in 2010 ( $R^2 = 0.48$ ,  $F [6, 656] = 101.10$ ,  $p < .001$ ), 36% ( $R^2 = 0.364$ ,  $F [6, 309] = 29.42$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and 29% ( $R^2 = 0.285$ ,  $F [6, 952] = 64.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ) of the variation in the data was explained by skin color and control variables used. In model 6, where both race and skin color were used as predictors along with control variables, race did little in way of adding to the amount of variation explained. Therefore, this suggests that skin color has more explanatory power in predicting BHA than race.

**Table 4.4. OLS Regression Coefficients Predicting Availability Basic Amenities by Categorical Race and Skin Color, LAPOP 2010-14**

	Year																	
	2010					2012					2014							
Constant	6.003 (.074)	-7.917 (.661)	8.377 (.266)	-6.477 (.772)	8.266 (.295)	-4.423 (.773)	8.664 (.077)	-.372 (.763)	10.837 (.292)	1.522 (.906)	10.559 (.335)	1.271 (.932)	6.326 (.072)	-3.789 (.621)	8.847 (.284)	-2.175 (.758)	8.649 (.307)	-2.259 (.767)
Race (reference = black)																		
mixed	.778*** (.235)	-.194 (.300)			.201 (.241)	-.444 (.305)	.787*** (.204)	.536* (.238)			.296 (.216)	.274 (.250)	.733** (.236)	.180 (.250)			.201 (.241)	-.039 (.257)
other	.857* (.387)	.044 (.495)			.165 (.390)	-.199 (.495)	1.252*** (.500)	.823 (.664)			.653 (.497)	.637 (.659)	1.535*** (.442)	1.189*** (.463)			.956* (.440)	-.927* (.467)
Skin color			-.314*** (.036)	-.143*** (.042)	-.302*** (.038)	-.159*** (.044)			-.296*** (.041)	-.196*** (.053)	-.263*** (.045)	-.171** (.057)			-.337** (.039)	-.171*** (.045)	-.316*** (.041)	-.159*** (.047)
Male		.202 (.157)		.307* (.158)		.301 (.158)		.415** (.168)		.485** (.167)		.484** (.167)		-.040 (.150)		.067 (.152)		.068 (.153)
Age		.044*** (.006)		.044*** (.006)		.044*** (.006)		.027*** (.007)		.028*** (.007)		.028*** (.007)		.004 (.005)		.004 (.005)		.004 (.005)
Years of Schooling		.254*** (.029)		.245*** (.029)		.247*** (.029)		.096** (.037)		.085* (.037)		.083* (.037)		.240*** (.028)		.227*** (.028)		.227*** (.028)
Household Income per Person Captia		.942*** (.068)		.907*** (.068)		.912*** (.068)		.637*** (.092)		.605*** (.091)		.611*** (.091)		.804*** (.071)		.780*** (.071)		.779*** (.071)
Location in Urban area		.912*** (.155)		.884*** (.154)		.896*** (.154)		.657*** (.185)		.565** (.185)		.571** (.185)		.398** (.152)		.334* (.153)		.339* (.153)
R-squared	.010	.472	.049	.480	.050	.482	.033	.349	.082	.364	.087	.368	.014	.284	.049	.290	.052	.293
Adjusted R-squared	.009	.466	.049	.476	.048	.476	.030	.334	.080	.351	.082	.351	.012	.279	.048	.285	.050	.287
No. of obs	1,504	663					583	316					1,489	959				

Source: Americas Barometer, Jamaica 2010, 2012, and 2014.

\*\*\*  $p \leq .001$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \*  $p \leq .05$

Note: All regression coefficients rounded to three (3) decimal places with standard errors in parentheses.



### *Years of Schooling*

On average, those individuals who identified as mixed or other had more years of schooling than those who racially self-identified as black. However, only the mean comparisons between blacks and mixed were significant across all models and years. When examining race solely as a predictor of years of schooling, results showed that those identified as mixed had an average of 1.6 (2010), 0.7 (2012), and 1 (2014) more years of schooling than blacks. These results were similar when examining skin color as a predictor of educational level; those who were darker-skinned had less years of schooling than lighter-skinned individuals. That is, for every unit increase in the skin color variable (meaning, the darker one was) there was a 0.3 (2010 and 2012) and 0.4 (2014) decrease in the years of schooling received. When both categorical race and skin color were used as predictors, only the comparison between mixed race and blacks remained significant (2010). Again, we see that while race is not significant when control variables were added to regression models, skin color continued to be significantly and negatively associated with years of schooling like that of BHA.

This supports previous findings that while categorical race substantially shapes educational inequality (Telles et al. 2015), skin color has been found to be a stronger predictor of educational attainment (Monk 2014, 2016). All control variables were significantly associated with years of education except for sex in 2010. Overall, males and older individuals had lesser years of schooling when compared to their female and younger counterparts; while those individuals who had higher household income per person capita and lived in an urban setting had more years of schooling on average.

**Table 4.5.** OLS Regression Coefficients Predicting Years of Schooling by Categorical Race and Skin Color, LAPOP 2010-14

	Year																	
	2010						2012						2014					
Constant	9.882 (.086)	3.352 (.874)	12.413 (.313)	4.347 (1.027)	12.023 (.345)	4.26 (1.029)	10.156 (.082)	5.297 (.603)	12.763 (.045)	6.619 (.759)	12.846 (.374)	6.687 (.785)	10.132 (.082)	4.643 (.700)	12.970 (.324)	6.942 (.840)	12.793 (.352)	6.758 (.853)
Race (reference = black)																		
mixed	1.590*** (.272)	.730 (.400)			1.045*** (.281)	.572 (.410)	.672** (.243)	.128 (.242)			.043 (.253)	-.096 (.255)	1.016*** (.270)	.693* (.288)			.390 (.277)	.366 (.296)
other	.378 (.448)	.510 (.661)			-.277 (.454)	-.357 (.667)	-.460 (.591)	.281 (.532)			-1.118 (.587)	.048 (.537)	.757 (.506)	.570 (.535)			.094 (.504)	.184 (.538)
Skin shade																		
1			-.327*** (.042)	-.120* (.057)	-.286*** (.045)	-.098 (.059)												
2																		
3																		
4																		
5																		
6																		
7																		
8																		
9																		
10																		
Male		-.366 (.209)		-.312 (.212)		-.304 (.212)												
1																		
2																		
3																		
4																		
5																		
6																		
7																		
8																		
9																		
10																		
Age		-.064*** (.008)		-.063*** (.008)		-.063*** (.008)												
1																		
2																		
3																		
4																		
5																		
6																		
7																		
8																		
9																		
10																		
Household Income per Person Capita		.981*** (.083)		.969*** (.083)		.958*** (.084)												
1																		
2																		
3																		
4																		
5																		
6																		
7																		
8																		
9																		
10																		
Location in Urban area		.541** (.206)		.547** (.206)		.529** (.206)												
1																		
2																		
3																		
4																		
5																		
6																		
7																		
8																		
9																		
10																		
R-squared	.023	.284	.039	.285	.049	.287	.006	.383	.042	.389	.045	.389	.011	.263	.048	.276	.049	.277
Adjusted R-squared	.021	.277	.039	.279	.047	.279	.005	.379	.041	.385	.043	.384	.009	.259	.047	.272	.047	.272
No. of obs	1,498	663					1,350	883					1,495	963				

Source: Americas Barometer, Jamaica 2010, 2012, and 2014.

\*\*\*  $p \leq .001$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \*  $p \leq .05$

Note: All regression coefficients rounded to three (3) decimal places with standard errors in parentheses.

### *Household Income per Person Capita (HIPC)*

In most countries, there is a relatively linear relationship between race, perceived skin color and household income per person capita: blacks or darker skin shades are associated with lower incomes more so than other non-black racial groups or lighter-skinned individuals (Bailey et al. 2014). Table 4.6 shows that in 2010 and 2014, non-blacks had higher amounts of HIPC when compared to blacks. Surprisingly, in 2012, it is observed that those who were racially categorized as other had significantly less HIPC than blacks (model 6). It was not surprising however, that darker skin shades were associated with significantly lower amounts of HIPC for all three years; for every unit increase in skin shade, there was 0.1 to 0.2 less household income per person capita, on average. However, while race is shown to be significant in shaping income distribution (Bailey et al 2016), a caution here is that the relationship between race and household income per person capita is explained away by skin shade. Similarities between the U.S., Latin America, and Jamaica regarding the disadvantages of skin shade for income is also noted (Allen, et al. 2000; Johnson et al. 1998; Keith and Herring 1991; Seltzer and Smith 1991; Telles and Murguia 1990).

Additionally, it was seen that being male was positively and significantly associated with HIPC, hence reflecting the gender gap in wages. As expected, older individuals and those with more years of schooling had more HIPC than their counterparts. For each unit increase in age and years of schooling, household income per person capita significantly increased between 0.3 to 0.5 and 0.01 to 0.02, respectively. Individuals located in an urban setting also had significantly higher mean HIPC when compared to those living in rural areas.

**Table 4.6. OLS Regression Coefficients Predicting Household Income Per Capita by Categorical Race and Skin Color, LAPOP 2010-14**

	Year																	
	2010						2012						2014					
Race (reference = black)																		
mixed	.587** (.189)	.369* (.171)	-	-	.397* (.194)	.243 (.175)	.167 (.121)	.056 (.112)	-	-	-.193 (.124)	-.115 (.117)	.199 (.125)	.032 (.114)	-	-	.052 (.127)	-.068 (.118)
other	.322 (.301)	.298 (.283)	-	-	.138 (.303)	-.176 (.284)	-.090 (.264)	-.330 (.247)	-	-	-.439 (.258)	-.497* (.247)	.296 (.234)	-.174 (.212)	-	-	-.108 (.235)	.052 (.214)
Skin shade	-	-	-.117*** (.026)	-.086*** (.024)	-.102*** (.027)	-.077** (.025)	-	-	-.180 (.021)	-.091*** (.021)	-.196*** (.023)	-.104*** (.023)	-	-	-.106*** (.021)	-.071*** (.021)	-.103*** (.022)	-.073*** (.021)
Male	-	.317*** (.089)	-	.359*** (.090)	-	.360*** (.090)	-	.400*** (.070)	-	.425*** (.069)	-	.432*** (.069)	-	.413*** (.067)	-	.454*** (.068)	-	.457*** (.068)
Age	-	.005 (.004)	-	.005 (.004)	-	.005 (.004)	-	.020*** (.003)	-	.019*** (.003)	-	.019*** (.003)	-	.014*** (.002)	-	.014*** (.002)	-	.014*** (.002)
Years of Schooling	-	.180*** (.015)	-	.176*** (.015)	-	.174*** (.015)	-	.205*** (.014)	-	.195*** (.014)	-	.194*** (.014)	-	.145*** (.012)	-	.137*** (.012)	-	.138*** (.012)
Location in Urban area	-	.254** (.088)	-	.251** (.088)	-	.243** (.088)	-	.333*** (.072)	-	.265*** (.073)	-	.264*** (.073)	-	.250*** (.069)	-	.220** (.069)	-	.221*** (.259)
Constant	9.426 (.051)	7.180 (.255)	10.339 (.196)	7.856 (.320)	10.193 (.210)	7.798 (.323)	9.112 (.041)	5.695 (.220)	10.441 (.159)	6.546 (.292)	10.590 (.176)	6.654 (.302)	9.048 (.040)	6.654 (.185)	9.838 (.157)	7.256 (.253)	9.803 (.168)	7.276 (.259)
R-squared	.016	.171	.030	.240	.036	.242	.002	.249	.067	.263	.072	.267	.004	.188	.025	.197	.026	.198
Adjusted R-squared	.013	.164	.028	.234	.032	.234	.000	.244	.066	.259	.069	.261	.002	.183	.024	.193	.026	.192
No. of obs	672	663					997	883					967	963				

Source: Americas Barometer, Jamaica 2010, 2012, and 2014.

\*\*\* p ≤ .001, \*\* p ≤ .01, \* p ≤ .05

Note: All regression coefficients rounded to three (3) decimal places with standard errors in parentheses.

## DISCUSSION

I began this study by asking if there is a race component in the stratification of social inequality in the perceived ethno-racial homogeneous society of Jamaica. Additionally, due to the racial homogeneity of the Jamaican context, I proposed a multidimensional approach for examining race defining race as self-classification and phenotype (skin color). Firstly, I find that categorical race does matter in the structuring of social inequality of Jamaica, as social inequality is starkly structured by both measures. Secondly, of the two distinct measures of race used in the study, skin color was found to more aptly capture patterns in inequality than racial self-classification. Overall it was found that Blacks and darker-skinned individuals (regardless of racial category) have significantly lower levels of BHA, HIPC, and years of schooling, as well as experience more household crowdedness than their non-black and lighter-skinned Jamaican counterparts, even when accounting for standard social class proxies.

These results point to the importance of accounting for the contextuality of race in inequality research. Examining skin color in addition to categorical race offered a more nuanced view on the structuring of social inequality that was simply not captured by utilizing racial self-classification alone. This was particularly notable when comparing the results and predictability of categorical race when using the 2001 Jamaican census compared to the 2014 LAPOP on Jamaica, where skin color, an additive dimension of race, was able to be assessed. As Monk (2016) noted in his research on Brazil, race and color are often conflated in race-based inequality research, despite both revealing differential dimensions of individuals lived experience and outcomes: “*They are not substitutable and do not refer to the “same underlying thing”*” (p.425; see also Banton 2012).

Furthermore, these findings take on even more importance considering that official discourse in Jamaica has historically used a “color-blind” or “non-racial” frame in describing Jamaican population dynamics. The ideology of Jamaican Exceptionalism (Gray 1991; Vickerman 1999) downplays the relevance of race and skin color in accounting for social inequalities. The constructed ambiguity of race imparted upon Jamaicans by its nation building elites (Hall 1997; Henke 2001; Kelly and Bailey 2018) eventually served to replace a privileging of race without eradicating the privileging of lightness; as evidenced by extensive skin color epithets (Hall 1997; Henke 2001) used in the island. This shift in the racial imaginary could then be described as superficial, as a resoundingly similar stratification remains, but the means through which it may be articulated has been overwhelmingly complicated. By viewing this phenomenon through a lens of racial homogeneity, the nuances of representation within the country’s occupational sectors are functionally ignored.

This belief is deeply ingrained in Jamaican society (Kelly and Bailey 2018), and the country lacks any race-based policies despite the urgings of the UN’s International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) (UN Doc. CERD/C/JAM/16-20). Since Jamaica is believed to be racially homogeneous as 91.6% of the population is of Afro-descent (according to 2001 census), the government may feel there is no need for race-based policies as the country’s population in and of itself dissuades racial inequality.

However, as the findings of this study shows, income, education, and standard of living are structured along categorical race and skin color in the island. In order to contextualize these findings, there are particularities that merit note. As stated previously, whites who remained in Jamaica after the abolition of slavery still held control of property. In addition, Jews, Syrians, and Lebanese merchants had human capital on which to compound their social positions. Afro-

Jamaicans on the other hand, rarely owned property or businesses, thus lacked prestige and financial wherewithal. This would no doubt influence the availability or ability to obtain certain household amenities. These results show a continuation of that disadvantage in contemporary Jamaican society. As Afro-Jamaicans had significantly less BHA than whites Jamaicans; this demonstrates not only the advantage of white racial group membership across the Americas (e.g., Bailey et al. 2014), but the disadvantages of blackness and membership in that racial group. This racial disparity hence largely represents the vestiges of slavery in the post-colonial context of Jamaica.

Though, what seems to be more central to the study of racial inequality in Jamaica is skin color. Historically it was shown that lighter-skinned slaves received better jobs, diets, living conditions, etc. (Bodenhorn and Ruebeck 2007; Johnson 2004). This light skin privilege persists in contemporary society as previous research have shown intra-group stratification among whites (Hannon 2015), Latinos (Allen, Telles, and Hunter 2000; Hunter 2007; Roth 2010) and African Americans (Allen, Telles and Hunter 2000; Goldsmith, Hamilton, and Darity 2006; Hughes and Hertel 1990; Hunter 1998; Keith and Herring 1991; Monk, 2014; Seltzer and Smith 1991).

Moreover, there has been research in Latin America that highlights the importance of skin color in structuring inequality across all individuals regardless of categorical race (Bailey et al. 2016; Bailey et al. 2013; Bailey et al. 2014; Telles 2014; Telles and Lim 1998). Skin color may have more purchase in racial stratification in Latin America due to ideologies of racial mixing or fusion. This ideology is also present in Jamaica as illustrated through its pluralist state motto (Out of many, one people). This racial pluralism coupled with Jamaica's perceived racial homogeneity, may substantially account for the observed effects of skin color regardless of categorical racial groups. Moreover, findings indicate the importance of capturing skin color data

on the national census of Jamaica Therefore, there are similarities between the U.S., Latin America, and Jamaica regarding the disadvantages of skin color.

It appears to be a shared characteristic and common theme of the Americas that darker-skinned individuals, and most especially those of African ancestry, have lower income and fewer years of schooling than their lighter-skinned counterparts (Keith and Herring 1991; Seltzer and Smith 1991). However, this ignores that socioeconomic well-being is heavily stratified along both racial and skin color lines in Jamaica, as results show, and historical disadvantage is only compounded (Conley 1999), especially when there are no measures in place to address historical and contemporary structural discrimination and exclusion.

This study has a limitation that should be noted when interpreting results. As noted previously, the portion of the sample that racially self-identified as non-black, specifically those who racially self-classified as white, Chinese, and East Indian, was very low in the Americas Barometer social survey on Jamaica although percent distribution of racial composition categories in the Americas Barometer surveys being similar to that of the Jamaican census. Having more individuals who self-classified as white, Chinese, and East Indian may offer alternative results. However, it is important to note that despite the sample size of non-black racial groups in the Americas Barometer on Jamaica, race was a significant predictor of the availability of basic household amenities and years of schooling when examined as a sole predictor.

This study advances in our understanding of the dynamics of race and skin color in patterning overall social inequality as the utility of both race and skin color does indeed vary across context. In Jamaica, this paper's results suggest that skin color was a stronger predictor of social inequality than race; however this does not lessen the fact that differences along race were



noted and significant, particularly when using census data. Hence, results show the importance of using both measures when studying social inequality (Bailey et al. 2014; Saperstein 2008; Telles 2014) and point to the need for innovative approaches that challenge assumptions about the structure of racial and color hierarchies in Jamaica despite insufficient acknowledgement by Jamaicans (Kelly and Bailey 2018).

## CHAPTER 5

### **Summary and Conclusion**

My dissertation, “Jamaican Ethnic Oneness: Race, Colorism, and Inequality,” analyzes racial and skin color stratification in Jamaica, the impact of an ideology of racial mixing on Jamaican’s explanation for that inequality, and racial and nation-based identification. Robust generalizable studies of social stratification by skin color and/or categorical race are generally lacking with regards to the Anglo-Caribbean. Therefore, the case of Jamaica is theoretically important because it is an English-speaking society in the Caribbean, which like the U.S., was colonized by the British Crown. However, unlike the U.S., an ideology of racial mixing is salient, like some regions of Latin America. Additionally, Jamaica is an overwhelmingly Afro-descent population, hence, overt privileging of non-black ancestry is constrained, and a color hierarchy is not always explicitly visible.

Findings document (1) that an ideology of racial mixing/fusion strongly influences understandings of Jamaican national identity. (2) Contemporary construction of nationhood of are raced with Jamaicanness being equated to racial mixedness. Thus, the hybrid or creolized body and culture are made requirements for national belonging. (3) While issues pertaining to both race and colorism are not blatantly denied, race is generally viewed as a “U.S. problem,” while colorism is considered centrally an issue of the nation’s past. Instead, Jamaicans overwhelmingly focus on class for explaining social inequality rather than skin color or race, despite the salience of dramatic racial hierarchies in both wealth and educational attainment. (4) There is dramatic social inequality by skin color in Jamaica and a majority embrace of an ideology of racial mixing is negatively associated with Jamaicans’ recognition of racial discrimination. (5) Socioeconomic well-being across all dimensions is starkly structured along

categorical race and skin color as white advantage and black disadvantage are consistent features across all outcomes; blacks and those of darker skin shades have fewer BHA and years of schooling, have lower per capita household incomes, and experience more household crowdedness on average compared to their non-black Jamaican counterparts.

While scholars, who have studied the Latin American case, argue that ideologies of creolization or racial mixing obfuscate and perpetuate racial discrimination (Bonilla-Silva and Glover 2005; Hanchard 1994; Paschel and Sawyer 2008; Warren and Sue 2011; Winant 1999) and that this ideology acts as ‘*color blindness*’ (Paschel 2010), ‘*race-blindness*’ (Sue 2011), and/or ‘*false consciousness*’ (Sidanius Peña, and Sawyer 2001; Winant 1999), this was not the case in Jamaica. While many Jamaicans strongly embrace an ideology of racial mixing<sup>31</sup> this did not obscure or lead to a denial of racial discrimination. As I show in Chapter 3, specifically Table 3.1 which uses 2008 LAPOP data on Jamaica, over two-thirds of Jamaicans claim that racial discrimination it is an important element in structuring black poverty on the island. Forty-three percent claim it is ‘very important’ and 30% claim it is ‘somewhat important.’ Additionally, from my qualitative interviews, while connotations were made with social class, the present of racism and colorism was not blatantly denied. These results are somewhat counterintuitive to group conflict theory (Bobo 1988; Bobo et al. 2012).

Instead of ‘false-consciousness’ being at work in the Jamaican population, I argue that the mismatch between perceived preferential treatment and structural inequality exists because Jamaica does not collect or document such data. There is no statistical documentation, by the government or otherwise (aside from the Americas Barometer) of the impact race and skin color

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<sup>31</sup> Table 3.1 showed that half of the LAPOP 2008 sample rated the level of its belief in ethnic oneness as a seven (out of seven), and another 32 percent embraced the ethnic oneness orientation at the five-to-six level. Additionally, while not representative, all 5 of my interview respondents expressed this. This coincides with its popularity across most of the Americas, except the U.S.

on life outcomes (despite continual prompting to do so by the UN's iCERD). For example, the Jamaican government does not have any policies that regulate the use of race and/or skin color in hiring practices. The very absence of such policies may signify that such practices are not institutional, but overall restrict claims of racism and/or colorism in the nation to mere anecdotes. Thus, Jamaicans may tend to point to class as the more salient explanation for poverty or inequality as its connection to life outcomes is apparent from the economic circumstances of the nation.

Overall, results point to the need for innovative approaches that challenge assumptions about the structure of racial and color hierarchies in Jamaica. My work makes use of categorical race and skin color, analyzed as two distinct dimensions of the construct we call "race." Using both measures offers a more nuanced examination of racial inequality and highlights the heterogeneity within a majority Afro-descent population, oftentimes treated as a monolith. Furthermore, it problematizes the non-racial frame and rhetoric dominant in Jamaica, in the region at large, as well as U.S. conceptualizations of race. Thus, my dissertation makes important advances in our understanding of racial dynamics in patterning overall socioeconomic wellbeing, the variation of the utility of both race and skin color across contexts and complicates race inequality discourse by highlighting the heterogeneity within the black diaspora. Additionally, it moves beyond commonsense notions of race and highlights how the use of both quantitative and qualitative analyses to interrogate the complexities of race can leverage important insights.

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## APPENDIX A

### Interview Guide

*Introduction:* Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Today I am going to ask you different kinds of questions about your experiences growing up here in Jamaica. I will be recording the interview, and if there are any questions you don't want to answer or don't want recorded just let me know. Do you have any questions before we get started?

#### **Racial/Skin Tone (and Class) Classifications**

1. How would you describe yourself in terms of your physical features and skin shade?
2. How would you describe your family and closest friends in terms of physical features and skin shade? You do not need to give specific details but you can generalize in your description with yourself as the reference point. That is, how they do they compare to you in terms of skin shade and physical features.
3. Can you tell me about a time in your life where you thought your physical features and skin shade mattered? This can be a specific episode and/or a phase in your life.
  - a. How do think your experience differs from the experience of others, say your family and friends (who may be lighter or darker)?
4. Many people speak Jamaican Standard English, patois, or a mixture of both.
  - a. Was there a time in your life where you thought the way in which you spoke mattered?
    - i. What do you think the way you speak says about you?
    - ii. What do you think the way someone speaks says about them?
      1. Their education?
      2. Their class?
      3. Do you think skin shade factors into this?

#### **Race Relations**

5. According to the Jamaican census, the various groups of people that live on the island are black/Afro-descent, mixed, Chinese, Indians, and white. Thinking about these various groups of people, do you think that some people are above others in how much power and respect they have?
  - a. If so, how would you describe the relationship between these groups of people? Please provide as much details as you can.
6. What do you think the lives of the people you placed in the different positions of the hierarchy are like?
  - a. What are the kinds of thing people say about them?
7. Give Social Distance Scale: [After table is filled in by interviewer, several probes will follow depending on which groups they list as being more willing to have particular social contact with. Some probes are (but not limited to):]
  - a. How does ethnic background or skin shade factor into whom you choose to date or marry?
  - b. Some people feel that their skin shade is a help at work, and some people feel that it is a hindrance. What is your experience? Do you think it matters in anyway?
  - c. How do you think where you live affect how comfortable you are with particular groups? [more probes here to ascertain differences between rural and urban areas]

### **Jamaica National Identity**

8. The national motto of Jamaica is, “Out of many, one people.” In reference to the different groups of people you see or know of that live on the island, what does this mean to you?
  - a. If you had to describe someone, who would you say is the ‘ideal’ representation of what it means to be Jamaican?
  - b. Are there any people living on the island that do not fit that image?
9. Some people say that the motto of the country shows or symbolizes the unity among the Jamaican people and that despite our differences we Jamaicans have many things that unite us as a country. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?
  - a. Why do you agree or disagree with this statement?
  - b. Do you think most Jamaicans believe this?
10. To what extent are you proud of being Jamaican?

### **Perceptions and Experiences of Colorism/Racism in Jamaica**

*Introduction:* Now I am going to present a few scenarios. These scenarios represent real situations that have taken place in Jamaica. After reading these scenarios, I am going to ask you your opinion about the scenarios.

11. Usain Bolt said in a recent interview that he has experienced racism in Jamaica. The particular event he referred to was an incident with Jinx, Sean Paul’s wife, who complained that he was playing his music too loud and that she wished he would “return to where he was from”.
  - a. What do you think of this situation? Do you agree with Usain that it was about race/color or do you believe that it had nothing to do with race/color?
  - b. Can you think of a situation or event when you have experienced something similar to Usain?
    - i. If not to you, can you think of a situation where something similar happened to someone you know?
  - c. What did you think of the event at the time? Did you share this experience with anyone?
    - i. If yes, how did you relate the situation?
    - ii. Can you recall their reaction to your experience?
  - d. Do you think that racism/colorism exists in Jamaica?
12. Some Jamaicans have stated that for several years now, the girls that (whatever association that does miss. Jamaica) have been selecting for Miss World or Miss Universe have all been light-skin or possess particular features (explain) and that there is a bias in this selection. Others have countered thus by stating that skin-shade doesn’t matter because we are all Jamaicans and the girls selected from these pageants represent the country well, particularly in terms of appearance.
  - a. What do you think about this debate? Which point of view do you agree with more? Why?
13. There was a documentary done in 2013 by Diane Jackson-miller on TVJ which investigated skin-bleaching in Jamaica. In this documentary a lot of the individuals interviewed who bleached their skin stated that the reason they did so was to appear more attractive, get better jobs etc.

- a. What is your opinion on skin bleaching or toning?
  - b. In your opinion, what are some reasons why individual would bleach their skin?
  - c. Do you think that the claims made or reasons given above for bleaching have any truth to them?
  - d. Some people state that most of the individuals who bleach their skin are working-class/ poor people. Do you agree or disagree with this assessment? Why?
14. Now thinking of persons who are poor in Jamaica, I'm going to read to you some possible reasons or causes why people are poor in Jamaica. For each cause, state how important you feel that cause is in holding people back, or in keeping them poor and why.
- a. Laziness, little or no ambition.
  - b. Lack of equal opportunity in Jamaican Society.
  - c. Poor money management.
  - d. Prejudice and discrimination against persons because of their color or race.

**Effects of Travel on Perceptions and Experiences of Colorism/Racism**

15. If you have lived aboard for more than a year, what are some similarities and/or differences in Jamaica and there in the way you think people are treated based on their physical appearance and skin shade?
- a. Can you tell me about a time while living aboard that you thought you were treated differently based on your physical appearance and skin shade in the country you were in?
16. If you have family or friends that live aboard, they may have had conversations with you about the treatment they have received based on their skin shade. If they have spoken to you about such matters, what have they said and what do you think about these conversations you have had with your family and/or friend(s)?

**Race Questions**

17. What do you think 'race' mean?
18. What do you think racism is?
- a. Do you think racism is present in Jamaica?
  - b. Can you explain why you think that?



## APPENDIX B

### Amended Bogardus Social Distance Scale

Instructions: Below is a table with a list of scenarios. Thinking about the different groups of people that live on the island, rank how comfortable you would be in the listed scenarios if the person was from one of these groups. List your ranking from 1 to 5 with 1 being the most comfortable and 5 being the least comfortable. Remember to give your first reactions in every case. Give your reaction to each as a group and not based on the best or the worst members that you have known.

	Black/Afro- descent	Whites	Chinese	Indians	Mixed
Would have as your political leader(s)					
Would marry or become family with through marriage					
Would be friends with					
On my street as neighbors or living in the same community					
Going to the same school or working alongside me in my job					
Attending the same church or religious service					
As citizens in Jamaica					
As visitors to Jamaica					
Would expel from Jamaica					

APPENDIX C

**Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA) Skin Color Palette**



APPENDIX D

**Full Model of Relative Risk Ratios from Multinomial Logistic Regression Analyses of Respondents' Sentiments of the Importance of Color/Race Prejudice and Discrimination Explaining Black Poverty, 2008 (N= 1,126)**

Models	Somewhat Important vs. Not Important						Very Important vs. Not Important					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Ethnic Oneness</i>												
Low	.764	.763	.763	.760	.760	.761	1.532*	1.545*	1.544*	1.550*	1.554*	1.552*
Medium	1.090	1.051	1.058	1.059	1.058	1.072	.795	.796	.792	.792	.780	.783
High	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Black		1.031	1.037	1.037	1.039	1.027		.896	.892	.891	.894	.890
Female			.912	.911	.910	.923			1.082	1.083	1.076	1.082
Age				.998	.998	.998				1.001	1.001	1.001
Urban area					1.104	1.096					2.524***	2.518***
Years of schooling completed						.992						.997

Source: Americas Barometer, Jamaica 2008.

\*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \*p<.05