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# **Imperial Sorting Grids: Institutional Logics of Diversity and the Classificatory Legacies of the First Wave of European Overseas Expansion**

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# Imperial Sorting Grids: Institutional Logics of Diversity and the Classificatory Legacies of the First Wave of European Overseas Expansion<sup>1</sup>

Peter Stamatov

This paper identifies two distinct patterns of defining legitimate human ethno-racial kinds that emerged in the course of the first wave of European overseas expansion between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries and, since then, have shaped in two distinct ways cognitions of human diversity. One is the “differentialist” racial imagination typical of formerly British and Dutch colonies that makes a strong distinction between a limited set of categories. The other is fine-graded and extensive nomenclature of phenotypic and cultural difference prevalent in territories of the former Portuguese, Spanish, and French empires. These two ideal typical modes of cognitively and symbolically sorting human diversity form two distinct institutional logics of diversity. Contrary to folk intuitions about natural bodily differences between individuals of different “races” with their typical somatic properties, these institutional logics of diversity do not simply describe pre-existing ethno-racial groups, but rather provide general cultural templates for the sets of basic human kinds into which populations are “sliced.”<sup>2</sup>

The two institutional logics thus allow for the social construction of certain, but not other, human kinds. In this manner, they have the causal power to consistently frame social reality. They have done so by imposing significantly different categorical distinctions which, in turns, influences individual life chances within the social context where the two logics have been employed. In other words—and using the conceptual vocabulary of the new institutionalism that

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<sup>2</sup> On the concept of “human kinds,” see Ron Mallon, “A Field Guide to Social Construction,” *Philosophy Compass* 2, no. 1 (2007).

informs this paper—once congealed institutionally and embedded in social perceptions and practices, these two diversity logics have guided social action and have produced distinct outcomes while remaining relatively autonomous and “decoupled” from structural demographic or economic conditions. Although typically employed by imperial and post-imperial states, the two logics of diversity have operated both within political units and in the wider transnational and trans-imperial space. In addition, they have been employed by a variety of non-state actors to configure changing patterns of cognitive and political differentiation of “races” in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean areas that had formed the global zone of early modern European imperialism.

### **Two Institutional Logics of Diversity**

The Portuguese voyages of discovery in the fifteenth century and American and Haitian independence around the turn of the nineteenth century that ushered in a period of imperial contraction mark the temporal limits of the first of two phases of European political expansion overseas.<sup>3</sup> The most general characteristic of this historical period is the expansion of the geographical scale of social interactions, which in turn changed the characteristics of these processes. The complex dynamics of this first phase of imperial expansion included exchanges, of a new intensity and increased frequency, between previously isolated human populations. Economic, cultural, and political interactions and struggles were thus intertwined with the “biological” travel of living organisms of all kinds, including human bodies and the resulting reproductive unions: a demographic re-patterning brought about by the new contiguity of previously separated individuals.

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<sup>3</sup> David B. Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance: European Overseas Empires 1415-1980* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

In contrast with the wider involvement of European states in the second stage of empire-building in the nineteenth century (and disregarding small Danish and Swedish possessions in the Caribbean and India), the protagonists of this first phase were the states on the Atlantic shoreline. Within the context of increased migration and sexual contact, a persisting division emerged in the ways human diversity was perceived, understood and labeled in the overseas territories of these first imperial powers. This division, furthermore, has been coextensive with the geographical and confessional divide between the Southern and Catholic imperial powers of Portugal, Spain, and France and, in the Northern Atlantic shores, the Netherlands and England/Britain that entered the imperial game while aligning themselves with the Protestant alternative after the religious bifurcation of the Reformation.

An extensive, elaborate, and detailed nomenclature of different human kinds institutionalized in “Southern” (and Catholic) imperial areas contrasts with a more limited set of categories typically employed in their “Northern” Protestant counterparts. In Franco-Iberian territories, various graded “intermediate” categories of human diversity have been important and conspicuous, while lacking or subdued in Anglo-Dutch territories. As a consequence, diversity categories have been fuzzier and less rigidly defined, often overlapping, and carrying less “social distance” between them in the Southern imperial and post-imperial context—as opposed to Northern rigid and clearly separated categorical distinctions. Interactionally, Southern diversity categories are mutable and sensitive to context and their “fuzzy” nature allows for individual transitions between identity labels in processes of “passing” of “whitening.”<sup>4</sup> Northern category sets, on the other hand, are stable across situations and discourage such transitions.

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<sup>4</sup> As Isar Godreau points out, in Puerto Rico different categories and different classificatory schemes can be employed to refer to the same person in the course of the same conversation. See Isar P. Godreau, "Slippery Semantics: Race Talk and Everyday Uses of Racial Terminology in Puerto Rico," *Centro Journal* 20, no. 2 (2008).

The clustering of these ideal-typical contrasts (summarized in Table 1) differentiate analytically two distinct institutional logics of human diversity that crystallized during—and have persisted since—the three centuries of the first period of European overseas expansion. I define these two diversity models or schemes as institutional logics in order to foreground two analytically important features: they are, first, institutionalized in various practices and organizations and are thus persistent while, second, they are relatively autonomous or “decoupled” from structural conditions such as demographic or economic stratification. Scholars of organizations have repeatedly drawn attention to institutional logics that inform ideas and evaluations of economic and organizational rationality and efficiency to point out how such seemingly abstract judgments are driven by deeper cultural understandings and models.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the two enduring diversity logics I identify are not simply the product or reflection of underlying and culturally “uncontaminated” demographic or “racial” realities. Embedded in and perpetuated by practices and organizations, these institutional logics have repeatedly constituted and created two distinct social worlds of human differentness.

Initially, the two diversity logics were the elaboration and development of a general tripartite hierarchical scheme of human diversity. This scheme had crystallized in Europe before the beginning of imperial expansion to differentiate three types of populations that in the preceding centuries of no or less intensive contact had developed distinct identifying phenotypical characteristics. On the top of the tripartite scheme were Europeans: “white,” Christian and civilized. In the intermediate position were the various “less white” and non-

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<sup>5</sup> Patricia H. Thornton, William Ocasio, and Michael Lounsbury, *The Institutional Logics Perspective: A New Approach to Culture, Structure and Process* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Roger Friedland and Robert R. Alford, "Bringing Society Back In: Symbols, Practices, and Institutional Contradictions," in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, ed. Walter W. Powell and Paul DiMaggio (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

Christian indigenous people—the type that Columbus as early as 1492 described as “of the color of the Canarians, neither black nor white.” The lowest—and “darkest”—rank went to the equally “heathen” enslaveable people: sub-Saharan Africans in the “West Indies” and Africans and Asians in the Indian Ocean area.<sup>6</sup>

The two distinct diversity logics I have identified maintain equally the color-based hierarchy and valorization encoded in this initial tripartite division—to the extent that even in a state with no significant white elite like independent Haiti lightness (or relative “whiteness”) of skin has been a marker of social and cultural elevation.<sup>7</sup> Yet the categorical distinctions within this uniform hierarchy of color are made in remarkably different ways under the two diversity regimes. The historically antecedent categories of European, indigenous, and black—and, in particular, the “mixed” offspring of sexual unions between individuals assigned to these categories—have been defined, labeled, and thought of differently in the two cases. In turn—to use Weber’s concept—these divergent cultural understandings have imparted to individuals thus differentially defined significantly different life chances in various institutional fields. To take just one example: contemporary economic inequality in the Americas does not correlate directly with either the respondent’s lightness of skin color or with one single hierarchy of racial

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<sup>6</sup> Luis Arranz, ed. *Cristóbal Colón: Diario de a bordo* (Madrid: Edaf, 2006), 92. See also Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), 251; Carl N. Degler, "Slavery and the Genesis of American Race Prejudice," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2, no. 1 (1959); William McKee Evans, "From the Land of Canaan to the Land of Guinea: The Strange Odyssey of the 'Sons of Ham'," *The American Historical Review* 85, no. 1 (1980); Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Va., 1968); A. J. R. Russell-Wood, "Before Columbus: Portugal's African Prelude to the Middle Passage and Contribution to Discourse on Race and Slavery," in *Race, Discourse, and the Origins of the Americas: A New World View*, ed. Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); James H. Sweet, "The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1997); Alden T. Vaughan, *The Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> H. Hoetink, *The Two Variants in Caribbean Race Relations: A Contribution to the Sociology of Segmented Societies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 134-35; Micheline Labelle, *Idéologie de couleur et classes sociales en Haïti* (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1978).

categories.<sup>8</sup> This finding is suggestive that, in addition to the various historical and contextual factors, the specific and enduring ways in which individuals are sorted differentially in different “racial” categories do matter for—among other things—the unequal distribution of wealth in the Atlantic areas of former European empires.

### **Two Logics in History and Practice**

Although observers had commented for centuries on the differences in which diversity categories are drawn in the Franco-Iberian and the Anglo-Dutch context, these differences were for the first time brought to the attention of social scientists by post-World War II studies in Brazilian “race relations” and the contrast their mostly North American authors draw with prevailing racial distinctions in the pre-Civil Rights Movement United States. Most notably, Marvin Harris observed the maintenance of a relatively rigid distinction between “black” and “white” in the US through the mechanism of what he called “hypo-descent”: individuals with less than perfect white “pedigree,” such as the offspring of phenotypically mixed sexual unions, would be automatically assigned to the “subordinate” black “group ... in order to avoid the ambiguity of intermediate identity.”<sup>9</sup> The typical US classification pattern operates with a limited and strictly defined categories of racial identification. By contrast, in Brazil categories defining one’s “color” have been numerous and relatively flexibly defined. As Harris again put it, the “calculus” of Brazilian racial identity is “referentially ambiguous.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Stanley Bailey, Aliya Saperstein, and Andrew Penner, "Race, color, and income inequality across the Americas," *Demographic Research* 31, no. 24 (2014).

<sup>9</sup> Marvin Harris, *Patterns of Race in the Americas* (New York: Walker, 1964), 56. The Brazil-US contrast was articulated in the studies collected in the 1952 first edition of

<sup>10</sup> "Referential Ambiguity in the Calculus of Brazilian Racial Identity," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 26(1970).

The contrast ran through all the studies of the UNESCO project of anthropological study of race and class in Brazil of which Harris had been a part.<sup>11</sup> Subsequent research both amplified and complicated the dramatically sharp contrast established by this first series of studies. The interest in the Brazil-US comparison lived on as the symmetrical persistence and late abolition of slavery in the two cases offered a particularly attractive anchoring point for comparative inquiry. One way in which the difference between the two contexts was framed was the distinction between a “dual,” black-and-white racial structure in the US and a “ternary,” black-*pardo*-white Brazilian racial structure.<sup>12</sup> Yet scholars also extended the comparative gaze into the wider Atlantic and Caribbean area—while still holding the United States, the contradictory site both of perplexingly enduring racial injustice and of an academically hegemonic social science on “race,” as a constant point of reference in the comparison. A part of this literature reaffirmed the important differences in racial classifications between the American North and the rest of the Americas and the Caribbean. At the same time, other authors (and, indeed, Harris himself) drew attention to important variations and gradations both within the United States and in the Southern American and Caribbean areas.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Charles Wagley, ed. *Race and Class in Rural Brazil*, 2d ed. (New York: International Documents Service, 1963), first published in 1952. For the context of the UNESCO Brazilian project, see Peter Wade, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto, 2010), 54-59.

<sup>12</sup> G. Reginald Daniel, *Race and Multiraciality in Brazil and the United States: Converging Paths?* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1971); Denise Ferreira Da Silva, "Facts of Blackness: Brazil is Not (Quite) the United States... and Racial Politics in Brazil?," *Social Identities* 4(1998); Robert Brent Toplin, "Reinterpreting Comparative Race Relations: The United States and Brazil," *Journal of Black Studies* 2, no. 2 (1971); Thomas E. Skidmore, "Bi-Racial U.S.A. vs. Multi-Racial Brazil: Is the Contrast Still Valid?," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25, no. 2 (1993).

<sup>13</sup> Peter Dodge, "Comparative Racial Systems in the Greater Caribbean," *Social and Economic Studies* 16, no. 3 (1967); Harris, *Patterns of Race*; H. Hoetink, *Slavery and Race Relations in the Americas: Comparative Notes on Their Nature and Nexus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); *Two Variants*; Donald L. Horowitz, "Color Differentiation in the American Systems of Slavery," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 3, no. 3 (1973); Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Race, Color, and Class in Central America and the Andes," *Daedalus* 96, no. 2 (1967); Eduardo Seda Bonilla, "Dos modelos de relaciones raciales: Estados Unidos y América Latina," *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 12, no. 4 (1968); Wade, *Race and Ethnicity*.



There has been, indeed, a remarkable degree of empirical variation between and even within various colonial territories. As I will point out, at least part of that variation is the result of dynamic and strategic interactions between the two diversity logics I have identified. In addition, the complex circuits of migrations since the mid-nineteenth century have increased cultural and demographic heterogeneity in virtually all former imperial possessions, thus complicating the classificatory patterns first established in the centuries of the first European overseas expansion.<sup>14</sup>

Still, the same fundamentally distinct cultural principles, exemplified so vividly by the Brazil-US contrastive pair “discovered” by the UNESCO project anthropologists, can be seen structuring two different institutional logics of diversity along the Southern and Northern pattern, respectively, not only in this specific pair, not only in the Americas and the adjacent Caribbean, but also in the two larger areas of the first overseas expansion around the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean—the areas that contemporaries distinguished as “East” and “West Indies.” In this wider global context, persistent systematic differences between the two diversity logics are evidenced by the different relative size and extensiveness of the categorical nomenclatures they have employed, by the differential social construction of symbolic boundaries between categories, and by the diverging prominence of intermediate categories denoting mixed offspring.

### *Categorical Ranges*

An index of the expansiveness of Franco-Iberian diversity classifications—an expansiveness that contrasts with the limited set of categories typically employed in Anglo-Dutch territories—is the proliferation and historical accretion of hundreds of words used to designate “races” and their

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<sup>14</sup> On the new migrations from Asia and Europe since the mid-nineteenth century that resulted, e.g., in the demographic “Europeanization” of Argentina, Southern Brazil, and Uruguay, see Magnus Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), 129-36.

“mixtures” in Spanish America.<sup>15</sup> The richness of diversity category sets has been documented consistently in various parts of the Franco-Iberian imperial world.<sup>16</sup>

Consider, for instance, the Mexican Inquisition’s dogged insistence to label properly accused bigamist Agustín Miguel de Estrada in 1736 as discussed by Ben Vinson. Estrada fit three of the then current diversity categories: *indio*, *lobo* (the offspring of an Indian man and a black woman), or *chino* (the offspring of a *lobo* and a black woman). Witnesses testified that his mother was a *mulata alobada* (a “mulatto” with light Indian traits) and his father an *indio muy ladino* (a genealogically and phenotypically Indian person who lives a “Spanish” life). Some thought that he was more of a *lobo*; others, that his light skin made him a *chino*.<sup>17</sup> Another example of an extensive category nomenclature comes from the sworn testimony of witnesses examined in 1759 by the *Royal Audiencia* of Cartagena de Indias in the New Kingdom of Granada (Colombia) during a lawsuit between bloodletting surgeon Miguel Banquedel and

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<sup>15</sup> Conveniently collated in Manuel Alvar, *Lexico del mestizaje en Hispanoamerica* (Madrid Ediciones Cultura Hispanica).

<sup>16</sup> For Brazil, see also Roger Sanjek, "Brazilian Racial Terms: Some Aspects of Meaning and Learning," *American Anthropologist* 73(1971); Livio Sansone, *Blackness without Ethnicity: Constructing Race in Brazil* (New York: Palgrave, 2003); Stuart B. Schwartz, "Brazilian Ethnogenesis: *Mestiços*, *Mamelucos*, and *Pardos*," in *Le Nouveau Monde, Mondes Nouveaux: L'expérience américaine*, ed. Serge Gruzinski and Nathan Wachtel (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1996), 20-21. For Mexico, Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, "Races in 17th Century Mexico," *Phylon* 6, no. 3 (1945); John K. Chance and William B. Taylor, "Estate and Class in a Colonial City: Oaxaca in 1792," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 19, no. 4 (1977); María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 166; Ben Vinson III, "Estudiano las razas desde la periferia: Las castas olvidadas del sistema colonial mexicano (lobos, moriscos, coyotes, moros y chinos)," in *Pautas de convivencia étnica en la América Latina colonial (indios, negros, mulatos, pardos y esclavos)*, ed. Juan Manuel de la Serna (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005). Peru: David Cahill, "Colour by Numbers: Racial and Ethnic Categories in the Viceroyalty of Peru, 1532–1824," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 26, no. 02 (1994); Pierre L. Van den Berghe, "The Use of Ethnic Terms in the Peruvian Social Science Literature," in *Class and Ethnicity in Peru*, ed. Pierre L. Van den Berghe (Leiden: Brill, 1974). Puerto Rico: J. Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island & in the United States* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 238; Godreau, "Slippery Semantics.": Clarence C. Gravlee, "Ethnic Classification in Southeastern Puerto Rico: The Cultural Model of "Color"," *Social Forces* 83, no. 3 (2005); Charles C. Rogler, "The Role of Semantics in the Study of Race Distance in Puerto Rico," *Social Forces* 22, no. 4 (1944). French Saint-Domingue/Haiti: Stewart R. King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig: Free People of Color in Pre-Revolutionary Saint Domingue* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2001); Labelle, *Idéologie de couleur*. More generally, see Irene Diggs, "Color in Colonial Spanish America," *The Journal of Negro History* 38, no. 4 (1953).

<sup>17</sup> Vinson III, "Estudiando las razas," 256. On the general context of concern with “purity of blood,” see Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*.

Manuel Cano, silversmith and weights and measures inspector. The legal determination of the precise identity of the latter was the end-tail of a dispute that had started with a heated words between the litigants' sons and nephews questioning the "pure" blood of the others' family. Six basic categories of "non-whiteness"—further specified with various qualifiers—were deployed in the small world of the lawsuit to define Cano, his relatives, and the very witnesses themselves (See Table 2). Four of them (*mestizo*, *mulato*, *pardo*, *zambo*) referred to various "mixtures" of European, Amerindian, and African ancestry by referencing the individual's personal appearance. The other two (*cuarterón* and *quinterón*) referenced rather the "fractions" of non-white blood in the person's ancestry. At cross-purpose with the legal intent to pin down the silversmith's exact identity, this courtroom mini-drama produced a spectacle of shifting appearances and shades of definition that are hard to translate into "objective" identity assignments. In eighteenth-century French Saint-Domingue, notarial records used a similarly extensive nomenclature to define the client's color in descending degree of whiteness: *blanc*, *nègre*, *mulâtre*, *quarteron*, *griffe*, *métif* (or *tierceron*).<sup>18</sup>

The Spanish American legal efforts to select the precise option from an extensive identity nomenclature contrasts with the simple dichotomous choice in the case of the courageous Dinah Nevil who contested her enslaved status in Philadelphia in 1772 in one of the events that led to the emergence of organized North American abolitionism. We do not have reliable evidence of her race, partly because the whites who spoke for her assigned her to either of just two categories: her abolitionist supporters defined her as "Indian" and thus illegally enslaved,

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<sup>18</sup> King, *Blue Coat*, 160-61. This is a reduced version of a more complicated diversity calculus presented in M. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'isle Saint Domingue* (Philadelphia 1797), vol. 1, 71-86. Moreau de Saint-Méry lists the various parental permutations that result in the offspring of *griffe* and *métif*.

whereas her owner claimed she was a legally enslaved “mulatto.”<sup>19</sup> An even more striking contrast to the Franco-Iberian administrative interest in specifying a person’s precise “hue” was the 1678 Maryland statute that mandated the registration of the births, marriages, and deaths of “all manner of persons in this Province Except Negroes Indians & Molottos [sic]”.<sup>20</sup> The developing colonial state apparatus not only lacked its Catholic counterparts’ curiosity in fractions of descent and “color.” In an unseemly non-Foucauldian fashion, it simply did not care to “know” its non-European subjects.

In 1705, the Virginia legislature produced the first North American legal definition of individual racial status in a law that excluded any convict and “negro, mulatto or Indian” from holding a public office. What is more, in contrast to the finer distinctions made in Catholic territories, it subsumed under the “mulatto” label anyone with at least an Indian parent and a black great-grandparent. In Spanish America, the same population would be differentiated into at least two distinct types with widely different status implications: a *mestizo (de indio)* as the mixture of two “pure” blood types ranked higher than the *mulato* contaminated with “inferior” African blood. A 1733 Act of the Jamaica Assembly, subsequently repealed by the Privy Council in London, similarly defined as mulatto anyone with at least one black great-grandparent while granting to Christians “untainted” by black blood in the previous three generations all “Privileges and Immunities of His Majesty’s white subjects.” Spanish classifications maintained the same idea of the potency of black blood to taint across generations in contrast to Indian blood that could be “ennobled” into disappearance by the infusion of Spanishness. Yet different categories were used to designate individuals with different fractional “remnants” of black blood.

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<sup>19</sup> Kirsten Sword, “Remembering Dinah Nevil: Strategic Deceptions in Eighteenth-Century Antislavery,” *The Journal of American History* 97, no. 2 (2010).

<sup>20</sup> William Hand Browne, ed. *Archives of Maryland: Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland, October 1678-Novemeber 1683* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1889), 76.

Thus the offspring of a *mulato* and a white person was labeled *morisco*, and the offspring of a *morisco* and a white person was usually labeled *albino*. In Virginia and Jamaica, however, these three types would be designated “mulatto.”<sup>21</sup> As a historian of the British Caribbean wrote, “the different classes, or varieties” of “persons of mixed blood” were “not easily discriminated” there and all with at least one black great-grandparent were “deemed by law Mulattoes.” He added in a rare moment of Hispanophilia that “the Spaniards ... have many other and much nicer distinctions.”<sup>22</sup> Like some of the North American states, another British territory, Barbados, never enacted a legal definition of exact genealogical fractions that defined a person’s blackness. Yet again, while Barbadian legislation used terms like “mulattoes” and “coloreds,” finer differences were not recognized legally and socially and the important distinction remained the one between white and black.<sup>23</sup>

After the American Revolution, the state legislatures of the new federation continued the trend pioneered by colonial Virginia to specify the minimum “amount” of non-white ancestry that qualified a person as non-white. Again, Virginia led the way with a 1785 law that defines as mulatto anyone with at least one black grandparent (or having “one-fourth part or more of negro

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<sup>21</sup> William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619, Volume III*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: Thomas Desilver, 1823), 251-2; *Acts of Assembly, Passed in the Island of Jamaica from 1681, to 1737, Inclusive*, (London: Thomas Baskett and Robert Baskett, 1743), 173; Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*; Mörner, *Race Mixture*, 38-9. For instances where the category *morisco* was used in official documents, see Chance and Taylor, "Estate and Class."; Patricia Seed, "Social Dimensions of Race: Mexico City, 1753," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 62, no. 4 (1982). The idea of the potency of black blood to leave its indelible mark across generation seem to lives on in Brazil, for example, where Doug Jones finds a “weak one-drop rule” in folk calculations of the identity of mixed offspring. See Doug Jones, "Looks and Living Kinds: Varieties of Racial Cognition in Bahia, Brazil," *Journal of Cognition & Culture* 9, no. 3/4 (2009).

<sup>22</sup> Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British West Indies with a Continuation to the Present Time*, 5th ed. (London: G. and W.B. Whittaker, 1819), vol. 2, 18, 20.

<sup>23</sup> Jerome S. Handler and Arnold A. Sio, "Barbados," in *Neither Slave nor Free: The Freedmen of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World*, ed. David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 230-31.

blood”).<sup>24</sup> The trend intensified after the 1850s and by the early twentieth century solidified in the general regime of “one drop of blood” rule that defined as black anyone with a single black predecessor in their genealogy and gradually made the “mulatto” category meaningless.<sup>25</sup> In Dutch Batavia (Indonesia), similarly, the only consequential legal distinction was between “Europeans” and “Asians”: again a reduced category set that, as we will see, did not necessarily map onto clearly defined phenotypical differences.<sup>26</sup>

The category populations of the two diversity logics are thus of significantly different size. A clear tendency towards reduced category sets in the Anglo-Dutch context contrasts with the lavish expansiveness of Franco-Iberian diversity categories. More generally, behind the two contrasting institutional logics are two contrasting cognitive principles of ordering reality. The Franco-Iberian logic is founded on the principles of “splitting” of the physical and perceptual givens of human differences into finer types. By contrast, in the Anglo-Dutch model potentially relevant differences are downplayed and “lumped” instead into larger categorical “chunks.”<sup>27</sup>

### *Boundary Hierarchies*

The reductive and “lumpy” compression of diversity category sets in the Anglo-Dutch imperial context went also hand in hand with the privileging of the white/non-white symbolic boundary, its elevation to a “master” distinction and the subordination of other potential boundaries. The

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<sup>24</sup> William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619, Volume XII*, vol. 12 (Richmond: George Cochran, 1823), 184.

<sup>25</sup> F. James Davis, *Who is Black? One Nation's Definition*, 10th anniversary ed. (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001); Paul Finkelman, "The Crime of Color," *Tulane Law Review* 67, no. 6 (1993); Charles Staples Mangum, *The Legal Status of the Negro* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1940); Joel Williamson, *New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States* (New York: Free Press, 1980).

<sup>26</sup> Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: Europeans and Eurasians in Colonial Indonesia*, 2nd ed. (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009); Elizabeth P. Wittermans, "The Eurasians of Indonesia," in *The Blending of Races: Marginality and Identity in World Perspective*, ed. Noel P. Gist and Anthony Gary Dworkin (John Wiley & Sons Inc, 1972).

<sup>27</sup> On the difference between “lumping” and “splitting” as meaning-making strategies, see Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Fine Line: Making Distinctions in Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

preamble of a 1761 Jamaica law stressed the fundamental importance of the dichotomous black-white distinction emphatically. Meant to prevent planters from bequeathing property to their extramarital mixed children, the law banned such property transfers because they destroyed “the distinctions requisite and absolutely necessary to be kept in this island between white persons and Negroes, their issue and offspring.”<sup>28</sup>

The typical import of race-defining legislation in Anglo-Dutch territories was establishing the minimum “amount” of genealogical or phenotypical properties that qualified an individual as “non-white.” Procedurally, the certification of such “deviation” ranged from the tracing of documented genealogical proportions of non-white “blood” to vaguer readings of somatic appearances. In all these cases, however, legislation continuously reaffirmed the cultural logic of the early Virginia legislation to draw the most important dividing line between whites and those defined as less-than-fully-white.<sup>29</sup> This forms a clear contrast with the location of such dividing lines in Portuguese East Africa, for example, where one observer described the population around Cena as divided into three types (*castas*): whites and baptized mestizos, “Kaffir” slaves, and indentured black servants.<sup>30</sup>

This is not to say that strong categorical distinctions were not employed in the Franco-Iberian context. Thus when in 1795 the Spanish crown introduced a price list for *gracias al*

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<sup>28</sup> *The Laws of Jamaica: Comprehending all the Acts in Force, Passed between the First Year of the Reign of King George the Third, and Thirty-Second year of the Reigh of King George the Third.*, vol. 2 (St. Jago de la Vega, Jamaica: Alexander Aikman, 1802), 23.

<sup>29</sup> A. Leon Higginbotham and Barbara K. Kopytoff, "Racial Purity and Interracial Sex in the Law of Colonial and Antebellum Virginia," *Georgetown Law Journal* 77(1989). See also Davis, *Who Is Black*; Finkelman, "Crime of Color."; Mangum, *Legal Status*; Williamson, *New People*. This unquestioned “master-boundary” leaves its traces even in more analytically cautious scholarly discourse. Eugene Genovese, for example, writes of “the free Negroes ... especially the well-to-do mulattoes” (Eugene D. Genovese, "The Slave States of North America," in *Neither Slave nor Free: The Freedmen of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World*, ed. David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 270.) Note the implicit assumption that “mulatto” is a sub-kind of “Negro.”

<sup>30</sup> Sebastião Xavier Botelho, *Memoria estatistica sobre os dominios portuguezes na Africa oriental* (Lisboa: J.B. Morando, 1835), 262.

*sacar*, the official document through which a non-white individual could be granted the status of a pure white-blood, the Caracas town council objected to the idea that non-whites be given access to official posts reserved for whites by invoking the absolute logic of the Jamaica legislation and accusing the Crown of disregarding the “immense distance” separating the whites’ “advantage and superiority” and the non-whites’ (*pardos*, a catch-all category of individuals with some mixture of black and possibly Indian blood) “baseness and subordination.”<sup>31</sup> Yet apart from such instances of direct confrontation when categorical differences sharpened, the precise proportions of various “bloods” mattered more for one’s categorical identification than they did in Anglo-Dutch territories where, by contrast, the white/non-white master boundary was policed more strictly and more consistently through, for example, legislation against mixed marriages and informal practices.

### *Categories of Inbetweenness*

One consequence of Anglo-Dutch “master-boundaries” is the marginalization of diversity categories denoting “mixed” descent. Individuals conceived in “mixed” sexual unions were a demographic and phenotypical reality in both Catholic and Protestant empires. Categories like “mulatto” and “mestizo” were used in both contexts. Yet in contrast to their role in Franco-Iberian extensive nomenclatures that captured gradations in color and appearance, “mixed” categories in Protestant empires have struggled to achieve social visibility and recognition, often at the cost of protracted political battles by identity entrepreneurs. And when instituted and recognized in the Anglo-Dutch context, such intermediate categories have “lumped” in a residual fashion individuals not subsumed by the main “master” categories.

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<sup>31</sup> José Félix Blanco, ed. *Documentos para la historia de la vida pública del libertador de Colombia, Perú y Bolivia* (Caracas: La Opinión nacional, 1875), vol. 1, 289.



Examples of such lumping are the “coloured” category in South Africa or the “burghers” of British Sri Lanka. A Governor General’s proclamation from the high days of South African apartheid defined seven disparate “groups” as comprising the one “Coloured” category: the Cape Coloured, the Malay, the Griqua, the Chinese, the Indians, as well as “other” Asiatics and “other” Coloureds. The Sri Lanka “burghers” are of Dutch, Portuguese and “mixed” Euro-Asian descent.<sup>32</sup> Both labels “cover” individuals with highly variable pedigree “mixtures” the only common feature of which is that they are “anomalous” and do not fit directly the prevailing clear cut categories.

The *métis*, descendants of French-Indian *métis* and Anglo-Indian “half-breeds” were recognized by the Canadian state only in 1982 after more than a century of political struggles. Earlier late nineteenth-century appeals for recognition in the US fell on the government’s deaf ears: its representative consistently retorted that the half-breeds are either white or Indian and, more than that, the British Crown’s problem. Similarly, several of the many “mixed” groups in the United States sought official recognition as “Indian nations” only in the second half of the twentieth century. The Anglo-Indians of British and independent India and the Eurasians of Dutch Batavia and independent Indonesia have remained ill-defined and socially unrecognized as politically distinct “groups.” The “free coloreds” of the English Caribbean, especially after they forged a political alliance with the British antislavery movement, achieved more recognition than the “mulattoes” of the United States where the traditional acceptance of free and socially prominent blacks in the Carolinas and Louisiana was overridden by the wave of “one drop” legislation. Still, the imposition of British authority over formerly French and Spanish territories

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<sup>32</sup> Tissa Fernando, "The Burghers of Ceylon," in *The Blending of Races: Marginality and Identity in World Perspective*, ed. Noel P. Gist and Anthony Gary Dworkin (John Wiley & Sons Inc, 1972); Arthur Suzman, "Race Classification and Definition in the Legislation of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1960: A Survey and Analysis," *Acta Juridica* (1960): 356-57.

came with restrictions of the rights non-slave “coloreds” had enjoyed before.<sup>33</sup> In short, in contrast to the elaborate diversity nomenclature in Catholic territories, there has been in their Protestant counterparts a general resistance against the symbolic recognition of finer differences and their naming with identity labels outside of the limited set of clear-cut “master” categories. The category of *pardo* in the Iberian context follows a “lumping” logic similar to “residual” Anglo-Dutch categories, especially when used to denote individual of “complicated” or cognitively demanding “mixedness” (as opposed to, for example, “simple” dual “mixes” of white and black or white and *indio*).<sup>34</sup> Yet the important difference is that such a lumpy category is a part of an extended category set and has not been used, as in South Africa for example, as an officially sanctioned designation of all those outside the two extremes of black and white.

### **The Causal Power of Diversity Logics**

There are, thus, systematic and historically persistent differences between two distinct ways of ordering human diversity prevalent in the Franco-Iberian and the Anglo-Dutch imperial and post-imperial worlds respectively. Is it justifiable, however, to define these systematic differences as the effects of two institutional logics: that is, of two distinct cultural models endowed with the causal power to direct social cognitions and actions?

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<sup>33</sup> On the various “mixed” populations and categories in the Anglo-Dutch context, see Mohamed Adhikari, “Contending Approaches to Coloured Identity and the History of the Coloured People of South Africa,” *History Compass* 3, no. 1 (2005); Brewton Berry, “America’s Mestizos,” in *The Blending of Races: Marginality and Identity in World Perspective*, ed. Noel P. Gist and Anthony Gary Dworkin (John Wiley & Sons Inc, 1972); Allen D. Grimshaw, “The Anglo-Indian Community: The Integration of a Marginal Group,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 18, no. 2 (1959); Horowitz, “Color Differentiation.”; Alvin Kienetz, “The Rise and Decline of Hybrid (Métis) Societies on the Frontier of Western Canada and Southern Africa,” *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 3, no. 1 (1983); Gary B. Nash, “The Hidden History of Mestizo America,” *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 3 (1995); Mark Naidis, “British Attitudes toward the Anglo-Indians,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (1963); Frits Pannekoek, *A Snug Little Flock: The Social Origins of the Riel resistance of 1869-70* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1991); Paul W. van der Veur, “Cultural Aspects of the Eurasian Community in Indonesian Colonial Society,” 6(1968); Charles H. Wesley, “The Emancipation of the Free Colored Population in the British Empire,” *The Journal of Negro History* 19, no. 2 (1934); Williamson, *New People*; Wittermans, “Eurasians of Indonesia.”

<sup>34</sup> Schwartz, “Brazilian Ethnogenesis.”; “Spaniards, ‘Pardos,’ and the Missing Mestizos: Identities and Racial Categories in the Early Hispanic Caribbean,” *New West Indian Guide* 71, no. 1/2 (1997).

The autonomous causal power of the two institutional logics of diversity emerges clearly when we consider alternative explanations accounting for the significantly different structuring of human diversity in the Franco-Iberian and Anglo-Dutch contexts, that is explanations that deny or downplay the causal influence of the two diversity logics by interpreting them as causally derivative and determined by deeper, more important structures and causes. Two types of such explanations have been deployed by scholars. The first variety assumes that there is a deeper and near universal social fact of racial stratification that is causally precedent to, and independent from, specific categories and classifications. Explanations of the second type do acknowledge the significant differences between cultural logics of diversity without reducing them to a single and near universal principle of racial differentiation and stratification. Yet these accounts explain the variation as arising from deeper and, again, casually more important demographic structures and processes. In this section, I consider both types of explanatory accounts and show that neither can explain the empirical structuring of human diversity in the two imperial and post-imperial context without the causally autonomous influence of divergent diversity logics.

### *The Inherent Cultural Foundation of Diversity Distinctions*

Was it two distinct institutional logics that governed the different ordering and sorting of human diversity in the first phase of overseas expansion? Or, more precisely, are the two diversity logics I identify equivalent and equally consequential social facts? One could argue, for example, that they are not of the same analytical or even epistemological status. I speak here of institutional, that is cultural, logics of diversity. The skeptic would admit that the ornate Franco-Iberian pattern with its almost Baroque proliferation of categories and labels is culturally

influenced. Yet perhaps the Anglo-Dutch logic and its categorical austerity simply captures better a pre-existing biological and racial reality and is therefore exempt from cultural influences.

From this point of view, Franco-Iberian diversity nomenclatures are exceptional and idiosyncratic, if not anthropologically picturesque. Peter Wade has noted, for example, that a constitutive element of what he calls the “classical” US-Brazil contrast is the assumption that North American racism is “deep” and “biological” whereas Latin American racism is more “superficial” and “cultural.”<sup>35</sup> Carl Degler notably draw attention to the fact that the US “simple, biological definition of the Negro never” developed in Latin America.<sup>36</sup> A distinct line of criticism against Harris’ thesis of Brazilian “ambiguity” has been mounted by cognitively oriented research that questions the extensiveness of diversity category sets and argues that Brazilian “racial” terms reveal, in fact, a simpler structure that is not different from universal racial distinctions present in different settings.<sup>37</sup> A similar argument of artificiality was made by Magnus who wrote that the unbridled and even absurd proliferation of categories made it practically impossible to classify properly an individual in the Latin American context, which—in turn—led to the eventual collapse of the extended category system under its own weight into a smaller categorical set. Finally, the cultural artificiality of the Franco-Iberian diversity logic is highlighted indirectly by those who argue that categorical distinctions between blacks and mulattos veil the universal facts of racial inequalities by preventing non-white individuals to see their inherent common interest on the implicit model of the North American Civil Rights movement.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Wade, *Race and Ethnicity*, 96. See also his “Race in Latin America,” in *A Companion to Latin American Anthropology*, ed. Deborah Poole (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2008), 185-86.

<sup>36</sup> Degler, *Neither Black nor White*.

<sup>37</sup> Sanjek, “Brazilian Racial Terms.”; Jones, “Looks and Living Kinds: Varieties of Racial Cognition in Bahia, Brazil.”

<sup>38</sup> Mörner, *Race Mixture*, 68-70; Daniel, *Race and Multiraciality*, 42.

Yet these assumptions of different “depth” or cultural “artificiality” are the products of cognitive and ideological bias. In the Anglo-Dutch pattern—as in the United States and South Africa—the “master boundary” in the limited set of relatively clearly defined categories has been perceived and thought typically to coincide with the “natural” phenotypical or skin color differentiation between populations. The cognitively unbridgeable difference between black and white, for example, resonates with the systematic “natural scientific” understanding of “races” as equivalent to animal species that consolidated in the nineteenth century—an understanding that despite its lack genetic foundation and the pressures of social constructivism continues to inform much social science research on “race.”<sup>39</sup> It also resonates with a commonsensical everyday folk genetics or a cognitive proclivity to think of “races” as “pure” or “unmixed” groups clearly identifiable by clearly identifiable clusters of somatic characteristics. Thus a “white” or “black” race is easy to think with. Not so a “quarteroon” race or a “Sikh-Punjabi-Mexican-American” race, even when these are distinctly identifiable populations.<sup>40</sup>

It is on this background that the Anglo-Dutch diversity logic appears “truer” to nature. Compared to the finer and apparently less significant distinctions made in Franco-Iberian diversity nomenclatures, it appears more securely anchored in seemingly natural and seemingly essential somatic differences. At the same time, however, the apparent naturalness of the model contrasts with the remarkable imprecision and variety of procedures for certifying one’s race even in phenotype-obsessed contexts like the United States and South Africa. The legal regime of “hypo-descent” in the United States, for example, is—at first sight—simplicity itself. Until

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<sup>39</sup> Thus one of the originators of the social constructivist “racial formations” perspective counsels that “the public articulation and exploration of [white/black] racial dualism would be ... a major advance” in Brazil. Howard Winant, *The World is a Ghetto: Race and Democracy since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 246.

<sup>40</sup> See Karen Isaksen Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992). Ron Mallon hypothesizes that human cognition is hardwired for processing “pure” races but not “mixed” ones. See Ron Mallon, “Sources of Racialism,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 41, no. 3 (2010).

the early twentieth century, various statutes and common law decisions defined the minimum size of the “drop,” usually measured by genealogical fractions, that “made” a person black for various purposes and in different areas of life. Administrative and legal measurements of the seemingly simple white/black difference, however, ranged from a mathematics of exact genealogical proportions of non-white blood to impressionistic “readings” of somatic appearances, as in South Africa or Arkansas where blacks were defined as having a “visible and distinct admixture of African blood.”<sup>41</sup> Yet even the exact mathematical calculation of the number of non-white predecessors relied as much on the natural persistence of inherited “racial” traits as on the commonsensical wisdom that ancestors beyond the fourth generation are unlikely to be alive or kept in collective memory.<sup>42</sup> What mattered in both official and everyday situations was indeed the perception and social valuation of a person’s appearance.

Both somatic appearance and descent (or some combination thereof) are thus typically favored in the Anglo-Dutch context of compressed diversity nomenclatures because they promise easy sorting of individuals into a manageable limited set of categories according to “natural” criteria. Yet neither of these two criteria aligns perfectly with what is ultimately a culturally assigned identification according to non-natural, artificial dichotomous rules. There is no objective reason, for example, to define “blackness” as expansively as it has been defined in Anglo-Dutch settings. This expansive definition of “blackness” was as much a recognition of certain bodily differences as a social non-perception of other important differences that a Franco-Iberian classification would acknowledge. Well before Lena Horn and Halle Berry graced large

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<sup>41</sup> Davis, *Who Is Black*; Finkelman, "Crime of Color."; Higginbotham and Kopytoff, "Racial Purity."; Suzman, "Race Classification."; Mangum, *Legal Status*.

<sup>42</sup> Thus a sixteenth century Mexican Inquisitor invoked Church fathers to prove that the inheritance of sins did not go beyond great-grandchildren 'because a man can only get to see his descendants as far as the fourth generation, and after this time there is no longer the fear that the successor will imitate the predecessor.' And, of course, the Mosaic God also has a habit of punishing up to the fourth generation. See Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 47.

and small screens, observers noted the paradox of non-black-looking blacks. Thus the Count of Volney visiting Jefferson's Monticello in 1796 was surprised to see children "as white as himself" treated as if they were black—a violation of the norm that slaves should be of dark skin color. Similarly, Brits visiting the Caribbean expressed surprise at seeing somatically "white" individuals who would be perceived as safely respectable and middle class in the metropole treated as "coloured" or even being legally enslaved.<sup>43</sup>

Another British set, those who occupied Dutch Indonesia in 1811, were bothered by the mirror image of this discrepancy between somatic appearance and identity status: the sight of Dutch men's mixed-origin wives defined legally as "European." In the absence of "biologically" European women, the Dutch created them by assigning a European status to daughters of mixed marriages. In turn, the offspring of these phenotypically mixed unions—that is, unions of high-status Dutch men and mixed-origin women—were defined as either "European" or "Asian." A typically rigid distinction between just two categories was maintained—this time, however, at direct variance with visible somatic traits and phenotype.<sup>44</sup>

The deliberate manipulation of phenotype and descent in the Batavian case contrasts with the professed reverence of their naturalness elsewhere in the Anglo-Dutch world. Yet regardless of the different valorization of physical appearances and genealogy, a common thread that unites all these cases is a cultural logic that favors a limited set of diversity categories. Furthermore, by

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<sup>43</sup> William Lloyd, *Letters from the West Indies during a Visit in the Autumn of MDCCLXXXVI and the Spring of MDCCLXXXVII* (London: Darton and Harvey, 1839), 17; John Augustine Waller, *A Voyage in the West Indies: Containing Various Observations Made during a Residence in Barbadoes* (London: Sir R. Phillips and Co., 1820), 94. Volney is quoted in Jean Gaulmier, *L'idéologue Volney, 1757-1820: Contribution à l'histoire de l'orientalisme en France* (Genève: Slatkine, 1951), 371. ("Mais je fus étonné de voir appeler noirs et traiter comme tels des enfants aussi blancs que moi.")

<sup>44</sup> Taylor, *Social World of Batavia*; Wittermans, "Eurasians of Indonesia," 80. A similar logic of defining non-whites as whites for pragmatic purposes was behind a 1765 act in the underpopulated colony of Georgia that encouraged the immigration of free "mulattoes" and "mustees" by granting them all the rights of British subjects except the right to vote and sit in the assembly. Not a single person, however, was naturalized under the act. See Jordan, *White over Black*, ????

disallowing fuzziness, mixture, and intermediate statuses, this logic of diversity keeps these categories from intersecting—even if, as in Dutch Indonesia, they do not map directly into otherwise striking and natural-looking somatic distinctions

### *The Cultural Construction of Demographic Realities*

Another objection to my argument of the causal properties of diversity logics will acknowledge the existence of such logics but will explain them as deriving from a causally weightier fact, namely distinct demographic patterns that intersect with sexual and economic behaviors.

Different immigration policies and the resulting different gender balances in British and Iberian colonies have been evoked to explain the higher prevalence of *mestizaje* in the latter, which, in turn, would account for the more evolved diversity nomenclature needed to label mixed progeny. The married Puritan couple in New England would, after all, not bear a mestizo offspring like the bands of single Spanish conquistadors in their unions with Inca princesses. In its bare essence, the starting point of this argument is the relative scarcity of European women in Franco-Iberian territories which inevitably led to greater proportion of mixed offspring in the population: hence the need to name and sort out such individuals. By contrast, as Degler wrote, “thanks to the rough balances between the sexes among whites, there was little demographic pressure for black-white matings” in the US.<sup>45</sup>

Another explanation, going back to Marvin Harris again, accounts for persistence of Iberian *mestizos* as arising from their availability for lower-end economic activities monopolized by poor whites in the Southern United States. Again, like the gender-proportions argument, this is an argument about demographic proportions. The larger proportion of Europeans in the in the

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<sup>45</sup> Degler, *Neither Black nor White*, 238-39. See also George M. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), 39; Daniel, *Race and Multiraciality*, 29-30, 85-87.



population of the North American British colonies (and then the United States) is invoked to explain the fact that, first, they were available for low-status employment that in Latin America was naturally taken over by Africans and “mixed” offspring and, second, by a combination of economic and ideological incentives they were induced to close ranks with high-status whites against free individuals with various degrees of African parentage, the end result of which was the solidifying of the white-black boundary across class divisions.<sup>46</sup>

While there is an element of truth in both of these causal statements from demographic proportions, the remarkable fact is that they have become something of a sociological lore by sheer repetition and the accompanying disinterest in supporting evidence. While certainly more European women migrated to British than Iberian America, the excess of marriageable men in British American colonies, at times at a six to one ratio, did not end (and the gender balance did not stabilize) until the end of the eighteenth century at the earliest—almost two centuries after the beginnings of colonization. On the other hand, in the early years of Spanish migration between 1509 and 1539, ten per cent of the official passage licenses were given to women. In fact, marriages of Spanish men with indigenous women declined with the political and economic decline of pre-conquest indigenous noble lineages.<sup>47</sup> In short, European women were neither as scarce in Latin America nor as abundant in the British colonies as the demographic myth suggest. As a result, the Latin American diversity regime cannot be understood simply, as one scholar argues, as the “validation” of the region’s “extensive miscegenation.”<sup>48</sup> Even more

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<sup>46</sup> Degler, *Neither Black nor White*, 44-47, 228-30; Dodge, "Comparative Racial Systems," 259-60; Harris, *Patterns of Race*, 88-89.

<sup>47</sup> Herbert Moller, "Sex Composition and Correlated Culture Patterns of Colonial America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1945); Mörner, *Race Mixture*, 15-16; Eva Alexandra Uchmany, "El mestizaje en el siglo XVI novohispano," *Historia Mexicana* 37, no. 1 (1987).

<sup>48</sup> Daniel, *Race and Multiraciality*, 29.

generally, initial gender balances cannot by themselves explain the remarkably different institutional regimes of human diversity.

Similarly, the influx of low-status Peninsulars into Iberian territories—comparable to low-end white labor in the American South—did not lead to an economically induced classificatory shrinkage of *mestizos* and *mulatos* and other intermediate categories. Incoming poor Spaniards were a social problem in Mexico as early as the 1550s, but if anything the status struggles in the colony led to a new prominence of mixed categories. The eighteenth century was a period of an increased discrimination against and segregation against non-white *castas* in Latin America. Yet this did not result into a flattening of categorical ranges comparable to the US “one drop rule.”<sup>49</sup> These counterexamples do not invalidate, in principle, the general point behind Harris’s argument: namely, that economic competition and conflict under certain circumstances could lead to the polarization of identification. Yet the lack of such polarization under similar demographic conditions suggests that institutional logics of diversity could prove resistant to “demographic pressures” precisely because of their cultural power.

To sum up, the difference between the two institutional logics of diversity persisted regardless of how precisely they mapped human heterogeneity onto appearance- and descent-based calculations of individual identity and regardless of the demographic and economic constellations within which they operated. They are indeed institutional logics, not simply the cultural acknowledgment and sanctification of pre-existing biological or economic differences. One can rather reverse this statement and argue that the reduced Anglo-Dutch model did exactly the opposite to registering more realistically such pre-existing differences: it made it possible,

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<sup>49</sup> Hoetink, *Slavery and Race Relations*, 18-19; Horowitz, "Color Differentiation," 522-25; Herbert S. Klein, *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 142-44; Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*; Mörner, *Race Mixture*, 57-67.

instead, to disattend, misperceive, and not register otherwise putatively salient identifying traits that contradict its cultural principles. The causal power of the two institutional logics lies exactly in this ability to frame reality by both highlighting and obscuring select traits of human diversity.

### **Logics Interacting**

While distinct in principle, these two logics of diversity have not been hermetically separated in practice, if only because “trans-imperial” cultural interactions have “contaminated” the operation of a pure model with the infusion of elements of the other. Even against this background of mutual influence, however, the persistence and cultural power of the two analytically distinct logics is remarkable.

The Dutch and the English, late entrants in the imperial game, adopted the nomenclature of human diversity that their Iberian predecessors had already developed. Hence the Iberian etymology of many central terms in the Anglo-Dutch vocabularies of human difference like “Negro,” “mulatto,” “caste,” or the less common “mustee.” Yet in the Anglo-Dutch context these categories were imbued with a different meaning that conformed to the Protestant cultural logic of diversity. This distinctive logic, in turn, was institutionalized in a “purer” form in a territory that were relatively insulated from the influence of Iberian precedent like Virginia than in the British Caribbean or the Carolinas where Spanish cultural influences persisted. In the new context, the symbolic function of the adopted category of “mulatto,” for example, was not so much the original Iberian intention to capture a gradient of color or descent, but rather the assignation of the quality—and the accompanying social status—of “blackness” to individuals with less than perfect “white” appearances. As Higginbotham and Kopytoff write, the “important dividing line” in the first Virginia law to define “races” in 1705 was exactly “the

white/mulatto boundary.”<sup>50</sup> Similarly, when the British took over Spanish Trinidad in 1797, they “accepted the Spanish color categories,” yet “anglicized them” by reducing the freedom and privileges the Castilian crown had guaranteed to non-whites.<sup>51</sup>

Or consider the curious trans-cultural mutations of the Iberian concept of *casta*. Although initially meant to capture the idea of “pure blood,” by the eighteenth century at the latest *castas* was the designation of the various intermediate categories of mixed descent in colonial Latin America. The popular genre of Mexican *casta* paintings depicted usually sixteen distinct permutations of such “mixed” offspring. That was a far cry from the strictly ordered hierarchy of clearly defined social distance that the British described when they began using the Portuguese term as a label for endogamous groups in India. By the 1920s, the concept of “caste” thus re-defined travelled back to North America as Robert Park used it to characterize polarized white-black relations in the United States. On this background, the use of “caste” as a translation of the *sistema de castas* of colonial Latin America in English-language histories is rather conceptually jarring.<sup>52</sup>

These examples illustrate processes of redefinition and transformation of the categorical vocabulary of diversity first developed by the Iberians to match the new and different cultural logic of Protestant overseas empires where the deployment of the same conceptual language resulted in a remarkably different ordering and understanding of human diversity. On the other

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<sup>50</sup> Higginbotham and Kopytoff, "Racial Purity," 1978. See also Jordan, *White over Black*, ???; Davis, *Who Is Black*, 6-11.

<sup>51</sup> Horowitz, "Color Differentiation," 519-20.

<sup>52</sup> John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937); Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 227-64; Möerner, *Race Mixture*, 53; Julian Pitt-Rivers, "On the Word 'Caste'," in *The Translation of Culture: Essays to E. E. Evans-Pritchard*, ed. T. O. Beidelman (London: Tavistock Publications, 1971); Stuart B. Schwartz and Frank Salomon, "New Peoples and New Kinds of People: Adaptation, Readjustment, and Ethnogenesis in South American Indigenous Societies (Colonial Era)," in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas South America, Vol. III: South America, Part 2*, ed. Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

hand, the persistence of the Franco-Iberian extensive diversity nomenclature in Louisiana, South Carolina, and Alabama, is suggestive of the survival and resilience of entrenched classification patterns in a “hostile” cultural environment, dominated now by the opposing cultural logic after a change of political “ownership.” In these territories of French and Spanish influence, as Eugene Genovese notes (using again the pregnant language of “caste”), the typical “two-caste” white/black system of the American South was breached by a “circumscribed three-caste system.”<sup>53</sup>

In the 1850s, for example, Frederick Law Olmstead testified to the currency in New Orleans of a classification scheme identical with that of eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue. “Experts,” he said, pretended “to be able to distinguish” the various varieties, “sub-varieties,” and “sub-sub-varieties.” As late as 1910—and in the midst of strengthening “one drop of blood” legislation across the United States—a Louisiana Supreme Court decision spelled out the commonsensical obviousness of these fine distinctions:

“We do not think there could be any serious denial of the fact that in Louisiana the words ‘mulatto,’ ‘quadroon,’ and ‘octoroon’ are of as definite meaning as the word ‘man’ or ‘child,’ and that, among educated people at least, they are as well and widely known. There is also the less widely known word “griff” [sic], which, in this state, has a definite meaning, indicating the issue of a negro and a mulatto. The person too black to be a mulatto and too pale in color to be a negro is a griff. The person too dark to be a white, and too bright to be a griff, is a mulatto. The quadroon is distinctly whiter than the mulatto. Between these different shades, we do not believe there is much, if any, difficulty is distinguishing”<sup>54</sup>

The geographical proximity of the Iberian model played a similar role in Dutch Curaçao where both prosperous mixed-origin individuals (calling themselves *mestiezen*, not “mulattoes”) and

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<sup>53</sup> Genovese, “Slave States,” 259-60.

<sup>54</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States: With Remarks on Their Economy*, vol. 1 (New York: Dix & Edwards, 1856), 583. The Court in *State v. Treadway*, quoted in Finkelman, “Crime of Color,” 2111.

low-status Protestant Dutch sought marriages with Catholic women from nearby Latin American territories. They thus “Latinized” themselves in order to avoid Dutch categorical hierarchies.<sup>55</sup>

Finally, a distinct chapter in the history of the interaction between the two logics of diversity began in the twentieth century when they were politicized in various registers—cultural politics, state policies, scholarship on “race,” and programs of civil society mobilization— and in the larger transnational arena. Early in the century, faced with the intractability of the “race problem” in the United States, black publications held up Brazil as an example of a country with no prejudice. Gilberto Freyre, shocked by anti-black violence in the United States, described Brazilian history as a remarkably peaceful “union” of cultures and his ideas of Brazilian “racial democracy” gained an official status in his country. By contrast, North American sociologists were likening “race relations” in the South to the pre-modern and irrational Indian caste system.<sup>56</sup>

In the second half of the century, the pendulum swung back. The general ideological context was provided by a newly hegemonic modernization theory and a scholarly paradigm contrasting a historically free and progressive American North with a persistently feudal and backward American South.<sup>57</sup> Actors both in the United States and in Latin America began valorizing and advocating an Anglo-Dutch understanding of clear-cut differences between “racial groups” against the indeterminate fuzziness of “Catholic” categories. Latin American

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<sup>55</sup> H. Hoetink, "Surinam and Curaçao," in *Neither Slave nor Free: The Freedmen of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World*, ed. David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 70-71.

<sup>56</sup> George Reid Andrews, "Brazilian Racial Democracy, 1900-90: An American Counterpoint," *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 3 (1996); Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 2nd English-language ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); David J. Hellwig, ed. *African-American Reflections on Brazil's Racial Paradise* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992). As late as 1971, Degler wrote approvingly of the application of the caste concept to the United States. See Degler, *Neither Black nor White*, 104-05.

<sup>57</sup> Jeremy Adelman, "Introduction: The Problem of Persistence in Latin American History," in *Colonial Legacies: The Problem of Persistence in Latin American History*, ed. Jeremy Adelman (New York: Routledge, 1999), 6-8.

states began adopting policies based on the “hard” counting of distinct groups typical of the US. A new paradigm of “normal” social science applied itself to exposing the myth of “racial democracy,” documenting the inequalities and injustice behind the façade of Latin American fuzzy categories, and showing how this fuzziness prevent the oppressed from mobilizing politically. Latin American activists were inspired by North American examples and the global black movement to mobilize around a more assertive blackness, eschew the social decorum of fine-graded categories and define themselves as “black.”<sup>58</sup> At the same time, however, the increasing number of Latino immigrants in the United States and new cultural and political valorization of “mixedness,” “hybridity” and “biraciality” complicate the dynamics by introducing a counter-current to the assertion of Protestant-style neat categories and destabilizing them in their cultural “home” in North America.<sup>59</sup>

Historically, then, the two diversity logics have interacted in at least three distinct ways: preexisting Catholic categories and concepts were appropriated and redefined by non-Catholic actors (and this appropriation and redefinition amounted to the crystallization of the distinct Anglo-Dutch Protestant model), “islands” of Catholic categorization survived (or were “smuggled”) in politically victorious and culturally alien Protestant settings, and a more generalized and reflexive symbolic contest between the two logics has taken shape in transnational space since the twentieth century. A political dimension is common to all these

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<sup>58</sup> Andrews, "Brazilian Racial Democracy."; Peter Fry, "Politics, Nationality, and the Meanings of 'Race' in Brazil," *Daedalus* 129, no. 2 (2000); Godreau, "Slippery Semantics."; Mala Htun, "From 'Racial Democracy' to Affirmative Action: Changing State Policy on Race in Brazil," *Latin American Research Review* 39, no. 1 (2004); Mara Loveman, *National Colors: Racial Classification and the State in Latin America*; Sansone, *Blackness without Ethnicity*; Toplin, "Reinterpreting Comparative Race Relations: The United States and Brazil."; Peter Wade, "Defining Blackness in Colombia," *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 95, no. 1 (2009); *Race and Ethnicity*, 70-71, 105-07.

<sup>59</sup> Daniel, *Race and Multiraciality*, 157-73; Clara E. Rodríguez, "Challenge Racial Hegemony: Puerto Ricans in the United States," in *Race*, ed. Steven Gregory and Roger Sanjek (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1994); Wade, "Race in Latin America," 188-89.

three interaction modalities. The two diversity logics are valorized culturally and morally by actors and employed as tools in political struggles. And this employment for political purposes accounts for the survival and persistence of the two distinct cultural models despite centuries of interactions and “cross-contaminations.”

In the early centuries of imperial expansion, the two logics were firmly connected with the political projects of their respective carriers, the imperial states, and the result of the contest between competing logics was, typically, determined by the balance of political power. As the English, the big winners in the first overseas imperial game, took over French- or Spanish-owned territories they imposed their own classificatory models on the population therein. Yet, as the survival of French-style multi-categorical nomenclature in Louisiana shows, an easy substitution was not automatically the case. In these early centuries, too, the imposition of the imperial titular’s “own” classificatory logic was closely connected with the dynamics of strictly territorial expansion and domination. By the twentieth century, however, the symbolic contest between the two diversity logics “spilled over” into transnational space, aided by the institutionalization of a “disembedded” social science discourse of “race” and of international governmental and non-governmental organizations monitoring and certifying degrees of discrimination and racism. Yet whether bound to territory by imperial or nation-states or travelling across space when advocated and valorized by scholars and identity entrepreneurs, the two distinct diversity logics have persisted as cultural objects employed and re-employed in political struggles of various levels and registers.

## **Conclusion**

Focusing on the first three centuries of European overseas expansion as an important period in which modern ideas and practices of ethno-racial differentiation were configured, this paper



draws attention on two formative moments in this configuration. First, European imperialism operated with and reinforced a pre-existing tripartite symbolic hierarchy of which, indigenous, and black into which the populations entering the orbit of imperial expansion were cognitively and ideologically sorted. A second and more important moment consisted of the bifurcated elaboration and consistent application of two distinct logics of diversity that, among other things, produced two distinct ways for accounting for the offspring of the reproductive unions between the distinctively different categorical sets inherent in the two diversity regimes. These institutional logics, more generally, provide the basic cultural parameters for understanding, knowing, and acting upon the salient and appropriate principles according to which distinctions between different human “kinds” are made. A Franco-Iberian type of evolved diversity nomenclatures that is characterized by occasionally Baroque intricacy forms a clear contrast with the classificatory austerity of Anglo-Dutch nomenclatures centered on a limited number of categories. The differences between the two diversity logics are systematic, they correlate with the South-North and Catholic-Protestant divide of the first imperial states, and apply to all the territories colonized in this first phase of overseas expansion. More generally, my argument suggests that our current understandings of basic human diversity, often couched in the language of “race,” emerge on the intersection of both universally recurrent processes of identity-related social closure and historically contingent crystallizations of specific diversity regimes with their inherent cultural logic.

The Anglo-Dutch and Franco-Iberian institutional logics of diversities are historically contingent cultural objects. Yet they have structured cognitions on human differences across time and in various national and transnational spaces. In this sense, such diversity logics occupy the conceptual and analytical middle ground between the universal and idiosyncratic. Cognitive

scientists and psychologists argue that the racial “processing” of individuals is based on an innate, universal, and potentially evolutionary based propensity to sort other individuals into “human kinds.”<sup>60</sup> Social scientists (and social psychologists), on other hand, have been more interested in bringing to the fore the social constructed processes of identity assignment as a particular case of more general processes of social classification.<sup>61</sup> The two diversity logics are historically contingent and thus socially constructed in the general sense that social scientists talk about the constructedness of social facts. Yet they are not simply coextensive with specific societies, states, or cultures. Once institutionalized, they have circulated as cultural objects that had been put to use by a variety of actors. And because of this recurrent deployment they shift towards universalist end of the conceptual continuum that cognitive scientists insist on—while, at the same time, the persisting contrast between them bears an indelible mark of their cultural artifactness.

One lead for further inquiry that my interpretation opens is the connection between the dominant confessional profile of imperial states and their respective diversity regimes. What exactly is the connection between Franco-Iberian Catholicism, Anglo-Dutch Protestantism and the respective diversity logics these imperial states instituted? The comparative investigation of “race relations” in the Atlantic world has been dominated by attention to economic, political, and demographic factors. The one argument that explained the different racial configuration in the US and Latin America by the different doctrinal content and effect on slavery of Protestantism and Catholicism, Tannenbaum’s *Slave and Citizen*, has been generally criticized as inadequate.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> E.g., Lawrence A. Hirschfeld, *Race in the Making: Cognition, Culture, and the Child's Construction of Human Kinds* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996); Mallon, "Sources of Racialism."

<sup>61</sup> Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (London: Sage, 1997).

<sup>62</sup> Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1947). See, however, the reappraisal in Alejandro de la Fuente, "From Slaves to Citizens? Tannenbaum and the Debates on Slavery, Emancipation, and Race Relations in Latin America," *International Labor and Working Class History* 77, no. 1 (2010).

Yet the strong correlation between diversity logics and confession in the early centuries of European overseas expansion calls for a renewed investigation of the religious factors that may account for emergence of two distinct visions of human diversity.

Table 1: Contrasting Dimensions of Franco-Iberian (Southern) and Anglo-Dutch (Northern) Institutional Logics of Human Diversity

Dimension	Franco-Iberian Logic of Diversity	Anglo-Dutch Logic of Diversity
Nomenclature of “human kinds”	Extensive	Limited
Intermediate or “mixed” categories	Important	Less relevant
Social distance between categories	Small	Large
Symbolic boundaries between categories	Permeable	Impermeable
Clarity vs. ambiguity of categories	Ambiguous	Clearly defined
Context-sensitivity of categories	Sensitive to context	Immutable across contexts
Individual identity transitions between categories	Facilitates transitions	Impedes transitions
Aggregate society structure	Ethnoracial continuum	Segmented/plural

Table 2: Categories Assigned to Manuel Cano o Reina and His Relatives by Witnesses in Legal Proceedings, Cartagena, 1759

Witness (with Self-Categorization if Available)	Manuel Cano and Ancestors			Individual Categorized	
	Miguel de Rosario (grandfather)	Clara (mother)	Manuel Cano	Jerónima Gómez (grandmother)	Maria del Pilar (mother)
Don Leonardo Pérez de Vega Native of Spain	Cuarterón	Cuarterona de mestizo	Cuarterón de mestizo		
Don Fernando Padilla Native of Spain	Mestizo	Mestiza	Mestizo		Cuarterona de mestiza
Andrés Calderín, Don Miguel Coreci, Don Domingo Sotelino	White	White	“Honorable man”		Mulata of light color
Fernando de Urué	Mestizo de indio	Mestiza de indio	Descendiente de mestizo		Cuarterona
Antonio Gaga de la Jara Quinterón de pardo			White		
Antonia Leal, Mulata	Mestizo de indio	Mestiza de indio	Cuarterón de mestizo	Parda yet hair braided	Cuarterona de mestizo
Ventura Meneses, Pardo	Mestizo de indio	Mestiza de indio	Descendiente de mestizo	Mulata	Cuarterona de mestizo
Bernardina Pretel, Zamba	Mestizo	Mestiza			Mulata

Source: Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, "Mestizaje y diferenciación social en el Nuevo Reino de Granada en la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII." *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* 3 (1965), "Anexos Documentales, pp. 197-213.

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