

# Demographic Threat and Social Honor: The Determinants of Black/Mulatto Occupational Differentiation at the Dawn of

Jim Crow\*

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## Abstract

In cross-national studies of race in the Americas, one of the key questions has been why the United States failed to develop and sustain an intermediate racial group between black and white. Although many hypotheses have been presented, analysis has been somewhat hampered by the small N problem of cross-national research and the potential idiosyncrasies involved with the development of racial categories at the national level. This paper explores these issues at the intranational level by exploiting regional variation in the United States in the degree of occupational differentiation between blacks and mulattoes during the transitionary period from slavery to freedom. Making use of the full 1880 Census count to generate county-level contextual variables, this paper uses a multilevel model to analyze this variation. I find that differentiation increased with the occupational standing of whites, which supports a social competition theory of differentiation. The relative size of the black population only indirectly affected differentiation by increasing the occupational standing of whites in a queuing process. In addition, support is found for translation between the boundaries of free/slave and black/mulatto in this period of transition.

In contrast to nearly every other country in the Western hemisphere with a history of African slavery, the United States failed to develop and sustain a mixed-race category between black and

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white. Instead, the United States developed what is known as the “one-drop rule” in which anyone with identifiable African ancestry is classified as black. This U.S. exceptionalism has long been the focus of cross-national research on the historical process of racialization in the Americas. Although numerous theories have been presented to explain the U.S. case, the small number of comparison groups and the idiosyncrasies of national development have made empirical verification difficult.

This static comparison between countries also underplays the dynamic nature of racial categorization in the United States and elsewhere. Although ultimately the *mulatto* category vanished from the national consciousness, the distinctiveness of mixed-race individuals has varied over time and space in the United States. It is only in the early twentieth century that the “one-drop” rule became dominant across the entire country. In much of the lower South, for example, mulattoes were well defined prior to this time period, and although the mulatto category was never as clearly defined elsewhere, the term was in common use in other parts of the country as well (Davis 1991; Williamson [1980] 1995).

In this paper, I exploit this variability over time and space to examine how regionally-specific contexts affected the occupational differentiation of individuals identified as black and mulatto during the transition from slavery to freedom. Specifically, I examine the occupational outcomes for a cohort of Southern males who entered the labor force during Reconstruction. The end of slavery and the resulting growth in the free black population forced Southern whites to re-organize a racial hierarchy which had previously been reinforced by slavery. Although Jim Crow segregation and the one-drop rule that supported it were the ultimate solution, this transition only occurred over a number of years and was variable across region. Local variation in racial context allows me to assess different cross-national theories at an intranational level.

Before I begin, I must clarify some terminology. Because the distinction between black and mulatto in the United States ultimately devolved into a single group identified as black, the existing terminology can be confusing. To resolve this issue, I use the antiquated term “colored” to refer to the entire population of African-ancestry, and I use the terms “black” and “mulatto” to refer to the unmixed and mixed sub-populations of this colored population.

## Background

### Socioracial Structure

The concept of “mixed race” is an outgrowth of the historical and socially contingent nature of race definitions. Although early social theorists assumed that racial distinctions had always existed (Gossett 1963; Franklin 1968), more recent work has established that the idea of dividing the

Table 1: Two Dimensions of Socioracial Structure

	Fluid	Rigid
Two-tiered	X	United States
Three-tiered	Latin America	non-Latin West Indies

world into a discrete set of well-bounded races is a fairly modern worldview whose roots lie in the colonial expansion of Europeans across the globe (Lieberman 1968; Snowden 1983; Omi and Winant 1994; Hannaford 1996; Smedley 1999; Hirschman 2004). Colonization brought Europeans into contact with groups that had previously been quite distant and thus very phenotypically different. Because these physical differences corresponded to the asymmetric power relations of colonialism, they helped solve organizational problems for the colonial enterprise and gave rise to the creation of artificial racial categories, superimposed on continuous phenotypic variability. These categories did boundary work by defining who was included and who was excluded from access to resources and power (Tilly 1998).

Ironically, the colonial period created a challenge to the very categories it helped to create by bringing people with considerable phenotypic differences into sexual contact. Even as Europeans defined boundaries in the public sphere, they frequently blurred them in the private sphere. Thus, all racialized social systems have had to confront the issue of mixed race. The “problem” of multiraciality was contemporaneous with the development of the race concept itself.

The resolution of this issue in every society leads to a particular *socioracial structure*, akin to socioeconomic structure, which defines the racial categories in use and their hierarchical relationship to one another (Hoetink 1973). In the context of African-migrant countries of the Western hemisphere, Hoetink (1973, pp. 193-196) argues that socioracial structure developed along two dimensions. Hoetink’s classification is shown schematically in Table 1.

The first dimension is the fluidity of racial definition. Fluid systems have loosely defined boundaries between categories, while rigid systems have clearly defined boundaries. Fluid systems tend to be characterized by an expansive nomenclature for differences in the degree of observed African ancestry.

The second dimension is the number of tiers that develop. Three-tiered systems define a middle category between black and white while two-tiered systems collapse into the two categories of black and white. Because fluid systems rely on fine grades of distinction, by definition, they cannot be two-tiered. Thus, the upper-left panel of Table 1 is a structural zero.

Hoetink (1973) identifies Latin American countries as having a fluid three-tiered socioracial

structure, while the former colonies of the British, French, and Dutch in the West Indies possess a more rigid three-tiered socioracial structure. In contrast to both of these groups, the United States alone has developed a rigid two-tiered socioracial structure.

What are the causal mechanisms which determine any particular society's placement along these two dimensions? The fluidity of socioracial systems is largely determined by the degree of group endogamy.<sup>1</sup> After initially high levels of race mixing in the early colonial period, mulatto distinctiveness in the non-Latin colonies was maintained by caste-like boundaries on intermarriage between the groups. This is in apparent contrast to Latin American countries where significant intermarriage was maintained between groups adjacent in the socioracial structure. According to Hoetink, the degree of group endogamy was largely determined by the *somatic norm image* of the white group (Hoetink 1973, pp. 196-210). Iberian's darker standards of beauty made them the more willing marriage partners of lighter-skinned African descendants.

This paper is concerned with the causal mechanisms behind the development of two-tiered versus three-tiered socioracial structures. However, explaining this dimension ultimately reduces to explaining United States exceptionalism within a cross-national context, because the U.S. is the only country to develop a two-tiered system. Despite the singularity of the phenomenon, theories have abounded. My focus here will be on the two most popular theoretical arguments.

Many scholars have noted that the mixed-race category has a tendency to defuse racial tensions. According to the well-known formulation of Degler (1971), the "mulatto escape hatch" reduces racial solidarity among African-ancestry individuals in Brazil because darker individuals have a chance of intergenerational upward mobility within the socioracial structure. Thus opportunities for individual mobility help maintain the overall system of racial domination. In many Caribbean countries, a distinctive middle category served as a buffer class between a small group of white elites and the darker masses (Horowitz 1973, pp. 530-538). In both cases, the primary reason for the existence of a mixed-race category is the potential for racial conflict stemming from a large African-ancestry population. Although isolated revolts were always a concern in the United States, the overall small size of the colored population made large-scale insurrection a minor concern. Thus, the reason for the weaker articulation of a mixed-race category in the United States may be the smaller relative size of the colored population (Horowitz 1973; Hoetink 1973). I refer to this as the demographic threat theory. It is noteworthy in this regard that the state with the largest concentration of coloreds (South Carolina) was well-known for its tendencies to make a distinction between mulattoes and blacks (Williamson [1980] 1995).

Demographic threat theory can be seen as an extension of the visibility-discrimination hypoth-

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<sup>1</sup>I am specifically referring to marriage with the term endogamy. Interracial sexual liaisons occurred in all cases. The important element here is the extent to which this sex and fertility occurred within legitimate unions.

esis (Blalock 1956). According to this hypothesis, the level of discrimination from the dominant group will increase as a minority increases in relative size, because the minority group constitutes a greater potential threat. Numerous studies have confirmed that the socioeconomic position of blacks declines with their relative group size (Blalock 1957; Frisbie and Neidert 1977; Tienda and Lii 1987; Burr, Galle, and Fossett 1991; Quillian 1995; Tomaskovic-Devey and Roscigno 1996; Beggs, Villemez, and Arnold 1997; Cohen 1998; McCall 2001), although Tolnay (2001) finds little evidence of this relationship among Northern cities in 1920. In the elaboration presented here, differentiation within the colored population should also increase as group size increases because the elevation of a mixed-race category may help defuse overall racial tension and reduce solidarity among the African-ancestry population.

Another major theory looks toward the class structure among whites for an explanation. The United States possessed a more differentiated white class structure and a higher level of immigration than most of the comparison cases. Scholars have argued that a middle category in the socioracial structure was a threat to the social honor and economic status of whites who were low in the socioeconomic structure (Harris 1964, pp. 86-89; Hoetink 1973, 14-31; Weber 1978, p. 391). According to this theory, competition between poor whites and the African-ancestry population in the United States prevented the formation of a middle category. I refer to this as social competition theory.

This theory is an elaboration of economic competition theory often employed in the study of ethnic groups (Bonacich 1972; Olzak 1986). According to the general theory, competition between ethnic groups at the same level in the socioeconomic hierarchy can intensify racial and ethnic animosity and possibly be detrimental to both groups. According to this extension of the theory, the potential for competition can in fact submerge racial distinctions which might otherwise occur. In this case, the threat of competition to lower-class whites undermined the elevation of a mixed-race category.

These two theories are closely related. It was precisely because of the large number of poor whites and immigrants that the United States had such a relatively small colored population. This relationship makes distinguishing these two theories at the cross-national level nearly impossible. Nonetheless, at the theoretical level, the theories are distinguishable because, in contrast to demographic threat theory, social competition theory makes a distinction not only about the relative size of groups but about the class structure of the white group. By examining regional variation within the United States during a period of transition, I can hopefully disentangle the theories.

## **Socioracial Transition, 1865-1880**

The importance of mixed race changed considerably in the United States with the end of slavery. During the slavery period, whatever racial distinctions existed were largely overshadowed by the

more important boundary between freedom and slavery. Illicit sex between white men and frequently unwilling black female slaves led to a sizable mixed race population on the plantation. It is likely that these mixed-race individuals were manumitted by their white kin at a higher rate than other slaves and hence not manumitted, mulatto slaves were more likely to serve as either house slaves or as skilled craftsmen on the plantation (Berlin 1974; Williamson [1980] 1995; Mullins and Sites 1984). Thus, mixed-race status played a role in the stratification of the slave population, but the advantages of mixed-race individuals were largely due to the personal kinship connections between themselves and white elites.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, this system of stratification was largely contained within the plantation system itself.

The proportion of mulattoes among the free colored population was higher than the proportion of mulattoes on the plantation (Berlin 1974). This difference was at least partially due to the aforementioned higher manumission rates among mulattoes, but may have also been due to fairly high levels of interracial sex off the plantation (Fogel and Engerman 1974; Bodenhorn 2002; Mills 1981). Historical evidence suggests that whites were fairly tolerant of interracial unions in the Antebellum period, even when such unions were between black men and white women (Mills 1981; Hodes 1997). This tolerance may be related to the small relative size of the free black population.

The containment of race relations within the institution of slavery ended with Emancipation. The suddenly large free black population forced whites to re-evaluate the existing socioracial structure. White tolerance for interracial mixing declined substantially as whites were forced to face more openly the question of how to deal with mixed-race individuals (Hodes 1997). Ultimately, the US moved to a two-tiered rigid socioracial structure in which the one-drop rule was employed to mark the boundary between black and white.

Because of the degree to which Emancipation destroyed the existing system of racial domination, this transitional period is critically important for understanding what drove the U.S. toward its peculiar socioracial structure. In particular, it provides fertile ground for testing theories which have been presented in an international context. In this study, I use this transitional period to examine why and how a young cohort of mulattoes were differentiated from blacks in the occupational structure. By exploiting regional variation in this differentiation, I can see how the socioracial structure responded to different local contexts.

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<sup>2</sup>This is not to say that such kinship connections were uniformly beneficial. In many cases, whites simply ignored these kinship bonds, and in at least some cases, these relationships may have been dangerous to mixed-race children. Nonetheless, on the whole, it seems clear that such connections were more likely to be beneficial than harmful.

## Theoretical Expectations

Table 2 shows the different theoretical expectations about the relationship between local social context and both the level of differentiation between blacks and mulattoes and the overall occupational standing of the colored population.

Following Blalock (1956), a relatively large colored population and relatively rapid growth in the colored population should have a negative relationship to the overall occupation standing of the colored population because these characteristics are likely to trigger more discriminatory action on the part of whites. However, according to the demographic threat theory outlined earlier, a relatively large colored population and growth of this population should also increase differentiation between blacks and mulattoes because the threat of insurrection embodied in a large black population makes whites more open to internal divisions within that population.

While demographic threat theory expects the relationship to level and differentiation to be opposite, social competition theory expects both the level and differentiation to move together. As the socioeconomic status of the white population improves, racial competition for lower-level jobs should be reduced, thus leading to an improvement in the occupational standing of the colored population. The reduction in economic competition should also make whites more open to mulatto distinctiveness because such an intermediary position is less threatening to their own occupational standing.

Although the main purpose of this study is to evaluate the empirical evidence for these two theories, there are two other potential explanations for black/mulatto differentiation that may prove fruitful. In connection with the arguments about fluidity addressed earlier, I can explore the degree to which exogamy encouraged or restricted interracial connections between strata. In areas with high colored/white intermarriage, one might expect differentiation to increase because of the clear kinship connections between whites and mulattoes. High levels of intermarriage between mulattoes and blacks, on the other hand, should decrease differentiation because it will weaken the boundaries between these groups.

I can also explore the degree to which mulattoes were able to exploit the pre-existing class structure among the free colored population. Because of the mixed-race nature of the this population, areas with a more established free colored community before Emancipation may have been particularly advantageous to mulattoes. Prior to Emancipation, the greatest boundary within the colored population was the distinction between those who were free and those who were slaves. After Emancipation, the greatest boundary was between black and mulatto. A translation process may have occurred in which the mulatto/black boundary was substituted for the previous boundary between freedom and slavery.

Table 2: Theoretical Expectations

	Level	Differentiation
<b>Demographic Threat</b>		
Relative size of colored population	-	+
Relative growth of colored population	-	+
<b>Social Competition</b>		
SES of white population	+	+
Relative size of immigrant population	-	-
<b>Interracial Connections</b>		
Colored/White intermarriage	+	+
Black/Mulatto intermarriage	NA	-
<b>Boundary Translation</b>		
Relative size of Ante-bellum free colored population	NA	+

## Data and Methods

### Data

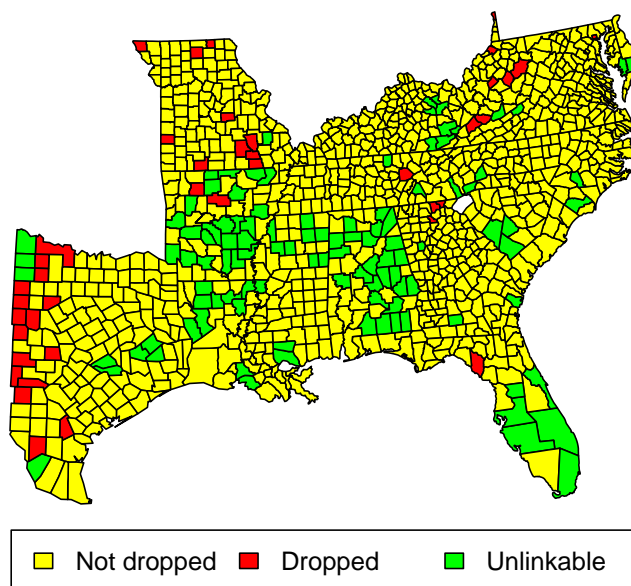
For this analysis, I use the 1880 Census full-count data, available through the the North Atlantic Population Project (2005). My interest is in a cohort of Southern colored men whose early careers developed in the period between 1865-1880. Therefore, I limit my analysis to Southern colored men between the ages of 25 and 34. This particular cohort was 10-19 years old at the end of the Civil War, so that most of their employment history will be during the period of Reconstruction.

I use the Duncan socioeconomic index (SEI) to assess the prestige of each respondent's current occupation (Blau and Duncan 1967). The SEI score is assigned from a 1950 occupational classification of the actual listed occupations in 1880. Because the 1880 Census did not ask for the income or education of respondents, the SEI score is one of the only univariate scale measures of stratification available.

The models I use to predict SEI include both individual-level measures and aggregate county-level measures. Aggregate county-level measures are either obtained by aggregating the full-count data I have or in a few cases are drawn from the published data on the Census. I also use published data on the 1860 Census to calculate county growth over time and to measure Ante-bellum racial structure. These published data were obtained from Haines and the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (2005).



Figure 1: Counties used in the analysis



Because county boundaries changed between 1860 and 1880, it is necessary to map the 1880 counties onto the 1860 counties in order to combine 1860 and 1880 data. In most cases, counties whose boundaries changed were simply divided between 1860 and 1880, so combining 1880 counties into 1860 counties is straightforward. In some cases, however, boundary changes were more complex. In these cases, I assigned 1880 counties to 1860 counties if 70% or more of their area was contained by the 1860 county and they accounted for at least 80% of the area of the 1860 county. Figure 1 shows the 1860-basis counties I use based on this mapping. Most of the counties whose boundary changes were too complex to map were located in either Alabama or Arkansas. I also eliminate some counties where the colored population was very small ( $N < 10$ ). After these restrictions I am left with 921 counties.

The individual and county-level variables used in this analysis are shown along with statistics on their distribution in Table 3. At the individual level I use the covariates of age and marital status. No information on education is available in the full-count data, so the effects on SEI that I observe are gross effects which may operate through the educational system.

Most of the aggregate-level characteristics I am interested in are represented as proportions of the population. The intermarriage ratios between colored/white and black/mulatto are calculated as

Table 3: Descriptive statistics, Southern colored men 25-34 years of age, 1880 United States Census

Variable	Mean	SD	Median	IQR
<i>Individual-level variables</i>				
Duncan SEI	11.005	8.289		
age	28.485	2.698		
married	0.695	0.46		
mulatto	0.146	0.353		
<i>County-level variables</i>				
urban	0.013	0.098		
proportion manufacturing	0.02	0.029	0.011	0.014
population (logged)	9.517	0.674	9.57	0.765
pop. growth (P1880/P1860)	1.677	1.672	1.411	0.497
colored/white intermarriage ratio	0.022	0.094	0.003	0.009
black/mulatto intermarriage ratio	0.241	0.206	0.202	0.152
proportion free colored (1860)	0.014	0.033	0.003	0.011
proportion colored	0.311	0.234	0.279	0.407
relative colored growth (1860-1880)	0.955	0.375	0.958	0.306
mean SEI, white males	16.958	4.18	16.001	3.817
proportion white males unemployed	0.079	0.035	0.075	0.041
proportion whites foreign born	0.033	0.06	0.012	0.029

the outmarriage ratios for the colored and black populations, respectively. Relative colored growth is determined by the ratio of population growth from 1860 to 1880 between the colored and white population.

In addition to the variables of interest, I also include some measures which can account for labor market differences between counties. I control for the proportion of the population engaged in manufacturing, the overall population size of the county, population growth since 1860, and whether the county is identified as urban or not.

The key variable in this analysis is the identification of the respondent as either mulatto or black. We have little information on how enumerators made this decision. Because “mulatto” was a fuzzy category, it is tempting to think that this variable will be measured with some unknown level of error. However, because there is no true definition of mulatto, such a statement would be inaccurate. Rather, what is important is the degree to which different observers agree on the classification of individuals as mulatto. In this Census record, particular enumerators were responsible for the classification of individuals in each household. If different enumerators had been used, the results might be somewhat different. Thus, this particular Census is one particular realization of a classification process which is naturally stochastic. This won’t necessarily impart any bias on my results, but it may cause point estimates to be underestimated.

## Methods

My interest in this research is in how contextual variables at the county-level (level 2) affect social differentiation among individuals (level 1). I therefore have a multilevel model. The individual-level model predicts the Duncan SEI score ( $y_{ij}$ ) for individual  $i$  in county  $j$ .

$$y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(m_{ij} - \bar{m}_{.j}) + \sum_{q=1}^Q \lambda_q(x_{qij} - \bar{x}_{q..}) + \epsilon_{ij} \quad (1)$$

where  $m_{ij}$  is an indicator variable for whether the individual is mulatto, the  $Q$   $x_{ij}$  variables are individual-level control variables, and  $\epsilon_{ij}$  is a random error assumed to be distributed as  $N(0, \sigma)$ . The group-mean centering of  $m_{ij}$  and the grand-mean centering of the control variables gives a particular interpretation to the  $\beta$  parameters.  $\beta_{0j}$  is the mean prestige score among all individuals in county  $j$  conditional on being at the grand mean for the control variables.  $\beta_{1j}$  is the mean difference between blacks and mulattoes in county  $j$ . Thus, within each county, this model distinguishes between the overall level of occupational prestige for the colored population and the prestige differentiation between blacks and mulattoes within that colored population.

The county-level model attempts to predict both level and differentiation as functions of county-

level variables. Specifically,

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \sum_{s=1}^S \gamma_{0s} w_{sj} + \delta_j \quad (2)$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \sum_{s=1}^S \gamma_{1s} w_{sj} + \eta_j \quad (3)$$

Where the  $S$   $w_j$  variables are county-level contextual variables, and  $\delta_j$  and  $\eta_j$  are each random error terms assumed to be distributed as  $N(0, \tau_1)$  and  $N(0, \tau_2)$ , respectively. The  $\gamma_{0s}$  coefficient describes how the mean level of occupational prestige for the colored population changes as a function of county-level variable  $w_s$ , while the  $\gamma_{1s}$  coefficient describes how the level of occupational differentiation between blacks and mulattoes changes as a function of the same county-level variables. Although not shown here, the county-level variables are all mean-centered for interpretive convenience.

Substituting equations (2) and (3) into equation (1) yields the full model,

$$y_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \sum_{s=1}^S \gamma_{0s} w_{sj} + \gamma_{10}(m_{ij} - \bar{m}_{.j}) + \sum_{s=1}^S \gamma_{1s} w_{sj}(m_{ij} - \bar{m}_{.j}) + \sum_{q=1}^Q \lambda_q(x_{qij} - \bar{x}_{q..}) + \delta_j + \eta_j(m_{ij} - \bar{m}_{.j}) + \epsilon_{ij} \quad (4)$$

This equation is a mixed effects model involving fixed effects, a random intercept ( $\delta_j$ ), and a random coefficient for the mulatto variable ( $\eta_j$ ). It is estimated in R using the nlme package (R Development Core Team 2005; Pinheiro, Bates, DebRoy, and Sarkar 2005).

In order to rule out any unobserved differences between states, I include state fixed effects into both county-level equations.

## Results

Table 4 presents the results from the multilevel model. Because I have data for the entire population, the standard inferential practices used in regression analysis are not entirely appropriate. Nonetheless, because of the inherently stochastic nature of racial classification, I include t-statistics as a rough guide to the importance of certain effects. Of more importance, however, are the substantive size of the effects.

Model 1 includes all variables except variables related to the white class structure. Model 2 includes the white class structure variables. I show both models because the white class structure variables have a significant impact on the other effects that helps illuminate the relationship between the independent variables.

Table 4: Multilevel regression model predicting the overall level of and black/mulatto differences in the Duncan occupational prestige score, Southern colored men 25-34 years of age, 1880 United States Census

Variable	Model 1				Model 2			
	Level		Difference		Level		Difference	
age	0.143	(26.43)			0.142	(26.41)		
married	0.723	(22.36)			0.726	(22.46)		
mulatto	2.894	(8.74)			3.249	(9.93)		
urban	-0.011	(-0.02)	0.402	(0.52)	-0.776	(-1.62)	-0.695	(-0.89)
proportion manufacturing	9.689	(5.64)	-2.048	(-0.69)	5.656	(3.17)	-7.579	(-2.44)
population (logged)	0.289	(3.38)	0.486	(3.06)	0.135	(1.56)	0.292	(1.81)
pop. growth (P1880/P1860)	0.107	(2.69)	-0.002	(-0.020)	0.086	(2.18)	-0.030	(-0.36)
colored/white intermar. ratio	1.480	(1.27)	-1.688	(-0.66)	1.696	(1.42)	-2.251	(-0.86)
black/mulatto intermar. ratio	-0.114	(-0.35)	-0.544	(-0.82)	-0.206	(-0.65)	-0.663	(-1.01)
proportion free colored (1860)	3.407	(1.95)	10.127	(3.29)	2.085	(1.23)	8.376	(2.77)
proportion colored	-1.410	(-5.50)	0.874	(1.88)	-2.40	(-8.31)	-0.343	(-0.65)
relative colored growth	0.644	(4.30)	0.230	(0.82)	0.631	(4.18)	0.095	(0.34)
mean SEI, white men					0.097	(6.56)	0.109	(4.40)
proportion white men unemp.					0.456	(0.35)	-0.486	(-0.20)
proportion whites foreign born					-0.623	(-0.60)	2.039	(1.09)
variance in level ( $\tau_1$ )	0.99				0.91			
variance in difference ( $\tau_2$ )	2.00				1.81			
correlation( $\tau_1, \tau_2$ )	0.335				0.275			
variance reduction in $\tau_1$	0.266				0.325			
variance reduction in $\tau_2$	0.118				0.198			
Number of individuals	316905				316905			
Number of counties	921				921			

Numbers in parentheses are t-statistics. All models include state-level fixed effects. The proportionate reduction in variance is measured relative to a model with just individual-level variables and state fixed effects.

Let me focus first on the demographic threat variables in Model 1. As other researchers have found for later time periods, the size of the colored population is negatively related to its own occupational standing. This finding is consistent with the visibility-discrimination hypothesis. The relative growth of the colored population, however is positively related. It is possible that the effect of relative colored growth is confounded by unobserved characteristics which draw the colored population to particularly good labor markets.

Both the relative size of the colored population and its relative growth lead to greater differentiation between blacks and mulattoes in Model 1. The effect for growth is small, but the proportion colored has a fairly strong effect. As the colored population increases in size, the occupational status difference between blacks and mulattoes grows. Thus, Model 1 provides some preliminary support for demographic threat theory.

However, this relationship vanishes once I control for the class structure of the white population. Although the relationship between the demographic threat variables and the overall occupational standing of the colored population holds in Model 2, neither the proportion colored nor relative growth have a substantial effect on black/mulatto occupational differentiation once the occupational standing of whites is introduced into the model.

The mean SEI of white males, on the other hand, has a strong positive effect on both level and differentiation, as expected by social competition theory. As the white population moves up the occupational ladder, direct competition is reduced and more space is created for occupational differentiation between blacks and mulattoes. These expectations are not met for the foreign-born and unemployment variables, however, suggesting that paupers and immigrants are not necessarily in a competitive position vis-a-vis the colored population, apart from their position in the overall white class structure.

The change in the effect of the demographic threat variables between Models 1 and 2 is an easily explained puzzle. Queuing theory argues that a hierarchical ranking of both jobs and groups will lead to an occupational queue in which the higher-ranked groups will be “pushed up” by a relatively larger population of lower-ranked groups (Lieberson 1980, pp. 294-298). As expected according to this theory, the relative size of the colored population has a positive effect on the mean SEI of whites ( $r = 0.44$ ). Thus, black population size indirectly affects black/mulatto occupational differentiation by pushing whites up the occupational queue. As whites move up the occupational queue, their own social standing is less threatened by the articulation of a mulatto category. This process is more consistent with social competition theory than demographic threat theory. As I noted previously, the singularity of the two-tiered system at the cross-national level made separating these two arguments impossible. But at the sub-national level, these results suggest that the overall movement toward a two-tiered system in the United States was directly driven more by the degraded class position of

whites than by an unusually small black population.

The results for the control variables provide some interesting findings, as well. In the preferred Model 2, urbanicity itself has a small negative effect on both level and differentiation. However, this is after controlling for two characteristics of urban areas – size and manufacturing intensity – which have larger more complex effects. Manufacturing has a positive effect on level but a strong negative effect on differentiation, suggesting that labor markets dominated by the manufacturing system benefited the colored population overall, but reduced the dominance of mulattoes. In Model 1, population size has a positive effect on both level and differentiation, but these effects both decline considerably with the introduction of white class structure controls. Thus, part of the effect of population size is due to the fact that large areas tended to increase whites' overall occupational standing, probably through scale effects, which then increases both the occupational standing of the colored population and differentiation within this population. Nonetheless, the effects remain positive, suggesting that mulatto/black differentiation may also increase through scale effects.

Intermarriage between both the colored and white populations and between the black and mulatto populations have unclear effects. Neither of these effects are very large over the observed range of values. As expected, higher levels of black/mulatto marriage reduce differentiation somewhat. More intermarriage between whites and the colored population, however, also has a negative effect, contrary to expectation. It should be noted that the rarity of the latter form of intermarriage means that this relationship is estimated on a severely restricted range of observations.

Finally, the size of the free colored population in 1860 has a very large positive effect on differentiation. Where this population was relatively large in 1860, I find greater differentiation between blacks and mulattoes in 1880. This finding suggests some degree of correspondence between the boundaries of free/slave and black/mulatto across this time period. There is little doubt that a disproportionate share of the mulatto men in the 1880 data are in fact the children of these free persons of color from before the war, and thus this correspondence may simply be explained by the immobility of family background. Unfortunately, it is impossible to derive this family relation from the 1880 Census and therefore the exact degree to which this conflation of boundaries is a result of kinship networks is unknown.

## Conclusions

By exploiting regional variation in the degree of occupational distinction between mulattoes and blacks, I have been able to assess the adequacy of theories regarding the causes of such distinction. The results presented here indicate that black/mulatto occupational differentiation increased with the occupational standing of the white population. This finding is consistent with social compe-

tition theory which argues that the suppression of a mixed-race category is driven by an implicit competition with relatively underprivileged whites for social standing.

The results do not indicate that the demographic threat of a large colored population led to greater occupational differentiation between blacks and mulattoes. Rather, a large relative black population indirectly created more differentiation by boosting the occupational standing of a small white population in a queuing process.

The results here also suggest that a strong determinant of black/mulatto differentiation was the relative size of the 1860 free colored population. Areas with a larger free colored population likely had a more differentiated class structure simply through economies of scale and mulattoes were able to take advantage of that differentiation for their own purposes. I suggest that this process can be thought of as a translation between the boundaries of free/slave and black/mulatto which helped create institutional stability in a period of rapid transition.

These results speak to overall level of prestige differentiation, but they ignore the question of how and when mulattoes became concentrated in occupational niches. Further analysis which can effectively parse the occupational system is warranted.

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