

¿QUÉ ES RACISMO?

Awareness of Racism and Discrimination in Ecuador

Scott H. Beck

East Tennessee State University

Kenneth J. Mijeski

East Tennessee State University

Meagan M. Stark

Syracuse University

Abstract: In the national consciousness, Ecuador is a mestizo nation. However, it is also an ethnically diverse nation with sizable minorities of indigenous and Afro-descended peoples. In national surveys, there is also a considerable minority who self-identify as blanco (white). Although there is strong evidence of continuing discrimination and prejudice toward both indigenous and Afro-descended peoples, there is little public discussion or political action addressing such issues. The emergence of a powerful and resilient indigenous movement in the late 1980s gained international interest and acclaim in the 1990s, in part because of the peaceful mobilization efforts and effective bargaining tactics of the movement. However, indigenous leaders usually have not engaged in a discourse of racismo and/or discriminación. There has been much less social movement solidarity and activism among Afro-Ecuadorians, but their leaders commonly employ a discourse of racismo and discriminación. In August and September 2004, a survey of more than eight thousand adult Ecuadorians was conducted in regard to racism and related topics. In this research, we use several measures from this survey that focus on awareness of and sensitivity to issues of racism, prejudice, and discrimination. Self-identification of respondents enables us to contrast the responses of whites, mestizos, Indians, and Afro-Ecuadorians to the measures. Other independent variables of interest are level of education, the region in which the respondent resides, and whether the respondent lives in an urban or rural area. Regression results show differences among the ethnic groups in levels of awareness of racism, but more powerful predictors are level of education and rural residence.

INTRODUCTION

Despite Gilberto Freyre's assertion of Brazilian racial democracy in his 1938 book *Casa Grande e Senzala*—translated into English as *The Masters and the Slaves* (1956)—race, ethnic identification, and racial and ethnic discrimination continue to be contentious issues in contemporary Brazil and across other Latin American countries (for an overview of the literature on race, ethnicity, and discrimination, see Wade 1997). In the Ecuadorian case, such claims by numerous modernizing leaders that “todos

somos mestizos" ("we are all mestizos") were finally put to rest by indigenous organizing that clarified and underscored the central importance of race and ethnic identity, thus forcing the country's whites and mestizos to face up to the fact that the Indians' "place" in Ecuador's society—characterized by poverty, illiteracy, and subordination—was a place that non-Indians defined and imposed on them. Ecuador's Afro-Ecuadorian population—historically concentrated in the coastal province of Esmeraldas and in the Chota Valley, located in the northern provinces of Imbabura and Carchi—in contrast to the country's Indians, was never meant to be included in the "todos somos mestizos" category.

In the early part of the twentieth century, indigenous peoples in the Sierra region (highlands) were considered capable of cultural transformation (i.e., of overcoming their "Indianness"). Perceived as victims of the Spanish colonists, they were treated as abused children, not responsible for their condition as the "miserable race," and as deserving of protection and nurturing by the state (on this history, see Clark 1999, and several essays in Clark and Becker 2007). On the other hand, Indians of the Oriente (Amazonian or lowland region) were not perceived as redeemable as their Sierra counterparts. As one scholar argues: "While highland Indians were effectively seen as a type of 'model Indian', as transformable future citizens, lowland Indians, meanwhile, were seen as more problematic: as savage, backward and fundamentally uncivilized" (Foote 2006, 271). Hence, Ecuador's Indians were treated discriminately, depending on whether they were "miserable" as a result of maltreatment or simply because they were "savages."

Afro-Ecuadorians constituted a third racial category; they were considered innately biologically inferior beings and were viewed by whites and mestizos as incorrigible. Early-twentieth-century Ecuadorian intellectuals regarded blacks as inherently and irrevocably inferior. Alfredo Espinosa Tamayo, influenced by social Darwinist thought, considered Afro-Ecuadorians a "servile race [that] is the least suitable for incorporation into civilization" (qtd. in Foote 2006, 265). Hans Heiman Guzman blamed blacks and mulattos for Ecuador's political instability because of their "bloody and warlike ways" (qtd. in Foote 2006, 265). Humberto García Ortiz, a civic education professor at Quito's Universidad Central, said that, whereas the black man is sociable, it is at the level of "the child or the savage," and having social relations with him would be like "a man having social relations with his cat" (qtd. in de la Torre 2002, 20).

Afro-Ecuadorians were also viewed as having a corrupting influence on the Cayapa Indians on the coast. Government ministers and missionaries in Esmeraldas argued that blacks were a "degenerate influence" on the Cayapas (Foote 2006, 265). Foote claims that the Cayapas may have been stronger in their demonization of blacks than were white officials and missionaries, referring to Afro-Ecuadorians as *juyungo*, "howler

monkey" or "devil," and even as cannibalistic, with Cayapa folk stories telling of blacks eating Cayapa bones (Foote, 2006). Such images of Afro-Ecuadorians as savages and cannibals have become part of children's games in contemporary Quito according to Carlos de la Torre (2002, 40), who recounts the following song recited by Quiteño children when he was a boy:

¿Quién quiere el hombre negro?	<i>Who likes the black man?</i>
¡Nadie!	<i>No one!</i>
¿Por qué?	<i>Why?</i>
¡Porque es negro!	<i>Because he is black!</i>
¿Qué come?	<i>What does he eat?</i>
¡Carne!	<i>Meat!</i>
¿Qué bebe?	<i>What does he drink?</i>
¡Sangre!	<i>Blood!</i>

Despite this history of racial stereotyping and resultant racial discrimination in Ecuador, many Ecuadorian intellectuals in the second half of the twentieth century argued that racism and racial discrimination were foreign phenomena and of little importance. For example, Nelson Estupiñán Bass (1961), a mulatto from Esmeraldas, contrasted the juridical basis for racial discrimination in the United States and South Africa with the absence of the same in Ecuador, asserting that, "[i]n Ecuador the black man can move freely in the streets, avenues or city squares; can go into bars, and can be a general, a minister of state, or President of the Republic" because in Ecuador "[t]he mestizo or the white has not suffered the malignant influence of the [racial] discrimination of foreigners" (qtd. in de la Torre 2002, 13). Rather, Estupiñán Bass argued, discrimination in Ecuador is based on class, not race.

Later studies by anthropologists and other social scientists, however, provided evidence that belied claims such as those by Estupiñán Bass. Quiroga (1999) maintains that in contemporary Ecuador there are numerous stereotypes about black Ecuadorians that persist, such as a natural proclivity toward laziness, violence, and crime, as well as abilities in music and sports. Almeida Vinueza (2008) has recently asserted that racism and all its accompaniments have been woven into the fabric of Ecuadorian society since early colonial times and still thrive through various institutions, daily customs, and the mental landscapes of Ecuadorians. Quijano (1999) made such an assertion on a much broader scale some years before in the context of his concept of *colonialidad de poder*. More than two decades before Quijano's analysis, Whitten (1974) concluded that, even in predominantly black towns, such as San Lorenzo, whites, mestizos, or mulattos ran all the administrative and commercial centers, and the only elected black officials were rural police.

More recent studies have found systematic discrimination against Indians and Afro-Ecuadorians in public spaces (de la Torre 1996; Cervone

1999), in education (de la Torre 1996; Martínez Novo 2008) and in the mass media (Rahier 1998, 1999). Quiroga (1999) asserts that, among mestizos and *blancos*, there are still widely held negative images of indigenous peoples typified by passivity, ignorance, and filth. Quiroga (1999) notes that, more recently, because of the public activism and political victories of indigenous peoples, additional negative images of the “disrespectful” Indian” and “suddenly violent Indian” have become common.

Colloredo-Mansfeld (1998) examines the concept of social difference in Otavalo, Ecuador, and argues that the modern indigenous movement has yet to eliminate racist attitudes in Ecuadorian society. He uncovers a white-mestizo campaign to promote the inferiority of indigenous Otavaleños by perpetuating the stereotype of the dirty Indian, most effectively in the city’s economic system. The city’s elites use the image of the unhygienic Indian to justify the inequality and poverty the indigenous populace suffers (Colloredo-Mansfeld 1998). Blanco-mestizos can even consider indigenous success in the system a threat; they often claim that only illicit drug profits can explain the monetary fortune of Otavalo’s urban indigenous. The endorsement of these stereotypical images of an indigenous population that is not only personally contaminated but also seeming to contaminate the population at large works to alienate indigenous merchants. On a similar note, Whitten and Quiroga (1998) report on derogatory language in the labor market. For example, when employees don’t receive the salary they were promised, they are considered *tratado como negro* (“treated like a black”), and they often respond to such treatment with “¡No mi negree!” (“Don’t treat me like a nigger!”).

The media in Ecuador has a long history of promoting inequality based on ethnicity. In his examination of the portrayal of Afro-Ecuadorians in the popular and widely circulated magazine *Vistazo*, Rahier (1999) noted that representations of Afro-Ecuadorians as “dangerous criminals” were ubiquitous and began in the earliest issues of the magazine in the late 1950s. In an analysis of Ecuador’s daily newspapers, Rahier also noted that the only mention of race in the reporting of a crime was when the criminal was black and the victim was not black. A recent study conducted in Guayaquil, Ecuador’s largest city, confirmed that the “feminine ideal” in the Ecuadorian media is Caucasian, thin, and perfectly dressed; on the rare occasion that the media features dark-skinned women, they tend to be foreigners (Masi de Casanova 2004). Rahier (1998) also notes racism in beauty contests, where light skin always trumps darker skin.¹

1. Indigenous women face similar prejudicial treatment. In August 1996, Quito’s major daily newspaper, *El Comercio*, reported that at the Yamor festival in Otavalo, the festival committee prohibited an indigenous woman from participating in the contest to be queen of the fiesta, supporting its position by referring to a municipal ordinance banning participation of indigenous women in the pageant (*El Comercio*, August 24, 1996).

THE POWER OF MESTIZAJE AND RESISTANCE EFFORTS

In summary, the evidence appears overwhelming that racism, racial stereotyping, and racial and/or ethnic discrimination have been and continue to be entrenched in Ecuadorian society, where *mestizaje* and *blanqueamiento* ("whitening") are considered paths for Indians and Afro-Ecuadorians to become "less Indian" or "less black." Beginning with the research and writings of *indigenistas* in Ecuador during the 1930s and 1940s (see Clark 1999) and continuing with modernization efforts during the 1960s and 1970s, the ideology that to be Ecuadorian is to be mestizo became a powerful force in public life. The process and advancement of mestizaje, which Whitten (2003b, 59) describes as "the blending body of ecuatorianidad" seems to have largely taken hold, at least in the sense that three-fourths of Ecuadorians identified as mestizo in the 2001 census and four-fifths in the survey used in this analysis.²

This blending ideology, part of nationalist development platforms in various Latin American countries at various times, doesn't really recognize or valorize different genetic and cultural backgrounds; rather, it promotes the current, the modern, the European- and American-dominated cultural strands existent in these countries (particularly among the urban middle and upper classes). As Whitten (2003b), Wade (2004), and most recently Roitman (2009) have noted, mestizaje glosses over specific, historically and geographically grounded ethnic traditions and existing communities, relegating them to the past or the irrelevant present. It further has been asserted that mestizaje, and the wide swath of people who clearly identify as mestizo, produces a perceptual prism in which it is quite easy to ignore, hide, downgrade, and ultimately deny processes of prejudice and discrimination toward those easily recognizable as Indian, black, or mulatto.³

Of course, there has been considerable resistance to the mestizaje ideology and process, particularly in the past thirty years. One could argue that a central effort of organized indigenous movements in Ecuador, Bolivia, Mexico, Guatemala, and some other nations has essentially been cultural preservation against the onslaught of the modern mestizo ideal. Also, re-

2. There is a large literature on mestizaje and the ethnic category of mestizo in Ecuador and throughout Latin America. Some of the more notable works are those of Stutzman (1981), Cervone and Rivera (1999), de la Cadena (2000), García Canclini (1995), Ibarra (1998), Espinosa Apolo (1997), Hale (2006), Tarica (2008), Weismantel (2001), Wade (2004), Roitman (2009), and some of the essays in Whitten (2003a).

3. In a recent essay, Walsh (2007) asserts that Afro-Ecuadorians have been and still are the lowest in the racial hierarchy of Ecuador, below the indigenous population. We suspect that many indigenous leaders as well as some historians and anthropologists would disagree with Walsh, but it does seem clear to us that, in the past twenty years, the indigenous population has achieved more political voice and cultural recognition than have Afro-descended peoples in Ecuador.

urgent efforts by Afro-descended groups in Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and even Peru to make claims for recognition and respect are at least in part efforts to shear away some of that glossing effect of *mestizaje*. Have these efforts been at least partially successful? That is extremely difficult to evaluate, in Ecuador or in any of the other nations. A central issue is whether citizens have an awareness that racially based prejudice and discrimination exist in their country, particularly among those who are commonly the targets of it (i.e., indigenous and Afro-descended people).

Ecuadorians appear to be quite conscious of race- or ethnicity-based categories; they differentiate people into well-known identities of blanco (or blanco-mestizo), mestizo, negro, mulatto (sometimes using *moreno*), and indigenous (*cholo* and *longo* are much less common than in the past). One could argue, then, that Ecuadorians are also quite conscious of racism and racially based prejudice and discrimination, especially among those who are likely to be subjected to it. But does racial consciousness equate to awareness of racism and racial discrimination? Is it possible, despite the evidence of discriminatory practices toward Indians and Afro-Ecuadorians, that many Ecuadorians, of all racial and ethnic identities, are still unaware of racism and prejudicial practices? Can race consciousness exist without racism awareness?

In a recent study, de la Torre (2002) conducted in-depth individual and focus-group interviews with Afro-Ecuadorians who lived in Quito. Most participants were activists and/or leaders in various Afro-Ecuadorian organizations at the national, provincial, or neighborhood levels. The interviewees were both race conscious and keenly aware of racism and prejudice in their communities and in their daily lives. They not only were conscious of race but also knew what racism was and were keenly aware of racial discrimination toward Afro-Ecuadorians, be it at the hands of the police, in their efforts to secure housing, or when seeking employment. Given the limits of de la Torre's "elite" sample, the question remains whether Afro-Ecuadorians or indigenous people who are not leaders or activists can be acutely conscious of race, yet somehow relatively racism unaware.

Quite distinct from de la Torre's findings, our own experiences in interviewing indigenous leaders and activists over a ten-year period (1996–2006) produce a different understanding, at least for indigenous people. In more than fifty interviews with a wide variety of indigenous activists, we never heard comments on racism, discrimination, or prejudice unless we brought up the subjects. The activists concentrated on issues of oppression, economic exploitation and poverty, civil rights, access to credit, educational opportunities, and political reform. It is easy for us to recognize, perhaps, that underlying all those concerns are issues of prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors. But if well-educated indigenous leaders and activists do not often use those concepts, it seems unlikely that

they are part of the conceptual repertoire of most people who identify as indigenous. Thus, although many people easily and “naturally” classify themselves and others into race-based categories in Ecuador, and some are certainly subjected to prejudicial beliefs and discriminatory practices, they may be quite unaware of racist practices. It is to this seemingly contradictory possibility that we turn our attention in this research.

DATA SOURCE

Since the 1930s and especially since the military regime headed by General Guillermo Rodríguez Lara in the 1970s, the Ecuadorian state developed a policy based on the idea that, with changes in culture and education, all Ecuadorians could become mestizos (see Clark 1998; Stutzman 1981). National censuses that did not gather information about respondents’ racial or ethnic identities reflected this policy. Those census efforts were restricted to asking about language spoken at home or, as in the 1950 and 1960 censuses, type of dwelling in which one lived and other indirect measures (Knapp 1991). It was not until the 2001 census that a self-identity question was added for heads of households: “Do you consider yourself to be: mestizo, blanco, *indígena* (what group?), negro, mulato, other?” The results of the census self-identity item were surprising to many and troubling to some. Approximately 77 percent of Ecuadorians self-identified as mestizo, barely 7 percent responded “*indígena*,” almost 5 percent identified as negro and mulato combined, approximately 9 percent identified themselves as blanco, and the small remainder chose “other.”⁴

In a few recent interesting analyses, Fabricio González-Andrade, an Ecuadorian geneticist, and his associates have used blood samples from Ecuadorians in an effort to trace the various ancestral mixes that coincide with social ascriptions of race (González-Andrade, Sánchez, González-Solórzano et al. 2007; González-Andrade, Sánchez, and Martínez-Jaretta 2008). The researchers used nonrandom samples of mestizos, Afro-Ecuadorians, and highland indigenous (or Kichwas) to analyze well-known short tandem repeats (STRs) and allele groupings from both the Y

4. All indigenous activists and many academics assert that the indigenous population in Ecuador has to be greater than seven percent. They are probably correct. We have previously used Sistema de Indicadores de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador (SIDENPE) estimates from the late 1990s, based in part on recognized indigenous community population estimates by Consejo de Desarrollo de Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador (CODENPE) and using certain assumptions about the percentage of indigenous people in urban areas (see Beck and Mijeski 2006). Weighted appropriately, the SIDENPE estimate comes out to about 14 percent, double the percentage in the census and in the INEC 2004 survey used in this analysis. Nevertheless, even the SIDENPE estimate is considerably less than the claims of indigenous activists of 30 percent, 35 percent, or more. Those are claims without empirical basis.

chromosome (male ancestry) and autosomal markers (non-sex-linked genetic strands). Although they report a variety of specific findings, the results basically show a high degree of diversity within groups, particularly mestizos and Afro-Ecuadorians, and virtually all the subjects are mixed race. Although the samples are not necessarily representative of the Ecuadorian population, they strongly suggest the high degree of ancestral mixing from different continents of the vast majority of individuals in Ecuador. What is sociologically interesting is that, in the 2001 census and in the nationally representative survey described herein, the overwhelming majority of Ecuadorians identify as mestizo and not with a continent-specific race marker (indigenous, negro, or blanco).

In August and September 2004, the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC), Ecuador's Census Bureau, carried out its annual employment survey with an added section—"Discriminación y Prejuicio Racial"—a first for the government of Ecuador. This module or additional section was designed by personnel at the Secretaria Técnica del Frente Social, a semigovernmental research organization headquartered in Quito that produces research reports under the heading Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador (SIISE). A grant from the Inter-American Development Bank aided the effort (Secretaria Técnica del Frente Social 2006). The "Racismo" team at SIISE was led by Jhon Antón Sánchez (2007), an Afro-Colombian researcher in Ecuador who has been studying Afro-Ecuadorian communities in Esmeraldas and other areas of Ecuador. Antón developed most of the survey items for this section, which include a focus on perceptions and beliefs about Afro-Ecuadorians in addition to many items that deal with more general issues concerning race, discrimination, prejudice and government policies. There are forty-three distinct items in the special section of the survey that actually produce eighty-one variables.⁵

The employment survey conducted by INEC in 2004 was based on a nationwide probability survey of 8,687 households. The first-stage selection consisted of sampling *parroquias* ("parishes") throughout the country, which resulted in a selection of 305 of those units (from more than 1,100), with further sampling of sectors within the *parroquias* before sampling households. Areas in the sparsely populated Oriente were oversampled, as were other rural areas, which resulted in slightly higher numbers of in-

5. Two reviewers wanted to know more about the motivations for, and basis of, the special questionnaire on racism. Basically, the Gutiérrez administration agreed to requests from various organizations of Afro-Ecuadorians (e.g., Organizaciones Afroecuatorianas de Pichincha, Organizaciones Afroecuatorianas del Valle Chota—Río Mira) to undertake a project to reveal more about racial discrimination and prejudice in Ecuador. Part of that project, more focused on economic disadvantages, is known as Sistema de Indicadores del Pueblo Afroecuatoriano (SISPAAE). Additional information, including the training of interviewers, is based on the first two authors' conversation with Jhon Antón Sánchez (personal interview with Jhon Antón Sánchez, Quito, July 22, 2007).

digenous and Afro-Ecuadorian households (Secretaría Técnica del Frente Social 2006). Because we used those variables in our analysis, the weighting factor provided in the survey data does not change in any significant way the results without weighting. Consequently, the findings summarized in the tables herein are with unweighted data.

INTERVIEW ITEMS AND INDEX CREATION

The racism section of the interview begins with the following question, “¿Sabe usted qué es racismo?” This is an interesting lead question because it reflects the understanding that, in Ecuador, concepts such as racism, discrimination, and prejudice are not widely disseminated or discussed, even though they exist as realities of everyday life. It should not be surprising, then, from an Ecuadorian vantage point, that 48.5 percent of respondents answered no. Further on in the interview, respondents were asked whether they knew what racial discrimination and racial prejudice were (separate questions), with even greater numbers responding no. This pattern of responses is an indirect indicator of a race-conscious but racism-unaware society.

As noted previously, although the large majority of Ecuadorians recognize racial differences and categories—such as blanco, mestizo, *indio*, negro, moreno, mulato—and know that people are often treated or thought of differently on the basis of those racial categorizations, the constructs of racism, discrimination, and prejudice are not implanted in the mental maps of a large segment of the Ecuadorian population. As de la Torre (2002, 27–28) points out, racism is often a “secret” or taboo subject about which black families in Ecuador do not converse.⁶ Certainly, some Ecuadorians are quite aware of the concepts and how they relate to issues in their society, but a large segment is not. Thus, the focus of this analysis is to develop a measure of awareness of racism and then test hypotheses concerning those factors that explain variation in levels of awareness.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

We are interested in measuring general awareness of or sensitivity to issues of racism in Ecuadorian society. We started by using the first three questions listed in Appendix A, which ask respondents whether they know what racism is, what acts of racial discrimination are, and whether

6. In contrast, there is some indication that Quito’s whites and mestizos are more likely to speak publicly in expressing stereotyped racist descriptions of Afro-Ecuadorians. De la Torre (2002) said that when he spoke with white and mestizo upper- and upper-middle-class Quiteños about his research with blacks, they, without his asking, always offered their stories about black peoples’ violent and criminal behavior.

they know what racial prejudice is—all with simple yes or no responses. We used each of the three, separately, as outcome variables in our analysis. After investigating other questions that dealt with related assessments or beliefs, we created a nine-item scale, all of which are shown in Appendix A. The items were scored 1 when respondents answered yes and 0 when they responded no or did not respond (“no sabe”). We refer to this measurement as the Awareness of Racism Index (or just the Awareness Index), and it ranges in score from 0–9, with a median of 5, a mean of 4.83, and a standard deviation of 2.32. Cronbach’s alpha is .733 for this scale, which is an acceptable level of reliability. The anchors to this scale are the first three questions listed in Appendix A, as they show the highest item-to-total correlations of the nine items in the scale.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Our primary interest in this research is to investigate differences among the four main groups with which people self-identified in Ecuador: whites, mestizos, Indians, and Afro-Ecuadorians. In terms of the dependent variables, it seems logical to hypothesize that the minority groups, Indians and Afro-Ecuadorians, are more likely to indicate that they know what racism, discrimination, and prejudice are and to score higher on the Awareness Index, because they should have experienced more acts of discrimination and expressions of prejudice during their life. It must be remembered, however, that what is being measured, via personal interviews, are perceptions, understandings, and beliefs. Thus, the extent to which people have been sensitized to these ways of thinking and perceiving have a tremendous impact. It may be that a variety of other personal, social and community-level factors mute differences across the four ethnic groups. Also, as noted previously, indigenous peoples and their leaders have usually not engaged in a language of *racismo* or *discriminación* but rather in a perspective stressing identity as *pueblos y nacionalidades* that are deserving of state recognition. Thus, indigenous respondents may be less likely to say that they know the terms *racism*, *discrimination*, and *prejudice* and as a group actually score lower on the Awareness Index.

Two other variables that may have an effect on respondents’ scores on the dependent variables are sex and age. Regarding gender, much of the historical research on racial attitudes in the United States has shown that women are less prejudiced than men toward members of other racial groups (see, e.g., Beutel and Marini 1995; Cross and Madson 1997; Johnson and Marini 1998). In contrast, a recent cross-national study using data from Eurobarometer 30 (Reif and Melich 1992) and the World Values Survey (Inglehart 2000) showed substantial variation across countries (Hughes, Tuch, and Hanson 2007). Findings from an analysis of the Latin American countries in the World Values Survey are illustrative. In Argentina, Chile,

Peru, and Venezuela, women were more likely than men to be accepting of out-groups, though not significantly so. In Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay, women were less tolerant than men, significantly so in the case of the Dominican Republic (table 2 in Hughes, Tuch, and Hanson 2007). Absent any clear hypothesized relationship, we chose to include gender in the case of Ecuador. Given the significant social and political changes that have occurred in Ecuador during the past twenty years—particularly the emergence of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian social and political movements and organizations—age of respondents may reflect a cohort effect wherein older Ecuadorians perceive and understand less about racism, discrimination, and prejudice and therefore score lower on the dependent variables.

Given the report from the SIISE research team (2006), a potentially important predictor is the urban-rural dichotomy. Those Ecuadorians living in rural areas may have less exposure to ethnic groups other than their own, particularly on a day-to-day basis. Also, they probably have less exposure to the mass media, especially newspapers and the Internet, and possibly less experience with political and economic institutional settings. Thus, we expect rural residents to be less likely to know the terms and to score lower on the Awareness Index. To the extent that indigenous or Afro-descended peoples are more likely to live in rural areas, controlling for this factor may explain some of the differences between ethnic groups on the dependent variables.

We also hypothesize that formal education influences responses. The way the survey measured this variable led us to create four ordinal categories: no education, primary school, high school, and university. Because the largest single category is primary school, that grouping is our comparison category in the regression analyses. We expect that those with more education have had more exposure to and therefore an increased sensitivity to concepts such as racism, racial discrimination, and racial prejudice; consequently, we expect them to score higher on the dependent variables.

The final independent variable in the analysis is a regional comparison. Ecuador has three regions: Coast, Sierra, and Oriente. Because the latter is so sparsely populated—which is reflected in the survey despite oversampling of the region—we combined respondents from Sierra and Oriente to create a dichotomy of Coast and non-Coast (Sierra plus Oriente) categories. Why should regional location produce differences in scores on the dependent variables? We are not sure that it should produce significant differences, but there is at least one reason there might be differences. The indigenous movement has had its strongest impact where indigenous people live, overwhelmingly in the Sierra and Oriente. The variety of marches, demonstrations, road blockages, building occupations, and withholding of agricultural products from the late 1980s to the time of the survey have been most numerous and intense in the Sierra and parts of the Oriente, not

on the Coast. This experience may have increased awareness and sensitivity to issues of racism and discrimination, not just among indigenous peoples themselves but also among the whole populace of the Sierra and Oriente, more than in the coastal areas. The lack of significant social movement activity and agitation by Afro-Ecuadorians along the coast during the same time may add to an awareness gap between the regions.⁷

ANALYTIC APPROACH

The dichotomous dependent variables, racism, discrimination, and prejudice, are to be analyzed via cross-tabulation and logistic regression. All the predictors we use, with the exception of age, are categorical variables. With the very large sample size ($N = 8,682$) and the desire to estimate net effects of various predictors, it is quite appropriate to use logistic regression of the following form:

$$\ln[P(Y_i = 1)] = \alpha + \beta_1 I + \beta_2 A + \beta_3 W + \beta_k Z_k, \quad (1)$$

where Y_i represents each of the three binary dependent variables and a "sí" response is coded 1, I represents the dummy contrast of Indigenous versus mestizo respondents, A is the dummy for Afro-Ecuadorian respondents, W is the dummy for blanco (or white) respondents, Z_k represents a vector of additional independent variables described previously, and the β s are the logistic coefficients. For easier interpretation, the antilogs of the coefficients or odds ratios are also reported.

The Awareness Index variable is approximately normally distributed, and given the set of predictors, we meet the general assumptions of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. In building these models, we were particularly interested in testing for interaction effects between the ethnic group variable and other predictors such as education and area (rural-urban). None of the interaction models showed significant improvements in model fit (i.e., statistically significant increases in R^2). Thus, the OLS models presented herein show only main net effects of the predictors.

RESULTS

Table 1 provides summary descriptive information on each of the variables used in the analysis. The ethnic self-identity variable reinforces the common belief that Ecuador is a mestizo society, with more than 80 percent of respondents choosing that category. Only about one in fourteen

7. Although Antón Sánchez (2007) describes the considerable growth of Afro-Ecuadorian organizations in the Coast region and nationally since the 1990s, he also notes that the proliferation of such organizations seems disconnected to most Afro-Ecuadorians, who do not consider themselves truly represented by the organizations' leaders.

Table 1 Summary Statistics for Dependent and Independent Variables Used in Analysis (*n* = 8,682)

Variables	Freq.	Mean (or Percentage)	Std. Dev.	Range
Awareness index	—	4.83	2.32	0–9
Ethnic group				
Mestizo	7091	81.7%	—	—
Indian	657	7.6%	—	—
White	573	6.6%	—	—
Afro-Ec	361	4.2%	—	—
Female (=1)	5118	58.9%	—	—
Age	—	43.2	16.0	16–98
Rural (=1)	2792	32.2%	—	—
Education level				
No-education	633	7.3%	—	—
Primary level	3857	44.4%	—	—
High school	2720	31.3%	—	—
College level	1472	17.0%	—	—
Coast (=1)	3933	45.3%	—	—

responded “indígena,” one in sixteen chose “blanco,” and about one in twenty-five identified as either “negro” or “mulato.” Whether the results are an accurate representation of how people really identify in their daily lives, in their families, in their communities, in their places of work, and in other social settings, or whether interviewer effects partially alter them, cannot be resolved here. In its report, the study team noted that interviewers were trained for this section of the survey and that most interviewers were mestizos. Does the presence of a nonindigenous or non-Afro-Ecuadorian interviewer inhibit some respondents who hold those identities (indigenous, negro, or mulato) from publicly proclaiming it? Certainly many indigenous activists and Afro-Ecuadorian academics with whom these authors have spoken believe this is the case; consequently, any surveys (including the census) would undercount the true numbers of these groups (personal interview with Jhon Antón Sánchez, Quito, July 22, 2006; personal interview with Edizón León, Quito, July 21, 2006).

Table 1 shows that there is an overrepresentation of women in the sample (almost 59 percent), and for that reason alone, it is important to include a female-male contrast in the regressions. Almost one-third of the sample lives in rural areas (in parroquias defined as rural), a result of the slight oversampling in those areas of the country. Some clarification is necessary in regard to the education categories. “Primary level,” with the largest number of respondents, does not necessarily mean that the person fin-

ished primary school (six grades), but rather that the person did not go beyond that level. That is also the case with the definitions of "high school" and "college level"; respondents may have attended high school but not graduated and may have attended university (or technical school) but not graduated. Finally, the region variable indicates that about 45 percent of respondents live in coastal provinces, a slight undersampling of that region.

We begin our inferential analysis by looking at responses on three basic variables of interest: Do respondents know what racism is? Do they know what discrimination is? Do they know what prejudice is? These variables were cross-tabulated with the ethnic ID variable (for a summary of results, see table 2). Overall, 51.4 percent of the 8,682 respondents indicated that they know what racism is, 37.2 percent answered "sí" to the question on racial discrimination, and only 30.6 percent responded that they knew about racial prejudice. These are interesting results in themselves, showing that large percentages of the Ecuadorian public are not familiar with these concepts. The one ethnic group that stands out from the other three in table 2 is the indigenous category. Fewer than one-fourth of these respondents indicated that they knew what racism was, only one-seventh about discrimination, and one-tenth about prejudice. As the odds ratios at the bottom of table 2 show, mestizo respondents were about four times as likely as Indians to respond "sí" (versus "no") to these questions.

Table 2 Summary of Cross-Tabulation Results between Ethnic Self-Identification and "Knowledge" Variables (n = 8,682)

Ethnic ID	Sabe Racismo?		Sabe Discriminación?		Sabe Prejuicio?	
	Sí Freq (%)	No Freq (%)	Sí Freq (%)	No Freq (%)	Sí Freq (%)	No Freq (%)
Mestizo (M)	3812 (53.8)	3279 (46.2)	2786 (39.3)	4305 (60.7)	2298 (32.4)	4793 (67.6)
Indian (I)	151 (23.0)	506 (77.0)	95 (14.5)	562 (85.5)	62 (9.4)	595 (90.6)
White (W)	312 (54.5)	261 (45.5)	233 (40.7)	340 (59.3)	196 (34.2)	377 (65.8)
Afro-Ec (A)	185 (51.2)	176 (48.8)	115 (31.9)	246 (68.1)	98 (27.1)	263 (72.9)
<i>Odds ratios</i>						
M – I	3.9		3.8		4.6	
M – W	.97		.94		.92	
M – A	1.1		1.4		1.3	

The percentages of white respondents indicating knowledge of these three terms is virtually the same as for mestizos. The percentage of Afro-Ecuadorians responding affirmatively to the knowledge-of-racism item is very close to that for mestizos and much higher than the percentage of Indians. Although in comparison to mestizos or whites, somewhat lower percentages of Afro-Ecuadorian respondents responded “sí” to the items on discrimination and prejudice, the percentages for this group are much higher than those for Indians. Why is it that indigenous respondents—and we therefore assume indigenous people throughout Ecuador—are much less likely to express knowledge of these attitudes and behaviors, which they have probably been exposed to in various ways throughout their lives?⁸ This is a question that we cannot answer at this time but we speculate on in our conclusion.

We now turn to logistic regression analysis of the three dependent variables to determine whether other predictors are useful in understanding the likelihoods of Ecuadorians knowing the basic concepts of racism, discrimination, and prejudice. Table 3 presents the log-odds coefficient along with its standard error; because it is more easily interpreted, table 3 also presents the antilog of the coefficient ($\text{Exp}(b)$), that is, the odds ratio.

Looking down the columns representing each dependent variable, the large coefficients for the education categories and the rural category become immediately clear. We return to those results later, but it is also important to note the high degree of consistency in estimates of effects across the three dependent variables (i.e., across the columns). For example, the contrast of indigenous responses with mestizo responses shows similar net effects across the three “sabe” variables, the only one of the ethnic contrasts to be statistically significant. The negative coefficient for women is consistent and significant across the dependent variables, which shows that they are less likely to know the terms *racism*, *discrimination*, and *prejudice* than are men, controlling for the other predictors. The positive coefficient for age, statistically significant for the second and third dependent variables, is misleading. At the bivariate level, there is a definite negative association between age of respondent and the log-likelihood of responding yes to all three dependent variables. Once we enter the education variables into the regressions, the coefficient turns around. The negative coefficient for the Coast category is as expected, indicating across the “sabe” variables that those living on the coast are about 80 percent as likely to respond yes as those living in the Sierra or Oriente regions.

The dominant net effects in these models are those of the education contrasts and the rural-urban contrast. The contrast category for edu-

8. One reviewer noted that if the items had included the terms *maltrato* or *abusos*, more indigenous respondents may have answered “yes” to the questions. This is certainly a possibility but one that we cannot address with this data.

Table 3 Logistic Regressions of Knowledge Variables on Full Set of Predictors
($n = 8,682$)

Predictors	<i>Sabe Racismo?</i>		<i>Sabe Discriminación?</i>		<i>Sabe Prejuicio?</i>	
	b (s.e.)	Exp(b)	b (s.e.)	Exp(b)	b (s.e.)	Exp(b)
Ethnic ID						
Indígena	-.591** (.116)	.554	-.587** (.137)	.556	-.734** (.155)	.480
Afro-Ec	.078 (.126)	1.081	-.028 (.134)	.972	.057 (.136)	1.059
Blanco	-.068 (.105)	.934	.001 (.108)	1.001	.011 (.108)	1.011
Women	-.389** (.055)	.678	-.422** (.057)	.656	-.351** (.056)	.704
Age	.003 (.002)	1.003	.009** (.002)	1.009	.018** (.002)	1.018
Education level						
No Educ,	-1.406** (.156)	.245	-1.064** (.191)	.345	-.935** (.192)	.392
High School	1.573** (.060)	4.821	1.671** (.066)	5.317	1.518** (.071)	4.565
College	3.122** (.109)	22.683	3.347** (.092)	28.427	2.930** (.085)	18.731
Rural	-1.001** (.061)	.368	-.907** (.070)	.404	-.889** (.075)	.411
Coast	-.130* (.055)	.878	-.334** (.057)	.716	-.174* (.057)	.840
-2 LL		8715.3		8163.4		8094.5
Model χ^2/df		3314.0/10		3296.3/10		2594.9/10
Pseudo-R ²		.423		.431		.365

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

cation is “primary school,” and the estimated likelihoods for those respondents with no education are much lower—between 25 percent and 40 percent—than those in the contrast category. Even more dramatic are the effects for those with more education, the “high school” and “college” categories show much greater probabilities of responding yes to each of the “sabe” questions. For example, looking down the middle columns for the dependent variable “sabe discriminación,” we see under the heading Exp(b) that the net odds ratio for those who went to high school is 5.3 and

the value for those who went to college is 28.4. These values mean that the odds of responding “sí” versus “no” for those who went to high school are more than five times the odds of responding “sí” versus “no” for those who went only to primary school; further, the odds of “sí” versus “no” for those who went to college are more than twenty-eight times the odds of those who went no further than primary school!⁹ The lower likelihood for rural than for urban residents, though not as dramatic as the education contrasts, is also a powerful predictor. The pseudo-R², which should not be interpreted as variance explained, reflects a powerful model for predicting yes versus no responses on the three variables.

Before discussing results for the regressions of the Awareness of Racism Index, it is important to note two analytic procedures. First, we conducted diagnostic tests for multicollinearity among the predictors and found no evidence of this problem. That is, none of the predictors is strongly associated with another. Second, we created interaction terms for the ethnic ID variable and other predictors, such as sex, age, rural-urban, region, and education. There were no significant interactions for ethnicity and the other predictors, and the addition of these terms did not increase the explanatory power of the models.

Table 4 summarizes regression results for the Awareness Index. We first estimate a model with only the ethnic identification categories as predictors. Here we find that the indigenous group shows a significantly lower mean score on the Awareness Index compared with the mestizo group, the mean for the Afro-Ecuadorian group is just slightly higher than that for mestizos, and there is no difference in the mean scores on this scale for whites and mestizos. Recalling that the mean is approximately 5 on a nine-point scale, a difference of 1.55 between the Indian and mestizo categories is actually quite large. However, the mean differences across ethnic categories account for only 3 percent of variance.

In the second model, we entered the other predictors and found that some have powerful effects on the dependent variable. The net mean difference between Indians and mestizos is reduced substantially to about one-third of the size shown in Model 1 (from -1.55 to $-.54$), whereas the net mean contrast for Afro-Ecuadorians increased once the other predictors were in the model. Female respondents do have a lower mean score on the Awareness Index, but the effect is minimal; in the multivariate context, age has no relation with the scale (it does have a negative correlation with that de-

9. Readers must recall that odds, and even more so odds ratios, can become very large, very quickly. For example, in the bivariate cross-tabulation of the “sabe discriminación” variable with the four education categories, we found that of the 3,859 respondents in the “primary school” category, only 576 (14.9 percent) responded “sí,” whereas among the 1,474 “college” category respondents, 1,262 (85.6 percent) responded in the affirmative. We find the following odds: primary, sí/no = $576/3,283 = .175$; college, sí/no = $1,262/212 = 5.95$. Thus, the odds ratio of college/primary = $5.95/.175 = 34$.

Table 4 OLS Regression of Awareness of Racism Scale on Ethnic ID and Other Predictors, $n = 8,682$

Predictors	Model 1		Model 2	
	b (s.e.)	B	b (s.e.)	B
Ethnic ID				
Indian	-1.55** (.093)	-.176	-.54** (.079)	-.061
White	.07 (.099)	.008	-.01 (.080)	-.001
Afro-Ec	.21* (.123)	.018	.49** (.100)	.042
Female	—	—	-.24** (.040)	-.050
Age	—	—	.00 (.001)	.008
Education				
No Education	—	—	-.97** (.082)	-.109
High School	—	—	1.56** (.050)	.311
College Level	—	—	2.79** (.061)	.451
Rural	—	—	-.94** (.047)	-.188
Coast	—	—	-.35** (.041)	-.076
Intercept		4.93		4.51
R ² for Model		.032		.380

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

pendent variable, but it is wiped out by its covariance with education). The education categories are the best predictors of scores on the Awareness Index. The partial correlation coefficients (or standardized net effects) of .311 for “high school” and .451 for “college level” represent powerful net effects (those contrasts alone explain 30 percent of the variance in the Awareness Index) and result from much higher mean scores on the scale compared to those who went only to primary school. Furthermore, respondents with no formal education (usually older than age fifty) have a mean score significantly less than that of those who went only to primary school.

The rural-urban difference is an important predictor of scores on the Awareness Index, as it was in the logistic regressions, which shows that

rural residents are less aware or less sensitive to issues of racism. Finally, the Coast-Sierra contrast is significant: coastal respondents showed lower scores, although the net effect of the variable was relatively small. Overall, the independent variables used in the analysis are good predictors of the Awareness Index, accounting for almost 40 percent of the variance. This result is very similar to the pseudo- R^2 results reported in table 3 for the logistic regressions. The powerful effect of formal education and, to a lesser extent, of rural versus urban residence on the three dichotomous knowledge variables is replicated for the Awareness Index.

CONCLUSIONS

As we discussed in the first two sections of this article, accumulated scholarly evidence and testimonials from Ecuadorians themselves underscore the claim that racism and racial and ethnic discrimination are alive and well in Ecuador. Beyond their demands for land and territory, the country's indigenous peoples have also insisted that they be respected for their "Indianness," thus forcing all Ecuadorians to be mindful of ethnic differences. Similarly, although thus far in a fragmented manner, Afro-Ecuadorians have created organizations that aim to instill consciousness of racism in the minds of their fellow citizens. It is also clear that Ecuador's white and mestizo populations are quite race conscious and frequently repeat well-worn shibboleths of racial and ethnic stereotyping.

Seeming to fly in the face of that evidence, our analysis of the 2004 countrywide survey revealed that slightly less than half of respondents—and by extension, half of all Ecuadorians—claimed not to know what racism was, slightly less than two-thirds said they did not know what racial discrimination was, and almost 70 percent claimed not to know anything about racial prejudice. Even more surprising were the data that showed that indigenous respondents are least aware of racism, discrimination, and prejudice. In light of the considerable social and political mobilization by indigenous organizations over the past twenty-five years, one would have expected Indians to be acutely aware of racism and prejudice. However, the leaders of Ecuador's indigenous movement have always used the discourse of nationalities, not the discourse of race. That is, indigenous people are certainly aware that non-Indians have treated them poorly and have excluded them from access to jobs, housing, and beauty pageants, but they may perceive the reasons as because of cultural differences, not because they see themselves and non-Indians as different races.

In contrast, Afro-Ecuadorians more often express their subordinate and oppressed place in society in the language of race, not in the language of nationalities. There may be real cultural differences between, say, Afro-Ecuadorians who live in rural areas of the province of Esmeral-

das and those in major cities such as Quito or Guayaquil. But despite any differences, Afro-Ecuadorians are aware that they are treated differently because of what they and others understand as race. Such a possibility may help us understand why most Afro-Ecuadorian respondents, in contrast to less than a fourth of indigenous respondents, said they know what racism is. It is still important to emphasize, however, that whether the respondents self-identified as indigenous, negro, mulato, mestizo, or blanco, a very large percentage express little awareness of racism. We attribute this primarily to the powerful effects of *mestizaje*, an ideology that has held sway for decades in Ecuador. However, further research is required to explore this empirically.

Two other results of our analysis warrant discussion: the positive relationship between formal education and the dependent variables and the relatively high explanatory power of the rural versus urban measure on the same outcome variables. The significant influence of formal education reflects a reality in Ecuador that the topics of race and racial discrimination infrequently become topics of conversation and serious discussion among families, friends, coworkers, and other people in various personal settings. It appears that those Ecuadorians who go to high school and beyond are more often exposed to concepts of racism, discrimination, and prejudice, thus rendering them more sensitive to those concepts. In short, education, regardless of whether one self-identifies as white, mestizo, indigenous, or negro, has a powerful impact on the degree to which one is aware of and sensitive to issues of discrimination and prejudice based on race. Put another way, blancos with little formal education are less likely to be aware of racism and racial discrimination than, for example, Indians who have attended university. This is why, in both the logistic and the OLS regressions, the differences between indigenous and mestizo respondents are reduced by at least half when the education categories are entered into the equation.

The other major predictor of scores on the index is the contrast between rural and urban residents. Even when controlling for education, ethnicity, sex, age, and region, rural residents score considerably lower than do urban residents. Rural residence may be a proxy for relative isolation from other racial groups, thereby limiting one's exposure to instances of discrimination and prejudice based on race or ethnicity. Furthermore, exposure to mass media reporting and discussion of racial and ethnic issues is lower in rural areas. The process by which urban residents become more aware of racism and prejudice warrants more careful specification through further research.

In conclusion, the 2004 national probability sample of more than eight thousand Ecuadorians represents an opportunity to understand better the landscape of racial and ethnic discrimination in Ecuador. Our analysis

can only partially explain the surprisingly low level of awareness of racism, racial discrimination, and racial prejudice across all ethnic groups. The broader historical context of racism and prejudice—whether having a juridical base or simply being ensconced in social patterns through hundreds of years—though a reality in Ecuador, has not produced a deep understanding or awareness of the processes that constitute racist practices, even among those who have been its victims. Although most Ecuadorians believe that blancos are treated better than members of other ethnic groups and that most of their fellow Ecuadorians are racist, there still persists relatively little understanding of the processes and institutional factors that produce differential treatment based on race and ethnicity. These findings for Ecuador may be applicable to other Latin American countries with similar histories and development profiles. However, particular historical factors and contemporary circumstances and context may limit any generalization of our empirical findings beyond Ecuador.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW ITEMS IN THE AWARENESS OF RACISM INDEX

1. ¿Sabe usted qué es racismo? (Do you know what racism is?)
2. ¿Sabe usted qué son actos de discriminación racial? (Do you know what acts of racial discrimination are?)
3. ¿Sabe usted qué es prejuicio racial? (Do you know what racial prejudice is?)
4. ¿Cree usted que los ecuatorianos son racistas? (Do you think that Ecuadorians are racists?)
5. ¿Quiénes cree usted que reciben mejor trato en el país? (Who do you think receives the best treatment in the country?) Listed options were los blancos, los mestizos, los indígenas, los negros, afroecuatorianos o mulatos, no sabe. Item coded 1 if response was “los blancos,” 0 otherwise.
6. ¿Cree usted que el color de la piel influye en el trato a las personas? (Do you believe that skin color influences how a person is treated?)
7. ¿Usted cree que la mayoría de los ecuatorianos tienen prejuicio racial acerca de las personas negras, afroecuatorianas o mulatas? (Do you think that the majority of Ecuadorians are racially prejudiced against blacks, Afro-Ecuadorians, or mulattos?)
8. En el Ecuador existen leyes internacionales y el código penal que prohíben la discriminación racial, acerca de esas leyes usted está ¿bien informado? (coded 1), ¿más o menos informado? (coded 1), ¿no conoce? (coded 0). (In Ecuador, there are international laws as well as a criminal code that prohibits racial discrimination; in regard to those laws, are you well informed, somewhat informed, know nothing about them?)
9. ¿Usted está de acuerdo que el Estado ecuatoriano implemente medidas para combatir la discriminación racial? (Do you agree that the government of Ecuador should implement measures to combat racial discrimination?)

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