

Contested Citizenship: The Dynamics of Racial Identity and Social Movements*

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While scholarly discussions of citizenship, social movements and racial identity-formation have generally remained distinct, these social institutions and processes are intimately connected. Official policies of exclusion from citizenship according to race have drawn boundaries solidifying subordinated racial identity, which then forms the basis for collective action in response to shifting state policies. Forms of domination are thus two-edged; exclusion of officially specified groups has the unintended consequence of defining, legitimating and provoking group identity and mobilization, forging struggles for inclusion between state agents and emerging political actors. This dynamic has generally been overlooked by those theorists of social movements, who have focused on relative deprivation, resource mobilization and responses to political opportunities, without explaining the related process of identity formation.

Defining the “who” of social mobilization must logically and (to some degree) temporally precede the logic by which a group responds to its economic and political situation, with the definitional issues shaping how such situations or opportunities are perceived and acted upon. In Karl Marx’s terms, a group must be conscious of existing “in itself” before it can engage in collective action “for itself”.¹ The “object” of a self-conscious group must be evident before it can act in response to its situation. I believe that the state plays a leading role in so defining a collective object, and in doing so both constrains and facilitates the terms by which deprivation, resources and opportunities are understood, resisted or embraced. Indeed, opportunities for mobilization according to race are defined as such and pursued, depending on whether and how such identity has developed in the first place. Social categories of identity thus shape social outcomes.

To clarify this argument as it applies to race, it is useful first to review recent developments in theoretical work. I will then proceed to examine the actual dynamics in three cases, South Africa, the United

* I am grateful for the comments and suggestions of Charles Tilly, Karen Barkey, Eric Foner, Carlos Hasenbalg, Jennifer Hochschild, Ira Katznelson, Manning Marable, Thomas R. Rochan, Sidney Tarrow and Rupert Taylor, and for the generous support provided by the United States Institute of Peace, the Social Science Research Council, the Tinker Foundation, the Center for Afro-Asian Studies in Rio de Janeiro, and the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation.

¹ Karl Marx, “The Poverty of Philosophy”, in David McLellan (ed.), *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (Oxford, 1977), p. 214. See also E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, 1966).

States and Brazil, with their majority, minority, and roughly equal mix of African descendants, respectively. Combining these three disparate cases will prove particularly useful for comparative purposes, in that any explanation of racial exclusion, identity and mobilization in South Africa and the US must be consistent with the relative lack of such dynamics in Brazil. Finally, albeit briefly, it will be possible to suggest the implications of these dynamics for other forms of identity and social movements.

One of the classic explanations of social movements argues that “relative deprivation” provokes mobilization.² Theorists concerned with race and ethnicity have followed this argument in suggesting that increased economic competition, “split labor markets”, or job replacement by immigrants, provoke protest by displaced blacks.³ On empirical grounds, this argument cannot account for extended periods of heightened relative deprivation which failed to produce mobilization, such as during the first half of this century in the United States and South Africa. As Sidney Tarrow concludes, “outbreaks of collective action cannot be derived from the level of deprivation that people suffer”.⁴ This explanation also ignores the extent to which mobilization, when it does occur, is often more directed at gaining social and political rights than economic advancement *per se*. Even more profoundly, the relative deprivation analysis cannot account for whether, how or when blacks might come to develop an “awareness of their deprived status as a group”.⁵ Deprivation may be experienced and perceived by individuals, who may not see themselves as part of a group so deprived, with or without resources to combat their deprivation. The shift to group solidarity and action remains to be explained.

The resource mobilization approach developed largely in response to the relative deprivation school’s empirical deficiencies, if not its omission of the prior issue of identity. According to the resource mobilization theorists, more or less constant economic deprivation and related grievances do not provoke mobilization in the absence of a critical mass of supporters benefiting from allies and organizational resources.⁶ Critics

² Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, 1970).

³ Pierre L. Van den Berghe, *Race and Racism* (New York, 1967); Edna Bonacich, “A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market”, *American Sociological Review*, 37 (1972), pp. 547–559; Susan Olzak, *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict* (Stanford, 1992).

⁴ Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 81.

⁵ Richard Murray and Arnold Vedlitz, “Race, Socio-economic Status, and Voter Participation in Large Southern Cities”, *Journal of Politics*, 39 (1977), p. 1070.

⁶ John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements”, *American Journal of Sociology*, 82 (May 1977); Aldon Morris and Carol McLurg Mueller (eds), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven, 1992), p. 3. See also Pamela Oliver *et al.*, “A Theory of Critical Mass”, *American Journal of Sociology*, 91 (November 1985), pp. 522–586.

have argued that this approach places undue emphasis on external and elite actors, for instance largely ignoring the “indigenous” resources provided by urban networks, churches, colleges and other associations which were centrally involved in mobilization of the Civil Rights movement in the US.⁷ In addition, the resource mobilization school generally ignored the role of the state as a provider of external resources, and the importance of divisions within the ranks of the ruling elite.⁸ Again, these empirical deficiencies ignore the more fundamental question of whether, why and how group identity emerges to build and take advantage of either external or indigenous resources.⁹ Resources become relevant only if there is a collective actor which perceives them as such and acts upon them.

More recently, theorists of “political opportunity structures” have made a significant contribution in explaining why mobilization occurs during particular historical periods. According to this approach, the state emerges as a central actor, for as the modern state increasingly penetrates society its actions provoke and serve as a target of mobilization.¹⁰ Protest, elite division, economic and international pressures may make the state increasingly responsive or vulnerable to pressure, inviting further mobilization by increasing the likelihood of reform.¹¹ Groups then organize to take advantage of such opportunities, following the schedule of shifts in state policy, and pursuing “repertoires” of collective action designed to take advantage of such political opportunities.¹² But as useful as this approach is for explaining the timing of mobilization as a response to state policy, it still does not directly address the prior question of how a group identity is formed which can perceive or act upon such opportunities. Nor does it address how opportunities are themselves shaped or interpreted according to the emergence of such identities.

⁷ Doug McAdam *et al.*, “Social Movements”, in Neil J. Smelser (ed.), *The Handbook of Sociology* (Newbury Park, 1988), p. 702; Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York, 1984); Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (Chicago, 1982), ch. 2.

⁸ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, p. 88; Michael Hechter, *Principles of Group Solidarity* (Berkeley, 1987), p. 48.

⁹ See Jean Cohen, “Strategy or Identity”, *Social Research*, 52 (Winter 1985), pp. 663–716.

¹⁰ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, pp. 31, 61–62. See also Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 34, 80, 572; Pierre Birnbaum, *States and Collective Action* (Cambridge, 1988).

¹¹ McAdam, *Political Insurgency*; Charles Tilly, “How to Detect, Describe and Explain Repertoires of Contention” (New York: Center for the Study of Social Change, New School, manuscript, October 1992); Dennis Chong, *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chicago, 1991); Sidney Tarrow, “Struggling to Reform”, (Ithaca: Cornell University, Western Societies Program Working Paper, No. 15, 1983).

¹² William Julius Wilson, *Power, Racism and Privilege* (New York, 1973), p. 61; Tilly, “How to Detect”; Doug McAdam, “Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency”, *American Sociological Review*, 48 (December 1983), pp. 735–754.

By the mid-1980s, theorists had finally begun to focus on the question of identity formation. Establishing “who” mobilizes is constitutive of, if not prior to, considering how and when a social movement emerges.¹³ As such, the identity-formation approach well described by Jean Cohen moved beyond a focus on individual economic rationality or resource availability applied to an unspecified group.¹⁴ Further theoretical advances were suggested by Charles Tilly’s discussion of the importance of “cateness and netness”, referring to identifying categories and networks as building blocks of movements.¹⁵ But as much as this approach broke new ground in recognizing the significance of identity formation, it generally abstracted the actual processes which would explain the emergence and boundaries of a particular identity as a social actor. More recent scholarship has addressed this issue, focusing on the role of “frames”, inequality and identities as motivating factors in social mobilization, thereby demonstrating the connection between identity formation and previous discussions of deprivation, resources and opportunities.¹⁶

In order to specify further the process of identity formation, it is useful to pursue earlier insights as to the role of the state. Clearly, states and social movements interact, for most modern movements are aimed at altering state policy and shaped by the opportunities for such reform. In a general sense, “it is impossible to understand the history of the powerless without understanding the history of the powerful”.¹⁷ More precisely, we have already seen that strong states that penetrate civil society tend to provoke equally strong nation-wide mobilization.¹⁸ The “structure of domination” would then somehow seem to shape the structure of resistance.¹⁹ Following Weber, if public policy by the state provides some “transparency of the connections between the causes and consequences” of domination, then it should be possible to so specify this process.²⁰ If indeed the type of movement is “perhaps determined primarily by the type of state to which it was opposed”,²¹ then we

¹³ Cohen, “Strategy or Identity”. See also Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity* (London, 1994).

¹⁴ See Sidney Tarrow, “National Politics and Collective Action”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 14 (1988), pp. 421–440; Russell Hardin, *Collective Action* (Baltimore, 1982); Morris and Mueller, *Frontiers*, p. 57.

¹⁵ Charles Tilly, “Models and Realities of Popular Collective Action”, *Social Research*, 52 (Winter 1985), pp. 717–748; Morris and Mueller, *Frontiers*, p. 308.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 14–16, 137, 156, 169.

¹⁷ Emilia Viotta da Costa, *The Brazilian Empire* (Belmont, 1988), p. xvii.

¹⁸ Birnbaum, *States and Social Movements*; Charles Tilly, “Social Movements and National Politics”, in Charles Bright and Susan Harding (eds), *Statemaking and Social Movements* (Ann Arbor, 1984).

¹⁹ Anthony Oberschall, “Theories of Social Conflict”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 4 (1978), pp. 291–315.

²⁰ H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds), *From Max Weber* (New York, 1978), p. 184.

²¹ Birnbaum, *States and Social Movements*, p. 73.

should be able to explain the process of identity formation as an outcome of state policy, prior to and determining of forms of mobilization. Of course, not all identities or social movements emerge from this dynamic, for instance with “new social movements” distinguished by their greater autonomy from the state. But given that many movements are shaped by and respond to the state, this dynamic deserves further analysis.

States shape civil society, *inter alia*, by establishing boundaries for inclusion or exclusion in the polity, through the process of “social closure”.²² The key mechanism for such “closure” is via the establishment of rules for citizenship, described by T.H. Marshall as selectively providing distinct civil, political and economic rights.²³ By defining and specifying “others” outside of the citizenry, states seek to unify those included in the nation as citizens. In the process, states provide a clear definition of those excluded, with the policies of such exclusion inadvertently serving as a unifying target of mobilization for “inclusion in the polity”.²⁴

Citizenship thus creates the “social construct” of relevant identities, with “oppositional consciousness” forged in reaction to the frame of domination.²⁵ Group exclusion defines subordinate identity and provokes a struggle for inclusion defined by the terms of citizenship, which often results in the further extension of such rights until they become “universal”.²⁶ The historical expansion of “citizenship emerged through a rough dialectic between movements – actual and feared – and the national state”.²⁷ This process of gradual inclusion involves protracted contestation, with contestants defined by exclusion and motivated by their “aspirations for public standing”, or “rewards” gained only by inclusion in the political system.²⁸ Gaining citizenship rights thus serves as a “frame” for mobilization, with exclusion defining and shaping opportunities for collective action aimed at inclusion legitimated as citizenship.²⁹ Building on Hirschman’s classic analysis, groups defined by their formal exclusion must use their “voice” to overcome their enforced and defining “exit” from the polity.³⁰ Citizenship thus appears to be crucial in setting

²² Frank Parkin, *From Max Weber* (London, 1982), p. 100; Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique* (New York, 1979), p. 95; Morris and Mueller, *Frontiers*, p. 111.

²³ T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class* (London, 1992).

²⁴ Judith N. Shklar, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 3; Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, p. 62.

²⁵ Morris and Mueller, *Frontiers*, pp. 78, 363.

²⁶ Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship* (Berkeley, 1964), p. 3; Shklar, *American Citizenship*, p. 15.

²⁷ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, p. 76.

²⁸ Shklar, *American Citizenship*, p. 28; Michael Lipsky, “Protest as a Political Resource”, *American Political Science Review*, 42 (1968), pp. 1144–1158; Calhoun, *Social Theory*, p. 25.

²⁹ Morris and Mueller, *Frontiers*, p. 189.

³⁰ See Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* (Cambridge, 1970).

the boundaries of group identity as a basis for mobilization directed at overcoming exclusion and gaining citizenship, the central aspiration of the populace in the era of the nation-state. Deprivation, resources and opportunities are perceived and acted upon within this context of emerging group identity and solidarity.

If this argument about the potential consequences of state policies of citizenship exclusion is to prove robust, it must not only explain identity formation but also variations in mobilization by groups so defined. There is an established literature describing shifts in “repertoires” of contention as responses to changing forms of domination.³¹ Both heightened repression and reforms can invite mobilization by excluded groups angered or encouraged by shifts of policy, with mobilizing groups seeking to learn from previous experience and to build on earlier successes at moving toward inclusion.³² Thus, social movements are shaped both by the “push” of their own internal development and by the “pull of a common target” defined by exclusion.³³ In this sense, the identity and strategy of movements are linked, both as directly related to state policy.³⁴ Exclusion defines the group and “political opportunities” for overcoming such exclusion, and influences the timing and form of such efforts. And as T.H. Marshall suggested, such efforts are directed at winning civil, political and social rights, often in that order.³⁵

Based on this theoretical discussion, it is now possible to put forward a more informed thesis of racial identity formation and mobilization. States reinforce racial identity among those excluded from citizenship according to official boundaries referring to physical differences of skin color. Such exclusion then provides a unifying target for mobilization aimed at overcoming exclusion and at winning civil, political and economic rights. Reinforced exclusion provokes more militant action or separatism, and reforms invite more moderate forms of mobilization, often for integration. The “who” and the “how” of mobilization are thus established by the focal point of the polity, with the form of domination and exclusion having the unintended consequence of setting the terms for its own opposition. As social movements in the modern nation-state are generally aimed at winning concessions and acceptance from the state, the state defines the dynamic of this process. Explicitly racial domination thus is two-edged, inviting racial identity formation and providing opportunities for mobilization, in turn. States create and

³¹ Bright and Harding, *Statemaking*; Tarrow, *Power in Movements*.

³² Hardin, *Collective Action*, p. 211; Edward N. Muller and Karl-Dieter Opp, “Rational Choice and Rebellious Collective Action”, *American Political Science Review*, 80 (1986), p. 484.

³³ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, p. 61.

³⁴ Arturo Escobar and Sonia Alvarez, *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America* (Boulder, 1992), p. 82.

³⁵ Marshall, *Citizenship*, p. 8.

legitimate racial categories through exclusion, with subsequent state policies providing resources and shaping opportunities for mobilization aimed at overcoming such exclusion so defined. Exclusion defines and unifies “who” are subordinated, and invites pressure for inclusion; identity formation and opportunity structures are thus connected. Ironically, categorical exclusion punishes the excluded in the short term, but provides them with bases for mobilization pressing for redress in the long run; lack of categorical exclusion is beneficial in the short term, but inhibits mobilization in the long run.

Constructing an abstract theory of identity formation and mobilization is one thing; testing such a theory against historical experience is another. But these two approaches must be connected. Accordingly, I will now proceed to examine the three cases of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil, to see whether the dynamics of racial identity and mobilization follow the general pattern thus far described. If so, then the highly elaborated form of racial domination in South Africa should have provoked considerable subordinated racial identity and mobilization, the lack of such official racism in Brazil should have produced less racial identity consolidation and protest, and the United States can be expected to fall between these two cases but, given Jim Crow, closer to the South African pattern. In exploring this comparison, it is useful to acknowledge up front the difficulty of including “identity” in any such analysis, given that specifying individual and group consciousness is always problematic. That social science cannot “read minds” should not preclude consideration of the mental states of identity as relevant to social outcomes. To address this issue, I will necessarily rely on elite pronouncements and evidence of collective action as indicators of identity formation, cognizant of the limits of this approach.

SOUTH AFRICA: MOBILIZATION AGAINST EXCLUSION

South Africa presents the quintessential case of racial identity and mobilization shaped in response to state policies of exclusion. Unification of the South African state was achieved by official discrimination against the indigenous black majority, consolidating racially defined opposition in response and provoking early forms of protest. As long as formal discrimination appeared fluid and open to reform, mobilization was muted and moderate. Reinforced discrimination provoked a more militant, mass-based response. When discrimination was further systematized under apartheid repression, collective action was stymied. With the emergence of divisions within “the ruling bloc”, mobilization reemerged. Throughout this process, the form of protest reflected shifts in state policy; reinforced racial exclusion provoked black separatism, reforms prompted a shift to “non-racialism”, and the state’s initiation of negotiations encouraged opposition compromise. In short, the emergence and

development of black South African identity and collective action is intimately connected with the dynamics of official racial domination.

The first thing to note is that during the nineteenth century, before the emergence of a unitary South African state imposing uniform racial exclusion, “black” racial identity or mobilization remained largely inchoate. British “indirect rule” over the Cape and Natal provoked sometimes violent resistance by local groups responding to localized policies, most notably with the defeat of a British regiment by the Zulus in 1879. Colonial policies of playing “tribal” rulers and factions off against each other, encouraged “tribal” responses, generally pre-dating the emergence of a unified racial consciousness.³⁶ In addition, “coloureds” and “Indians”, as they came to be categorized, remained largely complacent; the Coloureds’ “African Political Organization” and Gandhi’s mobilization of the Indian community developed only after the turn of the century.³⁷ In short, neither identity or collective action by race *per se* developed in the absence of explicitly and fully elaborated, formal domination, despite considerable deprivation, oppression and early discrimination.

Uniform, legal racial domination and resulting protest only emerged with the formation of a unified South African state. In fact, such racial dynamics were encoded in the very founding of that state. As the British High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner, understood as early as 1897, unified “self government [. . .] and colonial loyalty [. . .] (required) the abandonment of the black races”.³⁸ Milner’s expectation proved to be self-fulfilling, with the resolution of the bloody Boer War (1899–1902) between Britain and Afrikaners achieved only on “the Boers’ terms”, excluding the majority from the polity. Milner’s first draft of the 1902 peace treaty included a clause promising extension of the franchise to “the natives”. Boer Generals Smuts and Hertzog crossed out this clause, replacing it with a vague commitment to later discussions of this issue, a formulation to which the British agreed.³⁹ For the British, peace between them and the Afrikaners, allowing for the consolidation of a single state, proved more important than the protection of native rights, which were accordingly abandoned. The Afrikaners had proved themselves a viable threat to the emerging nation-state and had to be appeased with subordination of the black majority, which had historically been more divided and contained. Racial exclusion became the “founding flaw” of the South African state.

With the formal establishment of a unified South African state in 1910, “an avalanche of segregatory (sic) legislation and discriminatory policies [. . .] descended upon blacks”, setting the terms for subsequent

³⁶ See T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History* (Toronto, 1977); Leroy Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley, 1991).

³⁷ Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 15–16.

³⁸ G.H.L. LeMay, *British Supremacy in South Africa, 1899–1907* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 11–12.

³⁹ J.D. Kestell and D.E. van Velden, *The Peace Negotiations* (London, 1912), p. 112.

mobilization.⁴⁰ In 1912 what became the African National Congress (ANC) was formed, with the goal of overcoming “tribal” divisions in order to press for “a uniform Native policy”.⁴¹ The “common destiny” of the African people suffering from political exclusion and segregation was portrayed as the basis for united action in response.⁴² According to the ANC’s founding president, “the white people of this country have formed what is known as the Union of South Africa – a union in which we have no voice [. . .] We have called you therefore to this Conference [. . .] for the purpose of creating national unity and defending our rights and privileges”.⁴³ By 1920, the ANC recognized that “the Union Act of 1910 unites only the white races and that as against the blacks; for the colour bar struck the death-knell of Native confidence in what used to be called British fair play. That cow of Great Britain has gone dry”.⁴⁴ Accordingly, the ANC abandoned its polite petitioning of the British government, shifting its focus to limited domestic lobbying against the racially exclusive form of South African citizenship.

From the 1920s through mid-1940s, the South African state wavered in its application of racial segregation, provoking continued but still limited protest by blacks. General Smuts’ government proposed to relax the color bar in the early 1920s, with this policy reversed by Hertzog after 1924. In response, the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union (ICU) organized strikes and adopted Garveyite rhetoric, with the ICU’s leader proclaiming that “we natives [. . .] are dealing with rascals – the Europeans are rascals”.⁴⁵ Reforms during the 1930s served as a “palliative”, bringing the ANC to “the nadir” of its influence.⁴⁶ By 1936, the growth of a small black middle class bolstered by industrialization but still excluded from the polity, inspired calls for “common citizenship”.⁴⁷ Perhaps most significantly, after 1933 and culminating ten years later, the South African government abandoned its commitment to specified rights for “coloureds”, provoking leaders of that community “to seek closer cooperation with Africans”.⁴⁸ Consolidation of formal racial

⁴⁰ Gavin Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall* (Cape Town, 1987), p. 64. See also Adam Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth Century South Africa* (Oxford, 1990).

⁴¹ Pixley ka Isaka Seme, “Native Union”, in Thomas Karis and Gwendolen Carter (eds), *From Protest to Challenge*, vol. 1 (Stanford, 1972), p. 72.

⁴² Seme, “The Regeneration of Africa”, in *ibid.*, p. 71.

⁴³ Walshe, *Rise of African Nationalism*, p. 34.

⁴⁴ J.D.T. Jabavu, “Native Unrest”, in Karis and Carter, *Protest to Challenge*, p. 120.

⁴⁵ Tom Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945* (Johannesburg, 1983), p. 9; Walshe, *Rise of African Nationalism*, p. 90; Karis and Carter, *Protest to Challenge*, p. 301.

⁴⁶ Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven, 1991), p. 181; Lodge, *Black Politics*, p. 9.

⁴⁷ Karis and Carter, *Protest to Challenge*, vol. 2, pp. 79, 8.

⁴⁸ Lewis, *Between the Wire*, pp. 177–211; Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (eds), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa* (London, 1987), pp. 165–166; Karis and Carter, *Protest to Challenge*, vol. 2, p. 91.

discrimination pushed Coloureds and Africans toward a common identity and mobilization on the basis of their common exclusion from citizenship.

With the National Party victory in 1948 and the reinforcement of segregation as apartheid, the terms for heightened protest were clearly set. The ANC was revitalized by its Youth League, committed to "Africanism" and to encouraging "national consciousness and unity" opposed to white racial domination.⁴⁹ Massive defiance followed the formalization of apartheid, bringing together Africans, Coloureds and Indians as common victims of racially defined exclusion, who interpreted this explicit exclusion as an opportunity for advocating its reversal. The distinctions between these groups did not disappear, but a common platform emerged in the Freedom Charter of 1955, adopted by the ANC. Four years later the even more militant Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) was founded, with further protest culminating in the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. Recognizing that its exclusionary policies had reinforced opposition, the South African state moved quickly to ban the ANC and PAC, ushering in a decade of relative quiescence imposed by repression.

The 1970s and 1980s saw a resurgence of opposition, united by apartheid and bolstered by resources and opportunities presented thereby, as I have described elsewhere.⁵⁰ By the late 1960s and early 1970s, demand for more skilled labor brought black students together in segregated schools and universities, including those located in the newly formed separate black homelands. Led by Steve Biko, many of these students came together in the Black Consciousness movement, significantly unifying Africans, Coloureds and Indians all as "black" victims of heightened racial discrimination. Apartheid had forged a unified racial identity among the excluded, expressed in the 1976 Soweto uprising. Faced with such massive unrest, the South African state began to reform, legalizing trade unions and by 1983 proposing a new constitution offering limited citizenship rights to Coloureds and Indians. The United Democratic Front, implicitly aligned with the formally exiled ANC, took advantage of the opportunity of this reopening of the issue of citizenship, calling for massive protests against the continued exclusion of the African majority. Official efforts to sideline Africans into citizenship of the homelands were rejected; according to one squatter, "the government is telling us we are not South Africans, but we were born here".⁵¹ When the state clamped down on the UDF with a State of Emergency in the mid 1980s the trade union movements kept up the momentum of pressure, contributing to the initiation of negotiations in 1990.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 310, 300.

⁵⁰ Anthony W. Marx, *Lessons of Struggle* (New York, 1992).

⁵¹ Interview at Tekoza Squatter Camp, April 1988.

What emerges from this summary is the degree to which black racial identity was forged in response to official state discrimination. State policies unintentionally provided resources and opportunities for mobilization around emergent black identity. Segregation and apartheid forced together its victims, whose direct experiences informed their common identity as blacks and provoked protest. While full-scale repression curtailed mobilization, as during the 1960s, both reinforced and relaxed oppression provoked increasingly massive protest, in a curvilinear process. Heightened segregation encouraged black separatism, and reforms encouraged “non-racial” efforts at integration. Throughout, official exclusion and segregation provided the crucial ingredient of a common identity, complemented by the resources provided by increased industrialization and urbanization, and the opportunities provided by anger at repression and space opened by reform. All in all, racial identity and mobilization were closely tied to the dynamics of state policy.

This argument is further validated by recent developments. As the South African state in 1990 began to shift away from formal racial exclusion and segregation, toward “non-racial” democracy, racial identity and mobilization has lost some of its salience. In its place, political entrepreneurs have increasingly relied on “ethnic” identities as the basis of mobilization, as indicated by Zulu nationalism and “coloured” fears of African domination under the ANC. As the glue of official racial domination has dissolved, so has the salience of racial identity and mobilization begun to fade, with reconfigured “earlier” forms of identity reemerging. Earlier state policies, for instance to divide blacks by reinforcing ethnic distinctions, ensured that such divisions would remain “available” for manipulation by political entrepreneurs once unifying racial domination was officially abandoned.

What is also notable from this summary is the primacy of political over economic issues. As long as black South Africans were excluded from the polity and economically disadvantaged as such, it was the former that was more often the target of mobilization. The mainstream opposition, headed by the ANC, explicitly focused on achieving “national democratic liberation”, purposefully postponing demands for economic redistribution until a “second stage of struggle”. Achieving civil and political rights, as an aspect of nation-building, was seen as prior to addressing social or economic redress.⁵² The obvious exception to this priority has been the trade union movement, but even the unions have often subordinated broader economic demands while pursuing the interests of their membership. Given the divergent interests of white workers supporting racial exclusion, economic mobilization by a unified working class was simply not a viable option. The quest for civil and

⁵² See Sam C. Nolutshungu, “Reflections on National Unity in South Africa”, *Third World Quarterly*, 13 (1993), pp. 607–625.

political forms of citizenship for blacks has taken precedence over related social demands, consistent with the South African state's official focus on political exclusion and with T.H. Marshall's general argument.

In sum, political exclusion and segregation according to race shaped a collective black South African identity accordingly, provoking mobilization in response to available resources and opportunities. Identity formation occurred in response to state policy, logically and temporally prior to the dynamics of social mobilization described by theorists of deprivation, resource mobilization and political opportunity. Indeed, these dynamics of collective action were determined by the process of identity formation; exclusion solidified subordinate identity and implicitly created the opportunity for mobilization demanding inclusion.

UNITED STATES: THE QUEST FOR CITIZENSHIP

The issue of whether and how to include blacks in the American polity, and African-American struggles for full citizenship, are as old as the republic.⁵³ Pre-Civil War compromises over the maintenance and extension of slavery were central to the process of state-building, with revolts and abolitionism focused on slavery rather than racial discrimination *per se*. Explicitly racial identity remained quotidian, and as long as this remained the case, mobilization according to race was constrained. To the extent that post-abolition race relations were considered at all before the Civil War, the prevailing trend among whites and many blacks was for recolonization back to Africa. During the nineteenth century, more than 13,000 former slaves were "repatriated", with federal financial support.⁵⁴ Abraham Lincoln and black activists such as Martin Delaney supported the colonization efforts. Delaney himself reversed his position, loyally supporting the North's efforts at abolition by joining the Union army during the Civil War, and then again advocating a return to Africa once Reconstruction was abandoned.⁵⁵

Delaney's own shifting position reflects a general trend among the black elite of moderate patriotism during periods of reform and separatism in response to official betrayal. While Frederick Douglass never supported colonization, he also shifted between support for the Union, pessimism after Reconstruction, and then acceptance of a federal posting in Haiti.⁵⁶ Like many others, Douglass believed that effectively "slavery

⁵³ See Shklar, *American Citizenship*.

⁵⁴ Edwin S. Redkey, *Black Exodus* (New Haven, 1969), p. 18.

⁵⁵ Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925* (New York, 1978), p. 53.

⁵⁶ Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (London, 1970), p. 274; Charles V. Hamilton, "The Welfare of Black Americans", *Political Science Quarterly*, 101 (1986); John T. McCartney, *Black Power Ideologies* (Philadelphia, 1992), p. 40.

is not abolished until the black man has the ballot", and that militant assertion toward that end would only come with gradually increased socio-economic status.⁵⁷ Booker T. Washington accordingly abandoned political assertiveness in favor of separate economic advancement, encouraged by his influence over federal patronage for Southern blacks.⁵⁸ While W.E.B. Du Bois in the North advocated greater political agitation, he remained ambivalently drawn between loyalty for America and for his race, tortured by "his double self".⁵⁹ The unresolved place of blacks in the post-Civil War era, when Jim Crow segregation was beginning to be applied, left African-American intellectuals struggling with this dilemma, seeking to reinforce racial identity as a basis for mobilization once resources and opportunities emerged.

Jim Crow was a local boy, unevenly enforced by states with the grudging complicity of federal authority more concerned with healing the wounds of the Civil War and Reconstruction than with enforcing justice. As a result, the target against which nation-wide racial identity could be formed remained less fixed than in South Africa, where segregation was imposed on the majority from the center, albeit for similar purposes of white reconciliation and unity. And where Jim Crow was firmly established with repressive force, mobilization was muted, as it was during periods of extreme repression in South Africa. Civil and political rights remained elusive, as did social advancement. Black racial identity remained caught in Du Bois' "dual striving", provoked by local official exclusion and segregation, but dampened by loyalty and belief in the "the American creed" of equality promised more than delivered.⁶⁰ America's ambivalence in regard to race provided a still uncertain foundation on which to build a unified black identity or movement.

Full citizenship would only come from federal reforms and mobilization united by common identity and dependent on resources, all of which were in short supply until the mid-twentieth century. The most notable earlier attempt to forge such mass identity and mobilization was led by Marcus Garvey, who combined Washington's focus on economic advancement with calls for colonization "back to Africa", and for "racial unity".⁶¹ Not surprisingly, Garvey's support was based in the North, where blacks had more resources and were less subject to repression,

⁵⁷ Shklar, *American Citizenship*, p. 52; W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Souls of Black Folk", in *Three Negro Classics* (New York, 1965), p. 245; Gary T. Marx, *Protest and Prejudice* (New York, 1969), p. 49.

⁵⁸ Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order* (New York, 1986), p. 63.

⁵⁹ Du Bois, "Souls of Black Folks", p. 215.

⁶⁰ Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York, 1944).

⁶¹ Raymond L. Hall (ed.), *Black Separatism and Social Reality* (New York, 1977), p. 5; John H. Bracey, Jr. et al., *Black Nationalism in America* (Indianapolis, 1970), p. 154; David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross* (New York, 1988), p. 428.

but Garvey remained controversial and his movement foundered after he was imprisoned by federal authorities.⁶²

After Garvey and until the 1950s, the absence of opportunities and resources was reflected in the relative lack of mass mobilization. The Urban League did manage to assist blacks migrating to the North, with federal and corporate support.⁶³ The inter-racially led NAACP gained a mass following only in the years of economic growth during World War II.⁶⁴ Believing that “the government was always the key”, and that before 1960 only the judicial branch was “operating” in regard to civil rights, the NAACP focused on obtaining judicial relief.⁶⁵ As such, the NAACP was dependent on official sympathy or white allies, and remained skeptical of disruptive mass protest. The relative absence of such protest during the first half of this century reflected not only incomplete identity formation, but also the small size of the black middle class and incomplete consolidation of urbanized black concentrations.

The greatest test of any theory of social movements applied to African-Americans is to account for the dramatic rise of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. Theorists of relative deprivation have argued that heightened inequality produced the movement,⁶⁶ but such arguments fail to account for why pervasive deprivation provoked mobilization only in the 1950s, and initially in the South. Resource mobilization theorists have generally focused on the rise of white elite allies supporting the rise of the civil rights movement, but they cannot account for why such support developed. In addition, recent studies have shown that the most active civil rights organizations initially received relatively little outside support, and that such support generally followed rather than preceded activism.⁶⁷ Aldon Morris has corrected the resource mobilization approach by demonstrating the greater importance of “indigenous” resources, including the networks of previously conservative black churches and organizations such as the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality.⁶⁸

⁶² Charles V. Hamilton, *The Black Experience in American Politics* (New York, 1973), pp. 45–53.

⁶³ Talcott Parsons and Kenneth B. Clark (eds), *The Negro American* (Boston, 1965), pp. 599–602; Nancy Weiss, *Whitney Young Jr. and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Princeton, 1989).

⁶⁴ Parsons and Clark, *Negro American*, p. 599; Manning Marable, *Race, Reform and Rebellion* (Jackson, 1991), p. 15.

⁶⁵ Interview with Gloster Current, March 1993; Harris Wofford, Jr., *Of Kennedys and Kings* (New York, 1980), p. 103.

⁶⁶ See, for instance, Thomas F. Pettigrew, *Racially Separate or Together?* (New York, 1971).

⁶⁷ J. Craig Jenkins and Craig M. Eckert, “Channeling Black Insurgency”, *American Sociological Review*, 51 (December 1986), pp. 812–829; Doug McAdam, *Political Process*.

⁶⁸ Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York, 1984); Morris and Mueller, *Frontiers*, p. 313; Aldon Morris and Cedric Herring, “Theory and Research

Consistent with this argument, the emergence of the movement coincided with the rising size, urbanization and expectations of the black middle class as crucial movement actors with resources at their disposal.⁶⁹ It was this group which played a central role in consolidating a collective black identity and group consciousness. The black middle class, particularly in the South, experienced formal racial segregation which precluded them from advancing beyond their imposed category. In response, this black elite saw their fate as tied to blacks as a whole, and recognized the need for collective action. By the 1950s, this elite finally had the resources needed to act more effectively. All that was missing was federal intervention which would provide a nationally unifying spark for collective action, giving impetus to emergent collective identity. Initially among the black middle class, a consolidated black identity emerged to take advantage of opportunities when they arose.

The timing of the emergence of the civil rights movement has been best explained by the opening of “political opportunities” in the form of federal responsiveness.⁷⁰ No less an authority than Martin Luther King, Jr. cited the importance of governmental concessions in explaining the rise and moderate form of the movement.⁷¹ Building on earlier decisions, the strongest “spark” for the movement came from the Supreme Court’s “Brown vs. Board of Education” decision in support of school desegregation, which had the effect of encouraging “moderate” leadership.⁷² “For the first time since Reconstruction they felt the federal government was actually on their side.”⁷³ Further evidence of federal support was provided by the reluctant decision of President Eisenhower to send the army to support desegregation in Little Rock in 1957, “the first such commitment of federal troops since Reconstruction”.⁷⁴ John F. Kennedy’s election with decisive black support made black leaders even “more hopeful”, despite Kennedy’s failure to fulfill his civil rights campaign promises immediately.⁷⁵ By 1963, Kennedy had begun to shift away from his reluctance to interfere in “state’s rights”, declaring that

in *Social Movements: A Critical Review*”, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2 (1987), pp. 137–195.

⁶⁹ Bart Landry, *The New Black Middle Class* (Berkeley, 1987); Hall, *Black Separatism and Social Reality*, p. 72; Pettigrew, *Racially Separate*, p. 149; William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race* (Chicago, 1978), pp. 21, 135; Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power* (New York, 1967), p. 50.

⁷⁰ McAdam, *Black Insurgency*; Chong, *Collective Action*.

⁷¹ Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, pp. 488–495.

⁷² Lewis M. Killian, *The Impossible Revolution?* (New York, 1968), p. 49; Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 15.

⁷³ Virginia Foster Durr, *Outside the Magic Circle* (Tuscaloosa, 1990), p. 274.

⁷⁴ Robert H. Brisbane, *Black Activism* (Valley Forge, 1974), p. 31; Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer* (New York, 1988), p. 30.

⁷⁵ Interview with Congressman John Lewis, 5 May 1993.

“the time has come for this nation to fulfill its promise” to blacks.⁷⁶ By then, a consolidated black identity was in place to take advantage of this opening; such solidarity was a vital part of the process of mobilization consistent with the political opportunity thesis, though largely ignored by it.

The causes of the federal government’s increased responsiveness were multiple. The trend toward federal intervention to redress social inequality had begun with the New Deal.⁷⁷ “Fighting against racism over yonder” during World War II had increased concern about racism at home, among whites and especially black veterans who had been “given a chance to compete” but returned home to segregation.⁷⁸ In the aftermath of the war, the United States had emerged as a superpower, determined to defeat Communism and win over allies to the West. Once the paranoia of the McCarthyite period subsided, the federal government became increasingly concerned with the difficulties posed by domestic segregation for winning over African allies. This concern was reflected in the “Brown” decision, and is evident in the quick publicity of that decision in international propaganda over the Voice of America.⁷⁹ By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the federal government had both the capacity and interest to exert its authority in pushing for civil rights reforms in what Kennedy termed the “second Reconstruction”. Early mobilization emerged in the South, where official segregation helped to unify a collective black identity and where protests were aimed at provoking intervention by receptive federal authorities. A more direct or provocative expression of increased “political opportunity” is difficult to imagine.

The emergence of black identity, based on the experiences of official discrimination, segregation and urbanization, provided a collective actor ready to push for and take advantage of emerging opportunities. Indeed, such solidarity helped to create the opportunity for action and certainly made for a collectivity to take up those opportunities. For instance, pressure from increased black voting in the North among recent migrants from the South pushed the central government toward civil rights intervention.⁸⁰ But partisan concern about the black vote only emerged once black identity had developed to the point of solidifying an active voting

⁷⁶ Burke Marshall, *Federalism and Civil Rights* (New York, 1964); Clayborne Carson *et al.* (eds), *The Eyes on the Prize* (New York, 1991), p. 161.

⁷⁷ Parsons and Clark, *American Negro*, p. xiii.

⁷⁸ Interview with James Farmer, 6 May 1993; Interview with Congressman Charles Rangel, 8 April 1993; James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (New York, 1972), p. 93.

⁷⁹ Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice* (New York, 1977), p. 708.

⁸⁰ Hamilton, *Black Experience*, p. 225; John Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 8.

block concerned with both domestic and international issues. And in the South concern about the black vote would emerge only after civil rights reforms provided for the franchise. But with the opening of reforms, the black collectivity was primed to push further, much beyond what the federal authorities had intended. The emergence of racial identity, based on the experience of segregation, in effect pushed upon the opportunity for collective action, bringing further reforms which reinforced racial identity, in an escalating cycle.

Both the shift of federal policy and the consolidation of nation-wide black identity were influenced by the spread of the mass media. For example, "when the fire hoses were brought down to a church and put on T.V., even middle class whites were incensed".⁸¹ According to activist Willie Ricks, "television urbanized the rural folks" and brought them into the movement despite their lack of organizational resources.⁸² But the effect was even more pervasive, contributing to the emergence of mobilization also in the North, where (the former) Stokely Carmichael notes that "people [. . .] saw us being beaten up, building up their own sense of frustration".⁸³ According to Burke Marshall, the senior civil rights official in Kennedy's Justice Department, "television and communications technology educated the rest of the country to what was an intolerable situation, and that is an important part of what makes the political system run".⁸⁴ In other words, black mobilization provoked in the South by local discrimination and encouraged by federal responsiveness, then created images spread by the media which pushed the federal government toward further reforms, inspired wider black solidarity, and helped to provoke later mobilization in the North.

Northern militancy and riots in the 1960s have been described as a signal of the decline of the civil rights movement, but they are better understood as a different form of mobilization provoked by the closing of political opportunities. The Northern riots and Black Power movement of the mid to late 1960s were aimed, in part, at forcing further federal intervention during a period of decreasing governmental responsiveness. Success in winning legislative reforms which failed to change harsh conditions on the ground in the North sparked riots, as symbolized by the Watts riots exploding days after the passage of the Voting Rights Act. Rioters and militant activists were inspired by the Southern movement, reinforcing national solidarity; "the riots came out of what we saw happening in the South. Spirits were stirred. There was a contagion".⁸⁵ Northern blacks were also angered by the retreat from the exaggerated

⁸¹ Interview with Wayne Greenhaw, 26 April 1993.

⁸² Interview with Willie Ricks, 28 April 1993.

⁸³ Interview with Kwame Ture (aka Stokely Carmichael), 19 March 1993.

⁸⁴ Interview with Burke Marshall, 23 March 1994.

⁸⁵ Interview with Roger Wilkins, 5 May 1993. See also Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, p. 5.

promises of the Great Society programs depleted by the rising costs of the Vietnam War.⁸⁶ Northern blacks in particular watched in dismay as federal responsiveness to civil rights was replaced by concern for “law and order”.⁸⁷ Richard Nixon’s “Southern strategy”, consistent with his policy of “benign neglect” toward black concerns, symbolized the rightward shift. Again, mobilization followed a shift of federal policy, this time in the opposite direction from that which had encouraged the more integrationist civil rights movement.

Analysis of African-American mobilization since the 1950s would clearly be incomplete without consideration of identity formation. Certainly the common experience of segregation after the Civil War had gradually reinforced black solidarity, much as early segregation had encouraged solidarity among black South Africans. At the same time, the localized nature of Jim Crow had reinforced regional distinctions among blacks, with Northerners having different experiences and forming distinct early movements. With the post-war black migration North, this regional divide started to diminish. But it was the rise of central authority responsiveness and televised activism on civil rights which finally consolidated a common national black identity, provoking Northern mobilization linked to Southern activism.⁸⁸ According to one former activist, “it was the Southern experience which enraged us [. . .] I saw kids on T.V. who looked like me. I identified with them as heroes. [. . .] People were coming up from the South and telling their stories [. . .] By 1964 segregation had fallen. Then we could see the system; we saw it was not just about Southern segregation, but really more national”.⁸⁹

Rising nation-wide culture, spread by the media, came together with the shift of federal policy from non-interference in Jim Crow to purposeful intervention on behalf of civil rights. Only once the central authority had the capacity to so exert itself did such intervention reinforce a truly nation-wide black identity poised to seize opportunities for further reforms. The central US state could not and did not exert a uniform racial policy of reform until the middle of this century, no doubt in part because the black minority was perceived to be a less pressing concern than was unifying regional divisions and gaining electoral support from the white majority. Consolidated black identity formation and mass mobilization emerged fully only once the central state had the capacity to act more forcefully to reform, much as a comparable degree of racial

⁸⁶ William Brink and Louis Harris, *Black and White* (New York, 1966), p. 65; Wofford, *Kennedys and Kings*, pp. 319–324; Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding* (New York, 1969), pp. 5, 155.

⁸⁷ James W. Button, *Black Violence* (Princeton, 1978), p. 135; Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, p. 113; Calhoun, *Social Theory*, p. 232.

⁸⁸ See Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, pp. 46–59. See also Morris and Mueller, *Frontiers*, p. 167.

⁸⁹ Interview with Barbara Omalade, 10 March 1993.

identity and mobilization emerged in South Africa with the consolidation of repressive apartheid in 1948.

Whereas South African mass mobilization was provoked by heightened repression under apartheid, civil rights activism in the US emerged in response to reforms, with a more militant response emerging in reaction to the reversal of such reforms and urban inequality. By the mid 1960s, most African-Americans had been united in the view that “black people have not suffered as individuals but as members of a group; therefore their liberation lies in group action”.⁹⁰ Such group solidarity was expressed in Black Nationalism, cultural forms, and in continuing racial mobilization in local and national elections, with group solidarity as a necessary precondition to blacks perceiving and acting upon opportunities.⁹¹ Throughout these developments, mobilization in response to shifting state policy reinforced a nation-wide identity among blacks united by their exclusion from full citizenship. Central state action in regard to racial exclusion and segregation reinforced black identity formation and then mobilization in response to opportunities, with unforeseen consequences. Once such pervasive racial identity had been clearly consolidated, it emerged as a mainstay of American politics, remaining salient even after formal exclusion and segregation had ended.

BRAZILIAN “EXCEPTIONALISM”

South Africa and the United States provide examples of how a state-enforced ideology of racial domination has the unintended consequence of consolidating oppositional identity according to race. Mobilization was then provoked by shifts of state policy, with mass protest in South Africa sparked by heightened repression, and in the United States by reform. The implication is that racial identity and varying mobilization are responses to shifting state capacity and policy, more than they are effects of relative deprivation or resource availability, which become relevant only once they are perceived by a self-conscious group. Exclusive citizenship sets the boundaries which reinforce group solidarity among the excluded, who then use the opportunities of shifting public space to demand inclusion in that space as equal citizens.

If the analysis presented thus far is to prove robust, it must also explain an instance of a relative lack of racial identity and mobilization. Brazil provides such a negative test. Since slavery, the Brazilian state has projected and enforced an inclusive form of citizenship purportedly embracing Brazilians of all color and class. Instead of racial domination, Brazil has projected an image of “racial democracy” purposefully aimed

⁹⁰ Carmichael and Hamilton, *Black Power*, p. 54.

⁹¹ William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon* (Chicago, 1992); Leonard A. Cole, *Blacks in Power* (Princeton, 1976).

at unifying popular support. This inclusiveness provided a political veneer of equality overlaying vast inequalities between rich “whites” and poorer Afro-Brazilians. The relative lack of racial mobilization in Brazil suggests that such inequality alone is not sufficient to provoke mobilization in the absence of the target of an explicit, official racial ideology. In contrast to Brazil, official racial domination elsewhere has reinforced racial identity among a group able then to take advantage of opportunities and resources for protest, so defined.

The historical developments which led to Brazil’s lack of explicit racial order can only be briefly summarized here. Portuguese colonialism imposed on Brazil a more unified central authority than was the case in South Africa or the United States. Emerging nationalism and tensions within Brazil were further muted by the arrival in 1808 of the Portuguese court, forced to flee from Napoleon. The relatively low level of economic development provided little impetus for conflicts that might otherwise have undermined state consolidation and capacity. “Clientalist” and “patrimonial” rule was preserved, and effectively never seriously challenged.⁹² A “pre-fabricated” central state was in place when the winds of modernity hit. As a result, “Brazil is famous for its ‘white,’ or peaceful revolutions”, finessing its transitions from empire to republic, and from slavery to abolition, in 1888–1889.⁹³ With no cataclysmic ethnic or regional conflict, civil war or reconstruction comparable to that of the United States or South Africa, there was no need for the sort of reconciliation elsewhere achieved through an explicit ideology of racial domination.⁹⁴ In place of a nationalism unifying whites as dominant over a common black “enemy”, the Brazilian state eschewed legal discrimination and encouraged nationalism which unified all Brazilians of any color (and including native “Indians”). Potential racial conflict was submerged under the myth of “racial democracy” and images of an inclusive nation and corporatist state.⁹⁵ The relative lack of ethnic or regional conflict made possible an apparently more “tolerant” racial order.

We must be careful not to slip into taking Brazil’s “racial democracy” at face value, for racial inequalities have remained evident in Brazil. During and immediately after abolition, Brazil encouraged European and blocked African immigration, as part of a general project of trying to “whiten” the population.⁹⁶ Afro-Brazilians continued to fill subordinate

⁹² See Riordan Roett, *Brazil: Politics in a Patrimonial Society* (New York, 1984).

⁹³ Gilberto Freyre, *Brazil: An Interpretation* (New York, 1945), p. 120.

⁹⁴ See, for example, Donald Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil* (Chicago, 1942), p. 335.

⁹⁵ See, *inter alia*, Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (New York, 1974); Pierre-Michel Fontaine (ed.), *Race, Class and Power in Brazil* (Los Angeles, 1985).

⁹⁶ Robert Brent Toplin (ed.), *Slavery and Race Relations in Latin America* (Westport, 1974), p. 255; Magnus Morner (ed.), *Race and Class in Latin America* (New York, 1970),

economic roles, reinforcing significant inequalities.⁹⁷ By the mid 1970s, more than half of non-white workers received the minimum wage or less, as compared to less than a quarter of white workers.⁹⁸ While it is an exaggeration to conclude that as a result of such inequality, "Brazil has no black middle class", it is fair to note that this black middle class remains small, not bound by legal discrimination to fellow Afro-Brazilians, and resistant to identifying itself with poor blacks.⁹⁹ As a result, the small black Brazilian elite did not play a role comparable to the African-American or black South African middle class in helping to forge a collective racial identity.

Though social and economic inequality remains evident, the lack of official racial discrimination was more consequential in muting the prospects for racial identity formation or mass protest. Inequality and informal discrimination were not sufficient to provoke such responses on a large scale. According to leading black activists, Afro-Brazilians face "no legal limits, only practical limits", encouraging blacks to seek advancement through incorporation rather than by racial assertion and collective action.¹⁰⁰ "Racism is camouflaged by the myth of racial democracy. [Most people believe our problems are because] we are poor, not because we are black".¹⁰¹ The myth of racial democracy "has the power of confusing the Afro-Brazilian people, doping them, numbing them inside or barring almost definitively any possibility of their self-affirmation, integrity or identity".¹⁰² The result has been a dramatically low level of racial identity consolidation or mass protest according to race, despite inequality, despite a rich history of slave revolts, and despite the exclusion from voting until 1988 by many blacks barred as illiterate. As such exclusion from full citizenship was not explicitly based on race, it provided no identifying category or target for racial mobilization. Nor did efforts at such mobilization garner resources from white allies; "since whites say there is no racism, they give no support to black movements", helping to account for why no black movement organization has lasted even ten years.¹⁰³ As a result,

p. 127; John Hope Franklin (ed.), *Color and Race* (Boston, 1968), p. 284; Abdias do Nascimento, *Brazil: Mixture or Massacre?* (Dover, 1979), p. 75; Skidmore, *Black into White*.

⁹⁷ See, for example, Carlos Hasenbalg, "Desigualdades Raciais no Brasil", *Dados*, XIV (1977), pp. 7-33; Charles Wagley (ed.), *Race and Class in Rural Brazil* (Paris, 1952); Charles H. Wood and Jose A.M. de Carvalho, *The Demography of Inequality in Brazil* (Cambridge, 1988), ch. 6.

⁹⁸ Carlos Hasenbalg, "Race and Socio-economic Inequality in Brazil" (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Universitario de Pesquisa do Rio de Janeiro, March 1983), p. 10.

⁹⁹ Interview with Joa Jorge Santos Rodrigues, 15 June 1993; Florestan Fernandes, *The Negro in Brazilian Society* (New York, 1969), p. 266.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Jao Jorge Santos Rodrigues, 15 June 1993.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Benedita da Silva, 20 July 1993.

¹⁰² do Nascimento, *Brazil*, p. 2.

¹⁰³ Interview with Januario Garcia, 21 July 1993; Franklin W. Knight, *The African Dimension of Latin American Societies* (New York, 1974), p. 90.

those movements that did emerge remained “limited, not mass movements, and as such they did not touch the consciousness of elites”.¹⁰⁴ Even the most sympathetic of analysts have had to conclude that Afro-Brazilian mobilization has remained “quotidian”.¹⁰⁵

While the inescapable overall conclusion is that Brazil’s lack of explicit racial domination has discouraged racial identity-formation and provoked relatively little protest, the limited mobilization which did emerge has followed the patterns suggested above. Only in moments of crisis or transition in the form of state rule, has black protest emerged. Shifts of state policy have provoked what little mobilization did develop, with reforms encouraging a more moderate response and repression provoking greater militancy. For instance, the corporatist regime of Getulio Vargas, begun in the 1930s, initially encouraged black mobilization by “creating a climate of a general opening”, including support for expressions of African culture.¹⁰⁶ Established in 1931, the Frente Negra sought to take advantage of this opening, though it remained relatively small, elitist and distinctly loyal to the regime and to the myth of racial democracy right up until it was banned by Vargas in 1937.¹⁰⁷ The post-1964 military regime enacted a volatile mix of explicitly banning any discussion of race and then opening up the space for mobilization in a lengthy *abertura*.¹⁰⁸ In response, the Movimento Negro Unificado (MNU) emerged in 1978 “when the traditional system was being challenged with a new momentum, as a part of a general contestation”.¹⁰⁹ The MNU was relatively militant, challenging the regime to live up to the image of “racial democracy”, and organizing local *centros du luto*, but the Movimento also remained small, elitist and factionalized.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Carlos Alberto Medeiros, 14 July 1993.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power* (Princeton, 1994).

¹⁰⁶ Robert M. Levine, *The Vargas Regime* (New York, 1970); interview with Abdias do Nascimento, 28 July 1993; Allison Raphael, “Samba and Social Control” (Ph.D., Columbia University, 1980).

¹⁰⁷ George Ried Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo Brazil, 1888–1988* (Madison, 1991), pp. 148–157; Clovis Moura, *Historia do Negro Brasileiro* (São Paulo, 1989), pp. 71–72; Lelia Gonzalez and Carlos Hasenbalg, *Lugar de Negro* (Rio de Janeiro, 1982), p. 22; Celia Maria Marinho de Azevedo, “Sinal Fechado Para os Negros na Rua da Liberdade”, *Humanidades*, 5 (1988), p. 12.

¹⁰⁸ do Nascimento, *Brazil*, p. xi; Peggy Ann Lovell, “Racial Inequality and the Brazilian Labor Market” (Ph.D., University of Florida, 1989), p. 13; James H. Kennedy, “Political Liberalization, Black Consciousness and Recent Afro-Brazilian Literature”, *Phylon*, XL (1986), pp. 199–209; Alfred Stepan (ed.), *Democratizing Brazil* (New York, 1989).

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Carlos Alberto Medeiros, 14 July 1993.

¹¹⁰ Movimento Negro Unificado, *1978–1988: 10 Anos de Luta Contra o Racismo*, 1988; Clovis Moura, *Brasil: Raizes do Protesto Negro* (São Paulo, 1983), p. 73; Pierre-Michel Fontaine, “Transnational Relations and Racial Mobilization”, in John F. Stack, Jr. (ed.), *Ethnic Identities in a Transnational World* (Westport, 1981), p. 156; Joel Rufino dos Santos, “O Movimento Negro”, *Politica e Administracao*, II (July/September 1985), p. 298.

Since the reestablishment of democracy in Brazil, racial mobilization has remained muted, despite assertions by activists and sympathetic analysts to the contrary. The 1988 constitution declares that “the practice of racism constitutes a crime”, clearly maintaining the state’s rejection of any ideology of racial domination.¹¹¹ At the same time, the central and regional governments have established numerous new offices to coordinate Afro-Brazilian affairs, encouraged limited political activism around race, and supported celebrations of the centennial of abolition in 1988.¹¹² Progressive political parties have nominated black candidates for electoral office, though often these candidates have themselves downplayed the issue of race.¹¹³ Activists have complained that party platforms also generally fail to give prominence to the issue of racial discrimination. For instance, the MNU has complained that “according to the left, we are paranoid, fighting an enemy that does not exist”.¹¹⁴ According to one veteran activist, such constraints reflect the popular bias against race rhetoric: “all the politicians are afraid to use race. The great part of blacks don’t want a racial discourse. The number of conscious people is very small”.¹¹⁵ The ingrained legacy of the myth of racial democracy has clearly limited the salience of race issues, explaining little popular responsiveness even now that there are no official constraints against addressing the issue of race.

Despite limited efforts at collective action, Brazil’s lack of an explicit ideology or practice of racial domination has left Afro-Brazilians without the key initial ingredient for mobilization. With no clear target against which to organize, no unifying Afro-Brazilian political identity has emerged on a broad scale to take advantage of resources or opportunities for mobilization, despite the efforts of black activists. Since there has been no official racial limit on mobility, most blacks have accepted the ideology of racial democracy, seeing their path to advancement through the “whitening” process of miscegenation or passing. According to one veteran activist, “every black wants to be white”.¹¹⁶ As a result, “our biggest problem remains the fundamental lack of united identity”,¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Thomas E. Skidmore, “Fact and Myth: An Overview of Afro-Brazilian Studies in Brazil” (Kellogg Working Paper 1, 1992), p. 11.

¹¹² IBASE, *Negros no Brasil: Dados da Realidade* (Petropolis, 1989).

¹¹³ Gonzalez and Hasenbalg, *Lugar de Negro*, p. 55; Comissao de Religiosos Seminaristas e Padres Negros, “O Povo Negro e as Eleicoes de 1988” (Rio de Janeiro, 1989); Ana Lucia E.E. Valente, *Politica e Relacoes Raciais: Os Negros e as Eleicoes Paulistas de 1982* (São Paulo, 1986), p. 94.

¹¹⁴ “MNU e as Ideologias Brancas”, *MNU Journal* (18 January-March 1991), p. 11. See also Nelson do Valle Silva and Carlos Hasenbalg, *Relacoes Raciais no Brasil Contemporaneo* (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), p. 160.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Abdias do Nascimento, 28 July 1993.

¹¹⁶ Interview with Januario Garcia, 21 July 1993.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Clovis Moura, 8 July 1993.

for without such group solidarity encouraged by official exclusion the possibilities of collective action are not even so perceived, let alone widely pursued. Opportunities for collective action have not been interpreted or acted upon as race-specific, because the myth of racial democracy has camouflaged the racial component of subordination and thereby deflected identity formation. Thus, while Brazil appears to be an "exception" to the logic of racial identity formation and mobilization, it actually fits that logic by demonstrating that the relative lack of relevant causes produces an absence of race-specific consequences.

CONCLUSION

A comparison of the dynamics of racial identity formation and mobilization in South Africa, the United States and Brazil is useful as much for the similarities revealed, as for the differences. By examining three cases of divergent political and economic development, with varying demographic mixes of ancestry, it is possible to look for patterns linking such variation with similarity and difference of outcomes. The overarching pattern which does emerge is the similarity between South Africa and the United States, in terms of official racial exclusion, identity formation and mobilization, as contrasted with their relative absence in Brazil. What then do these patterns tell us about the dynamics of identity-formation and mobilization?

First, neither relative deprivation or resource availability in themselves explain racial identity and mobilization. Put simply, deprivation and resource availability have heightened and diminished in South Africa and the US without mobilization following the timing of these trends. Nor have deprivation and resources in Brazil brought comparable levels of mobilization. And these dynamics cannot explain the development of a collective identity of blacks as logically prior to such a group acting in response to its deprivation or resources.

A three-case comparison has demonstrated the central role of the state in shaping collective racial identity. For their own purposes, the South African and American state drew racially defined boundaries of exclusion from full citizenship, which had the unintended consequence of reinforcing a subordinated racial identity among blacks. Once such an identity was consolidated in response to official policy, then a collective actor self-consciously existed to interpret and respond to shifting political opportunities, economic conditions and resources, defined accordingly. Full-scale repression often dampened mobilization, but variations in racial domination, either toward greater suppression or reform, invited mobilization. Change on the side of the state has provoked corresponding movement by subordinates. At mid-century, the South African state reinforced uniform segregation as apartheid, and the US imposed reforms of localized Jim Crow. Racial identity was further

consolidated by these processes, constructing a collective actor then able to take advantage of opportunities for mobilization. The Brazil case negatively reaffirms this pattern, in that the lack of explicit, official racial ideology and practices of racial domination have deprived Afro-Brazilians of a clear target against which their identity could be consolidated. Afro-Brazilian mobilization has remained muted in the relative absence of such identity consolidation, with limited mobilization following the general pattern of the other two cases. Opportunities for mobilization existed, but were not generally interpreted along racial lines and not pursued as such, demonstrating that the logic of opportunity structures is applicable only according to prior identity formation.

The implication of this argument is that the explicit form of state domination is two-edged, in setting the grounds on which social movements emerge in response to official policy. This logic of identity-formation is necessarily prior to the dynamics of social movement variation, and must be incorporated into such analysis. Not only race, but other forms of identity may emerge from similar dynamics. States often construct identities other than race, for their own purposes, through explicit policies of exclusion and also inclusion, and in doing so set the boundaries and incentives for collective action. Therefore, analysis of ethnic, class, regional or gender mobilization would be well served by further exploring the role of state policy in establishing the definitions and "life chances" of such groups, which then interpret and use resources and opportunities for their own ends. For example, corporatist arrangements of functionally classified citizenship often encourage class identity and trade union mobilization, and ethnically defined exclusion from the nation often provokes counter-ethnic solidarity and protest. A prominent example of such dynamics would be the way in which Stalin ratified ethnic and national categories, which then encouraged such identification and mobilization after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Similar patterns of Hapsburg or Ottoman imperial policies encouraging proto-nationalism, reinforcing such identities and mobilization accordingly during imperial breakdown, are now being more fully explored. This approach then suggests how analysts can bring together studies of nation-state formation, citizenship, identity and social movements as interrelated, building upon the insights of earlier theoretical and empirical studies.

In more general terms, the analysis presented here is suggestive of an interaction between institutions and identities. Nation-state consolidation and rules of citizenship construct or reinforce categories of identity, which may then be embraced by those so identified as a basis for mobilization to alter such institutional arrangements. The interaction effects may thus be more iterated than generally understood; institutions shape identities, but mobilization around such identities also reshape institutions. Institutional rules of citizenship thus evolve over time, provoking and reconfigured through contestation.