Race and Social Problems
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Examining Race in Jamaica: How Racial Category and Skin Color Structure Social Inequality

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Abstract
Jamaica's social inequality is primarily held to be class-based due, in part, to the country's perceived ethno-racial homogeneity and to the particularities of its colonial past. However, whether "race" also systemically shapes inequality in Jamaica remains understudied. To address this empirical lacuna, I examine the effects of two measures of race—categorical race and skin color—on years of schooling and household amenities using data from the 2014 AmericasBarometer social survey. I find that access to household amenities and years of schooling are starkly structured by racial category, and even more robustly by skin color, across all dimensions. The findings challenge long-held assumptions that marginalize race with regards to social inequality in Jamaica. They also suggest the importance of a multidimensional approach to studying the effects of race for understanding stratification dynamics in Jamaica. As an English-speaking, majority Afro-descent society in the Caribbean, the study's findings add a unique country case for comparison to Latin America and may also speak to other similar contexts in the region.

Keywords Race · Skin color · Social inequality · Caribbean · Jamaica

Inequality in the Anglo-Caribbean country of Jamaica is substantial: about 20% of the population lives below the poverty line, while three-fifths of the country's wealth is held by only 10% of its population (World Bank 2013). This inequality is primarily attributed to class factors given the country's deep income stratification and perceived ethno-racial homogeneity; fully 91.6% of Jamaica's population self-identify as black or black-mixed (World Bank 2013). The latter reflects a presumed process of creolization, or racial blending/mixing, in both its people and its culture (Bolland 1998; Braithwaite 1971), which is reflected in the nationalist ideology of "creole multi-racialism" (Levi 1992; Thame 2017; Thomas 2002, 2004). The state's motto, "Out of many, one people," encapsulates and echoes this creolization (Kelly and Bailey 2018). According to the first Vice Premier Norman Manley (who also helped coin the motto):

> [We] are made up of…predominantly Negro or of mixed blood, but also with large numbers of others, and nowhere in the world has more progress been made in developing a non-racial society in which also color is not psychologically significant (as quoted in Nettleford 1970, pp. 23–24).

The ideology of creolization and its embodiment in Jamaica's national motto purports that there are no significant racial cleavages that create problematic fissures (e.g., racial stratification) among the population.

There is a significant body of research on the Latin American region that examines ideologies of racial fusion/mixing (referred to as *mestizaje*), the key elements of which may mirror those of Jamaica's ideology of creolization (Kelly and Bailey 2018). Latin American ideologies of *mestizaje*—a set of ruling ideas that positively characterizes a country's population as being largely comprised of "mixed" ethno-racial ancestries—were often viewed as blurring racial boundaries and thereby mitigating racial tension. However, some argue that such ideologies deny black and indigenous identities and cultures by casting the nation as mixed race/homogeneous (Nascimento 1989). The resulting intellectual constructions obfuscate the stratifying effects of race (Canache et al. 2014; Sue 2013; Warren and Sue 2011; Winant 1999).

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These ideologies may be particularly evident where individuals self-identify with racially ambiguous terminology and/or where populations vigorously embrace nation-based categories while downplaying race-based classifications (Bonilla-Silva and Glover 2005; Twine 1998; Warren and Sue 2011). Some scholars even argue that racial fusion ideologies may be increasingly producing similar effects in the United States, for example, in the case of Latin Americanization (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich 2008; Bonilla-Silva and Glover 2005). While some scholars disagree about this obfuscation of ideologies of racial mixing in Latin America (Bailey 2009; Bailey et al. 2016; Telles and Bailey 2013), the empirical research clearly demonstrates that racial stratification is very much present throughout Latin America and the United States (Bailey et al. 2014; Monk 2016; Perreira and Telles 2014; Telles 2014; Telles et al. 2015; Villarreal 2010).

Jamaica is the third-largest English-speaking country in the greater Americas (following the United States and Canada) and the largest in the Anglo-Caribbean; its population is overwhelmingly Afro-descendant. Despite the demographics of Jamaica, I argue that race does matter in the structuring of social inequality in the country. Although existing literature has explored the contours of nationalist fusion (Austin-Broos 1994; Thame 2017; Thomas 2002, 2004) and its influence on understandings of racial discrimination (Kelly and Bailey 2018), there is a dearth of quantitative research on how race may or may not structure inequality in Jamaica. This paper addresses that empirical lacuna using data from the 2014 AmericasBarometer social survey (Latin American Public Opinion Project [LAPOP]) on Jamaica to analyze two distinct measures of social inequality: access to household amenities and years of schooling. To more stringently test the influence of race on social inequality, I employ two measures of the construct. The survey includes a unique item about skin color in addition to one about racial category, which makes it possible to examine race as a multidimensional construct (e.g., Campbell et al. 2016). The analytical strategy of leveraging multiple measures of race to unravel its complex effects on social stratification is growing in importance in both Latin America and the United States (Bailey et al. 2013; Saperstein 2008; Telles 2014; Telles and Lim 1998). Moreover, leveraging skin color may be particularly important for the study of race in a context such as Jamaica, where the overwhelming majority of the population self-identifies as a single racial category—black—but also where significant intra-category differences along the lines of skin color may play an important role (Keith and Herring 1991).

Results show that both categories—racial category and skin color—shape a person's access to household amenities and educational attainment in Jamaica, even when class-based proxies and numerous other population characteristics are controlled for. Furthermore, the findings suggest that skin color may provide a useful and robust perspective on the role of race in Jamaica's social stratification. This paper's analytic approach and findings thereby contribute uniquely to two important research angles: the role of race in structuring social inequality in the Americas (even amid purported racially fused populations) and how a multidimensional approach may be particularly useful in furthering empirical demonstration and theory building.

Background

Historical Antecedents of Race-Making

The racialized demography of the Caribbean, also found in all the greater Americas, is rooted in the region's colonized past. During periods of colonization, the differences between West Africans and Europeans "were rendered by the dominant Europeans in terms of 'race' as evidenced in color and other attributes imagined and construed to ideological ends" (Austin-Broos 1994, p. 213). Through the race-making enterprise of colonization, whiteness became associated with power and freedom while blackness came to signify being sub-human and property. However, the subsequent racialized systems of social closure (Wacquant 1997) that emerged in Jamaica and in parts of Latin America often contrasted with the racial caste system of hypodescent that characterized the United States (Davis 1991). Scholars argue that the social creation and wider acceptance of "free coloreds"—who were the lighter-skinned offspring of oftentimes violent and forced sexual assaults between white planters and their slaves, whom the planters manumitted or freed upon their death—actually worked to strengthen slave societies in the Caribbean and Latin America (Hellwig 1992; Higman 1976; Johnson 2004; Ward 1988).

While free coloreds sometimes resisted slavery alongside fellow Africans (Johnson 2004; Sio 1976), they often aided whites in subjugating blacks by sustaining the oppressive system of slavery and by reinforcing a system of social closure that was based on skin color. In fact, Livesay (2018, p. 15) noted that free-colored (or mixed-race) Jamaicans, during the years 1733–1826, often petitioned for legal white status via privilege petitions (these petitions became little more than nominal forms of distinction from free black Jamaicans by the mid-eighteenth century) to be exempted from race-based inheritance regulations and other policies. These exemptions thus enabled free coloreds to own land and later to have access to the Jamaican Assembly. Though never equal to their white counterparts, free coloreds held substantially more power and rights as compared to black Jamaicans, free or otherwise (Altink 2009). Free coloreds, then, often used this alternative mobility structure to further

distance themselves from "unmixed" blacks, and "lightness, valued as a promise of higher status, became valued for itself" (Broom 1954, p. 117).

The abolition of slavery in 1838 in Jamaica, coupled with an en masse movement of blacks from sugar plantations, created a labor shortage; hence, Jamaica turned to China and India to replace the previously enslaved workforce. These new workers joined an already substantial population of Jews, Palestinians, Lebanese, and Syrians who had resided in Jamaica since the Spanish domination of 1494–1655 (Johnson 2005; Levy 1986; Nicholls 1986; Vertovec 1995; Yin 1963). The forms of upward social mobility that were available to both these earlier and newer ethno-racial populations on the island starkly contrasted with the lack of opportunities that faced black Jamaicans, whose disadvantaged position in Jamaican society continued (Johnson 2005).

Non-black status was still privileged in post-abolition Jamaica, and outside of manual labor, skin color and ethno-racial biases structured worker selection. For example, in 1925, Chinese and Chinese-Jamaicans, while comprising less than 1% of the population, held 28% of the trade licenses that were issued in Jamaica (Bryan 2004; Lee-Loy 2015), which aided them in their continued dominance of the grocery retail sector. Additionally, as a measure to prevent East Indians and Afro-Jamaicans from uniting to resist exploitation, the colonial state deliberately enforced policies to segregate the two groups, thus exacerbating animosity between them (Sherlock and Bennett 1998). In addition, East Indians achieved economic standing as merchants via favorable governmental policies (Johnson 2005; Nicholls 1986; Vertovec 1995). Thus, access and mobility in Jamaica were historically structured along racial and color lines and were woven into the fabric of daily life.

Nation-Building Ideology

Despite the presence of a clear racialized hierarchy, 20th-century Jamaican elites led nation-making projects to unify people from different racial backgrounds. Towards that end, elite actors promoted a creole or multi-racial framing of population diversity in Jamaica (Levi 1992; Meeks 2000; Smith 1990; Thame 2017; Thomas 2002, 2004) that was aided by a discourse about exceptionalism (Gray 1991; Vickerman 1999). This discourse operated on the premise of ethnic homogeneity, or a non-racialized framing of national belonging (Nas et al. 2009). The political project deployed hybridity (the mixture of European and West African) as a mobilizing and integrating force used to define Jamaica (Thame 2017). Austin-Broos (1994) and Thomas (2004) explained that nationalist efforts towards creating a Jamaican identity resembled classical European nationalism, which was founded in notions of a common history and culture rather than race. To safeguard this notion of commonality between all racial groups on the island, contemporaneous alternative racialized discourse and ideologies (e.g., black nationalism) were marked as divisive and were repressed (Johnson 2004; Thame 2017; Thomas 2002). Thus, leading up to independence, Jamaican politicians attempted to foster a "one people" national ideology (Thomas 2002, 2004). A particularly illustrative example of this salient non-racial frame of national origin in 20th-century Jamaica is the nation's official motto: "Out of many, one people." This, according to Braithwaite (1971), is further illustrated by the evolution of mixed cultural forms, as Jamaican culture is presently perceived as an amalgamation of all racial and ethnic populations on the island.

While this cultural amalgamation may exist to a certain extent, scholars have noted the artificial qualities of both assumed creolization and non-racial framing in Jamaica. The policy of centering hybridity effectively marginalized the country's majority black population (Cooper 2012); moreover, this policy helped to decenter race as a legitimate factor for structuring inequality and to replace race with class-based notions of the island's social stratification. This tendency, however, obscures how class and race were co-constitutive in Jamaican society: lighter-skinned, mixed-race, and non-black Jamaicans obtained higher class status through race-based colonial structures (Bryan 2004; Johnson 2005; Livesay 2018). Thus, the ideology of creolization, with its marginalization of the role of race in social structuring, served as a "legitimizing framework" (Nas et al. 2009) that was similar to *mestizaje* in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (Bailey 2009; Sue 2013). In effect, creolization partially enabled the domination of light-skinned, mixed-raced, middle-strata Jamaicans in post-independence politics (Nas et al. 2009; Thomas 2002). In addition, the ideological project essentially served as a tool that was used to control conflict (Johnson 2005).

Contemporary Racial Dynamics

Colonial racial structuring and post-abolition nation-building set the stage for contemporary racial dynamics in Jamaica and continue to robustly shape the country's social fabric. This structuring manifests itself at many different levels, including the continuance of racial discrimination, the privileging of a myriad of descriptive terms for skin color over racial categories, a preference for hybridity/brownness, and even skin bleaching. Regarding descriptions of skin color and the avoidance of race, Hall (1997, p. 53) reported: "I had never ever heard anybody either call themselves or refer to anybody else as 'Black.' Never. I heard a 1000 other words. My grandmother could differentiate about 15 different shades between light brown and dark brown." Jamaicans' tendency to identify as some form of brown (regarding skin color) and to relegate black

only to the very dark skinned may be viewed as a means of claiming hybridity (Thame 2017), which is an identity that results from the country's peculiar form of perceived racial mixing. Claiming hybridity or brownness is a way of signaling racially mixed ancestry and conferring social power onto oneself, as light skin or brownness "continues to remain the source of status and power" (Thame 2017, p. 122).

Similarly, even when terms that more directly refer to ethno-racial categories are used, they, too, are largely perceived as neutral descriptors. Henke (2001) reported:

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

Moreover, most Jamaicans refer to individuals from South Asia as "coolies" and to individuals of East Asian descent as Chinese, regardless of their ethnic background (Lee-Loy 2015). Hall (1997) and Henke (2001), illustrated the salience of skin color descriptions over racial identification as well as racial hybridity and fluidity.

Scholarship reveals, however, that these categories are not merely neutral descriptors; instead, the implicit racial meanings of such descriptors remain and affect social outcomes. Gordon (1991), for example, argued that social class and skin color jointly present the major issues of status that constitute a Jamaican sense of hierarchy. He illustrated this enduring significance of skin color on educational attainment by plotting the difference in educational outcomes between lighter- and darker-skinned children of the middle and lower classes. He found that despite the relative mobility of darker-skinned, lower-class children, when compared to their lighter-skinned counterparts, lighter-skinned children still outperformed darker-skinned children when it came to education. However, lighter-skinned children of the middle class used educational reforms to increase their educational advantage over darker-skinned children in the middle class. In addition, Kelly and Bailey (2018) examined the 2001 Jamaican census and reported that of the population aged 25–65 years, 40.7% of white Jamaicans (who comprise less than 1% of the population) had completed university-level education as compared to only 2.4% of Afro-Jamaicans (90% of the population). Chinese, East Indians, and mixed-race Jamaicans also had much lower percentages of college completion as compared to whites, though their completion rates were much higher than those of black Jamaicans.

Furthermore, Douglass (1992) conducted an ethnographic analysis of the relationship between structural racial hierarchies and mate selection practices by observing elite families in Jamaica. From her observations, she contrasted the existence of a naturalized racial hierarchy (which she introduced as a "color hierarchy") with beliefs in "meritocracy" and "egalitarianism," which are common among (white) elite families. These families describe the selection of intimate partners, both for themselves and their children, as being based on love, commonalities, and desirable character traits, while dismissing how these attributes are at their core structured by race and class. Thus, these families have largely retained the same color and class over several generations (see also Austin-Broos 1994). More recently, it was reported that some employers and their agents from a Jamaican state training organization specifically requested lighter-skinned or brown applicants, a criterion that was reportedly articulated both verbally and on the application forms for the placement of trainees (Neufville 2011).

A final issue that highlights particularly well the value of brownness and lighter skin tone to structuring contemporary Jamaica is its skin-bleaching epidemic (Charles 2003, 2009; Johnson 2004; Robinson 2011). It is all too common for individuals to apply substances, mixtures, or physical treatments to their bodies in attempts to lighten their skin color. The most common explanation that these individuals give for this behavior is that being lighter skinned offers them better chances in life and/or preferential treatment (Blay 2011; Brown-Glaude 2007; Charles 2003, 2009; Robinson 2011; Wallace 2009). However, these individuals are often portrayed in popular media and documentaries as both hailing from working-class backgrounds and suffering from low self-esteem or self-hate (Charles 2003, 2009; Robinson 2011).

This practice is representative of the vestiges of colonialism that are embedded in colorism: the "racial capital" (Hunter 2011) that lighter skin begets thus fuels the notion that being lighter or closer to whiteness is better (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich 2008; Hannon 2015; Harris 2008; Kinsbruner 1996; Sue 2009; Telles 2004). Social class in Jamaica is often divided among racial lines, with wealthier and more powerful Jamaicans generally being white and brown (mixed-race), while poor Jamaicans are mostly black. However, as skin bleaching is often framed as a pathology, overarching claims of "light-skin privilege" are effectively delegitimized by the government and healthcare practitioners (Wallace 2009). Hence, discussing skin bleaching as predominantly a health issue that plagues the lower classes removes the racial components of this "strategic" practice of skin lightening (Hunter 2011), which further supports the idea that Jamaica is free of racial problems (Henke 2001).

In sum, there is little doubt that race continues to stratify contemporary Jamaica.

Analytical Distinctions Between Racial Category and Skin Color

As evidenced in the abovementioned historical and contemporary racial dynamics in Jamaica, race is ever-present, though often only implicitly. Descriptor terms, which are perceived by many as neutral and often referring to color, explicitly avoid racial terms or categories, such as black and white. Hence, one of the analytical strategies in this paper is to attempt to disaggregate race using a multidimensional approach (Roth 2016) that examines the role of both racial category and skin color. While racial category and skin color often overlap (Telles 2012), they are analytically and empirically separate, as they each may have different relationships with inequality (Banton 2012; Telles 2014). Racial category, as measured by census categories, group people into a collective that is based on ancestry, language, religion, and/or geographical location (Dixon and Telles 2017), the meanings of which vary across context and time (Banton 2012; see also Bailey et al. 2013; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999; Hirschman 2004; Loveman 1999; Monk 2014). Racial category, however, does not fully capture the rate and magnitude of the discrimination that individuals face in their everyday lives and does not necessarily measure the significant, nuanced, and gradational differences in physical appearance (Monk 2016). Skin color, on the other hand, represents gradients along a color continuum from fairest/lightest to darkest skinned, thus more aptly capturing gradual variations in skin tones.

Studies that examine skin color and racial self-classification as predictors of outcomes of inequality usually find the existence of complex relations between the two (Bailey et al. 2014, 2016; Telles 2004, 2014; Telles et al. 2015; Telles and Lim 1998). For example, Bailey et al. (2014), in their analysis of household income inequality, found that income inequality can be best understood in the United States and Latin America using either measure or both. More specifically, they showed that both skin color and self-identified race significantly explained variations in household income for some countries, including the United States. However, in certain countries—such as Brazil, Panama, and Costa Rica—racial identification better accounted for inequality, and for other countries, such as Colombia and Uruguay, variations in household income were better explained by differences in skin color alone. Moreover, some studies have shown that skin color is a stronger predictor of inequality than racial category (Monk 2016; Paredes 2018). Thus, while society structure dynamics along both racial category and skin color, the two are not easily interchangeable, and they are not equally efficient at capturing the inequality that is structured by phenotype (Bailey et al. 2016). Therefore, I use a multidimensional approach for studying the differences in access to household amenities and years of schooling by racial category and skin color. This approach is made possible through the inclusion of the unique measure of skin color in the AmericasBarometer dataset (LAPOP 2014).

The Present Study

The context of Jamaica's racial dynamics is generally understood from the class-dominant ideology of racial mixing, at least in official or elite discourse, and is thus viewed as non-racial by virtue of its racial homogeneity. This non-racial framing operates on the island in the form of loose racial categorizations and colloquial skin color designations. Additionally, there has been little quantitative research on racial inequality in Jamaica. Therefore, considering these factors, there are two aims of this study. The first aim of the study is to investigate how racial category and skin color structure social inequality, namely access to household amenities and years of schooling, in contemporary Jamaica. For this, I expect that both racial category and skin color will be significantly associated with access to household amenities and years of schooling. The second aim of the study is to explore whether racial category or skin color better fit patterns of social inequality in Jamaica. As stated above, previous research has cited the complex analytical and empirical relationship both measures of race—racial category and skin color—may have with inequality and that this relationship varies across context. Therefore, this study explores the nature of this relationship in Jamaica to assess which measure more robustly captures patterns in social inequality.

Data and Methods

The data that were used to analyze racial category and skin color inequality came from the 2014 AmericasBarometer social survey on Jamaica by LAPOP, which is housed in Vanderbilt University. LAPOP partnered with the Center for Leadership and Governance at the University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica to conduct this social survey. The project used a national probability sample of voting-age adults. The full sample consisted of 1506 respondents who were surveyed in face-to-face interviews that were conducted in English. The survey used a complex sample design that considered stratification and clustering. The samples consisted of four strata representing the four main geographical regions: the Kingston metropolitan region, Surrey, Middlesex, and Cornwall. Each stratum was further sub-stratified by urban and rural areas.

Outcome Measures: Access to Household Amenities and Years of Schooling

In the 2014 AmericasBarometer social survey (LAPOP), Jamaican respondents were asked if they had several items in their homes. These items included a refrigerator, a landline/residential telephone, a cellular telephone, cars, a washing machine, a microwave oven, a motorcycle, indoor plumbing, an indoor bathroom, a computer, internet service, a television, a flat panel TV, and access to a sewage system. All but one of these survey items had a maximum score of 1, indicating that the respondents indeed had the item in their home. The exception was vehicle/car, which had a maximum score of 3 (having three or more cars was recoded as dichotomous; 0 = no car and 1 = having 1 or more cars). An exploratory factor analysis was done on these 14 survey items and revealed that there were four dimensions of household amenities; according to eigenvalue criteria, however, only one dimension met internal consistency reliabilities (Bollen 2014). The factor of household amenities consisted of a computer, internet service, and a flat screen TV (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.71$). To capture educational attainment, I used a continuous variable representing the number of years of schooling that the respondents had completed. These outcome variables—household amenities and years of schooling—effectively capture the core elements of social inequality. Jamaica is a developing nation, with a substantial part of the population—20% according to World Bank (2013)—living in poverty. Therefore, examining people's access to household amenities paints a more detailed picture of how and in what conditions people live (see also Paredes 2018). This level of detail is not possible when researchers simply investigate the respondents' educational levels.

Independent Variables: Racial Category and Skin Color

The respondents self-reported their ethno-racial status in one of the following categories in a closed-format question: black, white, East Indian, Chinese, mixed, or other. I used the responses to this question to operationalize racial category. Due to the small number of respondents in non-black categories, I coded the responses as black (reference category), mixed, and other (which included racial categories, such as white, Chinese, East Indian, and other). For the LAPOP (2014) data, an average of 88.4% of the sample self-identified as black, 9.1% as mixed, and 2.5% as other.

Additionally, I used the respondents' skin colors from the 2014 LAPOP dataset, which the interviewers collected at the end of each interview. The interviewers used the Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America Skin Color Palette to rank the respondents' skin color from very light (1) to very dark (11). According to the 2014 LAPOP data, the respondents' skin colors, as measured by the interviewers, ranked from 2 to 11, with the sample having an average skin color of 7. I use skin color as a continuous variable while considering the presumption that social mobility is directly proportional to skin color (Bailey et al. 2014).

Control Variables

The models include controls for various socio-demographic factors: respondent's sex, age, years of schooling, mother's education, and location. A dummy variable measured respondent's sex (1 = male, 0 = female), whilst a continuous variable ranging from 18 to 96 measured respondent's age. For location, I used a dummy variable to determine whether a respondent lived in an urban or rural area (0 = rural, 1 = urban). To allow for some control of parents' class position (which influences one's own social position; Hout 2015; Torche 2014), I used mother's education (an ordinal variable ranging from 0 to 8). I used this measure as it was the only parent-level variable in the dataset. This variable representing mother's education had data missing for one-third of the respondents; therefore, all missing data were dropped before conducting analyses. Additionally, years of schooling was only used as a control variable for the models when it was not used as an outcome variable (Table 1).

Interviewer's sex and skin color were initially controlled for (Villarreal 2010), but as the results were non-significant, these measures were dropped from the models presented. Moreover, previous research has found that the association between skin color and social outcomes differs by racial category and that skin color is slightly lighter in women than in men in every population thus far measured (Jablonski and Chaplin 2000). Hence, I included interaction terms for racial category and skin color as well as for skin color and sex. Additionally, I included interaction terms for racial category and sex as well as for racial category, skin color, and sex. However, as the results were not statistically significant, all interaction measures were removed from the results shown.

Results

Figure 1 shows the distribution of skin color by the racial category of the sample. As shown in Fig. 1, darker skin was not exclusive to those respondents who racially self-identified as black; all three racial groups had representations in all intervals of skin color, except for "mixed" in 11 and "other" in 10 and 11. Therefore, these descriptive results suggest that skin color does not neatly map onto racial categories in Jamaica. Hence, darker skin is not synonymous with racially black, and the results should not be interpreted as such.

Table 1 Mean and standard error for variables used, LAPOP (2014). *Source* Americas Barometer, Jamaica, 2014

Variables	Range	Mean (Std. Err.)
Racial category[a]	1–3	–
Skin color	2–11	7.029 (0.056)
Household amenities	0–1	0.424 0.013
Year of education	0–17	10.761 (0.095)
Male	0–1	0.492 (0.016)
Age	18–90	37.934 (0.474)
Mother's education	0–8	3.036 (0.048)
Location in Urban area	0–1	0.614 (0.015)
Number of observations—1004		

Means and standard errors (in parentheses) are rounded to three (3) decimal places

[a]For the LAPOP (2014) data, 1 = blacks which were an average of 88.4% of the sample, 2 = those who self-identified as racially mixed, which was 9.1% of the sample, and 3 = racial others who were 2.5%

Multiple Ordinary Least Squares regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship of racial category and skin color with access to household amenities and years of schooling, controlling for standard correlates. I present three models; the first model includes the racial category variable, the second model includes the skin color variable, and the third model includes both racial category and skin color variables (see Table 2; standardized coefficient of regression analyses are presented in the "Appendix").

Household Amenities

Model 1 of Table 2 shows that racial category was positively and significantly correlated with access to household amenities. Results show that in comparison to blacks, individuals who self-identified as racially other had more household amenities. More specifically, the results show that racial others had 48% more household amenities than blacks. Therefore, racial category does structure access to household amenities in Jamaica, as observed from the R^2 difference between models containing only control variables and containing race and control variables ($\Delta R^2 = 0.003$; $F(1, 997) = 3.693$; $p = 0.05$; models containing only control variables and outcome measures of social inequality are not shown in Table 2). In Model 2, with skin color as the sole predictor of household amenities, the results show a significantly negative correlation: those with darker skin had fewer household amenities than their lighter-skinned counterparts. For every unit increase in skin color, the respondents possessed, on average, 15% fewer household amenities. Therefore, an individual of average skin color (7) would have 75% fewer household amenities when compared to an individual who had very light skin (2).

When examining racial category and skin color as joint predictors of household amenities (in Model 3), those respondents who racially self-classified as "other" had more household amenities than blacks, and those with darker skin had less household amenities than those who were lighter. However, only skin color was a significant predictor of household amenities, thus making it more predictive than racial category. Ultimately, owning more of these household amenities is a proxy for a better standard of living. Even when accounting for key control variables, such as respondent's (and mother's) education as well as racial category, skin color remained significantly associated with household amenities.

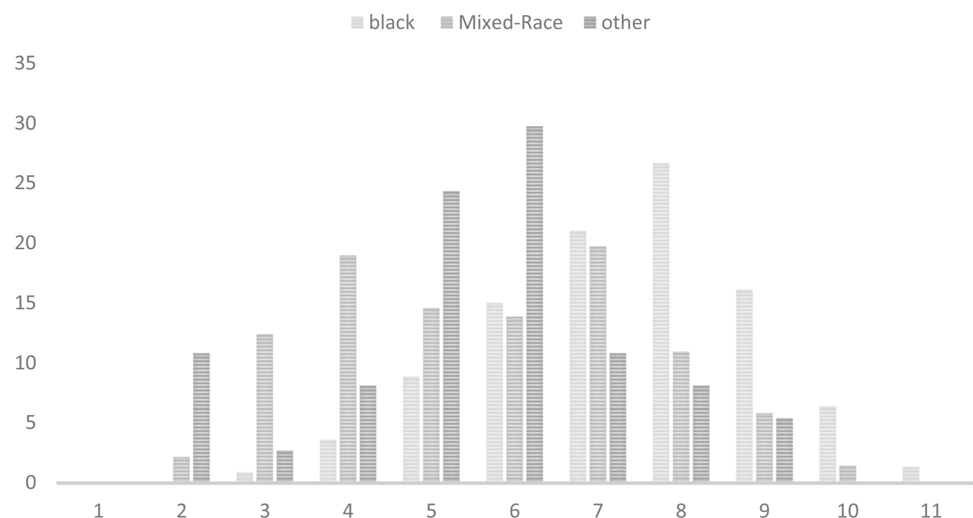

Fig. 1 Skin Color Distribution by Racial Category for Jamaica, LAPOP (2014)

Table 2 OLS coefficients of household amenities and years of schooling by racial category and skin color, LAPOP (2014) (N = 1004). *Source* Americas Barometer, Jamaica, LAPOP (2014)

	Household amenities			Years of schooling		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Racial category (reference = black)						
Mixed	0.027 (0.037)	–	− 0.002 (0.039)	0.268 (0.288)	–	− 0.153 (0.299)
Other	0.141* (0.069)	–	0.108 (0.071)	0.283 (0.542)	–	− 0.210 (0.547)
Skin color	–	–0.019*** (0.007)	–0.018** (0.007)	–	–0.245*** (0.051)	–0.256*** (0.054)
Male	0.006 (0.022)	0.017 (0.023)	0.016 (0.023)	− 0.215 (0.176)	− 0.065 (0.176)	− 0.059 (0.177)
Age	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	− 0.038*** (0.006)	− 0.038*** (0.006)	− 0.038*** (0.006)
Years of schooling	0.046*** (0.004)	0.045*** (0.004)	0.045*** (0.004)	–	–	–
Mother's education	0.043*** (0.008)	0.042*** (0.008)	0.042*** (0.008)	0.512*** (0.063)	0.482*** (0.062)	0.483*** (0.062)
Location in Urban area	0.077*** (0.023)	0.071*** (0.023)	0.070*** (0.023)	0.477** (0.181)	0.365* (0.180)	0.365* (0.180)
Constant	− 0.293*** (0.065)	− 0.129 (0.086)	− 0.143 (0.088)	1.410*** (0.386)	12.260*** (0.537)	12.356*** (0.561)
R^2	0.206***	0.209***	0.211***	0.154***	0.172***	0.172***
Adjusted R^2	0.200	0.204	0.204	0.149	0.168	0.167

All regression coefficients rounded to three (3) decimal places with standard errors in parentheses. Household Amenities = computer, internet, and flat screen TV; Cronbach's α = 0.71

***$p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$

Years of Schooling

When using racial category and skin color to account for educational differences, the results from Table 2, Model 1, show that racial category had no explanatory power in these differences. Skin color, however, was negatively and significantly associated with educational attainment. This finding may be surprising, as several studies document the impact of racial group membership on years of schooling (Carnevale and Strohl 2013; Diamond 2006; Stanley 2014). However, Monk (2016), in his analysis of the Brazilian case, similarly found skin color, rather than racial self-classification, to be more predictive of educational outcomes. Model 2 shows that those with darker skin had fewer years of schooling than lighter-skinned individuals. For example, the difference in the time spent in school between an individual who is very light (2) and one who is very dark (11) is about 2 years.

The amount of variation in the data can be explained by models that included both skin color and the selected control variables. Model 2 best explained the variation across the two separate measures of social inequality: household amenities and educational attainment. Even when examining both racial category and skin color as predictors of social inequality, racial category did little to account for the variation that was observed, thus suggesting that skin color is the stronger predictor. Overall, these findings illustrate that race is important in structuring social inequality. Despite controlling for class background (as measured by mother's education), blacks and those of darker skin colors were more disadvantaged in comparison to their non-black and lighter-skinned counterparts.

Discussion

I began this study with two aims. The first was to examine how race structures social stratification in a society that is perceived as ethno-racially homogeneous: Jamaica. Additionally, due to the fact that the country's population is overwhelmingly described by just one racial category, black, I proposed that a multidimensional approach be used by examining the associations of racial category and skin color with access to household amenities and years of schooling. I expected and found that access to household amenities and years of schooling are starkly structured by racial category and skin color. The second aim of the study was to explore which measure of race better fit patterns of social inequality in Jamaica. My results suggest that skin color more robustly captured patterns in inequality than did racial category. Overall, blacks and darker-skinned individuals have significantly lower levels of household amenities and years of schooling than their non-black and lighter-skinned Jamaican

counterparts, even when accounting for social class background. This supports previous research in Latin America highlighting the role of skin color in structuring inequality across all individuals, regardless of racial category (Bailey et al. 2014, 2016; Telles 2014; Telles and Lim 1998).

The measure of household amenities is not standard in the literature on social inequality, whether by racial category or skin color. That both racial category and skin color predict basic living conditions—even the net impact of one's class background—is an interesting and novel finding. The basic socioeconomic status indicators that are standard in U.S.-based research on racial/color inequality may be insufficient for capturing the full extent to which skin color relates to material disadvantage in Jamaica; this insufficiency may be partly due to Jamaica's relatively high level of poverty in comparison to poverty levels in the United States. Hence, the use of a household amenities measure was a necessary addition to the present study, as it contributed to a fuller view of inequality.

The history of access to ownership of key resources also suggests the utility of access to household amenities. Whites who remained in Jamaica after emancipation in 1838 still held control of property. These resources were sometimes transferred to their mixed-race progeny (Levi 1992; Livesay 2018). Furthermore, Jews, Syrians, and Lebanese merchants immigrated with high levels of human capital with which to leverage higher social standing. Afro-Jamaicans (specifically those with darker skin), however, did not and could not (for a long period of time) own property or businesses; thus, they lacked the substantial capital needed to garner ownership of key resources, including household amenities. Furthermore, an efficient means of importing goods to the island could have considerably impacted a household's access to amenities that lay outside the purview of their household education and income. In an economy that largely does not manufacture its own goods, coupled with the logistical complications of shipping to an island with poor infrastructure, gaining access to a multitude of "common" household amenities through importation can become a disorganized process.

The relationship between race and education has been examined with varied data sources and across national contexts in the United States and Latin America (Bailey et al. 2014, 2016; Flores and Telles 2012; Monk 2016; Telles 2004, 2014). Similar findings in Jamaica may thus seem unsurprising. However, these findings are significant because they challenge and refute the official discourse of Jamaica as a "non-racial" society "in which color is not significant" (Manley as cited in Sherlock and Bennet 1998, p. 386). Furthermore, the results show the influence of historical and contemporary labor practices (Altink 2009; Johnson 2004) and economic policies (Thomas 2002), which have coalesced in the disadvantageous station of Afro-Jamaicans on the island. This continued legacy of racial disadvantage has been further highlighted through the work of Kelly and Bailey (2018), who found that non-blacks had significantly higher levels of years of schooling and higher occupational prestige than Afro-Jamaicans, despite the fact that non-blacks only account for about 10% of the population. In addition, in the United States, whites historically enjoyed better living conditions and better paying jobs. This demonstrates not only the advantage of white racial group membership across the Americas (e.g., Bailey et al. 2014) but also the disadvantages of blackness and membership in that racial group. This racial disparity hence largely represents the vestiges of slavery in the post-colonial context of Jamaica.

Notably, skin color predicted years of schooling, regardless of the impact of respondent's class origin (as measured by mother's education). Likewise, Gordon (1991) found that there were skin color differences in children's educational outcomes in Jamaica. Given his findings, Gordon (1991) stated that attention to class alone masks other important dynamics, which can also be inferred from this study. These findings are consistent with previous research in the United States on intra-group stratification among whites (Hannon 2015), Latinos (Allen et al. 2000; Hunter 2007; Roth 2010), Asian Americans (Ryabov 2016), and African Americans (Allen et al. 2000; Goldsmith et al. 2006; Hughes and Hertel 1990; Hunter 1998; Keith and Herring 1991; Monk 2014; Seltzer and Smith 1991). Furthermore, the findings support prior research in Latin America suggesting that while racial category substantially shapes educational inequality (Telles et al. 2015), skin color may more strongly predict years of schooling (Monk 2014, 2016; Paredes 2018). Therefore, examining skin color in addition to racial category offered a more nuanced account of the structuring of social inequality, which might otherwise remain unseen if one utilized racial self-classification alone. As Monk (2016) noted in his findings from his work in Brazil, racial category and skin color are often conflated in race-based inequality research, even though both reveal different dimensions of an individual's lived experience and outcomes.

The empirical finding on Jamaica in the present study relates to the Latin American case because it expounds on the contextual relationship between the ideologies of racial fusion and racial/color inequality. Even though Jamaica has a larger Afro-population than other Latin American countries do, the continued association of racial category and skin color are unequivocal: both deeply structure the quality of life (ownership of household amenities) and social mobility (as evidenced by educational outcome) of the people. The constructed ambiguity of race that is imparted through ideologies of racial fusion serve to replace the old colonial racial order while maintaining the privileging of both whiteness and lightness. This shift in the racial imaginary could then be described as superficial; a resoundingly similar social

stratification remains, though its articulation has become overwhelmingly complicated.

In Jamaica, the phrase "the black working class" embodies the inherent assumptions behind the conflation of racial category/color and class (Austin-Broos 1994). Discussions of class in Jamaica take on the forms of "heritable identity," which give added weight to the established color categories. Therefore—despite the devaluing of racialism—race/color and class sustain the economic and cultural constraints that are placed upon Jamaica's poor and black populations. Moreover, notions of racial category/skin color can be implicitly transmitted solely through discussions of class (Austin-Broos 1994). Simply put, positive behavior traits and higher levels of education are racialized. Thus, when discussing class behaviors, one's racial category and/or skin color is assumed; "whiteness connote privilege" and blackness is "associated with poverty, manual labor, low status, and ignorance" (Nettleford 1965, p. 61). This operates much like the culture of poverty (Lewis 1969) discourse in the United States. Thus, however implicit, a racial/color hierarchy remains throughout the supposed cultural class distinctions. Likewise, ignoring this nuance in the occupational sector proves problematic, especially given the continuation of race- and color-based hiring practices (Neufville 2011).

Understanding social stratification is further complicated by Jamaica's lack of statistical documentation about the impacts of racial category and/or skin color on life outcomes. This statistical invisibility has the effect of relegating racial/color oppression and inequality to mere anecdotes and is presented as an excuse for the lazy (as seen in the discussions surrounding skin bleaching). At the same time, Jamaica's actual skin color and racial category inequality is compounded by Jamaica's lack of race-based policies, despite continual urging by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2012). The Jamaican government may feel that there is no need to address social inequality with race-based policies because the population's hybrid demography renders blackness insignificant; hence, the nation is not read as being racially hierarchized (Thame 2017). However, the findings of this study demonstrate that such an assumption is false because racial category and skin color do structure social inequality in the nation. This study thus contains substantial policy implications.

Limitations of the Study

As this study does not employ more conventional measures of inequality, such as income (household or individual) and occupation/job prestige, this may be considered a limitation of the study. However, the absence of such measures from regression analyses reflects a limitation of the data used. Household and personal income are commonly used measures of inequality; however, one-third and half of the data, respectively, were missing for these measures. These missing values account for a substantial portion of the sample. As imputing values on the dependent variable of household income is a contested issue (see von Hippel 2007), to avoid methodology complications, the variable was not used (nor was personal income). This was also the case for occupational data of respondents; 46% of values/responses were missing, and thus this was not used in the analyses. However, while these measures may be missing from this study, the social inequality measures used, access to household amenities and years of schooling, highlight a dimension of income inequality (income in large part influences one's access to household amenities and educational attainment) and paint a vivid picture on the impact of racial category, but more so skin color, on life outcomes in Jamaica.

Conclusion

This study has made important advances in our understanding of the dynamics of race in patterning overall social inequality. Previous research in other national contexts reported that racial category and skin color can structure inequality differently. This paper's research suggests that the same is true in Jamaica: skin color was a more robust predictor of ownership of household amenities and years of schooling than was racial category. The findings overall highlight how salient race is, even in societies such as Jamaica that are perceived as racially homogeneous. In post-colonial societies, transformed racial hierarchies operate in ways that are specific to each context and that inadvertently have structural consequences on an individual's opportunities in life (Bailey et al. 2014, 2016).

Overall, the results demonstrate that a multidimensional approach to race, using measures of both racial category and skin color when studying racial inequality, is important (Bailey et al. 2014; Telles 2014). The results also point to the need for innovative approaches that challenge the assumptions about the structure of racial and color hierarchies in Jamaica, despite the insufficient acknowledgement of racial inequality by Jamaicans themselves (Kelly and Bailey 2018). Thus, this paper contributes to the literature on racial stratification by highlighting the case of Jamaica, an English-speaking, majority Afro-descent society in the Caribbean. As robust generalizable studies of social stratification by skin color and/or racial category are generally lacking with regards to the Anglo-Caribbean, this study addresses that lacuna.

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Appendix

See Table 3.

Table 3 OLS standardized coefficients of household amenities and years of schooling by racial category and skin color, LAPOP (2014) ($N = 1004$). *Source* Americas Barometer, Jamaica, LAPOP (2014)

	Household amenities			Years of schooling		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Race (reference = black)						
Mixed	0.020	–	−0.002	0.027	–	−0.016
Other	0.058*	–	0.044	0.015	–	−0.011
Skin color	–	−0.085***	−0.078***	–	−0.144***	−0.150***
Male	0.008	0.021	0.021	−0.036	−0.011	−0.010
Age	0.031	0.028	0.028	−0.188***	−0.189***	−0.189***
Years of schooling	0.350***	0.338***	0.338***	–	–	–
Mother's education	0.167***	0.162***	0.162***	0.260***	0.245***	0.245***
Location in Urban area	0.095***	0.087***	0.162***	0.077**	0.059*	0.059*
R^2	0.206***	0.209***	0.211***	0.154***	0.172***	0.172***
Adjusted R^2	0.200	0.204	0.204	0.149	0.168	0.167

All standardized regression coefficients rounded to three (3) decimal places with standard errors in parentheses. The variable 'Household Amenities' is a factor containing variables: computer, internet, and flat screen TV; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.71$

***$p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, **$p \leq 0.05$

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