

Patterns of Race in the Americas. By MARVIN HARRIS. New York, 1964. Walker and Company. Illustrations. Maps. Tables. Charts. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. vi, 154. Paper. \$1.95.

The most recent book of Marvin Harris is a useful contribution to the growing literature on the comparative study of race relations. He contends that Latin America can be divided into three main geographically defined regions, each with peculiar ethnic characteristics. These are the highlands where a high percentage of Indians reflects the population density of pre-Columbian civilizations; the tropical and semi-tropical coastal lowlands in which a plantation economy once required the labor of large numbers of African slaves; and, finally, the temperate regions which eventually acquired a predominantly European population. In this study, not surprisingly, the last is the least considered because of the relatively negligible number of non-whites in modern times.

The prejudice and discrimination suffered by the highland Indians, in Harris' opinion, fell into a pattern designed to further the exploitation of one group by the other, and are consequences of the labor policies pursued since the conquest. "What we call prejudices," he writes in another connection, "are merely the rationalizations which we acquire in order to prove to ourselves that the human beings whom we harm are not worthy of better treatment" (p. 68).

A basic difference in the situation of both Latin American Indians and men of color compared to Negro North Americans is the immutably rigid definition of the latter's status and, contrariwise, the fluid definition of racial affiliation in Latin America. In the United States, as Harris reminds us, a man with a known drop of Negro blood is considered a Negro—no matter how biologically illogical this might be. In Latin America a man can be annexed to another ethnic group of higher status when his accomplishments seem to warrant it. This is not the acme of social justice, but it tends to reduce the appearance of racial tensions and permits a more beneficial use of human resources.

The crucial difference between the English and the Latin slave systems, Harris argues, was the treatment of the free Negroes and mulattoes whose opportunities for social mobility were greater in Latin America. This could have been the natural result of the relatively small European immigration to Latin America which required the Spaniards and Portuguese to rely upon elements of the non-white population for the performance of numerous functions which could not be entrusted to slaves. In Anglo America this tendency did not

develop because whites usually outnumbered non-whites and therefore were able to reserve nearly all non-servile occupations to people from their own ranks.

Harris remarks that certain differences between the slave systems of North and South America, while real, may not have been as accentuated as often has been implied. This approach could have been carried a bit further. For example, he re-asserts the old saw that what seems to be racial discrimination in Brazil, upon examination, turns out to be merely class discrimination, although he admits racial background to be among the criteria determining class. Many studies make it clear that neither racial prejudice nor discrimination is unknown in Brazil. The Brazilian social system has permitted men of color—although the less color the better—to participate in the general society much more fully than their American counterparts. This does not mean, however, that what is regarded as class discrimination may not at bottom be a mask for a racial prejudice which cannot be neatly explained by rational considerations.

The format of this volume is worthy of comment, for the publisher has applied some of the techniques which make modern textbooks and juveniles generally more attractive than most books addressed to the ordinary adult audience. There is a section at the back of the book containing illustrations and polychromatic tables, graphs, and maps. The value of the five photographs might be questioned, but the other innovations are generally useful and a step in the right direction. One reservation should be noted. To check a citation it is necessary to look in three different places: the page being read, the notes, and—because the notes omit the title—the bibliography.

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Estudio social de América Latina, 1962 and 1963-1964. Prepared by the DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS of the PAN AMERICAN UNION. Washington, 1964. Pan American Union. Tables. Notes. Pp. xxii, 384; xi, 265. Paper. \$3.00.

At a time when social scientists are building models for purposes of research, teaching, and prediction, it is important to note the publication of two valuable social studies on Latin America. Covering the years 1962 through 1964, both works go well beyond the area of "social" in the strictest sense of the word. The reason is that in preparing these volumes, the Pan American Union set out to describe the social aspects or "dimensions" (the term preferred by the au-