Racial Self-Classification, Group Consciousness, and Public Employment Representation

Abstract: This paper examines how racial identity misrepresentation influences public sector hiring in Brazil. We focus on misaligned white candidates — those who self-identify as white but are unlikely to be classified as such by facial recognition — and exploit close electoral races using a regression discontinuity design. Narrow victories by these candidates reduce the share of nonwhite hires in municipal legislative offices by approximately 20%, with effects concentrated in temporary and managerial positions. We also find a significant decline in nonwhite leadership in municipal secretariats. These results indicate that misaligned whiteness shapes racial representation through political and bureaucratic channels.

Authors:

Diogo Baerlocher, University of South Florida
Rodrigo Schneider, Skidmore College

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