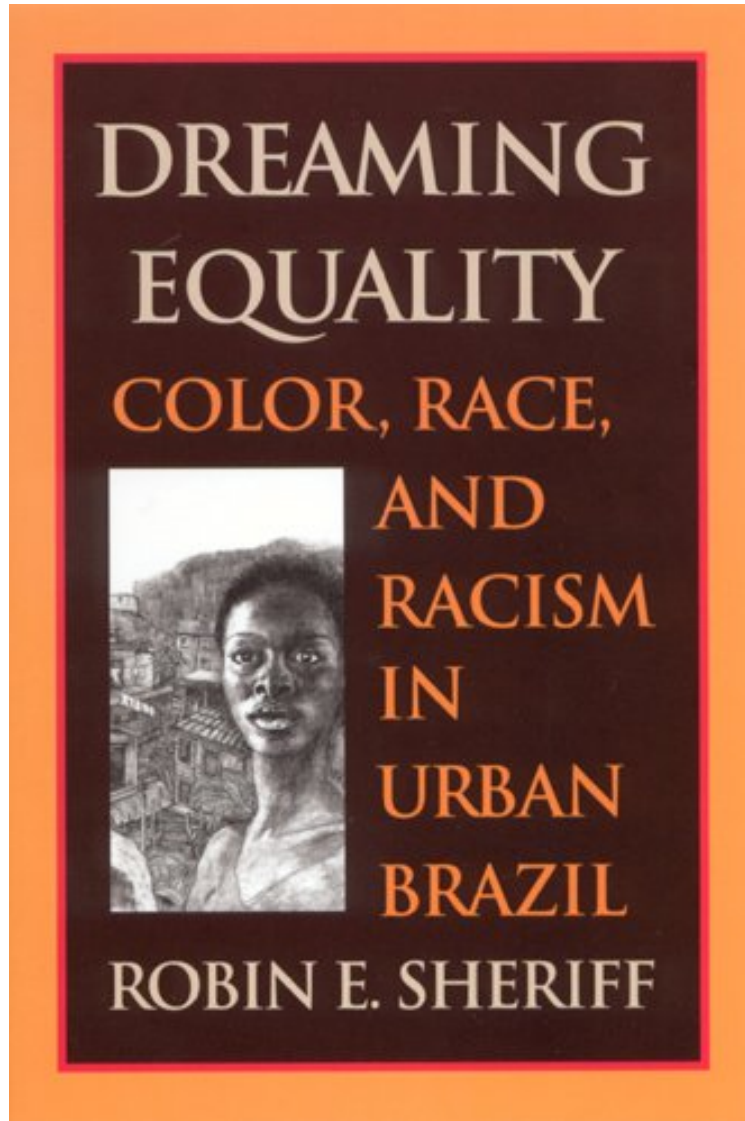


(Read free ebook) Dreaming Equality: Color, Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil

Dreaming Equality: Color, Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil

Robin E. Sheriff

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Robin E. Sheriff : Dreaming Equality: Color, Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dreaming Equality: Color, Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil:

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In the 1933 publication *The Masters and the Slaves*, Brazilian scholar and novelist Gilberto Freyre challenged the racist ideas of his day by defending the “African contribution” to Brazil’s culture. In so doing, he proposed that Brazil was relatively free of most forms of racial prejudice and could best be understood as a “racial democracy.” Over time this view has grown into the popular myth that racism in Brazil is very mild or nonexistent. This myth contrasts starkly with the realities of a pernicious racial inequality that permeates every aspect of Brazilian life. To study the grip of this myth on African Brazilians’ views of themselves and their nation, Robin E. Sheriff spent twenty months in a primarily black shantytown in Rio de Janeiro, studying the inhabitants’s views of race and racism. How, she asks, do poor African Brazilians experience and interpret racism in a country where its very existence tends to be publicly denied? How is racism talked about privately in the family and publicly in the community—or is it talked about at all? Sheriff’s analysis is particularly important because most Brazilians live in urban settings, and her examination of their views of race and racism sheds light on common but underarticulated racial attitudes. This book is the first to demonstrate that urban African Brazilians do not subscribe to the racial democracy myth and recognize racism as a central factor shaping their lives.

From *Library Journal* In this ethnography, Sheriff (anthropology, Florida International Univ.) challenges the decades-old claim that Brazil is relatively free of racial prejudice and functions as a *democracia racial* (“racial democracy”) by examining how discourse there constructs cultural understanding. To better appreciate how Brazilians talk about (or avoid talking about) color, race, and racism in everyday life, Sheriff moved to Rio de Janeiro, where she lived in a black shantytown for a year and a half, interviewing the residents, their white, middle-class neighbors, and urban black militants. After studying the narratives of residents who described themselves and others in color terms, she came to the conclusion that most Brazilians are very aware that racial discrimination exists in their society but help maintain the status quo by keeping silent. Skillfully dismembering the concept of *democracia racial* and all its paradoxes, Sheriff offers an innovative method for analyzing racism in any country or locale, not just Brazil. For academic libraries. Deborah Bigelow, Leonia P.L., NJ Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. “A compassionate, intelligent, and beautifully written study of racism in one of the world’s poorest slums.” -- Vincent Crapanzano, distinguished professor of anthropology and comparative literature, CUNY Graduate Center

From the Back Cover Brazil has the largest African-descended population in the world outside Africa. Despite an economy founded on slave labor, Brazil has long been renowned as a “racial democracy.” Many Brazilians and observers of Brazil continue to maintain that racism there is very mild or nonexistent. The myth of racial democracy contrasts starkly with the realities of a pernicious racial inequality that permeates Brazilian culture and social structure. To study the significance of this contrast on African Brazilians’ views of themselves and their nation, Robin E. Sheriff lived in a primarily black shantytown in Rio de Janeiro, where she explored the inhabitants’s views of race and racism firsthand. How, she asks, do poor African Brazilians experience and interpret racism in a country where its very existence tends to be publicly denied? How is racism talked about privately in the family and publicly in the community—or is it talked about at all? Sheriff’s analysis is particularly important because most Brazilians live in urban settings, and her examination of their views of race and racism sheds light on common but underarticulated racial attitudes. This book is the first to demonstrate that urban African Brazilians recognize the deceptions of the myth of racial democracy—while embracing it as a dream of how their nation should be.