Racism and Brazilian democracy: two sides of the same coin?

Gladys Lanier Mitchell

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Abstract

Experiences with racism and age negatively affect how Afro-Brazilians in Salvador and São Paulo rate democracy. Older cohorts are more likely to rate democracy high compared to younger cohorts who rate it as low. Respondents in Salvador tend to rate democracy lower than respondents in São Paulo. Moreover, interviews reveal that as citizens believe they are not accorded full rights, they do not agree that Brazil’s political system is fully democratic. Studies examining democracy in Brazil and racial politics throughout the diaspora would benefit from examining racialized experiences of citizens, rather than simply including the demographic variable of race. It is these experiences that affect rating of democracy rather than ascribed notions of race.

Keywords: Afro-Brazilians; racism; democracy; discrimination; politics; Brazil.

The reaction of a black (negro) that does not want to live with a white, I believe, is a natural reaction. Whomever was rejected in their personal life has no obligation to like the person who did not accept them. (Bacoccina 2007)

Why say Brazil is a country of equality, a country that has no prejudice … prejudice exists. If you were to stop and think, [you would ask] why don’t a lot of whites go to jail? You will see more blacks (negros) in jail … There is a lack of schooling … in the periphery; the place where we live is practically forgotten. (Self-identified black (negra) female rap artist in São Paulo, personal interview, 2008)
Matilde Ribeiro, former director of the Special Secretariat of Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality, finds it natural if blacks dislike whites because of past discrimination. Her statement was controversial because racism appears to be a ‘natural’ feature of multi-racial democracies. If racism is inherent to democracy, how does this affect ratings of democracy? The São Paulo rap artist suggests that Brazil is unequal because of prejudice. How does racism in the daily lives of Afro-Brazilians affect how they rate democracy? This article attempts to answer these questions based on Afro-Brazilians’ assessments of democracy in Salvador and São Paulo, Brazil. I rely on qualitative and quantitative methods to test my hypothesis that Afro-Brazilians who experience racism will rate democracy lower than those with no experiences of racism. Statistical analysis shows that Afro-Brazilians are more likely to rate democracy low if they experience racism. This finding is significant because racial experiences, rather than simply race, should be included when examining political attitudes. Afro-Brazilians should not be viewed as a homogeneous group. Older cohorts are more satisfied with democracy than younger cohorts. Interviews reveal that Afro-Brazilians believe politicians only discuss racial issues to appeal to voters, but do not enact racial policies once elected. Afro-Brazilians believe Brazilian society does not have a fully developed democracy since politicians do not address persistent problems such as poverty, which disproportionately affect Afro-Brazilians.

Current literature

My research can be situated in literature on patriotism and prejudice in the USA, racial attitudes in Brazil, and democracy and political opinion in Brazil. The low quality of Brazilian democracy is due to clientelism and patronage (Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Ames 2002), remaining vestiges of authoritarianism (Hagopian 1996), the over-influence of money on a politician’s success at being elected (Samuels 2001), personalized voting (Samuels 2001), and weak political parties (Mainwaring and Scully 1995).

In the existing literature on Brazilian democracy and public opinion, low ratings of democracy are due to low levels of trust in political institutions. Using the 2001 Latinobarometer, Marta Lagos (2001) finds that only 39 per cent of Brazilians prefer democracy. She attributes this to low levels of trust in political parties and the national congress. Younger cohorts with medium to high education are indifferent to the type of political regime. More educated people are not necessarily more supportive of democracy. Yu-Han et al.’s (2008) comparative study finds that in Latin America, Brazil included, a lack of trust in parties and parliament, and citizens not feeling empowered,
has a greater effect on dissatisfaction with democracy than opinions on the national economy and individual economic conditions. Baquero (2008) examines the role social capital plays in democratic consolidation. Using survey data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (2007) and Estudos Eleitorais Brasileiros (2002, 2006), he finds there is potential for social capital to play a role in strengthening democracy. However, because citizens accept corrupt politicians, they do not hold them accountable. Baquero argues that accountability is essential as political representation of citizens is necessary for a healthy democracy.

None of these studies include colour as a variable. Furthermore, none of these studies take racism into account and they do not address why they do not take it into account. For this reason, my findings are extremely important to current scholarship. Considering that the Brazilian state now addresses racial discrimination, it is necessary for scholars to include discrimination in political opinion studies. A distinction can be drawn when comparing how white and non-white Brazilians experience democracy.

Scholars have focused on racism in Brazil (Nascimento 1977; Twine 1998; Guimarães and Huntley 2000; Hamilton et al. 2001; Sheriff 2001; Telles 2004), how political elites shaped race (Marx 1998; Nobles 2000), Afro-Brazilian mobilization against racism (Hanchard 1994; Covin 2006), the media’s role in portraying Afro-Brazilian political candidates (Oliveira 2007), and Afro-Brazilian politicians’ support of racial policies (Johnson 2006). These scholars examine racism, racial politics, and inequality, but do not study the impact of racism on democracy.

Bernd Reiter (2008) and Kia Caldwell (2007) demonstrate how racism undermines democracy. Reiter focuses on education and civic participation. Caldwell examines Afro-Brazilian women’s daily experiences through the notion of cultural citizenship. Reiter focuses on how included white Brazilians exclude Afro-Brazilians and how they maintain positions of privilege. His case study takes place in Salvador, Bahia and was conducted between 2001 and 2005. He conducted interviews with students and teachers in public and private middle and high schools. Relying on the notion of positional goods, Reiter argues that white students attending private schools have the positional good of education which guarantees them university education and higher-paying jobs, while most Afro-Brazilians attend inferior and public schools. Reiter finds that a number of public school teachers do not show up for class, and those who do are substandard teachers. An example Reiter gives of participating in democracy as citizens is the participatory budget in Salvador, Bahia. Citizens actively mobilized and representatives from a number of organizations were chosen to voice their opinions on funding allocation. However, political elites
decided on budget allocation without them. Reiter’s study is illuminating as it shows how exclusion undermines democracy.

Kia Caldwell examines Afro-Brazilian women’s daily experiences through the notion of cultural citizenship. She conducts ethnographic research on Afro-Brazilian women activists and non-activists who self-identify as negra. Cultural citizenship takes account of how ‘black women’s citizenship experiences are shaped in domains such as the nation, popular culture, and the workplace, as well as in corporeal and intra-psychic arenas as they are expressed in relation to the body, self-esteem, and self-image’ (Caldwell 2007, p. 4). Caldwell finds that many Afro-Brazilian women are not valued as citizens of the nation due to their race and gender. Brazilian aesthetics that uphold whiteness as the standard lead to low self-esteem of Afro-Brazilian women who do not feel a part of the nation. Activists who claim a black (negra) identity gain cultural citizenship by combating negative stereotypes and claiming their rights.

Michael Mitchell (2007) and Michael Castro (2008) use the Latinobarometer to examine racism and democracy. Mitchell focuses on Brazil and Castro focuses on all Latin American countries surveyed. Mitchell examines democracy by focusing on institutions such as political parties, the police, the courts, work, and school. He finds that 66 per cent of the sample agree there is a lot of discrimination from the police, and 47.5 per cent claim there is a lot of discrimination in political parties. Moreover, 58.4 per cent believe there is a lot of discrimination in the courts. Castro examines racism and democracy by focusing on voting and discrimination. He finds that Afro-Latinos are less supportive of voting if they experience discrimination. Both Mitchell and Castro find that racism negatively affects how respondents experience democracy. I contribute to current research on racism and democracy.

Stanley Bailey’s book Legacies of Race: Identities, Attitudes, and Politics in Brazil (2009) examines racial attitudes of white and non-white Brazilians. Black Americans’ and white Americans’ racial attitudes tend to be polarized. Bailey concludes that the same cannot be said of Brazil. In fact, he finds that a higher percentage of white Brazilians than white Americans acknowledge that racism exists. Bailey concludes that a North American framework for examining racial attitudes cannot be used in studies on Brazilian racial attitudes. Bailey also concludes that negro movements in Brazil have been unsuccessful because of a lack of racial group identity.

Despite the fact that scholars argue against racial cleavage in Brazil, Brazilian social scientists began studying ethnic voting in the 1970s. Amaury de Souza (1971) found that Afro-Brazilian voters overwhelmingly supported the Brazilian Workers Party more than white Brazilians. Soares and Silva (1987) examined black, brown, and white
voting patterns in Rio de Janeiro’s 1982 election. They found differences in voting among blacks and browns. Mônica Castro (1993) compared voting patterns of Afro-Brazilians and found that poorer voters abstained, while middle-class voters supported Leftist candidates.

Using the concept of social dominance theory, Sidanius, Pena and Sawyer (2001) examined the Dominican Republic. In the USA, whites with anti-black racism are more patriotic than blacks. Thus, whites in the dominant racial group who hold racist beliefs are more patriotic than blacks. Sidanius et al. did not find the same relationship in the Dominican Republic. Those with anti-black racism were no more patriotic than those with no anti-black sentiments. My work provides Brazil as another case study and focuses on inter-group dynamics, rather than intra-group dynamics.

These studies are noteworthy but they do not consider racialized experiences of black and brown voters. This study departs from studies where whites’ and African descendants’ racial and political attitudes are examined. Like Bailey, I do not assume group identity exists among Afro-Brazilians. I examine intra-group differences and experiences of racism of Afro-Brazilians.

**Methodology**

I rely on original surveys conducted in 2006 and 2008 in Salvador and São Paulo. Salvador is located in the northeast, a poor region, and is known as the ‘mecca’ of Afro-Brazilian culture. It is nearly 70 per cent African descendants. São Paulo is in the south, a wealthier region of Brazil. Its population is nearly 30 per cent African descendants. According to the 2000 census, 20 per cent of Salvador’s population consider themselves *preto*. In São Paulo, 5 per cent consider themselves *preto*. Black movement activity has occurred in São Paulo since the 1930s (Hanchard 1994; Covin 2006), making it an interesting site of comparison.

The 2008 survey allows me to analyse the relationship between Afro-Brazilians’ experiences of racism and democracy. This survey was originally an experiment testing the effects of political messages on racial classification of politicians, but no effects were found. The sample size is 200. The 2006 survey does not include a question on rating democracy but it includes a question on experiencing racism. The sample size is 674. The larger survey complements the 2008 survey. I first examine the profile of Afro-Brazilians who experienced racism, by colour, age and gender. Second, with regression analysis, I examine the relationship between rating democracy and Afro-Brazilian respondents’ experiences of racism, colour identification, age, gender, city, and socioeconomic status. Third, I analyse my interviews.
conducted in both cities in November 2008. My conclusion suggests how Afro-Brazilians may participate in democracy in the future.

2006 survey

In consultation with experts in survey methods from the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), I chose the Salvador neighbourhoods Federação, Peri peri and Itapoa. Federação is socioeconomically heterogeneous. Some of the campus of UFBA, a prestigious public university, is located in Federação which includes middle-class households. There are also very low-income households. Itapoa is also socioeconomically diverse but it has a large proportion of low-income households. Peri peri is located in the suburbs. It is a low-income neighbourhood. It is relatively easy to find African descendants in these neighbourhoods.

A total of 346 interviews were conducted in Salvador. Brazilian undergraduate students conducted the interviews. They were trained in interviewing methods. Interviewers in São Paulo were affiliated with a student group that focuses on racial issues. All interviewers in São Paulo self-identify as negro/a. In Salvador, one interviewer self-identifies as white, one as parda, and the others identify as negra. Interviewers told potential interviewees that the study concerned Afro-descendants and they asked if any lived in the household. The respondent ultimately determined whether they were selected to participate in the study.

In São Paulo, along with experts in research on race in Brazil, I identified neighbourhoods with high populations of Afro-descendants but which were also socioeconomically diverse. The neighbourhoods chosen were Cidade Tiradentes, Casa Verde, Brasílândia, Campo Limpo and Capão Redondo. Cidade Tiradentes is a low-income neighbourhood located in the far east of São Paulo. Casa Verde is mostly middle-class, in the northeast of São Paulo. Campo Limpo is located in the southwest and is known for its large social divisions. Capão Redondo is located on the periphery in the south. I obtained neighbourhood maps from the Institute of Brazilian Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in São Paulo and randomly selected streets where students conducted face-to-face interviews. A total of 328 interviews were conducted.

Students were assigned to at least two neighbourhoods. Interviewers used a skip number method and conducted interviews at every fifth house, or third house if the street did not contain many houses. Respondents were of voting age. Voting is mandatory for those who are 18 to 70 years old. However, citizens can begin voting at the age of 16. A total of 674 interviews were conducted in Salvador and São Paulo.
2008 survey

The 2008 survey sample is made up of 200 respondents in Salvador and São Paulo. Afro-Brazilian university students from UFBA conducted interviews in Salvador and university graduates trained in interviewing methods conducted interviews in São Paulo. In both cities, all interviewers except a parda self-identify as negro/a. In Salvador, one interviewer has a medium brown complexion and the other a light complexion. In São Paulo, one interviewer has a medium dark complexion, another a dark complexion, and one has a light complexion. Interviews were conducted in neighbourhoods chosen by the interviewers and subjects were chosen at random.

I use this survey to analyse racism and ratings of democracy. To compare similar trends, I supplement the 2008 survey with the 2006 survey which includes questions on racial discrimination and trust in politicians. My survey data are complemented by interviews I conducted in 2008.

Descriptive results of surveys

In the 2008 sample, 31 per cent of respondents are aged 16–25, 40 per cent are aged 26–40, 21 per cent are aged 41–55, and 8 per cent are 56 or older. Afro-Brazilians identify in colour and racial categories which include white (branco), mixed-race (mulato), light brown (moreno claro), brown (pardo, marrom, moreno), dark brown (moreno jambo), the colour preto and the racial category negro. In Salvador, 1 per cent of respondents identify as white, and in São Paulo, 4 per cent identify as such. In Salvador, 31 per cent identify as brown and in São Paulo, 20 per cent identify as such. In both cities, 49 per cent identify as negro. Twelve per cent and 21 per cent, respectively, identify as preto in Salvador and São Paulo. Most respondents are located in the monthly family income bracket of R$830 to R$2,075.3 Forty-four per cent of respondents are located in this bracket, while 37 per cent have a monthly family income of up to R$830. Sixteen per cent have a monthly family income of R$2,075 to R$4,150, and 2 per cent have a monthly family income of R$4,150 to R$8,300. Only 1 per cent have no family income.

2006 survey

The colour and racial category most claimed is black. In Brazil, the word colour (cor) is preferred to race. Race is used to describe species not human beings. However, black movement activists sometimes use the word race. The racial category negro denotes census-category blacks (pretos) and browns (pardos). Moreno is a term Brazilians of all
colours may identify as and includes dark-skinned and light-skinned people with tans. Considering the open-ended colour categories, 2 per cent of Afro-Brazilians identify as white, 62 per cent as black (preto, negro, negão), and 36 per cent as brown (mulato, moreno, pardo, moreno claro, marrom). In São Paulo, 6 per cent of Afro-Brazilians self-identify as white (branco), 47 per cent as black (preto, negro, negão), 45 per cent as brown (mulatto, moreno, pardo, moreno claro, moreno escuro, moreno jambo, and marrom) and 2 per cent identify as other.

In Salvador, 52 per cent of respondents are male and 48 per cent female. In São Paulo, 57 per cent are female and 43 per cent are male. In both cities, the average age is 33. In Salvador, respondents’ ages range from 17 to 67 and in São Paulo from 16 to 83. In Salvador, 40 per cent of respondents have a low monthly family income of R$700 (approximately US$350). Forty-four per cent of the sample have a middle family income of $350 to US$875 per month. Only 13 per cent of the sample have a high monthly family income of $875 to US$3,500. In São Paulo, 26 per cent of the respondents have a monthly family income of approximately US$350, 46 per cent have a monthly family income between US$350 and US$875, and 25 per cent have a monthly family income between $875 and US$3,500.

Forty-five per cent of the sample in Salvador and 36 per cent of the sample in São Paulo have some high school education or finished high school. In Salvador, 15 per cent did not complete middle school, and in São Paulo, 24 per cent did not. Nineteen per cent of respondents in Salvador and 14 per cent in São Paulo were pre-college. Although the sample in São Paulo is less educated than the Salvador sample, they earn more money, likely due to it being a more developed city.

Selection bias

Nationally, most Afro-Brazilians identify as brown (pardo). In the 2000 census, 45 per cent of the population identified as white, 39 per cent as brown, 6 per cent as black and less than 1 per cent identified as yellow or indigenous. In Salvador, in the census, 66 per cent of the population considered themselves black or brown. In São Paulo, 30 per cent of the population considered themselves black (preto) or brown (pardo). In both cities most Afro-Brazilians consider themselves brown. It is impossible to know how many Afro-Brazilians self-identify as white. My Salvador and São Paulo samples are biased because of the large number of respondents identifying as black (preto or negro).

These biases are accounted for because my sample includes a significant percentage of young people. Livio Sansone (2004) finds that younger people identify as black. Stanley Bailey and Edward Telles
(2006) find that younger and educated people are more likely to choose the *negro* category than older people. People with higher education are more likely to choose the *negro* category rather than the *moreno* category (Bailey and Telles 2006). They claim that for younger people, *negro* is associated with a modern identity which is influenced by black American culture dispersed by music. They also claim that educated Afro-Brazilians claiming the *negro* identity are more exposed to black activists’ rhetoric than those who are less educated. This rhetoric encourages a collective black identity. Although my sample is biased, the study is especially useful because respondents were able to freely choose a colour or racial identification without being restricted to census categories.

**Racism in Brazil**

In the 2008 survey, 59 per cent of Afro-Brazilians had experienced racism and 96 per cent agreed that racism is a problem. In Salvador, 53 per cent had experienced racism, and in São Paulo, 67 per cent had experienced racism. In the 2006 survey, 87 per cent of respondents agreed that whites are prejudiced against blacks.

Evidence of racism is demonstrated by inequalities between whites and black and brown Brazilians. Statistical comparisons of infant mortality show that in 2005, infant mortality was higher for blacks and browns than for whites; 24.4 per cent for *pretas* and *pardas* and 23.7 per cent for *brancas* (Paixão and Carvano 2008, p. 38). In 2006 the number of whites attending university was over four times the number of blacks and browns attending university (Paixão and Carvano 2008, p. 81). Despite inequalities in health and education, some argue that these are class inequalities. This is often the argument made in debates about university affirmative action. Those against affirmative action believe that public school education should be improved because poorer children attend such schools. Yet, Paixão and Carvano (2008) show that *pretos* and *pardos* who have finished college are 1.2 times more likely to be unemployed compared to whites with the same schooling. This difference can be attributed to racial discrimination.

Racism is explicitly practised as police brutality, a problem Afro-Brazilians face. Michael Mitchell and Charles H. Wood (1998) found that the likelihood of assault by police officers on men increased depending on skin colour and age. Younger black and brown men are more likely to be assaulted by the police than whites. Although income and education decrease one’s chance of assault, it is important to note colour differences. The darker one’s skin colour, the more likelihood of assault by police officers.
Class, colour, and racism

The 2006 survey data show that a number of Afro-Brazilians believe they are judged more by their class than race. In the 2006 survey, 67 per cent of respondents in Salvador and 68 per cent of respondents in São Paulo agreed they are judged more by their class than colour. A closer analysis of respondents who experienced racism shows that, in general, there is an increase in the percentage of Afro-Brazilians who have experienced racism on a colour continuum from white to black (Figure 1). There are dips at the colours light brown and dark brown and the racial category mixed-race, which can be accounted for by small numbers. Of those who experienced racism, only 2 per cent self-identify as white; 15 per cent identify as brown, and 24 per cent identify as preto. The highest percentage experiencing racism are negros. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents who claim they experience racism are negro.

Preto versus negro

In the 2008 survey, the highest percentage of Afro-Brazilians experiencing racism are negros: a politically charged racial category. The same trend is seen in the 2006 survey. Negros have the highest percentage admitting that white Brazilians have a lot of prejudice against blacks (negros) (Table 1). Fifty-four per cent and 50 per cent of negros and pretos, respectively, believe whites have a lot of prejudice against blacks. Only 38 per cent of Afro-Brazilians who identify as white believe this. It is likely that negros acknowledge racism more than others because it is a politicized racial category. Preto is a colour category that denotes black, rather than a racial category. John Burdick (1998) found that pretos recalled personal experiences of racism more than negros assumidos. However, my 2008 survey findings do not show this.

Figure 1. Respondents experiencing racism, by colour, in Salvador and São Paulo (%)
Age and racism

As age increases, a smaller percentage of respondents claim to experience racism. In the 2008 survey, among those in the oldest cohort of 56 years and older, 47 per cent have experienced racism, and in the youngest cohort of 16 to 25 years 64 per cent have experienced racism. Fifty-nine per cent of those aged 25 to 40 have experienced racism, and of those aged 41 to 55, 55 per cent have experienced racism. In the 2006 survey, high percentages of respondents in all age cohorts believe white Brazilians are prejudiced against blacks (negros); yet as age increases, the percentage of those who believe whites are not prejudiced against blacks increases (Table 2). This could be the result of younger cohorts’ accommodation with a discourse of racial discrimination, whereas older cohorts are more attuned to the discourse of racial democracy, which is the idea that discrimination does not exist because Brazilians are racially mixed. Younger people tend to identify as negro. The 2008 data show that of those experiencing racism, 57 per cent self-identify as negro.

Table 2. 2006 survey: ‘In your opinion are white Brazilians prejudiced against blacks (negros)?’ (by age cohort)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes they have a lot of prejudice</th>
<th>Yes they have a little prejudice</th>
<th>Yes they are prejudiced but I don't know how much</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16–25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41–55</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56+</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Racism and gender

In the 2008 survey, 53 per cent of Afro-Brazilian women in Salvador and São Paulo said they had experienced racism. Sixty-six per cent of men had experienced racism. It is possible that racism is gendered so that Afro-Brazilian women cannot easily separate sexism and racism. Kia Caldwell (2007) acknowledges the various ways racism is gendered. In the 2006 survey the difference between men and women is quite small. Fourteen per cent of women believe whites are not prejudiced against blacks (*negros*), while only 12 per cent of men believe this (Table 3).

Racism and Brazilian democracy

Given that most respondents believe racism is a problem in Brazil, examining ratings of democracy is important. The 2008 survey question asked respondents to rate democracy on a scale where one is bad and ten is good. Statistical analysis is conducted where the dependent variable, rating democracy, is made dichotomous by measuring ratings as low (from 1–5) and high (from 6 to 10). Forty-six per cent of respondents rated Brazilian democracy high, and 54 per cent rated it low. The independent variables are experienced racism, colour, age, gender, and socioeconomic status (SES). The question regarding experiencing racism asked respondents to answer yes or no. Colour or racial identification is based on how the respondent identified in an open-ended question. The variable socioeconomic status is an interacted variable of education and monthly family income. Education levels include ‘did not complete middle school’, ‘completed middle school’, ‘did not complete high school’, ‘completed high school’, ‘in college’, ‘completed college’, and ‘completed a Masters degree’. Monthly family income is ‘no income’, up to two minimum salaries (US$415), between US$415 and US$1,037.50, between $1,037.50 and $2,075 and between $2,075 and $4,150. Cities include Salvador and São Paulo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes they have a lot of prejudice</th>
<th>Yes they have a little prejudice</th>
<th>Yes they are prejudiced but I don’t know how much</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regression analysis shows that the independent variable, experienced racism, is statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence interval (Table 4). Age is statistically significant at the 90 per cent confidence interval and is negatively associated with rating democracy. The independent variable, city, is statistically significant at the 90 per cent confidence interval. Respondents in Salvador are more likely than those in São Paulo to rate democracy low.

Experiencing racism by age and low ratings of democracy

In a logistic regression analysis, the independent variables, experienced racism, colour identification, gender, SES and city are held constant. Respondents in the age category $16 \leq x \leq 25$ have a 70 per cent chance of rating democracy low (Figure 2). Those in the 56 years or older age cohort have a 47 per cent chance of rating democracy low. The youngest cohort is one and a half times more likely to rate democracy low compared to the oldest age cohort. Given that the oldest cohort experienced military authoritarian rule and dictatorships, it is no surprise that they view democracy with a higher regard than younger cohorts. Respondents in the age cohort $16 \leq x \leq 25$ have only experienced democratic rule, which makes them more critical of democracy than those in older cohorts.

City

The city respondents live in affects how they rate democracy. Holding the independent variables gender, age, experienced racism, colour identification, and SES constant, respondents in Salvador have a 63 per cent chance of rating democracy low. Respondents in São Paulo have a 47 per cent chance of rating democracy low: a difference of 16 percentage points. It is likely that regional differences account for these variations. Salvador is located in the poorer northeastern region of Brazil and is known for the corrupt practices of the late Antonio

| Table 4. Regression analysis of rating democracy in Salvador and São Paulo |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Quality of democracy     | Coefficient | Standard error |
| Experience racism        | .16**   | .08     |
| Colour                   | .15     | .17     |
| Age                      | -.23*   | .12     |
| Gender                   | -.01    | .07     |
| City                     | .15**   | .07     |
| SES                      | .36     | .22     |
| Constant N 180           | .28*    | .15     |

* $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$
Carlos Magalhães (ACM). Through clientelism, ACM won elections. The Democratas, formerly the Liberal Front Party (PFL), to which ACM belonged, has a waning influence on voters in Salvador, yet citizens remain sceptical of politicians. São Paulo also has a history of corruption. My 2006 survey shows that in Salvador and São Paulo, 81 per cent and 85 per cent respectively of respondents do not trust politicians. Because of a long-standing tradition of corruption particular to the northeast, it is likely that respondents in Salvador have a higher probability of rating democracy low.

Experiencing racism

Holding the independent variables SES, colour identification, gender and city constant, respondents who have experienced racism have a higher predicted probability of rating democracy low. Respondents who have experienced racism have a 62 per cent chance of rating democracy low. Respondents who have never experienced racism have a 45 per cent chance of rating democracy low. In Salvador, the difference in rating democracy low between a respondent who has experienced racism and one who has not is 16 percentage points. In São Paulo, a respondent who has experienced racism has a 54 per cent chance of rating democracy low, compared to a respondent who has not experienced racism who has a 37 per cent chance of rating democracy low.

A respondent in São Paulo in the lowest income band with no experience of racism is one and a half times less likely than a respondent with the same characteristics in Salvador to rate democracy low. The interaction of class, city, and experiencing racism works in powerful ways, exemplified by the fact that a respondent in Salvador with the highest SES who has experienced racism is nearly three times more likely to rate democracy low than a respondent in São Paulo in the lowest SES with no experience of racism.
Interview results: accessing Brazilian democracy

Regression analysis demonstrates that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between experiencing racism and rating democracy. Interviews with Afro-Brazilians highlight why they rate democracy low. In 2008, I conducted fourteen in-depth interviews with Afro-Brazilians in Salvador and São Paulo. Two respondents identified as brown (pardo), one interviewee said he had no colour, and eleven identified as negro. Most respondents agreed that Afro-Brazilian and poor people’s issues are important. With a few exceptions, Afro-Brazilian respondents claimed that politicians largely ignore the interests of Afro-Brazilians and poor people.

I asked respondents if they thought politicians addressed the needs of Afro-Brazilians and about the importance of addressing such issues. All respondents except the ‘colourless’ respondent claimed most politicians do not address Afro-Brazilian issues. They believe politicians discuss these issues to get elected but after being elected do not address such issues. Although I asked respondents if they were affiliated with a political party, many named the candidates they voted for rather than a political party. Brazilians tend to vote for political candidates rather than political parties (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). Although Mainwaring finds that Leftist political parties are defined by political ideologies, conservative parties are not. For these reasons, I do not focus on political ideology and partisanship. The following are some responses to the question regarding whether politicians address Afro-Brazilian issues.

A 24-year-old golden-brown-complexioned male university student in Salvador who claims he has no colour stated:

If you have an ethnic banner of any type, whether it be indigenous, black, or white, I don’t think they need to worry about this. In general, we are in a country that does not fit this [profile]. You are black, such as I feel black, I feel white, indigenous, mixed-race ... I think this does not fit [the profile] here in Brazil. (personal interview, 2008)

Although an Afro-Brazilian student selected him for the interview, the interviewee denied he had a colour. Earlier in the interview, he claimed that racism is not a problem and is something he sometimes worries about which he attributes to blacks (negros). He did not answer the question concerning his opinion on whether politicians address racial issues.

Unlike the previous interviewee, the respondents I describe below all identify as black (negro) and believe politicians do not address racial issues. The first respondent thinks politicians forget about poor
people, who are black and do not contribute to the economy in the same way rich and wealthy whites do. For this reason, politicians see it as more beneficial to address white concerns over black concerns. The second interviewee believes politicians address issues during their campaigns but never fulfil promises made to blacks. A 19-year-old male college student in Salvador who has a medium skin tone and identifies as negro responded as follows to the question about politicians addressing Afro-Brazilian concerns:

I don’t think so. They talk a lot at the time of the elections to win votes but when they arrive, few do things for blacks (negros). They tend more to whites and those most favoured… the rich. I think that the rich and whites bring more wealth, more money to the market, [and] make the economy grow… so they are the people that politicians emphasize more… They give more value to [them], forgetting people from the lower class which is majority black (negro). (personal interview, 2008)

A 45-year-old dark-skinned black movement activist woman in Salvador responded:

No … You see politicians incorporating an ethnic-racial discourse but they do not keep their promises. So you introduce an ethnic-racial discourse because today there exists a significant portion that accepts the ethnic-racial question… So you use a discourse, a language, you use our music, our culture, and principally pan-African things. You identify as black (negro) … you look at the majority of campaigns and they are made with black (negro) music and with pan-African colours but these candidates do not keep their promises with us. (personal interview, 2008)

As in Salvador, in São Paulo most respondents believe politicians do not address the needs of Afro-Brazilians. One respondent said that politicians address issues in general terms but not specifically targeting blacks (negros). A 27-year-old rap artist responded:

I don’t think they should exactly address blacks but the person that is very needy … which generally is the community of the periphery. I think that politicians should do this independent of race because the majority of those in the periphery are black (negro). (personal interview, 2008)

In sum, most Afro-Brazilian respondents who self-identify as black (negro) believe it is important that politicians address racial issues. Not
all respondents believe politicians should specifically target the Afro-Brazilian population. However, they believe politicians should address the needs of poor people, who are Afro-Brazilian. Respondents believe politicians seek Afro-Brazilian votes, but when elected, do not support policies to benefit Afro-Brazilians. One form of participating in the democratic process is voting for elected officials; yet many Afro-Brazilians feel they are marginalized and ignored.

Brazil and democracy: one goes north, the other goes south

Interviews reveal that Afro-Brazilians are not satisfied with politicians. This contributes to Afro-Brazilians rating democracy low. What are the specific reasons they rate democracy low, and what do they think about Brazilian democracy? This section analyses interviewees' responses about Brazilian democracy. A 20-year-old light brown male in Salvador stated:

I think we have a democratic system that theoretically is very good and after the re-opening of democracy the country began to take a path that was beneficial but democracy brings a lot of racism... But you perceive that the electoral system is good... So I think that the democracy of the country is a democracy that since the 1980s is maturing and this is taking a good path but we need to wake up and see that it is still a racist system. (personal interview)

Although the interviewee above acknowledges that democracy is maturing, he believes it is racist. The respondent below criticizes Brazilian democracy but also acknowledges that Brazil has not always been democratic. A 44-year-old dark-skinned male university professor in Salvador who self-identifies as black (negro) stated:

Brazilian political democracy is in a process like any other democracy... It is always in a process... It has to have the capacity to contemplate all demands of representation and participation of society that with each time period changes... For example, today the issue of blacks... the action organized by the Afro-Brazilian population, has placed demands on Brazilian democracy, including a point of view about the issue of representation and of participation... For example, an effective presence of blacks (negros) today in spaces of political representation in Brazilian parliament is very limited so this is a challenge to Brazilian democracy... I think that Brazilian democracy has advanced with time... [but it] does not have a democratic history. (personal interview)
This respondent discusses under-representation of Afro-Brazilians in electoral politics; he believes democracies are always in the process of developing, and that a truly democratic regime will respond to the demands of citizens. He believes democracy allows for demands to be made. The 45-year-old female black movement activist in Salvador, quoted earlier, is very critical of Brazilian democracy, despite the fact that she has lived through previous undemocratic regimes. It is likely she takes this critical stance because she is an activist and aware of issues such as racism. She stated:

I think like this, Brazil and democracy are two words . . . one goes one way, the other goes another way; one goes north the other goes south . . . Brazil is not a democratic country. We have an image of democracy, an image of freedom but democracy does not exist without citizens. Democracy does not exist without respect . . . to have democracy, citizenship has to exist; to have democracy, respect has to exist; to have democracy, there has to be values; to have democracy, human rights have to exist and Brazil violates all of these! Therefore, I will not say that Brazil is a democratic country. (personal interview, 2008)

Perhaps this respondent is extremely critical of democracy because of her political affiliation. For example, a voter who supported President Lula from the Workers Party (PT) might have high expectations and when these expectations are not fulfilled may be critical. When I asked this respondent about her political affiliation, she claimed no political party but said she preferred voting for black (negro) candidates. She mentioned candidates from the PT and PMDB but was critical of all political parties, even the leftist PT party. She stated the following:

But even blacks (negros) who are in political parties, they are at the bottom of the pyramid . . . When it’s time to take power, who takes it? A white. And the ideology of the party is also white. Therefore none of the parties have a political project, not even the PT.

Similarly, the 20-year-old respondent in Salvador claimed that he votes for black candidates not political parties. Both of these respondents are involved in black movement organizations and advocate policies that will benefit blacks (negros), therefore they support candidates whose platforms address such issues. Some of their frustration with democracy is that they may support Lula or the PT but are constantly pushing for Leftist parties such as the PT to have more black representatives to represent blacks’ (negros) interests.

Respondents in São Paulo and Salvador complained about personal experiences of prejudice or problems in poor communities as problems
of democracy. Political elites now acknowledge racial discrimination in the country. Racism continues under a democratic regime. However, it is only under such a regime that racism has been explicitly addressed by national leaders. Afro-Brazilian citizens believe injustices disproportionately affect them. They are excluded from the polity and do not have a high opinion of Brazilian democracy. It is common for them to mention the problems poor blacks face.

Conclusion

Experiences with racism negatively affect how Afro-Brazilians in Salvador and São Paulo rate democracy. Older cohorts are more likely to rate democracy high compared to younger cohorts who rate it as low. Respondents in Salvador tend to rate democracy lower than respondents in São Paulo. Interviews reveal that as citizens believe they are not accorded full rights, they do not agree that Brazil's political system is fully democratic. Although President Lula supports affirmative action and policies that have aided in lifting a number of poor Brazilians out of poverty, Afro-Brazilian respondents believe most politicians do not address their needs. A number of Afro-Brazilian respondents complained that politicians use racial cues to gain black (negro) votes but, when elected, do not support policies to benefit Afro-Brazilians. Respondents who do not feel it necessary for politicians to specifically address the needs of Afro-Brazilians believe politicians should address the needs of poor people, who are disproportionately Afro-Brazilian.

Affirmative action programs in universities and the federal law requiring schools to teach African and Afro-Brazilian history highlight the tremendous change in Brazilian racial politics. Most studies on Brazilian democracy avoid serious discussions of race, despite changing racial dynamics and continuous black movement activity. As more Afro-Brazilians claim black identities, politics will increasingly become racialized.

I believe there will be a proliferation of black movement organizations and that they will be strengthened by the involvement of youth, especially those who enter universities. I expect university students to become exposed to black movement rhetoric. Another consequence of higher educated Afro-Brazilians is that more may choose to pursue electoral politics. With a more educated Afro-Brazilian citizenry willing to vote for candidates with race-related platforms, the likelihood of such candidates winning election will be higher than it is today. To accurately study Brazil’s democracy, political scientists cannot continually ignore the importance of Brazilian racial politics. Shifts in racial politics, along with the fact that Afro-Brazilians are not
satisfied with democracy because of their class and race, will shape Brazilian democracy.

Notes
1. The variable political party is not statistically significant in a regression analysis. I do not include it in this analysis because Brazilian voters vote for candidates over political parties. The survey does not include a variable on political ideology.
2. The author thanks the following for their assistance in Brazil: Edson Arruda, Paula Barreto, Magda Lorena, Cloves Oliveira, Leon Padial, Neusa, Rosana Paiva, Jacqueline Romio, Kledir Salgado, Thabathu Silva, Gislene Santos, Darlene Sousa, Ricardo Summers, Jaqueline Santos, Gabriela, and Gloria Ventapane.
3. For an idea of the class standing of respondents I report average monthly family incomes for various occupations. My statistical analysis concerns monthly family income which combines all incomes of those working in the household. A maid has a monthly family income of 386 reais, a bus driver 964 reais, an engineer 5,246 reais, and a construction worker 637 reais (www.worldsalaries.org/brazil.shtml).

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**GLADYS LANIER MITCHELL** is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Social Science Research Institute at Duke University.

ADDRESS: Social Science Research Institute, Duke University, 2024 W. Main St, Durham, NC 27708, USA.

Email: glm2@duke.edu