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How Do You Define the Color Line?: Exploring the Impacts and Perceptions of Racial Representation in Brazilian Telenovelas

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HOW DO YOU DEFINE THE COLOR LINE?:
EXPLORING THE IMPACT AND PERCEPTIONS OF RACIAL
REPRESENTATION IN BRAZILIAN *TELENOVELAS*

By

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<u>How Do You Define the Color Line?:</u>
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<u>Brazilian *Telenovelas*</u>

This thesis explores the impact and perceptions surrounding racial representation in Brazilian society, using three modern Brazilian telenovelas as the microcosm for the study. Beginning in 1996 with the release of *Xica da Silva*, followed by *Duas Caras* in 2007, and ending with *Malhação* in 2014, each *telenovela* is examined in relation to the political context in which it was released, a thorough content analysis focusing on prevalent themes, and a look into the audience's perception of these programs through user generated YouTube comments. This thesis touches on the connections between traditional forms of media such as television, together with social media websites such as Facebook and YouTube, to connect past, present, and future media mediums. By addressing racial representation through these lenses, it pushes the reader to question the media's role, specifically through the *telenovela,* in influencing societal norms and opinions.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to Brazil and its people. When I was 18, I was first exposed to the wonders that the country has to offer and every time I go back, I find another piece of my being that I did not know existed. My experiences in Brazil have helped to develop me as a scholar, world citizen, and fellow human.

I hope that this thesis can help stimulate further conversation surrounding racial representation in Brazilian media and society, while providing a solid reference for future scholars who wish to explore this topic. Through all of our efforts, we can make a change and give voice to a community that needs to be heard.

Embora meu sangue seja americano, meu coração é brasileiro!

Acknowledgement

Writing and completing this thesis has been one of the most challenging, yet rewarding experiences of my young academic life.

I would not have been able to complete this work without the thoughtful and caring assistance of my committee members, Tracy, Sallie, and Donette. Your comments pushed me to think outside of the box and improve my work. Tracy, ever since my first semester of my freshman year, you have been a mentor for me, always providing positive and encouraging comments that challenged me to do better. For that, I cannot thank you enough!

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To the best research assistant there is, my *querida* sister, Danielle. This was the first, but will not be the last of our adventures!

To my future video director and co-producer, Hannah. Thank you for taking the time to help me with content revisions, idea development, and a shoulder to cry on. This was just another example of our work, but we will continue to explore, edit, and experience Latin America together!

Thank you a million times over to my parents. My entire college experience is thanks to the love and support you provide me; I could not have done it without you.

Lastly, I want to extend my greatest thanks to my furry daughter, Julieta, who provided me with emotional support, stress relief, and encouraging licks throughout this entire process. *Te amo mais do que você poderia imaginar!*

Beijos,
Kelsey

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Introduction

In February 2016, I reposted an article from *The Guardian* on my Facebook page, titled "The Brazilian Carnival Queen Deemed 'too black'" (Lankester-Owen).[1] The article centered around Nayara Justino, a dark-skinned black woman who had been awarded the title, *Globeleza 2013,* (carnival queen) for the major Brazilian television network, Rede Globo, for the 2013 carnival season[2]. Thrilled to receive such an honor, Justino happily accepted the title and began filming the corresponding commercial segments. However, soon after her appointment as the new *Globeleza*, Justino began to receive racist messages on her social media accounts. Anonymous users called her a monkey and ogre, saying she was too dark to be on TV. Ultimately, as a response to the comments, or because they found Justino's performance to be "inadequate," Globo removed her as the *Globeleza* and replaced her with a lighter-skinned woman.

While I was living in Brazil in 2014, I had heard this story, but only within the Brazilian context. A couple articles surfaced on social media, written in Portuguese, and a few Brazilian friends posted their opinions about it. But overall, this race-based act of astounding discrimination went largely unnoticed and unremarked. Therefore, in February 2016, when I saw an international news outlet cover the story, in English, I excitedly reposted the article with the caption, "This is why RACE, MEDIA, and POPULAR CULTURE matter!!" *The Guardian*'s article sought to tell Justino's story, and through her experience, expose the

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[1] The content of this article is discussed further at the end of Chapter One.
[2] The importance of the *Globeleza* is further explained at the end of Chapter One.

extent to which racism continues to dominate media and society. The video included interviews with Justino's family members, loved ones, famous actresses of color, and scholars of Brazilian race relations. The video provides readers insight into one of the country's most pressing social issues. By connecting race with television and media, The Guardian story, which now has over 14,000 shares was a testament to the importance of racial representation in media for the Brazilian population.

Methodology

One major take-away from Lankester-Owen's piece is the intimate connection between race and media within Brazilian society. My personal experience living in Brazil, consuming media content, and observing the regional nuances throughout the country led me to question the potential impact of racial representation in Brazilian media. Using one of Brazil's most beloved and widely recognized forms of entertainment, I chose the *telenovela* (or soap opera), as the microcosm through which to analyze the historical importance, social impact, and audience perceptions of racial representations in this form of entertainment. This background led me to ask three research questions that have guided my approach on the topic. First, how have black people been portrayed in three specific *telenovelas* over the past twenty years? Second, how have viewers received actors of color in *telenovelas* over the past twenty years? And third, is there a correlation between racial representation and audience reception?

Beginning in 1996 with *Xica da Silva,* followed by *Duas Caras* released in 2007, and ending with *Malhação* from 2014, this thesis investigates the ways

racial representation has and has not evolved over the past twenty years. I present the social and political contexts that influenced the production and reception of each program, analyze common portrayals of black characters, and seek to understand audience reception of television programming through social media and online commentary. In order to provide a comprehensive perspective surrounding this issue, my research uses a mixed-methodology, including personal interviews, qualitative and quantitative analysis, and my own interpretations of the three *novelas.*

I conducted personal interviews during August 2015 throughout three different cities: Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Salvador. In order to reach a broad and diverse audience, I relied primarily on street interviews in busy public places such as the Parque Ibirapuera in São Paulo, the Feira Hippie in Ipanema, and the Barra do Farol, in Salvador, seeking people of different ages, races, genders, and origins. In total, I interviewed 36 people across the three cities: seventeen people in Rio, nine in São Paulo, and ten in Salvador. The ages of participants ranged from 18 to 65, averaging around 35 years old. Fifteen of the respondents were male and 21 were female. I interviewed people who self-identified with three major racial/color groups: *negro/preto* (16); *branco* (12); and *pardo* (8).[3] The three major questions that I asked were: Is the media representative of the people? Would you like to see more diversity in the media? What impact do you think media has on people? Although responses varied

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[3] Roughly: negro/black; white; brown. The distinctions among these terms will be explained in Chapter One.

according to location and personal experience, each person provided an interesting perspective into the ways that media and racial representation are intimately linked. Quotes from the interviews are spread throughout the following four chapters as a way to elaborate on and contextualize my arguments. While not at all representative of Brazilian society, patterns emerged in the interviews that add audience members' perspectives to this study and can be stated as propositions based on initial qualitative evidence.

The qualitative and quantitative analysis I offer provides an additional perspective on these research questions by analyzing both the content and reception of the *novelas.* I viewed each *novela* as a way to understand its context, characters, and plots. My analyses reflect my motives for working on these issues and my personal experience in Brazil as ways to contextualize the messages and social impact of each *novela.* Content analyses of the three programs looks specifically at the ways black characters are portrayed as empowered or disempowered figures. I found that that regardless of the year a *novela* was released, many characters reflected highly stereotypical portrayals of people of color that emphasized low socioeconomic class, financial instability, and a hyper-sexualized image.

In a separate section of each chapter, I also examined audience reception by using YouTube comments as one way to determine how viewers responded to different aspects of each storyline and production. For each program, I collected and analyzed comments left on multiple YouTube clips to understand how anonymous users reacted to or "decoded" the various themes present in the

content.[4] As pertinent to this research, I focused mostly on race-related comments that pertained to specific characters or scenes throughout the *novelas.* In using this methodology, I acknowledge the digital divide that exists in Brazil, where in 2013, only half (52%) of the population had access to the internet (Kende and Jimenez). Those without access to Internet are those who are economically, socially, politically marginalized—namely, people of color, women, and poorer populations. Therefore, it is likely that people leaving comments on YouTube videos, must be of a class that affords them time, access, and interest in leaving comments on the videos. Therefore, although these tools shed light on important patterns in audience reception, they cannot lead us to conclusive claims.

Chapter Highlights

The following chapters seek to provide evidence to explain the ways racial representation in Brazilian *telenovelas* has changed over the past twenty years, while taking into account the political context of the release of each program. Chapter One lays out the theoretical tools that I use throughout the paper, which are drawn from media studies, cultural studies, and critical race studies. I begin by explaining the ways uniform media content messages can influence viewers through repetition. I then address Brazil's most popular racial ideology, the myth of "racial democracy," and conclude by bringing together the media's representation of race and its potential to influence popular audiences. Chapter Two investigates the *telenovela Xica da Silva* and the political context of 1996,

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[4] The term "encoding" and "decoding" will be further explained in Chapter One.

when it was released. President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's welcoming of neoliberal policies influenced the production of the *novela,* making *Xica da Silva* the first *telenovela* with a black protagonist. Chapter Three explores the *novela, Duas Caras*, which was released in 2007 amidst the expansion of Brazil's affirmative action movement and the support of that movement by president Luíz Inácio Lula da Silva[5]. *Duas Caras* approached racial representation head-on by incorporating normalized acts of racism found in Brazilian culture and society into the storyline of the *novela.* Chapter Four looks at the famous teen-audience driven *novela, Malhação,* which came out in 2014. This *novela* was released during President Dilma Rousseff's first term and highlighted the ways society's affinity for protest in the name of "social justice" influenced students during the twenty-second season of *Malhação.* Each chapter seeks to understand the ways society has evolved; how the content (may) have reflected that evolution; and how people have responded to those representations. Through the extensive analysis of each *telenovela,* this interdisciplinary thesis engages media studies, Latin American studies, and critical race studies in hopes of furthering the discussion of racial representation and media products in modern-day Brazilian society. Through greater awareness of the (in)equalities in media and their changing social impact over time, viewers can better understand the individual and collective consequences of the content they consume—both by choice and by default.

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[5]Other (black) protagonists (including, centrally, Abdias de Nascimento; the Zumbi Movement; Oludum, etc.) were more important in the long term passage of this law, but Lula's presidential support was key in its passage and implementation.

Chapter One

Adding Color to a White Screen:
The Junction of Race and Media

If you walk down the street of any major Brazilian city, you will encounter

television sets at almost every corner—in restaurants, cafés, salons, and

newspaper stands. With a glimpse of a different screen at every block, viewers

are flooded with commercials trying to promote the latest "must-have" products or

teasers for "must-see" shows. Over the past fifty years, televisions have become

a staple in Brazilian households, cutting across class, race, and gender lines as a

crucial source of news, entertainment, and cultural references.[6] Specifically, the

t*elenovela*, or Brazilian soap opera, more commonly referred to as *novelas,* are a

key product of the Brazilian television industry. The ways *telenovelas* portray

certain aspects of society add to the symbolic representations of national identity

because of the political ramifications associated with each depiction.[7] With

complex storylines that stay up-to-date on Brazilian current events and dynamic

characters that show multi-faceted emotions, *novelas* can be particularly

influential when it comes to current social issues. The circulation of cultural

references within their content gives those references a privileged position from

which to influence the formation of popular thought.

In recent years, *telenovelas* have addressed a variety of social issues like

racism, LGBTQ rights, and the role of women in *machista* societies, as a way to

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[6] For more about Brazilian media consumption, refer to *A vida com a TV* (2002), compiled by Luiz Costa Pereira Junior.
[7] The term "symbolic representation" is taken from Mauro Porto's 2012, *Media Power and Democratization in Brazil.*

problematize the marginalization that these subaltern groups face in mainstream society. Since the mid-1990s, only a few *telenovelas* have sought to tackle issues in Brazilian society stemming from systemic inequalities, namely racism. Even though *novelas* examining racial and social issues have been in circulation for nearly three decades, the media industry still lags behind in presenting a realistic and fair representation of Brazil's racial diversity in its programming. National demographics show about 50% of the country identifying as black or brown, which is disproportionate to the white faces that dominate media productions (Portal Brasil).[8] This disjuncture in mass media productions demonstrates Brazil's dominant racial culture and the ways that many Brazilians continue to think about race even 65 years after the Afonso Arinos Law, making racial discrimination illegal across the country[9]. Many people are raised under the myth of "racial democracy," suggesting that Brazil's colonial and post-Independence past of racial mixing does not give way to racism of the same degree as it does in societies like that of the United States, where formal segregation was in place for decades (Htun 61). Scholars and academics have argued against this idea for the past half-century, but it continues to shape Brazil's national identity and perceptions surrounding race in powerful ways, thus further complicating society's ability to acknowledge, address, and overcome racism. This conversation culminated in the first decade of the 21st century, with

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[8] During this thesis, Black is the word choice for referring to race as an aggregation of color groups according to official Brazilian color classification: "preto" (black) and "pardo" (brown) (Torres, 1).

[9] Lei Afonso Arinos (1951), named for its author, banned racism in public services, education, and employment (Htun, 65).

the beginning of affirmative action programs that tried to lessen the racial

disparities in Brazilian universities and larger society.[10] The implementation of

affirmative action contradicts the idea of Brazil as a racial democracy because it

recognizes the inequalities that people of different racial backgrounds and skin

colors have in accessing higher education, better jobs, running for public offices,

among other civic privileges. Although affirmative action together with other

social programs continues to debunk the notion of Brazil as a racial democracy, it

continues to play a large part in the way many Brazilians—especially white or

light-skinned Brazilians—choose to think about themselves and their society.[11]

As television consumption, particularly of *telenovelas,* has become a

cultural habit for many Brazilians, the symbolic representation of people in these

soap operas can help advance, or delay, the conversation surrounding racial

issues in greater society. While the media's portrayal of certain issues may not

have a direct cause and effect relationship on its viewers, the repeated,

extended, and reinforced imagery of a particular group, can influence perceptions

of said groups and movements. Therefore, as the Brazilian population looks for

its daily dose of self-reflective romantic dramas that serve as a mirror of their

society and identity, the ways stories illustrate people can influence larger

perceptions of people and groups. This chapter examines these intimate

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[10] Affirmative action will be discussed more in depth in Chapter Three.
[11] It is important to acknowledge that people of different skin color/racialized identification feel differently about this question because of the societal significance of each term. Until the 1991 Census, the IBGE asked census respondents, "What is your color (cor)?" For the 1991 Census, the question reads "What is your color or race (raça)?" Since 1940, the IBGE has used the categories white (branco), brown (pardo), black (preto), yellow (amarelo, i.e., of some Asian descent), and added the Indigenous (Indígena) category in the 1991 census, showing the traditional ways people self-identify with their racial background (Bailey and Telles 3).

connections between television and racial representation, while exploring the

ways that *telenovelas* can act as a catalyst in changing the status quo

surrounding racial discourse in Brazil. By analyzing the power of television to

influence society through a cultural studies approach of "encoding and decoding"

that is informed by cultivation and "drip" theories,[12] together with information and

quotes gleaned from first-hand personal interviews conducted with a random

selection of Brazilians in August 2015, this chapter provides a foundation for

understanding how the symbolic representation of race in *telenovelas* can both

add and detract to the conversations surrounding race in Brazilian society.

Part I: Exploring the Social Impact of Media in Brazil

The Force of Television

Through television's ability to relay information, tell stories, and engage

spectators, its content centralizes the dissemination of messages and images

into the screen of every viewer. As a societal phenomenon, viewers have

adopted ritualistic consumption patterns that incorporate television messaging

into their daily lives. Barriers that once separated people from public participation

in cultural activities, like literacy and mobility, now are surpassed through the

visually easy task of consuming television programming (Gerbner et al 44).

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[12] Scholar Stuart Hall is known for launching cultural studies as a way of examining audience reception of media products with his seminal article *Encoding, Decoding* (1973), in which he uses the terms encoding and decoding to describe how media producers embed or encode messages within media content and how viewers interpret or decode those messages according to varying degrees of opposition, negotiation or uncritical acceptance. Hall places emphasis on the active interpretative capacity of the audience as it decodes messages. In contrast, cultivation and "Drip" theories were defined by Gerbner et al, and Greenberg, respectively, and seek to explain the long-term effects of continued exposure to repeated images in the media. Gerbner and Greenberg are less interested in audience interpretation and more in how a relatively passive audience is influenced through continued exposure to unified messages. These three theories will be further explained and applied in the following section that explores the impact of the media.

Television content creates socially accepted cultural cues for society, making it one of the major sources for everyday information. Therefore, according to media scholar Aletha Huston, all television is educational television—even when used for entertainment (6). The ways that television carries messages about social interactions and the nature and value of groups in society, can influence attitudes, values, and actions among its viewers (Huston 6). It serves as a source of information about the world, whether viewers seek entertainment or enlightenment.

Today, information passed through television is handed out to viewers in almost every sphere of their daily lives. Content reinforces particular beauty, living, and success standards in television programing, which pushes media producers to recreate these same standards in their construction of societal norms within their media productions, thus feeding into a cycle. In the chapter, "Growing Up with Television: Cultivation Processes" in the book *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, authors George Gerbner et al explain "The function of television lies in the continual repetition of stories (myths, 'facts,' lessons, and so on) that serve to define the world and legitimize a particular social order" (Gerbner et al 44). Viewers must negotiate the space between portrayed reality and their own, however the patterned use of settings, casting, social typing, actions, and related outcomes that cut across program types and viewing modes, complicate the natural process of distinguishing the norms found in television reality from those of real life (Gerbner et al 45). Therefore, as a key participant in the construction of ideas and norms, television and the media play

a dual role in helping to maintain and sculpt audience perceptions and understandings of reality (Hughes and Prado 111).

Theoretical Background

To understand the effects of media representation on viewers, I draw upon three theories explaining the relationship between reinforced messaging and audience perceptions. Namely, through Stuart Hall's *Encoding/Decoding (1973),* Gerbner et al's theory of cultivation (1976), and the "drip" versus "drench" models described by B.S. Greenberg (1988), these scholars provide explanations of how media representation can influence viewers' construction of social reality. Although each theory addresses audience reception of media differently, each explanation builds on the others. Hall approaches audience reception from an empowered stance where the audience actively decides how to decode the media messages, while Gerbner et al and Greenberg present a more disempowered stance where audience members passively accept and in some circumstances react to the repetition of the messages presented. I do not argue that consuming media has a "hypodermic needle effect," whereby what is presented on the screen causes a sort of brainwashing or creates a situation of complete control over the minds of consumers, but rather, that continuous exposure to specifically encoded[13] messages over an extended period of time can help to shape people's understandings regarding certain topics. In keeping with these notions, I argue that uniform, long-term representations of "race"

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[13] Encoding is defined and understood in this paper as the ways that meanings and ideas are constructed in media products by the creators (producers, writers, networks) of media products. Hall, *Encoding/Decoding (1973)*

through Brazilian television production influence audience perceptions of racial

signification, cultural interpretation, and social interaction.

      In his seminal article, "Encoding, Decoding" (1973), cultural theorist Stuart

Hall explored different ways that messages are encoded by content producers

and decoded by audiences. The communication process is best explained by

envisioning a sender who transmits a message to be interpreted by a receiver;

thus, TV producers might be seen as the sender of culturally encoded messages

and Brazilian audience members as the receiver. In the production of a TV

program, messages are encoded into the product through specific choices in

storyline, scenery, and casts. As audiences consume the product, they decode

the messages based on their *personal* and *individual* experiences and previously

held cultural knowledge and values, which in turn greatly influences their

interpretations of texts (Hall 92, author's italics). Hall uses the terms *dominant-*

hegemonic, negotiated, and *oppositional* to differentiate the ways individuals may

decode texts (Hall 101). Dominant decoding means that the viewer takes the

connoted meaning from a television program "full and straight," and decodes the

message in terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded (Hall 101).

The negotiated code includes a mixture of "adaptive and oppositional decoding,

that acknowledges a message's legitimacy within the hegemonic definitions (in

the abstract), but on the situational level, it operates with exceptions to the rule"

(Hall 102). A viewer who decodes oppositionally, perfectly understands both the

literal and connotative inflection given by a discourse, but chooses to decode the

message in a globally contrary way (Hall 103). In these three examples, both

encoders and decoders work together in order to co-construct meaning of particular texts and make them applicable to *their* reality (Louw 208). Each viewer uses his/her own lens to decode a message, which will help shape the ultimate impact that material has on a particular person.

Eric Louw's, *The Limits of Power: Resisting Dominant Meanings* (2001), furthers Hall's theory of encoding/decoding by demonstrating that one's societal and linguistic norms contribute to the ways one decodes a message because these factors help us "pre-code" content into the categories afforded to us by our linguistic reach. Therefore, one's future exposure to a particular media message will be interpreted through the "pre-coded" lens of their previously established social reality. Once someone has internalized a text and made meaning of its message, they maintain a commitment to that particular frame of reference, which will continue to influence the ways new information is perceived (Louw 210). In order to decode a message with coherence, audiences participate actively in the interpretation of the messages they are consuming so that they can dialogue with the encoded messages in that particular text. Individual experiences create predispositions for decoding content and the media's penetration of public opinion is thus challenged and to some extent limited by the decoding of representations by different groups. The media's repeated representation of people, places, and things help create, or cultivate, the "pre-coded" lens described by Louw.

As opposed to the viewer taking an active stance in media decoding, cultivation theory empirically supports the argument of media effects on

worldviews over time in situations where messages are uniform and television use is high. In the chapter "Growing Up with Television: Cultivation Processes", scholar George Gerbner et al, uses long-term viewer studies to explain the impact that television has on a viewer's construction of reality through continuous exposure to specific messages that are likely to confirm, reiterate, and nourish the values and perspectives shown on screen (Gerbner et al 43, 49). Producers create television content with the intention of uniting the masses under shared concepts and understandings of society. Through the repeated patterns of programming that reinforce similar values and norms, the symbolic world presented in TV programs helps to "cultivate" a certain understanding of reality (Gerbner et al 46). Over time, for viewers consuming high quantities of television programming, the aggregate messages encoded in television programs cultivate common perspectives that may not *change* opinions, but will make them *stronger*. According to Gerbner et al, "the repetitive 'lessons' we learn from television, beginning with infancy, are likely to become the basis for a broader worldview, making television a significant source of general values, ideologies, and perspectives as well as specific assumptions, beliefs, and images" (Gerbner et al 53). Therefore, a person's world view may be more reflective of common and repetitive images seen on television than of those actually experienced (Seels et al 285). Thus, the audience passively receives messages encoded by the media and because of their repetition overtime, begins to normalize them. The internalized images can then influence a person's outward actions and participation in larger society.

B.S. Greenberg's "drip" and "drench" theories (1988) also explain the effects of prolonged exposure to media representations. Similar to the dripping of water, Greenberg's "drip model" explains that television may influence viewers through the subtle accumulation of images and beliefs through a process of gradual incorporation of frequent and repeated messages (Seels 285). The "drip model" reinforces Gerbner's theory of cultivation because both theories assert that extended exposure to repeated images helps shape the viewer's understanding of reality. In contrast to the "drip" and cultivation theories, Greenberg also proposes the "drench" theory, which explains that "*critical images that stand out or are intense* may contribute more to the formation of impressions than does the *frequency* of images overtime" (Greenberg 100; Seels 285, author's italics). This theory implies that specific programs or series may have a larger effect when containing particular portrayals of people, groups, or movements. Greenberg argues that not all portrayals have the same impact and that viewers probably "attend more closely to a limited set of portrayals, ones that become significant for us" (Greenberg 99; Ward and Greenfield 94). This focus on distinct portrayals has become particularly important in modern television productions because networks are creating more directed content that appeals to specific populations, meaning specific stories and depictions may have a larger impact on the audience. The differences in approach between the "drip" and "drench" theories are nuanced, yet are based upon the assumption of audience passivity in absorbing media content.

The three theories discussed offer alternative explanations of how media imagery, settings, and casts can ultimately impact the viewer's construction of reality and perceptions of the world. However, Hall's understanding of encoding/decoding places the viewer in a more active position than Gerbner or Greenberg, who focus on the audience as a passive and influenced actor. To balance this dichotomy, the audience must negotiate its participation as both active and passive players in the (de)constructing of messages found in media content. Television content under certain circumstances influences the formation of beliefs and attitudes. However, each audience member will decode messages differently, allowing for a diverse understanding of each depiction in a program. Therefore, in order to comprehensively understand the real impact of a media product, producers, networks, and academics must address both the passive interpretations (cultivated/ "drip" theories) and the active interpretations (hegemonic/negotiated/oppositional decoding) that audiences negotiate as a part of their message internalization.

The spectrum of audience reception theories is the lens that I use in this research to understand the greater impact of the media's representation of race in Brazilian *telenovelas* on society at large. Brazilian media, namely *telenovelas,* continue to be dominated by white faces that are equated with the pinnacle of beauty, success, and power, while people of color remain marginalized in media productions often playing inferior, submissive, or stereotypical roles. Per cultivation and "drip" theories, the repeated imagery that reinforces this representation of the races, audiences may begin to normalize these depictions,

while intermingling television's portrayed reality with their personal reality. This could translate into outward and/or inward[14] acts of racism that reinforce a social hierarchy based on race in Brazilian society. Although the specific message proposed by media programs may not be racist in and of itself, extended exposure to structural racism, social inequity, and injustice may allow for deeper penetration and integration of that imagery into everyday life (Gerbner et al 63), which could make a *negotiated* or *oppositional* decoding of those messages difficult for the average viewer. Historically, the most active decoders of racial representation were limited to activists, intellectuals, or conscious community members who understand the larger impact this inaccurate representation of Brazilian society has on its viewers. However, in the digital age, social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram created new spaces that make the writing, "liking", sharing, and discussing of topics more accessible. Each audience member still needs to navigate the space between active and passive decoding of media, but through social media platforms, audience members can actively engage with other viewers to examine trending topics and problematize their place in their (virtual) society.[15] In the remainder of this chapter, I explore further the role of *telenovelas* as a social agent that fosters stereotypical perceptions of people of color in Brazilian society and how that impacts the

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[14] Here, I coined "inward acts of racism" and define it as actions of self-hate causing identity issues, or the inability to embrace one's skin color based on the societal pressure that emphasizes white and light-skinned as beautiful, successful, or powerful. Also, it can be understood as the initial thought that associates people of color with marginalized aspects of society (e.g. drug use, theft, assault) in a public setting.

[15] The use of social media as a tool to measure audience participation will be further discussed at the end of this chapter in the section connecting race and the media. Also, it will be a part of a larger methodology used to assess audience reception of three *telenovelas,* in chapters 2, 3, and 4.

evolution of Brazil's racial culture,[16] while demonstrating how racial

representation and the media continue to grow more intertwined in the production

of new content.

The History of Television in Brazil

Over the past fifty years, access to television has been among the most

important technological developments in Brazilian society. Watching television

has become an integral part of the daily lives of many people who use it as a

source of news, entertainment, or even background noise. Some people look at

the television set as a necessity—even more so than a refrigerator.

Approximately 87.5% of Brazilian homes have televisions; only 82.5% have other

electro-domestic items (Pereira Junior 21, 57). With some 39 million TV

households, Brazil has one of the largest television audiences in the world

(Machado-Borges 6). Initial access to television began in the 1950s, but was

limited during the military dictatorship of the 1970s, and only in the 1990s did TVs

really begin to reach the masses. The economic reform seen with Fernando

Henrique Cardoso's New Real Plan (1994), gave the market the push it needed

to make television a highly commoditized item (Pereira Junior, 58). This

economic policy caused a boom in consumption by the lower class, resulting in

the sale of around 28 million new television sets (Pereira Junior 58). Increased

access to televisions across different socioeconomic levels allowed for greater

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[16] Racial Culture as used by Denise Ferreira da Silva in her excerpt from the book Black in Brazil. She says, "I examine the hierarchical and exclusionary beliefs of Brazilian racial culture…the two main themes of Brazilian racial culture [are], 'whitening' and 'racial democracy'" (339). Here Da Silva refers to racial culture as the collective ways race and racial ideas are conceptualized within a Brazilian cultural context.

penetration of televisions into the everyday life of tens of millions of people.

According to a 2011 study by the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística

(IGBE), Brazilians view an average of four hours and thirty-one minutes of

television per weekday, and four hours and fourteen minutes on weekends

(Barbara), totaling about 30+ hours of television viewing per week.

One of the main benefits of the expansion of television has been in

connecting all corners of Brazil. In the book, *Only for You!,* scholar Thaís

Machado-Borges states, "Television was given an agglutinating function: it

integrated the national culture by spreading understandings of southeastern,

middle-, and upper-class standards of life…to the rest of the country" (Machado-

Borges 31). However, as a way to foster a stronger sense of national identity in

the 1970s, television networks also began showing images that highlight unique

differences across regions. Seeing and hearing about these exotic places aimed

to cultivate a feeling of national belonging throughout the country, and promote

the regional diversity experienced in Brazilian culture. In a series of interviews

that I conducted throughout Brazil, one of the respondents from São Paulo said,

"Media influences a lot. If a network made a *novela* that only has a little to do with

the country, not a lot of people are going to watch it. So, the *novelas* have to

make sure to include various regions" (Renato, 19, São Paulo). Despite the

geographical and cultural diversity in media productions, content has continued

to highlight the urban triangle of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Belo Horizonte

as the glamorous hotspots of the country. Today, although there is a variety of

content, television networks create an idea of Brazilianness by reinforcing

images of Brazil's southeast, the country's economic center, as representative of the entire nation. But, some Brazilians see that as a potential problem. "I think that the focus on Rio and São Paulo as the country's center is bad because it creates false expectations or realities for people who live in other regions" (Andre, 45, São Paulo). As Junior Pereira explains, "None of these TV products are naïve: they mold cultural standards, world references, consolidate opinions and become beauty style guides" (Pereira Junior 157). The country's fondness for television makes it possible for program content to shape cultural norms by repeated references to national symbols and repertoires that help construct the Brazilian national identity.

As is the case in many developed, industrialized countries, media industry growth in Brazil led to an almost monopolistic control of airwaves whereby the power of the industry was split among a handful of commercial networks owned by wealthy families (Machado-Borges 33). No public television in the European sense exists, nor channels dedicated to non-governmental organizations as in Uruguay. Thus, critics complain that the commercial, class-based perspective of the media and its owners limit the narrative surrounding the national identity in a finite supply of content. "The media helps formulate opinions, this is a fact. It can also form negative opinions. The media can help with growth, but can also knock down all of that. TV has to know how to deal with that because it's a window in the house of the people" (Marina, 57, Rio de Janeiro). Considering cultivation theory, this lack of diversity in TV networks and programming gives the

companies great power to influence the construction of the nation through popular culture.

Getting to Know the Networks

Brazilian broadcast television is currently controlled by four major companies: Rede Globo, Sistema Brasileiro de Televisão (SBT), Bandeirantes, and Rede Record. The largest and most well-known is Rede Globo, owned by Roberto Irineu Marinho, one of Brazil's most influential businessmen, who inherited the media group from his father. Globo's empire extends beyond TV and includes several radio stations, a daily national newspaper, a publishing house connected to various magazines and books, a record company, a video company, several cable stations, and a cultural foundation (Machado-Borges 33). Globo's programming, while popular, is nonetheless ideologically constructed to play on the fantasies and values of the upper middle classes (Pontí 219). Rede Record is the second largest network, owned by Edir Macedo Group. Macedo is also the founder and bishop of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, an evangelical sect. Although the network maintains a generally secular program list, it subtly incorporates religious scheduling into its daily schedule. SBT follows as a major network owned by Sílvio Santos, who began his career as a variety show host, then turned into a media executive building his own major company (Rêgo 85; Machado-Borges 33). Opposite to Globo, SBT aims its programming at the lower classes, engaging a different audience (Pontí 220). In an interview with Ivonete, a street vendor in São Paulo said, "I love the Mexican *novelas* on SBT, I prefer them to the ones on Globo" (Ivonete, 62, São Paulo). *Bandeirantes,*

nicknamed Band, is the least popular network, owned by the Saad family, specializing in sports, news, and reality shows (Machado-Borges 33).

Each network has its own profile that influences its content and viewership according to their specific strengths and weaknesses within the given market. Globo is the world's fourth-largest television corporation, and by far the largest in Brazil, reaching daily audiences of close to 100 million (Barbara; RedeGlobo). Globo portrays itself as a network that cares for the quality (moral and aesthetic) of its programs and controls that by producing more than sixty percent of its own programming (Machado-Borges 34). Many of the shows, specifically the *telenovelas* that Globo produces, have a movie-like appearance, reflecting the high production quality of the Globo Brand. Thiago, an actor from Rio de Janeiro says, "[Globo] is now making the *novelas* really realistic. They show the naked and raw truth in their *novelas"* (Thiago, 19, Rio de Janeiro). Rede Record is the second largest network for domestically produced entertainment and *telenovela* consumption and in more recent years has had greater successes with their audiences. In 2015, Rede Record released *Os Dez Mandamentos,* or The Ten Commandments, which told the story of four books of the Old Testament, exceeded network goals of audience ratings and surpassed Globo's *novela Babilônia* airing at the same time (Moreno). SBT tends to import content from other Latin American neighbors, making their influence on the constructions of Brazilian identity relatively limited (Machado-Borges 34; Rêgo 86). Lastly, Bandeirantes has come to profile itself mostly as a sports network with some news and talk shows (Machado-Borges 34). A lot of the power of these different

companies is in the sheer number of people they can reach on a daily basis. On average, the share of network viewing allows for about 41% dedicated to Globo, 14% to Rede Record, 13.6% to SBT, and 6% to Bandeirantes (Bekemball). These numbers reinforce the power that specifically Globo has on the population because of the amount of people who are exposed to their programming every day. While each network may portray nuanced types of content and messaging, their visual, emotional, and cultural appeal engages large and loyal audiences.

Explaining *Telenovelas* and Their Stories

Telenovelas have acted like a magnet within Brazilian society, attracting people of different backgrounds, ages, social classes, regions, and genders with a shared cultural experience. As a main pillar of broadcast television in Brazil, *telenovelas* are among the most watched programming (Rêgo 76; Vink 11). Since the 1960s, *novelas* have been a staple in the Brazilian television industry and have since earned the public's recognition as an aesthetic and cultural product, becoming a central figure in the country's culture and identity (Rêgo 77). Through the references to national symbols and repertories, combined with high production values, emotional appeal, and authentic depictions of the Brazilian life, viewers relate their personal experiences to the *telenovelas* which allows them to engage in the larger cultural practice of watching these daily soap operas. *Telenovelas'* centrality in Latin American culture has created a loyal audience of millions of people who become invested in the stories and follow each episode.

Brazilian *telenovelas* have a serial form that includes certain aspects of repetition and innovation, with a focus on building an emotional connection between characters' actions and viewers' lives. Each episode plays into the ups and downs of audience emotions by including specifically planned commercial breaks and cliff-hangers, spread throughout four to five segments. Stories touch on topics of power, social mobility, gender, relationships, love, sexuality, race, or politics, frequently intertwining more than one of these themes. Brazilian *novelas* last around six to nine months, for roughly 150 episodes (Pontí 221; Machado-Borges 7). Rede Globo airs only domestically produced content and *novelas* in their strict weekday schedule. Viewers know to expect a *novela* during prime time, starting at six o'clock and ending at ten o'clock, with a pause at eight for the *Jornal Nacional* or national news. The six o'clock *novela* tends to be more romantic and lighthearted, aimed at pre-teen audiences of both sexes, with plots often focusing on a period of Brazilian history (Pontí 221). The seven o'clock and nine o'clock *novelas* deal with a larger variety of subjects, which can be both humorous and controversial. Generally, the nine o' clock *novelas* are the most popular, projecting to adults 18-35, frequently reaching audiences of fifty million (Pontí 221; Machado-Borges 41).

Novelas are able to attract such extensive audiences because of their high production value both on and off the screen. Brazilian soap operas are known to have an almost movie-like level of technical quality to their camera shots and production (Pontí 221). The storylines are often linked to current events, such as elections, strikes, and political scandals, as they are happening in "real time"

(Rêgo 89). The plots "represent in a simplified way an otherwise subtle and complicated reality, [that] exaggerates and emphasizes contrasts and contemporary contradictions," while playing into the melodramatic appeal of their stories (Machado-Borges 43). "The *novela* is an idealized portrayal of how the ideal society would be" (Renato, 19, São Paulo). These depictions result in a simplified portrayal of the Brazilian reality because *novelas* tend to exaggerate certain aspects of Brazilian life while underrepresenting other groups like the elderly, children, or poor people (Machado-Borges 43). "What the *novela* shows is a caricature of the [Brazilian] reality" (Carine, 28, Salvador). The blurred lines between reality and fantasy give *telenovelas* an ambiguous space to make (in)direct social commentary, thus adding a layer of complexity to their content.

Indirect social commentary allows *telenovelas* to transcend the entertainment world and make room to discuss and question Brazilian culture and society. They can "introduce fashions and products, approach polemical subjects and comment upon (in a realistic or parodic way) contemporary social issues" (Machado-Borges 7). In a personal interview with professor Angela Paiva at Pontifícia Universidade Católica, she commented, "*Telenovelas* are very good at putting certain topics into question, for example they can raise questions that help with [different social issues]" (Angela, 65, Rio de Janeiro). Follow Angela's point, Mauro Porto recalls an interview with former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, where he explained that *telenovelas* act as a chronicle of customs, raising new topics in the public agenda, such as homosexuality and establishing new behavioral models (Porto 143). Their content relates to such a large

audience that the viewer profiles of *novelas* cut across potentially divisive

demographic lines like, sex, age, educational level, race, class, and life

experience, by using their stories to create a unified national identity. In her book,

Visível e o invisível no ver e no olhar a telenovela (2002), Brazilian scholar Élide

Maria Fogolari explains that, "the *telenovela* drives the affirmations of our

national identity, in a way that is decisively constructed by them. Every chapter,

every episode, brings, even if in a small and partial way, the history of the

Brazilian people, despite the implications of ethics and contrasts with the real

story" (Fogolari 19). By addressing issues that impact the idea of Brazilianness,

these daily dramas connect with viewers in a way that includes them in the

ongoing creation of national identity (Fogolari 72; Pontí 221).

The local appeal and authentic portrayal of Brazilian themes allows

novelas to connect with viewers in a way unlike other types of programming. As

telenovelas provide free entertainment, many people choose to "relive" parts of

their daily lives, as seen through the actions, projects, world views, values, and

decisions represented in the story (Fogolari 73; Rêgo 76*).* Through the intricate

stories that emphasize scenes and icons of Brazil, people are able to mentally

escape and travel to a new reality, in the comfort of their living room (Fogolari 73;

Vink 11). "*Telenovelas* portray what society is going through now" (Priscilla, 21,

Rio). As Fogolari explains, "*telenovelas* rise as a genre that established

mediations that go beyond the simple conquest of consumers of the vast market;

telenovelas put themselves in another place that stimulates personal

relationships and intersubjects how they speak to the viewer in a singular way"

(Fogolari 28). In an interview with Marina from São Luís, Maranhão, she says, "*Telenovelas* influence a lot! The way to dress, think, even what words to use. If the *novela* is going to educate people, they have to do it in a special way because what is good for some, is not good for others" (Marina, 57, Rio de Janeiro). Perhaps the links that *novela*s make to daily Brazilian life allow viewers to be influenced by their plots and characters in part because they feel like they are participating in those stories. Although each person can actively decode the story in his or her own way, by consuming *telenovelas,* viewers consume dominant cultural codes as designed by the Brazilian media.

The melodrama genre that emphasizes exaggerated characters and exciting events, appeals to the universal emotions of its viewers. Nico Vink in his book, *The Telenovela and Emancipation* (1988), says, "The characters have histories and memories, but so does their faithful viewer" which adds to the genre's relatability (167). Some people may enjoy a story of social mobility because it represents their own struggle to find a place in society; others may look towards more realistic depictions of how a family might address the coming out story of a child. By replaying scenes that many people face in their daily lives, *telenovelas* allow viewers to (re)live a situation, inside their reality (Rêgo 76). "The emphasis put by the soap opera and *novela* on the personal and its 'colonization' of the public from the private, is implied in its production process and expected by its audience" (Vink 169). Machado-Borges refers to this influence as the "*telenovela* flow," which acts as a tangible measure of the *telenovela's* impact on Brazilian society.

Through her research, Machado-Borges investigated "how the *telenovela* flow interpellates viewers – how it calls them, addresses them – and how viewers, in turn, answer or do not answer these callings… [by trying to understand] the place of the *telenovela* flow in the making of gendered, sexualized, racialized, and classed Brazilian subjects" (Machado-Borges 9). Through interviews, Machado-Borges identified how viewers incorporated deep *telenovela* content into their constructions of daily life. Various interviewees described how they bought clothes to fit the style of a particular actress, or used a situation experienced by the characters of the *novela* to understand better their personal actions. The direct relationship that *novelas* build with the identity of their audience through specific cultural cues that are then manifested in their own social experiences, allows the *novelas* to guide certain beliefs and values of modern society because of the way they represent the latter (Rêgo 76). "The *novela* can influence the people, resonate with the masses, but it should use its [influential] power for good" (Shay, 30, São Paulo). The way that people are represented in the media, or the symbolic representation, can also impact identity building within the Brazilian context. "[Specific cultural characteristics] is how the production of the genre represents and dialogues with the lived world of its social subjects, driving the questions about history, politics, anchored in the present. It's common for the entire country to discuss everyday themes seen in the *telenovelas"* (Fogolari 27).

Therefore, the genre's permeation into the heart and mind of society has helped to cultivate the *telenovela* as a powerful purveyor of specifically upper

class, commercial constructions of Brazilianness, which helps to dictate the status quo of society. This makes sense when analyzed through passive audience participation lenses, whereby the *telenovela* "buys" their audience, or repeatedly presents a certain issue in Brazilian society, which in turn, influences the way that the population at large discusses and conceptualizes these particular ideas. Brazil's long history of racial discrimination and exclusion alongside increasing numbers of self-identifying "brown" and "black" people per the national Census and other formal polls indicate the centrality of racial identification and categorization to any meaningful interpretation of Brazilian "national identity."[17] As a key participant in Brazilian cultural formation, television's representation of race and racial culture has the potential to shape the ways people perceive, problematize, and question issues relating to race in their daily lives.

Part II: Explanations of Racial Thought

The Myth of Racial Democracy

Brazil's colonial legacy and racial history have helped to shape the country's modern racial culture. As Da Silva reiterates, two terms that became synonymous with Brazilian racial studies in the twentieth century and that built on the legacies of Brazil's colonization are "whitening" and "racial democracy" (D. Da Silva 339). Racial democracy, with the support of *embranquecimento* or

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[17] The terms Brown and Black are the best English translations for the words used on the IGBE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) census, for *preto* (black) and *pardo (*mixed race/brown). The 2010 IGBE census showed that 50.74% of the total population self-identified as either *preto* or *pardo.* In 2010, the official color categories changed from *branca, preto, amarelo, and índigena to* also include *pardo.*

whitening, emphasize that through the exclusion or (dilution) of the black component of the population, racial issues will not affect Brazilian society (D. Da Silva, 339). Beginning in the 1930s, grounded in the work of influential Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre, popular discourse has sought to question the validity of these ideas, often viewing racial democracy as a myth and not a concept[18]. However, even though scholars have long agreed that Brazil is in fact not a "racial paradise" these terms continue to play a critical role in the ways many Brazilians understand racial identity and culture. Because of the myth of racial democracy, Brazilians have thought of themselves not as a people composed of distinct "races", but rather a multi-colored national race, which makes it hard for Brazilians to admit to racism in their society (Htun 61). "Prejudice is still very strong, but it's camouflaged. Because there are a lot of *mestiços*, people think there isn't prejudice, but it's still there" (Élio Junior, 26, Salvador). However, the denial of racism only further perpetuates Brazil's racial hierarchy that disenfranchises a large portion of the population.

Racial democracy has influenced society as a response to a push from upper class (mostly white and light skinned Brazilians) to discount racialized differences as a strategy to maintain their power. In his seminal work, *The Master and the Slaves* (1933), Gilberto Freyre explained how the dynamic between the

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[18] Although Freyre never used the term, "racial democracy," the concept became associated with his work because he argued that Brazilian society was formed by the racial and cultural mixing of the Portuguese, Africans, and Indigenous peoples during colonial times. Brazil's extensive miscegenation creates a meta-race that defies racial categorization and prejudice (Bailey and Telles 7).

masters and the slaves in Brazil's colonial past led to the formation of modern Brazilian society.

Freyre proposed instead that 'cross-breeding' produced hybrid vigor in humans, thereby enabling a bright future for Brazil with its large proportion of persons with varying degrees of African descent. By emphasizing the special character and uncommon flexibility of Portuguese colonizers that made possible extensive miscegenation among African, European, and Indigenous people, Freyre claimed that Brazilians were becoming a new race, or meta race which he describes as a moreno people (Freyre 1979) (Bailey and Telles 7).

Ultimately this means that Brazil celebrates mixity, and racial categories are fluid and ambiguous (Htun 61), much like other countries in Latin America. However, Freyre's publication confronted popular racial ideas and ideals of the time, such as the eugenics movement in Europe and the Americas, both of which taught the superiority of the "white race." Jim Crow laws in the United States sought to subordinate people of color through forced segregation of white and black spaces (PBS, Jim Crow Laws). While both of these movements supported the marginalization of non-whites, their approaches created different platforms for the eventual public acknowledgement of institutionalized racism. Although the United States continues to suffer from racism, its history of segregation and the civil rights movement, has since been able to problematize the issues surrounding race in its society. Brazil never faced the public acknowledgement of its racial past rather has continued to hide under the mask of a "racial democracy".

Responding to the eugenics movement and other scientific discourses of racism, Freyre sought to explain a different impact of miscegenation in the Brazilian context (Nogueira-Joyce)[19]. Brazilian history often recounted racial mixing from the time of conquest, as "Portuguese men went to Brazil without their wives and had sexual relations with indigenous and black women from the very beginning of colonization…This intermingling of racial mixing and colonization was said to loosen social distances between the races and not to have created a divide [such as in the United States] …" (Nogueira-Joyce 28). Brazilians proudly believed (and often believe) that their national identity reflects the cultural, racial, and ethnic mixing of Portuguese, Africans, and indigenous peoples. Thus giving birth to a new race constituting a new world in the tropics, a Brazilian 'meta-race,' a *moreno,* an ambiguous brownish color of people. This amalgamous race allegedly evades racism because every Brazilian comes from a long lineage of mixing between these three races (Bailey 1). "Everyone's equal, for me [someone's race] doesn't make a difference, I don't see [racial] colors" (Luis, 28, Rio de Janeiro). However, miscegenation did not alter the racial concentration of income, power, and social prestige; the theory of racial democracy was proven to only help certain people, namely those at the top. In his essay, *Where Are the Blacks?* (1999), Antônio Pitanga says that the acceptance of racial democracy would mean that, "the Brazilian racial problem, therefore, would be absent from

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[19] For further reading on the eugenics movement in Europe, refer to the book by Count Arthur de Gobineau, *The Inequality of the Races; The Pioneering Study of the Science of Human Races, Noontide, Los Angeles, 1966.* For information regarding eugenics in Latin America, refer to *O espetáculo das raças (1995),* by Lilia Mortiz Schwarcz.

the reflections of intellectuals of all ideological stripes [because of their higher class]. Concomitantly, however, it would be constantly present in the daily life of the black population [because they would face racism every day]" (Pitanga 35). Pitanga points to the clear disparities in the ways that people of different racial/social classes even thought about racial democracy. Racial democracy's repetition and adoption by mainstream society was rather ironic; even though scholars proved it was a myth, the ideology continues to be a part of the way that Brazilians speak of race in their country.

Following Freyre and *The Master and the Slaves* in the 1930s, racial thought continued to be heavily influenced by the concept of miscegenation, through the 50s, 60s, and 70s as discourse surrounding race continued to evolve (Pitanga 35; Nogueira-Joyce 29). In the 1950s, Columbia University and the state of Bahia, with the help of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sponsored a joint research project, further analyzing race relations in Brazil (Nogueira-Joyce 29). Contrary to the expectations of the Brazilian intellectual elite, researchers found that, "Brazilians who were phenotypically more African were disproportionately located at the bottom of society in terms of education, occupation, and income..." (Nogueira-Joyce 30). The results of this study concluded that the discrimination felt in Brazilian society, came from a "rigidly stratified class structure" which coincidentally corresponded to racial stratification (Nogueira-Joyce 30). The idea was that once Brazilians of color reached a certain economic status or education level, they would be fully accepted by whites. However, in the 1960s, scholars from São Paulo proposed

that racial and economic inequality was a result of the "handicap" African

Brazilians felt through slavery. As a result of this stratification, black Brazilians

were never included in the post-abolition, mainstream economic or social order

(Nogueira-Joyce 30; D. Da Silva 339). In the late 1960s, Florestan Fernandes[20]

challenged the scholars by arguing racism is a phenomenon of dependent

capitalism, and as such, transitory (Nogueira-Joyce 31). However, decades later

racism still maintains a powerful presence, and whiteness continues to be

associated with a positive self-image that fulfills a social role of authority

(Nogueira-Joyce 31).

In the 1970s, debates surrounding Brazil's racial discourse gained

attention from North American scholars that saw existing inequality as a cultural

divide between blacks and non-black Brazilians, but would soon disappear.

"These scholars believed that being Brazilian automatically implied a meta-racial

character, which muddled racial distinctions through extensive miscegenation"

(Nogueira-Joyce 30). However, when miscegenation is emphasized through the

lens of whitening, lighter skin is seen as a way to climb up the racial and social

hierarchy. When making these clear distinctions between one's race and social

class, it reinforces the notion that equates skin color with success.

The recently established affirmative action movement has called upon

even more critics of the concept of racial democracy. In 2001, state deputies

announced the implementation of affirmative action in Rio de Janeiro's state

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[20] For more by Florestan Fernandes, refer to Fernandes, F. (1965). A Integração do negro na sociedade de classes [The integration of Blacks into a class society]. São Paulo: Dominus Editora.

university (UERJ), as a way to increase the number of nonwhite students attending public universities (Peria and Baily 4; Telles 1). This policy has since received a lot of resistance from Brazilians because it is seen as an "anathema to Brazilians' long-established idea of their country as a racial democracy" (Telles 1). More specifically, Brazil's history of racial mixing makes it difficult to answer, "who is black in Brazil?" and therefore, "who should benefit from this policy?" (Htun 62). Since affirmative action was first mentioned during Fernando Henrique Cardoso's administration, then further implemented through Luís Inácio Lula da Silva's presidency, in August of 2012 Dilma Rousseff finally ratified an affirmative action policy that reserved fifty percent of spots in all public universities for black, mixed-race, and indigenous students (Jordan; Peria and Baily). Because of the widely held belief that racism in Brazil does not exist, many Brazilians have rejected the advances that affirmative action has achieved. "Having a quota creates more racism because there's always going to be inequalities between races…" (Belizário, 27, São Paulo). However, for some scholars, the ultimate win has been in the way that controversy has helped to engender new discussions about race and racism in public settings, which was rare prior to 2001 (Telles 1). After beginning the affirmative action programs, lawmakers have also sought to acknowledge the differences between race and class, since many people feel that quotas based solely on "race" exclude white or light skinned people of lower socioeconomic levels.[21]

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[21] Refer to Htun (2004), Peria and Bailey (2014), and Bailey (2001) for more on affirmative action. The importance of affirmative action will be further discussed in chapter 3 in relation to the *telenovela,* Duas Caras. Overall, the evolution of racial discourse from the 1950s to the 2000s has created new explanations and solutions for Brazil's inequalities. However, the discussion ultimately ends with the same conclusion: the need to address the connections between race and class.

Connections Between Race and Class

In my personal experience in speaking with Brazilians, many would mention that people suffer more from social/economic discrimination than racial, a point that is also argued by Mala Htun (62). "Racial prejudice is very strong here, but social prejudices are even stronger because Brazil is a very unequal county, that this creates more problems than just race" (Luis Fernando, 26, Rio de Janeiro). The connection between race and class, as explained earlier, is further defined by Samantha Nogueira Joyce, who says, "historically, whites, and to some extent *pardos,* were the ones with access to money, education, and opportunities, creating the reality that equates blacks with being poor and all the cultural and social-economical downfalls that are connected to the [marginalization of people of color]" (Nogueira-Joyce 26). Tania Cantrell Rosas-Moreno elaborates: "The possibility of anyone labeling him/herself a race other than what s/he may appear to be is rooted in cultural conceptions of race being defined by socioeconomic status. A common saying is that 'money whitens'" (Rosas-Moreno 49). Both of these authors reiterate the connections that society makes between race and class, and how a lot of classism is in fact based on racism. One's social mobility is heavily influenced by their skin color and Rosas-Moreno's use of the phrase, "money whitens", exemplifies this concept. Through these social associations emphasizing the expectations of one's class based on their race, reinforces the idea of whites of a higher class and blacks of a lower one.

The concept of *embranquecimento,* or whitening has long been a part of Brazilian history and political policy. The imposition of this ideology supported the theory of racial democracy because it was thought that through miscegenation, people "would be able to climb up the social hierarchy ladder in a white supremacist way, since the closer you are to looking white, the better" (Nogueira-Joyce 30). In the first half of the twentieth century, between the two World Wars, the Brazilian government promoted the emigration of thousands of Italian, German, and other white Europeans immigrants to the country to help further push the idea of whitening through interracial marriage (Machado-Borges 100; Nogueira-Joyce 30). As a result, the Brazilian government favored immigrant labor in urban centers over Afro-Brazilian labor, thus creating a deeper social stratification based on skin color (Nogueira-Joyce 30; Hasenbalg 61). This policy reinforced the associations between whiteness and social superiority and blackness and social inferiority.

The persistence of an idealized whiteness has permeated the collective cultural mindset surrounding race in Brazil. Antônio Pitanga further explains that, "the ideology of whitening, which is strongly inculcated in the population, makes the shame of being black or mulatto [in people's self-identification of their color" (Pitanga 37). Ivonete, a lower-class street vendor in São Paulo furthers Pitanga's ideas. "[Racial discrimination on TV] makes me feel rejected, you know? This misrepresentation impacts me because there are places that I'm even embarrassed to enter because I'm black (*preta)*" (Ivonete, 62, São Paulo). *Carioca* politician (and Pitanga's spouse), Benedita da Silva reiterates this

sentiment: "The use of words like, *moreninho* (little dark one)*, feijãozinho* (little

black bean), and *crioulinho* (little creole), causes a serious loss of identity. Blacks

lost not only their identity, but also their culture in a process of acculturation

through which customs, traditions, dialects, speech, and patterns of beauty

disappeared" (B. Da Silva 18). By seeking to erase or undo a collective black

identity, dominant racial ideology has emphasized the myth of racial democracy,

"constructed to obfuscate a conflictive, discriminatory, and separatist social

reality" (Santos 25).

Thereza Santos elaborates on the impact that mainstream society's

exclusion negatively impacts black identity formation in her essay, *The Black*

Movement.

The destruction of identity generates subordination and reinforces the idea

of the black as a negative type who is ethnically and culturally inferior [to

whites]. Since blacks are accepted socially to the extent that they

approach white values, they are led to accept the symbolic mechanisms of

domination and, consequently, their racial identity and consciousness are

forgotten or marginalized (Santos 24).

In Santos's essay, she reinforces how mainstream society's control of racial

culture has caused negative associations with the term *negro* or black, which

has, "determined [black peoples'] invisibility in the different spheres of national

life" (Santos 25). More specifically, through dominant ideology that supports the

myth of racial democracy, "the stereotype developed from this concept has led

blacks to assume their pseudo-incapacity for socioeconomic evolution, thus

removing them from the process of consciousness-raising and destroying

whatever is left of their racial identity and their most basic rights of citizenship"

(Santos 25). This racial hierarchy only deepens the social gaps between different

people, thus creating more internal tension felt by whites and blacks. The

discriminatory values that see blacks as inferior and whites as superior act as a

mental genocide practiced through the stigmas and prototypes that destroy

backs' self-esteem and dignity (Santos 24, 28). Although Santos's claims are not

made through empirical evidence, her words reflect the experience of an activist,

scholar, and black woman in Brazil, making them even more authentic and

poignant. She chose to actively decode the messages dominant society

reinforces and challenged the effects that they have on people's personal

identities, which spills over in the construction of national identities.

The Myth of Racial Democracy and Brazil's National Identity

A 2010 IGBE survey found that roughly half of Brazilians claim some

degree of African ancestry, however many still identify as a, "'mixed blood

people'… representing the hegemonic notion…that all races are equal" (Rosas-

Moreno 48). In one of his most famous texts, *O Povo Brasileiro*, anthropologist

Darcy Ribeiro argued that, "the uniformed underlying aspects of Brazilian culture

hide themselves in deep social distancing, created by the type of stratification

that the process of nation building itself produced" (Ribeiro 23). Ribeiro points out

that the celebrated aspects of Brazilian culture (e.g. Samba, Carnaval,

Capoeira), were produced at the expense of the strict racial hierarchy. The *povo-

nação,* or "nation-people" was built on a social structure that reinforced racial

stratifications that continue to plague society. Likewise, as Machado puts it, "through the hegemonic representation of all Brazilians pertaining to one 'metarace,' the myth of racial democracy is still alive and works 'either as a charter for social action or as an ordered system of social thought that enshrines and expresses fundamental understanding about society'" (101). Ribeiro continues, "the frightening part is that Brazilians, proud of their proclaimed, 'racial democracy,' rarely realize that beneath this is the separation of social layers" and the continual marginalization of people of color (Ribeiro 24). As Brazilians continue to believe and support this myth, its repetition in popular discourse has helped to make racial democracy a key component of their national identity.

Many scholars have made an attempt to try and define, or imagine, what constitutes a national identity. More than 30 years ago, Benedict Anderson explored the multiple ways states "imagine" themselves as a nation by creating and manipulating powerful symbols of nationhood, ranging from language and religion to cultural practices and written texts (Anderson 46). As a way to in/exclude, community members will emphasize or lessen characteristics that could unify or distance two states. Displays of nationalism are constructed to foster a sense of fraternity within communities, that use specific cultural cues (e.g. language, religion, written communication etc.) to connect people within the same imagined space (Anderson, 48). In *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies* (1996), Stuart Hall analyzed the way national identities are formed and transformed in relation to *representation* (612). Hall explains, "A national culture is a *discourse* – a way of constructing meanings which influences and organizes

both our actions and our conception of ourselves. National cultures construct identities by producing meanings about 'the nation' with which we can *identify*" (613). Here, we see how both Hall and Anderson stress how symbols can cultivate shared feelings of camaraderie among fellow compatriots.

Brazil's national identity has been heavily influenced by the country's racial origins. The reinforced symbols of Brazilian culture (e.g. Samba and Capoeira), have their roots in the country's African history, yet have become the face of an authentically (white) Brazilian practice. "Even with Samba, which grew in the favelas, you only see white women" (Julia, 54, Rio de Janeiro). Similarly, the repetition of Brazil's "meta-race" (Bailey 2001) as a result of their centuries of racial mixing, seeks to agglutinate the racial differences in order to create one singular identity that reaches all members of the community. Racial democracy has largely participated in the conversation surrounding the country's national identity because of the way that popular thought prides itself on its racially fluid categories, even though society remains profoundly stratified by color (Htun 61). "For me, everyone is equal (*igual)"* (Hannah, 25, Rio de Janeiro) "Everyone is equal!" (Thiago, 19, Rio de Janeiro), "For me, everyone is equal, there aren't any differences, I don't see color. Brown (*pardo)* and white are equal" (Luis, 28, Rio de Janeiro). These different quotes emphasize how even though racial discrimination and inequalities exist, many people continue to subscribe the idea of "equality" for all Brazilians because of the way that society has embraced this racial ideology. However, in deeming everyone "equal", it ignores the country's racial, social, and cultural diversity, thus forgetting the importance of discussing

the racial disparities present in society (Htun 61). Therefore, through the repetition of Brazil as a multi-hued racial democracy through various facets of society, this ideology has heavily shaped the discourse surrounding the formation of national and person identities.

By failing to acknowledge the institutional, cultural, and economic structures that have maintained whites in positions in power, and blacks in submission, Brazilian identities continue to support a false idealization of their country. The denial of true equality for people of color in media productions, political office, or access to education, society attacks both the personal identity and notions of citizenship supposedly afforded to all Brazilians. Reinforcing a falsified national image creates further injustice for the population. The economic and racial stratifications within the nation reflect great inequalities that need to be addressed by mainstream society. However, by choosing influential outlets that can spark cultural changes within society, Brazil can begin to truly address the issues of racism in a constructive and thought-provoking way, namely through the media.

Part III: Linking Media and Race

The theoretical framework of media effects and racial thought, established in the prior two sections, created the base to answer the larger question: What are the larger implications of all-white programming on audience members? How does the average person react to this material? Although empirical evidence documenting the direct effects of unequal racial representations in the media is rather limited, this section uses critical race analysis supported by the theory of

symbolic representation, together with examples of the intersection of race and media in Brazil, to try and answer these questions. The attention paid to personal identity formation and political importance, help direct the conversation surrounding racial representation in the media.

The Importance of Color Beyond the Screen

Not only does the skewed representation of race associate whiteness with power, but the term "money whitens" goes beyond just the socioeconomic implications of skin color. Many *novelas* have begun to show an economic-aesthetic dimension by using the color white in apartments, furnishings, and people to communicate a higher economic class to the viewer. "Having a white living-room implies that one also has the money to afford people (usually non-white maids, washers, and cleaners) to keep the white white" (Machado-Borges 101). "Whenever they show a rich person's house, they always show nice people, talking correctly, eating a full breakfast. And when they show a house in the suburbs (*periferia*), they show a messy house with people speaking incorrectly" (Roque, 40, Salvador). Through these subtle insertions of whiteness, beyond just the talent but now even into settings, producers are making the connection between whiteness and the upper-class even stronger.

In contrast, the way black and brown characters are portrayed in *novelas* often communicates an opposing image of a less desirable lifestyle that emphasizes poverty, exclusion, and socially inferior characters. Although black people have been a part of *telenovelas* since their inception, their presence alone does not supersede the stereotypical representations repeated in mass media. In

his documentary, *Brazil's Denial (A negação do Brasil)*, Joel Zito Araújo argues that, "historically, the majority of [black Brazilians] have been portrayed in marginal positions, such as villains, and in inferior and sometimes demeaning roles, such as slaves, servants, maids, and other service roles," which has "denied [them] visibility and participation on Brazilian TV and [in] society" (Nogueira-Joyce 50). More importantly, people are aware of the differences in the portrayals of people of color. "Black people only have small roles like the housekeepers" (Zilda, 36, Rio de Janeiro), "Whenever you see a black actress, she's always going to be the *favelada* or housekeeper" (Élio Junior, 26, Salvador), "When they show a young black person, they always are poor, stupid, or a thief" (Gabriela, 20, Salvador). The juxtaposition of people of different skin colors in media productions, and ultimately the classes associated with each one, perpetuates colonial legacies in Brazilian society, which promotes the idea that people of color are inferior to light-skinned Brazilians. "The majority of people on TV are white, and attractive. The poor ugly black (*preto)* doesn't come out. The white guy, with straight hair, light eyes…is a majority of the protagonists in *novelas* or they fit this beauty pattern" (Rodrigo, 24, Rio de Janeiro). "Afro-Brazilians have largely been absent from Brazilian entertainment media, not necessarily because of their race, but rather their class, according to the unique Brazilian concept of racial democracy that cleverly guises at least these two concepts" (Rosas-Moreno 61). Therefore, in recognizing the power that repeated imagery, casts, and settings, can have in the media we see that the representation of people of color, racial culture, and national identity can greatly

influence the population's perceptions and understanding of blacks' place (or lack thereof) in Brazilian society.

The Impact on Identity and Political Voice

The underrepresentation of empowered, successful, and influential black and brown characters in *telenovelas* ultimately impacts the identity and identification (Hall 613) of people of color (Leslie 372). According to a 1988 study led by Haroldo da Costa, researchers found that, "a broad cross-section of Brazilian blacks said they felt psychologically marginalized and stereotyped in the mass media and in Brazilian cultural, political, economic, and social life [and] some identified television as a prime source of unfavorable portrayals" (Leslie 364). In the book, *Media Power and Democratization in Brazil* by Mauro Porto, he provides further reasoning for connections between media representation and identity formation, as mentioned in Da Costa's study, through the introduction of the term symbolic representation. Porto argues that the symbolic representation of marginalized groups, specifically in *telenovelas,* is important because of the ways that these programs construct a compelling idea of the nation through repeated symbols and representations (125). Therefore, when certain groups like gays, blacks, or women are absent, or present, from mass media productions, they are symbolically removing, or adding, their representation (and voice) from larger discourse. Conversely, even if groups are active in media productions, they can be affected by stereotyping or disparaging representations, reinforcing their subjugation in society (Porto 137). Therefore, the way that the mass media depicts specific groups through their content, plays a central role in determining

which aspects will receive more visibility (or legitimacy) in the public domain (Porto 137). Through the symbolic importance given to repeated imagery in the media, namely *telenovelas,* people construct their understanding of the nation. So, when considering who is (not) a part of that image, media are reinforcing a particular (ergo white) nationally idealized identity. In the book, *Latina/os and the Media* by Angharad N. Valdivia comments,

> What is missing from media representations is not necessarily an indicator of that which is not *present* in our culture but rather a sign of that which we desire to *ignore, extirpate, or marginalize*…From a center-of-power perspective, they are *not* important enough to be mentioned. It is quite possible for a group of the population to be quite numerous, in absolute and proportional terms, yet lack representation (Valdivia 70, author's italics).

Valdivia's connection to the struggle of representation for Latinas/os in the United States media, perfectly mirrors the Brazilian context: both suffer from the absence of brown bodies, thus reinforcing a false image of their respective national identities. Through their academic analyses of the importance of representation, both Porto and Valdivia reinforce the need to implement more diversity in media products as a way to promote the *real* identity of Brazil: a culturally and ethnically diverse country. The persistent absence of faces of color in media productions only causes a greater disconnect between the imagined Brazilian community and the reality that many black and brown people face every day.

The symbolic representation of marginalized groups in media, has such a profound impact because it can condition the way these groups are represented *politically* (137, author's italics). The media's lack of representation has larger implications than just one's personal identification, rather it can also in/decrease the voice of a movement in larger society. "Everyone has the same rights, but not the same access. It's a lie that the law is for everyone. The elite are the ones with rights. The media collaborates a lot to reinforce this idea of inequality" (Luciana, 45, Rio de Janeiro). Angharad N. Valdivia, furthers this notion by again comparing the experience of Latina/os's representation in the media productions from the United States.

> The virtual absence of Latina/os throughout most of US history in the mainstream press, means that they were not treated *seriously as citizens* and therefore endured discrimination and lack of access to *the fruits of democracy*. At the very least, this virtual absence meant lack of knowledge about their *lived experience* and *lack of voice* in public policy discussions. The potentially negative ramifications of lack, or particularly racialized forms, of content and representation apply not just to Latina/os but to all brown bodies – an indeed, to the entire nation – for they set up a climate of *tolerance or intolerance* for certain types of human beings that pervades social life (71, author's italics).

Both Porto and Valdivia stress how a group's symbolic representation in media products influences personal identities, and also emphasizes their political power and voice within society. This is evident in the previous discussion of affirmative

action whereby the policies have been so fundamental in Brazil's attempts at overcoming racism because they finally provided a national platform that recognized the disparities between racial representation, while seeking solutions to that problem. By problematizing racial discourse first through a political lens (i.e. legislation), it opened the space that allows other sectors (e.g. media, healthcare, and education) to take an active stance in challenging the meaning of "equality for all" in the Brazilian constitution[22].

Telenovelas have been key in pushing the political agenda of various social issues, such as LGBTQ rights, women's rights, and the rights of people with disabilities, by incorporating the discussion of these issues into their storylines (Machado-Borges). The LGBTQ movement has gained particular prominence in *telenovelas* because many stories seek to include gay and lesbian characters into their plots. By showing storylines that include these characters, dialogue expands/spreads with regard to LGBTQ rights in personal, political, and social contexts. *Amor à vida* (2014), for example, became famous for the "first gay kiss" shown on a Brazilian *novela* (Sila, Santos, Andrade 13). "The media 'bought and sold' the Gay Movement and we're seeing today how that's helped and supported the movement" (Angela, 65, Rio de Janeiro). The representation of queer characters presented a connection between the "*novela* reality" and the "viewer reality" that serves as a point of conversation among family members, co-

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[22] In the Brazilian Constitition drafted on October 5th, 1988, in Title II – Fundamental Rights and Guarantees, Chapter I – Individual and Collective Rights and Duties, Article 5: All persons are equal before the law, without any distinction whatsoever, Brazilians and foreigners residing in the country being ensured of inviolability of the right to life, to liberty, to equality, to security and to property…" (Reichart).

workers, or friends. Although all conversation may not be gay-positive, programming seems to opens the door for a cultural shift surrounding LGBTQ rights and lifestyles, as seen in *Amor à Vida* and other *novelas* (Silva, Santos, Andrade 13). Overall, "by giving more visibility to the representative claims of marginalized social perspectives, *telenovelas* have contributed to enhance their position within the long-term institutional arrangements that characterize Brazil's representative democracy" (Porto 143).

Questions of race and racial equality, however, continue to be excluded from a majority of *telenovela* plots and storylines. Even with a growing United Black Movement (MUN), and the publications of numerous books, documentaries, and articles on the subject of race and the position of people of color in Brazilian society, this topic continues to be neglected on Brazilian television (Leslie 365). "There are more blacks (*negros)* on *novelas,* but it's still only *one* couple. Black's presence on TV is still small. The United Black Movement of course would like to see more black people, but the Brazilian people, in general, naturalize the idea" (Angela, 65, Rio de Janeiro). As a result, "There are no serious, ongoing programs on Brazilian television in which the condition of blacks (and browns) in Brazilian society is examined and problematized" (Leslie 365). As it stands, it is clear that race has been given less airtime than other social issues in the Brazilian media.

Examples of the Intersection of Race and Media in Brazil

In the past year, various stories have emerged exemplifying how racism continues to be exacerbated by the Brazilian media. Three stories in particular have shown the ways that audiences actively decode messages from linear programming, and react via social media websites. Their direct participation through sites, like Facebook, show how unfiltered voices of social media has started to have a direct impact on television networks and their programming.

On July 3, 2015 a cyber-attack was launched on the *Jornal Naciona*l's journalist and weather correspondent, Maria Julia "Maju" Coutinho. After posting a picture to the *Jornal Nacional's* Facebook page, recapping Maju's forecast, some users commented on the picture heavily attacking her blackness. "She only got a job on the [national news] because of the quotas, filthy black girl", "In plain 2015, we still have blacks on TV", "I don't have a colored TV to keep seeing this black girl on my screen" (Globo.com 12/10/15). The, predominantly white, team from the *Jornal Nacional,* responded by posting a video with the two main correspondents, William Bonner and Renata Vaconcellos*,* saying, "I'm in the Trophy Room, which is where the *Jornal Nacional* has its meetings, and I'm with Renata Vasconcellos. How are you, Renata?" "Good." "Good. Renata, the team from *Jornal Nacional* and I had an idea, we wanted to give you a message. The message is this, 'we are ALL Maju'" (Globo.com 7/3/2015). The last line was repeated in chorus with the entire team of the *Jornal Nacional*, as Renata assertively looked into the camera, affirming her position against the racist comments. The hashtag #SomosTodosMaju was trending as a way for people to

show their support for Maju following these attacks. One of my interviewees commented, "The case of Maju shows the prejudice that still exists here in Brazil. It's horrible what happened. Someone with power, with a job, still suffers prejudice like that" (Renato, 19, São Paulo).

A few months later on October 31, 2015, world acclaimed *telenovela* actress for her roles in *Xica da Silva* (1996), *Da Cor do Pecado* (2004), and *Viver a Vida* (2009), Taís Araújo was also victim of racist comments left on her Facebook profile. Among her many accomplishments, Araújo is known as the first black actress who played the protagonist of a *novela,* in her role for *Xica da Silva* in 1996[23]. Anonymous users commented things like, "I'll pay you with a banana", and "let me borrow your hair so I can wash my dishes" (Globo.com 11/1/15). Araújo responded by saying,

> *It's very disappointing that in 2015, we still have to talk about this, but we can't be quiet. Last night I received a series of racists attacks on my page. Absolutely everything is registered and will be sent to the Federal Police. I won't delete any of these comments. I'm making it a point for everyone to feel what I felt: embarrassment of still having cowardly and small people in the country…I'm not going to be intimidated, nor will I lower my head in shame.*
>
> *I'll keep doing what I know how to do best: work. If my image or the image of my family makes you uncomfortable, that's your problem! I want this episode to serve as an example: anytime you find any type of discrimination, denounce it. Don't stay quiet, show that you are not ashamed of who you are and continue hassling the cowards! Only this way will we build a more civilized Brazil (*Globo.com 11/1/15, author's italics*)*

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[23] This study will further analyze *Xica da Silva* (1996)'s place as the reflection of the opening of racial policies in Brazil and the ways that audiences have engaged with its content in Chapter Two.

Araújo's last sentence really sends the larger message to Brazil, that this type of

behavior is unacceptable and needs to be challenged and changed in order for

Brazilian society to continue to progress. The hashtag #TodosSomosTaísAraujo

emerged as a result of the racist remarks, as a way to show unity with Taís.

Most recently, in the midst of Carnival 2016, *The Guardian* published an 8-

minute documentary on February 9, 2016, recounting the story of former

Globeleza (2014), Nayara Justino. Each year for carnival, Rede Globo chooses

their own carnival queen to dance samba in between programs and commercial

breaks for the network. The women, traditionally *mulatas,* normally are

completely naked, except for body paint covering their most intimate parts

(Lankester-Owen et al). In 2013, Nayara Justino was chosen to be the Globeleza

for that 2014 carnival season. Shortly after airing the clips of Nayara on TV,

Globo began receiving comments from users disapproving of Nayara, because

she was, "too black" (Lankester-Owen et al). "I started getting comments on my

Facebook page of people calling me, 'monkey' and 'darkie'. People wrote, 'On

the TV screen in the middle of all these people, this woman looks like an ogre

hahaha'" (Lankester-Owen et al). In an interview with Nayara's boyfriend, Cairo

Jardim, he said, "It wasn't just the prejudice and pejorative comments, but it was

the way that they were saying it. Their intention was to say, that kind of woman

should not be on TV. Women that look like her should be in the kitchen cooking

for me" (Lankester-Owen et al). Following these comments, Globo removed

Nayara from the position of Globeleza and replaced her with a lighter-skinned

woman. Globo did not explain Nayara's demission, but commented, "Globo does

not base its contracts on skin color. Actors are chosen based on her artistic fitness for the role. The same criteria apply to the choice of Globeleza, where artistic merit prevails" (Lankester-Owen et al).

These three stories exemplify a major contradiction in Brazilian society: apparent acts of racism, in a so-called racial democracy. The ways that these three women were humiliated and attacked for the color of their skin, points to a reality that continues to exercise racial prejudice (and sexism). Although many people came to the defense of Maju, Taís, and Nayara following these events, they still show how, "slavery ended, but racism continues even to today" (Justino, Lankester-Owen et al), especially in television content. However, as Taís Araújo said, by continuing to denounce acts of racism, include more opportunities for people of color on television, and problematizing the larger issue of race, Brazilian society can continue to progress towards a more equal and socially just nation.

Looking Ahead: Case Studies and Application

Starting about twenty years ago, networks have made an effort to include more diversity in their *telenovelas.* Although the representations of people of color in these productions still emphasize stereotypical characteristics, the ways that writers problematized racial discourse and culture in various *novelas* has given more visibility to the conversations surrounding race in modern society. In the context of underrepresented peoples of color in the Brazilian media, I examine the function of race and racial discourse in three *novela*s that took an active stance addressing racial inequality: *Xica da Silva* (1996)*, Duas Caras*

(2007), and *Malhação* (2014). Through the inclusion of black protagonists, direct attention given to racial discussions, and the challenging of Brazilian racial culture, these *novelas* show the evolution of Brazilian socio-political contexts, which have contributed to the larger discourse surrounding racial representation in media productions. Within these *novelas* there still exists many contradictions between messaging and representation of content and repeated themes. However, their most important feat is in participating in the larger conversation surrounding race in society and thus trying to advance the conversation.

Cultural studies approaches, cultivation and "drip" theories, and critical race analysis suggest how media help shape racial understandings by reinforcing certain beliefs, especially when there are few alternative sources of knowledge and the values/judgments are dominant in wider society. In the Brazilian context, this means that *telenovelas* can act as an effective medium for discussing and questioning racial inequalities found in society, while acting as a way to impact widespread cultural thought surrounding these and related issues.

The chapters that follow expand on the ideas of racial theory discussed in this chapter by analyzing the racial representation in three specific *telenovelas*: *Xica da Silva* (1997), *Duas Caras* (2007), and *Malhação* (2014). Each of the *novelas* address race in a unique way that reflect their cultural and political context. *Xica da Silva* marked the beginning of a new era in Brazilian *telenovelas,* as it was the first to include a black protagonist. Its story follows the life of a female slave in colonial Brazil, who ascended socially by marrying one of the wealthiest white men in the region. It's release in 1996 reflected the political

and economic context of the time, under president Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

Duas Caras examines race issues in a more recent context by discussing

interracial relationships, class differences based on skin color, and social

mobility. This *novela* came out in the midst of affirmative action activism in Brazil

under President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva's presidency and reflected the

racialized social consciousness of that moment. The 22nd season of *Malhação*

focuses on the lives of Brazilian teenagers and various issues that they face.

Although somewhat overshadowed by the presidency of Dilma Rousseff, the

portrayals of characters of color within the idealized world of *Malhação* reflects

the racial discourse in 2014 that emphasized social inequalities through public

protest, amidst the 2014 World Cup.

To analyze these programs, I divide each chapter into three sections: (1) Context

of Production, which examines the social context surrounding the release of the

telenovela and its relation to racial discourse at the time; (2) Qualitative Content

Analysis of major themes present in the *novela* and how they challenge or

confirm stereotypical portrayals of race; and (3) Qualitative Audience Reception,

which seeks to understand how viewers decoded messages about race while

watching these *telenovelas*. While this section is not conclusive for any specific

audience segment for reasons I elaborate in my chapters, it does seek to identify

broad tendencies in the audience reception. These patterns indicate how

motivated fans with access to YouTube react to the three *telenovelas* and serve

to supplement the personal interviews I conducted in Brazil in August 2015.

Through this three-pronged approach, then, my thesis points to the importance of

racial representation in media productions and argues for the critical

reconfiguration of programming in support of various movements for social

justice.

Chapter Two

Creating a Protagonist While Negating the Audience:
Analyzing Racial Representation within *Xica da Silva*

As the subject of one of the most iconic stories in Brazil, Xica da Silva represents female strength, intelligence, and power. Da Silva, a former slave who ascended social classes to become one of the wealthiest women in colonial Brazil, is known for using her beauty and wit to achieve social mobility. Unlike most other enslaved women in Brazil's colonial era, Da Silva challenged the racial structure of the time by earning freedom and ultimately becoming the wife of one of the wealthiest men of the time. Intrigue surrounding her story led novelists, filmmakers, and television producers to recreate her life in numerous cultural productions. Specifically, in the *telenovela, Xica da Silva*, first released in Brazil in 1996, her story and attitude captivated the imagination of millions of Brazilians. The *novela* showed Da Silva's transformation from an enslaved woman in rural Brazil to an influential voice in her community, while incorporating typical *novela* themes like love, deceit, and power.

Since its initial release, *Xica da Silva* has continued to entertain audiences through its engaging plotline set in colonial Brazil. The *novela* centered around the theme of race, but touched on other topics such as slavery, social mobility, and class perception. After Xica da Silva, the character, became the diamond contractor's wife, she continued to struggle with other (white) characters because of her race and history as a former slave. The way that race and social ascension are intimately intertwined in the *novela* reflect the connection that society makes between social mobility and whitening. The ways that *Xica da Silva* challenged

certain aspects of Brazil's racial culture show how this *telenovela* represented a new era of racial dialogue in Brazilian society.

Even though the *novela* sought to challenge previously established racial norms through its storyline and debut of the first black protagonist in a *telenovela, Xica da Silva's* portrayal of people of color did not avoid placing them in stereotypical roles. The story's focus on white families, couples, and problems contrasted against the depiction of disempowered, uneducated, untrustworthy black slaves, leads us to an important question: Did *Xica da Silva* challenge the acceptance of racial democracy by representing a black female as the protagonist? Or did its portrayal of race relations in colonial Brazil only further reinforce harmful stereotypes associated with people of color? Although these questions have no obvious answer, a close reading of the n*ovela* focusing on the context of production, content analysis of important themes, and audience reception, shows how *Xica da Silva's* encoded racial messaging both added to and detracted from society's critical participation in the conversation of Brazilian racial discourse.

The first section of this chapter examines the context of production by recounting the history of Xica da Silva's life in relation to the *telenovela*, while investigating the political context and impact surrounding the release of this *novela*. The second section will examine the reoccurring themes and imagery that relate to race, specifically in the depictions of poverty, social ascension, and the sexualization of black bodies as ways to evaluate critically how these themes reflect racial discourse. Last, the third section identifies patterns in audience

reception, and specifically, of the *novela's* representation of race, through YouTube comments authored by anonymous users on twenty different episodes. Although this section cannot make definitive claims about audience reception, the comments do reveal apparent trends in viewers' opinions and understandings of the *novela*. By using *Xica da Silva* as my first case study, this chapter provides a starting point to investigate Brazilian racial discourse of late 1990s, while creating the basic analytical framework for studying the *telenovelas* discussed in the following chapters.

Part I: The Context of Production

The Historical Xica da Silva

TV producers, writers, and filmmakers tend to interpret the story of Xica da Silva from two different angles: her romantic/sexual appeal, or her larger impact on society. Regardless of the producer's intent, each production bases its story on the historical figure of Francisca da Silva de Oliveira, or Xica da Silva, while incorporating embellishments for modern aesthetics.

In the book, *Chica da Silva,* author Júnia Ferreira Furtado provides the setting and context in which Da Silva lived and how that impacted her story of ascent. Da Silva grew up in the small village of Tejuco, today known as Diamantina, in the state of Minas Gerais (Furtado). During the time of its initial growth, Tejuco had not yet discovered that it was a region rich in precious stones; rather, it was known as a remote village surrounded by gypsies, unemployed people, and maroons (runaway slaves) (Furtado 37). Between 1720 and 1750, the city began to grow as diamonds were discovered in the nearby

rivers (Furtado 38). As Tejuco grew, more people from around Brazil, along with their enslaved servants, began to inhabit the area. "The Diamantina society had the same profile of the capital and was composed of an expressive layer of slaves, another smaller layer of freed men and women, many of them brown (*mulatto*), and a small white ruling class, mostly of Portuguese descent" (Furtado 43). Although European descendants clearly held the power in society, there existed some possibilities for social ascension through marriage or buying freedom (Furtado 43). Once slaves were freed, many were able to acquire wealth and to mix with the free "white" society in the town (Furtado 44).

Born between 1731 and 1735, Xica da Silva was the daughter of a black slave named Maria da Costa and a white man named Antônio Caetano de Sá (Furtado 47). Da Silva first appeared in Tejuco in 1749, as the domestic slave to a prominent family. In 1751, she had her first child, named Simão, with her then owner, Manuel Pires Sardinha. Shortly thereafter, in 1753, she was sold to João Fernandes de Oliveira, the diamond contractor for the Portuguese Crown. Prior to her intimate involvement with João Fernandes, while still his slave, Da Silva earned her freedom. Although it is not clear how Da Silva did this, Furtado explains that, "the ex-slave became free on her own accord, without connections or sponsorships" (Furtado 57).

Once Da Silva became known as João Fernandes's unofficial wife, she began to embrace her "whiteness," while minimizing her blackness, as a way to blend into Tejucan society. She officially adopted the full name of Francisca da Silva de Oliveira, a name that blended both her past and her future: Da Silva, a

generic Portuguese name given to free and enslaved people who did not know their origins, and de Oliveira, João Fernandes de Oliveira's last name. (Furtado 58). Da Silva sought to reclassify her heritage by acknowledging her Portuguese blood from her father while trying to hide her past as a slave and diminish her mother's African roots by distancing herself from the black community (Furtado 63). Da Silva's rejection of her blackness reflects how colonial Brazil associated skin color with class, success, and importance. Da Silva's African heritage together with her rising power threatened the status quo set by white upper class society. Therefore, in an attempt to be accepted in white society, Da Silva tried to divorce herself from her black past and embrace her white future.

The relationship between Da Silva and João Fernandes was particularly unique for colonial Brazil because it challenged the social norms. Not only were they an interracial couple, but a mutually consensual interracial couple. In colonial Brazil, sexual relationships between Portuguese men and their female slaves was common; many men took advantage of their power to abuse their slaves sexually. However, João Fernandes' relationship with Da Silva resembled a marriage more than just a sexual encounter. Da Silva had thirteen children with João Fernandes, and he legally recognized all of them as his own. Ultimately, once he returned to Portugal, he left all of his new world wealth, including land, slaves, and jewels, to Da Silva and their children (Furtado 70, 82). These material acquisitions made Da Silva one of the wealthiest women in Minas Gerais, eventually allowing for her burial in a cemetery reserved for the white colonial elite (Furtado 82).

Da Silva's rise to power and wealth has remained an emblematic story in Brazilian history because it represents the social mobility that many people dream of attaining. Da Silva climbed the social ladder at a time when people of color were seen by dominant society as property. Da Silva's embrace of whiteness and rejection of blackness were crucial in her need to be accepted by society, exemplifying the associations between race and class that continue to permeate modern Brazilian society and racial culture. Nevertheless, as Da Silva is such a quintessential character in Brazilian history and folklore, creating a *telenovela* based on her life seemed only appropriate for the Latin American, specifically Brazilian audience, to reflect on the region's colonial legacy and its remnants in modern society. *Xica da Silva's* production in the mid-1990s reflects a liberalization in Brazil's political, economic, and social policies, which helped to usher in a new era of thinking. With the help of political policies, people's mentalities began to shift towards more open ideologies that sought to include previously marginalized segments of society.

The Intersection of Neoliberalism and *Xica da Silva*

The 1990s in Latin America represented an era of transition for the continent. In prior decades, many countries suffered from oppressive authoritarian regimes that removed civil rights and liberties. The 1990s marked a new term in modernization, as Brazil for the first time elected Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a progressive president, who wanted to integrate the country into the 21st century. Cardoso's policies sought to stabilize the struggling economy,

create political security, and promote racial diversity, all of which helped the welcome back democracy.

The era of opening in the 1990s followed the dictatorial military regime that controlled Brazil from 1964-1985. This dictatorship severely limited free speech, free press, and anything that criticized the government (Meyer). The military regime even limited content produced in telenovelas as a way to control Brazilian thought and culture (Rosas-Moreno). Beginning 1964, with the help of the United States government, the military orchestrated a coup d'état against then president, João Goulart, for his attempts at nationalizing the economy (Rusk). Brazil's authoritarian regime, together with many other Latin American countries, had sought to modernize through the developmental strategy of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI), as a way to "break out of the world division of labor" by "establishing domestic production facilities to manufacture goods which were formerly imported" (Baer 95). In order to increase nationalism and greater economic independence, policies during ISI included closed economies and limited imports/exports, the promotion and protection of infant industries through nationalization and direct governmental participation, and governmental subsidies to different industries to encourage domestic spending (Baer 95). For the initial two decades of ISI, these policies worked and provided the region with economic growth and development. However, by closing off the economies to foreign trade and technological advancements, political leaders created large market inefficiencies and a misuse of resources (Thorsen & Lie). Ultimately, this

strategy left many Latin America's governments bankrupt and severely lagging

behind the world's technological advancements.[20]

Thus, the 1980s represented a period of economic and political instability

in the region, as the different countries tried to bounce back from their periods of

ISI. As the economic strategies outlined by ISI began to fail, the military regimes

started to lose their power and fall. This shift in political and economic leadership,

ushered Latin America into a new era of political and economic policies, defined

as neoliberalism. The neoliberal approaches emphasized open economies for

international trade, austerity in government spending, and democratically elected

governments, all things that were absent under ISI (Thorsen & Lie). The following

decade really showed how Latin American countries adopted neoliberal policies

in their governmental approaches. In Brazil, 1995 marked the change of an era

as the country elected Fernando Henrique Cardoso as president.

As not only a politician, but a renowned scholar and sociologist, Cardoso

created and implemented policies that would tackle key issues like economic

instability and income inequality. Economically, one of Cardoso's main feats was

in the implementation of the New Real Plan (1994) which, "consisted of a new

currency (the *real)* pegged to the U.S. dollar, a more restrictive monetary policy,

and a severe fiscal adjustment that included a 9% reduction in federal spending

and an across-the-board tax increase of 5%" (Meyer 3). This initiative allowed

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[20] ISI regimes were prevalent all through Latin America, but these policies are most specific to the Brazilian, Mexican, and Argentina cases. These countries showed some of the most successful ISI models, as they occupied massive territories that could support the development of a variety of industries such as the automobile industry, heavy machinery, and food production (Blouet & Blouet).

prices to stabilize, decreased inflation, and privatized some previously state-owned enterprises, while opening up the Brazilian economy to foreign trade and investment (Meyer 3). After stabilizing the economy, and alleviating the threat of an economic collapse, Cardoso and his administration began to focus on other social domestic issues relating to the country's inequalities.

Cardoso's academic history included extensive research about the country's racial history and culture, which he decided to incorporate into his political priorities as president (Rosas-Moreno 118). He created the National Human Rights Program in 1996, and laid the framework for his successor, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, to create other social programs that sought to bring greater equality in the country. These programs included, "a series of targeted income transfer programs designed to alleviate poverty," which later evolved into *Bolsa Família*[21] under President Lula (Meyer 3). Cardoso also created the body for the Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality (Secretaria Especial de Políticas de Promoção da Igualdade Racial), which Lula also expanded during his presidency (Rosas-Moreno 65). Cardoso sought to combat the country's inequalities by creating initiatives that sought to include greater racial and economic diversity into mainstream society, thus trying to integrate the *periferia* and the *asfalto* (Rosas-Moreno 65). The Cardoso administration's emphasis on greater social and racial equality, represented a cultural shift whereby Brazilians

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[21] Bolsa Família is a "direct cash transfer program, directed at families in poverty or extreme poverty, all over Brazil, so that they can overcome their situation of vulnerability and poverty. The program seeks to guarantee these families the right to food and access to education and health. All over Brazil, 13.9 million families have been helped by Bolsa Família" (http://www.caixa.gov.br/programas-sociais/bolsa-familia/Paginas/default.aspx)

began to embrace greater diversity in the public office, media, and workplace. Although these policies were not accepted blindly by the population and Brazilian society continues to be plagued by racism and inequality, Cardoso's policies emphasized a cultural, economic, and political liberalization that promoted racial and social diversity by welcoming cultural influences from foreign countries. "The increased appearance of black telenovela actors and actresses since the mid-1990s coincides with the Brazilian government's new liberal policy regarding the import of foreign goods and the consequent import of ethnic products [specifically for black women]," like hair products (Machado-Borges 58). These cultural changes even reached the entertainment world, where the first *telenovela* with a black female protagonist was released in 1996, namely, *Xica da Silva.*

Beginning in the 1990s, *telenovelas* began incorporating more socially provocative stories that discussed controversial political and societal issues (Machado-Borges 58). Plots discussing class, race, and sex became common themes in *telenovelas* as a way to criticize and challenge society. The release of *Xica da Silva* exemplified this shift in Brazilian society because audiences positively received the *novela* that supported popular TV's first black protagonist. Prior to 1995, "it was almost only among lower-class characters that one could find black actors" (Machado-Borges 44). Therefore, *Xica da Silva's* depiction of a socially-mobile black women reflected the larger cultural transformation in Brazilian society because it placed a woman of color on the forefront of Brazilian media. Through this portrayal, along with its creative storyline, complex characters, and challenging content, *Xica da Silva* opened the door for greater

diversity in all types of mass media productions, namely of the representation of people of color.

<div align="center">*Xica da Silva:* **The** *Telenovela*</div>

The *telenovela Xica da Silva* engaged audiences through a romanticized account of Xica da Silva's life. Although the *novela* based some of its storyline on facts, it also used strong, sensual, and exciting scenes to dramatized the romance, violence, and reality in which Da Silva lived. The *novela* portrays Da Silva as a strong, smart-witted, sexually liberated woman who used these characteristics to help launch her social ascension. Through this idealized presentation of Xica da Silva, the *novela* successfully engaged millions of people, in Brazil and across Latin America.

Xica da Silva first aired in Brazil from September 17, 1996 until August 11, 1997 on the now extinct Rede Manchete. *Xica da Silva* garnered high ratings, with its average IBOPE (Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics) score of 18 points, some days reaching 22 (Montano; Paraná Online)[22]. In 1998, as a result of numerous internal issues, Rede Manchete went bankrupt and shut down, blocking their content from airing on TV (Montano). Years after, in 2005, SBT acquired the rights to air *Xica da Silva,* among other Manchete *novelas,* and showed an abbreviated version during their 9PM *novela* slot. The architects of

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[22] The IBOPE Score is measured by the People Meter, a machine that logs the content that users are watching on their television. To get the overall scores, 660 homes in the greater São Paulo area are fixed with a People Meter. Each house represents 6,580 houses in the region. For national numbers, the averages from São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte and Curitiba are totaled. In the IBOPE sample, an average of six houses equals one point on their scale. Each point represents 43,429 houses or 162,465 residents in the region (Pereira Junior 75). Meaning that on "lower" days, *Xica da Silva* reached roughly 2.9 million and on "higher" days it reached 3.5 million people.

the *novela* were writers Walcyr Carrasco and Mário Teixeira, both known for their success in making *novelas* "de época" or pertaining to a certain era (Carrasco). The director, Walter Avancini, also helped to construct the story of Xica da Silva. Both Carrasco and Avancini had previously worked on an assortment of *novelas* for Rede Manchete, when the network was still active (Avancini). In total, *Xica da Silva* had 231 episodes (218 that aired on SBT) that depicted Da Silva's life from her time as a slave, through her social ascent, to her last kiss with João Fernandes.

 Xica da Silva, the *novela,* followed a 1976 depiction of Da Silva. Famous Cinema Novo director Carlos "Cacá" Diegues created a film titled *Xica da Silva*, where he also emphasized Da Silva's wit and sexual prowess to accomplish her goals of social ascension (Gordon). In the film, actress Zezé Motta played Da Silva, who was then cast to play Da Silva's mother Maria in Manchete's *telenovela.*

 In her breakout role, then seventeen-year old actress Taís Araújo played Xica da Silva. This *novela* was the first *telenovela* to include a black lead character. Araújo's interpretation of Da Silva emphasized her wit, which she frequently showed with shoulder shakes; her sexual appeal, which was highlighted in various semi-nude scenes; and her no-nonsense attitude, which became a part of Da Silva's regular encounters with the town villain, Violante. Through this romanticized depiction of Da Silva, the novela successfully entertained viewers across the world.

Xica da Silva: Plot Summary

The *telenovela* begins by showing Da Silva with her mother in slave quarters. They are both wearing ratty, brown, ripped clothing that shows their class and denotes them as slaves. Their owner, Commander Felisberto Caldeira D'Brantes, one of the most important men in Tejuco for his connection to the Portuguese king, considers selling Da Silva to a new family. By this time, multiple people in the community have recognized Da Silva's beauty and sensuality, and Senhor Jacobino, the owner of the town's bar and brothel, hopes to buy her from the Commander. Once Da Silva learns of these plans, she decides to steal a bag of diamonds from the Commander, with the help of another slave, Quiloá, who is in love with her. Once the Commander finds out that the diamonds are missing, he searches all of the slave quarters and tortures various people, including Da Silva, in search of the precious stones. After extensive searching, the diamonds are not found and as a result, the Caldeira D'Brantes family loses their power for supposed fraud committed against the crown. The Commander is taken back to Portugal to be imprisoned, while his son and daughter, Martim and Clara, stay in Tejuco. Da Silva and her mother are then sold to the family of Sargent Cabral.

Once under Sargent Cabral's ownership, Da Silva begins to suffer physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Sargent Cabral starts by taking Da Silva's virginity through rape. After that scene, Da Silva goes to a nearby river to wash herself and meets José Maria. José Maria is suspected to be the town homosexual, and eventually is attacked by community members for his questioning sexuality. He lends Da Silva a compassionate hand as she

processes the physical and emotional pain of being raped, and a loose friendship forms. Da Silva is then given to Sargent Cabral's daughter, Violante, as her personal slave. Violante, known for her rudeness and oppressive ways, never misses an opportunity to humiliate Da Silva. While Da Silva suffers in her new home, Quiloá becomes the leader of the nearby *quilombo,* or community formed by fugitive slaves. The black slaves of Tejuco and the free blacks in the *quilombo* continue to help each other survive by stealing food, passing secret information, or ultimately providing refuge for wealthy white community members fleeing from persecution for accusations of infidelity or alleged murder. Eventually, the Contractor João Fernandes de Oliveira arrives to Tejuco to adopt the post previously held by the Commander D'Brantes.

After his arrival in Tejuco, João Fernandes begins to learn the dynamics of the community. He spends time with Sargent Cabral's family and eventually asks for Violante in marriage. As a part of the engagement, he requests that Da Silva become his slave, to which Sargent Cabral agrees. Shortly after Da Silva moves in with João Fernandes, he becomes infatuated with her. He then frees Da Silva from slavery and breaks off his engagement with Violante in order to pursue a relationship with Da Silva. Violante and her family take this as extreme disrespect, thus beginning a feud between Xica and Violante.

Once João Fernandes names Xica as his wife, she begins to embrace the luxuries of her new lifestyle including intricate clothing, personal slaves, and full meals. As a way to show how she has transformed her status, Xica begins to wear detailed full-length dresses, white wigs, and make-up used by upper class

white women of the time. Da Silva extends this privilege to her slaves and caretakers; eventually all of the people working in João Fernandes's house wear clothes associated with upper-class, white society.

Da Silva's pride and power allow her to live like a true queen. In her new position as an influential community member, she begins to help different residents of Tejuco who suffer at the hands of Violante. José Maria and his future wife, Elvira, become some of Da Silva's closest friends. As Da Silva is able to solidify her status as the Contractor's wife, she starts using her power to challenge dominant white society and take revenge on people who had hurt her in the past, while helping people who deserve compassion. Violante, particularly hurt, offended, and revengeful of Da Silva's new life with João Fernandes, begins to plot situations that can destroy Da Silva, while hoping to retrieve her former fiancée.

Throughout the *novela*, Violante and Xica create situations involving lies, deceit, and manipulation to harm the other. As a result of this game, Da Silva and João Fernandes's relationship suffers, as he falls for some of the tricks played by Violante. The dynamic between Da Silva and Violante is exemplified in the final episodes of the *novela* when Violante wrongfully imprisons Da Silva. João Fernandes, already back in Portugal, can no longer protect Da Silva from Violante's revenge. Violante, with the help of a crooked priest, accuses Da Silva of witchcraft, a crime punishable by death. As Da Silva sits in prison, counting her last days, Violante writes a letter to João Fernandes saying that she will free Da Silva if he agrees to marry her. As a way to save Da Silva, João Fernandes

accepts Violante's request, and allows her to come to Portugal to be married. However, as a way to avenge her treatment of Da Silva, immediately following the marriage ceremony, João Fernandes abandons his new wife, Violante, in his mansion in Portugal and tells her that the hate in her heart has made it impossible for them to ever be together. João Fernandes then returns to Brazil to be reunited with Da Silva, one last time, and meet their newborn daughter. The novela ends with an older Da Silva watching her daughter, Joana da Silva Oliveira, get married to a white man, continuing the legacy of social advancement first achieved by Da Silva[23]. The ending leaves the viewer feeling satisfied and happy because both the hero and villain got what they deserved.

Comparing the life story of Xica da Silva, with the *telenovela's* depiction of it, clear discrepancies appear in the focus and purpose of the production of the program. The *novela* highlighted supposed characteristics of Da Silva, like her sex appeal and wit, but almost forgetting the themes of "whitening" that were crucial to Da Silva's story and social ascension. The *telenovela's* romanticized portrayal of Da Silva's life fit a predetermined storyline that lacked a critical analysis of issues like sexual assault, racial stereotyping, and gender inequalities that Da Silva faced in colonial Brazil. As a product of the entertainment industry, these types of dramatizations are expected. However, can straying too far from

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[23] This scene mirrors one of the most important paintings in Brazil's racial discourse, named the A *Redenção do Cam,* or Cam's Redemption, which "portrays the actual story of Brazil. You have the picture of the traditional dark-black skinned grandmother; she has her hands in the air. Next to her seated is her *mulata* daughter, she obviously had a relationship with a white man, so her daughter is progressively lighter skinned. Next to the *mulata* daughter is the Portuguese immigrant, he's white, and in the *mulata's* daughter's arms in the white son. So after two to three generations, the blackness of the family has disappeared, and the grandmother is giving thanks to god [with her arms up], like thank you for removing this black stain from my family" (Travae, Lankester-Owen).

Da Silva's lived experience present a false image of who this woman was and what she really represents for Brazilian racial discourse? The next section will analyze the nuances of racial representations in *Xica da Silva* to understand how the *novela* engaged with dominant racial discourse by both empowering and stereotyping characters of color in its production.

Part II: Content Analysis

Recurring Themes and Representations

Although produced in the mid-1990s, *Xica da Silva's* content continues to be relevant in modern society. Most notably, the *novela's* depiction of race during the colonial period gives some insight into Brazil's current racial culture. *Xica da Silva* highlighted race as one of the major issues, while tying it together with class, social ascension, and sexual objectification.

This section will critically evaluate the ways that race was represented through the *novela,* in order to better understand particular themes. To analyze the content and present themes, I use David Altheide's methodology for qualitative content analysis that uses "descriptions, attention to nuances, and openness to emerging insights" (Altheide 27), to (de)construct the portrayal of characters, images, and objects.

As discussed in Chapter One, audience participation can be organized into active and passive positions. Although the recurring themes in *Xica da Silva* can be decoded in a variety of ways (hegemonic, oppositional, or negotiated), depending upon the unique lens and experience of the viewer, this section reflects my decoding of these themes and their connection to larger racial

discourse in Brazil. As explained by cultivation and "drip" theories, the repeated presentation of black people in disempowering, inferior, and submissive roles can impact the ways that viewers translate or incorporate representations from the television reality to or their own social reality. Therefore, the content analysis in this section identifies the passive messages that can be interpreted by viewers as a result of the *novela's* portrayal and representation of race. This analysis also aims to provide greater context for understanding more recent portrayals of people of color in the other *telenovelas* analyzed in this thesis, namely *Duas Caras* (2007) and *Malhação* (2014), in the following chapters.

Class

When developing its storyline, *novelas* use specific visual cues like the setting or wardrobe to portray differences in the characters. In *Xica da Silva,* the representation of class differences was specifically based on the race, clothing, and speech of the characters. This made the depiction of colonial Brazil seem highly stratified by racial, and ultimately social, lines that emphasized a secondary role for blacks in society.

The most obvious way *Xica da Silva* showed class separations was through the character's skin color. As the *novela* sought to portray colonial Brazil, which thrived on slave labor, all of the black characters with the exception of Da Silva followed a similar profile, emphasizing their low position in society. In episode five, one of the doctors is called to take care of Da Silva after she was forced to swallow a boiling egg as punishment for lying about the whereabouts of Caldeira D'Brantes's diamonds. As the doctor tells Violante and her family about

the ways the egg burned Da Silva's insides, Violante responds, "You're wrong, Doctor. You speak of the slaves as if they were the same as us. Your own Pope recognizes that they're not human. How can they feel pain and feelings like us?" "Let me tell you Ms. Violante, only the color of the skin changes. I've seen the death of *senhores* (white men) and slaves in practicing my profession…they all have the same red blood and cried the same tears…" (Xica da Silva Episode 5, all translations by the author unless otherwise indicated). Here, Violante discounts the slaves' humanity, due to their black skin, while clearly positioning white people and their pain as superior. The doctor's response, though, tries to disassemble this notion and recognize that all people suffer, regardless of race. This quote exemplifies the associations between race and class, importance, and position in society.

Another cue that represented class distinction was in the clothing used by black and white characters. The black slaves wore ragged and ripped clothes, in varied shades of brown fabrics. Women often wore long skirts and loose oversized tops. The black females were never shown using make-up and most wore their hair naturally or pulled back in a turban. Depending on the scene, black men wore loincloths or baggy pants and frequently appeared shirtless or with an oversized top. Their outfits generally appeared disheveled, made of clothes that looked like they belonged to someone else. This unkempt appearance, was used as a way to indicate visually the economic and social disparity among slaves and the white population.

In contrast to this portrayal, white characters were always shown in formal outfits that reflected a higher economic level. Generally, white women wore long, modest, and colorful dresses. Depending on their class, some dresses showed more intricate detailing than others, but many white women wore complementing gloves, bonnets, or jewelry. Women of the upper classes would indulge in a curled, Marie Antoinette-style white wig. White upper class men wore full body outfits including breeches, a waistcoat, and an outside coat that reached the knee. The soldiers, or *dragões,* wore sky blue versions of these same outfits. Both upper class men and the *dragões* would wear long curled white wigs with ponytails, topped with a three corner hat. This hairstyle marked these men as important in the community. Lower class white men would still wear the three-pieced suits, but usually of lighter colors, fewer details, and with their hair pulled back in a ponytail. The ragged and oversized clothing used by the black slaves compared to the intricate dresses and suits used by the white middle and upper classes, explicitly shows the difference in the classes of each group. However, as will be discussed further on, clothing also acted as way to indicate vertical mobility, as it was one of the first things to change after Da Silva married João Fernandes.

The *novela* characterized people of different classes through the characters' grammatically (in)correct speech. The black slaves constantly made grammatical mistakes like the misuse of a subject, adjective, or pronunciation of a word, as a way to reflect their lack of education. For example, in Episode 10 after Sargent Cabral agrees to give Da Silva to João Fernandes, Da Silva says to

her mother, "*O contratador vai se arrepender de ter comprado eu. Ele até pode abusar de eu, ele é meu dono.*" In English, "The contractor is going to regret having bought I. He could even (sexually) abuse I, he is my owner" (Xica da Silva Episode 10). In this phrase, Da Silva uses "I" instead of the grammatically correct "me." In Portuguese the correct sentence would read, "*O contratador vai se arrepender de ter me comprado. Ele pode até abusar de mim, ele é meu dono*". Throughout the *novela,* Da Silva and the other slaves continue to make grammatical mistakes like this one, which serves as an audible reminder of their lack of education and lower class. Even after Da Silva becomes the Contractor's wife, she continues to repeat this specific mistake, acting as an indication of her past as a slave. In episode 217, as pregnant Da Silva sits in a jail cell awaiting her death, she recounts to one of her slaves, "I was born a slave, I never thought that I could be anything else in this life. I saw *muito branco* (a lot of white [sic]) and wanted those things for I [sic]…but now I see those wishes go with the wind like smoke…" (Xica da Silva Episode 217). Here, in the penultimate episode, Da Silva explains that even though she became the contractor's wife, to many white people, she remains a slave, as is echoed by her incorrect grammar. The semantic mistakes that Da Silva and other black characters made reinforced to the audience the characters' low stature in society.

Xica da Silva's representation of class through the race, wardrobe, and speech of its characters explicitly showed the differences in social positions. The slaves were portrayed as dirty and uneducated, while the white characters were seen as charming and well dressed. By creating such stark differences between

classes, the *novela* plays into the audience's pre-coded notions that anticipate people of each race to fulfill a particular physical characterization. The consistent presentation of white characters in nicer outfits and engaging in elegant conversation, creates a subconscious connection between white skin and success, power, and beauty. This dichotomy between black and white becomes clearer when Da Silva transforms from a slave to a housewife, as the "necessary" changes she needs to make in order to be accepted are directly related to upper class white culture.

Social Ascension

Xica da Silva begins the *telenovela* as a slave, but by episode 14 João Fernandes names her the "dona da casa", or his housewife (Xica da Silva 14). Once Da Silva is officially free from her slave duties and is considered a free woman, João Fernandes gives her a long blue dress to wear, representing her transition to the upper class. However, prior to the Contractor's official gift of the blue dress, Da Silva begins to foreshadow to the audience her affinity towards "white" things like round skirts and white wigs. In episode 7, Da Silva fondly tells her mother about a group of recently arrived Portuguese women. Da Silva explains every detail of their clothing and says how much she would like to wear their intricate outfits. Maria, Da Silva's mother responds sharply,

> Maria: "You're trying to be white, you wanna be a lady, huh? Well, be born again… things like big skirts and white wigs doesn't change anyone's skin color, Xica!"
>
> Xica: "I didn't say I wanna be white."

Maria: "But you wanna live like you were white" (Xica da Silva Episode 7).

This conversation already makes the connection between the quality of one's

physical appearance and race. Maria infers that because of Da Silva's black skin,

she will never reach the same level or class as that of a white woman, even if

she gets to wear the same clothes. Maria, proud of her African heritage,

continues to disapprove of Da Silva's desire to "whiten" herself, even after she

becomes João Fernandes's wife.

In Episode 14, Da Silva excitedly goes to her mother to tell her of her new

relationship. In her new blue dress, she meets Maria by the river while her

mother continues washing clothes in ripped rags. With love her in voice, Da Silva

tells her mother about living with the contractor and Maria responds by saying,

"You're tryna whiten yourself. You forgot that you're black. You're thinkin that

because you're sleeping with a white guy, and he likes you, that the rest of your

life is going to be like this, but no! Those whites [use us] and throw us away,

Xica" (Xica da Silva Episode 14). Maria's harsh words fall on Da Silva's deaf ears

as she continues to talk of the Contractor's positive qualities, but their dialogue

shows how the two women view vertical mobility as a form of "whitening." Da

Silva's mother thinks that by wanting to wear nicer clothes and becoming

involved with a white man, her daughter wants to *se branquear*, or whiten herself.

Maria sees social mobility as a form of whitening because she sees how Da Silva

embraces white culture, while distancing herself from the black community. As a

result, Maria continues to disapprove of Da Silva's relationship with João

Fernandes and hopes that Da Silva will return to Quiloá, the slave who she once loved.

Episode 15 marks a significant step in Da Silva's social advancement, as she is confronted with direct changes that she needs to make in her appearance, attitude, and expressions. José Maria and Elvira are sent to the Contractor's house to measure Da Silva for new clothes. After being fitted for new dresses and a wig, José Maria sits down with Da Silva and defines the changes she must make if she wants to be accepted by white society. He explains that, "It's no use if you just buy dresses and wigs, but still seem like a slave. Specifically, if you always walk around barefoot. You need to learn a lot, and the first is to walk in shoes. You should also learn to speak correctly, like a lady, not like a slave. You should also learn to eat with a knife and fork. This is all *necessary*, Xica" (Xica da Silva 15, author's emphasis). In this scene, José Maria's advice mirrors the cues given to make class distinctions between the rich and the poor. In order for Da Silva to be *accepted* by white society, she *must* adopt white appearances, white customs, and white speech. If Da Silva does not make these changes, in the eyes of Tejucan society, she will continue to be perceived as a slave in nice clothes. José Maria's advice once again exemplifies the ways that the norms of white society dictate success, power, and beauty by forcing Da Silva to conform to high class (ergo white) social standards.

In the episodes following Da Silva's conversation with José Maria, Da Silva takes active steps to embrace her new social class by embodying white ideals. She begins by changing her appearance: Da Silva starts to wear

exclusively long and extravagant dresses, styled white wigs, and flamboyant jewelry. She even physically tries to appear whiter by wearing a thick layer of white powder underneath her make-up, and drawing a fake mole on her left cheekbone. Da Silva also makes an effort to refine her speech, even though she continues to make some mistakes, as described in the scene from Episode 217. As a way to project her new class, Da Silva starts to spend time exclusively with white characters, while her interactions with black characters are limited to her own slaves or her mother. All of the active and conscious changes that Da Silva makes align with the concept of whitening because in order to fully embrace her new status as the Contractor's wife, she must create a new identity that distances her from blackness, yet embraces whiteness. The way Da Silva adjusts to these changes ultimately leads her to gain respect, power, and allies throughout the Tejucan community because she challenges the societal norms that equate race and class.

Xica da Silva's representation of social ascension presents a detailed account of the historical Xica da Silva's process of social mobility; however, the *novela's* repetition of whiteness as a measure for success can be highly problematic for viewers. When applying the theories of cultivation and "drip", the repeated imagery that stresses Da Silva's whitening only furthers disempowering notions that think of white skin as superior to black or brown skin. Besides Da Silva's own transformation, all the other main characters in the *novela* are white, emphasizing the idea that in order to attain that level of success, one must be or

act *white*—a skin color with which roughly 50% of Brazilian do not identify.[24] By

encoding this hegemonic message throughout, the *novela* perpetuates unrealistic

ideals for society that makes it seem like people of color will never fit the profile

as wealthy, successful, or powerful because of their skin color. Therefore, even

though this *novela* presented the audience with a strong empowered black

protagonist, "the process of ethnic and cultural whitening [in Da Silva's story]

reveals not only the democratic characteristics of relations between races, but

the subtle booby-traps by which racial oppression is hidden in Brazil," which

support hegemonic readings of this program (Furtado 23). The visual reminder of

this hidden truth in society further marginalizes people of color because even

when a black protagonist is portrayed to have ascended against all odds, she is

only recognized as she approaches white standards and norms, ignoring the

potential for her own success.

Sexual Objectification

Another reoccurring theme in *Xica da Silva* was the hyper-sexualized way

the *novela* presented characters of color. When researching about Xica da Silva,

articles, books, and films always emphasize her "sexual prowess" (Gordon 3) as

one of her most recognizable traits. Júnia Ferreira Furtado's recount of her life in

Chica da Silva, in contrast, does not emphasize Da Silva's sexual activity and

desire because many of her sexual encounters were forced (with owners, or

other Portuguese men), or out of her volition. In the *novela,* Da Silva plays a

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[24] "According to the 2010 census, Brazil's population is 47.7 per cent white (branco), 43.1 per cent brown (pardo), 7.6 per cent black (preto), 1.1 per cent Asian, and 0.4 per cent indigenous" (Peria and Bailey 3).

flirtatious character, often using her wit and good looks to manipulate situations. However, that representation of Da Silva most likely stems from popular culture, where Da Silva is imagined as a sexually liberal woman. The *novela's* repeated sexual glorification of people of color reinforces a problematic representation of black bodies in the media that place more emphasis on their sexualization than on their character development.

The *telenovela's* opening scene shows Da Silva, half-naked, bathing alone in a waterfall. Her breasts are exposed to the audience, as the water covers her lower body parts. As she swims around this paradisiacal pool, two white *dragões* appear hoping to take advantage of the beautiful naked slave. After teasing the two *dragões* with her charm, the soldiers begin to fight over who will get to "go" first. During their scuffle, Da Silva carefully slips away into the forest, stealing their clothes and their hearts, as she remains untouched. As the opening scene of the *novela,* this encounter sets the tone for the way that the audience is to perceive Da Silva's personality—tricky and sensual. Later*,* as João Fernandes's wife, Da Silva continues to appear semi-nude, even when the Contractor may be fully dressed, furthering the association of Da Silva as a sexual object for the white male.

As a slave, Da Silva continually faced sexual objectification from white men who often wanted to realize a sexual fantasy with her (Xica da Silva Episode 9). One of the most defining scenes in the *novela* is when Sargent Cabral rapes Da Silva and takes her virginity. Sargent Cabral purchased Da Silva to take advantage of her sexually, removing her maidenhood as a way to emphasize his

masculinity and dominance. This scene exemplifies how her white owner thought of Da Silva as a body, not a person, and forced her to accept his sexual advances. This presentation of Da Silva removes her agency and degrades her being, as she is seen as a sexual object who exists solely for her owner's pleasure and not as an equal. During slavery, white men often raped the black female slaves, which the *novela* sought to show through a variety of scenes that depicted the harassment, abuse, or rape.[25] Although these scenes try to accurately illustrate colonial Brazil, the repetition of these scenes further equates the black body to an object, thus further marginalizing black characters in *telenovelas*. This type of repeated sexual objectification in media products disempowers people of color because it takes away from their value as characters, actors, or even people, because their importance lies in their approximation to white characters.

In the article, "Look, Blackness in Brazil!: Disrupting the Grotesquerie of Racial Representation in Brazilian Visual Culture," scholar Maria Andrea do Santos Soares explains that these hyper-sexualized black characters play into a previously established role for women of color in the media. "Playing the voluptuous, lustful, and always ready to undress female is almost the only space for young black Brazilian women in the media. The recurrence of the undressed

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[25] For more information about female sexual abuse during colonial Brazil, refer to: Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, by Michele Mitchell for the UN; *Brazilian Legacies* by Robert Levine; *Critical Voicings of Black Liberation: Resistance and Representations in the Americas* by Kimberley L. Phillips

mulata is … evocative of the place imagined for black women in the narrative of the nation…" (Soares 82). The *novela's* repeated representation of black women as the sexual property of white men affirms the idea that objectifying women of color is accepted because they are inferior to whites, socially and economically. The similarities in the treatment and depiction of Da Silva, as a slave and as the Contractor's wife, only emphasizes that her worth as a black female has not improved, even if her economic status has. As explained by cultivation and "drip" theories, the repeated presentation of women of color in these roles reinforces their position as "sexually liberal" (Soares 83), and normalizes the representation of black bodies in this way, thus perpetuating their objectification in media and in everyday life. Therefore, this *novela* presents an interesting contradiction of Xica da Silva, because as she seeks to represent an empower black female, she reaffirms the role for women of color as submissive and sexually hungry objects.

Even though Xica da Silva was a revolutionary *telenovela* because it was the first to cast a black female protagonist, analysis of its representations of race, makes evident that the program furthered stereotypical images of people of color. According to the passive decoder of media messages, the repeated representations of class, social ascension, and objectification/sexualization throughout this *novela*, can cultivate and strengthen previously determined ideas of the racial paradigms in Brazil, where white is consistently seen as superior to black. The larger implication of the mentioned themes lies in the repetition of every image or scene that affirms a white ideal or objectifies a black person because they act as "drops of water," slowly emphasizing pre-coded ideas that

viewers may have about race, thus influencing their own social realities within the television reality. However, it is important to note that although the themes discussed in this section have been decoded through a racially focused lens, this analysis does not imply. As Stuart Hall (1973) explained, that *every* audience member would decode the encoded messages in the same way. Therefore, when considering the impact of *Xica da Silva* on Brazilian racial culture and discourse, another way of understanding the impact of the *telenovela* is through positioning viewers as active participants in the digestion of media messaging, by analyzing the reception of the themes, characters, and scenes in the *novela.*

Part III: Audience Reception

When audiences consume television content, each person uses her/his prior experiences to help interpret and connect to the program. With every program watched, viewers choose to decode the encoded messages actively or passively, positioning themselves in empowering or disempowering roles. By taking an active stance in their decoding, viewers can further engage with content by discussing, problematizing, and questioning characters, plots, or themes. In 2016, as social media's importance in daily activities has (and continues) to grow exponentially, active audience members can be seen through posts, likes, shares, and other kinds of comments about a particular program left on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube. Regardless of the viewer's approach to decoding, whether *hegemonic, negotiated,* or *oppositional* (Hall 1973), participation through social media profiles enable viewers to share

opinions about the content they consume and makes visible the stance taken by the audience member.

As a way to understand better the ways that viewers of *Xica da Silva* actively decoded the encoded messages about race, love, or specific characters, this section uses qualitative and quantitative techniques to evaluate the audience reception of the *novela,* as portrayed by YouTube comments. By analyzing the specific comments left on twenty different episodes (qualitative) and the number of times each comment related to five coded categories that emerged in analyses of comments (quantitative), it provides a general look into the ways that some viewers decoded the *novela.* This section provides interesting insight into audience reception, but cannot make definite claims through this method because it of its limited and anonymous sample size that only looks comments posted by viewers within the past year. Nevertheless, the results provide a valuable look into the ways viewers actively decoded the *telenovela* with particular attention to race-related themes and/or characters.

Methodology

As this study pertains to race and the media's influence on constructing perceptions of race, this section's guiding methodology decodes the content through a racially charged lens. To create a sample, I chose twenty different episodes that I marked, during my personal viewing of the *novela,* as containing a scene, quote, or situation pertinent to the *novela's* theme of race. Almost all comments were written in Portuguese, with an occasional comment left in Spanish. After reviewing the 1000+ comments left on these twenty episodes, I

created a five category coding system based on repetitive themes present in the comments. The five categories were: RA, or a race related comment; RO, or a romance/love/couple related comment; CH for a character/storyline comment; EV to denote direct reference to an event; and OTH for other.

To fit the RA section, a user's comment would include some reference to skin color, race, racial history, slavery, or race in modern Brazil. Specific words *like "negro", "escravo", "branco",* or other slang terms associated with race e.g. *"negão" or "branquela*" were considered. For the RO related comments, I looked for direct references to couples in the *novela*, with a particular focus on the romance and love. Comments may have included a user's opinion of a couple or expressing the desire to be like one of the couples. The CH grouping reflected user commentary about specific characters or aspects of the storyline, frequently mentioning a user's (dis)like of a particularly person. EV was categorized by comments that directly referred to a specific event or scene in the story that included a minute and second marker. Lastly, the OTH category encapsulated all comments that did not follow a particular pattern, like laughter, insults, random conversation between users, or references that were outside of the context of the *novela*. This coding method reflects my interpretations without independent validation of the placement of the comments. A large number of comments support each category and very few were categorized as other, so the categories themselves have substantial support. Through the large sample of comments collected, these larger trends appeared.

Discussion

As this thesis focuses on race, the discussion section analyzes the comments pertaining to the RA or race category. After reading a total of 1019 comments, only 125 comments left were in relation to race--about 12% of the total. Recurring themes in the comments included references to slavery, references to being black in modern Brazilian society, and sexualized comments about black characters.

Various users commented on the importance of *Xica da Silva* for its depiction of slavery in colonial Brazil. Although people learn about this period in schools, watching a television program that provides a visual narrative of the time of slavery, allows viewers to connect more deeply with the content and program. User Rivaildo Santos commented, "It's shameful for our history. Auctioning off people as if they were merchandise. Unfortunately, this shameful episode wasn't just in the *novela*. It happened in real life" (Santos Episode 1). With this comment, Santos takes a negotiated stance to the *novela's* representation of slavery because he accepts the depiction, but challenges its lasting impact on society.

Image 1.1:
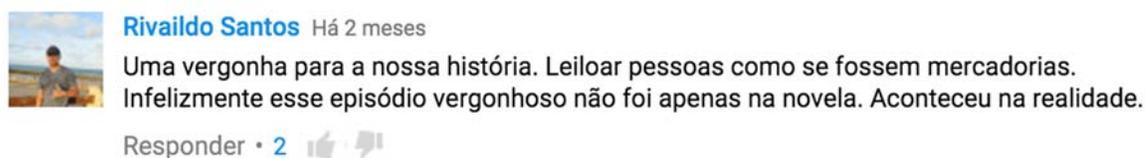
User Royse H. Black, a very active commentator, frequently addressed historical issues surrounding slavery. In her comment below, she explains how the

differences between slavery in the United States and Brazil helped shape the two

societies. She concludes her comment by explaining that racism manifests

differently in the United States than in Brazil because of the way slaves were

treated. "If the slaves in the USA were treated a little better, today racism there is

[a lot worse] than in Brazil. Maybe because in Brazil, there was a big mixture of

races and in the USA, even today, whites only marry whites, and blacks with

blacks. And if there is mixture, society does not easily accept it" (Black Episode

1). Here, Black indirectly acknowledges the myth of racial democracy as the

reason for society's current racial dynamics, through a negotiated lens because

she acknowledges Brazil's harsh past, yet trivializes it compared to the United

States'. The United States' history of segregation is the reason for modern-day

racism, while due to Brazil's history of miscegenation, racism is not as prevalent.

Image 1.2:

Rosye H. Black Há 3 meses

africano é africano (contrabandeado para ser vendido) em qualquer lugar... me lembrei do filme "...e o vento levou" sem cortes, original, os escravos tbm trabalham cantando, no meio do sofrimento, com um sorriso no rosto. A diferença é que nos EUA não havia tamanha tortura, escravos podiam comer carnes, ovos... e os brancos não faziam sexo (leia-se estupro) com negras - aésar dp motivo racista, que eles consideravam transar com negros o mesmo que fazer sexo com macacos, mas daí as mulheres eram livres de serem molestadas, e nos EUA só eram espancados por motivos mais forte, diferente daqui, q apenas com um olhar torto, ficava com as costas sangrando. Mas tá ai a ironia... se os escravos lá no EUA eram tratados um pouco melhor, hj em dia o racismo lá é inúmeras vezes do que no Brasil. Talvez pq no Brasil houve uma gde mistura de raças e no EUA até os dias de hj, branco casa com branca, negro com negra. E se há mistura, a sociedade não aceita facilmente.
Mostrar menos

Responder

Other users commented on how the *novela's* representation of race reflected

modern society. On episode 35, BrunosBarbos2 says, "This ideology that a black

person has to help the other only exists in *novelas*, because today, it's a black

person who wants to scam the other (most of them)" (Barbos Episode 35). This

comment reflects an oppositional stance because BrunosBarbos2 completely

challenges the *novela's* representation of black unity within the modern day context.

Image 1.3:
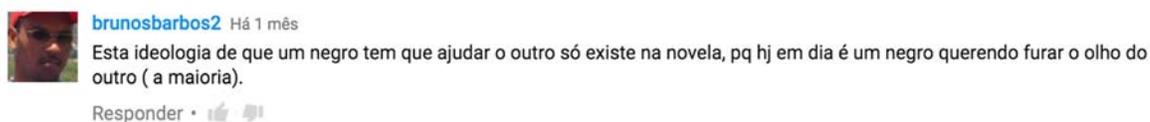
Esteves Camacho comments on the place of blacks in Brazil by saying, "This is a joke, only the black guy is burned…all of the whites are free, like always!" (Camacho Episode 54). Here, Camacho references how race impacts the treatment one may receive, again showing an oppositional stance for the clear differences between the TV reality and Camacho's lived reality. In Brazil, people often comment on the fact that wealthy, white politicians are involved in some of the most heinous (white collar) crimes, but the poor black *favelados* are the ones to be incarcerated or murdered for petty crimes.

Image 1.4:
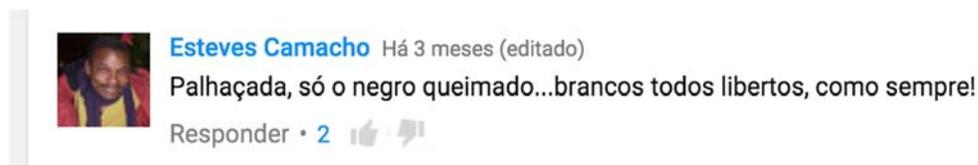
Some users also commented on the sexualized representation of black characters. A scene that users highly commented on, was when Violante bought a large slave to punish her step-mother, Micaela, for cheating on her father. The audience was led to believe that the size of the slave's genitalia was extremely large, as to inflict more pain on Micaela as Violante ordered him to rape her repeatedly. User Royse Black comments, "I think this is the worst punishment of

the entire *novela*, against a human being (or not, for many hahaha). To be raped

by this huge wall of ebony that appears to have an anaconda in between his legs

hahaha" (Black, Episode 180). Ricardo Silva replies by saying, "I'm also a good

reproducer, even though I'm mulato hahaha" (Silva Episode 180).

Image 1.5:

> **Rosye H. Black** Há 3 meses
> Nussssss capitulo 180, acho que esse é o pior castigo de toda novela contra um ser humano (ou não, pra mtas kkkkk) ser estuprada por esse paredão de ébano que parece ter uma anaconda no meio das pernas kkkkkkk
> Responder · 1
>
> **Ricardo Silva** Há 3 meses
> eu também sou um bom reprodutor embora eu seja um mulato kkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkk
> Responder · 1
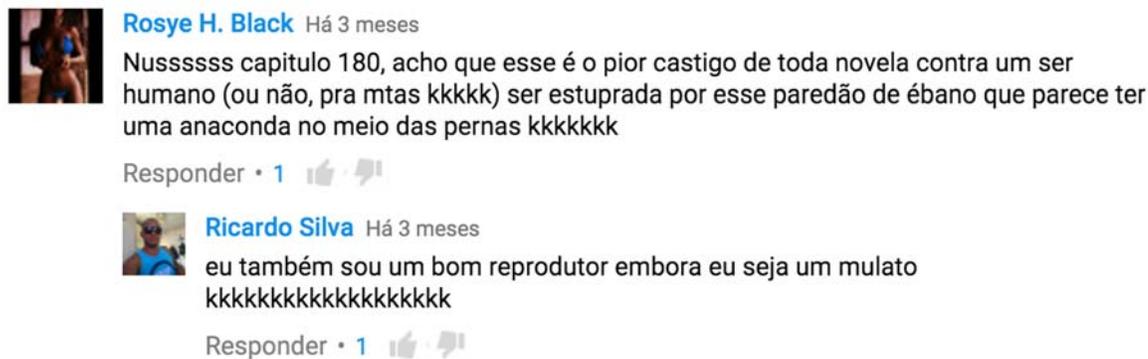
This banter between Black and Silva reflect society's sexual objectification of

black bodies, where they concentrate their attention to the slave's penis size, and

not the larger issues relating to slavery or rape. The joking tone that Black and

Silva use to discuss this scene shows how they interpreted this interaction for its

surface value much more than considering substantial implications of the

portrayal of this encounter, reflecting a hegemonic approach. Instead of

challenging, questioning, or fighting against the novela's depiction of rape, they

accepted it by turning it into banter. No other users joined this conversation

commenting on the severity of rape, rather most users left sexual jokes or

innuendos on this episode. Furthermore, the fact that no other user challenged

them for their jesting response to rape reflects larger issues relating to rape

culture, machismo, and gender norms.

Overall, the comments relating to race left on the twenty different episodes

did not provide any conclusive evidence as to how *Xica da Silva's* encoded

messages surrounding racial representation influenced audience reception.

Although the comments users left are not completely representative of the impact

the *novela* had on viewer's perceptions, the 125 RA comments show at least

some decoding of racialized messages, even if by a relatively small group. Most

users seemed to leave comments reflecting their personal opinions of the

storyline and characters.

Quantitative Results

Spread over twenty different episodes, the coding section analyzed the

content of a total of 1019 comments. There was an average of 51 comments left

per episode. The most recent comments were left in early February 2016 and the

oldest were all left in January and February 2015. Figure 1 shows the total and

percentages of the comments found in each category. Although there were some

comments that may have overlapped categories, I grouped each comment based

on the first answer/reference to a category that appeared.

Table 1.1:

	Race	Romance	Character	Event	Other	Total # of Comments
Total # of Comments Found in 20 Episodes	125	33	397	135	331	1019
% of Total	12%	3%	39%	13%	32%	

From Table 1.1, it is clear that the category with the largest number of

comments is "character/storyline," comprising 39% of the comments. Race was

the fourth largest category, comprising only 12% of the total. These results reflect

an overall disinterest in the representation of race and more interest in the

development of the storyline, indicating that many viewers may prefer to decode

actively messages relating to plot and interactions between characters, more

than decoding through a racialized lens. Therefore, the repeated representation

of race throughout *Xica da Silva* may have had a larger impact through passive

audience participation than active. Users' tendencies to comment on the *novela*

seem to suggest that viewers are more interested in relating to the melodramatic

aspects of the genre than to the larger social and political implications of the

storyline and its encoded messages.

Conclusion

From the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the comments left on

twenty episodes of *Xica da Silva,* two main conclusions can be made about the

audience reception and decoding of the *telenovela*. First, the genre of

telenovelas specifically focuses on audience engagement through multi-faceted

characters that portray relatable emotions. Therefore, the fact that the "character"

category has 39% of the total number of comments shows that the *telenovela's*

technique of deep character engagement continues to connect with the

audience. Through the personal decoding of character expressions, actions, and

participation, the audience further connects with the plotline and fellow viewers

through a medium like YouTube. Users seem to care more about relaying their

opinions of the characters than in making broader social commentary. Second, audience members did not seem to decode messages about race, racial representation, or racial (in)equality, when watching *Xica da Silva*, with the same level of frequency as they commented about the characters or storyline. Even though this genre could be the tool to spark social commentary, a majority of the YouTube audience members did not decode representations of race as problematic or otherwise central to their viewing.

These results lead to larger questions, which a future study may seek to answer, such as: Do the results found in the analysis of YouTube comments reflect how Brazilian society chooses to ignore or engage in conversations about race? How has the media's repeated portrayal of race naturalized people's perceptions of race in larger society? Does Brazilian society's understandings of race and racial culture correlate to these results? What changes would have to be made for the audience to decode a *telenovela*'s racialized messages in terms of race? Considering these questions in the future would be helpful for understanding discourse surrounding racial representation in Brazilian society and media productions.

<u>Looking Forward</u>

The *telenovela Xica da Silva* provides viewers and academics alike with rich content that can be analyzed and decoded through racial, cultural, or social lenses. By choosing a black actress for the lead role, *Xica da Silva* reflected a new era in Brazil's cultural history that embodied a feeling of relative openness to exploring questions of diversity and racial (in)equality. This chapter's analysis of

the *novela* through its context of production, including Brazil's political and economic climate in the late 1990s, together with a close reading of the text through a qualitative content analysis, concluding with apparent trends in a specific audience's reception of the *novela,* helps paint a picture that explains the importance of this *novela* in the evolution of Brazil's racial discourse. Although *Xica da Silva* did present stereotypical portrayals of characters of color, by being the first *telenovela* with a black female protagonist, it started a conversation surrounding the place of black faces in Brazilian media productions—an issue that continues to be discussed and problematized widely. The symbolic representation of retelling Xica da Silva's story through a *telenovela,* shows that there is a prominent place for people of color in Brazil's mainstream society and media. The next step in this process would be to present more empowered and inspirational characters with whom audiences can relate so that society can see and learn to value racial equality. The following chapters take a similar approach in analyzing the impact of two more recent *telenovelas, Duas Caras (2007)* and *Malhação (2014).* Through a close reading of these two texts, they will provide some comparison to *Xica da Silva* and explain further how *telenovelas* have continued to (not) include more diversity and questioning of race in their content.

Chapter Three

Looking at Two Faces in Black and White:
Exploring *Duas Caras'* Representation of Race

"I don't believe it, you're going to really be mine, *branquinha* (little white girl)", says Evilásio, one of the main characters in *Duas Caras.* His girlfriend, Júlia then looks lovingly into his eyes and says, "I'm already yours, *negão* (big black man)" (Linkmoderador). Unlike in the United States, in Brazil using racialized terms like *branquinha* or *negão* is common and can be a sign of endearment. As the main couple of the *novela,* Júlia and Evilásio play into the racialized component of their relationship by using these pet names. Júlia, an upper-middle class white girl, and Evilásio, a black man from the *favela*, find romance in their differences and use their love to overcome the division of coming from the *asfalto,* or formal city, and the *morro,* or *favela*. Júlia and Evilásio's relationship challenges the racial discourse found in today's society by adding class, status, and definitions of success to their romance.

Duas Caras became one of the most provocative *telenovelas* of the mid-2000s for its direct commentary on racial prejudice and inequalities in Brazilian society, incorporating interracial romance, familial pressure, and class differences into the complex storyline. The political context of mid-2000s boasted the rise of the affirmative action movement, helping contribute to the *novela's* pertinence in societal discourse and the show's ultimate success.

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva invested heavily in the expansion of social movements, namely those that sought racial equality, as a way to combat the country's colonial legacy of racism. The affirmative action policies acted as a

catalyst towards a cultural shift in Brazil because they pushed people to engage in conversation surrounding Brazil's racial inequalities. The release of *Duas Caras* furthered racial discourse because it translated everyday racism found in Brazilian society to a *telenovela* that problematized those actions and ideologies. Like *Xica da Silva, Duas Caras* also boasted black protagonists and represented similar themes, including social ascension, interracial relationships, and displays of poverty, but within the context of modern Brazil. One of the major strengths of the *novela* was how it highlighted and challenged culturally accepted acts of "micro-racism,"[26] seen through facial expressions, backhanded comments, or gestures, further confronting the blurred racial space in which Brazilians live. Although *Duas Caras* did not provide any direct solutions to Brazil's deeply embedded racial culture, by presenting characters, plot twists, and dialogues that confronted the racial prejudices found in modern society, the *novela* provided a culturally relevant production that sought to advance political agendas while informing audiences.

Similar to the approach used in the analysis of *Xica da Silva,* this chapter will investigate *Duas Caras* through three different lenses: the context of production, qualitative content analysis, and a qualitative/quantitative method of understanding the audience's perception. The context of production will further explore the presidency of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, while explaining the larger

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[26] I coined this term, based off the term "microaggressions" coined by psychiatrist and Harvard University professor Chester M. Pierce in 1970 to describe insults and dismissals he regularly witnessed non-black Americans inflict on African Americans. For more information on the term, refer to the article "Black psychiatry one year after Miami,*"* November 1970. This term's application to *Duas Caras* is explained in Part II: Content Analysis.

impact of the affirmative action movement on the evolution of Brazil's racial discourse. The qualitative content analysis will examine the *novela's* depiction of interracial couples, character occupations, and scenes that exemplify "micro-racism," to understand how the repeated representations of race in *Duas Caras* both challenges and reinforces stereotypical portrayals of people of color. Lastly, the audience reception analysis investigates trends in YouTube comments left by users on particular episodes and scenes of the *telenovela,* to understand the ways viewers decoded the *novela's* racial messaging. This thorough analysis of *Duas Caras's* representation of race will provide a valuable comparison to the arguments presented in *Xica da Silva,* while showing the changes in racial discourse from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s.

Part I: The Context of Production

The Mid-2000s and the Rule of Lula

Following Fernando Henrique Cardoso's administration, the 2000s represented a shift in Brazilian politics through the election of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva ("Lula) from the left leaning *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT), or Worker's Party. After three attempts at winning the presidency as the socialist candidate Lula was elected president in 2002 (Meyer 3; Ansell 3). Known for his charismatic personality and character, Lula fought hard to reach the presidency. Born in 1945, Lula came from a poor family from the interior of Pernambuco, in the Brazilian northeast, and at an early age moved to São Paulo with his family in search of a better life (Bourne 1). Lula had little formal education, only learning to read and write at the age of 10, quitting school after the fourth grade in order to

start working (Bourne). Throughout the 1970s, Lula became an active member in the fight for union workers' rights, gaining great appeal with the working class. His extensive involvement with unions led him to help found the Worker's Party in 1984 (Bourne). With the backing of his party, Lula eventually started running for political offices, beginning with state congress in São Paulo, then two failed attempts at president in 1994, 1998, but ultimately winning in the 2002 presidential election.

As a major advocate for the working class, the poor, and other marginalized groups, Lula focused heavily on the expansion of social programs: specifically, poverty reduction, racial equality, and economic growth became the foundation of his presidency. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Fernando Henrique Cardoso had laid the framework for many of these projects to come to fruition through his implementation of cash-transfer programs, the creation of a Human Rights Board, and the stabilization of the economy with the New Real Plan (Htun 84). Once president, Lula began his fight for social justice through the creation of *Fome Zero,* or Zero Hunger, a federally-funded initiative that guaranteed meals for low-income citizens. Due to state and local government weaknesses, *Fome Zero* was met with mixed success, leading to a rebranding of the concept and the creation of *Bolsa Família*-- a cash-transfer program that provides federally funded monthly stipends to low-income families in exchange for their children's regular attendance at school and medical check-ups (Ansell 3; Bourne; "How to Get Children out of Jobs and into School"). Although still a contested program, since its original implementation in 2004, *Bolsa Família* has lifted millions of

Brazilians out of poverty (Bourne; Ansell).

Lula endeavored to achieve greater economic inclusion and racial equality within the country. In 2003, he created the Special Secretariat for Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality (Secretaria Especial de Políticas de Promoção de Igualdade Racial), which was involved in research, the creation of affirmative action policies, and the support and recognition of over two thousand *quilombos*[27] throughout the country (Bourne 130)[28]. Lula and his administration's direct acknowledgement of society's racial inequalities began to stimulate a cultural shift as the population had to begin confronting the impact of racism politically, socially, and culturally. Once the government formally addressed these issues through various affirmative action policies, Brazilians began engaging in more conversation surrounding racial discourse, as people could no longer deny how racial disparities cause larger effects on economic, educational, and social advancement.

Following a United Nations conference in 2001, the Brazilian government decided it needed to take a proactive stance on its racial inequalities. This conference, held in Durban, South Africa, named the World Conference Against Racism, brought together various world leaders to confront and seek solutions to overcome racism in their own countries. Internationally known for the country's racial culture, Brazilian leadership received harsh criticisms for their racially

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[27] Richard Bourne defines *quilombos* as "settlements for runaway black slaves in the seventeenth to nineteenth century that were symbols of African culture through Brazil centers of Afro-Brazilian pride" (Bourne, 130).
[28] For more information on this program, visit http://www.seppir.gov.br/.

divided society (Htun 67).[29] Ultimately, the results of this event combined

transnational activist networks and the growing power of Brazil's social

movements, put pressure on the Brazilian government to address racialized

social disparity and create more diversity in public arenas (Peria and Bailey 4).

The Growth of Affirmative Action

In 2001 interview, President Cardoso commented on the creation of

affirmative action policies for the Foreign Ministry (Itamaraty): "We need a

diplomatic corps…that reflects our society, which is multi-colored and will not

present itself to the outside world as if it were a white society, because it isn't"

(Htun 69). Before the conference and Cardoso's remarks on the issue, the first

affirmative action policies to be passed began in December 2000, when

Governor Anthony Garotinho established a 50% quota for public high school

students through the implementation of Law No. 3.524/2000 into the State

University in Rio de Janeiro (Universidade Estatual do Rio de Janeiro, UERJ)

(Peria and Bailey 6). This law did not explicitly mention socioeconomic level, but

assumed that public school students were predominantly poor and working class.

Then, in September 2001, the Minister of Agrarian Development, Raul

Jungmann, implemented a 20% quota for black employees in jobs at his ministry

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[29] A similar study was done in the 1950s by UNESCO to further understand race relations in Brazil. "The 1950s UNESCO studies of race constituted another key vector in the postwar shift as it took place in Brazil. UNESCO deputized an international team of scholars: Florestan Fernandes, Roger Bastide, and Oracy Nogueira were assigned to research racial relations in São Paulo; Thales de Azevedo and Charles Wagley were assigned to Bahia; and Darcy Ribeiro was to study the assimilation of indigenous people. In most cases, the research uncovered a subtle web of structural disadvantage and prejudice entrapping blacks and indigenous people. These studies also produced three ideas that became academic 'common sense': (1) that understanding racial relations in Brazil also requires understanding class; (2) that racial taxonomies in Brazil are extremely complex; and (3) that, despite 'racial democracy,' the strong correlation between poverty and color reflects a prejudice against those who are 'darker'" (Shohat, Stam 177).

and in firms seeking official contracts (Htun 68; Peria and Bailey 4). Two months later, in November 2001, Rio de Janeiro State Representative José Amorim created the first racial quota, Law No. 3.708/2001, establishing a 40% admissions quota for black (*negro)* and brown (*pardo)* populations in public institutions of higher education in the state of Rio de Janeiro (Peria and Bailey 6-7). The passage of this law ignited conversation among activists, politicians, and critics, all trying to understand its potential implications.

Amorim's bill came as a surprise to many Brazilians, as he acted independently in the passage process (Peria and Bailey 7). Most black movement leaders and university officials only discovered the bill after its passage. People's uncertainty over the new legislation divided black activist groups, intellectuals, and politicians as each organization tried to understand the law's meaning. Some activists wished there had been more discussion about the bill prior to its passage, while others wanted to continue pushing forward with its implementation (Peria and Bailey 7). Those unhappy with the law saw it as short sighted because it failed to acknowledge other issues facing minority students in university settings, such as financial support for these students once admitted to the university (Peria and Baily 7). Although in public universities, tuition is free, students are required to pay for their own materials and transportation--costs that an economically disadvantaged student may not be able to cover. However, those in favor of the law saw it as the best available option to take a step forward for the black movement. In a personal interview with race scholar Angela Paiva,

a sociology professor at Rio de Janeiro's Catholic University, explained why affirmative action policies are important for the progress of the country:

> [I am in favor of policies like affirmative action because they] are used as a way to accelerate the process of equality in society. One day, when there is more racial equality in places like universities, maybe the law will be repealed, but until then, it provides marginalized groups the extra opportunity needed to make it equal for all students Angela, 62, Rio de Janeiro).

In an interview with university student Renato, in São Paulo, he further explained to me his support of the policies: "I'm in favor of quotas [in universities] because they give access to various people who deserve to be there" (Renato, 19, São Paulo). The quotes from these interviews show how some people adamantly support the law's passage because they recognize how quotas can help bridge racial stratifications found in society. However, critics continue to disapprove of the law as they deem quotas inappropriate for Brazil's subtle and implicit racism, because social inequalities are based on class, not race.

After the implementation of affirmative action policies around the country, critics began attacking all aspects of the law, with some people focusing on the nuanced racial wording. "By establishing a quota for *negros* and *pardos*, the law drew from two different systems of classification: the mixed color category *pardo* used by Brazil's national census, and the politicized racial category *negro* employed by the black movement" (Peria and Baily 8). For many black Brazilians, the term *pardo* does not exist because it shows disengagement with

their African heritage; they feel that all people with black blood should be considered *negro.* As Paiva puts it:

> The black movement reinforces the idea of *negritude* (blackness).
> *Negritude* is like instead of saying, "I'm *moreno,*" you say, "I'm *negro.*"
> Using *moreno* shows a lack of racial *conceitização* (consciousness). But
> when a person says, "I'm black," it means that this person has a
> *conceitização* of their *negritude.*[30]

As a result of state influence and social factors, including informal segregation and the propagation of negative images associated with blackness, Brazilians of African ancestry tend to have a weaker "racial consciousness" or identification of themselves as a member of a distinct group called "blacks," like they do in the United States (Htun 64). It is therefore extremely difficult to answer the questions, "Who is black in Brazil?" and "Who will benefit from this law?" Depending on one's education, social status, or cultural formation, Brazilians might embrace or reject their blackness, further complicating the implementation of race based legislation.

Other critics attacked the practice of affirmative action policies in Brazilian society for three main reasons, all of which focused on the state. First, scholars noted that educational outcomes across color groupings showed a direct correlation to basic education systems and foundations laid in primary school. Therefore, many critics felt that federally backed policies should focus more on improving the public education system holistically as a way to help the population

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[30] In his book, *Modernity Identity Making in Modern Societies* (1996), Stuart Hall further explains this idea by analyzing how identities are formed and what identifying as black means.

universally, instead of simply creating more spaces for students who may be

academically unprepared for the rigors of higher education (Peria and Bailey 5).

Second, echoing issues surrounding racial identification, critics felt that by

enacting policies that required official racial sorting, racialization processes would

depend on distorted visions of human diversity and ultimately exclude people

further or differently (Peria and Bailey 5). Third, critics argued, policies based on

racial status contradict Brazil's universality principles, as explicitly noted in the

1988 constitution[31], where racial discrimination and inequality are explicitly

seen—as they have been since the Afonso Arinas Law of the 1950s—illegal

(Peria and Bailey 5, 9). The second and third criticisms reflect ideologies rooted

in the concept of Brazil as a racial democracy, whereby enacting quotas forces

society to acknowledge racial inequalities, thus contradicting one of the

cornerstones of the country's racial culture. Nevertheless, through governmental

initiatives that pushed the public to acknowledge the existence of race in society,

it created the space to transform a culture that tacitly endorsed racial inequality

(Htun 85).

     As more and more Brazilians became knowledgeable of the impact and

benefits of affirmative action, governmental agencies and universities began to

see race-based quotas as too limiting and sought new policies that emphasized

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[31] The 1988 Brazilian constitution states, "Discrimination is prohibited explicitly, as stated in art. 3, IV of the Federal Constitution, which provides that one of the fundamental objectives of the Federative Republic of Brazil, is: to promote the good of all, without prejudice as to origin, race, sex, color, age and any other forms of discrimination. Forbid, too, the salary difference, exercise foundations and admission criteria by reason of gender, age, race, marital status or possession of disability (art. 7º, XXX e XXXI)" (Curso de Direito Constitucional Positivo, 2003, p. 222). Peria and Bailey further expand on that last criticism by adding, "Regarding this last criticism, Brazil's highest court rules in April 2012 that differential treatment based on racial status if not unconstitutional" (Peria and Baily, 5).

the inclusion of various marginalized groups. By 2005, 24 of the 95 public

universities had adopted some variety of affirmative action policies in their

admission processes. That number grew to 37 in 2007 and 73 by 2012 (Peria

and Bailey 5). Today, most public universities used a "mixed" affirmative action

strategy targeting a combination of public school students, Afro-Brazilians,

indigenous Brazilian, low-income students, students from *quilombos,* residents of

the state, and students with disabilities (Peria and Bailey 15). The adoption of

this "mixed" strategy shows how leaders began to see the nuances in the

systemic issues that continue to marginalize people of color, from lower

socioeconomic levels, and across distinct geographic locations vis-à-vis

mainstream society. By understanding the diversity in the needs of the

population, universities seem to be on the forefront of progressive racial

policymaking. Ultimately, the Brazilian government's extensive attention to racial

inequalities bled over into other informative sectors, namely the media, through

quotas and productions also dedicated to the goal of racial equality.

Affirmative Action and the Media

Working closely with the government backed affirmative action messages,

the media industry was the next outfit to adopt these policies. In 2001, following

the first enactment of affirmative action in Rio's State University, another law

passed requiring a quota of 25% for black actors on television programs and a

40% quota for television (Htun 71), directly linking the importance of racial

representation and media production. Reinforcing the concept of symbolic

representation, as used by Mauro Porto and explained in Chapter 1 (supra), the

media's representation of a particular group can greatly influence the way society portrays that movement, both socially and politically. Therefore, having more ethnic and racial diversity on screen symbolically gives those minority groups more voice and presence within society.

Even though the implementation of this law intended to provide greater representation of the Brazilian population on screen, some people interpreted their attempts at racial inclusivity as lackluster: "There's a law that says that like 10% percent of media productions has to be given to blacks, but I think it appears really *forçado* (forced). Like in *Malhação,* there's a group of little white, blond kids, and then *one* black girl and *one* Asian girl, just so they can say they filled the quota. Now when I see *two* black people, it's weird because it seems *forçado*" (Shayla, 28, São Paulo). "The media is really eclectic, of course you see that there's a lot more white people than blacks, but there's a few [blacks] on screen, just so they can say 'they reached the quota'. But having a quota fosters more racism because there's going to be an inequality between the races, but at the same time, it's the only thing the government can do for us, blacks" (Belizário, 28, São Paulo). Although this thesis argues for the importance of racial representation in media production, it is important to note that simply including more racially diverse casts is not enough to capture audiences, as is reinforced by many of my interlocutors in Brazil. Both Shayla and Belizário expressed that just putting black faces on screen to "fill the quota," seemed inauthentic because traditionally, the Brazilian media has excluded people of color from their programs. Even though these quotas represented an important

step forward for achieving greater racial equality in Brazil, if producers, networks, and activists wanted media productions to connect with an audiences' racial consciousness, they must incorporate depictions of the experiences that that members of the black community face daily. This gap helps to explain why the *telenovela Duas Caras* has proven to be a success with Brazilian and international audiences: it openly discussed and challenged racial inequalities, prejudice, and discrimination found in 21st century Brazilian society.

The airing of *Duas Caras* in 2007 reflected the newly established shift in Brazil's racial discourse that recognized, problematized, and challenged the country's legacy of racial inequalities through affirmative action. The *novela* boasted an extremely race-heavy storyline, which sought to bring attention to the racial prejudices and inequalities that have permeated Brazilian culture and society. Through the representation of interracial couples, social ascension, and racial prejudice, *Duas Caras* embraced the momentum surrounding affirmative action and used it to engender more conversation surrounding Brazil's racial culture. *Duas Caras* acted as a mirror to Brazilian society, where it emphasized small acts of "micro-racism," like comments, actions, or prejudices that many Brazilians (un)consciously perform every day. The *novela* challenged audiences to think critically about race in national society, while remaining entertained through a comfortable medium: the *telenovela.*

Duas Caras: The *Telenovela*

Duas Caras received worldwide attention for its innovative storyline focusing on racialized themes. Airing as the nine o'clock *novela* on Rede Globo, *Duas Caras* was an important production for the network and its audiences. The *novela* first aired on October 1, 2007 with a total of 210 episodes, and ended on May 31, 2008. *Duas Caras's* debut had one of the lowest IBOPE scores of a nine o'clock *novela,* reaching only 40 points, which is still a large number, over the *novela's* seven month run its average IBOPE score totaled around 41 points (Feltrin; "Caminho das Índias")[32]. As a result of these ratings and the *novela's* storyline, the Spanish magazine, *20 Minutos* named *Duas Caras* the ninth-best Brazilian *telenovela* of all time (*20 Minutos*).

Duas Caras was written by renowned *telenovela* author, Aguinaldo Silva. Silva's *novelas* such as *Senhora do Destino* (2004/5) and *Fina Estampa* (2011), have been some of the most successful in Brazilian history (Feltrin). At the time of airing the *novela,* Silva kept a weekly blog whereby he would give viewers insights to the week's characters and storyline in real time (Memória Globo). His innovative approach to incorporating audience commentary into the plot's development allowed the *novela* to stay up-to-date with current events and audience reactions (Memória Globo). At one point, Silva had to shut down the blog and remove himself as lead author because he began to receive anonymous threats from viewers regarding the program's content (Expresso).

The *novela* included five different directors: Claudio Boeckel, Ary Coslov,

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[32] Refer to the explanation of the IBOPE scores in Chapter Two.

Gustavo Fernandez, Miguel Rodrigues, and Pedro Carvana (Memória Globo). In addition to race, *Duas Caras's* plotline touched on themes of class, identity, and gender roles, while breaking out of the traditional *telenovela* mold of clearly defined heroes and villains. Instead, *Duas Caras* developed complex characters who showed positive and negative façades, making their actions beneficial to some, and detrimental to others. This multi-faceted approach to character development allowed viewers to create their own definitions of heroes and villains. *Duas Caras* received numerous awards in 2008, including the Extra Television Awards – Brazil, Prêmio Contigo – Brazil, and Prêmio Qualidade – Brazil, with numerous other nominations (Duas Caras – Awards). By creating a story within an urban Brazilian context that linked together a wide variety of personal and social themes *Duas Caras* intrigued millions and continues to be one of Brazil's most sought out *telenovelas.*

Duas Caras: Plot Summary

Duas Caras is divided into two phases, separated by a ten-year gap in the story. The first phase establishes the main storyline between Maria Paula and Adalberto, while the second develops the parallel stories involving Júlia and Evilásio, Sabrina and Barretinho, and Célia Mara and Branca. The first phase of *Duas Caras* opens with a tragic car crash, involving a man and a married couple. Adalberto Rangel, the man from the accident, approaches the car to see the damage he caused. He notices money, jewels, and precious metals, and a picture of a young girl in the car. As a result of the crash, the couple dies, and

Adalberto takes their valuable possessions he found in the car and sets off to find the girl from the photo.

In order to find the girl from the photo, Adalberto attends the couple's funeral and meets their daughter, Maria Paula. Taking advantage of Maria Paula's vulnerability as she mourns for her parents, Adalberto convinces her that her mother's dying wish was for him to take care of Maria Paula. Lost and confused, Maria Paula welcomes the attention from Adalberto, and as his advances become more romantic, she quickly falls in love with him. Maria Paula's family friends are wary of Adalberto's intentions with her and try to convince her to not get involved, especially while in such a sensitive state. As a way to follow her heart and escape the negative commentary of her friends, she accepts Adalberto's proposal to elope to São Paulo.

Maria Paula's friends end up in a frenzy trying to locate her, but eventually she returns to her hometown with her new husband to start their new life together in her inherited mansion. Maria Paula's friends remain uneasy about Adalberto and keep trying to tell her that she has made a mistake. After a few days back in her parents' house, Maria Paula wakes up one morning to find her bed empty, her safe cleaned out, all of her jewels, inheritance, and most importantly, her husband, gone, leaving her poor and heartbroken. Adalberto had used his charm to convince Maria Paula to put both of their names on all of her accounts, allowing him to clean out all of her wealth. He stole everything that she owned and moved to Rio de Janeiro. As a way to dodge any connections to Maria Paula, Adalberto gets facial surgery to change his appearance (hence the title,

Duas Caras or two faces), changes his name to Marconi Ferraço, and uses Maria Paula's inheritance to start a construction company. Little did he know that he left Maria Paula pregnant with their son, who later becomes a crucial part of the story.

Ferraço hires a team of people to work with him in his new construction company. Paulo Queiroz de Barreto, or Barretão, a very successful lawyer, well known for his ability to find legal loopholes, becomes a close friend in Ferraço's new venture as a businessman. At the same time, a group of northeastern migrants comes to Rio de Janeiro in search of a new life and begins to occupy a piece of land as their own. Through this "invasion" of territory, they begin to establish their homes and eventually build the *favela* of Portelinha. Juvenal Antena, a charismatic and strong leader, becomes the head of the Residents Association (Associação dos Moradores) and controls the *favela*. He makes strict no drugs and no violence policies that help make a safe environment. Maria Paula eventually moves to São Paulo with her newly born son to start a new life and begins working at a supermarket, but maintains her goal of finding Adalberto and bringing him to justice.

The second phase of the *novela* picks up ten years later. After excelling at her job, Maria Paula is invited to move to Rio de Janeiro to work at a larger supermarket. She moves with her family's lawyer and best friend, Dr. Claudius, and her ten-year-old son Renato, who does not know about his father's dark past. Coincidentally, once in Rio, she sees a report on TV that shows that Ferraço is alive and living in Rio, and decides to go after him.

By this time, Juvenal has become the most important man in Portelinha and uses his power to control the community with the help of his godson, Evilásio, and a group of residents. Juvenal becomes well-known in *carioca* society and Barretão's daughter, Júlia and some friends want to shoot a documentary highlighting Portelinha as a "model *favela*" that is peaceful, without violence or drugs (problems frequently associated with urban *favelas*). One night, Júlia goes to Portelinha alone to see if she can speak with Juvenal. She gets a flat tire and she begins to get nervous about being in the neighborhood by herself. As she sits in her car contemplating what to do, Evilásio comes out from behind a corner wearing a hooded sweatshirt to check out what happened with her car. As Júlia sees him approaching, she begins yelling that she does not have any money and that he should to leave her alone, assuming that because Evilásio is a black man, alone, in a *favela*, he is only interested in robbing her. Without even paying attention to Júlia's comments, Evilásio changes her tire and then walks away, leaving Júlia feeling guilty for assuming his intentions. The next day, Júlia returns to Portelinha to find Evilásio and apologize. After some chasing, persuading, and discussing, Júlia and Evilásio reconcile their differences and begin to date. To the dismay of Barretão and her mother, Giaconda, Júlia and Evilásio's relationship becomes one of the central stories in the *novela.*

Continuing with *novela* tradition, as the plot develops, each character starts involving more love, deceit, and jealousy to the story. Wealthy Ferraço falls in love with Barretão's niece, Sílvia, and asks her to marry him. Similar to what

happened with Maria Paula, Sílvia's family, (namely her widowed mother Branca), disapproves of the marriage because they feel uneasy about Ferraço's plans. Silvia ignores their concerns and happily begins to plan their wedding. Barretão's son, Barretinho, begins to have feelings for their housekeeper, Sabrina, a beautiful, dark-skinned woman. Much to Barretão and Giaconda's chagrin, they become directly confronted with their racial prejudices as both of their children start showing romantic interest in people of color.

Juvenal Antena discovers that he has a twenty-year-old daughter named Solange, whose mother has just passed away and told her to go live with Juvenal. Juvenal then gets another unexpected visitor: his old friend, nicknamed Morena for her dark skin, reappears in Portelinha. Morena had left Brazil to work as a club dancer in Europe. During her time abroad, she ended up marrying an Italian count who left her his entire fortune, renaming her the Condessa de Finzi-Contini, or the Countess. Hoping to give back to her community, the Countess returns to Portelinha to open an NGO dedicated to helping Brazilian women fight sex trafficking—the darker side to her European adventures. Coming back to her community as a wealthy and established women, Morena is very well respected, by even Giaconda, regardless of her skin color, which reaffirms the idea that, "money whitens."

Ferraço and Sílvia's love story comes to an end as Ferraço ends up scheming Síliva, as anticipated. Maria Paula interrupts Ferraço and Sílvia's engagement party, yelling about Ferraço's past as Adalberto and exposing his lies. People do not believe Maria Paula and she proves it by acknowledging their

son, Renato. Once Ferraço learns of Renato and begins to connect with him, Ferraço starts to show interest in rekindling his romance with Maria Paula. By the end of the *novela,* Ferraço ends up cutting off his engagement with Síliva in order to pursue a relationship with Maria Paula and reunite their family. Maria Paula eventually takes Ferraço back, but makes him admit his crimes to the police. He spends two years in jail and when he is released, realizes that Maria Paula stole all of his assets, the same way that he had left her. As he exits prison, he receives a phone call from Maria Paula and Renato telling him that they have been waiting for him, and send him a plane ticket to the Caribbean to meet them. The *novela* ends happily as Maria Paula, Adalberto/Ferraço, and Renato are brought together in the name of love.

Júlia and Evilásio's love story continues to develop, even though they confront a lot of prejudice and racism along the way. Once Júlia and Evilásio become an official couple, Barretão kicks Júlia out of their house and cuts her off financially to show how he disapproves of the interracial relationship. But, they ultimately have a child together, which forces her parents to accept their relationship for the sake of their granddaughter. Evilásio begins to progress professionally after a falling out with his godfather, Juvenal. Congressman Narciso Tellerman invites Evilásio to work on his campaign in Brasília, after meeting Evilásio at a dinner party with Júlia's family. Upon his return, Evilásio runs against Juvenal for the position of head of the Resident's Association. At one of his rallies, Juvenal is shot by an unknown man and as a result, is forced to

give up control of Portelinha and allow Evilásio to become the new boss, thus restoring their relationship.

After multiple attempts at winning over Sabrina, the family's housemaid, Júlia's brother Barretinho, interrupts Sabrina's wedding and confesses his love for her. At first she rejects his advances, but ultimately accepts that she loves him and the couple begin their own relationship. Once Barretinho and Júlia are both involved with people of color, Barretão and Giaconda come to terms with their children's significant others and accept them.

The storyline of *Duas Caras* is extremely complex, connecting multiple side stories and romances into the central plot between Maria Paula and Ferraço. The *novela* incorporated social commentary about race, class, social mobility, gender norms and prejudice in modern Brazilian society, often problematizing the racist actions and comments of Barretão, Giaconda, and other characters. The various interracial relationships and racially charged dialogue among characters highlighted the *novela's* critique of Brazil's racial culture by challenging the racial norm often found in *telenovelas. Duas Caras's* repetition of racialized themes, comments, and representations further shows how the *novela* used the momentum from the political racial movements of the mid-2000s to question society's understandings of race.

Part II: Content Analysis

Duas Caras distinguished itself from other *telenovelas* of the 2000s because of its unique storyline that engaged multiple facets of Brazilian society like urban development, racial prejudice, and wealth disparities. In the *novela's*

depiction of race and racial relations, *Duas Caras* confronted everyday issues that many Brazilians face, like interracial relationships, stereotyping, and acts of micro-racism. By intertwining racial themes into the larger storyline, *Duas Caras* presented racial tension in various contexts showing its omnipresence in Brazilian society. As a way to better understand the ways that *Duas Caras* approached and questioned race throughout the *novela,* this section analyzes representations of black characters involved in interracial relationships, the occupations of central characters, instances of "micro-racism," and how these themes engage racial discourse of the mid-2000s.

In keeping with my analysis of *Xica da Silva,* I will use David Altheide's methodology for qualitative content analysis, which focuses on descriptions, nuances, and openness to emerging insights as a way to analyze recurring themes. As in the case of *Xica da Silva*, I acknowledge that every viewer decodes messages through his or her own experiences and perspectives. Whether viewers choose to decode messages actively or passively, or to let implicit messages "drip" on them, they use their unique lenses to interpret media content. As I argued in Chapter 1, the way that character types are portrayed repeatedly in television programs helps to cultivate or strengthen established associations, opinions, and feelings regarding particular social groups. Therefore, when considering the depiction of these three major themes –interracial relationships, character occupations, and acts of micro-racism—the angle used to glorify or demonize characters, their actions, or interactions can provide insight into the ways race influences a character's representation and reception.

Although this section approaches interracial couples, character occupations, and micro-racism through a racially sensitive lens, the deconstruction of these themes shows how they relate to larger representations of race in modern Brazilian society.

Interracial Relationships

Complicated romance is a central component of *Duas Caras.* Whether it was Maria Paula and Ferraço, Júlia and Evilásio, or Sabrina and Barretinho, each couple faced their particular woes in achieving "happily ever after." However, unlike Maria Paula and Ferraço, whose relationship was overshadowed by betrayal, Júlia and Evilásio, and Sabrina and Barretinho's relationships faced issues for being interracial. Although at the end of the *novela* all three couples end up together, confronting the racial and class prejudice of Barretão and Giaconda was a central theme because of the way the script sought to challenge the stigma associated with interracial couples.

Barretão's disapproval of his children's relationships began with racial prejudice but became fortified by concerns over the class, occupation, and geographic origins of partners who hail from lower-class society. Evilásio, for example, was born and raised in the *favela* of Portelinha and proudly represented his community. When Evilásio began dating Júlia, he was his godfather, Juvenal Antena's, right-hand man, but still lacked formal education, an official job, and exposure to the world outside of Portelinha. Barretão saw his daughter as an educated, well-spoken, ambitious woman; considering her accomplishments, she was quite the opposite of Evilásio.

As Júlia and Evilásio became more intimate, Barretão saw Evilásio's blackness as a representation and reminder of his lower socioeconomic level, roots in the f*avela*, and informal occupation—all things he did not want to accept for his daughter. As Júlia became more involved with Evilásio, tensions grew between Júlia and her father because of the racist assumptions and attitudes Barretão maintained towards Evilásio. The dynamic between Barretão and Evilásio became a crucial part of the story because their relationship reflected the racial prejudice with which upper-class Brazilians tend to view people of color, associating them with the ills of society, poverty, and *favela* violence.

In the *novela,* this tension culminates in a scene where Evilásio comes to Júlia's house for a formal dinner party. Evilásio arrives exactly at nine o'clock, in a white button down shirt, black slacks and loafers—an outfit that clearly contrasts with his normal attire and reflects his attempt to fit into Júlia's world. While Júlia gets ready, Barretão and Evilásio share a couple glasses of whiskey before sitting down for dinner. Once dinner formally begins, Barretão pours Evilásio a glass of wine and asks him what he tastes in the Argentine Malbec. Evilásio recites a line that he had read in a magazine about Malbec wine, saying it is similar to warm asphalt and cigars. As the guests chuckle, Barretão snaps and Evilásio.

Barreto: "But what an arrogant *crioulo (*N word)!"

Júlia: "If you don't take back what you said and apologize, I will get up with Evilásio from this table right now and leave. I'm waiting for you to apologize!"

<u>Barreto</u>: "I'll apologize. I apologize to my guests for having to be with *esse tipo de gente* (this kind of people)."

<u>Giaconda</u>: "For God's sake, Barreto. He's our guest …"

<u>Barreto</u>: "He's a *favelado!* Stuck up and arrogant. Stuck up and arrogant kid that thinks he could be at a table with people like us."

<u>Júlia</u>: "Have you gone crazy?!"

<u>Barreto</u>: "*You* are the one who's gone crazy! Bringing this *sujeito* (subject, used pejoratively to equate a person with a thing) to our table!"

<u>Júlia</u>: "Apologize, now!"

<u>Barreto</u>: "Apologize? Me? Me, Paulo de Queiroz Barreto, apologize to a *tição* (literally an ember, colloquially used as an extremely pejorative and harsh way of referring to a black person). I'm just saying what everyone is thinking, but doesn't have the courage to say! I don't like *these people.* They're shameless; they're lazy; they only impede the country [from progress]! The country got to this point thanks to the Europeans. Look at Paraná and Santa Catarina! Then look at Bahía.[33]"

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[33] Similar to the cultural, political, and economic divide that exists between the Northern and Southern regions in the United States, the same type of regional stereotyping exists in Brazil between the Northeast and the Southeast. The Northeast (Bahía, Alagoas, Sergipe, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte, Ceará, Piauí, Maranhão) is one of the poorest regions in the country. During colonial times, most of the slaves were taken to the Northeast to work on sugar plantations, which continues to influence the current racial demographics of the region. Once the major cities started to industrialize beginning in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century, many people from the Northeast migrated to Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, or farther south to work. Since many of the migrants were poor, they settled and created the *favelas* that are now a central part of Brazil's urban scene. Northeasterners
are stereotyped as lazy, uneducated, poor and black. Conversely, Southern Brazil (Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, Paraná) is known for its European roots. In the twentieth century, many Italian, German, and other white European immigrants moved to southern Brazil. People from this region tend to be fairer skinned, more educated, wealthier than people from the Northeast. Some Brazilians believe that the South's economic success is due to its European influences that have helped advance and progress the region, where the Northeast's African roots have made the region poor and less developed (Batista, Leite, Torres, Camino).

[Scene cuts to the kitchen to follow Sabrina]

Sabrina: "How disgusting! In a minute I'm going over there to vomit on top of him."

[Scene cuts back to the dinner table]

Barreto: "The fact that this country doesn't work is because of *those* people!"

Congressman Tellerman: "Racism is a crime, Barreto! And you as a lawyer should know that better than anyone!"

Barreto: "Oh Congressman, you only care about their votes!"

Congressman Tellerman: "That's a lie and shows a profound historical ignorance of what Brazil could be, ok? The culture, sports, music, to just name a few things, were all done by our African immigrants and their descendants. That's the soul of the country; the soul is black!"

Barreto: "That's just political blabbering. Come talk to me if one of your kids gets involved with one of them."

Giaconda: "But, but that's not what's happening here because Júlia and Evilásio are just…"

Júlia: "That's what this is about, Dad?!"

Deputado: "If I had children, I would be very proud to have a son-in-law with as much dignity and character as Evilásio!"

Barreto: "Have kids, congressman. Have a *daughter,* and then come and talk to me!"

Evilásio: "I see that you only welcomed me into your home so you could

humiliate me, Mr. Barreto?"

Barreto: "I didn't invite you, kid!"

Evilásio: "Yes, and you also didn't humiliate me. I'm leaving here with my head raised, with the same dignity that I inherited from my father, who's black and a hard worker, like me, who taught me to be *educado (*polite). You're the one who ended up humiliating yourself, Mr. Barreto. In front of all of your guests, spewing so much nonsense and ignorance. With all the respect I learned from my upbringing, I'll leave. Excuse me."

(Brduascaras, "O Jantar com Evilásio na casa da Júlia – Parte 2")

This tense interaction exposes Barretão's racist and machista mentality, most notable when *his* daughter is involved. Barretão's comment directed towards the Congressman, "Have a *daughter,* then come and talk to me!," shows how he sees Evilásio as a threat to the sanctity and purity of his family. Although Evilásio is respected and bright in his own community, Barretão assumes he's a poor, lazy, *favelado* because of his skin color. By making these assumptions, Barretão's reveals that his racism is linked with classism because he equates blackness with poverty. When people of color are working *for* Barretão, or *under* him, he accepts and tolerates their presence; but once they begin approaching the nucleus of his family, they cannot have a place in his house. Once Barretão discovers his son's love for Sabrina, a romance that began *inside* of the house, he finally begins to reevaluate his perspective on interracial relationships.

Throughout the *novela,* Sabrina and Barretinho play a game of cat and mouse where Barretinho makes advances that Sabrina always rejects. In their

first scene together, Sabrina goes to wake up Barretinho. As he rolls around in his bed, he eventually jumps up and tries to kiss Sabrina. Sabrina pushes him away and declares her body off-limits, hoping this rejection will create space between herself and Barretinho. Throughout the *novela*, however, Barretinho tries constantly to appeal to Sabrina, begging her for a chance. Strong willed, proud, and aware of the racist man for whom she works, Sabrina rejects all of Barretinho's advances. She tells him that the only way she would be involved with him is if he goes to the *favela* where she lives, asks her father for her hand in marriage, and marries her. Scared of his own father, Barretinho makes excuses to himself for why he cannot pursue romance with the maid. Even though Barretinho continues to be enticed by Sabrina, Barretinho keeps reminding himself that they come from different realities. She is the black housemaid, tasked with cooking, cleaning, and other chores, while he is the white son of a wealthy and powerful lawyer.

Eventually, Sabrina grows tired of Barretinho's games and tells him that she is getting married to another man. Distraught over the idea that Sabrina is going to marry someone else, Barretinho drunkenly interrupts the ceremony and pleads for her to not get married. Barretinho says, "No, Sabrina, you can't marry this guy! I want you, I love you. Sabrina, I know that you also want me, you can't get married" (Pbarretofilho). As Sabrina begs for him to leave so that he will not ruin her wedding, Barretão drags Barretinho out of the church. Frustrated and upset, her fiancée cancels the wedding and says he is not going to marry Sabrina. While outside, Barretão pulls his son to the car and says, "Oh my God,

my son with a housemaid?! And Júlia with that *favelado*?!" (Pbarretofilho). Once again, through Barretão's statement, viewers see the layered problems that Barretão has with Sabrina: Not only is she black, but she is a poor maid. Because of her class, she could never be fit for someone as important as his son. Even in his last comment, where he mentions Júlia, Barretão reinforces how his racism goes hand-in-hand with classism: he describes Evilásio as a *favelado* and ignores all of his other traits. Hoping to keep Sabrina out of Barretinho' sight, Giaconda and Barretão send her to work at Ferraço's house, and hire a new (black) maid.

These two interracial couples provide the audience with an interesting comparison, as one couple is a white female (WF) with a black male (BM), and the other a black female (BF) and white male (WM). In Brazilian society, dating a WF has become synonymous with class ascension. When soccer stars, actors, or musicians "show" their ultimate success, it tends to be accompanied by a white girlfriend or white, confirming their social ascension. Therefore, Sabrina and Barretinho's relationship presents an interesting reversal, because it places the focus on a BF with a WM. This categorization of WF and BM, BF and WM reiterate how race and class are connected in Brazilian society. Barretão disapproves of his children's relationships because of the stereotypical associations that society makes with people of color, also denoting them as poor, uneducated, and unskilled. The *novela* developed these representations of people of color by depicting blacks in stereotypical jobs that also reinforced their inferiority to white characters.

Representative Occupations

Throughout *Duas Caras,* race not only pre-determined class, but also foreshadowed character occupations. In short, the white characters, including Ferraço, Barreto, and Claudius, were businessmen or lawyers, while the black characters, like Evilásio and Sabrina, were domestic workers or informally employed. The repetition of this stereotype creates clear associations between people of color and their perceived level of success while reinforcing the idea that people of color are submissive to whites economically and occupationally. This characterization is particularly evident in the cases of Evilásio and Sabrina.

Evilásio and Sabrina's characters have important roles in the development of the *novela* as the love interests of the Barreto children. Although both Evilásio and Sabrina are complex characters who move beyond the flat depictions as a "*favelado"* and "housemaid," as Barreto once refers to them, their roles also follow the stereotype often given to black actors. Through this repetition, audiences have come to assume that the inferior and submissive role will be given to actors and actresses of color. "Whenever you see a black actress, she's the maid or *favelada"* (Élio Junior, 26, Salvador). "Media only makes people stay in the same place…the maid is always black, poor, and old…" (Luis Fernando, 26, Rio de Janeiro). These observations reveal how some audience members associate people of color with inferior roles, even before they consume a new piece of content. Even within the context of the *novela,* white counterparts discount Evilásio and Sabrina's importance and appreciation because of their respective labels, *favelado* and *empregada.* Their relevance to the story is only in

relation to white characters, reinforcing Evilásio and Sabrina's perceived

submission. If not known as the significant other to Júlia or Barretinho, Evilásio's

place would be as the right hand of Juvenal Antena, and Sabrina's place was to

serve the Barreto family. Because neither Evilásio nor Sabrina possess money,

power, or high-class social connections, the white characters frequently discredit

their place in the community, thus furthering associating race with occupation.

However, these representations do not fail entirely to represent Brazil's

racialized labor force, which continues to marginalize people of color from formal

housing and jobs; many *favelados*, house maids, and street sellers *are* people of

color (Blofield; Peria and Baily 5).[34] Within Brazilian culture, the expression, "*um

pé na cozinha*" or "a foot in the kitchen" refers to one's African ancestors

because traditionally blacks were responsible in the kitchen and a lot of Brazilian

food has African roots. This expression was even used by former President

Fernando Henrique Cardoso to explain his own ethnic background in his fight for

greater racial equality (Davis 66). Furthermore, when considering the importance

of authenticity in media productions, one viewer commented: "They never show a

black person as the executive, but why? How are they going to put a black

person living in an apartment in Leblon, when that doesn't exist? Not saying

that's wrong, but they can't have a *novela* like that because it doesn't make

sense to depict a black person in Leblon[35]" (Luis, 28, Rio de Janeiro). Even

though a majority of the lower classes tends to be black, the repeated

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[34] For more on the situation of domestic workers and other informal jobs in Latin America, refer to *Care Work and Class: Domestic Workers' Struggle for Equal Rights in Latin America* (2012) by Merike Blofield.
[35] Leblon, located in the South Zone, is one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro.

representation of people of color in inferior and submissive positions reinforces a negative image of blacks in Brazilians society. As explained in Chapter One, the symbolic representation of blacks in this particular way influences society's association between the televised stereotype and their lived experiences, thus equating people of color with social inferiority. Although both Sabrina and Evilásio had strong personalities that contradict the negative stereotypes given to people of color, they still lead unoriginal roles that exploit predetermined characterizations of people of color.

By continuing to follow this pattern, then, *Duas Caras* strengthens previously construed ideas of the place of blacks in media productions and in contemporary Brazilian society. This symbolic representation of people of color is particularly important because their ongoing portrayal as second-class citizens can impact how they perceived themselves and how others perceive them, as well as their political voice and identity formation. On the other hand, by challenging these stereotypes through more complex and innovative narratives that spread success, power, and wealth across racial identities, media productions might help support or even foster progressive social and cultural change.

Micro Racism

Acts of micro-racism, derived from the concept of, "micro aggression," are small insults and dismissals frequently used by non-blacks towards blacks. I interpret these acts to include facial expressions, under-the-breath comments, and assumptive actions based on perceptions of race. Throughout the *novela,*

many of the wealthier, white characters engage in acts of micro-racism whereby they express disapproval of a person a color by (in)directly acting out. Because racism in Brazil has been illegal since the 1950s and was criminalized further by the 1988 Constitution[36], most acts of discrimination must be subtle as seen through micro-racism. *Duas Caras* reflects these nuances in its representation of Brazil's racial culture by using visual cues to communicate disapproval or dislike of a character of color. Further analyzing the subtle components of the scene where Evilásio comes to Júlia's house for dinner shows how the different characters exhibited micro-racism.

The scene opens with Giaconda looking proudly at her perfectly set table. At exactly nine o' clock, the doorbell rings and she walks over to the door saying, "Nine on the dot? No one arrives on time in this city. Who could it be?" As she opens the door to greet her first guest, shock passes over Giaconda's face and her excited smile turns into a stunned frown as she sees Evilásio standing on the other side of the door. The camera follows Giaconda's gaze and looks him up and down, staring at his formal loafers, then slowly moving to his black slacks, and white button-down shirt, finishing at Evilásio's face smiling awkwardly. Although Giaconda never explicitly expresses her dislike for Evilásio, or people of color in general, her facial expression communicates a clear dissatisfaction with his presence at the dinner party. Evilásio then says, "I'm looking for Júlia, is she here?" Giaconda's face struggles to smile politely, and responds, "Oh, you must be one of the producers of the documentary. If you have a message for her, I can

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[36] Refer to Footnote 6 for further explanation of this law.

pass it along." "No, ma'am, I'm not the producer of the film, well actually I'm…".
As Evilásio struggles to find the words to describe his relation to Júlia, Lenir,
Giaconda's close friend pops up behind her and says, "Evilásio!," and subtly
reminds Giaconda that he is Júlia's guest. Giaconda awkwardly tries to cover up
the situation by inviting him inside. This scene exemplifies the type of micro-
racism that the *novela* effectively captured because Giaconda's facial
expressions communicate a clear dissatisfaction with Evilásio's presence,
especially as Júlia's guest. Before even giving Evilásio a chance, Giaconda
already made assumptions about Evilásio because of his black skin.

The scene continues with Barretão walking to the door to see who just
arrived. As Giaconda uncomfortably says, "It's Júlia's guest, honey," Barretão
arrives at the door and his smile quickly changes to a scowl as he looks at
Evilásio. Giaconda and Barretão exchange disapproving looks in silence, as the
shot cuts to Júlia getting ready in her room. The camera then switches back to
the doorstep:

> Evilásio: "It seems like I got here too early, but Júlia told me get here at
> nine o'clock."
>
> Lenir: "And you arrived right on time because you're a well-educated
> person!"
>
> Giaconda: "Most people think the contrary, that being polite is arriving late,
> and what's even worse is the later you arrive, the more important a person
> is." (Brduascaras, "O Jantar com Evilásio na casa da Júlia – Parte 1")

As Giaconda finishes her comment, her lips remain pursed with annoyance, and she lets out an uncomfortable chuckle. The camera shoots to Evilásio's face where he starts looking at Giaconda, but as she says, "more important the person is," his gaze shoots down to floor and laughs wearily, trying to make light of the situation. Here, Giaconda's backhanded comment shows micro-racism in another form because she takes advantage of the opportunity to make Evilásio aware that his presence is not welcome. By saying that the later one arrives the more important he is, she implies that Evilásio must be the *least* importance guest, reaffirming her disapproval of him.

Once Evilásio officially enters the apartment, Barretão invites him to his office to try some of his "best" whiskey. Barretão begins the conversation and shows fake enthusiasm towards him, a feeling that Evilásio easily detects. His actions then match his thoughts:

Barreto: "So you mean to say that you work for Juvenal Antena?"

Evilásio: "Yeah, I work with my godfather."

Barreto: "Godfather—I bet you're his bodyguard!"

As Evilásio and Barretão begin speaking, Júlia arrives in the doorway, listening to their conversation without entering. When Barretão asks Evilásio if he is Juvenal's bodyguard, Júlia cringes at her father's ignorance that implies that the only available job for a young, fit, black man could be as a bodyguard in the dangerous *favela*. This comment further exemplifies the type of subtle actions of racism seen throughout the *novela,* because Evilásio's value is only recognized in relation to a white man. Barretão's stereotypical assumption of a young black

male reiterates the types of subtle, yet racially charged commentary,that many people of color face on a daily basis, furthering their marginalization in society.

Although these three examples were taken from only one scene in the entire *novela,* it shows the prevalence of these types of comments throughout the entire story. Instead of making direct comments about race, characters used acts of micro-racism to communicate their disapproval and dislike, often leaving characters of color feeling uncomfortable and not welcome.

Conclusions of the Content Analysis

Through the representation of interracial couples, stereotypical depictions of "black" occupations, and acts of micro-racism, *Duas Caras* confronts the ways that racial prejudice continues to be a part of Brazilian society. By incorporating both overt and veiled racist acts into the storyline, the *novela* communicated the uncomfortable feeling that racial discrimination causes on the characters and victims of racism. Analyzing these repeated themes reveals how the writers of *Duas Caras* sought to challenge common acts of racism that tend to be socially accepted by mainstream society. By acknowledging the ways that racism manifests in all aspects of society, the *novela* successfully brought attention to the marginalization that many people continue to face. Similar to the third part of my chapter on *Xica da Silva,* the next section will examine the audience reception of *Duas Caras* through YouTube comments, as a way to see the connections between the encoded messages and the ways that other, non-racially focused viewers, decoded the content.

Part III: Audience Reception

Duas Caras became a world renowned and studied *telenovela* for its direct acknowledgement of Brazil's racial inequalities and prejudices. Through the *novela's* intricate storyline that focused on interracial couples, modern day racism and classism, and the complex life in a *favela, Duas Caras* shows many of the nuances of Brazil's racial culture and why it attracted fans from Latin America, Europe, and the United States. Similar to my analysis of the audience's reception of *Xica da Silva,* this section uses qualitative and quantitative means to examine how viewers actively decoded the messages of race in the *novela* through their comments left on various episodes and clips. Again, this sample does make any definitive claims about the audience's reception; however, it does provide a look into the opinions of the *novela* by fans who sought out *Duas Caras* content via YouTube.

Methodology

The methodological approach for *Duas Caras* differed slightly from that used for *Xica da Silva.* The *Duas Caras* YouTube account posted the complete *telenovela*; however, the episodes lacked a lot of audience engagement and commentary. Ten different episodes had inspired only 35 total comments. Therefore, as a way to understand how users felt about different themes in the *novela*, I also incorporated comments left on shorter clips of specific characters or scenes. In addition to the ten full episodes, I looked at 22 clips, focusing on Júlia and Evilásio, Barretinho and Sabrina, Claudius and Solange, and the Countess. I used the same five category coding set that I developed for *Xica da*

Silva, coding comments into RA, or a race related comment; RO, a romance/love/couple related comment; CH for a character/storyline comment; EV to denote direct reference to an event; and OTH for other.

Discussion

Out of the 177 comments assessed in this section, only 21, or 12% of those comments included a reference to race. The racialized comments were left in regard to the different interracial couples, the media's role in choosing the cast, and how the *novela* touched on being black in Brazil. These comments reflect similarities in the themes discussed in Part II's content analysis.

One key theme in *Duas Caras* was the way it exposed racial prejudice through the connections of interracial couples. In the couple-specific clips that I searched, various users commented on each couple, naming them their favorite, or the most attractive. Júlia and Evilásio's relationship received a lot of attention from users, most likely because they were the central couple. Júlia's father Barretão, an open racist, made her relationship with Evilásio difficult because he did not want to accept a black person into his house or his family. As a response to Barretão's treatment of Evilásio, users emphasized the importance of love as the best way to combat racism. User Camila Pereira said, "Black or white, it doesn't matter. Love is what must prevail, not racism" (Pereira, Linkmoderador. "Julia Beija Evilásio, Duas Caras.").

Image 2.1:

camila pereira Há 6 anos
preto e branco tanto faz o amor tem que prevalecer não o racimo

Another user, Andreia Vasconcelos said, "Love overcomes prejudices" echoing Pereira (Vasconcelos).

Image 2.2:

Andreia Vasconcelos Há 4 meses
o amor supera preconceitos.
Responder

These comments suggest users felt it was important to acknowledge racism in modern society, but also to challenge the idea that racial prejudices should inhibit people from falling in love. Both of these users took hegemonic approaches in decoding the couples' relationships because they accepted it for its surface value, only considering the importance of love, not the complex societal intricacies of race, class, and gender.

The next type of comment looked into the media's role in reinforcing stereotypical portrayals of people of color. A majority of these comments were left in reference to Adriana Alves's character, A Condessa de Finzi-Contini—the dark-skinned black woman from the *favela* of Portelinha, who married an Italian Count and returned to Brazil with a majority of his fortune. Users Francisco Bottentuit and Luis Manresa commented on her beauty, both classifying her beauty as a *negra,* or black woman (Bottentuit, Manresa).

Image 2.3:

Francisco Bottentuit Há 2 anos
Uma negra lindaaaa Amooooo

Luis Manresa Há 2 anos
Adriana Alves é muito gata,uma negra gata,amo ela

After praising Alves for her beauty, User Willy García commented that he is still

waiting for Globo to make a black actress like her as the protagonist. "Goddess!

Simply I don't know what else to say about her. No actress in Hollywood can

compare with her. What are they, from Globo, waiting for to make her the

protagonist of a *novela?"* (García).

Image 2.4:
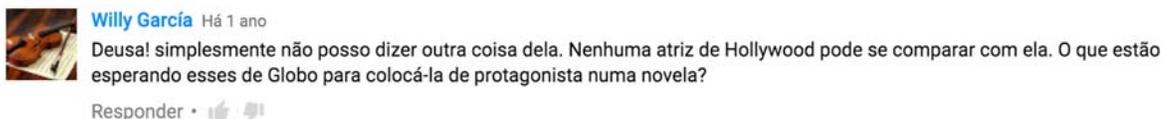
User Wansnegao joined the conversation by adding, "Once again, Globo puts a

beautiful black woman to co-star together with a white actor. (Observation:

Nothing against him)" (Wansnegao).

Image 2.5:
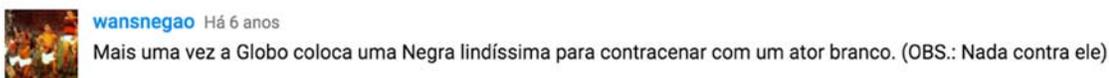
These comments show how audience members are making the connection

between racial prejudice, discrimination, and inequality in media products. These

users recognize the beauty and talent of black women, but see the media's

beauty standard as inhibitive of reaching racial equality in the actors'

protagonism. These comments reveal a negotiated lens of decoding the content

because they accept Alves' participation in the production, yet challenge the

reasons why she only assumes an inferior role, thus questioning the racial norms

established by the media.

One of *Duas Caras's* strengths as a *novela* was to bring direct attention to racial prejudice and inequalities in Brazil. As a result, many YouTube users commented on their experience as people of color in Brazilian society and how they related to the content of the *novela.* User Carlos Machado noted that, "Racism is a system that privileges whites and yellows (Asians) and excludes blacks and indigenous people" (Machado).

Image 2.6:

> **Carlos Machado** Há 3 anos
> Racismo é um sistema que privilegia brancos e amarelos e exclui negros e indígenas.

Even though many upper class Brazilians think of their country as a racial democracy, Machado points out that there clearly exist social differences between people of each race, which greatly affect their ability to succeed. The social exclusion that people of color face often removes them from the mainstream economy, job market, and places of education. Machado's comment shows an oppositional approach to the content in the *novela* because he directly challenges society's depiction in the story, while linking the televised reality to his social reality. Interestingly, although the system seeks to exclude people of color from mainstream society, Brazil's most popular cultural products have their roots in African culture. User Nhansan furthers this notion with his comment:

Image 2.7:

> **Nhansan** Há 7 anos
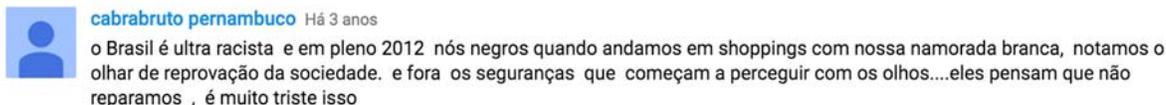> nois os negros somos sugados... mas sem o negro... o Brasil para ingles ver nao existiria... O Brasil Mulata, O Brasil, Samba, O Brasil Futebol, O Brasil Carnaval, o Brasil capoeira... Entao Brazil Abra seus olhos pra o verdadeiro Brasil... e respeite a Luta... ja que nao ajuda a melhorar pelo menos nao atrapalhe quem quer melhorar de vida... ohh pais de racistas! Chega ! Parem com isso antes isso pare vcs!

> We blacks are sucked dry...but without blacks…Brazil for the Englishman to see[37] wouldn't exist. The Mulata Brazil, the Samba Brazil, the Football Brazil, the Carnival Brazil, the Capoeira Brazil. So Brazil, open your eyes to the *real* Brazil, and respect the fight. If you're not going to help improve things, at least don't get in the way of those who want a better life…oh country full of racists! Enough! Stop that before it stops you! (Nhansan, author's italics).

Nhansan's comment brings attention to racism in Brazil by acknowledging the disparities between lived experience for Brazilians and the touristic vision of the country. Society often disregards black people, but uses their cultural history as the face of Brazil. This double standard deepens an already stratified society because it tells people of color that they are accepted only within the realm of popular cultural forms, like samba or capoeira. But, once they approach mainstream society and spaces, their presence is unwelcome. Through Nhansan's comment, it is clear that he used an oppositional stance to decode the content because his words are fighting against mainstream society exploitation of black people and culture. User Cabrabruto Pernambuco furthers that idea by saying,

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[37] This expression is used in Brazil to explain laws that are demagogues, but not upheld in practice. It originated from the colonial period after Great Britain passed a law declaring the trafficking of Africans illegal. In Brazil, Feijó's Law was passed on November 7, 1831, as a way to appear to the British crown that Brazil/Portugal also supported the end of the slave trade. However, in practice, this law was never executed and was disobeyed by everyone involved in slave trafficking, thus giving birth to the expression, "For the English to see" (Gurgel 1).

Image 2.8:

cabrabruto pernambuco Há 3 anos

o Brasil é ultra racista e em pleno 2012 nós negros quando andamos em shoppings com nossa namorada branca, notamos o olhar de reprovação da sociedade. e fora os seguranças que começam a perceguir com os olhos....eles pensam que não reparamos , é muito triste isso

 "Brazil is ultra-racist and still, in 2012, we blacks, when we walk in shopping malls with our white girlfriends, we notice the disapproving look from society. And outside, the security guards who begin to follow us with their eyes…they think we don't notice… it's really sad" (Pernambuco). *Duas Cara's* focus on the stigma felt by interracial couples brings Pernambuco's comment to life. Not only are black people discriminated in public spaces like shopping malls, but dominant society feels uncomfortable seeing a black man with a white girlfriend because of cultural norms that interracial couples challenge by dating outside of their race/class. Again, Pernambuco's response shows another oppositional way of decoding the content because he confronts society's normalized racist actions, yet completely opposes them.

Although small in number, the racialized comments left on the *Duas Caras* videos show an active level of engagement in internalizing and challenging many of the racial norms found in Brazilian society. The comments of anonymous users also show how a *novela* directed towards racial injustice can help foster discussion surrounding the role of race in Brazilian society.

Results

The comments collected from the sample of clips and episodes from *Duas Caras,* totaled 177, divided among ten full episodes and thirteen different video clips focused on specific characters or scenes. There was an average of roughly

seven to eight comments left on each video. The most recent comments were from March 2016, and the oldest comments were from 2008. Table 2.1 shows the total and percentages of the comments found in each category and by each grouping

Table 2.1:

	Race	Romance	Character	Event	Other	Total # of Comments
10 Full Episodes	0	5	20	5	5	**35**
5 Sabrina + Barreto Clips	4	3	17	4	20	**48**
6 Júlia + Evilásio Clips	14	6	9	1	13	**43**
1 Solange + Claudius Clip	1	5	3	0	4	**13**
1 Condessa Clips	3	0	0	0	0	**3**
% of Total	12%	9%	26%	6%	23%	**177**

This table shows that the largest number of comments were coded under the Character/Storyline category, with 26% of the total. Comments in this section often referenced the *novela* villain, Sílvia, or the situation surrounding a particular couple or scene. The Race group was the third largest, accounting for 12% of comments. The clips about Júlia and Evilásio, the two main characters, had the highest number of race-specific comments. These results follow the tendencies

presented in the previous chapter, where YouTube audience members seemed to engage more with the characters and their storyline than with encoded messages about race.

Culminating Remarks

Through the quantitative and qualitative assessment of the audience reception of *Duas Caras,* two main conclusions can be made. First, when assessing the quantity of comments left in each category, race does not seem to be the most common category. Most users seem to be more engaged in the storyline and the characters than in decoding racialized messages. Nevertheless, even though, there are few comments dedicated to race, there were many poignant observations that integrated racial representation into Brazilian media productions. Second, the fact that some users left critical comments that did address the *novela's* representation of race shows that *telenovelas* in general, and specifically, *Duas Caras,* presented racial concepts in an interesting and challenging way that pushed viewers to decode messages about race actively. This finding suggests that when a message is encoded in an easily digestible way, audiences may be more likely to decode messages actively from the content they are consuming.

Conclusion

Overall, these results show that *Duas Caras's* way of directly approaching the issue of race in Brazilian society created the space for viewers to think critically about their personal racialized experiences. The reception and content of the comments found on the episodes of *Duas Caras* differ from those found on

episodes of *Xica da Silva,* because of the contexts in which the *novelas* were released. During the midst of the affirmative action movement, many viewers were primed and perhaps also more prepared to consider the larger implications of racial representations in society. The fact that *Duas Caras* accompanied this movement allowed viewers to consider television realities in light of their rapidly changing social reality. The ten-year difference between *Xica da Silva* and *Duas Caras* also reveals how racial discourse evolved to emphasize further the problem of racism in Brazil's dominant culture. Seeing the differences in the analysis of *Xica da Silva* and *Duas Caras* thus leads me to wonder if similarly, notable changes will have occurred between the mid-2000s and today. Is racial representation in media productions improving? Will Brazil continue to make progress in its fight for equal representation in *telenovelas?* I seek to address these question in my next chapter, which analyzes a third *novel*, *Malhação* (2014), in a contemporary social and political context.

Chapter Four

The Subtleties of Societal Discourse:
Racial Representation in *Malhação* 2014

"*Reveja seus conceitos!"* or "reconsider your assumptions!" became one

of the slogans for the twenty-second season of *Malhação,* released in 2014. As a

part of the *novela,* this phrase was sung by a group of students during an art

performance put on to protest racism, racial inequalities, and prejudice, and to

call for a change in society. *Malhação,* literally meaning gym club, but translated

into "Young Hearts", has been a part of Rede Globo's afternoon broadcasting

since 1995, and has become a staple for many Brazilian adolescents. In this

telenovela, directed towards teenage audiences, *Malhação* incorporates modern

themes that adolescents encounter in middle and high school settings, such as

teen pregnancy, peer pressure, homosexuality, and family relationships. Set in a

high school in Rio de Janeiro, *Malhação* is also known for its idyllic

representation of high school, where the actors and actresses look like

supermodels, wear fashionable clothing, and use the most up-to-date slang.

Although a somewhat unrealistic depiction of high school, the *novela* engages its

audience through situations and characters that resonate with younger

audiences.

In 2014, Rede Globo released *Malhação*, titled *Sonhos*, or "Dreams." This

season highlighted the importance of following one's dreams, whether to be a

famous singer, an accomplished Muay Thai fighter, or a *novela* actress. As the

students fought for their dreams, characters faced their own personal challenges,

such as gender roles, racism, sexual orientation, and family issues. Unlike other

Brazilian *telenovelas* that connected the *novela* reality with lived experience, *Malhação*'s representation of society in 2014 did reflect themes unique to that time period. Although it immediately followed the end of the 2014 World Cup, the storyline did not incorporate the "hot" topics of 2014, such as corruption scandals, police brutality, or political unrest; rather it maintained the picturesque portrayal of high school, only addressing overarching issues in Brazilian society.

Compared to the other *telenovelas* analyzed in this thesis, *Malhação* differs in the way it depicts racial representation and society. *Xica da Silva* and *Duas Caras* overtly challenged Brazil's racial culture through depictions of class ascension, interracial couples, and prejudiced behavior. In contrast, *Malhação* did not center on racial issues, but sporadically touched on them throughout the story [38]. Other *novelas* from the time period that included racial themes featured the same lead cast from *Xica da Silva* and *Duas Caras,* namely Taís Araújo and Lázaro Ramos, which I found interesting. Why are Araújo and Ramos the only actors of color suitable for lead roles in a *novela?* Although *Malhação* does not focus on race as heavily as *Xica da Silva* and *Duas Caras,* the *novela* does incorporate smaller more nuanced statements related to racial inequalities through specific characters, scenes, and artistic forms of protest. With the *novela's* targeted audience of adolescents, it takes a different and subtler approach in addressing modern social issues. Therefore, its unique differences

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[38] *Xica da Silva* was an obvious choice because it had been the first *novela* with a black protagonist, Taís Araújo. *Duas Caras* followed as it has received extensive attention from scholars in and outside Brazil for its direct approach in commenting on Brazil's racial culture. Actor Lázaro Ramos, who played Evilásio, was extensively praised for his acting in *Duas Caras*. But when looking into the "Dilma" years of Brazil (2010-present), I found it challenging finding a third *novela* to investigate. None of the most recent *telenovelas* focused on racial relations, in the way that *Xica da Silva* and *Duas Caras* did.

made it an interesting comparison to the themes presented in *Xica da Silva* and *Duas Caras.*

My analysis of *Malhação* (2014) will follow a similar format used in the previous chapters. First, it will explore the political context of 2014, examining President Dilma Rousseff's expansion of specific social policies, as well as the relevance of the 2014 protests to Brazilian democracy and *Malhação.* The second section will qualitatively examine the artistic performance, "*Reveja seus conceitos,*" as a way to understand the representation of characters of color and the song's larger critique of society's prejudices. The third section will qualitatively and quantitatively explore the YouTube audience's reception of *Malhação,* by analyzing the comments left on different episodes and video clips, with a particular focus on how viewers decoded messages of race. *Malhação* provides an interesting comparison to the previous two chapters because as the most recent *novela* of the three I've analyzed, it shows one way that racial issues are being addressed in modern Brazilian society and media productions.

Part I: Factors of Production
The Era of Dilma

The era of Dilma began in 2010 and until May 2016 Dilma Rousseff served as the 36th president of Brazil and only the fourth since Brazil returned to democratic rule in 1988[39]. Rousseff's policies have largely sought to maintain the

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[39] In May 2016 the Brazilian Senate suspended President Rousseff's presidential powers. Facing accusations of corruption for manipulating government accounts, Rousseff currently is awaiting her impeachment trial, scheduled for October/November 2016. Michel Temer, Rousseff's Vice President, is acting as the president in the meantime. For more on this topic, follow these links: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-36028247, http://g1.globo.com/politica/processo-de-impeachment-de-dilma/, http://www.cnn.com/2016/05/10/americas/brazil-rousseff-impeachment-explainer/ .

various economic and social policies implemented under Luíz Inácio Lula da Silva. Hand-picked as his successor, Rousseff made her dedication to the Lula legacy and the Worker's Party (PT) a key component of her platform. Specifically, in regard to Lula's social programs, initiatives like Bolsa Família, affirmative action policies, and gender equality have been emphasized and expanded under Dilma, increasing her widespread appeal (Taylor). However, sketchy economic policies, corruption scandals, and massive public funding of mega-events like the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games have negatively marked her presidency, resulting in mass protests asking for impeachment (Morais, Rodrigues, Ramalho). Protests have come to be a staple in displays of Brazilian democracy, and one of the subtle ways the sociopolitical backdrop of 2014 was included in *Malhação's* storyline, specifically in the student's musical performance against racism.

Dilma Rousseff has always led a politically active life. Starting in the late 1960s, during the Brazilian Military dictatorship, Rousseff began participating in various left-wing groups that fought for Marxist policies and against the government (Brooks). In 1970, Rousseff was arrested for her leftist activities and tortured by various members of the governing military regime. In 2012, as president, Rousseff officially inaugurated the *Comissão Nacional da Verdade,* or the National Truth Commission, which investigated human rights abuses committed during the military dictatorship (CNV). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, she had remained engaged in politics, participating in various municipal and state functions. Then, in 2003 Rousseff was indoctrinated formally into

national politics when Lula chose her as the Minister of Energy, a position that she had held at the state level years prior.

In 2005, Lula's chief of staff, José Dirceu, resigned for connections to the *Mensalão* scandal,[40] and Lula chose Rousseff to be his next chief of staff. Grooming her to be his successor, Lula's support greatly helped Rousseff win the presidential election in 2010, even though she had not previously been elected to public office (Taylor). She framed her candidacy under the slogan, "For Brazil to keep changing," inferring that a vote for her was a vote to help Brazil continue developing the various programs inaugurated under Lula. One of the pillars to her campaign was her dedication to social initiatives like *Bolsa Família,* affirmative action policies, and gender equality.

As a result of the nearly sixteen-year legacy of PT rule, Brazilian social policy has progressed and grown. Initially, Rousseff's adamant adherence to the continuation of social programs led her to high approval ratings, in March 2013 even reaching upwards of 77% (Jeffris). Bolsa Família, most notably, has been one of the most successful programs of the PT, reaching millions of Brazilians in need. Critics believe that the continuation of Bolsa Família has been used as an electoral technique to garner more votes with Brazil's poor population, thus perpetuating the PT's reign in politics (Hoefner, Midgley, 35). Nevertheless, the

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[40] "The Mensalão, or the 'big monthly allowance,' was a scandal that broke out in 2005 during Lula's first term. Roberto Jefferson, then president of an allied party (PTB), defended himself from charges of corruption by attacking the PT and the government. He accused Lula's chief of staff, José Dirceu, of managing a scheme to buy the support of individual politicians by offering monthly cash allowances. Subsequent investigations confirmed some of the allegations and revealed other malfeasances involving the PT and allied parties. Because it involved lawmakers, the Brazilian law required the criminal case to be tried by the Supreme Court. The court found 25 people guilty, including Jefferson and Dirceu" (Tosta and Coutinho 66).

government's sustained support for Bolsa Família provides livable wages for the poorest groups (Hoefner, Midgley 35). Through the program's requirements, it is expected that the demand for basic education and health services will increase, thus enhancing human capital (Hoefner, Midgley 35). Rousseff's promise to Bolsa Família has protected it from federal spending cuts and thus plans to integrate it into the country's larger developmental policy.

Rousseff's support for minorities and marginalized citizens extended from social programs to affirmative action initiatives. On August 30, 2012, Rousseff passed one of the "western hemisphere's most sweeping affirmative action laws," requiring public schools to reserve 50% of their admission for poor students and to increase the number of university students of African descent (Romero). The law obligates public universities to designate admission spots based on the racial makeup of each of Brazil's 26 states and the capital, Brasília (Romero). Along with strides made toward greater racial equality, Rousseff also sought to increase gender equality throughout different industries. "As Brazil's first female president, Rousseff helped increase the profile of women in both Brazil's business and political sectors, and by 2013 over a quarter of her cabinet were women" (Taylor). Rousseff's initial commitment to creating a more just and equal society led many people to support her. However, as the population began to grow more frustrated with the government's (over)spending and corruption surrounding the 2014 World Cup, frustrated Brazilians began taking to the streets and Dilma's approval rating started to plummet.

The 2014 World Cup was supposed to be a highlight in modern Brazilian history, as the country united under the hope of Brazil winning a sixth World Cup title. However, the excitement surrounding the event was not enough to qualm the population as they learned of the billions of *reais* of public funds spent on building and maintaining stadiums. This misappropriation of funds infuriated the public because they saw various industries as inefficient, weak, and failing. In a news package by *Daily Mail UK*, author and producer Steve Nolan said: "Young and old have come together, angry at high taxes, inflation, and corruption. People say that want more hospitals, schools, roads, and police" (Nolan). Shoddy education, health care, social programs, and increased transportation costs all provoked Brazilians' frustration. This anger resulted in massive protests throughout the country where citizens demanded justice for the misuse of public funds. Increased police violence towards protestors became a consequence of the riots, with various groupings of young people being tear gassed, beaten, or abused (Nolan). People risked their safety to protest and public demonstration increased as a key component of Brazilian democratic expression.

Since the end of the dictatorship, as a way to reclaim their democracy, Brazilians have used protest to show dissatisfaction with the government, economy, and general state of affairs. Following the 2014 protests and leading up to mid-2016, people have continued to protest government corruption scandals, and the country has become radically divided over the legality of ongoing efforts to impeach Dilma Rousseff (Pereira). Regardless, through the country's transition to democracy, Brazilians learned to use their right to protest

when they felt injustice was being committed. Although in the *novela Malhação,*

no direct influences of Rousseff's presidency became part of the storyline, in one

of the most racially charged scenes, students used protest as their form of

challenging the status quo. When the class learns that one of their colleagues

has suffered an act of racial profiling by police, students join together to bring

attention to the issue through an art performance wherein four students and the

professor criticize all forms of prejudice. Before starting to plan the performance,

the professor leaves the students by saying, "When you are going to revolt, make

sure to do it through art!" incorporating the student's artistic background together

with their act of protest ("Curtiu").

The performance's goal was to bring attention to the racial inequalities that

many people continue to feel in society, while showing that they, as young

citizens, were not going to accept such behavior. It is unclear if the writers

intentionally used a protest-like performance as a way to raise awareness of this

topic, but in doing so, they reflected the political complexity of 2014, where angry

citizens took to the streets weekly to demand justice. As such an ingrained trait of

Brazilian democracy, the student's decision to protest racism seemed as

plausible as the population's decision to protest governmental corruption,

showing some connection between the 2014 political arena and the production of

Malhação.

Malhação: The Series

Malhação was the first Brazilian *telenovela* of its kind, featuring mostly

teen casts, in high school, and directed toward adolescent audiences. Set in

Barra da Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro, the *novela* developed the name *Malhação,* from its original setting in a fictional gym that connected local high schools in the area ("Globo – Young Hearts"). Throughout the years, the settings and stories have changed to include up-to-date issues, but every season problematizes a new list of everyday adolescent struggles. *Malhação* first aired on April 24, 1995, and has gone on to include twenty-three different seasons, with the latest season airing in 2015-16 ("Globo – Young Hearts"). Andréa Maltrarolli and Emanuel Jacobina were the original creators, but newer seasons have begun to include other directors, writers, and producers. The show's popularity has inspired numerous spin-offs and web series, along with blogs and social media pages where viewers can engage with talent, other audience members, and behind-the-scene clips of content ("Malhação | Novela | Gshow"). Currently, *Malhação* airs on weekday afternoons, following the program "*Vale a Pena Ver de Novo,*" or "It's Worth Seeing Again" on Rede Globo. Since its original release, the *novela* has been rebroadcasted by networks around the world, including in Portugal and Canada ("Globo – Young Hearts").

The twenty-second season aired from July 14, 2014 to August 14, 2015 and included 280 episodes. The season of *Sonhos* was written by Rosane Svartman, Paulo Halm, and Márcio Wilson and directed by Luis Henrique Rios. Unlike previous seasons that changed the main setting from the community gym to other familiar spots, this season's plot returned to the gym, creating familiar scenes for audiences. Using the gym as one of the main locations throughout the *novela* brought viewers back to the classic appeal of *Malhação* (*Diário de SP*

Online)*.* The ratings for the twenty-second season surpassed those of the previous seasons, reaching an average of 16 points on the IBOPE scale. Within Rio de Janeiro, some episodes exceeded 20 points, some days even reaching 26 points, reflecting high audience consumption of the program (Santiago). Episodes were originally written for thirty minutes, but once ratings exceeded network goals, episodes were extended to forty minutes (Diiego – 2 /7/15). *Malhação* was nominated for multiple awards in 2014 and 2015 and won the *Troféu Internet* in 2015 for best *novela* (Diiego – 6/17/15)*.* This season of *Malhação* combined enough romance, fighting, deception, and success to fascinate viewers throughout the country.

Malhação: An Overview

The central story in *Malhação* focuses on the couple Bianca and Duca, and the difficulties they face in trying to be together. In Bianca's father, Gael's martial arts gym, Duca dreams of being Muay Thai champion[41] and Bianca, a famous actress, like her deceased mother. When Bianca decides that she wants to study at the Ribalta Art School, where her mother had studied, she confronts issues with her overprotective, easily angered father who struggles to address the difficult memories of his deceased wife. After much convincing, Gael allows Bianca to attend Ribalta because he wants her to follow her dream of being an actress. However, tensions start to rise when Gael prohibits Karina, Bianca's younger sister, from practicing Muay Thai at his gym because he does not see it as a sport fit for girls, especially his youngest daughter. Karina grows frustrated

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[41] Muay Thai is a type of hand martial arts that is practiced around the world, but originated in India and ultimately this style was perfected in Southeast Asia (Van der Veere 8).

with her father because he allowed Bianca to follow her dreams, but forbids Karina to do the same. In an act of defiance, Karina begins to secretly train Muay Thai with Duca, Bianca's love interest and Gael's best fighter, at the gym. Also hiding their relationship from Gael, Bianca and Duca start growing more intimate, but oblivious to her sister's romance, Karina ends up falling in love with Duca. Bianca and Duca begin to date secretly, as a way to "protect" Karina from the truth and hide the relationship from Gael. However, their plan backfires and once Karina learns they are dating, she becomes hurt, confused, and defiant towards her father and sister, and tries to discover her own path.

As the story develops, Karina tries to get over Duca by finding a new love interest, Pedro. Pedro attends Ribalta as a musician and dreams of becoming a famous guitar player. Solange, Sol for short, is another key character throughout the *novela,* as she is one of the only characters of color, comes from a poor family, but dreams of becoming a famous singer. Sol confronts issues of financial insecurity, as her mother, Bete, earns a minimum-wage salary working as the housemaid for Gael, Karina, and Bianca. Sol struggles to find money to pay for tuition at Ribalta, as well as places to perform, and suffers from the societal structure that disenfranchises poor, black students. However, Solange proves to be very strong willed in following her dreams and earns fame from her singing career.

Another layer of the story takes place in Gael's gym, where a new boy is introduced to the group. Named Cobra, for his aggressive personality and hunger to fight, he quickly becomes at odds with Duca as they start to compete for the

position of top fighter at the gym. Cobra's rough past and anger problems make it difficult for him to succeed because he cannot focus his energy and emotions, resulting in situations where he acts out of aggression. Even though Cobra is an excellent fighter, Gael finds it frustrating trying to control him and ultimately Cobra's talent is recognized by Lobão, Gael's nemesis and owner of a competing gym. "Khan Gym" is owned by Lobão and has a sketchy reputation for hosting illegal fighting rings and the marginal characters brought in to participate in them. Throughout the *novela,* various fighters find themselves at a fork in the road, faced with choosing between Gael and Lobão. Gael represents hard work and integrity, while Lobão uses bribes and illegal money to win over athletes. Together they represent the divide between good and evil in the *novela.*

As the name, *Sonhos* or "Dreams," implies, this season focuses on the ways each character is determined to achieve a specific dream. Although the *novela* includes many positive achievements on the road towards these dreams, characters confront their own pain, challenges, and heartache as they work to accomplish their goals. The ways each character learns to test his or her values, morals, and courage to make the right decision to reach goals, shows how the *novela* tried to reflect the everyday difficulties that adolescents face. Overall, *Malhação's* diverse approaches to issues ranging from teen pregnancy and abusive relationships to infidelity and gender norms show the types of problems teenagers face while presenting different ways of addressing them. Another interesting layer of the *novela* is the way it subtly touched on racism in Brazil, reflecting another attempt to include conversation of this topic in public dialogue.

Part II: Content Analysis

    Malhação addressed different types of racial prejudice that many people confront in modern Brazilian society through the performance of the song "*Reveja seus conceitos"* or "Reconsider your assumptions." This performance included students from Ribalta, the *novela's* performing arts school, together with students from the community. The idea for the performance was sparked by an encounter wherein the police racially profiled a classmate, Rico, assuming a young black male must have stolen the nice car he was driving. The performance included five different verses wherein each singer's poignant lyrics addressed one aspect of growing up black in Brazil. This performance was one of the *novela's* sharpest critiques of a racial culture that continues to marginalize people of color. Even though *Malhação* tends to paint a picturesque version of high school, which includes beautiful (mostly white) teenage girls and handsome (mostly white) teenage boys, that exists within an elite bubble of Rio de Janeiro, the students' performance of "*Reveja seus conceitos"* revealed a distinct, more socially conscious component to the *novela.* This section will explain how the *novela* also pointed, perhaps unintentionally, to the unrepresentativeness of the upper-middle class, predominantly white, world it depicts in its storyline.

<div align="center">

"*Reveja seus conceitos"* and the Fight for Racial Equality

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    Malhação has been successful in attracting audiences in part because of its portrayal of an elite high school. As noted, the casts include attractive male and female characters who wear the latest clothes, and use the most up-to-date slang, helping to reinforce the show's representation of everything "cool." "On

Malhação, there are only beautiful people. Even the black people are beautiful!" (Elane, Salvador, 29). The protagonists live upper-middle class lives, with maids, cars, and access to capital, while the secondary characters often show opposite lifestyles, struggling for money or jobs as a result of their race or class. The 2014 season followed the same pattern, where the story centered on the romantic issues of Bianca and Duca, while threading in other problems such as divorce, anger management, and infidelity through the couple's relationships with Karina, Pedro, and Gael. These issues reflected emotional instabilities, rather than structural or societal ones, although problems tended to correlate with the class of these characters. Conversely, the three main characters of color (Solange, her mother Bete, and Wallace, Solange's friend/love interest) were portrayed as stereotypical black characters. They were constantly reminded of their lower socioeconomic level, their origin in *favelas*, and low-paying work through struggles to finance the luxuries and necessities, like school tuition, enjoyed by the white characters. However, *Malhação's* stereotypical pattern of casting thus makes the performance of "*Reveja seus conceitos*" all the more important. The song's sharp verses critiqued the prejudice suffered by black youth.

The theme of the performance originated from the racial profiling that one of the students faced a couple days prior. Rico, a black boy and student at Ribalta, took his father's car out to pick up some friends. When he arrived at his friend's house in the fictional *favela* of Marechal, he was approached by police officers who accused him of stealing the car. The police said they had received a call alerting them of robbery of that car by someone with a "similar profile" to

Rico, or young black male. As Rico tried to explain that it was his father's car and that he was using it while the father was out of town, the police officer, wary, of his explanation, replies, "a black person in this car could only be a criminal" ("Curtiu"). Ruiva, one of Rico's white friends, becomes involved with the police when she sees her friend getting harassed. As tensions between the officers and the angry teens begin to rise, the police ultimately take Rico and Ruiva to the police station for furthering questioning. Once Rico and Ruiva are released from the police and back at school, the students begin to brainstorm the content for their next performance. Rico then brings attention to the injustice he has suffered for being, "black (*negro*) while driving an imported car." His comments inspire students to react through an artistic display of protest to be performed in the Marechal *favela,* the location of the harassment*.*

The scene of the performance opens with a panning shot that shows the groups of students, painted in black and white paint, rocking to a hip-hop beat. Although not identical, the song's beat is remnant of the song, "I Ain't Too Proud to Beg" by the all-black female group, TLC. The lyrics to "I Ain't Too Proud to Beg" speak of the reality of black women growing up in the inner-city, trying to find sexual satisfaction. Although the content of this song does not relate to the performance, the fact that "*Reveja seus conceitos*" sampled TLC's beat, shows the international importance of hip-hop as a genre. Hip-Hop began in urban centers across the United States in the 1980s, to give the people of these depressed communities a form of local, authentic, and genuine expression to resist the powers of mainstream society (Travis). Since the 1980s, hip-hop has

travelled world-wide, but continues to be used as a tool to vocalize the struggles that people face (Travis). By referencing this beat in their performance, it shows the transnational character of hip-hop, while reinforcing its use as a method of resistance, protest, and social change for communities.

As the panning shot begins to focus on the students, Rico is the first artist to perform and raps:

> A lot has evolved, but almost nothing has changed/ I continue being judged by the color of my skin/ Good that my dad told me to always be careful/ Even when I'm doing the right thing, they can see it as wrong/ Oh, because I'm black in an imported car/ Racism is so cruel that it makes me feel handcuffed/ I carry this pain on my chest ("Curtiu").

Then the group sings in chorus, "*Reveja seus conceitos! Reveja seus conceitos*!" Rico's verse tells the struggle of young black men, specifically in relation to police abuse. As in the United States, black youth in Brazil suffer greatly from police abuse, violence, and murder.[42] Rico acknowledges that even though Brazilian society has evolved to be more accepting of racial diversity, he still confronts

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[42] As documented in the book *The Killing Consensus (2015)* by Graham Denyer Willis, urban violence exploded with the growth of the drug trade, specifically inside of the *favelas.* With drug trafficking game gangs, which brought territory wars and shoot-outs. As a way to "control" the violence, while benefiting from the system, many crooked police officers started engaging with the drug lords. In exchange for cash, the police officers would provide tips to the traffickers and/or silence on their whereabouts. Eventually the dynamic between the gangs and the police grew more tense as civilians were suffering from the police attacks and were being murdered at alarming rates. "Every year Brazil's police force is responsible for more than 2000 deaths" (H.J.). The case of Amarildo Dias de Souza became particularly popular in Brazilian media as an example of police violence. De Souza disappeared on July 14, 2013 from his home in Rocinha, the largest *favela* in Brazil, and was taken by the military police. He was never returned to his home and led to the social media movement, "Cadê o Amarildo", with over 4,000 likes, a symbolic movement asking for justice of police violence and abuse of power (https://www.facebook.com/Cad%C3%AA-o-Amarildo-418832998237714/). For more on police violence in *favelas,* refer to *Drugs and Democracy in Rio de Janeiro* (2006) by Desmond Arias; *Police Brutality in Urban Brazil* (1997) by James Cavallaro, Anne Manuel, and Human Rights Watch/ Americas; and *Living in the Crossfire* (2011) by Maria Alves and Philip Evanson. As a way to cleanse the *favelas* of the drugs, violence, and other illegal activities, in preparation for the World Cup in 2014 and Olympics in 2016, a new program called the Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora, Pacifying Police Unit (UPP). This initiative sought to remove the corrupt police officers of the past with fresh recruits with training in human rights, social programs, and community outreach (Zirin). Since its inception, this program has received a lot of criticism because it seemed to not help the systemic issues that continue to affect *favelas.* For more on the UPP's impact refer to *Brazil's Dance with the Devil: The World Cup, The Olympics, and the Struggle for Democracy* (2014) by Dave Zirin.

racial prejudice in his everyday life. Regardless of his moral character, achievements, or successes, simply because of his black skin, he will continue to suffer from discrimination, profiling, and stereotyping, which deepens his feeling of being handcuffed in his own skin.

The next verse is sung by Guta, another black student from Ribalta, who speaks to the struggle of black women. In her stanza she sings, "The black woman gets samba, but doesn't get respect/ She battles with big claws to get her rights/ In this racist, machista, and violent world/ You have to have courage, [that's] why I say this banging on my chest" ("Curtiu"). Here, Guta challenges the designated space for black women in Brazilian society, where they are allowed to embrace their blackness in relation to samba, *capoeira*, or other Afro-Brazilian cultural products, but in their daily lives struggle to get the same respect or recognition as their white counterparts. Her comments seem to support the arguments of sociologist Maria Soares dos Santos, who has argued that black women are accepted by dominant society only when they assume roles of samba-ing *mulatas (Look: Blackness in Brazil! Disrupting the grotesquerie of racial representation in Brazilian visual culture*), hence furthering the association of black women as objects of white sexualization, which was also seen in the depiction of Xica da Silva in *Xica da Silva*[43]*.* The marginalization that black women experience, as explained by Guta, places them in a confined space wherein they must battle against racism, sexism, and violence in order to survive.

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[43] For more on the representation of women, and women of color in Brazilian media refer to *Negras in Brazil: Reinvisioning Black Women, Citizenship, and the Politics of Identity* (2007) by KL Caldwell and *Watching While Black: Centering the Television of Black Audiences* (2013) by Berretta E. Smith-Shomade.

Wallace raps the next verse, focusing on prejudice, but also alluding to issues surrounding interracial couples:

I'm *negão* (a big black man) with pride, style, and attitude/ I fight against prejudice, I'm from the health generation/ You can discriminate against me, or speak ill of me behind my back/ You may not like me, but your daughter does/ You got it, or is it a lost cause? ("Curtiu")[44].

At this point in the *novela,* Wallace has started entertaining the idea of pursuing something with Ruiva, even though Sol was his first love. In the penultimate phrase, he references the struggle that he faces as a black man who chooses to date white women. Here, the juncture of race and class come together, specifically in relation to interracial couples, because the issue of racial mixing becomes such a sensitive topic as there are clear class differences at play. As in *Duas Caras,* interracial couples create controversy, in part, because of the prejudice suffered by black men who are stereotyped as poor, dangerous, uneducated *favelados*. However, in relation to other interracial couples that caught the media's attention, race was not always the key factor. For example, Brazil's beloved (black) soccer player, Pelé, and Xuxa, a famous actress, received a lot of attention as a couple because as high profile celebrities, but received criticism for their age difference and career paths. However, race was rarely cited as a reason for this controversy (Simón). Although Pelé came from

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[44] In the line where he refers to "You may not like me, but your daughter does", Wallace is paraphrasing a famous song by Brazilian singer and songwriter Chico Buarque, "*Jorge Maravilha",* where Buarque sings the same line as Wallace. Buarque was an active voice in the fight for democracy during the military dictatorship, and in *"Jorge Maravilha",* Buarque's line about a daughter is in reference to then president Ernesto Geisel, whose daughter, Amália Lucy, had declared herself a big fan of Buarque (Moura).

humble beginnings, his success in soccer distinguished him from other black men, helping him surpass the stereotyping that Evilásio, in *Duas Caras,* suffered because of his fame and wealth. This double standard perfectly exposes how Brazil's racial culture continues to act as one of the biggest contradictions of society.

The assumptions that Barretão made of Evilásio in *Duas Caras* also appear in Wallace's verse, because he confronts the same type of discrimination when trying to date a white woman. Wallace's acknowledgement of the racism and discrimination felt "behind my back," contrasted with the phrase "your daughter likes me," suggests that he will continue to confront and fight against racism, even at the expense of an unhappy father. As Ruiva and Wallace grow closer, Sol becomes jealous because she sees Ruiva's presence as a threat to her relationship with her "*negão*" (as she often refers to him). Sol's growing resentment of Ruiva and Wallace's friendship reflects another stereotype: that upon reaching a certain socioeconomic level, black men seek out white women instead of black women, as further discussed in Chapter Three. Sol responds to this idea in her verse.

In Solange's verse, she mentions Martin Luther King, as she explains how prejudice has directly affected her life:

There will always be people to say that/ Who was born poor in life/ Doesn't have the right to overcome/ I'm tired of going into stores and being ignored/ For many people, skin color still dictates power/ I'm still going to sing for a colored and smiling world/ That just like Martin Luther King, I also have a dream ("Curtiu").

In this verse, Sol tells how the color of her skin has impacted her life. She has learned that "skin color still dictates power," and that as a black female, she will continue to be treated poorly. Sol's reference to Martin Luther King touches on the transnationality of racism from which the African diaspora continues to suffer. As much inside as outside of the United States, MLK has come to symbolize strength, determination, and inspiration in the fight for racial equality. Therefore, the use of hip-hop and references to MLK add a layer of cross-cultural understanding between Afro-Brazilians and African-Americans, making Sol's verse even more powerful because her words and experiences go beyond the Brazilian context. By ending on, "I also have a dream", Sol leans on the progress made by other racial movements, namely in the United States, while continuing to show optimism in improving the Brazilian racial dynamic.

Another key part of her rap touches on poverty and financial insecurity, which has been a repeated theme throughout this thesis. Her character struggles to find money, which reinforces the connection between race and class. Even though she is a strong character who pursues her dreams, Solange is often reduced to the stereotype of a poor, black, *favelada.* However, her participation in this performance shows how Sol, together with Rico, Guta, and Wallace, can

use their voices to bring attention to the racial discrimination felt by the black community and try to eliminate it.

As the song ends and the audience believes the performance is over, the students' professor, Edgard de Monmart, jumps on stage to sing a surprise verse wherein he also addresses prejudice:

Everyone has to take responsibility/ It doesn't matter your race, sex, or age/ Who has to understand is society, and it's also for the State/ You made a mistake, I can't stay quiet/ Prejudice, my friend, is really from the past/ It's time for Brazil to put an end to all of this/ We're going to fight for our rights/ Rethink your prejudices!" ("Curtiu").

As the only white person who participates in this performance, Edgard extends the conversation to address other types of social marginalization. He acknowledges that dominant society, culture, and the state need to work together in overcoming prejudice because only by attacking the issues from the top-down and the bottom-up, can change be enacted. Furthermore, Brazilian democracy can only truly flourish when society ends its racial culture that marginalizes a majority of the population by refusing to accept the colonial legacy of racial inequality. He emphasizes the importance of "we" when trying to challenge engrained cultural customs and ways of thinking, arguing that change must be a collective effort. By addressing the role of students in changing dominant mentality, the program shows how youth play a crucial role in forming and progressing societal norms. However, when further analyzing Edgar's stanza, it is important to consider the different ways that his presence in the song can be

understood. The fact that Edgar is white, adult, man reiterating social prejudice, seems to provide the students with a voice of authority, seeking to validate what Rico, Guta, Wallace, and Sol are saying. On the other hand, his presence in the song could also be read as an opening of the prototypical authority figure (white male) acknowledging the problems of the prototypical disadvantaged (black youth). Per the lens of each viewer, s/he may choose to interpret Edgar's role accordingly.

This performance marked an important part of *Malhação* because of its direct treatment of racial prejudice. Each person who performed in "*Reveja seus conceitos*" incorporated a different perspective on how racism impacted his or her life. Whether or not their verses were based on a specific event from the *novela*, as in Rico's case, their verses resonated with viewers because they told of common acts of racism experienced by many people every day. By including such an address of Brazil's racial inequality, *Malhação*, showed how some media producers are addressing and discussing the ongoing prevalence of racism in Brazil, even if advances for racial discourse are minimal. The repetition of stories, experiences, and tales that vocalize struggles against racism and challenge the status quo to help cultivate a mindset that supports equality in all aspects of Brazilian social life. The next section examines the audience's reception of the content found in *Malhação* while paying close attention to the ways that racialized messages were interpreted by anonymous viewers.

Part III: Audience Reception

One of the major differences between *Malhação* (2014), *Xica da Silva*, and *Duas Caras* is the intended audience. As a teen-themed *novela* that airs in the afternoon, after school, *Malhação* tends to attract high number of adolescent viewers. *Malhação's* younger demographic forces the writers to approach the *novela's* social commentary in a different way because the themes must be suitable for adolescent viewers. Social topics must subtly address issues, enough to engage them, but without overwhelming them. This section of my chapter will look at the audience's reception of the *novela* from a qualitative and quantitative perspective as a way to understand how *Malhação's* audience interpreted various themes, including romance, character development, and racial representation. The perspectives analyzed in this section are not conclusive of the audience's reception, but they do provide some understanding for how YouTube fans interpreted this season of *Malhação.*

Methodology

The approach I used in the analysis of *Malhação* mirrored the one I used for *Duas Caras.* The *Malhação* episodes were uploaded by YouTube account, Novelas Online, but due to copyright issues, not all episodes were uploaded in a complete and chronological order. On the episodes that followed the sequential order, there was some user engagement, but not much thought provoking commentary. Therefore, I sought out short video clips of different couples and characters, and ultimately found a small collection of race-related comments in one specific video. In total, I looked at the comments left on seven full episodes,

three character specific clips, and a character list made by a fan. I used the same five category coding set forth in the analysis and divided the comments into RA, or a race related comment, RO, or a romance/love/couple related comment, CH for a character/storyline comment, EV to denote direct reference to an event, and OTH for other.

Discussion

Malhação presented an interesting case study for this thesis because it did not follow patterns seen in the analysis of the previous two *telenovelas.* In a total of 1056 comments analyzed, only 13, or about 1% were race related. On the episode comments, viewers did not mention any characters of color, including Solange, or her socioeconomic status, even though her struggle as a *favelada* was a large part of her character. The only clip that received race-specific comments was on the fan created character list.

The clip named, "Top 10: As Mais Bonitas de Malhação 2014/2015" video, created by user Samara Macedo, was the only clip to receive racialized attention. In this list, Macedo named the ten prettiest women from this season of *Malhação,* putting Guta and Solange in the 9th and 10th spots, respectively. Some users were irritated by the two girls' lowest ranking, as they were also the only two girls of color in the *novela.*

Image 3.1:


mayara calazans Há 1 ano
Serio eu acho isso racismo sabe pq as negras ficaram por utimo e elas sao muito mais bonitas que muita gente!!!

Responder • 1

User Mayara Calazans says, "Seriously, I think this is racism, because the black girls came last and they are a lot prettier than a lot of people!" [sic] (Calazans). Thalya Santos also noticed the order and asked, "But why are the *morenas* the last ones?" (Santos). Macedo responded by saying, "It's not prejudice, it's just my opinion" (Macedo).

Image 3.2:
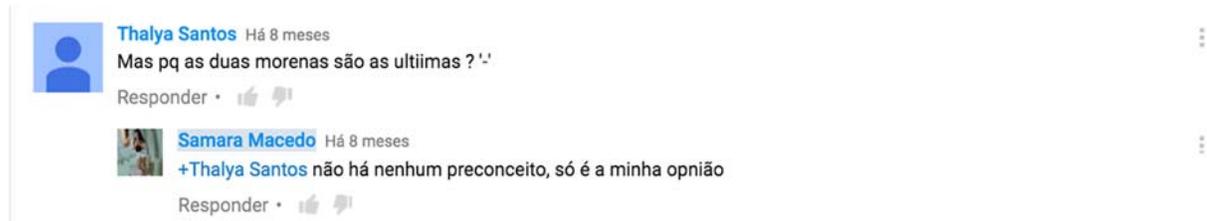
Macedo was also critiqued by another user who questioned the placement of the women of color in the video. "Wow, what racism, putting the black girls last…" (Vieria). Macedo defensively responded, "Of course not, I respect everyone. Prejudice is you not respecting my opinion" (Macedo). Other user, Gabriela Araújo de Assis, chimed in, "It's all racism" (Araújo de Assis).

Image 3.3:
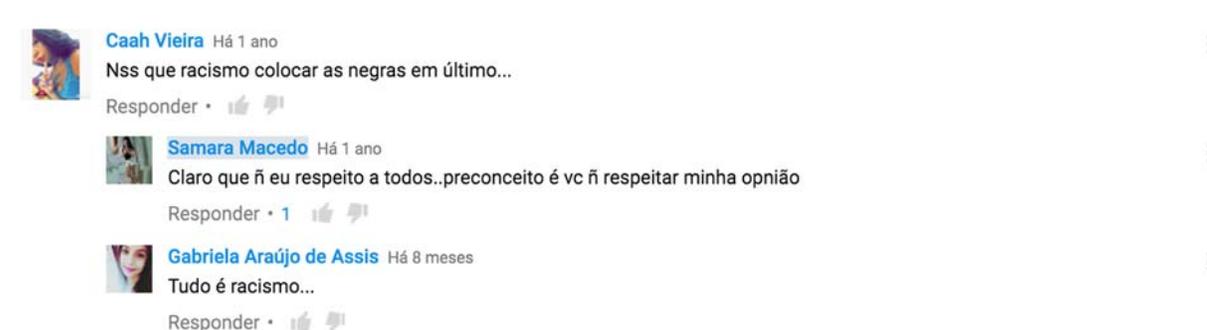
The comments left on this video show how young viewers have begun to make the connection between media power and racial representation. As is evident from these comments, racial representation in the media reflects

dominant beauty standards, whereby white women tend to be more valued than women of color, both on and off screen. Although Macedo denied that her post was racist, her choice to place the only two black characters as the ninth and tenth prettiest women on the show reflect a dominant societal norm that embraces white and "European" features while devaluing features perceived as black and African. By putting women of color in secondary roles while their white counterparts are cast as protagonists, the media cultivate a skewed image of beauty that glorifies, straight blond hair, light eyes, and white, slender bodies. The fact that these different users commented on Macedo's placement of Solange and Guta shows how some users seek to critique widespread beauty norms and to combat social and racial prejudice by bringing attention to such issues. By acknowledging the unequal treatment of white and black women, the *novela* makes race a relevant point for viewers, provokes discussion, and helps foster more generalized questioning of Brazil's dominant racial culture. All of these comments reflect an oppositional decoding method by the commenters because they openly challenged Macedo's decision to put the women of color in the last positions, thus fighting the societal norms that praise white beauty while disregarding darker variations.

It is important to note that Brazil's racialized social culture varies from region to region, as the demographic make-up of each region also changes. These *novelas* all have taken place in Brazil's urban Southeast, which reflects a different reality than someone living in Salvador da Bahía in the Northeast or Manaus in the Amazon, Campo Grande in Mato Grosso do Sul in the Center-

West region. Per the users' personal experience with race relations in their community, they react and respond accordingly.

Results

Comments left on the various episodes and clips of *Malhação* totaled 1056, divided among seven full episodes, three character clips, and one fan-made list. There was an average of 96 comments left on each video used in this analysis. The most recent comments were from April 2016 and the oldest from April 2015. Figure 1 shows the total and percentages of the comments found in each category by grouping.

Table 3.1:

	Race	Romance	Character	Event	Other	Total # of Comments
7 Full Episodes	0	11	63	12	260	408
3 Clips	1	31	24	0	327	383
1 List	12	0	0	0	253	265
% of Total	1%	4%	8%	1%	80%	1056

Table 3.1 shows that 80% of comments fell into the "Other" category. As mentioned earlier, *Malhação* was not updated chronologically, so many comments found on each episode asked the account operator of Novelas Online to upload the next episode (or series of episodes). Other comments included viewers acknowledging the twenty-second season as one of the best and naming

Duca and Bianca as the "ideal couple." These results differed greatly from those made about *Xica da Silva* and *Duas Caras* because users did not seem as engaged with the content, storyline or characters beyond a superficial level. Racialized comments made up only 1% of the total comments left, specifically pertaining to only one of the clips, reflecting an overall low number of users using a racially charged lens to decode their content. More research is necessary to determine whether the difference reflects message encoding throughout the *novela* and/or the possibility that younger audiences are less critical when consuming television content.

Final Thoughts

Through the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the YouTube comments left on a collection of videos from *Malhação* (2014/2015), I offer two main conclusions. First, the comments left on this *novela* had the lowest number of active user engagement than the two other *novelas,* especially when considering the number of race related comments. Users did not seem as interested in the large social issues the *novela* tried to raise—not even teen pregnancy, homosexuality, and gender norms. Indeed, the majority of comments were people praising the *novela* as their favorite and users naming their favorite couples (Bianca and Duca, Pedro and Karina, or Cobra and Jade).

Second, the few comments left about race on other episodes provided an interesting look into Brazil's beauty standards.[45] Some users were irritated by the "racist" list that put the two black actresses as the least attractive of the season. However, their comments were not directed towards the *novela* itself, just the list and its author. The fact that some viewers commented on this list, nonetheless, shows sensitivity to discriminatory racial representation in media products and intolerance for whitewashed images that are supposed to represent them, their community, and their country. Although the race/color of these users is unclear, as they remain anonymous, it would be interesting to consider how the commenters personal experience with race influenced their perception and ultimately the way they interpreted these videos.

In sum, *Malhação* prompted few racialized comments compared to *Xica da Silva* and *Duas Caras.* Low audience engagement might be due to the fact that *novela* presented few scenes that problematized racism overtly or due to decreased public discourse surrounding racial issues in 2014, but further research is needed to make that determination. Compared to *Xica da Silva* and *Duas Caras,* which both boasted about 12% of racialized comments, *Malhação's* meager 1% shows how users seemingly appear to not be decoding the visual representations of race when consuming the content of this *novela*, which will be further analyzed in the next chapter.

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[45] In the book *Xuxa: The Mega-Marketing of Gender, Race, and Modernity* (1993), author Amelia Simpson explores the explosion of Xuxa and how her portrayal of the Brazilian ideal of beauty reflects contradictory beauty standards. "Xuxa is the embodiment of some of Brazil's deepest contradictions" (Simpson 4) as a blonde, white, woman in a country filled with mixed-race people. For more on Brazilian beauty standards, also refer to *Pretty Modern: Beauty, Sex, and Plastic Surgery in Brazil* (2010) by Alexander Edmonds.

Conclusion

What Will Be the Future of Racial Representation?

As I have sought to show with these four chapters, Brazilian *telenovelas* continue to struggle to present a racially representative portrait of Brazil's population. Whether through the underrepresentation of actors of color in any given production or rampant, stereotyped portrayals of people of color, these *telenovelas* have largely failed to create programming that represents black Brazilians favorably or in accordance with their make-up of the overall national population. That being said, as a result of various political initiatives, the industry has made some changes to help achieve greater racial equality in media productions. Focusing on the popular genre of *telenovela,* this study has aimed to place these complex, and, for many Brazilians, uncomfortable questions of racial culture, into a widely recognized and "comfortable" context. By white millions of people every day may be influenced to make an effort to connect, challenge, and engage viewers on a variety of race-related topics. Considering my findings and the insight I have aimed to achieve with this project, I offer three main conclusions regarding the impact of racial coding embedded in these telenovelas. These conclusions relate directly to the political context surrounding the release of the programming; the repeated themes and portrayals in the *novelas;* and diverse interpretations by audience members*.*

My first conclusion concerns the connection between the political circumstances and the content found in the *novelas.* The political initiatives surrounding the release of each of the *telenovelas* created a context that

influenced the way the*y were* created, disseminated, and received. *Xica da Silva's* release during the neoliberal initiatives of President Cardoso, for example, had potential to make some sectors of society more accepting of diversity by beginning the conversation about racial inclusivity. *Duas Caras's* race-heavy storyline might be seen as a direct reflection of the affirmative action policies of the 2000s. The conversation initiated by the government in recognizing and seeking to rectify racial inequalities through race-based quotas influenced the telenovela producers, which in turn influenced the general public, to further discussions about the role of race in national society. Lastly, *Malhação,* following the controversy and dialogue created by the implementation of affirmative action policies, intertwined racial issues with other social themes, such as homosexuality, gender norms, and family relations. Furthermore, through its depiction of protest for social justice, *Malhação* presented a clear parallel to the massive political and social protests of 2013 and 2014.

This pattern shows how governmental initiatives and public policy, combined with media's depiction of these ideas, play a dual role in influencing society by reinforcing hegemony, while through diversity, allowing new ideas to enter the public imagination and ultimately spark change. This puts more responsibility on the government to continue to create and enforce progressive social initiatives that push society to challenge and question the status quo in search of a more accepting community. However, considering the Brazilian political context of May 2016, following Dilma Rousseff's suspension and Michel Temer's assumption to the presidency, depending on the initiatives and motives

of the political party in power, it remains questionable whether the government will continue to push such initiatives. Nevertheless, an active and engaged population can contribute to the future of cultural, ethnic, and racial representation in media products by demanding more representation through grassroots movements and bottom-up activities that emphasize the voice of the masses, which will provide hope for further social progress.

My second conclusion is that since *telenovelas* seek to reflect the social context in which they are produced and will be received, changes in Brazilian society, perhaps in tandem with the participation of the producers in this context, slowly created more multi-faceted characters that do not follow a single stereotype. *Xica da Silva* presented a strong-willed, but socially disempowered and economically fragile black woman who was portrayed more as a sexual object than a person. In *Duas Caras,* Evilásio and Sabrina slightly challenged that role by demanding respect and equality, regardless of their clichéd depiction as *favelados.* The students' performance in *Malhação* furthered this notion of empowerment by exposing the difficult experiences of black youth in urban Brazil. Even though the characters of color were also typecast as *favelados,* through their performance-protest, students claimed an empowered place in society and used their influence to give visibility to struggles that millions of people of color face every day. These examples lead me to believe that *telenovelas'* depictions of disenfranchised people of color will become increasingly unacceptable to broader audiences, and thus less frequent. Although these changes may not happen quickly, social consciousness will

continue to grow and racism will become less and less tolerated by the majority.

My final and possibly most important conclusion shows that regardless of the ways race is presented in a *telenovela,* viewers' primary interest in viewing these programs is unrelated to racial representation. Both *Xica da Silva* and *Duas Caras* centered their stories around themes of race, but after examining the racially charged YouTube comments left for these two *novelas,* I found that only 12% of the total number of comments were related to race. Of the comments left on *Malhação,* only 1% of the total were racially themed. Although there exists an 11% gap between the comments left on *Xica da Silva/Duas Caras* and *Malhação,* even 12% is marginal.

Overall, these numbers seem to indicate that regardless of the degree of the *novela*'s emphasis on race-related issues, viewers are not overtly decoding content through a racially-focused lens, even though race has the potential to structure their decoding in less-obvious ways. The dominance of character-focused commentary indicates how *telenovelas* use emotion to engage viewers into a storyline. The characterization of protagonists, villains, and bystanders, regardless of race, seem to impact audiences the most; themes extending beyond character relationships seem secondary. This emphasis might help to explain why I encountered so few race-related comments on the over 2000 YouTube comments I analyzed in the thesis. Furthermore, the lack of racial commentary also exemplifies how the myth racial democracy continues to permeate contemporary Brazilian society because people are primed to believe that racism is absent and thus does not need to be challenged, problematized, or

questioned, even though racial meanings are encoded in *all* characters and plots. However, by ignoring the racial prejudice, inequalities, and injustices that people face on a daily basis, "racial democrats" perpetuate the racialized system that empowers whites while marginalizing people of color.

Overall, although the ways audiences have responded to explicit depictions of race in *novelas* have been minimal, one might still cast their response in a positive light. All of the comments posted across the three *novelas* were left from 2007 to the present, in the midst of affirmative action implementation. As society works to assimilate these changes youth culture will also change—as depicted clearly in *Malhação.* As more children are born into an era of affirmative action, popular thinking in Brazilian culture becomes more inclusive and accepting of difference and more children will come to learn that racial equality matters for the progress of their democratic society.

Malhação's depiction of race contrasted radically to depictions in *Xica da Silva* because of the *novela's* focus on contemporary issues, such as educational inequalities, societal exclusion, and police abuse. Generations that grow up in the 2010s will learn to use a different lens to decode television content because of a cultural shift in society that recognizes the importance of racial diversity and equality in media, government, business, among other industries. This assertion may romanticize the change in Brazilian racial culture, but I prefer to be optimistic for a better future than to limit my project to problematizing the status quo.

Considering the responses that I received in my personal interviews, many people seek representations of greater racial equality in their media products. Of

the 36 people interviewed, 24 wished to see more racial diversity implemented by the media. Many commented on the belief that media have the power to shape people's opinions, including by creating more diverse casts and a wider variety of characters. Although no conclusive statements can be made from a sample of 36 people, the interviews do provide some insight into the shared perceptions among viewers in three different cities regarding race representation in the media.

This study raises questions about the importance of racial representation in Brazilian media productions through an interdisciplinary lens that draws from media, cultural, critical race, Latin American, and political studies. This collection of approaches can be seen as the project's strength, but also, perhaps a weakness. Because in this paper I have tried to weave together themes and ideas across various disciplines rather than one particular field, various theories and methodologies impacted my collection and use of data. I recognize that if this thesis had been dedicated to one discipline with a singular methodology, it may have produced results from which one could make larger claims. Nevertheless, these four chapters aim to show that multiple disciplinary angles help us understand the social implications of the texts under study. The political context *does* impact the content, which *does* influence audience perceptions; a contextualized understanding of my topic is thus deepened by multiple disciplinary tools and perspectives.

Finally, this work raises questions that future scholars may seek to answer like: How would audience reception be different if it measured opinions of

television viewers directly, instead of through a third-party site like YouTube? How do political initiatives influence societal perceptions, and vice versa, and what is the impact of those policies? How do class, educational level, and occupation impact the ways viewers decode content related to their correlated class/ educational level/occupation? Are people from lower economic classes more likely to identify with lower class characters and to decode the messages of the content through a lens that supports their own position in society, or through one that contradicts it? This model of study might also be used to advance similar studies related to social change and justice, such as women's roles in Brazilian *telenovelas* and popular culture; the evolution of homosexual representation; or the racial and ethnic representations of other minority groups, such as indigenous or Asian Brazilians. In sum, this thesis explores the role of race in Brazilian media representation out of my desire to deepen discussion about an important topic that very few people in Brazil seem to want to discuss. It seems that the closing of the Ministry of Racial Equality by President Michel Temer on 12 May 2016 now makes this initiative and the questions at its core more urgent than ever.[46]

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[46] After countless protests throughout 2016, on April 17, 2016 the lower house voted to impeach Dilma Rousseff as president. On May 12, 2016, the Senate voted to hold an impeachment trial for Rousseff, suspending her powers for the next 180 days until they go to trial. Her vice president, Michel Temer of the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party, a more conservative and right-wing party, assumed power on May 12. One of his first actions as president included cutting the number of ministries from 32 to 22, as a way to cut governmental expenses. Temer plans to combine Culture with the Education Ministry and eliminate the Human Rights Ministry (in 2015, the Ministry of Racial Equality was usurped by the Ministry of Human Rights) which would become part of a new Justice and Citizenship ministry. For more on this refer to these articles: http://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-politics-cabinet-idUSKCN0Y12KB ; http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/13/world/americas/michel-temer-brazils-interim-president-may-herald-shift-to-the-right.html; http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/13/michel-temer-brazil-president-rebuild-impeachment

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Notes

1. "ciganos, desocupados, e quilombolas, a amedrontar os moradores" "gypsies, unemlployed people, marroons (runaway slaves), that frighten residents" (37, Furtado, translation by KRF).

2. "O centro do povoado se estabelceu em torno da igreja matriz de Santo Antônio, construída em uma praça…" "The center of the town established itself around the plaza where the church of Santo Antônio was located" (38, Furtado, translation by KRF).

3. "A sociedade diamantina tinha os mesmos contornos da capitania e era composta de uma camada expressiva de escravos, outra menor de homens e mulheres libertos, muitos deles pardos, e uma pequena classe dominante branca, em sua maioria portugueses…" "The diamantina society had the same profile of the capital and was composed of an expressive layer of slaves, another smaller of freed men and women, many of them brown (mulato), and a small white ruling class, mostly of Portuguese descent" (43, Furtado)

4. "muitos acumularam bens e se misturaram à sociedade branca e livre do arraial" "many were able to acquire wealth and mixed with the free white society in the town" (44, Furtado, translation by KRF).

5. "O que podemos concluir é que a ex-excrava entrou no mundo dos livres por sua própria conta, sem conexões ou apadrilnhamentos" "What we can conclude is that the ex-slave became free on her own accord, without connections or sponsorships" (57, Furtado, translation by KRF).

6. "O processo de branqueamento étnico e cultural revela não as características democráticas das relações entre as raças, mas as armadilhas sutis por meio das quais se esconde a opressão racial no Brasil" (Furtado, 23)

7. "O contratador vai se arrepender de ter comprado eu. Ele pode até abusar de eu, ele é meu dono" (Xica da Silva, Episode 10).

8. Maria: Você tá querendo ser branca, Tá querendo ser fidalga, eh? Pois nasça de novo,…coisa Saia armada e piruca empoada não muda a pele de ninguém, não Xica!
   Xica: Eu não disse que queria ser branca
   Maria: Mas quer viver como se fosse uma branca (Episode 14)

9. Maria: você tá querendo se branquear. Esqueceu que é preta. Tá pensando que porque tá se deitnando com branco e tá gostando de vos mercê que vai ser o resto da vida assim, mas não. Esse brancos, nós jogam fora, Xica (Episode, 14).

10. José Maria: Não adianta vos mercê comprar vestidos e perucas, mas sempre parecendo uma escrava. Principalmente se viver de pé no chão. Precisa aprender muita coisa, e a primeira é andar de sapatos. Deve também aprender a falar direito, como uma fidalga, não como uma escrava. Deveria também aprender de comer de garfo. Será preciso, Xica (Xica da Silva, Episode 15).

11. Violante: O senhor está enganado, doctor. Falou dos escravos como se fossem iguais a nós. Seu próprio papa reconhece que não são humanos, não sintem dores e sofrimentos como eu e o senhor.
Doctor: Que me conta, senhora violante. Só muda a cor da pele. Já vi a morte de senhores e escravos no exército do meu trabalho. Têm o mesmo sangue vermelho e choraram as mesmas lágrimas…" (Episode 5).

12. Xica: Eu nasci um escrava e nunca pensei em poder ser outra coisa nessa vida. Eu vi muito branco e desejava essa coisa pra eu. Mas agora eu vejo que tudo isso começa a fugir, como fumaça levado pelo vento… (Episode,