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The Tones of Democratic Challenges: Skin  
Color and Race in Mexico

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## Abstract

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*This paper explores people's political attitudes mediated by their perceived skin tone and their own racial identification in Mexico. As a young democracy Mexico's political institutions face many challenges while in the process of democratic consolidation. One of those challenges is the incorporation of every person into the democratic process. Sometimes it is easier to identify possible excluded groups, but sometimes it is harder to do so. In this paper I look at whether people's feeling of representation and inclusion are mediated by their skin tone and/or their racial appearance. In other words, I look at whether people are excluded from the political process because of their phenotypic appearance and/or racial identification in Mexico. Moreover, the paper tests the theories of Social Dominance Approach and System Justification Theory to explain phenotypic relations in Mexico. The data for this paper comes from the Latin American Public Opinion Project 2010 Mexico survey. This survey included measures of: representation, discrimination, skin tone, and racial self-identification. The paper shows that people's skin tone can explain socioeconomic inequalities as well as support for different types of political participation and feelings of representation. It also finds partial, but not full support, for the Social Dominance Approach and System Justification Theory showing the need to build a different theoretical framework to explain the political, social, and economic consequences of phenotypic relations in Mexico.*

## Resumen

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*Este documento explora el efecto del color de piel e identificación racial de las personas en sus actitudes políticas en México. La consolidación democrática de las jóvenes instituciones mexicanas enfrenta diversos retos. Uno de esos retos es la incorporación de todas las personas en el proceso democrático. Algunas veces es fácil identificar a los grupos excluidos del proceso político pero a veces es más difícil. En este documento analizo si el color de piel y/o la identificación racial de los individuos explica qué tan representados se sienten y qué tanto apoyan al sistema político. Asimismo, exploro si teorías que buscan explicar relaciones sociales jerárquicas sirven para entender cómo se relacionan las personas en México mediadas por su tono de piel. Los datos usados para este estudio provienen de la encuesta de México de 2010 del Latin American Public Opinion Project. La encuesta incluye mediciones sobre: representación política, discriminación, tono de piel e identificación racial. El documento muestra que el tono de piel de las personas sirve para explicar la desigualdad socioeconómica, así como apoyo a distintos tipos de participación política y sentimientos de representación.*

*Finalmente, se encuentra algo de evidencia empírica que apoye las teorías de jerarquización y conflicto social discutidas, por lo que se argumenta que se tiene que trabajar en un marco teórico más apropiado para explicar el efecto de los fenotipos en las relaciones económicas, sociales y políticas de las personas en México.*

## *Introduction*

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One of the challenges democracies face is the incorporation of excluded groups into the democratic process. The incorporation of these groups is not only good for normative reasons but for the well-functioning of democratic regimes. Non-democratic challenges are risky for democracies. If actors do not feel part of the democratic system they might seek undemocratic means to fulfill their demands. This is especially true in younger democracies as their institutions might not be strong enough to resist angry challenges from excluded groups. Most of the times it is easy to identify the excluded groups in each polity, but sometimes it is harder to do so.

In this paper I explore the effect that people's racial identification and skin tone have in their attitudes towards the political system in Mexico. Talking about race in Mexico is tricky. First, the majority of Mexicans identify as mestizo,<sup>1</sup> so the common wisdom in Mexican society is that there cannot be discrimination based on someone's racial appearance as everyone belongs to the same group. If some kind of discrimination exists is based on social class. As I have shown somewhere else discrimination based on social class and racial appearance are too closely intertwined, as an individual's racial appearance can predict people's perception of her social class status (2009). Other research has shown that Mexico is socially stratified based on people's skin tone, with darker-skin people placed at the bottom of the scale (Villarreal, 2010).

This paper is a first approach to the study of attitudes and feelings of exclusion based on people's perceived skin tone and racial self-identification in Mexico. In this paper I look at whether theories of social exclusion apply to the case of Mexico by differentiating people by their skin tone and racial identification, and their political attitudes.

### *Democratization and Inclusion in Mexico*

Countries undergoing democratization processes usually suffer great institutional instability that can conduce to violent crisis (Huntington, 1991; Sahin and Linzk, 1995; Tarrow, 1994). As a consequence of such instability countries with clearly divided societies are likely to go through a period of civil unrest during the democratization process (Gurr, 1974; Hegre *et al.*, 2001; Horowitz, 1993). All these authors point out the problems facing newly democratic regimes when trying (or failing) to incorporate previously excluded groups to the democratic process.

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<sup>1</sup> Although the percentage of people identifying with this group has been changing in the last decade, still a large majority of Mexicans identify as mestizos.

The inclusion of everyone in society is not only important for new democracies but it is, many times, important for any kind of government's survival. Take the example of Mexico and most of Latin America. The societies in this region were sharply divided after their independence from Spain and Portugal by castes (*castas*) and socioeconomic differences. One of the challenges these polities faced was staying viable as countries. For purposes of social unity the intellectual and political elites of these countries advanced the "mestizaje" (miscegenation) ideology. Such ideology claimed that most of the population was mestizo, the product of the cultural and biological intermixing of European and indigenous races [i.e. Vasconcelos 1948 (1925)]. Mestizos in many of these countries, and especially in Mexico, became the national emblem; being mestizo meant also being Mexican (Knight, 1990). In that way, the region was able to overcome the divisions created by the castes.

More recent research has questioned the success of mestizaje at overcoming various types of discrimination based on racial appearance or phenotypes (Aguilar Pariente, 2009; Bonfil Batalla, 2000; Gall, 2004; Knight, 1990; Machuca, 1998; Telles and Sue, 2009). The argument is that phenotypes in Mexico matter. People tend to favor European-looking individuals over indigenous-looking ones. This preference can be traced to commercials, TV newscasters, and actors and actresses in soap operas (even those actors playing roles of usually indigenous-looking individuals tend to be more European-looking) (Telles and Flores in press). Looking at the factors that explain people's income level we do find a negative effect of people's skin tone on their income level after controlling for education. These results (see Table 1) show a relationship between darker skin tones and lower levels of income.

TABLE 1. FACTORS EXPLAINING PEOPLE'S INCOME LEVEL

VARIABLES	INCOME
SKIN TONE	-0.144*** 0.037
WHITE	-0.016 0.027
MESTIZO	0.041** 0.021
FEMALE	-0.056*** 0.013
EDUCATION	0.355*** 0.027
AGE	0.000 0.000
CONSTANT	0.300*** 0.041
N	1304
R <sup>2</sup>	0.17

\*\*\* p-value ≤ 0.001; \*\* 0.001 < p-value ≤ 0.05; \* 0.05 < p-value ≤ 0.10

But, if we agree on the unequal treatment of people based in their racial appearance, does people's racial appearance have any political implications? To answer this question I look into two important bodies of literature that speak to the way stereotypes work in dividing societies into groups with an asymmetric distribution of power:

1. *Social Dominance Approach (SDA)*: put forward by Sidanius and Pratto (1999) it argues that society is organized in a hierarchical way by groups that dominate others. The dominating group produces an ideology that justifies their domination and equates it to nationalism. As a consequence, members of dominated groups have a low attachment to the nation as they do not feel identified with it. The authors found evidence of lower patriotic sentiment among African Americans when compared to non-Hispanic whites in the US. The theory did not work as well when taken to Latin America, as the researchers did not find lower feelings of national attachment among members of subordinated groups (blacks in Cuba and Dominican Republic), but sometimes they found a stronger national attachment among members of these groups than among whites (Sidanius *et al.*, 2001). A possible reason for these findings in the Caribbean is that the countries' racial ideologies are more inclusive than the US racial ideology. As explained earlier, these countries tend to incorporate the

majority of the population under a single group that is usually the most relevant group.

2. *System Justification Theory (SJT)*: put forward by Jost, Banaji and Nosek (2004) it agrees with the SDA in that society is hierarchically organized in groups. It differs from the SDA in that members of the dominated groups interiorize the negative stereotypes used to maintain them in a lower social position, and believe that their situation is fair. Examples of relations perpetuated by this theory are gender relations, in which women believe that men are more apt to work and have positions of power than them; or interethnic conflict in which indigenous groups fight among each other when one group disapproves the other when rebelling against a non-indigenous group with more power than them.

These theories seek to explain, and predict, the way social systems with unequal distribution of power maintain themselves. They also want to predict the attitudes of members of these groups. According to the SDA members of oppressed groups should not express national attachment, while according to the SJT members of oppressed groups should support the status quo. As I have mentioned research has shown darker-skinned people in Mexico tend to be significantly in the lower end of the social hierarchy (Villarreal, 2010). If we assume that people with darker skin tone tend, in general, to have more indigenous features than those with less dark skin complexion then we can test the following hypotheses:

- 1) *Darker-skinned people (indigenous people) will tend to feel less attached to their Mexican identity (SDA).*
- 2) *Darker-skinned people (indigenous people) should not favor acts of protest against the government from people who want to complain about their situation more than fairer skin people (whites and mestizos) tend to do it (SJT).*
- 3) *Darker-skinned people (indigenous people) should support acts of rebellion against the government if they perceive it as used by the dominant group to maintain their power (extending on SDA).*

## Data

The data used to test these hypotheses comes from the Americas Barometer Mexico survey, 2010. The survey was conducted among a representative sample of the Mexican population (1,562 people). This data is a good way of testing the hypotheses because it included two different “racial” or “phenotypic” measures: it asked respondents for their identification with a

racial group (six in total), and the interviewer rated the respondents' skin tone based on a 10-category color palette. It is interesting to see that there is not a clear pattern of skin tone and racial self-identification.

**TABLE 2. RACIAL SELF-IDENTIFICATION BY SKIN TONE**

	FAIREST SKIN TONE	0.13	0.25	0.38	0.5	0.63	0.75	0.88	DARKEST SKIN TONE	TOTAL
WHITE	10.89%	29.44%	31.05%	15.73%	9.68%	2.42%	0.40%	0.40%		100.0%
	69.23%	45.63%	23.48%	9.82%	9.13%	3.26%	1.61%	4.55%		17.0%
MESTIZO	1.13%	8.11%	21.77%	31.10%	18.19%	14.04%	4.43%	1.13%	0.09%	100.0%
	30.77%	53.75%	70.43%	83.12%	73.38%	80.98%	75.81%	54.55%	50.00%	72.8%
INDIGENOUS			12.05%	19.28%	26.51%	24.10%	9.64%	8.43%		100.0%
			3.05%	4.03%	8.37%	10.87%	12.90%	31.82%		5.7%
BLACK/ MULATTO/OTHER		1.54%	15.38%	18.46%	36.92%	13.85%	9.23%	3.08%	1.54%	100.0%
		0.63%	3.05%	3.02%	9.13%	4.89%	9.68%	9.09%	50.00%	4.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	2.68%	10.98%	22.51%	27.25%	18.05%	12.63%	4.26%	1.51%	0.14%	100.0%

Table 2 shows that people with fair skin tend to identify either as white or mestizo, and of those who identify as indigenous the majority are located in the middle of the skin color scale.

The survey also asked a series of questions related to people's experience with discrimination, attachment to the country, trust and pride with the political system, etc. I looked at responses to inquires about people's views of acceptable and not-acceptable political participation, trust and pride of the political system, people's experiencing and witnessing acts of discrimination, the role of government in the economic sector, and people's experience with extortion on part of the authorities.

The questions I am using as dependent variables for the analysis are the following:

1. *Proud of being Mexican: this is a 7-point scale variable bounded between 0 and 1, where 0 means not proud at all and 1 means been very proud.*
  - 1.1. *Expectation: Following the SDA one would expect that people with darker skin and indigenous people should not feel proud of being Mexicans, as they perceive a national ideology that excludes and oppresses them.*
2. *Discrimination: surveyed individuals answered whether they had suffered any discrimination because of: their way of speaking or their accent, their skin tone, their gender, or their socioeconomic status. In the same way, they also reported whether they had witnessed some case of discrimination based on these issues against other person.*

A factor analysis (FA) showed that these sets of questions mapped on two different dimensions: one of having experienced discrimination, and the other of having witnessed discriminating acts against someone else.<sup>2</sup> The only variable that did not strongly relate to these dimensions is the question related to having experience gender discrimination. This might be due to the fact that just a few respondents expressed having experienced such discrimination (140 respondents). This question is excluded from the analysis. The Cronbach alpha for the questions measuring personal experience with acts of discrimination is 0.69, while for the questions about having witnessed some kind of discrimination the alpha is 0.86 showing strong reliability for these two scales. Thus, I created two scales by averaging the values of the relevant questions in each area only including those respondents who at least answered half of the questions. I also used the question of having experienced discrimination based on their skin color as a dependent variable on its own. It is a 4-point scale variable bounded between 0 and 1 where 0 means not having experienced any discrimination at all, and 1 having experienced a lot.

*2.1 Expectations: people with darker skin tone and indigenous people should report having suffered discrimination, and having witnessed discrimination based on their skin tone. Of course, if we follow the SJT approach these respondents could believe that they deserve being discriminated against, and they might not report any discrimination at all.*

*3. Experienced extortion: People answered whether they had been asked to give any bribes to the police, public servants, to their employers, to the local authorities when (dealing with them), to the judicial system, to anyone in the public health system, and to their children's school authorities. The Cronbach alpha for these questions is 0.73. The scale measuring extortion is composed by the average of all the questions aforementioned.*

*3.1. Expectation: authorities should feel more comfortable extorting people who are more disadvantaged, as the probabilities of being punished for such act will diminish in direct correlation with the social status of the person been extorted. So, darker-skinned and indigenous people should report having been victims of extortion more than others.*

*4. Ruling elites care for what people like me think: this question aims to measure whether people believe their interests are well represented by the elites in power. This is an approach to look at whether people feel identified with the government.*

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<sup>2</sup> All the FA results are available upon request.

- 4.1. *Expectations: extending on the SDA people who are subordinated should not feel represented by the ruling elites. Thus, there should be a significant and negative effect for darker-skinned and indigenous respondents.*
  
5. *Opinion on protests and participation: Some questions asked people's views of other individual engaging in legal and illegal actions to protest against the government. These two sets of questions do map on two different dimensions (according to a FA). One set of questions is composed by questions on whether people support the following means of protesting: (1) closing highways and roads; (2) invading private property; and (3) using violent means to take over the government. The questions related to participation are: support for people's participation in legal protests; support for people's trying to solve problems in their community through involvement in a community organization; and campaigning for a candidate or a political party. The Cronbach alpha for the questions on illegal protest is 0.74, while for the questions on participation is 0.68.*
  - 5.1. *Expectations: Extending on the SDA dark-skinned and indigenous respondents should tend to support more illegal means of protesting than other respondents. This difference is due because the former consider they are not properly included into the nation, and they are cognizant of their disadvantage. The SJT would predict that dark-skinned and indigenous respondents would not favor more illegal means of demonstrations than others because they feel their situation is fair. In terms of regular means of political participation, the SDA would predict oppressed people would tend not to participate while we should not find differences according to their identification and appearance according to the SJT.*
  
6. *Trust and pride in the institutions: respondents reported their level of trust on the following institutions: the judicial system in general, Supreme Court of Justice, electoral institute (IFE), elections, army, congress, federal government, police, political parties, president, municipality, federal attorney office (PGR), and media. They also reported their level of trust in government procedures and level of pride in its institutions. These questions are: (1) feeling proud of living under the Mexican political system; (2) respect for Mexican political institutions; (3) protection of people's basic rights by the Mexican political system; (4) level of support for the Mexican political system; and (5) likelihood of people receiving a fair trial in Mexico's tribunals. All these questions exhibit good levels of reliability with a Cronbach alpha of 0.93.*

*6.1.Expectations: According to SDA low status respondents should not trust or feel proud of the political institutions as they not only do not help them but legitimize the status quo.*

*7. State intervention in the economy: respondents answered to a series of questions regarding the desirability of state intervention in different areas of the economy. Factor analysis shows that these questions mapped two different dimensions. One dimension is state intervention on specific welfare issues like: paying for health care, taking care of pensions, create jobs, and fighting economic inequality. The other dimension has to do with the state ownership of enterprises key for the national interest and being responsible of people's general wellbeing. The Cronbach alpha of the first set of questions is 0.76; and the alpha for the second set of questions is 0.44.*

*7.1.Expectations: Extending on the SDA subordinated people should not trust the government so they should not want the government to intervene in the economy. An alternative expectation, extending on the SJT, is that low status individuals would favor government's intervention in the economy with the hope of improving their status.*

## *Analysis*

I ran multiple regressions to look into the independent effect of skin tone and racial identification on these dependent variables. The independent variables in the models are:

Skin tone: at the end of the survey interviewers rated the skin tone of the respondents looking at a palette of 10 different tones. The lowest value corresponds to the fairest tone and the highest value corresponds to the darkest tone. The recoded scale takes the value of 0 for the lowest tone and 1 for the darkest one.

Racial identity: respondents had six choices when asked to identify with a group: white, mestizo, indigenous, mulatto, black, and other. I created dummy variables for each category collapsing the last three categories (mulatto, black, and other) with the indigenous one as those three had too few respondents (65). For the analysis the excluded category is indigenous.

Ideology: ideology is a ten-category variable bounded between 0 and 1 where 0 means left and 1 means right. This variable is only introduced in the models with political dependent variables.

Female: takes the value of 1 for female respondents and 0 otherwise.

Education: education is an 18-point scale bounded between 0 and 1 where 0 is no-education at all and 1 is postgraduate education.

**Income:** income is a ten-point scale bounded between 0 and 1 where 0 means zero family income and 1 means more than \$13,500 Mexican pesos of family income.

**Age:** age is a continuous variable for respondents' age.

### Results

For purposes of saving space, I only report the results for the models in which any of the variables of interest (skin tone and racial identification) came out statistically significant.

First, I look into the variables that could explain a feeling of exclusion from part of the respondents, both in terms of society and the political system. The results are shown in Table 3.

**TABLE 3. EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION AND IDENTIFICATION WITH THE POLITICAL SYSTEM**

	SUFFERED DISCRIMINATION, SKIN COLOR	SUFFERED DISCRIMINATION	DISCRIMINATION TO OTHERS	VICTIM OF EXTORTION	ELITE
SKIN TONE	0.157*** 0.042	0.279*** 0.088	-0.098	0.043*	-0.104*
WHITE	-0.091*** 0.026	-0.259*** 0.064	-0.270** 0.146	0.026*	0.025 0.04
MESTIZO	-0.066*** 0.021	-0.226*** 0.051	-0.036 0.085	0.019 0.013	- 0.032
IDEOLOGY	***	***	***	***	0.211*** 0.037
FEMALE	-0.006 0.012	-0.043 0.031	-0.021 0.051	-0.050*** 0.008	0.007 0.019
EDUCATION	-0.010 0.030	-0.099 0.076	0.665*** 0.126	0.069*** 0.019	- 0.121*** 0.047
INCOME	-0.022 0.027	-0.155** 0.067	0.131 0.110	0.041*** 0.017	-0.039 0.041
	SUFFERED DISCRIMINATION, SKIN COLOR	SUFFERED DISCRIMINATION	DISCRIMINATION TO OTHERS	VICTIM OF EXTORTION	ELITE
AGE	-0.001 0.000	-0.003*** 0.001	-0.004** 0.002	0.000** 0.000	0.000 0.001
CONSTANT	0.157*** 0.042	3.305*** 0.109	2.983*** 0.165	0.054** 0.025	0.563*** 0.062
N	1137	1304	1304	1304	1123
R <sup>2</sup>	0.03	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.06

\*\*\* p-value ≤ 0.001; \*\* 0.001 < p-value ≤ 0.05; \* 0.05 < p-value ≤ 0.10

These results show effects for these variables if we look at both respondents' skin tone and group identification. First, people with darker skin tone (regardless of their racial identity) report having been discriminated against in general and based on their skin tone. At the same time these respondents believe the ruling elites do not care for what people like them think. Second, people who identify as white are less likely to report having suffered

discrimination and witnessed anyone been discriminated against, when compared to people who identify as indigenous. The majority of the subjects, those who identify as mestizos, also are less likely to report having suffered discrimination, but they also believe that the ruling elites do not care for what they think when compared to indigenous individuals. As individuals identify more with the political right they tend to think their interests are well represented by the ruling elites. Both people who identify as white and those with darker skin reported having been victims of extortion, the latter at a higher rate than the former. These results confirm the expectations outlined before: darker-skinned and indigenous people report having been discriminated against, while only indigenous people report having witnessed discriminatory acts when compared to whites.

Now, let's look at some of the actions and opinions that people have depending on their skin tone and racial identification.<sup>3</sup>

TABLE 4. ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND NATIONALITY

	PROTEST	STATE INTERVENTION IN KEY IND/WELLBEING	TRUST/PRIDE	PROUD OF BEING MEXICAN
SKIN TONE	<b>0.082***</b> 0.030	<b>0.119***</b> 0.041	0.025 -0.032	<b>0.087***</b> 0.028
WHITE	-0.004 0.022	0.018 0.030	<b>0.064***</b> 0.023	0.022 0.020
MESTIZO	<b>-0.051***</b> 0.017	-0.006 0.024	0.021 0.019	0.005 0.016
IDEOLOGY	-0.027 0.020	-0.028 0.270	<b>0.179***</b> 0.02	0.026 0.018
FEMALE	0.003 0.010	-0.019 0.014	0.010 0.011	0.009 0.010
EDUCATION	0.107*** 0.026	-0.059* 0.036	-0.051* 0.027	-0.050** 0.024
INCOME	0.004 0.023	-0.05 0.031	-0.024 0.024	-0.011 0.021
AGE	0.001*** 0.000	0.001 0.001	0.000 0.000	0.000 0.000
CONSTANT	0.380*** 0.034	0.613*** 0.047	0.443*** 0.037	0.892*** 0.032
N	1123	1131	1132	1137
R <sup>2</sup>	0.05	0.03	0.09	0.03

\*\*\* p-value ≤ 0.001; \*\* 0.001 < p-value ≤ 0.05; \* 0.05 < p-value ≤ 0.10

The results in Table 4 show that people with darker skin tone tend to support unconventional actions of protest against the government (invading private property, closing highways or streets, using violence to take over the government, etc.) At the same time they also favor more state intervention in key enterprises and think the government is responsible for people's overall wellbeing, contrary to the expectation derived from the SDA. Those

<sup>3</sup> I looked into past and future voting behavior and none of the variables of interest came out statistically significant.

respondents who identify as white tend to be proud of the political system and to trust political institutions to protect people's rights when compared to indigenous individuals. Mestizos tend not to favor acts of illegal protest when compared to indigenous individuals. Darker-skinned people tend to be proud of being Mexicans, contrary to the SDA expectation. Finally, as people identify more to the right of the political spectrum they tend to be more proud and trust more Mexican political institutions. These results are mixed in terms of confirming the expectations mentioned before. First, contrary to expectations darker-skinned people exhibit greater pride of being Mexicans, and there is no effect of skin tone in the level of pride and trust for the political institutions. Indigenous people tend to posit less trust and be less proud of the political institutions than whites, but there is no difference among any racial group on their level of pride of being Mexicans. Finally, darker-skinned and indigenous individuals do support illegal actions of protest against the government.

## *Discussion and Conclusions*

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This paper explores and tests the effect of skin tone and racial self-identification on people's political attitudes and beliefs. I discussed two different theories that aim to explain societal conflict looking into society through the lenses of group conflict. First, social dominance approach argues that society is divided by a group that dominates other groups. The former uses national ideology to justify the control over the latter who, in turn, do not feel attached to their nation as they feel excluded from it. The other theory is system justification theory which argues that, contrary to SDA, members of subordinated groups believe that their situation is fair and justified. Based on previous research that shows Mexican society organized in a hierarchical manner based on skin tone (Villarreal, 2010), I argued that darker-skinned individuals and indigenous people are at the bottom of the social hierarchy and subordinated to fairer-skinned people, whites and mestizos.

The analysis in this paper<sup>4</sup> has shown that none of the theories apply completely to the Mexican case. There is evidence that shows a feeling of exclusion from society and the political system on part of darker-skinned and indigenous individuals. At the same time, darker-skinned people feel more proud of being Mexicans than those with fairer complexions. They also support more state intervention in the economy to promote people's general wellbeing and state control of key national industries. If the SDA applied entirely darker-skinned and indigenous people would not feel proud of being Mexicans and would not endorse state intervention in the economy. This theory would predict these individuals' rejection of the political system and support for the use of illegal means to protest state actions. The findings in this paper show exactly that: darker-skinned and indigenous people (when compared to mestizos) believe the ruling elites do not take into consideration their interests and support illegal means to protest against the government.

These preliminary results show the relevance of skin tone and racial self-identification on people's feelings and attitudes towards Mexico's political system. Future research has to look into who are the people who identify as white, mestizo, and indigenous; what is the relationship between skin tone and racial self-identification. From these findings we learn that these two usually unproblematized issues (skin tone and racial attachment) matter for people's political behavior and attitudes in Mexico. One of the many challenges Mexico faces as a young democracy is the incorporation of excluded individuals into the system, but first we have to acknowledge and study their exclusion.

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<sup>4</sup> This paper is only a first attempt to understand and explore this phenomenon.

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