Lissa covers an array of important issues in contemporary Egypt in a way that is thorough, accessible, and humanistic. It is a good book to assign in introductory courses in anthropology as well as other visually themed courses. Yet, to follow the story’s arguments requires a visual literacy that is not needed for traditional articles. For that reason, the book includes teaching materials, which include an essay that provides direction for the first-time comics reader, a short piece on graphic novels as ethnography, an interview with the authors, a teaching guide with questions, and further bibliographic resources. Not only does Lissa pave the way to new avenues of disseminating ethnographic research, it ensures that those reading and teaching the novel find it accessible and engaging.

Nama Khalil


In The Politics of Blackness: Racial Identity and Political Behavior in Contemporary Brazil, Gladys Mitchell-Walthour seeks to explain Afro-Brazilian political behavior and political inequality in the cities of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Salvador. These cities are among the largest in Brazil that have significant Afro-Brazilian populations. Even so, distinctions among them that relate to income inequality, racial composition, and racial politics allow for a dynamic comparison of Afro-Brazilian experiences and how these experiences, in turn, inform political opinions. Mitchell-Walthour centers racial group attachment and experience of racial discrimination to demonstrate variations in political behavior among Afro-Brazilians using the Latin American Political Opinion Project national surveys for 2010 and 2012 (LAPOP) and original survey data that she collected in 2005–6 and 2008. She also relies on in-depth interviews that she conducted in 2012 (32).

The opening pages of The Politics of Blackness guide readers through some of the complexities of race in contemporary Brazil. Importantly, Mitchell-Walthour lays out three aspects of color—social status, physical characteristics, and gender—that are central to the Brazilian context. She also situates her work within the current and existing scholarship on Afro-Brazilians and race among scholars such as Tianna S. Paschel, Keisha-Khan Perry, and Alexandre Emboaba Costa. Her own work adds nuance to understandings of race in Brazil and places the experience of race as central to her arguments on political inequality and racial discourse. The Politics of Blackness demonstrates the importance of prioritizing intersectional experiences in conjunction with skin color to understand political behavior and political outcomes, particularly in countries that have recently passed through both democratic and authoritarian regimes.

In chapter 1, “Afro-Brazilian Political Underrepresentation,” Mitchell-Walthour is concerned with how Afro-Brazilians explain political underrepresentation and social exclusion of Afro-Brazilians in spaces that are perceived as being white spaces. Even
though Afro-Brazilians make up 53 percent of the national population, they are not equally represented in the National Congress (47). Racism, social exclusion, and the legacy of slavery are among the reasons cited by Afro-Brazilian respondents as explanations for political underrepresentation. Given that these responses did not hold equal weight for all Afro-Brazilian respondents, Mitchell-Walthour argues that it is not enough to consider variables of race and color identification when studying political behavior. Instead, she asserts that class and gender must also be taken into account.

In chapters 2 and 3, “Blackness and Racial Identification in Contemporary Brazil” and “Negro Group Attachment in Brazil,” Mitchell-Walthour argues that racial identification is linked to experience, and experiences of racial discrimination are key to black-linked fate and racial group attachment in black political behavior. Although 53 percent of Brazilians are of African descent, this does not mean that all Afro-Brazilians identify as black. The author explains that people who claim black identity become black after an experience with racism or exclusion. It is then that they exhibit a sense of black-linked fate in their political positioning. In this discussion, the author also incorporates the ways in which skin color, hairstyle, class, education, and gender point to differences in the experiences of Afro-Brazilians, who hold physical appearance in high regard due to racial discrimination.

In her interrogation of black-linked fate in chapter 3, Mitchell-Walthour argues that there are strong links between skin color and social status that impact self-identification and racial group attachment. For instance, despite having the largest black and brown population, São Paulo had the highest number of survey respondents to express no connection with black-linked fate. Mitchell-Walthour states that most of her respondents in São Paulo were low-income and, thus, distanced themselves from black identity due to the importance of class and social status in Brazil. Although São Paulo has the highest average monthly salary among all racial groups among the cities studied, white Brazilians make over two times the salary of Afro-Brazilians. Furthermore, most Afro-Brazilians live on the periphery of São Paulo, which complicates access to economic opportunities (58). The evidence that *The Politics of Blackness* provides on the complexities between exclusion and discrimination, access to economic opportunities, income inequality, and political underrepresentation marks São Paulo as an intriguing location for future research on race and political behavior including black-linked fate.

In the final two chapters, Mitchell-Walthour investigates increased racial awareness of Afro-descendants in countries that have recently enacted affirmative action policies. She finds that black-linked fate is a powerful predictor of Afro-Brazilian’s support of affirmative action, teaching culture in schools, and a president’s nomination of black people to political office in Brazil. In both the Brazilian case and in the selected Latin American countries from the LAPOP survey, she finds that higher education levels lead to a decrease in support of affirmative action by Afro-descendants. Apart from the fact that many of her other findings on affirmative action in Latin America contradicted her findings in Brazil, it would be helpful to have more insight as to what can be learned and expanded upon from the finding that was held in common.
As Gladys Mitchell-Walthour makes clear in the conclusion of *The Politics of Blackness*, the current political climate threatens the continuance of race-based programs in Brazil. According to the author, some black activists understand the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2016 in racialized terms and assert that Dilma’s impeachment was a *coup d’etat* due to the political motivations of Michel Temer, who replaced her when she was subsequently removed from office. Prior to Rousseff’s impeachment, the Brazilian media aired debates as to whether or not the cash program *Bolsa Família*, which began under Lula (president from 2003–10) and continued under Rousseff, was a form of clientelism. Mitchell-Walthour contends that the media depicted *Bolsa Família* recipients as lazy and desirous of government handouts. Undoubtedly, millions of Afro-Brazilian families benefited from *Bolsa Família* programs. The Brazilian media perpetuated the idea that Rousseff was re-elected as a result of votes from *Bolsa Família* recipients. The outcomes of the *Bolsa Família* program for Afro-Brazilians, Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment, and the election of an extreme right-wing president in 2018 national elections might prove to be a fruitful site for future studies on Afro-Brazilian political behavior and the impact of extreme right-wing politics on racial programs.

*The Politics of Blackness* is a significant and well-researched book for scholars who focus on race, politics, political representation, and national elections. The richness of Gladys Mitchell-Walthour’s findings come not just from the diversity of survey data, but also from her mixed-methods approach and her cogent ability to convey the intricacies of racial identity in everyday contexts. *The Politics of Blackness* not only provides rich and important information on racial dynamics and the social, economic, and political contexts in Brazil and Latin America, but it does so in a way that makes this work both critical and legible across multiple disciplines.

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Since Trayvon Martin was murdered by citizen-vigilante George Zimmerman in February 2012, young Black Americans around the country and comrades in countries around the world have been rallying and organizing for Black liberation in the United States. Such fights, often led by young queer Black women, are rarely destined to be archived in the annals of history—the stories, lives, and experiences of young Black Americans and African-descendant people are frequently erased or co-opted by those with more power, access, and privilege. In *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements*, Charlene Carruthers, the founding national director of Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100), a membership-based activist organization of young Black Americans ages 18 to 35, writes against that current by centering the accounts and choices of young Black Americans during the early moments of the Black Lives Matter Movement.