

# Who Benefits Matters: Social Affinity and Political Backlash in Brazil

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## Abstract

Existing research demonstrates that members of majority groups often punish politicians at the ballot box when they perceive relative deprivation as a function of minority improvement. However, this literature largely treats minorities as a homogeneous category, ignoring meaningful differences in how different groups shape political behavior. I contend that minority groups provoke different levels of perceived deprivation among majority members depending on the degree of social affinity they elicit. High levels of affinity foster parochial altruism within the majority, which tempers political backlash, whereas low levels of affinity produce stronger reaction. I evaluate this argument using a difference-in-differences design that leverages the staggered creation of policy councils supporting various minority groups in Brazil. The findings show consistent with relevant heterogeneity: policies directed at ethnic minorities—such as Afro-Brazilians and Indigenous peoples—lead to stronger electoral punishment than policies aimed at women. These results underscore how differential social perceptions condition the political viability of minority-focused policies.

**Keywords:** Minorities | Political behavior | Relative Deprivation | Brazilian politics

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Around the world, governments have adopted more policies benefiting minority groups with the goal of changing a status quo that has traditionally benefited the majority. Scholars in political psychology and political economy have shown that perceptions of a narrowing socio-economic gap with minority groups lead members of the majority to electorally sanction the political establishment ([Ballard-Rosa, Jensen, and Scheve, 2022](#); [Gest, Reny, and Mayer, 2018](#)). One central explanation for this backlash is relative deprivation, a psychological mechanism whereby individuals perceive themselves or their group as losing status relative to another group for reasons they view as unfair ([Smith et al., 2012](#)). The recent socio-economic improvement of the minority group triggers a sense of relative deprivation among members of the majority, resulting in anti-establishment political behavior. [Bustikova \(2014\)](#), for example, shows electoral punishment towards governments favorable to ethnic minorities in post-communist countries. Similarly, the rise of the Tea Party has been attributed to the election of Barack Obama and the expansion of gay and lesbian rights. ([Barreto et al., 2011](#)). [Samuels, Mello, and Zucco \(2024\)](#) also argues that efforts to reduce racial, gender, and social inequality fueled electoral support for Jair Bolsonaro.

This literature treats minorities as a single and homogeneous category and, in doing so, overlooks potentially relevant differences. However, minorities—defined as groups that do not receive equal treatment from the state ([Mukand and Rodrik, 2020](#))—pursue distinct political objectives that challenge the status quo in different ways. For example, the legalization of same-sex marriage and the implementation of racial quotas at universities challenge majority privileges, but their effects on the majority group are markedly different.

In this article, I argue that the majority reaction to policies favoring minorities stems from perceptions of unfair privileged treatment, but that these perceptions vary across minority

groups, producing heterogeneous effects on majority political behavior. Previous research has shown that support for policies depends on whether they are perceived as necessary and whether the beneficiaries are viewed as free riding (Cavaille, 2023; Mijs, 2021). These perceptions of fairness are shaped by social affinity toward the recipient group. Greater affinity harbors social identification, which in turn generates parochial altruism—extended only to groups with whom individuals identify (Fowler and Kam, 2007; Lupu and Pontusson, 2011).

I evaluate this argument by leveraging the staggered creation of municipal councils that promote minority policies in Brazil. These councils were created after Brazil’s redemocratization, and their goal was to promote policies and civil society participation of different minority groups. My focus is on councils for women and ethnic minorities. I assess the impact of their creation on the Workers’ Party (PT) voting share in the presidential election. The choice to focus on the PT is threefold. First, PT is the strongest Brazilian party (Klašnja and Titiunik, 2017; Samuels and Zucco, 2018). Second, it held the presidency for most of the period analyzed. Finally, the PT historically supports those councils (Magalhães, 1999).

Using a difference-in-difference empirical strategy, results show that the establishment of councils for ethnic minorities, a minority group not represented across social classes, triggers a higher electoral punishment of the PT. In contrast, the creation of councils for women, groups more uniformly distributed across socioeconomic status, produces a lower negative electoral response. The results indicate the existence of a relevant difference across minority groups.

This study contributes to the literature on the political effects of relative deprivation.

This research shows that there is no monolithic response to minority gains—rather, voters evaluate beneficiary characteristics separately. Regarding policies, the findings challenge fatalistic views suggesting that measures benefiting minorities inevitably increase political outsiders’ appeal, and instead highlight that promoting equality can be compatible with limiting the majority’s negative reaction. At the same time, however, the results emphasize the danger that policymakers may marginalize minorities who are also more frequently linked with lower socioeconomic status. Finally, the results reinforce the importance of socio-cultural issues in shaping voters’ preferences, even in unequal, developing countries such as Brazil.

## The Impact of Social Affinity on Relative Deprivation

I follow [Mukand and Rodrik \(2020\)](#) definition of majority and minority. In a democracy, the latter is the groups within the population that do not have equal treatment by the state, commonly guaranteed through civil rights,<sup>1</sup> while the former is the group that has political power by selecting the elected officials. Consequently, the majority and minority are not necessarily linked with their proportion in the population.<sup>2</sup>

A growing body of research argues that voters of the majority group punish the political establishment when they perceive a loss of status relative to minority groups ([Alesina and Tabellini, 2022](#); [Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014](#); [Rodrik, 2018](#); [Turnbull-Dugarte, López Ortega, and Hunklinger, 2025](#)). This reaction is commonly explained through relative deprivation: individuals experience grievance when they believe their group is becoming worse off

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<sup>1</sup>Civil rights are understood as “equality before the law as well as non-discrimination in the provision of public goods such as justice, security, education and health” ([Mukand and Rodrik, 2020](#), 766).

<sup>2</sup>The most egregious example is Apartheid-era South Africa, where the white population was the majority.

compared to another group in ways that are perceived as unfair (Smith et al., 2012). Policies that explicitly benefit minorities can, therefore, trigger backlash when majority members interpret them as privileged treatment. Existing accounts, however, implicitly treat minorities as a homogeneous category. They assume that the political consequences of relative deprivation are similar regardless of which minority group is the beneficiary (see, for example, Burgoon et al., 2019; Norris and Inglehart, 2019).

Relative deprivation requires not only comparison but also a judgment of unfairness (Smith et al., 2012). Such fairness evaluations depend on whether the beneficiaries are perceived as free riders who are taking advantage of the system (Cavallé, 2023). I propose that social affinity shape majority’s perception of policies toward minority groups. While social identity explains in-group biases (Fowler and Kam, 2007; Lupu and Pontusson, 2011; Luttmer, 2001; Shayo, 2009), I refer to social affinity as a process that reduces out-group negative bias. When social affinity exists, individuals are more likely to extend concern and perceive benefits as legitimate. When affinity is low, benefits are more easily interpreted as undeserved privilege. In this sense, social affinity also gives rise to a form of parochial altruism (Fowler and Kam, 2007): individuals express solidarity—albeit to a lesser extent than their own groups—toward groups with which they feel a sense of social affinity. Ultimately, this process of developing social affinity with some minority groups reduces the majority’s inclination to punish the political establishment for promoting policies that benefit the minorities they favor.

I argue that minority groups that are more evenly distributed across social classes are better positioned to generate affinity with majority members. Cross-class distribution increases the likelihood of social contact and shared social spaces, whether through personal

interaction (Allport, Clark, and Pettigrew, 1954; Dinesen, Schaeffer, and Sønderskov, 2020; Scacco and Warren, 2018) or parasocial interaction through symbolic representation in elite institutions and media (Alrababa’H et al., 2021). In contrast, minority groups that are disproportionately concentrated in lower socioeconomic strata are less likely to generate identification among majority members.

This difference has clear political consequences. When policies favor minorities that elicit higher social affinity, majority group members are less likely to perceive such policies as unfair and therefore less likely to punish the governing party. In contrast, when policies benefit minorities that are strongly associated with lower socioeconomic status—a group that fosters low affinity, perceptions of unfair privilege intensify, and electoral backlash becomes more likely and stronger.

## Research design

After redemocratization,<sup>3</sup> Brazil’s new institutional system consolidated a legal framework that promotes civil society participation (*Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil*, art CCXIV, § 2). This legal framework resulted in the creation of councils to address minorities’ concerns. These councils vary by topic and whether they are nationwide, statewide, or municipal. In general, the councils were established at the national level, and the states and municipalities follow suit. The role of the councils ranges from solely advisory to a more substantive policy-making role of supervising, deliberating, and implementing public policy. To test my hypothesis, policies favoring minorities that elicit low (high) social affinity will be more (less) likely to punish the political establishment, I leverage the variation in the

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<sup>3</sup>Brazil’s redemocratization occurred in 1985. The new constitution was approved in 1988.

implementation of municipal councils for minorities in Brazil.<sup>4</sup>

Municipalities have incentives to establish these councils because doing so facilitates access to federal funds. For example, the *Sistema Nacional de Promoção da Igualdade Racial* [National System for the Promotion of Racial Equality] (SINAPIR) grants preferential access to funds to municipalities that join the system through a racial equality council ([Ministério dos Direitos Humanos, 2018](#)). These federal transfers are earmarked for programs benefiting the corresponding minority groups, creating a direct connection between council establishment and minority-targeted policies. The effect of these policies, however, is challenging to assess due to the lack of measurements of the effect of those policies. Nevertheless, as Table 1 shows, the overwhelming majority of councils operate with some form of institutional support from the municipalities and are structured to include substantive participation from civil society. These factors indicate that the councils themselves can affect minority outcomes by institutionalizing civil society participation and empowering grassroots organizations that act on behalf of the targeted groups. For this reason, I contend that, all else equal, the creation of these councils increases both the number and the effectiveness of policies directed at the relevant minorities.

In this research, I focus on the creation of councils that promote policies in favor of women, as a minority group with cross-class representation, and ethnic minorities (Afro-Brazilian or Indigenous), a minority group consistently associated with lower socioeconomic status (see, for example, [Kustov and Pardelli, 2018](#)).<sup>5</sup> Figure 1 shows the proportion of

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<sup>4</sup>Appendix 1 has the distribution of council creation by year and region.

<sup>5</sup>In total, the data collected were about the following councils: Conselho municipal de direitos da mulher [Municipal Council on Women's Rights], Conselho Municipal de Direitos de Lésbicas, Gays, Bissexuais, Travestis e Transexuais [Municipal Council on Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, *Travestis*, and Transsexuals' Rights], Conselho Municipal de Igualdade Racial [Municipal Council on Racial Equality], and Conselho Municipal dos Povos e Comunidades Tradicionais [Municipal Council on Traditional People and Communities]. I combine

Table 1: Council’s Structure and Organization

| <b>Municipality</b>                           |     | <b>Women Council</b> | <b>Ethnic Council</b> |
|---|-----|----------------------|-----------------------|
|   |     |                      |                       |
| <b>Provide any Structure for the Councils</b> | No  | 178                  | 43                    |
|   | Yes | 1074                 | 384                   |

Continued on next page

Table 1: Council’s Structure and Organization (Continued)

| <b>Council’s Organization</b> |                                     | <b>Women Council</b> | <b>Ethnic Council</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|                               |                                     | Equal Participation  | 1121                  |
|                               | Greater civil Society Participation | 90                   | 38                    |
|                               | Greater Government Participation    | 41                   | 13                    |

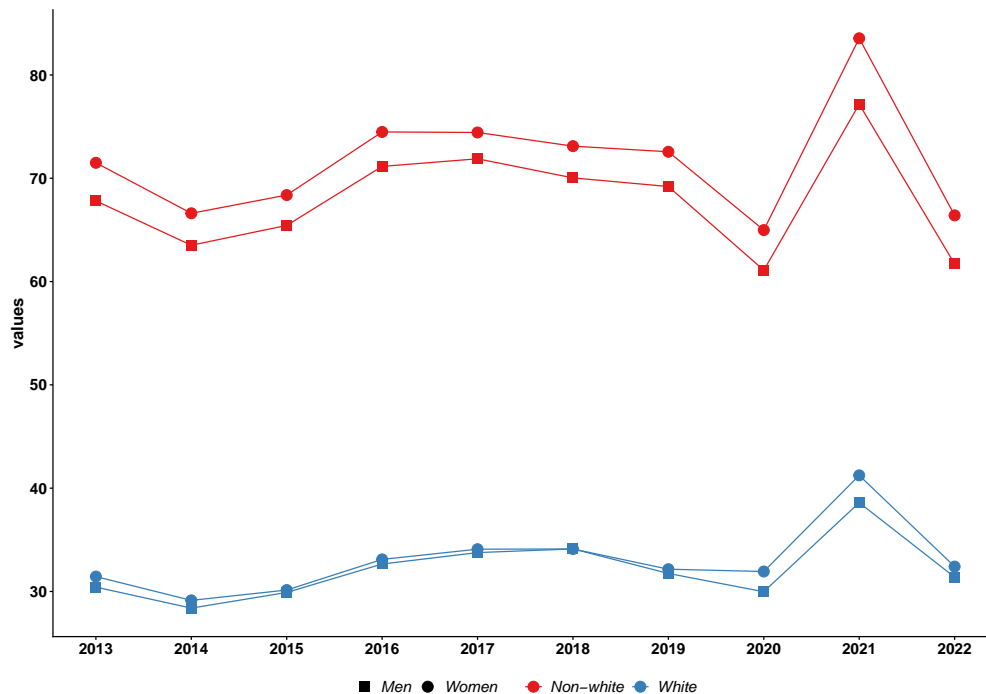
*Note:* Data from the IBGE/MUNIC, available at <https://www.ibge.gov.br/pesquisa-de-informacoes-basicas-municipais.html>. Infrastructure is providing at least one of the following: room, computer, printer, access to the internet, vehicle, telephone, travel costs, council’s has a budget, and transportation. Participation refers to the number of members in the council that are part of the the municipal government or civil society.

white and non-white men and women who live with less than US\$ 6.85 (PPP 2017) per day. Unsurprisingly, there is a gender gap; men earn more than women. In most years, both white and non-white women receive less than their male counterparts. However, the difference for race are markedly more important. A substantially lower proportion of white women earn less than US\$ 6.85 than black men (the means are 32.98% and 67.90%, respectively). The proportion of the non-white population that manages to earn more than US\$6.85 is never below 61%. This difference highlights the high correlation between wealth and race in Brazil (Kustov and Pardelli, 2018).

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the last two councils as the councils related to ethnic minorities due to the sample size.

Figure 1: Proportion of Men and Women Earning Less than US\$ 6.85 (PPP 2017) by Year and race



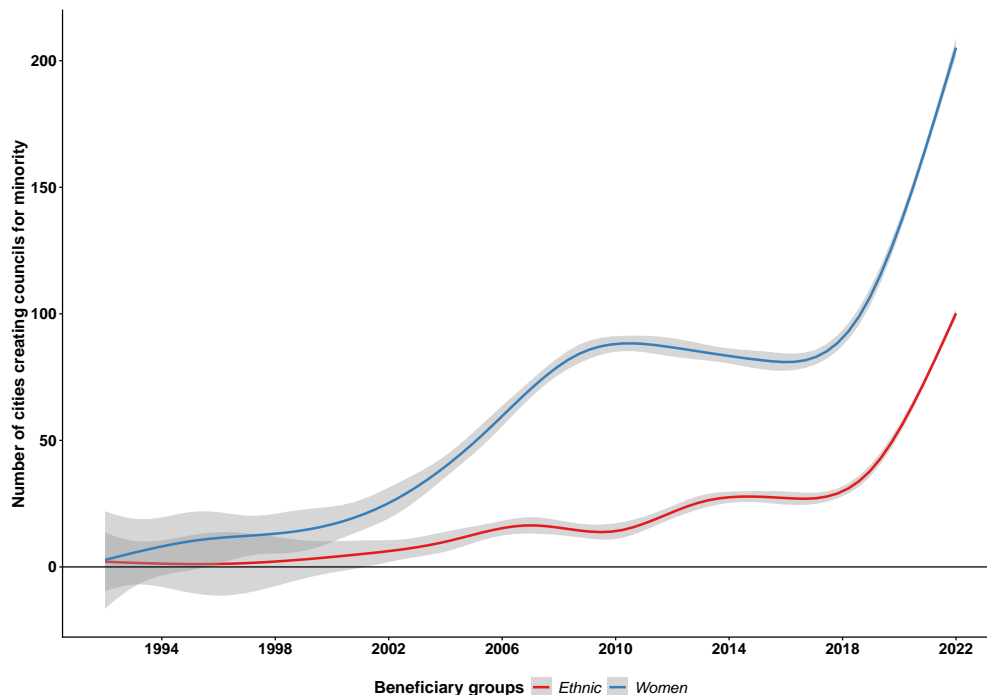
Note: Data from IBGE/PNAD, available at [www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/sintese-de-indicadores-sociais.html](http://www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/sintese-de-indicadores-sociais.html). Data at the household level. Non-white is the population that declares to be *preto* or *pardo*. 2013 is the earliest year with available data.

Since the councils' creation happened in different years in each municipality, I take advantage of this variation in the timing to use a difference-in-differences (DID) design. I estimate the DID separately for the establishment of women's councils and councils for ethnic groups.<sup>6</sup> Figure 2 shows the evolution of council creation by each group. It shows that there are more women's councils and their creation usually happened earlier. However, both types of councils had a surge around 2002 and 2018.

One possible explanation for the difference in the number and timing of women and ethnic councils creation is their different levels of institutionalization. The Conselho Nacional dos Direitos da Mulher [National Council of Women's Rights] was created in 1985, while the

<sup>6</sup>In Appendix C, there is a DID and a discussion concerning only LGBT councils and all councils combined.

Figure 2: Distribution of the Different Types of Policies in Municipalities by Year of Creation



Note: Data from the IBGE/MUNIC, available at <https://www.ibge.gov.br/pesquisa-de-informacoes-basicas-municipais.html>. The curves are LOESS estimates.

counterparts for ethnic minorities are more recent (2003).<sup>7</sup> The establishment of councils can also be linked with the Workers’ Party’s (PT) rise to the presidency in 2002. The party has been a historical advocate of similar councils (Magalhães, 1999), and PT’s presidencies have expanded national policies for minorities in general (Kapiszewski, Levitsky, and Yashar, 2021).<sup>8</sup>

My analysis focuses on the effect of the creation of the different types of municipal councils

<sup>7</sup>One important aspect to highlight is that the creation of the national councils “treats” all Brazilians. Hence, they do not affect the DID model.

<sup>8</sup>Appendix D has the distribution of mayors who created councils by ideology. It is more likely for a leftist mayor to create a council (in other words,  $Pr(\text{Create a council}|\text{Leftist mayor}) > Pr(\text{Create a council}|\text{Rightist mayor})$ ). However, most of the councils were not created by leftist mayors (putting it differently,  $Pr(\text{Leftist mayor}|\text{Create a council}) < 0.5$ ) since there are markedly more rightist mayors in Brazil. The majority of the council creations occurring during non-leftist mayors’ terms diminishes the concerns that the DID is analyzing an underlying preference in the city’s population for pro-minority policies.

on PT’s voting share in the following presidential elections. Since PT is a center-left party and held the presidency for most of the period analyzed, it is the natural target of any political reaction against these policies. The choice for analyzing national elections instead of municipal elections is to diminish the risks of endogeneity caused by inverse causality. Instead of the councils affecting voting behavior, the voters’ preference in electing a given mayor might have resulted in the creation of the councils. This risk is particularly acute because (i) PT ideological alignment with the councils’ creation and (ii) anti-PT voters’ (*antipetistas*) resistance to social change and lower engagement with civil society activism (Samuels and Zucco, 2018). Since the national elections occur at different moments and on national rather than local issues, the focus on presidential elections diminishes but does not erase the risk of endogeneity. For this reason, I perform a matching procedure to increase the confidence in the DID design’s parallel trend assumption. I perform two matching procedures<sup>9</sup>—one for women and one for ethnic councils—pairing treated municipalities with a “control” (i.e., never treated) group on key socio-demographic variables to have a more appropriate counterfactual.<sup>10</sup>

I analyze council implementation from 2002 to 2022. This 20-year period allows me to implement a DID design with multiple time periods (Callaway and Sant’Anna, 2021).<sup>11</sup> The parameters of interest are the following:

$$\theta(g) = \frac{1}{\tau - g + 1} \sum_{t=g}^{\tau} ATT(g, t) \quad (1)$$

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<sup>9</sup>The matching tables are in Appendix B, including for LGBT councils.

<sup>10</sup>The variables are: income per capita, Gini index, municipal Human Development Index, averaged educational level, proportion of women, proportion of rural population, and proportion of the population in poverty.

<sup>11</sup>I operationalize the DID model by using Callaway and Sant’Anna’s (2021) R package `did`.

$$\theta_T = \sum_{g=2}^{\tau} \theta(g)P(G = g) \quad (2)$$

equation 1 is the Average Treatment of the Treated (ATT) for each group of municipalities that implemented the council; equation 2 is the ATT across the groups.  $ATT(g, t)$  is:

$$ATT(g, t) = \mathbb{E}[Y_t - Y_{g-1}|X, G = g] - \mathbb{E}[Y_t - Y_{g-1}|X, C = 1], \forall t \geq g \quad (3)$$

where  $\mathbb{E}[Y_t - Y_{g-1}|X, G = g]$  is the difference of PT's voting share at time  $t$  of cities "treated" in time  $g$  ( $Y_t$ ) and their observed vote share before treatment ( $Y_{g-1}$ ). In turn,  $\mathbb{E}[Y_t - Y_{g-1}|X, C = 1]$  is a similar difference between the municipalities that were never treated ( $C = 1$ ). The difference between those expected values is the difference-in-difference estimator. Finally,  $X$  is a set of controls and  $\tau$  is the  $max(t)$ . These controls are macro-region fixed effects,<sup>12</sup> and whether the mayor was leftist.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 3 illustrates the staggered evolution of treatment in my DID with multiple time periods. It shows that my design has five groups ( $g$  in the equations above), 2 to 6,<sup>14</sup> linked with the presidential elections. The DID models analyze the impact of the councils that occurred after the treatment (elections on a solid circle or a solid line in Figure 3). This dynamic in the evolution of treatment derives from the fact that local and national elections alternate across even years.<sup>15</sup> resulting in new mayors implementing the councils between

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<sup>12</sup>Due to lack of observations, regions North and Northeast were combined in the macro-region North-Northeast, while the remaining three regions were aggregated in the Central-South macro-region.

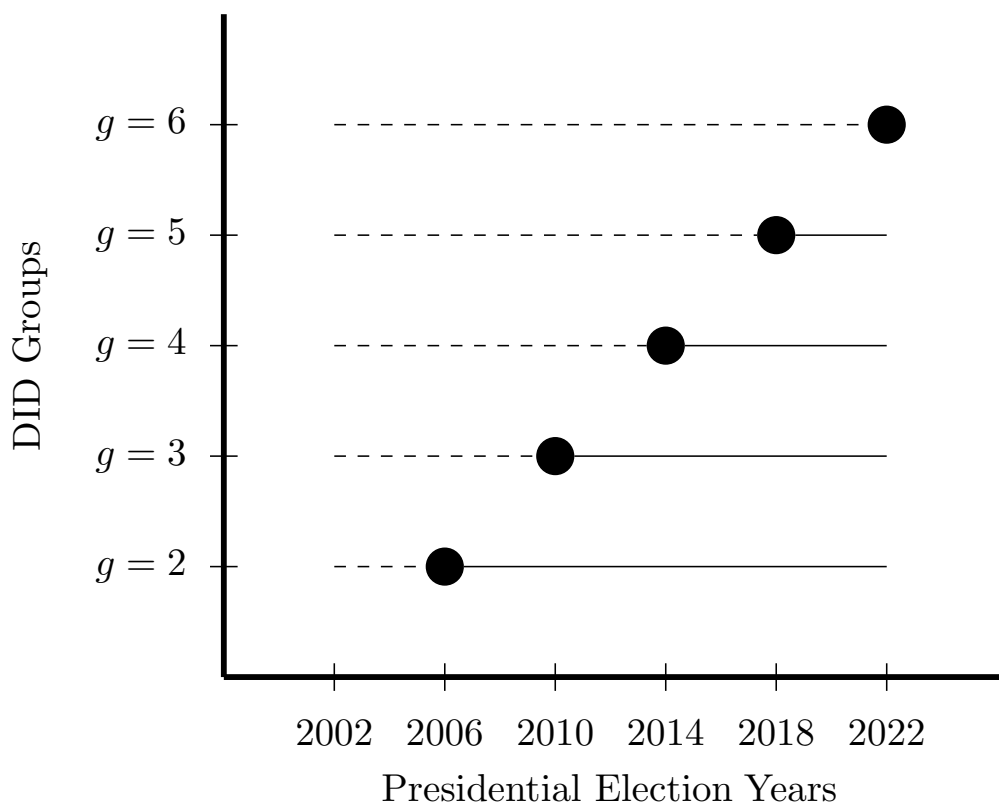
<sup>13</sup>1 if the mayor was from the PT, Partido Socialismo and Liberdade [Socialism and Liberty Party] (PSOL), Partido Socialista Brasileiro [Brazilian Socialist Party] (PSB), Partido Comunista do Brazil [Communist Party of Brazil] (PC do B), Partido Democrático Trabalhista [Democratic Labour Party] (PDT), Partido Verde [Green Party] (PV), and Rede Sustentabilidade [Sustainability Network] (REDE); 0 otherwise.

<sup>14</sup>Since group 1 does not have a time prior to assess the parallel trend assumption, it is ignored in the analysis.

<sup>15</sup>For example, the national election that occurred in 2010 was two years after the 2008 municipal election and two years prior to the 2012 municipal election.

presidential elections.

Figure 3: The Staggered evolution of Treatment



*Note:* The dashed line represents that the municipality is not-yet treated. The solid line indicate that the city has been treated. The solid circle is the first presidential election after treatment for a given municipality.

In the next section, I first discuss the main results showing that the establishment of councils for ethnic minorities generate a stronger backlash against the PT than the establishment of women councils. After, I evaluate the DID parallel trend assumption through a placebo tests.<sup>16</sup> Third, I assess the plausibility of the proposed mechanism—namely, that groups that cut across class divisions are more likely to foster social affinity than groups that do not. Finally, I address two alternative explanation: I explore whether Bolsonaro’s rise may have increased the salience of minority policies among voters. I also evaluate whether

<sup>16</sup>I have an additional discussion on DID assumptions exposed by [Callaway and Sant’Anna \(2021\)](#) in Appendix I.

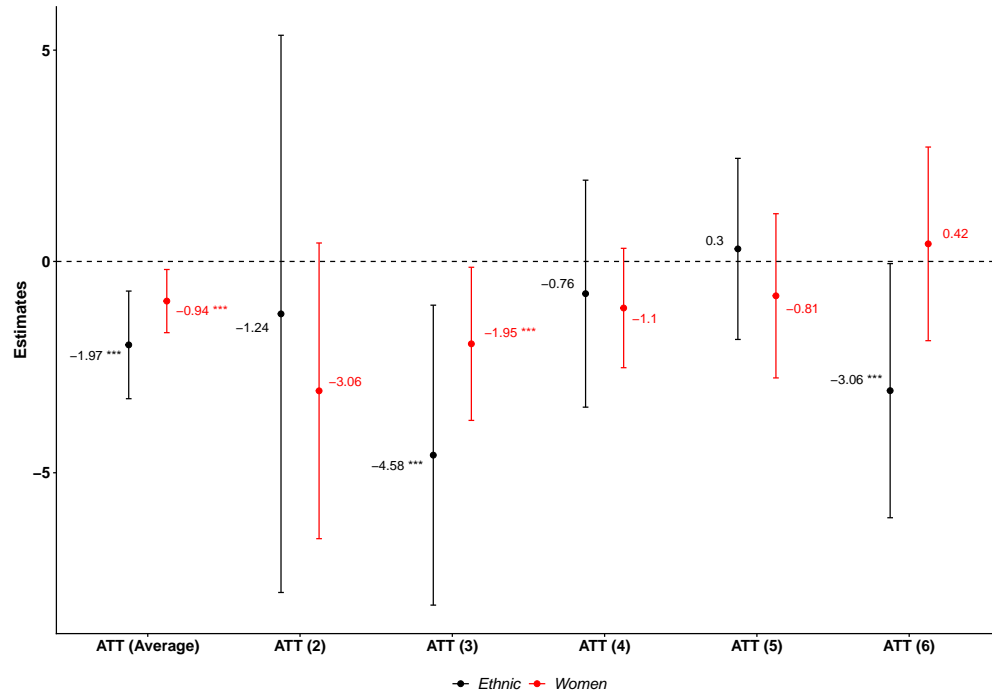
the substance or efficacy of the policies drives the results, rather than the identity of the beneficiary minority group.

## Results

Figure 4 shows the results. The leftmost result is the value of equation 2, while the others are the result of equation 1 for each group (i.e., electoral cycle). The results show that the establishment of councils for minorities that correlate with lower socio-economic status, ethnic minorities (Afro-Brazilians and Indigenous), generates a stronger backlash than the establishment of women councils—a minority that does not correlate with socio-economic status—against the PT. The ATT that averages across presidential elections (i.e., groups) shows that ethnic minority council creation reduces PT’s voting share by almost 2 percentage points (1.97). Among municipalities within group 3 (2007-2010), the reduction in PT’s voting share is 4.58 percentage points. In contrast to ethnic minorities, councils for women generated weaker reactions. The result is 0.94 percentage points for the women’s council. Moreover, only one of the ATT for the groups is significant (group 3). Hence, the results suggest that the reaction against women’s councils is weaker than for ethnic minorities. These results support the theoretical expectations of a heterogeneous effect among different types of minority groups and that minorities more linked with lower socio-economic status generate a stronger negative reaction.

While the results of the DID models indicate that ethnic councils generate a stronger electoral negative reaction, the difference among coefficients does not reach significance (but see the results in Appendix F concerning a dynamic analysis). The lack of more robust

Figure 4: Council Creation Effect on PT’s Voting Share by Minority Group: Average ATT and Groups’ ATT



**Note:** Error bars are the 95% confidence interval. They were calculated with a bootstrapped standard error clustered on the municipal level (1000 resamples)

results is likely due to a smaller sample size of ethnic councils in comparison to women, as shown in Figure 2 and table 1.<sup>17</sup> This is, in itself, is an indication of a variation in the political interest and viability of the two types of councils. Yet, these results are relevant because they show sub-group variation that we would not have perceived when analyzing all minority groups together.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Appendices E and F provide a longer discussion on this matter. Appendix E has some tests that show that the three cases with significant coefficients—ATT(Average), ATT(3), and ATT(6)—only the difference related to ATT(6) is statistically significant. However, since ATT(6) is when most of the ethnic councils were created (see Figure 2), it might be an indication that the lack of difference is solely due to lack of statistical power. Additionally, Appendix F has the evaluation of the DID as a event study. In this case, the results show that only ethnic minorities are significant in ATT(0), the first event (i.e., the presidential election just after the municipality created the council). In this dynamic analysis, the difference between the two councils type related to ATT(0) is significant, reinforcing the assumption that a reduced sample size is the culprit for the lack of a significant difference in the coefficients in the main results.

<sup>18</sup>See Appendix G for a discussion of the results of the minorities combined.

However, the results of my DID are only valid if its assumptions are valid. Critically, we must be assured that the parallel trend on “never treated” assumption hold to be confident that the shock generated by the councils creation resulted in reducing PT’s voting share.<sup>19</sup> In my analysis, the parallel trends assumption is satisfied when units (municipalities) display a comparable electoral “trajectory” prior to treatment; that is, their patterns of change in PT’s vote share must be alike.<sup>20</sup>

I test the parallel trend by running a placebo analysis before municipalities created the councils. Figure 5 plots the placebo tests by the presidential election years before municipalities receiving treatment. It shows that, regarding their PT’s voting share, municipalities that created councils (treated) did not differ statistically from municipalities that never established councils (control). Therefore, both groups of municipalities have the same trend without treatment.

In appendix J, I present a discussion of the mechanism—that the variation in social affinity with minority groups drives the reduction in PT’s voting share. I assess the validity of the mechanism using Latinobarómetro data. In five waves,<sup>21</sup> respondents were asked to classify the level of conflict between races and between women and men.<sup>22</sup> Since both questions were asked in the same waves and had the same structure, they allow a direct comparison between how individuals perceive gender and ethnic dynamics. I exploit this comparability

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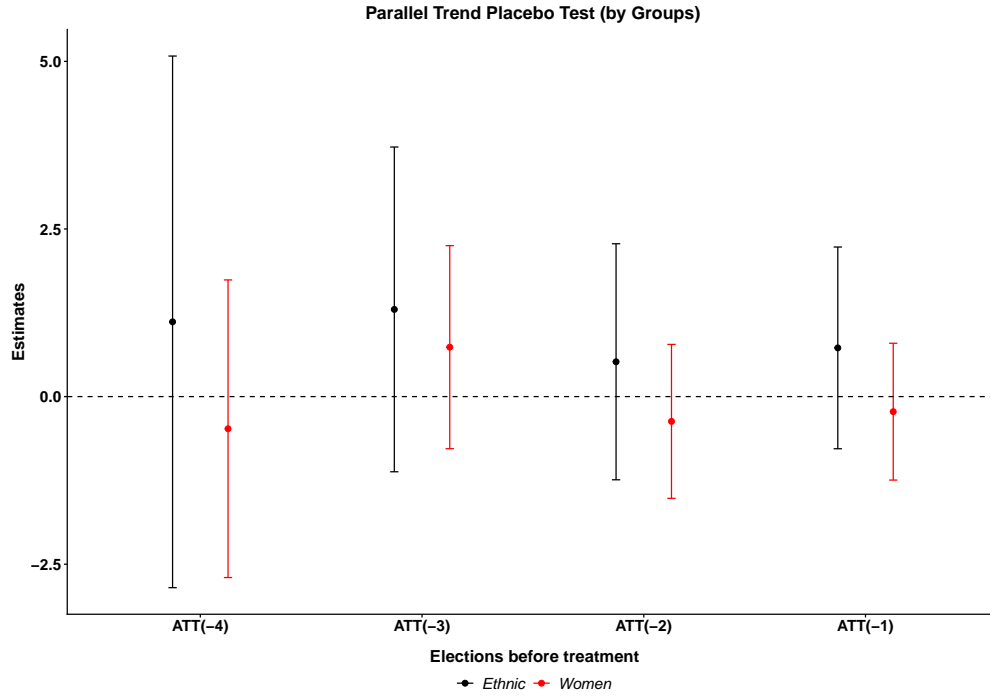
<sup>19</sup>Callaway and Sant’Anna (2021) argues that The DID design that I am using also relies in the irreversibility of treatment and limited treatment anticipation assumptions. There is a discussion on these other two assumptions in Appendix I.

<sup>20</sup>Consequently, random assignment is not required. Therefore, there is no need to be concern about the possibility that geographical characteristics might bias the results. However, in the appendix A, there is a figure showing the proportion of the non-white population by municipality. Brazilian ethnic groups are a minority because they lack full access to civil rights (Mukand and Rodrik, 2020), but they are quantitatively the majority of the country.

<sup>21</sup>The waves are for the years 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2017.

<sup>22</sup>The variable has four categories: no conflict, weak, strong, and very strong. Respondents who either did not answer or answered “don’t know” were excluded from my analysis.

Figure 5: Parallel Trends by Election-year



*Note:* Error bars are the 95% confidence interval. They were calculated with a bootstrapped standard error clustered on the municipal level (1000 resamples)

to examine whether members of the majority group are less inclined to acknowledge the existence of racial conflict than gender conflict within Brazilian society.

I regress respondents' conflict views on their gender and ethnic group to perform pairwise comparisons of predicted margins.<sup>23</sup> I chose black women as the group of reference because they sit at the intersection of both dimensions analyzed here—race and gender—making them the most appropriate baseline for a comparison. I treat the recognition of a conflict as a proxy for social affinity, since recognizing a high level of conflict is a form of empathetic acknowledgment that the minority faces a problem that could be addressed through policy.

<sup>23</sup>Although my analysis is observational, this is similar to average marginal component effects (AMCEs), commonly used in conjoint analysis. I generate the pairwise comparison through an OLS regression with a gender and ethnic group interaction with their view on the existence of gender and ethnic group conflict as the dependent variable. In total, I analyze 12 groups (6 ethnic groups times 2 genders). The OLS model has respondents' ideology and education as controls. Moreover, I included region and year fixed effects. Finally, the regression has robust standard errors clustered at the year level.

I expect respondents to be more willing to recognize a gender conflict than a racial conflict. The results support this expectation. Only seven differences (out of 22) are statistically significant—six for ethnic groups and one for gender—and all of them are negative coefficients. This result suggests that a significant number of respondents perceive the existence of less conflict about inter-ethnic dynamics than gender, relative to black women. Notably, white men were the only group for which both coefficients are negative and significant (-0.16 for women and -0.22 for ethnic groups), indicating a greater resistance to acknowledging social problems related to these minorities. In sum, the findings align with my general argument since Brazilian society in general, especially white Brazilians, is more likely to acknowledge a gender issue than a racial issue in the country.

## Alternative Explanations

I consider two possible alternative explanations for my results: Jair Bolsonaro becoming prominent and the substantive effect of policy. Bolsonaro was elected Brazilian president in 2018 in a context where Brazil faced a series of political scandals and economic hardship (Hunter and Power, 2019). His success is linked with deploying an anti-establishment, inflammatory rhetoric targeting various minority groups.

A key claim of this article is that the heterogeneous effect of minority groups derives from the public. However, Bolsonaro's strategy to become a central figure in Brazilian politics might be a critical trigger to the salience of anti-minority sentiments in the public. Putting it differently, rather than the heterogeneous and negative effect of minority improvement being a bottom-up phenomenon (as I argue), it might be a top-down phenomenon generated

through Bolsonaro's and his supporters' rhetoric. [Bernardino-Costa \(2023\)](#) and [De Micheli \(2023\)](#), for example, argue that Bolsonaro has increased the political saliency of race in Brazil.

I assess the possible effect of Bolsonaro becoming a central figure in Brazilian politics through another DID model. I use his voting share as the dependent variable.<sup>24</sup> Since he ran for president in 2018 and 2022, it allowed me to test the impact of the creation of councils between those elections. Moreover, analyzing only those elections made it possible to incorporate data on LGBT councils.<sup>25</sup> The findings of this model, however, must be interpreted with caution. Since I only have two time periods, it is not possible to conduct a more robust analysis on parallel trends, as I have done for the main results. Even so, the model follows the same structure as the models presented above: I matched on observables, clustered the standard errors at the municipal level, and included geographical fixed effects and covariate controls.

Figure 6 reports the DID model related to Bolsonaro's voting share. In the case of women and LGBT councils, I find they have no significant effect on Bolsonaro's electoral performance. Ethnic councils generated a significant and negative effect on Bolsonaro's vote share, suggesting that Bolsonaro's rising does not explain the results in Figure 4.<sup>26</sup> The results, therefore, do not indicate that Bolsonaro's rising played a relevant role in shaping

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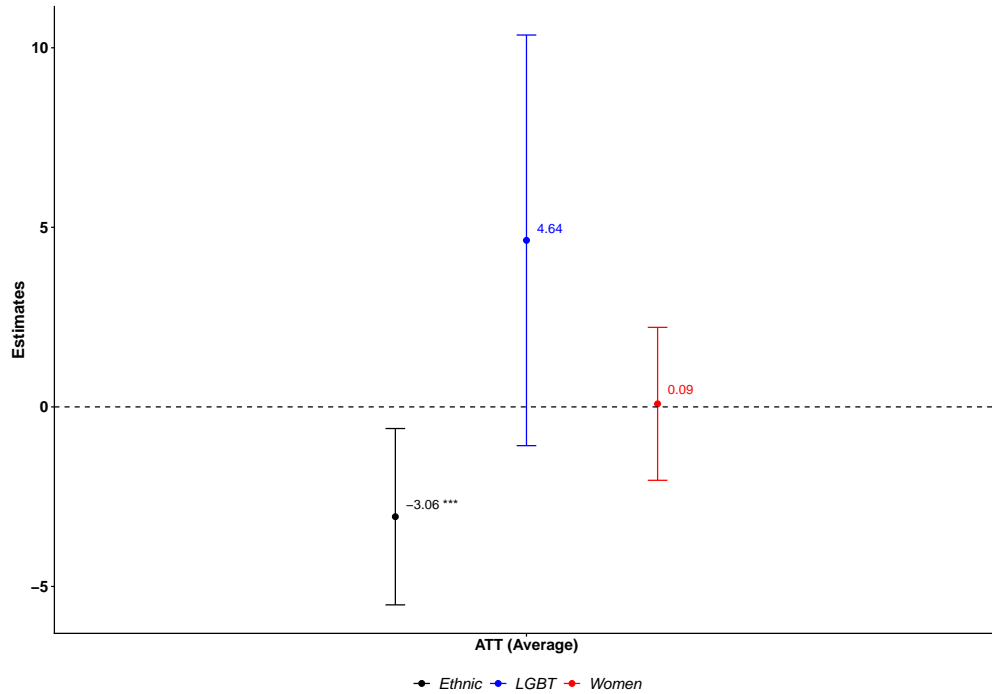
<sup>24</sup>In 2018, it was the vote for the Social Liberal Party (PSL) candidate and, in 2022, for the Liberal Party (PL) candidate.

<sup>25</sup>The results related to LGBT councils were not used in the main analysis because their council creation is much more recent and smaller in comparison to ethnic and women's councils. For a longer discussion and some results on LGBT councils, see Appendix C.

<sup>26</sup>Moreover, this results indicate that Bolsonaro and PT are not mirror images of each other. It is possible that ethnic councils have an effect on Bolsonaro through a different mechanism than the one I am proposing. The council might have generated nostalgic deprivation, as I claim, that resulted in decreasing PT's voting share. In parallel, it might empower groups related to ethnic groups that rejected Bolsonaro's rhetoric.

my main results.

Figure 6: Council Creation Effect on Bolsonaro's Voting Share by Minority Group



*Note:* Error bars are the 95% confidence interval. They were calculated with a bootstrapped standard error clustered on the municipal level (1000 resamples)

The other explanation that I analyze is the possible effects of policy in explaining the results, instead of minority group characteristics. Minorities' demands and needs regarding policies are not the same. For example, ethnic groups support racial quotas in universities. LGBT groups lobby for the adoption of same-sex marriage, and women demand policies focusing on women's healthcare, like breast cancer. All these policies can result in different attention from the media and reaction from the public in general. For example, we know that racial quotas had attracted significant attention from the news. Consequently, the content of policies has its own inherent political significance. For this reason, councils for ethnic minorities might have generated a higher effect than councils for women because of

the policies they created rather than their beneficiaries. Therefore, variation in policy may play an important role in defining my results.

I analyze the possible relevance of policies through a regression that interacts councils and policies with PT's voting share as the dependent variable. As the policies analyzed, I use domestic violence protection as the policy regarding women.<sup>27</sup> Regarding ethnic groups, I combined a set of policies<sup>28</sup> in a single covariate, labeled Ethnic promotion. Both policies were coded as 1 if the municipality implemented the policy;<sup>29</sup> 0 otherwise. I estimate a regression model that includes socio-demographic controls<sup>30</sup> and a measure of the mayor's ideology.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the specification incorporates region<sup>32</sup> and election-year fixed effects. Standard errors are robust and clustered at the municipality level.

The result, presented in Appendix H, shows that policy content does not drive the council effects. Without the policy interaction, ethnic and women's councils' coefficients are negative and significant, similar to what we observe in the DID model. This result increases the confidence in the main results.

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<sup>27</sup>No other policy was directly linked to women.

<sup>28</sup>Those policies are: Afro-Brazilian heritage promotion, Racial equality promotion, Documentation of individuals belonging to traditional communities, and service to citizens who spoke indigenous languages. Despite combining these policies, there are almost twice as many municipalities with policies against domestic violence as having any ethnic policy (3,090 and 1,653, respectively). In Appendix H, there is a table with these policies disaggregated. The main results remain the same.

<sup>29</sup>In the case of Ethnic promotion, I coded as 1 if the municipality has any of the policies benefiting ethnic groups

<sup>30</sup>These are: municipal HDI, municipal Gini index, municipal income per capita, municipal poverty proportion, municipal educational level average, municipal proportion of population living in rural areas, municipal proportion of women, and proportion of non-white population.

<sup>31</sup>1 if she is from a leftist party; 0 otherwise.

<sup>32</sup>The regions are: North, Northeast, Center-west, Southeast, and South.

## Conclusion

A large body of research has argued that a reason for a backlash against the political establishment derives from minority groups improving, resulting in what is known as relative deprivation (Smith et al., 2012). However, this literature has overlooked the potential heterogeneous effect of different minority groups on this political reaction. In this article, I argue that individuals reduce their in-group bias in accordance with their social affinity to the minority groups. Greater affinity toward a minority group results in a more positive view that, in turn, reduces the relative deprivation. Putting it differently, people are more likely to see policies as fair if they favor groups that those people like.

I theorize that this variation has the pernicious consequence that the policies that seem the most unfair are those to the most fragile minority groups. Following a literature that highlights the importance of personal interaction (Allport, Clark, and Pettigrew, 1954; Dinesen, Schaeffer, and Sønderskov, 2020; Scacco and Warren, 2018), I argue that minority groups that are more associated with a low socio-economic status have a lower capacity to create ties with the majoritarian group because members of these groups are less likely to interact with each other. On aggregate, this lack of interaction results in a greater rejection of the minorities that correlates with lower socio-economic status.

Leveraging the variation in the creation of municipal councils that oversee and implement policies for minorities in Brazil, I implemented a staggered difference-in-differences to estimate the heterogeneous effect of the minority group on voting share. I focused on councils that support policies for women and ethnic minorities (Afro-Brazilians and indigenous) across 6 national elections in Brazil (2002-2022). Results show that the creation of those

councils resulted in a decrease in the Workers' Party (PT) voting share. More interestingly, they show that ethnic councils, the minority associated with lower socio-economic status, generated a greater effect than the council for women.

These results have relevant implications. Normatively, the findings suggest that social improvement of minorities who are less likely to be poor is easier to implement than it is for those associated with lower socio-economic status. The worrisome consequence is that the groups that need to improve the most, as they face the double burden of discrimination and poverty, are the ones that generate the greatest electoral rejection. The findings suggest a vicious cycle that fosters inequality even among the different minority groups. This research also underscores the need to evaluate different minority groups in comparison. A large part of the literature either evaluates a minority group in isolation (for example, [De Abreu Maia, Chiu, and Desposato, 2023](#)) or aggregated as a single group (like, [Samuels, Mello, and Zucco, 2024](#)). Finally, the results also have relevant implications for Brazilian politics. The findings indicate that socio-cultural themes related to supporting minorities are electorally relevant in the country, despite the economic challenges that Brazilians face. Moreover, it suggests that racial dynamics were electorally consequential before the rise of Bolsonaro, but his candidacy also had an effect in increasing the saliency of the topic. Lastly, the results provide additional evidence that the backlash against minorities contributed to Bolsonaro's victory.

Finally, the results suggest interesting areas of future research. One area is the relation between minority heterogeneity and populist radical right (PRR) parties, which tend to reject minority groups due to their nativist ideology ([Mudde, 2007](#)). Along with other explanations (e.g., [Weeks et al., 2023](#)), closer attention to these differences between minorities might help to elucidate why some minorities are more "acceptable" than others by PRR parties. A

second avenue for research is to assess minority heterogeneity in a cross-national setting. Future research should evaluate whether similar dynamics of the heterogeneous effect of minorities occur across Latin America and beyond. Future work could also compare different types of policies. It is possible that economic policies, like conditional cash transfers, are deemed to be fairer than socio-cultural policies that promote the celebration of minorities' identities. Last but not least, it would be interesting to gauge whether members of minority groups also have a heterogeneous perception of members of other minority groups.

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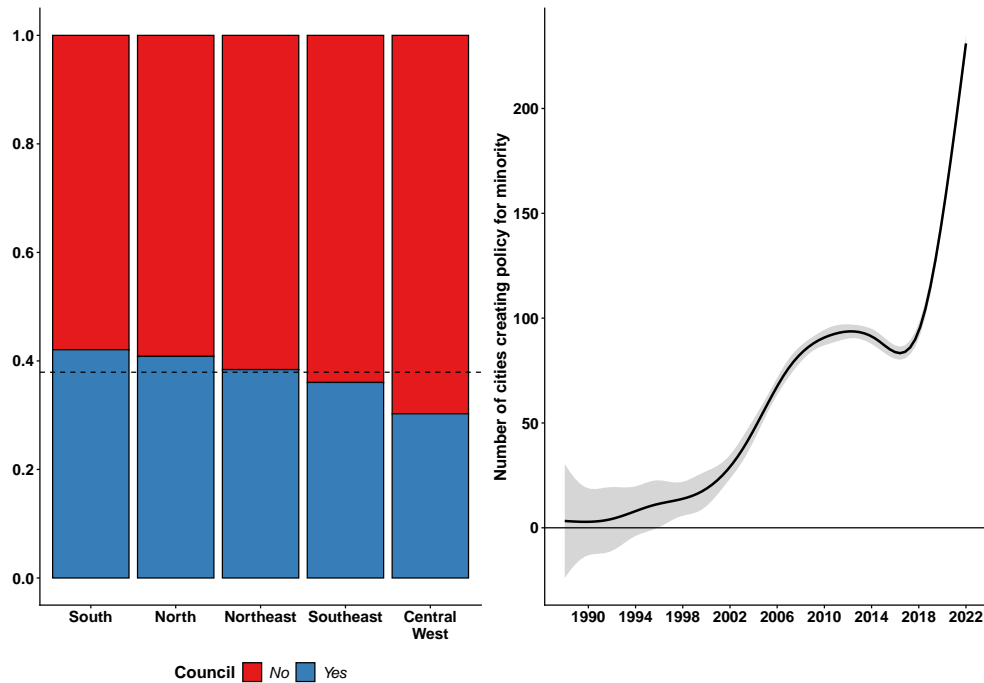
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# 1 Appendix A: Additional Descriptive Statistics

Figure 7 shows the geographical and temporal variation in council existence in Brazilian municipalities.

Figure 7: Distribution of Municipalities with Policies for Minorities by Region and Year of Creation

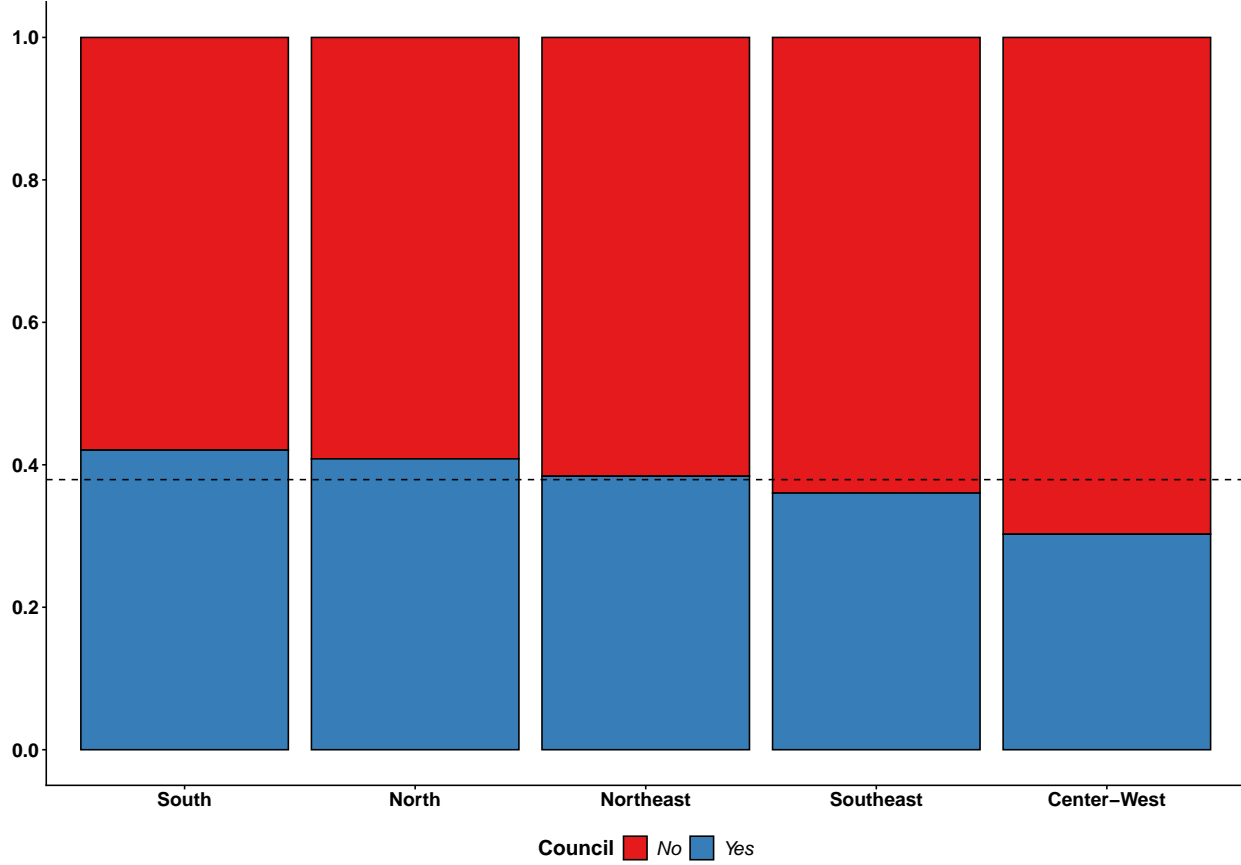


**Note:** The dashed line in the left graph is the national average (37.9%). The right graph shows when each municipality created its first council. These graphs includes data on all minorities, women, ethnic and LGBT.

Figure 8, table 9, and 8 show the proportion of cities in each Brazilian region with some policy for minorities.

Figure 10 shows the distribution of the non-white population across Brazilian municipalities.

Figure 8: Distribution of Municipalities with Policies for Minorities by Region



**Note:** The solid line is the national average (37.9%)

Table 2: Number of Policies for Minorities in Municipalities by Region

| Region       | Number of policies for minorities |                |                |              |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | Zero                              | One            | Two            | Three        |
| North        | 188<br>(60.5%)                    | 97<br>(31.2%)  | 23<br>(7.4%)   | 3<br>(1%)    |
| Northeast    | 1136<br>(63.3%)                   | 532<br>(29.7%) | 108<br>(6%)    | 18<br>(1%)   |
| Southeast    | 1090<br>(65.3%)                   | 376<br>(22.5%) | 175<br>(10.5%) | 27<br>(1.6%) |
| South        | 732<br>(61.5%)                    | 356<br>(29.9%) | 96<br>(8.1%)   | 7<br>(0.6%)  |
| Central-West | 328<br>(70.4%)                    | 102<br>(21.9%) | 32<br>(6.9%)   | 4<br>(0.9%)  |

Figure 9: Distribution of the Different Types of Policies in Municipalities by Region

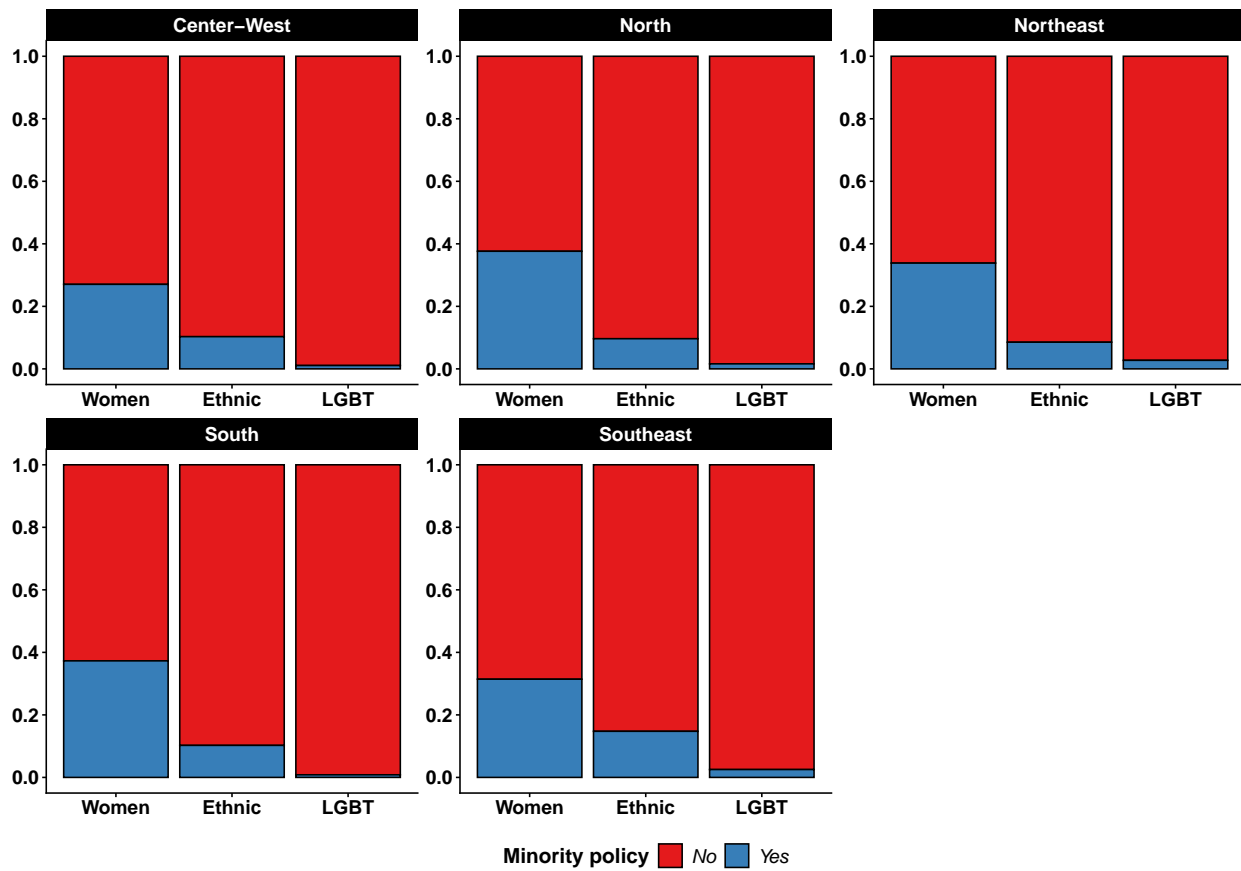
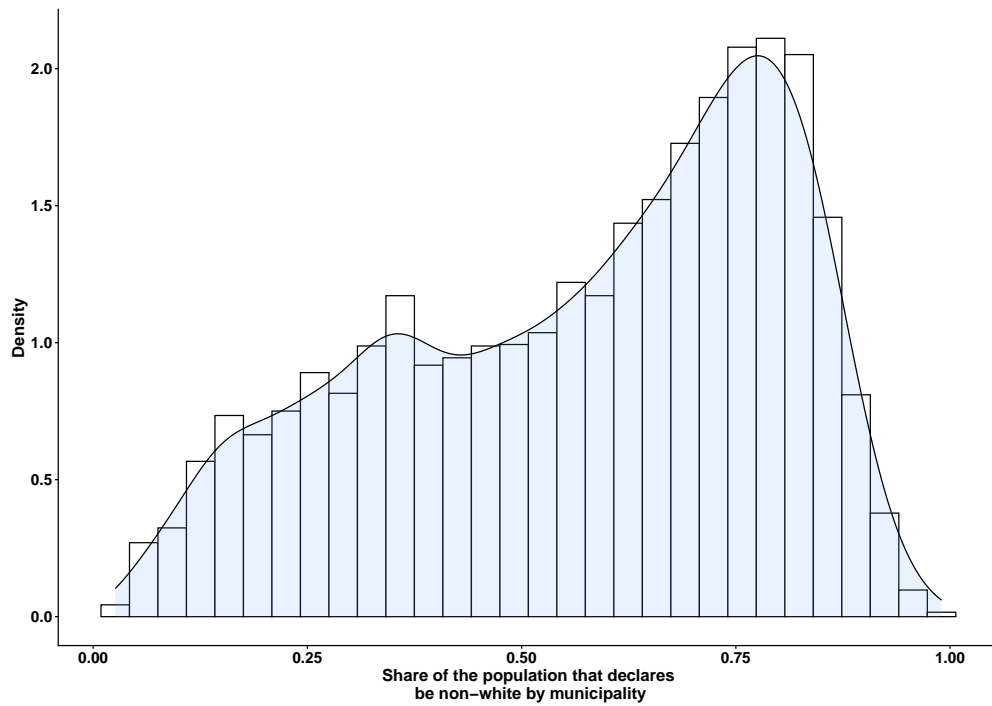


Figure 10: Distribution of Non-White Population by Municipality



**Note:** The ethnic data derives from the 2022 census. The data is the ratio of the non-white population to the total population.

## Appendix B: Matching Tables

Table 3: Matching statistics

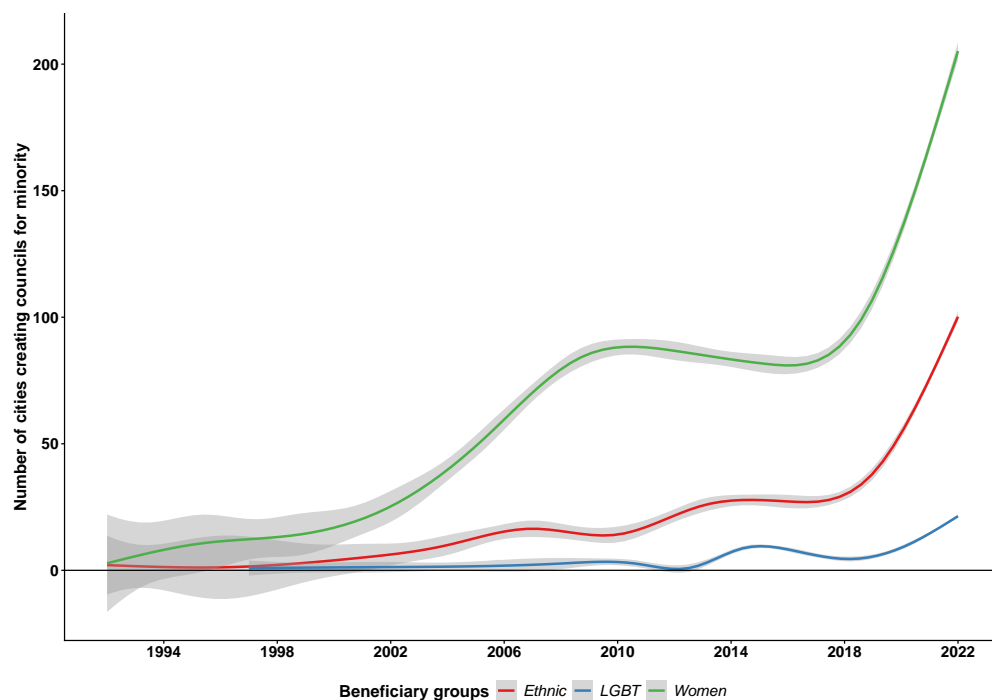
| Covariates                 | Mean treated | Mean control | Std. Mean diff. | t-test(p-value) | KS    |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Before matching</b>     |              |              |                 |                 |       |
| Population                 | 112226.803   | 19687.963    | 19.587          | 0               | 0.349 |
| MHDI                       | 570.060      | 478.008      | 32.002          | 0               | 0.154 |
| Gini index                 | 0.681        | 0.654        | 35.709          | 0               | 0.156 |
| Averaged income per capita | 0.501        | 0.491        | 15.877          | 0               | 0.087 |
| Poverty (%)                | 20.118       | 23.754       | -21.250         | 0               | 0.094 |
| Education (%)              | 0.453        | 0.383        | 56.191          | 0               | 0.261 |
| Rural population (%)       | 0.267        | 0.385        | -53.745         | 0               | 0.241 |
| Female population (%)      | 0.502        | 0.494        | 54.938          | 0               | 0.255 |
| <b>After matching</b>      |              |              |                 |                 |       |
| Population                 | 112226.803   | 80787.586    | 6.655           | 0.005           | 0.088 |
| MHDI                       | 570.060      | 562.858      | 2.504           | 0.001           | 0.019 |
| Gini index                 | 0.681        | 0.681        | 0.460           | 0.447           | 0.015 |
| Averaged income per capita | 0.501        | 0.499        | 3.435           | 0.001           | 0.036 |
| Poverty (%)                | 20.118       | 19.967       | 0.880           | 0.074           | 0.029 |
| Education (%)              | 0.453        | 0.448        | 4.264           | 0.000           | 0.044 |
| Rural population (%)       | 0.267        | 0.268        | -0.670          | 0.320           | 0.035 |
| Female population (%)      | 0.502        | 0.501        | 3.228           | 0.001           | 0.045 |

*Note:* Post-matching statistics of Brazilian municipalities' socio-demographic data. The pre-matching sample size was 5,564, and the post-matching sample size was 528.

## Appendix C: DID Model for LGBT Minorities

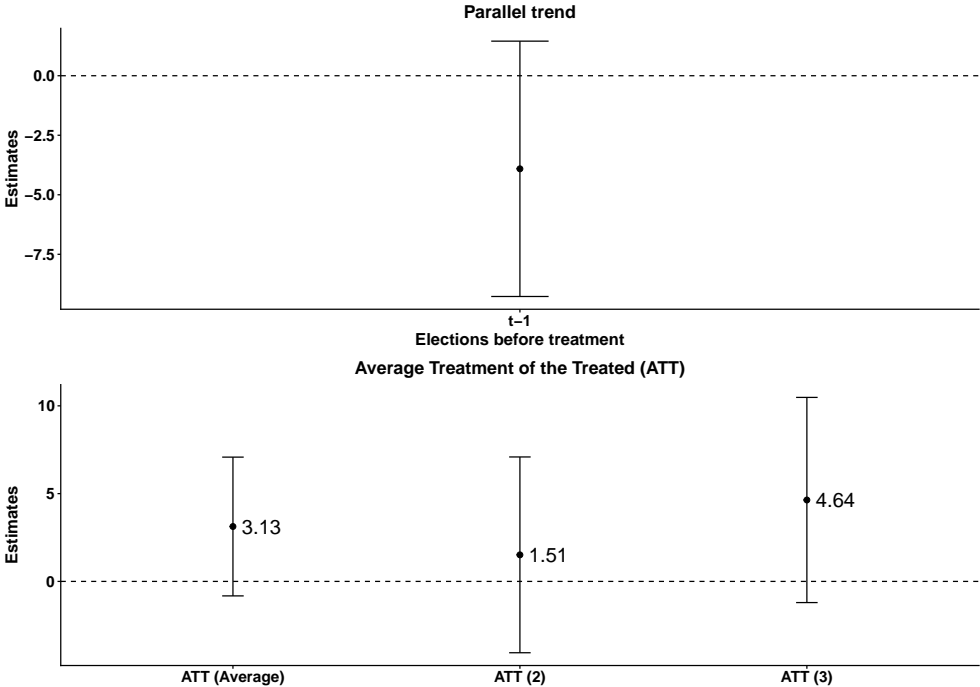
As Figure 11 illustrates, most of the LGBT councils were created more recently. For this reason, the results, shown in Figure 12, were limited to analyzing only two groups: council creation between 2015 and 2018 (group 2) and between 2019 and 2022 (group 3). The data limitation only allows the analysis of a single period pre-treatment. Consequently, the evaluation of these results must be assessed with caution.

Figure 11: Distribution of the Different Types of Policies in Municipalities by Year of Creation



The results indicate that the parallel trend assumption holds. However, the ATTs are positive and insignificant. Although the lack of significance might derive from a smaller sample size, the positive coefficients suggest that the councils might be helping instead of punishing the PT. This result supports other empirical evidence of a socially liberal view in favor of the LGBT community in Brazil (De Abreu Maia, Chiu, and Desposato, 2023).

Figure 12: LGBT Council Creation Effect on PT's Voting Share: Parallel Trends by Election-year; Average ATT and Groups' ATT



**Note:** Error bars are the 95% confidence interval. They were calculated with a bootstrapped standard error clustered on the municipal level (1000 resamples)

## Appendix D: Distribution of Mayors who Created Council by Ideological Group

Figure 17 shows a leftist tendency in council creation. The graph in the bottom shows that it is more likely for a leftist mayor<sup>33</sup> to create a council than a rightists mayors.<sup>34</sup> However, most of the municipalities that implement the councils did not have leftist mayors.<sup>35</sup> Although we can assume that most of leftist mayors created councils due to their ideological preferences, it is likely that non-leftist mayors main motivation was the access to federal resources.

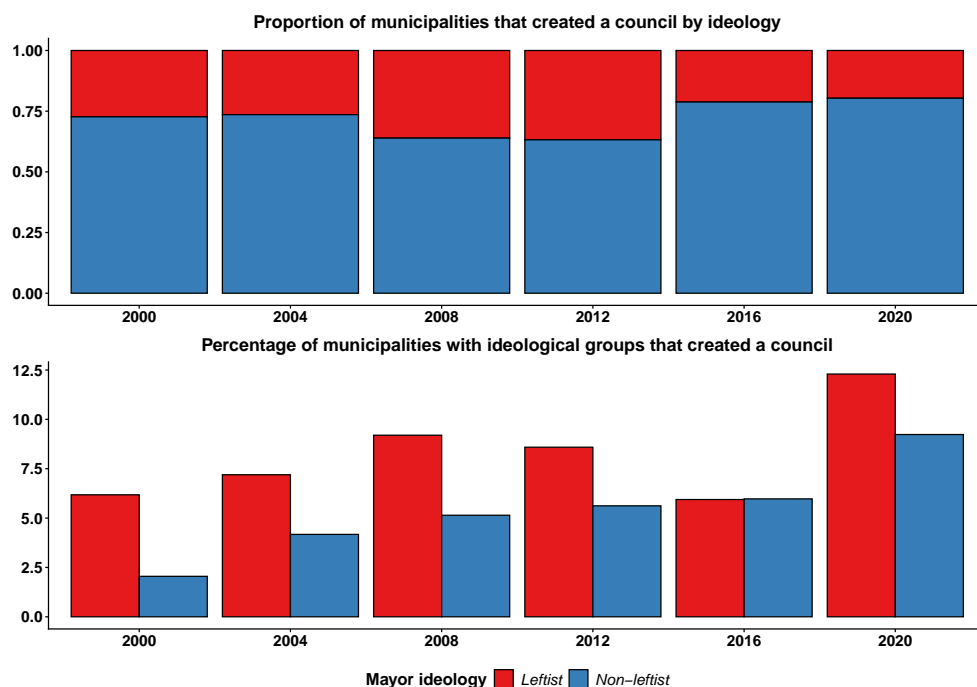
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<sup>33</sup>The parties defined as leftists are PT, Partido Socialismo and Liberdade [Socialism and Liberty Party] (PSOL), Partido Socialista Brasileiro [Brazilian Socialist Party] (PSB), Partido Comunista do Brazil [Communist Party of Brazil] (PC do B), Partido Democrático Trabalhista [Democratic Labour Party] (PDT), Partido Verde [Green Party] (PV), and Rede Sustentabilidade [Sustainability Network] (REDE).

<sup>34</sup>In other words,  $Pr(\text{Create a council}|\text{Leftist mayor}) > Pr(\text{Create a council}|\text{Rightist mayor})$ .

<sup>35</sup>Putting it differently,  $Pr(\text{Leftists mayor}|\text{Create a council}) < 0.5$ .

Figure 13: Distribution of Municipalities with Policies for Minorities by Party



**Note:**Data from the IBGE/MUNIC, available at <https://www.ibge.gov.br/pesquisa-de-informacoes-basicas-municipais.html> and TSE, available at <https://sig.tse.jus.br/sig-eleicao/home>. The parties defined as leftists are: PT, PSOL, PSB, PC do B, PDT, PV, and REDE. The mayor's party is defined as the one in which she was elected. These graphs includes data on all minorities, women, ethnic and LGBT. The first figure shows, for each mayoral election-year, the ideological composition among mayors who created a council. The second figure is the share of mayors within each ideological group who created a council for each mayoral election-year.

## Appendix E: Different Test of the Difference between Women and Ethnic ATT's Coefficients

I performed two different tests to assess the difference between Women and Ethnic coefficients. Since my goal is to test whether ethnic council coefficient is significantly smaller than the women council coefficient, my hypothesis test is:

$$\begin{cases} H_0 = \hat{\beta}_{ethnic} - \hat{\beta}_{women} \geq 0 \\ H_1 = \hat{\beta}_{ethnic} - \hat{\beta}_{women} < 0 \end{cases}$$

In order to do the hypothesis test, I performed the following calculation:

$$\hat{\beta}_{ethnic} - \hat{\beta}_{women} + 1.645 \times \sqrt{Var(\hat{\beta}_{ethnic}) + Var(\hat{\beta}_{women})}$$

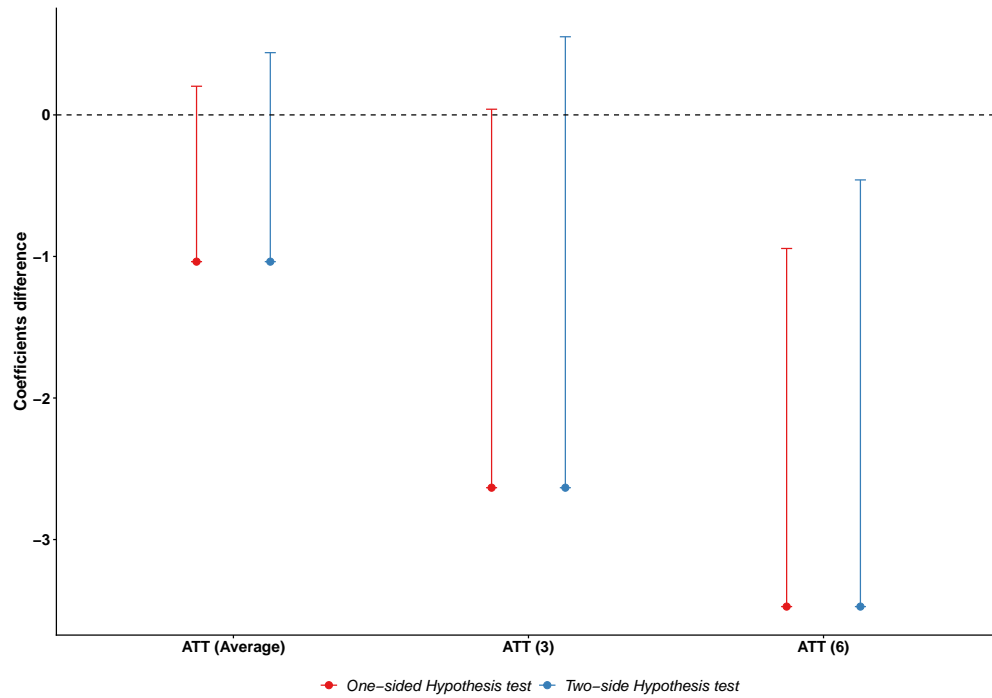
Figure 14 shows the test comparing the coefficients for women and ethnic minorities for the cases where either of the coefficients was significant. It provides the result for the one-sided and the, more conservative, two-sided hypothesis test.<sup>36</sup> The results show that only the difference in relation to group 6 coefficients that are statistically significant.

In addition, I performed a Hausman test between the coefficients. In this case where we are testing one coefficient, the Hausman test is calculated as follows:

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<sup>36</sup>In the case of the two-sided, the test is:  $\hat{\beta}_{ethnic} - \hat{\beta}_{women} \pm 1.96 \times \sqrt{Var(\hat{\beta}_{ethnic}) + Var(\hat{\beta}_{women})}$ .

Figure 14: Test of the Difference between Women and Ethnic Groups' ATT Coefficients



$$H = \frac{\left(\hat{\beta}_{ethnic} - \hat{\beta}_{women}\right)^2}{Var(\hat{\beta}_{ethnic}) + Var(\hat{\beta}_{women})}$$

where H must result in a p-value below the critical point ( $\alpha < 0.05$ ) of a Chi-squared distribution with 1 degree of freedom to reject the null hypothesis. The p-values for the three coefficient differences analyzed are the following:

$$ATT (Average) = 0.1687258$$

$$ATT (3) = 0.1051572$$

$$ATT (6) = 0.02390481$$

Consequently, only for ATT (6) we can reject the null hypothesis with the Hausman test.

Therefore, the results are consistent that only the ATT (6) is consistent.

One possible explanation for this lack of significance in their difference might be due to their sample size. The number of ethnic councils is markedly smaller than councils for women (see table 1). Moreover, the majority of the ethnic councils were created more recently (see figure 2).

## Appendix F: DID Dynamic analysis

As highlighted in the body of the article, the ATT analysis among groups is the following:

$$\theta(g) = \frac{1}{\tau - g + 1} \sum_{t=g}^{\tau} ATT(g, t)$$

$$ATT(g, t) = \mathbb{E}[Y_t - Y_{g-1}|X, G = g] - \mathbb{E}[Y_t - Y_{g-1}|X, C = 1], \forall t \geq g \text{ and } t \geq 2$$

In the case of dynamic analysis, The ATT is the following:

$$\theta(e) = \sum_{g=2}^{\tau} \mathbf{1}\{g + e \leq \tau\} ATT(g, g + e) Pr(G = g | G + e \leq \tau)$$

$$ATT(g, g + e) = \mathbb{E}[Y_{g+e} - Y_{g-1}|X, G = g, E = e] - \mathbb{E}[Y_{g+e} - Y_{g-1}|X, C = 1], \forall e \geq g$$

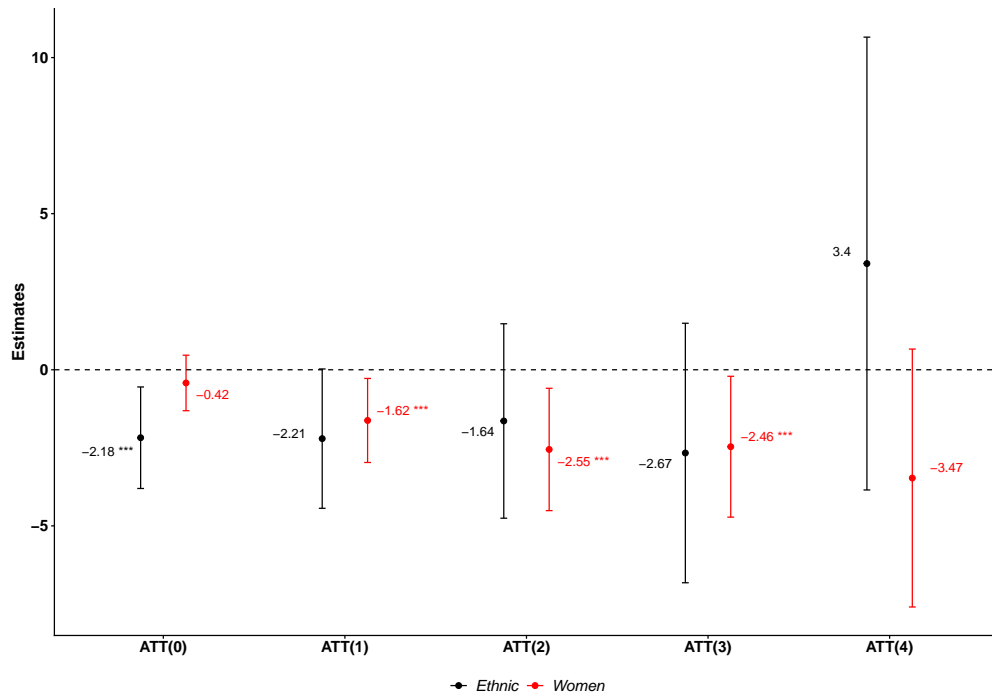
The logic is that while the first set of equations averages the effect of the treatment across different “cohorts” ( $g$ ), the latter equations set averages the effects in  $e$ .

Figure 15 shows the results of the DID models with a focus on the dynamic effect of the council’s creation. The results show that only ethnic minorities are significant in  $ATT(0)$ , the presidential election just after the municipality created the council. However, only women councils have a sustain negative effect with significant coefficients in periods 1 to 3.

These results are largely consistent with the variation in council creation. Women’s council experienced two waves of creation, one around 2002 and another after 2018. Conversely,

ethnic councils have only recently surged.<sup>37</sup> Because of this timing, we expect two distinct effects. First, the two types of councils should have an effect after their creation. Second, women’s councils are more likely to have a significant effect in the long run, since they have a substantial number of councils to generate a majority response, whether through the lasting effects of policies or through stronger mobilization from civil society. The only results that failed to match these expectations are the results for women’s council in period 0.

Figure 15: Council Creation Effect on PT’s Voting Share by Minority Group: Periods’ ATT

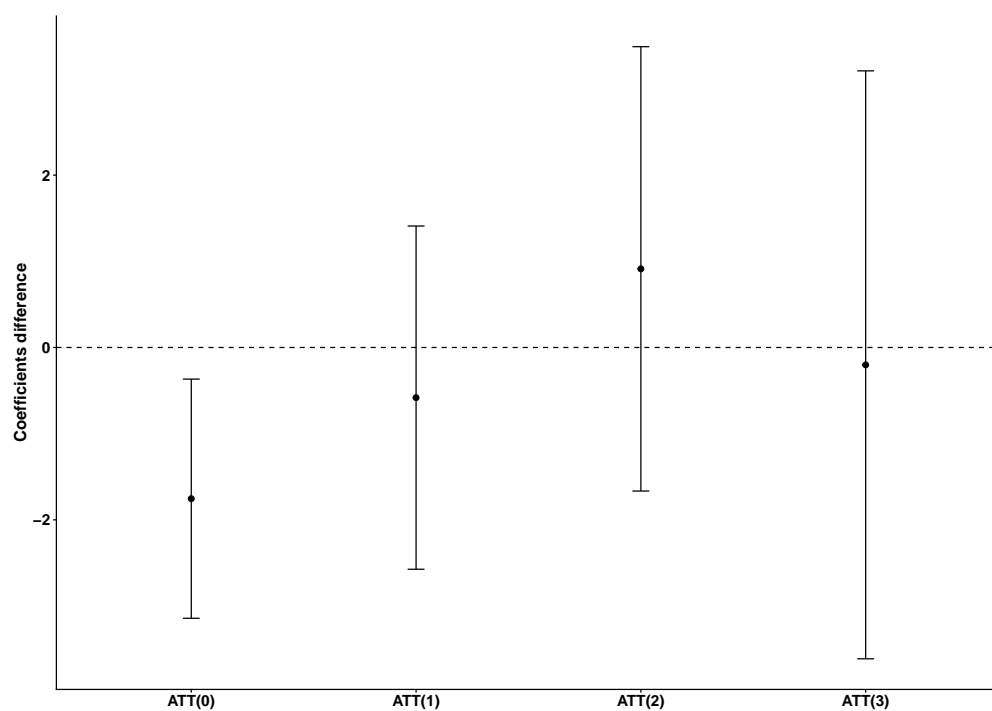


Note: Error bars are the 95% confidence interval. They were calculated with a bootstrapped standard error clustered on the municipal level (1000 resamples)

Figure 16 has the results of the test of the difference between women’s and ethnic coefficients when either was significant. In this case, only the difference between the two councils type related to ATT(0) is significant. Moreover, the results show that the negative effect was stronger in ATT(1) and ATT(3).

<sup>37</sup>See Figure 2.

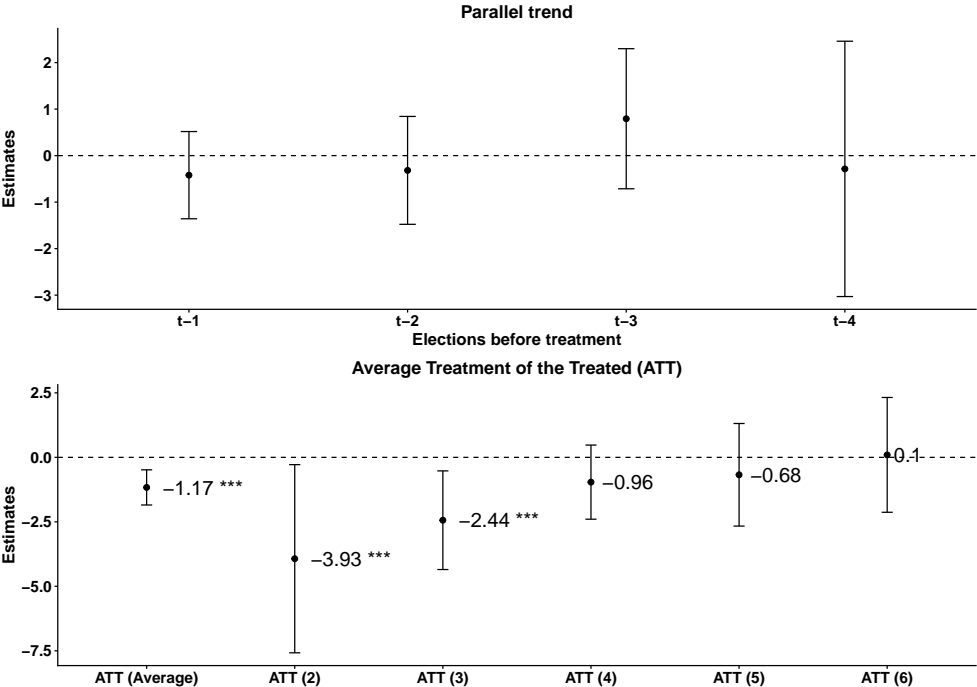
Figure 16: Test of the Difference between Women and Ethnic Periods' ATT Coefficients



Note: The plotted points represent  $\hat{\beta}_{ethnic} - \hat{\beta}_{women}$  for each group, and the error bars are obtained using  $\hat{\beta}_{ethnic} - \hat{\beta}_{women} \pm 1.96 \times \sqrt{Var(\hat{\beta}_{ethnic}) + Var(\hat{\beta}_{women})}$ .

# Appendix G: DID model with the Minorities Aggregated

Figure 17: ATT with All Minorities Aggregated



Note: Error bars are the 95% confidence interval. They were calculated with a bootstrapped standard error clustered on the municipal level (1000 resamples).

## Appendix H: Regression of Councils and Policies

The result in Table 4 shows that no interaction is significant, indicating that policy type is not a driver for the effect of the councils. Without interaction, ethnic and women's councils' coefficients are negative and significant, similar to what we observe in the DID model. Their coefficients are -0.013 and -0.029, respectively. This result increases the confidence in the main results. However, the Afro-Brazilian promotion policies are positive and significant (coefficient is 0.011). Although this result does not invalidate my theoretical argument that highlight the importance of a variation between minority groups, it suggests that policy type might also play a relevant role in condition political behavior.

Table 4: Council's and Policies effect on PT's Voting Share

|   | PT's Voting share    |
|---|----------------------|
| Women council                                       | -0.013*<br>(0.007)   |
| No policy   | -0.005<br>(0.003)    |
| Domestic violence protection                        | -0.003<br>(0.003)    |
| Ethnic council                                      | -0.029***<br>(0.008) |
| Afro-Brazilian promotion                            | 0.011***<br>(0.002)  |
| Women council $\times$ No policy                    | 0.008<br>(0.010)     |
| Women council $\times$ Domestic violence protection | 0.005<br>(0.007)     |
| Ethnic council $\times$ Afro-Brazilian promotion    | 0.017<br>(0.009)     |
| No policy $\times$ Ethnic council                   | 0.019<br>(0.020)     |
| Num.Obs.  | 32 336               |
| R <sup>2</sup>                                      | 0.547                |
| R <sup>2</sup> Adj.                                 | 0.546                |
| Socio-demographic controls                          | Yes                  |
| State Fixed Effect                                  | Yes                  |
| Election-year Fixed Effect                          | Yes                  |
| Std.Errors Clustered by                             | Municipality         |

\* p &lt;0.05, \*\* p &lt;0.01, \*\*\* p &lt;0.001

*Note:* Data from the IBGE/MUNIC. The controls are: municipal HDI, municipal Gini index, municipal income per capita, municipal poverty proportion, municipal educational level average, municipal proportion of population living in rural areas, municipal proportion of women, and proportion of non-white population. I am also controlling for the ideology of the mayor. Regions are the Brazilian five regions: North, Northeast, Center-west, Southeast, and South. Ethnic promotion is the combination of all policies favoring ethnic groups. No policy means no human rights policy was implemented in the municipality.

As a robustness evaluation, I disaggregated the ethnic policies. Table 5 shows that results that are substantively the same as the one observed above.

Table 5: Council's and Policies effect on PT's Voting Share

|   | PT's Voting share   |
|---|---------------------|
| Women council   | -0.013<br>(0.007)   |
| No policy   | -0.008*<br>(0.003)  |
| Domestic violence protection                                      | -0.009**<br>(0.003) |
| Ethnic council  | -0.029**<br>(0.009) |
| Afro-Brazilian heritage promotion                                 | 0.012<br>(0.007)    |
| Racial equality promotion   | 0.011***<br>(0.003) |
| Service to citizens that spoke indigenous languages               | 0.000<br>(0.008)    |
| Documentation of individuals belonging to traditional communities | 0.000<br>(0.004)    |
| Women council $\times$ No policy                                  | 0.008<br>(0.010)    |
| Women council $\times$ Domestic violence protection               | 0.009<br>(0.008)    |
| Ethnic council $\times$ Afro-Brazilian heritage promotion         | -0.016<br>(0.014)   |
| Ethnic council $\times$ Racial equality promotion                 | 0.018<br>(0.011)    |

Continued on next page

Table 5: Council's and Policies effect on PT's Voting Share (Continued)

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Ethnic council × Service to citizens<br>that spoke indigenous languages               | −0.066***<br>(0.020) |
| Ethnic council × Documentation of individuals<br>belonging to traditional communities | 0.027*<br>(0.012)    |
| No policy × Ethnic council  | 0.020<br>(0.022)     |
| Num.Obs.  | 32 336               |
| R <sup>2</sup>  | 0.491                |
| R <sup>2</sup> Adj.   | 0.491                |
| Socio-demographic controls  | Yes                  |
| State Fixed Effect  | Yes                  |
| Election-year Fixed Effect  | Yes                  |
| Std.Errors Clustered by   | Municipality         |

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

*Note:* Data from the IBGE/MUNIC. The controls are: municipal HDI, municipal Gini index, municipal income per capita, municipal poverty proportion, municipal educational level average, municipal proportion of population living in rural areas, and municipal proportion of women. I am also controlling for the ideology of the mayor. Regions are the Brazilian five regions: North, Northeast, Center-west, Southeast, and South. Ethnic promotion is the combination of all policies favoring ethnic groups. No policy means no human rights policy was implemented in the municipality.

## Appendix I: Further Discussion on DID Assumptions

Besides parallel trend, the other two assumptions of the DID model are: irreversibility of the treatment and limited treatment anticipation (Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2021). Irreversibility of the treatment refers to the expectation that municipalities remain impacted by the treatment after receiving it. I contend that this assumption holds because the council operates primarily through its influence on policy and the mobilization of civil society. These effects remain even when councils are formally closed. In addition, the patterns shown in figure 15 indicate a sustained effect over time. Limited treatment anticipation occurs when the treated unit does not know or choose treatment. I argue that the fact that most of the councils being created by rightist mayors<sup>38</sup> is evidence that this assumption holds.

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<sup>38</sup>See Appendix D for descriptive statistics on mayors' ideology and councils creation.

## Appendix J: Analysis of the Mechanism

I present an analysis of the mechanism—variation in social affinity with minority groups drives the reduction in PT’s voting share. I use data from Latinobarómetro<sup>39</sup> to assess how the Brazilian society, especially the majority group (white men), perceives racial and gender dynamics. I perform pairwise comparisons of predicted margins<sup>40</sup> between the different ethnic groups and gender to assess their views on the existence of racial and gendered conflict. In the waves analyzed, respondents classify the level of conflict between races and between women and men in four categories.<sup>41</sup> I coded this variable such as that higher values indicate answering a stronger conflict, its distribution is in Figure 18. The key advantage of this set of questions is allowing a direct comparison between how individuals perceive gender and ethnic dynamics. I contend that the recognition of a conflict is a form of acknowledging a problem and, consequently, more accepting of policies to remedy it—as proposed in my theoretical argument.

I regress respondents’ view on conflict by their gender and ethnic group. In the latino-barómetro, the interviewer assessed respondent gender by marking them to be either a men or a women. Regarding ethnicity, interviewer could classify respondents in seven groups: Asian,<sup>42</sup> Black, Indigenous, *Mestizo*, *Mulato*,<sup>43</sup> White, and other race.<sup>44</sup> The distribution of ethnic groups is Figure 19. The interaction between gender and ethnic group results in

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<sup>39</sup>The waves are for the years 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2017.

<sup>40</sup>This is similar to average marginal component effects (AMCEs), commonly used in conjoint analysis.

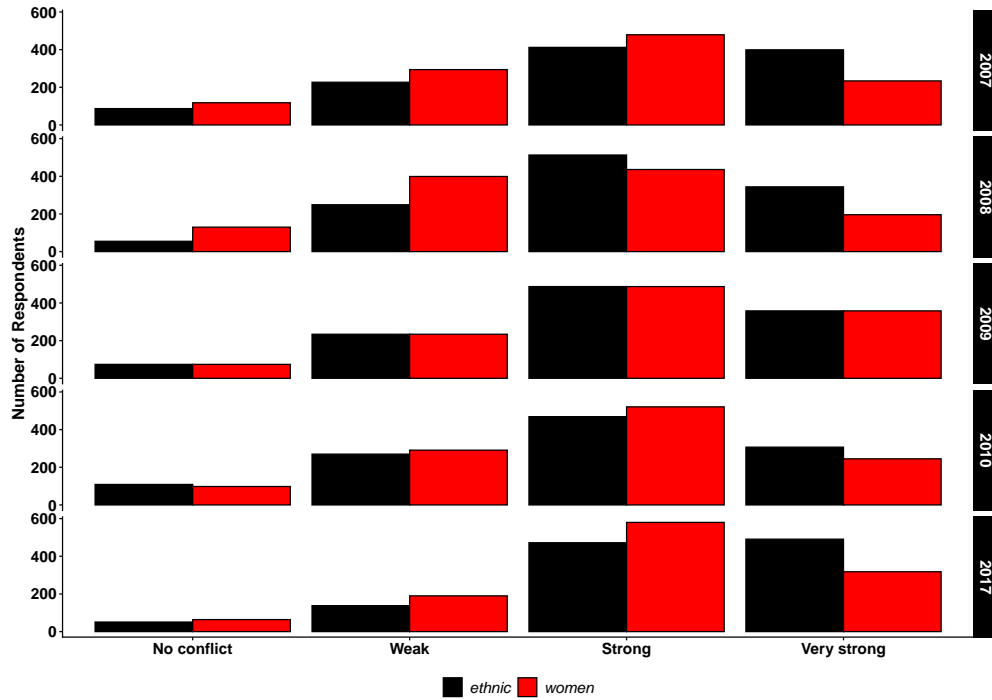
<sup>41</sup>The categories are: no conflict, weak, strong, and very strong. Respondents that either did not answer or answered “don’t know” were excluded.

<sup>42</sup>Due to sample size, I combine Asians respondents with other race.

<sup>43</sup>*Mestizo* and *mulato* are common expressions to identify mixed-race individuals in Latin America.

<sup>44</sup>Despite the census indicate that most of the Brazilian being non-white (see Appendix A), the majority of the interviewer declared the majority of respondents to be white. This difference likely indicates a bias in the survey sample or interviewer understanding what a white person is to declare more people to be white. Regardless, this group fits what the definition used here for majority (Mukand and Rodrik, 2020).

Figure 18: Distribution of Answers related to Gender and Ethnicity

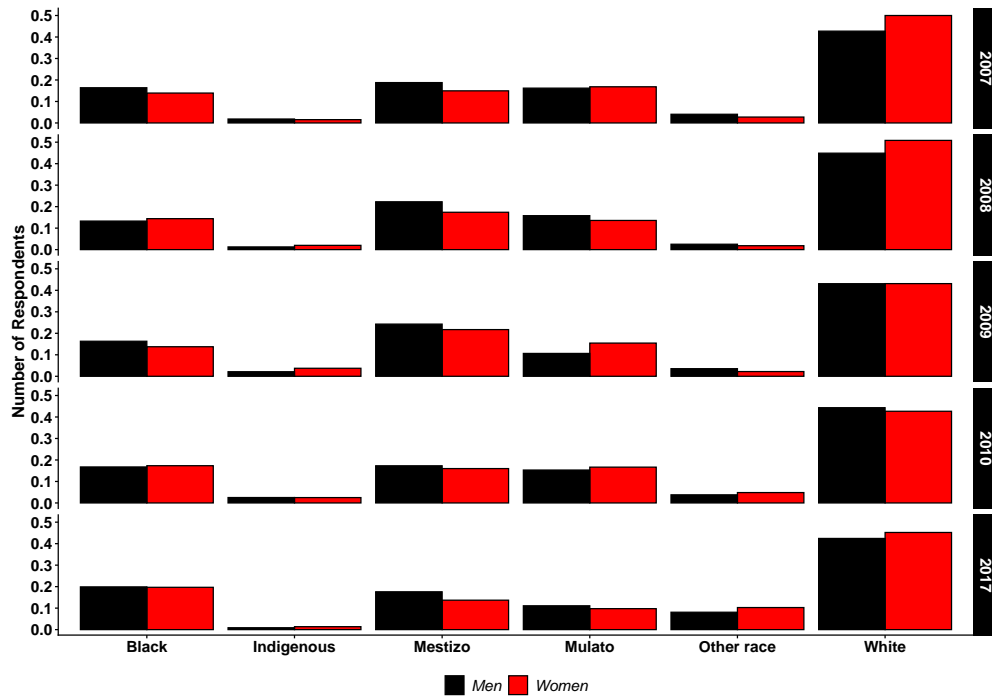


Note: Data from the Latinbarómetro for the 2007,2008,2009,2010, and 2017 waves.

12 groups (6 ethnic groups times 2 genders) since I incorporate the Asian group to other race group. I choose black women as the group of reference for the comparisons of predicted margins. This choice derives from the fact that black women are affected by gender and racial inequalities. I performed a OLS regression interacting gender and ethnic group with respondent’s ideology and education as controls. Moreover, I included region and year fixed effects. Finally, the regression has robust standard errors clustered at the year.

Figure 20 presents the results. It shows that, in comparison to black women, most groups perceive less conflict, either related to race or gender. However, only seven cases the difference is statistically significant—six for ethnic groups and one for gender. This result suggest that respondents perceive less conflict related inter-ethnic dynamics than gender (in relation to black women). Notably, only for the white men group both coefficients are

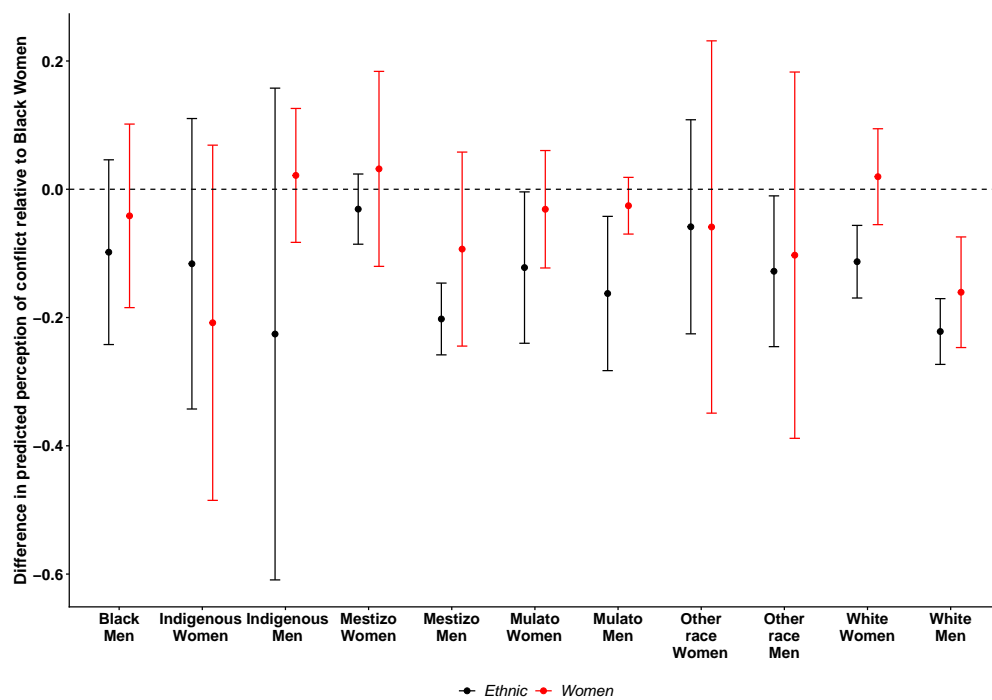
Figure 19: Distribution by Gender and Ethnicity of Latinobarómetro Respondents



*Note:* Data from the Latinobarómetro for the 2007,2008,2009,2010, and 2017 waves. Asians were aggregated with “Other race” category.

negative and significant (-0.16 for women and -0.22 for ethnic), indicating a greater resistance to acknowledge social problems relate to these minorities. In sum, the finding that Brazilian society in general, especially white Brazilians, is more likely to acknowledge a gender issue than a racial issue in the country, as I propose in my mechanism.

Figure 20: Pairwise Comparisons of Predicted Margins in relation to Black Women



*Note:* Asians were aggregated with “Other race” category. The model has left-right self-position and education as controls. It also has year and region (North, Northeast, Center-west, Southeast, and South) fixed effects. Finally, it has robust standard errors clustered at the year..