Spatialization of Death: Police, Black Youth, and Resistance

In a São Paulo Shantytown

by

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Urban violence has been widespread in contemporary Brazil. Every year, approximately 50,000 people are killed in this country known as the “land of cordial man.” Even worse, young males account for 95 percent of the mortality by homicide. While recognizing the systematic culture of death against other marked bodies, in this paper, I present an account of the ‘masculinization’ of violence in urban Brazil, focusing on the racialized, classed, and gendered aspect of the killing of young male favela residents. My departure point is the theorization of a geography of death expressed in the articulation between the production of urban space, race, class, and gender whereby state policing policies and society at large produce technologies of terror against predominantly Black neighborhoods. The shantytown of Jardim Angela provides ethnographic data to unveil the multifaceted aspect of urban violence and the politics of resistance that have arisen in this context.
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Introduction

Brazil is a nation that kills its youth. Since 1998 when it carried out the first systematic diagnosis on deadly violence in the country, UNESCO’s Mapa da Violência: os Jovens do Brasil [Map of Violence: The Brazilian Youth] has revealed that violence in Brazil is highly concentrated among favela resident, young, poor, black men. Brazilian juvenile homicide rate has registered a persistent increase since the eighties when it was 34.5 out of each 100,000 inhabitants to 54.7 out of each 100,000 persons in 2002. UNESCO’s researchers identified the following patterns of homicidal violence in Brazil: a) 93 percent of murders occur among the male population; b) homicides are heavily concentrated within the age range of 20-24 year-olds and are quickly growing within ages 14-16; c) the index of victimization of young black males is 85.3 percent higher than among whites in the same age range. Moreover, they have shown that in the last decade (between 1993 and 2002), there was an increase of 88.6 percents in homicides among young males between 15 and 24 years old in Brazil’s metropolitan regions (Waiselfisz, 2004, p.32).

In Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil’s two most densely inhabited states, the total homicide rate among whites and Blacks, regardless of their age, is respectively: 31.5 to 83.6 in Rio de Janeiro and 30.3 to 56.0 in São Paulo. In other words, the lethal victimization of Blacks in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo represent rates 174.5 percent and 85.1 percent higher than among whites in the same age range. When classified within the lethal age range of 15-24 years old, Black male youths once again make up the majority of homicide victims. In Sao Paulo they
represent 127.9 out of each 100,000 people, while whites of the same age represent 64.4 out of each 100,000 people (Waiselfisz, 2004, p.57).

Broadly, this paper is an analysis of the persistent, systematic, and qualified killing of young Black males in Brazil. More specifically, it examines how structural, symbolic, and physical violence impact the lives of black youth in a São Paulo’s shantytown. My theoretical argument is that the production of deadly violence in Brazil is deeply related with the production of the urban space where notions of race, class, gender, and sexuality inform the chances of living and dying. Indeed, I contend that the controlling image of young Black men as criminal, ugly, polluted, and evil—and the perception of black women as the source of that ‘aberration’—is the strategy by which racial domination effectively takes place in Brazilian ‘racial democracy’.

By placing Black men at the center of the discussion, my aim is to address the follow questions: What makes Black men the main target of a particular kind of violence, that is, homicides? Why is violence constantly invoked to construct Black men’s gender identity? What environment most frequently embodies the narratives of violence? Indeed, what kind of social geographies are created when the state inscribes violence upon specific locations delineated by race, gender, and social location? What are the roots of the masculinization of premature death in Brazilian metropolitan areas and what it says (or silences) about gender dynamics? How does gender count for the narratives of violence in Brazilian social imagery? How can the patriarchal state-sponsored violence against Black communities be assessed? I mainly argue that in order to understand the dynamics of violence against young Black males in Brazil, one needs to discuss the very nature of the Brazilian state. Put
simply, the killing of young black males must be contextualized within the
ontological impossibility of the Black subject in the Brazilian nation; as a nation,
Brazil was/is imagined through the lenses of a racial hegemony (Hanchard 1994)
that has whiteness as its organizing principle. It is within this political economy of
violence that the black body is read, portrayed, perceived, and treated as a key site
where racial domination takes place.

This work is divided as follow: I firstly situate my argument within the
Brazilian national context in which the Black population has been violently
disenfranchised from the already minimal rights of citizenship the state has allotted
them. I then provide a brief discussion on the Brazilian nation-building process
whereby conceptions of modernity and civility erase the black body from the ideal-
type of the *brazilianidade*. Next, I will look into how ‘racialized regimes of
representation’ (Hall, 1997) of black males inform the state-sponsored violence
against them in the urban area of São Paulo. By exploring the narratives of
masculinity and violence in the urban space, the goal is to engage in an
intersectional analysis that privileges race, class, gender, and sexuality as key sites to
look into in order to understand the multiple faces of violence in the urban
landscape. A final section in this paper provides a sample of the way the *geography
of death* operates in the production of urban space in the city of São Paulo. Here I
look into state’s technologies of terror expressed in the Military and Civil Police
force.

Indeed, the last part of this paper seeks to look into the particular experience
of Black youth living in the shantytown of Jardim Angela, a predominantly black
neighborhood in the outskirts of São Paulo, situating their experience within the
global experience of Black youth in the African diaspora. Ultimately, the ethnographic data in the favela of Jardim Angela is an attempt to fulfill the evasiveness of official statistics on race, gender, and urban violence in Brazilian metropolitan cities. Jardim Angela’s ethnographic and statistic data provide an example of how structural, symbolic, and physical violence disenfranchises black people in the city of São Paulo.

The social index of the *bairro* points to its sadly infamous records of banal deaths. Jardim Angela appears as a site of hopelessness and desperation known for its infamous position as the most violent and most feared neighborhood in the municipality of São Paulo. While Jardim Angela is most definitely plagued by such characteristics as high-poverty, violence, and desperation, the *bairro* is not only that. Jardim Angela has creatively reinvented itself through the work of several popular organizations that challenge the pathologization of poor, black bodies in hegemonic discourse as well as through its residents’ permanent refusal of the label of “victims.” In the last couple of years, its residents have mobilized themselves and achieved important gains. The neighborhood’s rate of homicide is dropping off year-by-year and several grassroots organizations have mobilized its youth though educational and professional training.

Drawing on ethnographic data from the abovementioned community, I aim to engage in a theoretical understanding of how race, gender, and class interact in defining protagonists and agents of violence in the urban landscape. Moreover, the aim is to put under analysis this hidden structure of terror by showing how structural, symbolic and physical violence produce and are produced in the *favela*. Yet before doing that, I shall first contextualize the killing of black young men in
Jardim Angela by exploring the material and ideological conditions that make possible this cumulative process that lead to the racial domination of Blacks by whites in Brazil.

I shall warn the reader that I am not invested in any generalized claim that black males are the only victims of violence in Brazil. Black women have also been participants in the national rank of violence and mass incarceration in increasing numbers. Indeed, the non-homicidal victimization of black women is also a key form of victimization to urban violence. Black women’s bodies have been objectified as the place for all kinds of structural abuse: from the plantation economy to current neoliberal turns. Sueli Carneiro, for instance, has argued that black women’s social position in that country remains continues unchangeable after almost 300 years of abolition of slavery: “yesterday we were in the service of frail mistresses and rapacious plantations owners; today we are domestic servants for ‘liberated’ women and housewives or mulatas-for-export” (218). Black women’s unique experience, Carneiro contends, has received little attention in the discourses around race and racial oppression in Brazil. Such approaches, she argues is most of the time made from the master’s house perspective, completely re-writing history of master’s assault on black women’s body (see Carneiro 1999, p.222).

Authors such as Angela Davis (1983), bell hooks (2004), and Patricia Collins (2005) also point to how state patriarchy and everyday forms of violence against women are intertwined factors. Moreover, these authors have argued that black man replicates hegemonic gender relations, what bell hooks has called “white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (2004, p. xiii). As she notes, “[t]he mainstream society has invested in pushing the notion that all that black men need to do to
survive is to become better patriarchs” (idem, p.xiv). Although I agree with hook’s proposition, my position here is to bring forth awareness of the political implications behind white racist notions that mark the Black man as the responsible party for the oppression of their own communities.

This work recognizes, then, that violence is an intrinsically gendered phenomenon as much as it is a racialized one. But the question remains: how do we account for the fact that Black males are subject to desperately high ranks of homicide in Brazil? What does this particular kind of death, against particular kind of bodies, say about race and gender relations in Brazil? Patricia Collins (2005) has reminded us that studying gender does not equate to an exclusive study of women. Rather, because violence is a multifaceted phenomenon, one can still make an account of its multifaceted nature by taking the physical aspect of the death of black men in Brazil as a starting point. By that I do not claim that black men is the paradigmatic victim of racial oppression, rather their experience need to be contextualized within the larger anti-black racism that has black women as its main target. My goal here is less ambitious, then: what I want to challenge here is conventional narratives that depict black man as synonymous of criminal. Only in that sense we can start to understand why, despite their over representation in police killing and national homicide, little attention has been paid to their destiny.

On Positionality and Methodology…. 
This work is grounded and informed by my own involvement in Black Brazilian activism through participation in a grassroots organization in the municipality of São Paulo with whom I have worked the last couple of years. I started working with Black youth in the favela of Jardim Angela through Educafro - Educação e Cidadania de Afrodescendants e Carente. Educafro is a branch of the Brazilian Black Movement that works with marginalized Black and poor youth in the peripheries of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasília, and Minas Gerais. I am conscious, however, that by choosing to carry out ethnographic work with Black youth enrolled in a grassroots organization like Educafro, I may have received a different account from that of working with Black youth outside the formal arena of the Black movement at large. The ethnographic account with the youth at Educafro, though, can illuminate the ways race and resistance are thought and forged in the context of mobilizing the favela against violence. Indeed, researching in Jardim Angela is deeply informed by my own experience as a Black male and former favela resident. It is my lived experience that I am bringing to the front line when I consciously choose to research police violence and Black youth in the favela.

I cannot advocate that my position as a “native” gives me better understanding of Jardim Angela’s residents’ life. I can, however, make the claim that my particular position offers me a privileged location from where I can engage in a self-reflective approach. Needless to say, I draw on the Black feminist which stresses the uses of one’s experience as privileged place. Indeed, this approach invites us to engage in a critical perspective on the politics of knowledge production, as well as with the contributions that women, people of color, and other

Indeed, this research is informed by what Audre Lorde has called “the use of anger.” A mixture of fear and anger provides me the insight to reflect on the systematic police practice of shoot-to-kill. The familiar experience of having one’s home subject to raids, the constant fear of being arrested, or the everyday behavior of the white women who panic at my site and cross the street making us believe that we are criminals. This is the place from where I speak. On anger as a political weapon, Audre Lorde (1984) and Paulo Freire (2002) have argued for a pedagogy of indignation that leads one to a radical reflection on his/her situation. Freire suggests that anger as a right of the oppressed can enable one to self-empowerment; indeed, anger is an important tool toward collective transformation when used as a radical refusal of a given reality. Likewise, Lorde has argued that

… anger expressed and translated into action in the service of our vision and our future is a liberating and strengthening act of clarification, for it is in a painful process of this translation that we identify who are our allies, with whom we have grave differences, and who are our genuine enemies (Lorde, 1984, p. 127).

Chandra Mohanty (2003) has suggested that marginalized groups’ position and experience “provide the most inclusive viewing of systemic power (idem, 2003, p.232)”. The author provides a radical blueprint for decolonizing the academy from the particular location marginalized people inhabit; hence, the epistemic privilege arises from the social location and critical perspective, the experience and identity that third world and people of color provide (2003, p. 232).

Yet, my social and historical position as a heterosexual, male, black/brown, working class from northeast Brazil provides me not only an epistemic privilege but also an epistemic limitation. Whilst the ‘epistemic privilege’ comes form the
particular ways of see from the lived experience and the social position one inhabits in society, I am also aware that one needs to be more inquisitive on the tensions a embodied in heterogeneous social locations such as class, gender, sexual orientation, skin color. As Satya Mohanty (1993) has contended,

Entailed in our acknowledgment is the need to pay attention to the way our social locations facilitate or inhibit knowledge by predisposing us to register and interpret information in certain ways. Our relation to social power produces forms of blindness just as it enables degrees of lucidity. The notion of epistemic privilege is thus inseparable from the cognitivist account of experience and cultural identity (…), and it explains how objectivity in historical and moral inquiry can be found not by denying our perspectives or locations but rather by interrogating their epistemic consequences” (1993:74) [emphasis added]

Thus, in my research I take my self experience as a critical site for knowledge production based on self-reflectivity on my urban experience from the social location of black-working-class and heterosexual men. Indeed, theorizing on death and suffering requires more then vindicating membership in the victimized group one is working with. It requires also that we put under scrutiny the very purpose of one’s research. Violence and death perpetrated against some bodies resist translation into words and for those of us resisting to be more then scholars in the academic setting, it is impossible to be mere observers of somebody else’s pain.
Section One

Theoretical Considerations: Making the Nation, Performing ‘Good’ Citizenship

National belonging in Brazil is rooted in a racialized notion of citizenship as it is not extended to all within the nation. Marilena Chauí (2000) has argued that the foundation of the nation in Brazil was marked by an absence of ‘the people’ as these would include the mass of dark bodies that lived in the walking line between insider/outsider. Yet while the dark people are left out of the political voice they appear in popular representations of the nation: the exotic outsiders within. Carnival, samba, football, sexual tourism, and so on are incorporated in the narratives of the nation in a culturalist perspective that both depoliticizes the meanings of Blackness while reinforcing this very category. This regime of representation of the nation is produced by a set of discourses and practices that in a different context Edward Said (1979) has appropriately called Orientalism and to fulfill the purpose of my work I will call by endogenous Orientalism. To continue with Said’s insights on racialized geographies, the line between those who belong to the nation and those who are marginalized from it produces the imaginary and concrete geography of national boundaries in which the ‘favela’ is the most visible expression.

It is within this framework that I pose the following questions: In what material conditions do Blacks participate in the imagining of the nation in Brazil?
what sense do counter-narratives of the nation offered by Black people challenge this hegemonic nationalist claim? How is the historical reality of colonialism updated and re-actualized within the contemporaneity? How is violence deployed to write and to sustain the ideal-type/the project of the Brazilian nation?

Homi Bhabha (1990) has contended that nation-building is the result of a creative work, a “cultural elaboration.” He asks: How does the nation write itself? How can the oppressed re-write the nation? Bhabha insightfully reflects on the ways the colonized disturb hegemonic codes of the colonizer through a “strategic ambivalence” (Bhabha, 1990, p.293) in which the body of the colonized becomes both the object of the colonial abuse as well as a vehicle of power and subjectivity. Yet in the question of Black citizenship and belonging in Brazil what interests us of Bhabha’s reflections is the formulation of the “other question,” that is, how “the other” is constructed by a web of discourses on sexuality, race, class, gender to exclude or fit in the narration of the nation. Bhabha invites us to read the nation as a performative work. According to him, the nation is produced and lived by two processes: the pedagogical and the performative.

The pedagogical process would be the one learned from what Althusser (1989) had previously called Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). The schools, the church, the national media, and so on are examples of the living narratives that are ‘told’ to us. The process of performing the nation, he suggests, would be one in constant making/becoming. We write the nation by performing the nation. And by performing the nation we contest, negotiate, re-write it (1990, p.297). In that sense, the good citizens would be the ones that perform the nation with docility. It is the pedagogical process that normalizes/disciplines the body, producing ‘good’ citizens.
Drawing on Foucault, Bhabha’s argument provides us textual strategies to read the nation; indeed, he offers us routes to think the ways the nation is written not only in the geographical, but also in the performative work of the biological body (Bhabha, 1990, pp.302). Yet, the questions that arise from his reading are: What happens to those who bodies are made inherently unfit to the nation? What happens when certain ‘performative subjects’ are made a threat to the nation?

These questions are important as they invite us to think about urban violence in Brazil, particularly the culture of death against young Black males, as a web of events and practices informed by constructed meanings over citizenship, gender, race, class, and sexuality. We can link this discussion to Jacqui Alexander (1994), as she has argued that the very process of nation-building requires the discipline and regulation of ‘deviant’ bodies by a technology of state control aiming to reassure the reproduction of the heterosexual family. According to her, an intertwined and historical process of *masculinization* and heterosexualization of the state colonized notions of citizenship. Thus,

[n]ot just (any) body can be a citizen any more, for some bodies have been marked by the state as non-productive, in pursuit of sex only for pleasure, a sex that is non-productive of babies and of no economic gain. Having refused the heterosexual imperative of citizenship, these bodies, according to the state, pose a profound threat to the very survival of the nation (1994, p.06).

By scrutinizing the historical foundation of the ideal of citizenship, Jacqui Alexander’s formulation also questions Foucault’s notion of the universal subject and his consequent erasure of the racial other. In the same vein, Joy James (1996) has criticized Foucault for not considering the historical racialized aspect of discipline and punishment. As she points out, “Foucault’s assertion that the end of public executions represents a diminished focus on spectacle and the body fails to
consider, as exemplified in death-penalty biases, that bodies matter differently in racialized systems” (James, 1996, p.34).

In *Discipline and Punishment*, Foucault (1979) takes the white European male subject to claim that the technologies of control of the body have shifted from regimes of punishment to the modern mechanisms of discipline. If the body of the condemned were the place where the sovereign reassured its power, now a new politics of the body takes place, a political technology of production of normalized and productive bodies (Foucault, 1979, p. 157). In Foucault’s view, then, it is discipline that introduces a whole regime of production of subjected and docile bodies through a new ‘micro-physics’ of power rather than through the ritual and theatrical representation of punishment of the previous era (idem, p. 34).

Alexander and James’ response to Foucault is very relevant to the scholarship on violence in Brazil. Their critique helps us to unveil the multifaceted aspects of violence by which the state exercises control over the Black body in this supposedly racial paradise. Furthermore, their assertions put under scrutiny traditional literature on violence in Brazil for not situating the anti-black violence within the ontological anti-Black character of the Brazilian nation (see for instance Da Matta 1981, Zaluar 1994, Kant de Lima 1994 and 1987, Caldeira 2003, among others). We may then ask, is something inherently anti-Black in the Brazilian nation?

The project of nation never included Blacks within the imagined community as such a group being was perceived to be outside the ideal-type of modernity and civilization celebrated by the elites (Munanga 2004, Marx 1998, and Skidmore 1993). The Republic was built under the eugenic ideology of purification by racial
whitening, *embranquecimento*. It was hoped that Brazil would achieve the status of a civilized nation when the phenotypical profile of its population would more closely resemble that of Europeans (Skidmore 1993). This solution would solve two problems at once: it would perpetuate white supremacy and it would eliminate the Black population without bloody conflicts identified in South Africa and in the United States (Marx, 1998)³.

In his famous book, *Brazil: Mixture or Massacre*, Abdias Nascimento (1979), has denounced the existence of genocide against Black people in Brazil. According to him, the practices of aculturation, assimilation, and miscegenation carried out by the Brazilian State and its elites had the goal to liquidate the *raça negra*. This ‘dissimulated and sophisticated schema of genocide’ would be found in the violence against Black women, the persecution against AfroBrazilian religions, the state-endorsed immigration policy aimed to bring in Europeans, job market discrimination against blacks, and the denying of access to the full rights of citizenship (Nascimento, 1979, p.75).

Within the highly sophisticated economy of racism in Brazil, black women and black men are portrayed and consumed differently, albeit alike in popular discourses. Black women’s controlling image as the kindly/humble Tia Anastácia or the over-sexualized Xica da Silva (De Souza 2006). In Brazilian literature, the mulata occupies a central place. Aloisio de Azevedo’s *The Cortiço* and Jorge Amado’s worldwide renowned *Gabriela* appears as a case in point of the commodification of black sensuality. Both characters embody the Brazilian ideal of racial harmony and are tied to the international sex trade as their y images are
consumed as ideal-type of the hypersexual Brazilian black culture (see Pravaz 2000).

Likewise, Black man is the ‘malandro’ or the soccer player in Roberto Da Matta’s anthropology of carnival and football, or yet the natural-born criminal ‘well’ portrayed in City of God. Samba, carnaval and soccer appear, in these accounts, as the public sphere where race and gender are lived/performd harmoniously. In fact, samba and soccer have received considerable attention from authors such as Roberto Da Matta 1981, 19983, Peter Fry 1982 and Hermano Vianna 1995 in their claiming of Brazilian exceptionality in the field of racial relations.

Taking this into consideration, we can start to delineate a political economy of violence that relies upon the anti-Black nature of the Brazilian nation-state. It is not an easy task to uphold a claim of Black exclusion given that the strong rhetoric of the nation as a ‘imagined community’ is grounded in the very idea of inclusiveness and horizontality (Benedict, 1983). The impossibility of inclusion of the Black subject within the Brazilian nation, I would argue, is expressed by a racially ambivalent condition (Hale 2002, and 2006) that while one hand stresses the discourse of a raceless society, the other carries out a continuous, routine, and systemic practice of denying citizenship, criminalization and the killing of Blacks. Although the hegemonic discourse of national belonging embraces racial hybridism as the prototype of Brazilian ‘democracy’, neither mestiços nor blacks are fully incorporated into the national project: they are the antithesis of the national condition. If this were not the case, how can we explain the systematic killing of the Black population? Is it possible to come up with different characterizations of Blacks’ situation in Brazil than ‘genocide’ when one looks at the “deadly physical
violence, institutionalized discrimination by and in the police, courts, and legislature; psychological terror, economic and political marginalization, and militarization” (Vargas, 2005a, p.269) against Black people in Brazil? Yet, is not that ambivalence of incorporation by exclusion precisely what makes the reproduction of the nation so powerful in the Brazilian case?

In order for the Brazilian racial state to reproduce itself, it is critical to constantly develop new material and symbolic mechanisms of power. Racial domination cannot be continuously deployed by the same practices; it requires constant innovation, flexibility, and dissimulation. This would explain, for instance, why it is so hard to come up with terms that express the genocidal practices of global racism without being labeled as apocalyptic or paranoid. These mechanisms, however, still rely heavily on supposedly long-extinguished eugenic practices.

Explicit eugenic discourses have long been discredited, but they still orient government practices identified by the rhetoric of crime, the military invasion of Black communities, the mass incarceration of Blacks, and in the (un)official public security policy on the elimination of ‘undesirable’ citizens. As Nancy Ordover (2003) points out, “[to] grasp the resiliency of this discredited but never dormant philosophy is to understand the consolidation of race, gender, class, sexuality, and nation – not only as categories but also as ideological weapons of a state committed to eugenic curatives (2003, p.xiv).”

Throughout her book, Ordover posits how the scientific and political discourse on nation-building is in itself an essentially eugenic project. Purifying the nation, she argues, has been a never-completed project “requiring constant monitoring and patrolling of literal and figurative borders (idem, p.06)”. In that
sense, the discourse on “race hygiene”, “feeblemindedness”, “gene therapy”, “health care rationing”, and so on are examples of persistent adaptive rhetoric that state control policies have adopted under the multicultural era to legitimize its anti-black, anti-women, and anti-gay crusade (idem, p.79).

Practices of policing symbolic and material boundaries in the favela are deeply implicated in these eugenic logics. These eugenics-based discourse and policies are grounded on the premise that homosexuals, aliens, black men and women, and other minorities in general are an aberration that does not fit in the normalized ideal of nation. These bodies are made to require constant regulatory technologies to prevent or correct deviance. The state is then invoked to intervene with its apparatus (military, medical, technological, communicational) to normalize and control the sources of its reproduction. Consider, for example the following statement from Sergio Cabral, the current governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro:


Cabral’s declaration reveals much more than a conservative rhetoric on crime: it reveals the ideology that informs how state’s policies are racially oriented toward the victimization of Blacks in the favela. Indeed, one can read Cabral’s eugenics claim as symptomatic of how violence against racialized, classed, gendered, and sexualized bodies are constructed in and justified as a collateral effect of a ‘necessary’ war. In that sense, violence is inscribed on the black body through a particular understanding of peace, security, ugliness, purity, and dirtiness. Here, the black body is the symbolic territory where State’s power is violently evoked to discipline, normalize, and regulate deviancy. It is within this set of discourse, or
further yet the ‘regime of production of truth’ that we need to situate the myth of the black male as hyper-sexual and hyper violent and the way such a discourse is organized to reduce black subjectivity to its physical signifier, the Black body. To read black is to read a physical threat, an object in itself (Ferber 2007, Davis 1987, Collins, 2005).

**Race, Gender, and the ‘Masculinization’ of Premature Death in Brazil**

The dynamic of violent deaths (among them homicides, suicide, and traffic accident) in Brazil has been studied by scholars from different perspectives. More recent works have pointed the intersection between the poverty, youth, and urban violence, calling attention to the ‘masculinization’ of death in this country (Mello-Jorge 1998, Lima et al. 1998, Ximenes 2002, Souza 2005). In all these studies, lethal violence among young males has been situated in the socio-economic context of poverty, unemployment, and the state’s neglect in providing social protection to urban youth. In São Paulo, a study by Frederico Poleto et al (2003) has suggested a correlation among lethal violence, growth population, youth spatial concentration density, and poverty in the periphery of the city. As the authors have noted,

> Poverty per se does not explain the evolution of urban criminality; however, neighborhoods that have multiple deficit, competition between residents for housing, jobs, and other basic necessities of life can erupt into violence, especially when access to justice is limited (2003, p. 14).

Analyzing the evolution of homicide among males 15-49 years old in Pernambuco, Ricardo Ximenes et. al. (2002), has noticed that the majority of the killings take place in the poorest geographical eras of Recife’s metropolitan area. The authors suggest that social inequality is not definitive but plays an important
role in the production and prevalence of homicide among males excluded from
the job market, illiterate, and without state net of protection. Indeed, the authors
noted that there is a persistent pattern of growth in homicides among young males
since the 1980s when a national economic crisis most severely affected poor,
urban youth. Between 1980 and 1998, Pernambuco registered an increase of 249
percent in the homicide ratio among males, with a high concentration within the
metropolitan region of Recife (Lima et al, 2002, p. 466). Along the same lines,
Helena Mello-Jorge (1980, and 1998) has stressed that since the 1960s, males
have counted for the majority of violent deaths (car accident, homicide, and
suicide) in São Paulo. She notes that in the 1960s homicides were the 4th *causis
mortis*, but followed a persistent tendency of growth in 1970s, then responding
for the majority of lethal violence along with car accidents by the end of the
1970s. In all categories analyzed the author identifies the over-victimization of

More recent studies developed by UNESCO have confirmed the trend of
masculinized death identified by these previous researchers, stressing not only the
role played by gender and class position, but also the factor of race as an
important variable in the victimization of young Black males. UNESCO’s *Map of
Violence* has noted that lethal violence in Brazil is highly concentrated among
poor urban youth. Homicides in cities such as Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Vitória,
Salvador, and São Paulo are responsible for more than half of the killings of
young people. Between 1993 and 2002, there was an increase of 88.6 percent in
the homicides among young males between 15-24 years old within Brazil’s
metropolitan regions. Homicides prevail among the Black male population, as
they have a homicide ratio of 73.1 percent higher than whites in the total population, and 85.3 percent higher among the youth population. Black males between the ages of 15 and 24 alone account for 68.4 homicides out of each 100,000 population, while whites represent 39.3 out of every 100,000 population, a difference of 74 percent (Waiselfisz, 2006, p. 156).

What are the roots of the masculinization of premature death in Brazilian metropolitan areas? Edinilsa Souza (2005) has suggested that part of the explanation for the high ratio of homicide among males can be located in a hegemonic model of masculinity structured in sexism and high-risk practices. In the highly competitive urban space, young males would need to assure their virility and reaffirm their identity by protagonizing violence. The victimization of males would be explained, also, by the correlation between masculinity and structural forms of violence (Souza, 2005). Although it is true that hegemonic notions of masculine identity have stressed the uses of force and aggressive behavior as proof of virility, and proof of the ideal macho, such explanations are not enough to present an account of how gender counts towards the narratives of violence in Brazilian social imaginary. Indeed, it silences a critical perspective I would put under stake here: the racialized aspect of gendered violence among young males in Brazil.

I contend that the state’s heteronormative narrative is also a weapon marked by an ambivalent process of making and policing Black masculinity. If in the process of nation-building transgender individuals are disruptive others for not being ‘productive’ bodies, as Jacqui Alexander (2002) reminds us, it is also true that state masculinization incorporates Black women and men as hyper fertile,
mythically hyper-heterosexual, hyper violent others. In other words, Black heterosexuality is also constructed as an inherent threat to the national project, one that requires the normalization of control over its meanings and bodies.

Here, I argue, lies the ontological impossibility of the Black subject within Brazilian society. Blacks will never be allowed to fulfill the role of the ideal citizen in the Brazilian racial imaginary as the imagining of the Brazilian nation has historically meant an erasure of the Black subject. Put succinctly, some bodies cannot be disciplined, cannot perform the ideal citizen for they are the essentially deviant others that threaten the reproduction of the nation (as Alexander 2002, James 1998, Spillers 1987 have pointed in different contexts).

Keeping Order and Progress: Demonizing Black Males

In this section I contend that the symbolic and discursive production of meanings over Black male’s identity in the making news is strategically articulated. The ideological production of domination establishes the conditions to physical, economical, and political subordination. These strategies of domination through dehumanization are expressed in, but not exclusive to: 1) the misrepresentation of Black males as natural-born beyond-repair criminals; 2) the pathologization of communities of color as places of criminality, danger, and fear; 3) the legitimation of State’s directly and indirectly sponsored violation of human rights within the favela. What I am trying to get at here is that the racialization of fear in the news and the spatialization of death in the favelas are two sides of the same coin. Yet, it is by racial boundaries (geographically and bodily) that the Brazilian state reconfigures
the territories of citizenship and the territories of death, mobilizing and enforcing racially oriented violence against predominantly black neighborhoods.

Media plays a central role in the dissemination of a rhetoric on crime that creates the *favela* as the place of savagery and its residents as criminals. Media’s totalizing narratives of violence in the urban landscape bank on what Stuart Hall (1997) has appropriately called the ‘racialized regimes of representation’ whereby “the other” is suspended in a system of signifying practices mobilized around fear and anxieties. By exploring examples of popular representation of racial difference from the time of slavery to the present, Hall shows how racialized bodies become the discursive site to perform the making of difference:

Typical of this racialized regime of representation was the practice of reducing the culture of black people to Nature, or naturalizing difference. The logic behind naturalization is simple. If ‘differences’ between blacks and whites people are cultural, then they are open to modification and change. But if they are ‘natural’, - as the slave-holders believed – then they are beyond history, permanent, and fixed. ‘Naturalization’ is therefore a representational strategy designed to fix ‘difference’ and thus secure it forever. It is an attempt to halt the inevitable ‘slide’ of meaning to secure discursive or ideological ‘closure’ (Hall, 1997, p.245).

Based on stereotypes that ‘naturalize’ violence as a black inherent characteristic, the repertoire on crime attends a logic of ‘ritualized degradation’ (p. 245) whereby symbolic and physical violence are inscribed in the black body as form of economic and political control. Calling for a reading of the *favela* as the source of evil, media’s narrative of violence invokes an ideal of order based on the elimination of undesirable individuals sharply condemned on the national news television programs⁶. Within this context, Black men’s bodies become the center of a spectacle of horror where death is banalized and violence becomes ‘naturalized’ as the only way to resolve conflicts in everyday life. Portrayed as cold-blooded
criminals that kill anyone who cross their way, black males come to embody the
 totality of evil.

The making of news on crime and the way they link it to Black men can be
situated within this hegemonic “regime of production of truth”, to quote Foucault, a
regime that (re)produces a set of knowledge based on the a culture of fear that
evokes military intervention to safeguard the middle and upper classes from ‘black
criminals’. The news on crime privileges the aggressive performance and disposition
of the black bodies on the screen, strategically manipulated through technological
sophistication to harmoniously integrate the geography of the favela and the
cartography of the black body. Indeed, this strategically placed journalistic
discourse accounts for a dissimulation and legitimation of violence perpetrated
against black males in a spectacular regime of manufacturing news that finds
resonance in the popular discourse. In fact, the spectatorship of violence in
mainstream media feeds the web of discourse that naturalizes physical violence
against the black body as a condition to achieve the ‘social peace’. Indeed, the set of
ideas and beliefs that are broadcast creates a collective catharsis in which ‘state
violence is invoked as synonymous with state protection’ (Joy James, 1996, p.14)

The symbolic violence perpetrated in the systems of representation of Blacks
is a strategy of domination. In that sense, meanings over blackness sustain relations
of racial subjugation, as we have argued so far. Patricia Collins (2005) has
highlighted the role played by the popular culture industry in perpetuating all kinds
of stereotypes that leads to different forms of violence. The media’s repertoire of
images are symbolic forms of domination that regulate, commodify, and de-
politicize the meanings of blackness. The reduction of the black male’s body as a
source of inherent deviance, she argues, is about a historically rooted obsession with black sexuality. This is the same logic that today informs the commodification of the black body: “[b]ecause sexuality has been such an important part of the depiction of Black masculinity, Black male’s bodies remain highly sexualized within contemporary mass media” (2005, p.161).

Collins’ approach allows us to see how racial hegemony has historically operated by dehumanizing African Americans in mediated images from earlier controlling images of Black woman as jezebels and mammies, and Black males as brutes and coons to contemporary image of prostitutes, gangsters and so on. Similarly, mediated images of Black male athletics and Black female entertainers are used to spread the ideology of this “new racism” that includes by distorting images of the black body as deviant or exceptional (Collins, 2005). As she points out, “the contested images of Black male athletes, especially ‘bad boy’ Black athletes who mark the boundary between admiration and fear, speak to the tensions linking Western efforts to control Black men (Idem, p. 153).

Therefore, since the white imagination of violence is the key organizer of black manhood the question of whether blacks should not be feared arises. Indeed, the answer is yes, and ‘white paranoia’ over black male bodies requires its domestication by any mean. Controlling the black male body is the condition to keep the white world free from violence. Racial, gendered, and sexual boundaries are created to protect whiteness from polluted others. Here, the dichotomy between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ boys is revealing:

This division between the good guys who have been tamed and know their place versus the bad boys who refuse to submit to control reflects the historical and ongoing construction of Black masculinity in White supremacist culture and limits the ways in which Black men are seen in our culture. It reinforces the old
presumption, widespread as slavery declined, that Black men are safe and acceptable only when under the control and civilizing influence of Whites. However, they have an inherently violent, aggressive nature lying just beneath the surface, threatening to spring forth at any time. At the same time, the good guy space reinforces color-blind racism. (Ferber 2007, p. 22)

The ontological impossibility of the black subject within the Brazilian nation-state, or even its paradoxically conditional possibility—that is, by embracing the idea that everyone is Brazilian while restricting the rights of citizenship only to some racially privileged subjects—explains the anti-Black systemic practices of violence in the country. In Brazil, the “violence of everyday life”, as Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992) has named that, is expressed not only in the bloody state practices that result in death, but also in the continuum and routine practices that disqualify and restrict access to the already minimal rights of citizenship authorized by the state to a large part of its population, notably the one of dark skin.

Along the same lines, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro (1995) has named by “authoritarianism socially implanted” the internalization/reproduction of violence in everyday life. He argues that sanctioned violence against those who supposedly committed crimes or against those outside the spheres of power is based on a system of values that subscribes rules of domination as legitimate and necessary. To understand the roots of socially implanted authoritarianism, he argues that one needs to look at how currently existing macro-despotic practices originating in the colony are fed and reproduced in the space of everyday life: the “web of micro-despotism” against women, blacks, children, and so on, adapts to micro-contexts the practices of violence institutionalized by the state (1995, p.56).
The violence against Blacks, and markedly against young Black men must be situated within this larger context of institutional and everyday practices of oppression. In that sense, it is counter-productive to look at the boundary between physical, symbolic, and structural forms of violence for these are part of a multifaceted and intertwined phenomenon: economical and political violence disempowers Black communities, leading to their desperation, segregation, and more vulnerability to other forms of violence. In the same vein, the representation of Black males as criminal feeds this perverse cycle by informing and legitimizing their physical elimination as necessary conditions to keep the white ideal of order.

As I have suggested until now, the dehumanizing discourse on black men’s bodies are used to provide solutions to the violence in the *favela*. By that I do not mean, by any means, that Black males are only victims of violence. As I discussed earlier, Black males are far from being the exclusive victimized group of violent death and they are in fact increasingly the protagonists of violence. Yet what this truly reveals are the state’s shifting strategies in killing by sponsoring and by creating the material conditions for the production of violence. We need to focus on the racialized nature of the technologies of urban youth policing and the over-representation of young Black men as the main victims of two very representative aspects of the production of state terror: homicides and mass incarceration. It is to this point I shall now turn.
Section Two

The Penal State and the Geography of Death in São Paulo

...quem segurava com força a chibata agora usa farda, engatilha a macaca, escolhe sempre o primeiro negro pra passar na revista. Todo camburão tem um pouco de navio negreiro [Rappa]

When I first went to Jardim Angela four years ago, I was shocked by the aesthetics of the bairro. Although I am a former favela resident myself, Jardim Angela struck me with its ugliness, environmental degradation, and its pungent commercial center in addition to my own awareness of its infamy as the most violent neighborhood in the world. Boi M’rim Street, location to the modern commercial center with its own apparatus of private security, contrasts sharply with the fundão [the most recent favelas that compose the district] as marked by their precarious habitations, unpaved and dirty streets without signals or coherent urban guidelines, accented by the precarious public transportation. To arrive downtown, passengers spend at best two hours in crowded and old buses.

The district does not have a hospital and the few day-clinics are constantly crowded. They are only open Monday thru Friday and promptly close at 5PM. The public schools look like prison installations with high walls as apparatuses of protection and well-fortified gates. The wall of a secondary public school is graffitied with the following inscription: Polícia, sai do pé! [police get out!] The message reminds us that the police seem to be the main vehicle of State presence in Jardim Angela. The region has four Military Police bases, besides the infamous 100ª DP (Delegacy of Police). This adds to ostensive policing in the streets and
flying helicopters that continuously circle people’s homes making, one feel like he or she is in the middle of a war zone.

The shantytown of Jardim Angela is just a sample of the ongoing social and physical death of urban youth throughout the African Diaspora. The brutal presence of the police force at Jardim Angela accompanied by the brutal absence of public services is reminiscent of the outskirts of any other mega city in the Black Americas. In *City of Quartz*, Mike Davis (1992) gives us an account of the criminalization of poor youth in Los Angeles:

> Everywhere in the inner city, even in the forgotten poor-white boondocks with their zombie populations of speed-freaks, gangs are multiplying at a terrifying rate, cops are becoming more arrogant and trigger-happy, and a whole generation is being shunted toward some impossible Armageddon (Davis, 1992, p. 316)

As the ethnographic analysis of Jardim Angela’s youth will illustrate in a final section of this paper, the killing of Black youth is a result of a cumulative set of white supremacist practices that denies the right to full existence to AfroBrazilians. Yet the state-sponsored violence against Black communities in general, and against black males in particular, is something that has challenged our understanding of urban violence in Brazil. Because of this, questions dealing with Black male death repeatedly return: What is the logic behind these deaths? What makes black males the main victims of violence? Why is premature death disproportionately associated with young black males? What do police killings and non-lethal acts of brutality say about hegemonic constructions of masculinity?

I have already addressed some of these issues in my discussion of the politics of black representation in popular culture informed by a hegemonic regime of representation that depicts black males as natural-born criminals.
Historically, popular culture has portrayed Blacks under the idea of savage, criminals, or pathological beings from ‘innocent amusements’ (Hartman, 1997) like the famous TV Globo’s Sunday night comedy Os Trapalhões to movies such as City of God, Elite Squad, among others that have invested in a racist ideological apparatus to narrate violence in favelas. In City of God, the main character is portrayed as a Black, cold-blooded criminal. Elite Squad invests in a fascist solution to criminality in the favela by justifying extrajudicial solutions and summary executions as valid strategies in the ‘War on Drugs’. These fictional representations of Blacks find their way to the news rooms where Blacks become suspect of crime and are sentenced and symbolically executed by journalists in police-news programs such as Cidade Alerta, Brasil Urgente, Linha Direta, and so on.

Yet the questions can also be addressed by looking into the anti-black genocidal practices of the neoliberal penal state. Here, I contend that policing racial boundaries and the killing of black males is an important procedure to the Brazilian State to reassure its power in a deeply destabilized economic environment. Yet, since the white middle class objectifies its fear and anxiety over the black male body, the Brazilian State apparatus operates by subscribing to this logic and establishing a politics of terror that contains, kills, and lets blacks be killed in the favela.

Thus, even though we are aware of the dynamics of violence involving different actors in the urban landscape (for instance Black-on-Black violence), we take state-sponsored violence as the main point to be addressed here for two main reasons: first of all for state’s ability to enforce discipline by way of its legitimate
and legal monopoly over physical violence. Although it can be argued that state
no longer has the monopoly on violence, it is certainly still the main brutal force
in the life of disenfranchised people through the paraphernalia of repressive
technologies of power. Secondly, because the State is brutally present and
imposing on the lives of people even though it may not be there to uphold the
social contract. Thus the effects of the state can be found in its negligent absence
in the poor communities through economic disinvestment, residential
segregation, school inequality, lack of health care, unemployment, environmental
racism, and so on.

The very production of the *favela* illustrates state penal policing practices.
Studying residential segregation in the US, Douglas and Massey (2001) have
showed that the ghettoization of African-Americans was not simply the result of
their migration to urban areas in the post-emancipation period. As they are able to
show, whites used a variety of violent strategies from mob violence to housing
pressure and institutionalized preference to whites in housing policies,
sanitarization, structural economic changes, and so on to enforce racial
subjugation (2001, p. 37). The authors suggest that the racial isolation of blacks
within specific neighborhoods interacts with class structure to provide an
important tool for the maintenance, reproduction, and control of the ghetto. As
they point out, the ghetto was not an economic natural process but rather was
created by a series of deliberate decisions that still endures today.

As conditions in the ghetto have worsened and as poor blacks have adapted
socially and culturally to this deteriorating environment, the ghetto has assumed
even greater importance as an institutional tool for isolating the by-products of
racial oppression: crime, drugs, violence, illiteracy, poverty, despair, and their
growing social and economic costs (Douglas and Massey, 2001, p.217).
We can say that the Brazilian pattern of residential segregation follows the same logic as in the US. Raquel Rolnik (1989), Edward Telles (1994), and João Vargas (2005b) have pointed to a cumulative process of disinvestment in poor neighborhoods, a lack of public policy addressing poverty, and state-sponsored violations of human rights by its police force that act as serious factors of victimization of urban youth.

In his study on racial politics in Rio de Janeiro, Vargas (2005b) has argued that the residential segregation of Blacks to precarious areas in the city is the result of the State’s racialized public policies which privilege whites and deny minimum rights of citizenship to blacks. In other words, he invites us to read the urban segregation of the black population in favelas as an expression of how the politics of race operate in Brazil to keep racial group in its place. The favela has hence become the ‘privileged’ place for the exercise and maintenance of order; the favela thus represents the modern senzala [slave-quarter], or still the “Brazilian apartheid” (see Vargas, 2005b).

Edward Telles (1994)’s study on skin color and urban segregation in Brazil suggests that residential dissimilarities among blacks and whites is deeply associated with skin color, low social economic status, and region of origin. The author notes that residential segregation within heterogeneous income groups is lower between blacks and browns (pretos e pardos) but it is significantly higher when comparable with whites. The color continuum of the population – in which lays the racial hierarchy of white, brown and black- also influences in access to the housing market. However, white/black segregation has the highest index while the segregation between brown/black (pretos and pardos) is lower than between browns
and whites. Telles concludes that segregation depend more on the skin color of the population than on their income level but that segregation tends to increase among higher income brackets.

The same socio-racial gap that separates the rich from poor also distinguishes who lives and dies in Brazil. The geography of race is also a geography of death in the Brazilian urban landscape. Because of this, in order to understand how power relations and racial domination are inscribed in the production of space it is necessary to look into the way social and urban boundaries are increasingly racialized to isolate blacks in specific localities. Here, the ideologies associated with ‘place’ and race helps to define and conceptualize space as the totality where race, class, gender, and sexuality are produced and lived. Yet, I here contend that the favela is a spatial boundary that enables forms of racial subjugation.

Jaqueline Brown (2005) has showed us that place operates by mediating and molding the meanings of race and gender. Place, she suggests, is a signifier that normalizes racial and gendered ideologies though the particularization and the discursive production of the local as a racial category (idem, 2006, p. 32). She put it this way: “[a]s basis for the construction of difference, hierarchy, and identity, and as the basis of ideologies that rationalize economic inequalities and structure people’s material well-being and life chances, place is [also] a vehicle of power (idem, p. 08).

Because race shapes and is shaped by the production of the urban space, we have to take into consideration how racially oriented meanings of specific localities came to signify crime and disorder in order to understand urban
violence in and against black communities as Brown suggests. How is the *favela* produced and reproduced in the spatialized and gendered ‘narrative’ of black criminals? How and to what extent does the spatialization of violence in specific localities produce the geography of death in the urban setting? The implicit logic here is that if the *favela* is the totality of the evil, then, is not the military occupation with tactics of war absolutely necessary to maintain them in zones of confinements?

The racialization of the space also produces geographies of racial terror whereby multifaceted forms of violence interact in a web of death. The geography of death and race in Brazilian metropolitan areas speaks though the dynamic of homicides primarily in the *favelas*. São Paulo represents this logic very well. The ‘city of walls,’ as Caldeiras (2003) calls it, is one of the most segregated cities in Brazil. Along with Recife and Rio de Janeiro, this is also one of the most violent cities in the country and tops national rankings in homicide rates. Between 1993 and 2002, Sao Paulo registered an increase of 72 percent in its mortality rate by homicide among youth 15-24 years old. The capital city alone accounted for 35 percent in this increase, and there is strong evidence to believe that this proportion will continue in the next decade (Waiselfisz, 2004).

The spatial distribution of death in predominantly black neighborhoods reveals a *geography of death* in the municipality of São Paulo. Here, the articulation of social exclusion, spatial segregation, and institutional racism produces the social and physical death of Blacks. As can be seen in the map below, as it reaches far from the downtown area as the green portion in the extreme of the city disproportionately contains a concentration of homicides. Figure 01 represents the
rate of homicide in the total population of each district in the municipality of São Paulo in 2002.

Figure 01: The distribution of homicide among general population to each group of 100,000 people in the districts of the city of São Paulo. Source: Sistema de Estatísticas Vitais (2000), Fundação Seade.
The urban space is an important metaphor to one’s understanding of how race, gender, and class are lived in the city of São Paulo; to read spatial segregation is to read how the politics of place are deeply grounded in a pattern of racial subjugation that inscribes white supremacy in the making of the city. In São Paulo, the majority of the black and brown populations are distributed among the 612 low-income areas away from the downtown area. In these peripheral settlements, the State as the keeper of social welfare is absent, while its police-force is brutally present. Keeping in mind that the State of São Paulo is composed of 71.2 percent of whites, 27.4 percent of Blacks, and 1.4 percent of other groups, Blacks are proportionality over represented among the neighborhoods suffering hyper-poverty and underrepresented in the rich residential areas. As many Black activists I worked with would say, poverty in São Paulo has a color and an address. Table 1 shows the rank of the five most socially vulnerable and the five least vulnerable districts to urban youth in São Paulo.

Table 1. Spatial Distribution by Race in Ten Districts of the City of São Paulo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Whites (%)</th>
<th>Blacks (%)</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Whites (%)</th>
<th>Blacks (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marsilac</td>
<td>8,398</td>
<td>58,6</td>
<td>40,2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jd. Paulista</td>
<td>83,663</td>
<td>90,9</td>
<td>5,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Iguatemi</td>
<td>101,772</td>
<td>63,3</td>
<td>36,1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Moema</td>
<td>71,269</td>
<td>91,9</td>
<td>4,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C. Tiradentes</td>
<td>190,652</td>
<td>49,4</td>
<td>49,8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pinheiros</td>
<td>62,991</td>
<td>88,4</td>
<td>7,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Grajaú</td>
<td>334,283</td>
<td>49,6</td>
<td>48,8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Perdizes</td>
<td>102,440</td>
<td>90,1</td>
<td>7,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jd. Ângela</td>
<td>245,799</td>
<td>47,2</td>
<td>51,4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Itaim Bibi</td>
<td>81,450</td>
<td>90,1</td>
<td>6,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IBGE Population Census 2000, Coordenadoria de Assuntos da População Negra (Cone) and Fundação Sistema Estadual de Análise de Dados – SEADE

By crossing numbers from the official census with the index of youth social vulnerability annually released by Fundação Seade, I have categorized the spatialization of socioeconomic and demographic variables that interfere in the
quality of life of urban youth, such as hyper population density, violence, unemployment, lack of sport facilities, lack of public policies and so on by isolating race as a unit of analysis. When we consider these statistical factors we can see that the spatial concentration of blacks in high-poverty neighborhoods reveals strategies for the creation of racialized social opportunities.

The “geography of opportunities” (Rosenbaum 2002) among predominantly white neighborhoods prevents Blacks-access to public transportation, quality housing, the job market, educational opportunities, environmental justice, and so on. The poorest neighborhoods in the municipality of São Paulo are the ones that count for the highest mortality rate by homicides. Among them, the monthly average income of the head of household is as low as 430.00 USD and half of the municipal income average (884.00 USD). In neighborhoods such Jardim Angela, Grajaú, and Cidade Tiradentes the head of household incomes are as low as 340.00 USD; 360.00 USD; and 360.00 USD respectively. On the other hand, high income regions such as Jardim Paulista (where 90.9% of its population is white); Perdizes (90.1% white); and Itaim Bibi (90.1% white), contrastingly register nominal head of household incomes of 3100.00 USD; 2240.00 USD; and 2,530.00 USD respectively (IBGE/Fundação Seade 2000).

As I will show, in a city where Blacks account for the poorest among the poorest populations, class position is translated into racially divided chances of life. The overlapping of class position, racial background, and spatial location creates ‘geographies of opportunities’ and geographies of death. This is further illustrated when we compare Figure 2 to Figure 1. The dark areas in the map below (Figure 2) represent low-income, predominantly Black neighborhoods. When compared with
the previous map (Figure 1), we can see the overlap of urban poverty, homicide, and spatial segregation.

Figure 02: The nominal income of the heads of household in the districts of the city of São Paulo.
As I discussed earlier, it is also essential to consider the *masculinization* of violence when studying the victimization of urban youth in São Paulo. As we have seen, the geography of death in the city follows the national trend. However, that is not solely produced by the articulation of spatial racism and social exclusion.

Gender also plays an important role in defining who lives and who dies in the urban space. The premature death of young males in the urban setting is a tragic phenomenon that reveals the qualified and selective aspect of violent deaths. In all regions of the municipality of São Paulo, young males account for the absolute majority of homicides. Among males between 15 and 19 years old, the official rate in the city is 212 out of 100,000 people. However, when separated by districts, it is again the poorest, segregated, predominantly Black neighborhoods that correspond to the majority of deaths.

The top five most vulnerable neighborhoods (see table 01 above) also have young male mortality by homicide rate above the municipal average. In some districts the numbers reveal a situation of war: In Jardim Angela, Grajaú, and Cidade Tiradentes among groups of 100,000 people, males in the age-range of 15 to 19 years of age hold homicide rates of 438.2/100,00; 356.8/100,000; and 292.8/100,000 respectively. On the other hand, the least socially vulnerable neighborhoods (i.e. high-income regions) experience a very distinct situation in which the homicide rates among young males in the same age group are as follows: Jardim Paulista (13.1/100,00); Perdizes (35.8/100,00); and Itaim Bibi (12.0/100,00). Figure 3 shows the rate of mortality by homicide among the male population ages 15 to 19 years of age in the city of São Paulo.
The spatial concentration of homicides in predominantly black urban settings points to the ways the ‘Brazilian apartheid’ (Vargas 2005) operates. Patterns of racial domination inscribed in the urban space of the city are an articulation of schematic racial terror and sophisticated dissimulation of racially oriented violence, as few would argue that the genocidal proportion of young black male’s killing as not being rooted in institutional and everyday racism. The conservative view would
argue that Black males account for the majority of death not because they are targeted by the state, but because they are more likely to be involved in criminal activities. In order to contest these claims which are informed by racist assumptions of the ‘black criminal,’ one needs to look beyond the killing of the black material body and acknowledge the social death by which Blacks are routinely made subject to by the state.

The previous maps (as well as the map below) make spatially visible the overlapping of race, gender, sexuality and class oriented deadly violence in the municipality of Sao Paulo. Based on the 2000 Brazilian Census, the figure 04 shows the demographic concentration of black population in the city of Sao Paulo. Taken along with figures 1, 2, and 3, it shows how race informs the distribution of death in the urban setting.

Figure 04: The demographic distribution of black population among the districts of the city of São Paulo. Source: Fundação Seade. IBGE Census 2000.
Keeping this in mind, I invite the reader to see the geography of death in the urban space not merely as the spatial concentration of homicides in specific areas but as the cumulative process of symbolic and physical death inscribed in the social relations of power that the very production of the urban space embodies (see Lefebvre, 1991 [1979]). Whether intended or unintended, the state here plays an important role in shaping the urban setting according to a racially oriented articulation of place, space, and race. Within this context, the production of death in the favela is the result of this continuum state-sponsored terror in which the black body is perceived as the symbolic geographic place where white supremacist practices produce its effects. Black youth killing is the visceral effect of the concrete materialization of power through a combination of territorial inequality, urban poverty, and state sanctioned structural racism against Blacks. And thus I ask: How has the state responded to Black youth’s demand for rights of citizenship within this context? How does the state re-assure its power in the economically destabilized urban space? What are the roots of the state systemic mass incarceration, police killing, and the brutal assault on the Black body?
Section Three

Technologies of Terror: Prisons, and the Militarized Police Force

“60% dos jovens de periferia sem antecedentes criminais ja sofreram violencia policial. A cada 4 pessoas mortas pela policia, 3 sao negras. Nas universidades brasileiras apenas 3% dos alunos sao negros. A cada 4 horas, um jovem negro morre violentamente em Sao Paulo. Aqui quem fala e o Mano Brown, mais um sobrevivente”.

[Racionais MC’s cap.4, versiculo 3]

What are the ideologies that orient the ongoing expansion of the prison industrial complex throughout the world? What accounts for the penal state’s criminalization of blacks and poor urban youth in societies such as Brazil and United States? Looking at incarceration as a global phenomenon, the 2005 World Prison Population Report finds that almost 9 million people are currently behind bars throughout the world, principally held as pre-trial detainees or as convicted offenders. The United States (1.96m), Russia (0.92m) and China (1.43m) account for almost half of the world prison population. The study also reveals that the United States leads the international rank on mass incarceration, with a prison rate of 686 per 100,000 of the national population. In the Americas, the prison population has increased 68 percent in the last couple of years. Currently, the median rate for North America and South America is 107 per 100,000 and for Caribbean countries, it is 297 per 100,000 of the national population (Walmsley, 2005).

Although this is not intended to be a comparative analysis, the Brazilian and the US contexts help illustrate a global trend toward Black incarceration. By far, Brazil and the US have the two largest prison populations in the Americas in terms of their absolute numbers. Between the years of 1980 and 1995 the number
of people living behind bars tripled in the US. Today, the US prison population is over 2 million. Even worse, projections made by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency suggest this population will rise to 7.5 million in the next decade. By 2020, approximately 65 percent of all African American males will be under the control of the criminal justice system (Donziger 1996, p. 35). Indeed, a statistical study carried out by Davis Cole (1999) has shown that Black males represent a per capita incarceration rate seven times higher than among white males. In the age range of 25-29 years old, the Black male incarceration rate is ten times higher than whites at the same age; in the US, “[t]here are more young Black men under correctional supervision than in college” (idem, p.141).

As in the US, Brazilian incarceration rates have consistently increased over the last few decades. According to the Ministry of Justice/DEPEN, the country in 1995 had 148,760 prisoners with an incarceration rate of 95.4 out of each group of 100,000 people. In 2007, the official number counted 401,288 people directly under state control (a national rate of 191 per 100,000 of the national population), excluding individuals below 18 years of age housed in state juvenile facilities. Prison expansion under Lula’s government continues with the expenditure of public funds in the construction of new corrections facilities and expansion of existing facilities under which the federal government intends to spend R$6,707 billion on the penitentiary system by the year 2012 (Ministry of Justice, 2007).

Why have our governments invested so heavily in the expenditure of public funds and the expansion of the prison industrial complex? Locking people behind bars has been the Brazilian state’s main response to social marginalization and the economic
deprivation that poor whites and people of color experience in their day-to-day life. Ruth Gilmore (2007) has argued elsewhere that “prisons are partial geographical solutions to political economic crisis, organized by the state, which is itself in crisis (p. 26)”. It is in fact that under the neoliberal turn, in which drastic reductions of the role of the state in the economic setting and the dismantling of public policies is left behind in favor of embracing the market’s ‘invisible hand’ principle and *laissez faire* economics, that the state needs to reassure its power over those who represent a threat to the free movement of capital. It is by now clear how neoliberal policies have generated a new penology in which the social state is replaced by a penal one that has as its main duty to manage poverty and administrate the territory through crime and punishment (see Wacquant 2002, Mauer 1999).

Ferguson and Gupta (2002) have coined by “spatialization of the state” as the process whereby the state’s effects of power becomes routinized in mundane practices under the current neoliberal globalization. The authors suggest a need to scrutinize the principles of verticality and encompassment that have characterized the state as these principles are challenged by state-like national and supranational entities (idem, p. 995). By that, the authors do not mean that state’s claim of verticality no longer exists but that, on the contrary, the state’s power is reassured in daily practices by new forms of government control that many times supersede the sphere of the nation-state. It is within this neoliberal government control that one needs contextualize state’s practices as a form to spatialize its effects and preserve its monopoly of violence in an increasingly destabilized economical environment.
Here, global and local and old and new forms of domination are articulated in a web of structural, physical, and symbolic violence so important to the reproduction and accumulation of capital. LiPuma and Lee (2004) have provocatively called this organizing of economic and physical ‘terror that flows in and around the state’ by way of abstract violence:

The violence is abstract in terms of both its opacity at the level of everyday existence and the oppositional character of the socio-structural relations between the global and the local. This double nature of abstract violence, at least from the standpoint of its victims, amounts to a new form of terrorism, a new mode of abstract domination, one in which violence is so economically systemic that it appears necessary and inevitable (Lipuma & Lee, 2004, p.170)

The growth in the penal state must be contextualized within the global correlation between racism, neoliberalism, and new policing tactics to preserve the ‘safe environment’ to the capitalist enterprise. The paradoxical characteristic of the neoliberal state here is as follows: the so-called minimal state has been minimal in guaranteeing rights of citizenship to its population and maximal in providing advantage to private corporations (see Harvey 2005). The criminalization of marginalized groups attends to the state practice of responding to poor people’s demand for fundamental rights with technologies of surveillance and policing. São Paulo’s prison industrial complex has accomplished this very effectively. With 143 correctional facilities and almost 150,000 people behind bars, the State of São Paulo’s has the largest prison population in Brazil. Figure 4 shows the evolution of incarceration in terms of the absolute numbers of incarceration in the state.
Since 1994, the incarceration rate in São Paulo has increased by 161.5 percent despite the fact that the crime rate has consistently fallen within the same time period. In the meantime, official accounts celebrate violent crime reduction while extraordinary numbers of prisoners increase and the lethality of police practices endures. If prisons are the answer to combating crime, then why does the “criminal” population increase consistently when crimes seem to have been drastically reduced? Penal policies, I argue, do not rely on factual crimes but rather on ideological aspects that organize the society at large. Critical criminology approach has contended that, penal policies do not rely on factual crimes but rather on ideological aspects that organize the society. The very definition of crime produces what is criminality, the criminal body and who is punishable (Santo 2006, Baratta 1999). In fact, it can be argued that contemporary societies have increasingly been governed through crime and punishment. Johnathan Simon’s analysis of the US policies on crime may shed light on the Brazilian experience: “we are experiencing not a crisis of crime and punishment, but a crisis of governance that has led to
prioritize crime and punishment as the preferred contexts of governance’ (2007, p.173).

Sao Paulo’s Penal Landscape

In Are Prison Obsolete, Angela Davis (2003) has put it this way:

To understand the social meaning of the prison today within the context of a developing prison industrial complex means that punishment has to be conceptually severed from its seemingly indissoluble link with crime. How often do we encounter the phrase ‘crime and punishment’? To what extent has the perpetual repetition of the phrase ‘crime and punishment’ in literature, as title of television shows, both fictional and documentary, and in everyday conversation made it extremely difficult to think about punishment beyond this connection? How have these portrayals located the prison in a causal relation to crime as a natural, necessary, and permanent effect, thus inhibiting serious debates about the viability of the prison today? (Davis 2003, p.85).

The increasing growth of the incarceration rate in São Paulo in the last couple of years is a collateral effect of the ‘war on drugs’ and on the ‘war on crime’ against property that aims at low-income people of color as its main target. Contrary to what has been noticed in other kind of crimes, there is a persistent pattern of increase in drug and robbery arrests. These typologies of crime are by themselves symptomatic of the ideological approach on fighting crime in societies structured around inequalities like Brazil. Changes in anti-drug policies during the 1990s – correlated with the implementation of neoliberal policies that deepened urban poverty to exceptional levels in Brazilian major cities – aimed to fight the ‘drug war’ with tough legislation, denying parole and probation, military occupation of poor neighborhoods, and extended prison sentences for those prosecuted.

Figure 5 shows the dynamic of violent crimes in Sao Paulo. As can be seen, there was a significant reduction in violent crimes, in the same period where drug legislation and prison boom took place. In the last couple of years violent crimes
came to have negative growth and the ‘war on drugs’ became the main public concern of government policies.


Homicides and other violent deaths account for the smallest number of arrests in the criminal justice system in São Paulo. The ‘war on crime’ is concentrated on two main fronts: crimes against property and crimes against drug offenses. It is not new that the repression to this kind of crime has targeted predominantly Black neighborhoods. Because the *favela* is the main place targeted by the police searching for illegal drugs, it is reasonable to suppose that a disproportionate number of favela residents will likely be arrested. And it is not a solely Brazilian phenomenon. In the US context, arrests for drug abuse have tripled since 1980, when the state changed its drug policies. Around 35 percent of those arrested for this kind of crime were people of color, even though they only represent 13 percent of the population. In some US cities, African Americans have 50 times higher chances to be arrested for drug offenses than whites (see Donziger 1996, Rubinstein and Mukamal 2002).
Figure 6 shows the number of drug arrests in the third trimesters between 1995 and 2006 in the state of São Paulo. Although not representative of the full period, the numbers show that between the third quarter of 1996 and 2006 there was a growth of 147 percent in the number of occurrences involving drug traffic and use of illicit drugs. If we multiply the absolute numbers by the four quarters of each year, then we have a projection of at least 120,000 people arrested during the full period. Particularly, cocaine has received special attention from the criminal justice system in São Paulo; in the period analyzed there was a growth of 222 percent in the apprehension of cocaine and its derivatives.

Figure 06: increase in drug apprehension and drug arrest between the third semester of 1995 and the third semester of 2006. Source: Secretaria da Segurança Publica de São Paulo (SSP/SP).

Crimes against property are the violations that receive more attention from the criminal justice system in São Paulo. In the city of Sao Paulo, homicides represent only 2 percent of the total number of arrests while ‘crimes against property’ correspond to majority of the detention cases. Amongst these detentions the three most common categories of crime against property are car thefts, robberies, and burglary. Yet what is interesting here is the comparison that the Secretaria de
Segurança Pública makes between its achievement and the infamous Zero Tolerance Program of New York City under Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani’s administration:

Sao Paulo’s effort to reduce homicides is evident when comparing the results of the city with the ones obtained by the known New York “zero tolerance” program. The fall in the percentage of homicides in the third trimester of the last seven years (1999 to 2006) was 64.14 percent, overcoming the percentage achieved by New York during Rudolph W. Giuliani’s term (1993 a 2000) (Statistic Release SSP/SP 2006, my translation).

As has being extensively documented, the political architecture of the Zero Tolerance Program was based on crime control policies centered on small misdemeanors and drug-related crimes. Based on a rhetoric of fear and war, Giolliani’s Zero Tolerance Program carried out a sophisticated program of surveillance and punishment that paved the way to all kind of police abuses and mass incarceration of poor whites and Black youth. Christen Parenti (1999) presents a balance of New York’s ‘war against disorder’ as follows:

Between 1994 and 1997 misdemeanor arrests shot up by 73 percent, swamping the seventy-seven judges who handle the city’s criminal cases, while murder nosedived by over 60 percent. By 1998, the city was looking forward to its lowest murder rate in thirty-three years. Complaints of police brutality have jumped by 62 percent since Rudolph Giuliani took office in 1994, while in the same period the city has paid out more then $100 million in damages rising from police violence. Brutality complaints increased 46 percent during the first half of 1994 alone (Parentti, 1999, p.83).

What was hidden, however, were the consequences of the program to Black and Latino youth living in New York ghettos. As Parenti has pointed out, zero tolerance selectively targeted Latinos and African American urban poor, “a postmodern version of Jim Crow (Idem, p.89)”. Likewise, what is striking about Sao Paulo’s criminal justice system’s claim of crime reduction is the correlation between state’s protection of upper and middle-class private property, and the mass incarceration of poor and Black people. Figure 7 illustrates the high concentration of police arrest in property-related crimes. Special attention should be paid to
burglaries as they are crimes characterized by the absence of physical violence as the victim is usually not present.

Like in the US, young Black males lay behind Brazil’s “war on drugs” and the “get through” state strategies. The lack of data on race in the prison system in São Paulo, and ultimately in the whole of Brazil, makes an accurate assessment of the profile of the prison population difficult. Yet, many Brazilian scholars have stressed the racialized aspect of the criminal justice system. These scholars have argued that Blacks are more likely to be convicted in the criminal justice system than whites (see Inacio Cano 2007, Vilma Reis 2005, Sergio Adorno 1995, Jorge Silva 1998, Paixão 1982, among others). In a study carried on Rio de Janeiro’s judicial system, Jorge Silva (1998) has shown that place of origin, race, and class position significantly influences jury decisions. Indeed, Silva has argued that many Blacks do not even get in the criminal justice system, given the high level of summary execution by agents of the state (*idem*, p.176). In São Paulo, Sergio Adorno has identified an “elective affinity between race and punishment” (1995,
He notes that Blacks have a greater dependency on defense by state attorneys, a greater subjection to arbitrary police investigation and arrest and states: “… if crime is not a characteristic of the black population, punishment seems to be (idem, p. 124)”.

According to him, because Blacks heavily depend on public attorneys, that is, free legal aid, they have a chance of being convicted. He also reveals the racially oriented aspect of the criminal justice in São Paulo through two important finds: Black dependency on public attorneys and their denial of the right to call witnesses. Regarding this last aspect, the author shows that only 25.2 percent of Blacks defendants called witnesses in contrast to 42.3 percent of the whites; among Blacks who did not present witnesses, 32 percent were acquitted and 68 percent were convicted. However, among blacks who called defense witnesses, 28.2 percent were acquitted, while 71.8 percent were convicted (Adorno, 1995, p.125).

Although Adorno’s study represents a partial approach on a single category of crime (aggravated robbery), it points to the role race plays in the criminal justice system. From his analysis can be said that Blacks are more convicted than whites, leading to the suggestion that Blacks are more likely to be under state control. Precisely how many Blacks are behind bars in Brazil today is still a mystery. What can be argued, however, is that since Black neighborhoods are the main target of police incursions, because they are more likely to be arrested, and because they are less likely to take full advantage of their rights to a fair trial they are more likely to be convicted.

São Paulo’s Prison Population Census with database from IBGE/2000 shows that 75 percent of prison inmates are in the age range of 18 to 34 years of age. Among the male population, 6 percent are illiterate, 75 percent have less than five years of elementary school, 7 percent have some high school education, and 2
percent completed college. The census also confirmed the racialization of criminal
justice policies as demonstrated through the disproportional incarceration of Blacks
in comparison to whites. Although Blacks compose 28.3 percent and whites 70.5
percent of the population of the State, the numbers show that the correctional system
is the place where blacks are over-represented: among males, blacks correspond to
33 percent of the prison population (‘negros’ 16% and ‘mulatos’ 17%) while whites
account for 46 percent of the inmates (Fundação Funap, 2000).

It is interesting to note that this pattern of Black overrepresentation in
prisons extends to female inmates. Amongst females, black women compose 34
percent of the total population while white women account for 47 percent. These
numbers should not be taken uncritically, however, given that there is no
explanation about the methodology used and there is a lack of clarity regarding the
categories used. Indeed, there are strong reasons to believe that the numbers are
underestimated given the fact that incarceration is highly concentrated among the
most socially disadvantaged. Despite the probability that the SAP survey may be
making underestimates of the incarcerated Black population, the numbers that are
otherwise indicated still point to a proportional overrepresentation of Blacks in the
prison system when compared to the total Black population in the state of São Paulo.

The most active and present state institution in the lives of Blacks in São
Paulo is the police. Yet the military and civil police of São Paulo is infamous for its
misconduct, savagery, and corruption. The military police is responsible for the
ostensive street-policing that account for a majority of the police killings: suspects
are judged, sentenced, and executed in the hands of the Military Police. Between
1997 and 2007, the Civil and Military police in São Paulo killed 5,331 people
(Police Ombudsman, SSP/SP 2007). It may be fruitful to make a quick comparison on the situation in São Paulo to New York City, famous for its anti-Black police. A Washington Post news report by David Craryn (2006) revealed that the New York Police Department has a rate of 0.25 killings per 1,000 officers. Officers fatally shot fifty-four people in 1973, thirty in 1996, and nine in 2006. Excessive use of force, however, had increased by 60 percent from 2001 to 2005 (Craryn, 2006). In fact, rampant police abuse in the US has called the attention of international organizations such as the Human Rights Watch, which has alleged that there are “unjustified shootings, beatings, choking, and rough treatment, yet overwhelming barriers to accountability remained, enabling officers responsible for human rights violations to escape punishment (HRW World Report, 2003)”\textsuperscript{11}.

What is lacking in official statistics on police terror in these cities is the color of those who are killed. The State race-evasiveness on the official statistics on the police killing in São Paulo is symptomatic of its modus operandi: outlaw practices have become the law, that is, extrajudicial violence has become authoritative in police practices. The lack of accountability in the numbers of homicides in people color has a lot to say about the hidden structure of terror that has been integral part of the São Paulo police force.

Although the statistics released by Police Department do not specify the color of their victims\textsuperscript{12}, the scholarship on the lethality of police action by Antonio Paixão (1983), Sergio Adorno (1996), Tulio Kahn (1998), and more recently Inacio Cano (2007) have showed that the public safety policies are highly racialized. The image of Black males being stopped and beating by the police has been incorporated into police action as ‘normal’ procedure. These
authors have also called attention to the militarized culture of Brazilian police force that continues to incorporate in its practices the authoritarianism of the dictatorship era. Tulio Kahn has also argued that in their everyday life, blacks are likely to receive the worst treatment from the police. Blacks are also the targets of the criminal justice system, with a 5 times greater probability of being arrested than whites (Kahn 1998, and Kahn 1999).

In his most recent work, Inacio Cano has incorporated the racial dimension into his analysis on police lethality in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and argues that Blacks are more likely to be killed by the police. By cross analyzing numbers from the Corpse Recognition Form, Autopsy Report, Corpse Removal Form, and Police Incident Reports, the author identifies the existence of racial bias both in the penitentiaries and in police action (idem, 2007, p.33).

Given the inconsistency in the racial classification, the author concludes that:

a) Signs of summary executions, which were abundant, did not show a different pattern by race, so the evidence does not confirm the idea that policemen pick on blacks to execute them summarily;

b) Police are more violent in their use of lethal force against blacks and browns than against whites. This is evidence of racial bias that would occur at the time when police decide to use their weapons. Yet it is not conclusive on the possibility of racial bias on the decision of whether or not to use their weapons;

c) Exactly as in São Paulo, [in Rio de Janeiro] blacks are more than three times more likely to be shot dead by police than would be expected from their weight in the population (Cano, 2007, p.34).

Figure 8 shows the evolution of police killing in absolute numbers in the state of São Paulo during the last decade. As can be seen, an average of 50 percent of the killings occurred in the city of São Paulo while the other 50 percent occurred in the interior and metropolitan region of São Paulo.
The killing of black males by the police must be situated in this large context of anti-Black genocidal practices of the Brazilian state. Residential segregation of blacks in the favelas, the ‘ritualized degradation’ (Hall, 1997) of black males in the mediated discourse, and their economic and political marginalization pave the way to the physical death and confinement of black young males in the hands of the penal state. In the following, we provide a brief sample of how physical, symbolic, and structural forms of violence intertwine in the production of violence in physical and symbolic territory of the black body and of the favela.
Section Four

State Violence, Black Youth, and Resistance in Jardim Angela

The physical and symbolic urban space of the favela is a gateway to understanding the work of hegemony in Brazil. Gramsci (1971) has noted that hegemony is a process whereby a ruling class exercises domination upon other, a domination, he argues, exercised by consent given and/or coercive power (idem p.12-13). Raymond Williams (1977) expanded Gramsci’s concept making a critical observation that the concept of hegemony includes but is not restricted to culture and ideology. As the author asserts,

[h]egemony is then not only the articulate upper level of ‘ideology’, nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as ‘manipulation’ or ‘indoctrination’. It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. (...) it is, that is to say, in the strongest sense, a ‘culture’, but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes (Williams, 1977, p.110).

The subaltern position of Blacks in Brazilian society is sustained by the sophisticated work of racial hegemony, which functions through an ambivalent process that depoliticizes the meanings of race while structuring social life through this very category (see Hanchard, 1994). The favela, is then the place per excellence where racial hegemony takes its most naked form, as it embodies the most profound aspects of racial discrimination as well as the celebratory discourse of racial hybridity. The favela is celebrated in popular culture and attracts tourist attention by illustrating the supposed ‘harmony’ Brazilian urban experience as a façade for the crudest manifestations of racial terror. In that sense, the spatialization of violence attends to a racial logic that inscribes terror in the physical and in the geographic black body, what Vargas (2005) has named “Brazilian apartheid”.
A study by Nancy Cardia (2000) revealed that lack of social safety networks in the periphery of São Paulo, the lack of sport facilities, and the economic conditions of its residents are important factors to understand the victimization of youth in the city. At Jardim Angela, Cardia found that the district had the highest homicide ratio in São Paulo since 1994. Basing her conclusion on an analysis of official statistics, the author also noted that Jardim Anegla had the highest population growth during the 1990s. While the city average growth was 0.4 percent, in Jardim Angela the growing was eleven times the city average (idem, p.15).

The situation of Jardim Angela has improved in since then. An official report from the Secretaria de Planejamento Urbano de Sao Paulo (Sempla, 2007) showed that the district is composed of 37 favelas with a population of approximately 250,000 inhabitants. Even changes in the landscape did not result in an improvement in the social conditions of its population as a whole. Preliminary analysis of the data collected during my early research shows that the bairro continues to count as one of the poorest in the metropolitan area of Sao Paulo.

The Map of Social Exclusion in the Municipality of São Paulo, elaborated by Spozati et al (2000) revealed that, in Jardim Angola 42. 8 percent of the heads of households earn incomes 3 times below the minimum wage, 19.8 percent of them had no reported income, and from 20 to 30 percent of the families were headed by women although in some districts in the extreme south (Jardim Vera Cruz, Jardim Capela, and Horizonte Azul), the percentage of female-led households approached 80 percent. Moreover, only 1 percent of the head of households in the district had earned a college education. Compared with other areas of the city, the neighborhood
continues to concentrate the worst social index in all applicable variables (Sposatti et al, 2000).

Indeed, the district appears in the Municipal Index of Juvenile Vulnerability (IVJ)\textsuperscript{13} with one of the highest scores, rating 76.0 in a scale in which 0 is the lowest level of social exclusion. On the other side of the city, middle and upper class districts such as Lapa (23.0) and Perdizes (19.0) appear as the less socially vulnerable regions for juveniles. The mortality rate by homicides among the male population in the 15-19 age range in Jardim Angela is 438.2 for each group of 100,000 people. Indeed, 31.01 percent of the youth between 15 and 17 years old are already out of school, and another 51.33 percent dropped out of school before completing high school (IJV, Fundação Seade 2000)

The population of Jardim Angela is composed mainly of internal migrants from northeastern Brazil. It is interesting to note that as the two most violent \textit{bairro}s in the city, data from the IBGE/Census 2000 characterize Grajaú (25.702\%) and Jardim Angela (17.600\%) as having one of the largest male youth populations within the demographic group of 18 to 24 year olds. In contrast, Lapa and Morumbi have fewer young males in the same age range, 2.793\% and 1.813\% respectively. The demographic and economic data are important as they help us analyze the correlation among the lack of social welfare public policy in high-poverty neighborhoods and the spatial concentration of Black youth in precisely these disenfranchised regions. There is a contrast among districts which is correlated with the predominance of homicide in overcrowded districts lacking state-protection of their social welfare.
As these districts are also the ones that have disproportionately larger Black populations\textsuperscript{14}, it is possible to assert that: a) Violent death is predominantly present in the São Paulo districts with limited social welfare programs; b) these disenfranchised districts are the ones where the majority of the São Paulo Black population lives in; c) neighborhoods with homogenous white populations incur lower violent death rates than more racially heterogeneous neighborhoods; d) and whites have greater chances of being victimized when sharing the same social space of Blacks as the routes of violent death follow the spatial concentration of Blacks in specific places. Figure 9 illustrates the correlation between juvenile vulnerability and homicide deaths among the five richest and the five poorest districts in the city of São Paulo in 2007. By combining the number of homicides with IBGE’s demographic data on population density and the Municipal Index of Juvenile Vulnerability (IJV/2000) I contend that there is a correlation between race, age, and class among homicide distribution in São Paulo districts.

![Figure 09: Absolute number of homicides in the five richest and five poorest districts of the municipality of São Paulo in 2007. Source: author’s crosstabulation, with numbers from DATASUS/PRO/AIM, Fundacao Seade’s Index of Juvenile Vulnerability (IJV)](image)

As suggested earlier, in the most violent districts are those in which Blacks are the main victims (Grajau, Jardim Angela, and Cidade Tiradentes). Prevalent
homicide rates among white youth can lead us to conclude that class rather than race is the main component to explain the killings. However, we need to look at the racial composition of each group in the city and correlate that with the proportion of homicides in each group when considering class as the major factor in homicide rates. Once we do this, we see that Blacks are overrepresented in all social indexes that reveal poverty, violence, and spatial segregation.

Black deaths are proportionality higher, even in the districts where whites represent for the largest degree of victimization in absolute numbers. This is seen in Brazilandia, for example, where whites represent 58.4 percent of the population and Blacks represent 39.7 percent (see graphic above). The numbers analyzed here suggest that the patterns of homicide track predominantly Black neighborhoods, which suggest that whites sharing the same social environment of Blacks are more likely to be victims of homicide.

It is important to keep in mind that there is a general lack of accuracy and accountability in official calculations of urban violence and race in Brazil. The numbers of homicides, for instance, are mainly based on police incident report and the certification of obituaries that bring strong doubts over their accuracy given official agents’ propensity to whiten the victims. Who classifies the victims? What is the ideological framework used for racial classification of others by agents of the state? Jorge Silva (1998) has made a compelling argument that although urban violence is an issue highly discussed,
Blacks; that the exterminated in Acari and Vigario Geral, in its majority, had their skin marked by the stigma of Cain (Silva, 1998, p.176) [my translation].

Silva’s argument is applicable to Jardim Angela as well. Since Jardim Angela became infamous for its title of most violent urban settlement in the world in 2000, it attracted attention of researchers and journalists from different backgrounds. Indeed, there was a disconcerting silence over the fact that Jardim Angela is a predominantly Black neighborhood and that the majority of the homicides that took place where among young Black men. Between 1996 and 2000 the district registered an annual homicide rate of 116 homicides per 100,000 population, while the city of Sao Paulo’s homicide rate oscillated from 55.6 to 66.9/100,000 population in the same period. The numbers were still worse when categorized by age and gender: males between 15 and 25 years of age accounted for a homicide rate of more than 200 killings per 100,000 population. In 2001, the district of Jardim Angela registered 277 homicides (DATASUS/PRO-AIM, 2006).

Even though the district has registered a continuous decreasing trend in homicides, it continues to be among the most violent areas of the municipality. For instance, the district registered 88 homicides in 2006, becoming the third most violent following Grajaú (118), and Brasilandia (91). In 2007, the official number of violent deaths in the three most violent districts was, in descending order: Grajaú 65, Jardim Angela 53, and Brasilandia 50 homicides (DATASUS/PRO-AIM, 2006). Here, it was young men who corresponded to the majority of the deaths. Even though homicide among women in the city of São Paulo has followed the national trend with an average rate of 7 percent (see Waiselfisz, 2004 and 2006), the distribution of female mortality by homicides are also concentrated in the
predominantly Black districts as well. In Jardim Angela, Brasilandia, and Grajaú the homicide rate among women is higher than the city’s average among the same group even though the numbers have been historically lower than among males in the same districts.

Figure 10: Absolute number of homicides in the three most violent districts of the municipality of São Paulo in 2007. Source: author’s crosstabulation, with numbers from DATASUS/PRO/AIM)

One way to address this is to question how have women, and Black women in particular, been victimized in the urban setting. How are other marked bodies implicated in this predominantly masculine pattern of deadly violence? How are they interpolated by the state and by Black men’s particular notions of patriarchy within the violent environment of the favela? Indeed, one needs to look into the broad picture of other social index that from a male perspective can not be seen as deadly violence (maternal mortality ratios, domestic violence, psychological terror, and other serious women health problems…). This paper acknowledges these questions as critical to prevent us from erasing Black women’s suffering or taking black men experience as the universal subject of Black people. To the scope of this paper, the proposal is to take the particular phenomenon of masculinization of homicide (a particular kind of violence) among impoverished young males.
Making Headlines in Jardim Angela

Jardim Angela’s has been historically reputed as a hyper-violent bairro that has called the attention of the media. I conducted exploratory research which included an analysis of Sao Paulo’s mainstream newspapers from the period in which the district headlined as the most violent in the city. I found that the news reports generally depicted the bairro as a territory of fear and an outlaw land. Indeed, its residents were marked as either passive or dangerous. The media’s rhetoric of fear in reporting on Jardim Angela founds its way in such sensationalist head lines as:

- *Jardim Angela é campeão em violência.* [Jardim Angela is a Champion in Violence] (Jornal da Tarde, May, 28th, 1996)
- *Jardim Angela: um lugar aonde a vida é negociada.* [Jardim Angela a Place where Life is Negotiated] (Jornal O Estado de S. Paulo, August, 30th, 1998).
- *Drogas assombram Jardim Angela.* [Drugs Scare Jardim Angela] (Diario de S. Paulo, 03/04/2004).
- *Noite de Blitz no Jardim Angela.* [Night of Blitz in Jardim Angela] (Jornal da Tarde, October, 10th, 1997)
- *Jardim Angola tem um bar para cada 10 habitantes.* [Jardim Angola has a bar for each 10 inhabitants] (Folha de S. Paulo, January, 02nd, 1999).
- *PM é recebida a balas no Jardim Angola.* [PM is received by Bullets at Jardim Angola] (Folha de S. Paulo, March 03rd, 1997).

The journalist discourse on crime at Jardim Angela privileges a perspective that links the ‘culture of poverty’ with violent behavior. *Diário de S. Paulo’s* news report *Drugs Scare Jardim Angela* is an example of that. The news report stresses the relation between the high consumption of alcohol and violent behavior to explain
violence in the district. Likewise, the news report *Jardim Angela has a Bar for each Ten Inhabitants* invests in an association between alcohol and homicides among males that, according to the journalist, spend hours and hours drinking. The news report ends by suggesting alcohol control in the district, as well as showing that bars will be the target of police strategies to reduce violence in the *bairro* (see appendix on pages 95, 97, 98, 100).

The fascination over Jardim Angela has also inspired journalists to live in the district for a while or accompany the ROTA at work (the Rondas Ostensivas Tobias Aguiar, a branch of the Military Police) in its harassment on Jardim Angela residents. In “Night of Blitz in Jardim Angela”, journalist Valdir Sanches narrates ‘surprise attack’ by the military police on the *favela*. The narrative is built from the perspective of the police, making an account of military occupation of the *favela*. In the text, police searching for drugs and arms in several stops of ‘suspects’ appear as the obvious response to crime in the *favela*. In the article’s accompanying photograph the residents and the suspect are portrayed as welcoming the police. Sanches’s account reads as an adventure which ends with an unsuccessful persecution of drug dealers. Here, police’s performance and journalist’s practice converges in the production of news.

Overall, the newspapers do not discuss solutions to criminality in Jardim Angela; their discussion on criminality is reduced to a moral rhetoric on war that avoids the structural roots of violence in the *bairro*. Consider, for instance, the following headline from the *Diário do Comercio: Jardim bate Cali em homicidios* [Jardim Angela beat Cali in Homicides]. Here, the verb ‘beat’ and the mention of the Colombian city associates homicide rates with a sort of civil war where urban
centers challenge each other. The race between the favela and Cali also suggests that Jardim Angela is a place out of control and under the domain of drug dealers as Cali has been portrayed in the international media and in Hollywood—another instance in which some spaces are pathologized at the expense of finding solutions to criminality.

Media’s ideological apparatus paves the way for an end to the ‘war on crime’ at any cost. The newspapers invest heavily on narratives that privilege police reports and official accounts as the main source of their news making. The journalists’ discourse is informed by an ideal of ‘order’ that sanctions state’s military occupation, moral control of alcohol consumption, and the war on illicit drugs. The strong hand of the state is invoked as the solution to violence. A news report in Folha de S. Paulo opened the front page of the section ‘Quotidian’ with the follow headline: PM is Received under Bullets at Jardim Angela. The confrontation between drug dealers and the police is used in the text to present an account of police incursions in the favela. The text reads: “The main goal, beside the verification of car, motorcycles, buses, and pubs, was to try to apprehend clandestine guns.” The news is like a police report based exclusively on legitimizing the police officers’ view in the operation. The account presented to the reader is the following: In the military operation, 1,538 suspects were stopped, more then 150 pubs were supervised, four guns were apprehended, and one alleged bandit was killed. The newspaper also gives interviews to the PM Commander in Chief about the incursion. He replies: “We are going to make arrastões [looting rampages] against criminality. Operations like this one will happen every weekend (see appendix on page 94).
The media is also invested in banalizing ‘evil’ in Jardim Angela. Although some recent news report in the district have recognized the community’s agency in facing violence, overall the coverage here analyzed depicts the district as a pathological space and its residents both as passive victims or potential criminals. The headlines “Crime do not surprise anymore” (Jornal da Tarde, May 28th, 1996) and “Crime Makes the Cemetery a Profitable Business” (O Estado de São Paulo, August, 31st, 1998) are just two example of the naturalization of deadly violence in journalist discourse.

In the period analyzed, although in an unbalanced and very limited way, Diario Popular, Diário de S. Paulo, and O Estado de S. Paulo were the newspapers that discussed some solutions, and recognized the agency of the community in reducing violence: Hope, Jardim Angela Struggles to Overcome the Fame of Most Violent (Diario Popular, March, 27th, 1999), Jardim Angela Overcome Violence and Change its Face (Diario de S. Paulo, November, 11th, 2001), and Social Action May Reduce Violence (O Estado de S. Paulo, August, 31st, 1998), were the few examples of media’s discussion on the structural causes of violence, even though the solutions presented usually stressed the combination of police force and state social protections, thus undermining the work of several grassroots organization in the district. The Diario Popular’s special edition on August, 1st, 1999 presented a positive account of the district, stressing the work of ordinary people to overcome violence (see appendix on page 107 and 108).

Overall, there is a complicit silence on police brutality and state structural racism against the favela residents, even though the majority of the deaths from police incursions in the favela are Blacks. This indicates that there is a systemic
practice in making news on urban violence in Jardim Angela as well. From the newspapers analyzed, only one small news report (*PMs Under Suspect*, Folha de S. Paulo, May 29\(^{th}\), 1996) addressed the issue of police brutality. Indeed, none of them discussed the fact that young Black males are the main victims of the rampant homicide in the district. Put simply, the press erases the color of the dead bodies when covering urban violence. Other questions also arise from this absence: Who speaks and from what perspective when the topic is urban violence is covered? Where are the voices of the victims? What are the life histories behind the statistics on violence?

Jardim Angela attracts media attention as an aberration, for the danger it represents, as a constant source of dirtiness, fear, impurity in media’s racist imaginary. The production of truth on Jardim Angela, to use Foucault’s terms, privileges the *favela* as a place out of control, an ‘ungovernable space’ where the state must be present to contain its inhabitants by establishing physical and symbolic boundaries. If the *favela* is a place where violence is rampant, is it not reasonable that state’s technologies of controlling and disciplining would be constantly employed against its inhabitants? Indeed, if *favela* residents are marked as criminals, could their killing be anything other than a necessary measure to protect the ‘us’ from ‘them’?

*In a Classroom: Discussing Urban Violence, Racism, and Hope*

In the summer of 2007 I administrated focus group interviews and participant observation with Jardim Angela resident participants at Educafro (Educação e
Cidadania de Afrodescendentes e Carentes), a community-based grassroots organization. We discussed the following issues in an hour-long session divided in two sections: media, police, public policies, and their life experiences as favela residents. Although I initially planned to conduct interviews exclusively with black males, I instead organized a group focus with all participants of Educafro teaching sessions (this included fifty three young women and men of different racial background, but the majority of them were Blacks). Since the discussion was with a large number of participants in a classroom, it became hard to identify particular speakers in the dialogues. Indeed, given their vulnerability, I decided to keep students identities anonymous; likewise, activists/coordinators of Educafro in the region who appear in this study, in a final section with individual interviews, have their name changed to preserve their identity. I began our conversation by asking how they perceived media coverage on the Jardim Angela bairro. Though the discussion began timidly, people’s level of excitement soon heightened. The majority of them vehemently rejected the stigma of the bairro as violent:

- *The favela is violent, but not as violent as the media want us to believe it is. The bairro is as violent as any other.*

- *The media’s coverage is very problematic because violence is only seen by ‘them’ as violent death. Then, if there is a death in any place close to Jardim Angela, they just say that it happened at Jardim Angela. They [the Media] are lazy.*

- *The bairro is violent, yes. When we do not suffer violence from the bandits, we suffer from the police.*

- *I’m ok with that [violence in Jardim Angela]. Ever since I was born, my bairro has had this fame and it has not changed. To live here is not calm, but I’m used to it.*

- *What sells in the media is blood. If there is blood, there is profit. That is all.*

- *Not only the press, but society itself see the bairro as excluded [sic]…it’s like there were borders that delineate where poor and violent people should live.*
As I have mentioned, the residents’ anger toward media’s editorial behavior is a result of its partial coverage that lacks historical contextualization of the causes of violence. There is lack of questioning on behalf of the Media: What skin color are the victims and protagonists of violence in Jardim Angola? Are official statistics enough to explain the dynamics of death in a favela neighborhood? What is hidden behind the statistics? How does the community face everyday forms of violence? The news reporting on crime in the district privileges a rhetoric on war that does not contribute to finding collective solutions to the multifaceted aspect violence takes in the favela.

The second issue discussed with the focus groups was police presence in the neighborhood. As my work suggests, this issue garnered very strong reactions by Educafro participants. A very common set of feelings among the respondents were fear, distrust, and anger from students from a mixed racial background in the classroom:

- I can’t count how many times I was stopped by the police here in Jardim Angela.
- One friend of mine had his guitar stolen by a white person. He called the police, and the police ended up arresting him!
- What disturbs me is when a Black male police officer calls us monkeys, opens our backpack, [and searches through] the food we are taking to our jobs. It is not the white, the Black police officer himself [that does this]. What is that?
- The police and noting are the same. We are our own police. The PM comes here only to use force against us.
- The residents here in Jardim Angola have more fear of the police than of the bandits; The police are present in the bairro, but only to humiliate [the] poor and Blacks, letting everybody know to think twice before committing a crime.
- I think the police should be more present here, I think.
Fearing the police, at the same time that evocating the police presence in the neighborhood shows here the contradictory character of demanding state protection and resisting state violence in the favela. If by one hand the police is seen as a brutal force that performs violence against the poor, Black, favela resident, and by the other, police presence is desired as synonymous with protection. The state is, then, put under inquiry for both its absence as net of social protection and by its violent presence though the work of its military force. Basing my conclusions in the discussion, it was clear to me that the youth in Jardim Angela are highly conscious about their situation of exclusion. They are very critical of the role played by media, police, and other state institutions. “We do not need the statistics to know what is going on here. This is what we live”, said one student in response to my questioning on Jardim Angela’s statistical representation as a violent neighborhood. Here then arises a critical negotiation between the denials of the existence of widespread violence in the neighborhood as represented by the media while recognizing the actual existence of violent acts in the bairro. There is a contextualization of violence within the larger reality of poverty, police misconduct, and state neglect by its absence in providing social protection to which it is held under popular understanding of the social contract.

The lack of trust in the justice system, and in the police in particular, points to crises of state legitimacy among the poor urban youth. Distrust in the state institutions’ interest in solving the conflicts was also a recurring reaction. While the police were seen as abusive forces against the poor, the Primeiro Comando da Capital [PCC], a criminal organization in São Paulo, was seen to be the purveyor of justice when I asked how the community reduced criminality in the bairro. One
respondent’s response was particularly telling: “It was the PCC that ended with criminality here”. When I asked how, he continued, “With the PCC, if a person steals a water jug he is sentenced to pay [by the PPC] with community service. Now if you call the police, he is gonna be killed. The Justice of the PCC is different, they are on the side of [those in] the periphery.”

– It was the PCC that ended with criminality here, says one student.

With life in the favela being characterized as such, what expectation did Jardim Angela’s youth have about their future in a place where hope seems to be a scarcity? I found that the participants expressed not only a desire to get a college degree, to have family, or to get a good job, but also to help others to succeed. The discussion on future hopes and expectations was also marked by a critical stance taken by a young man who revealed: “To have dreams in the favela is very relative. If you ask me, I want to get a college degree, and to get married. But if you ask a guy over there, he will say that he wants to be the dono da boca [the drug dealer].”

The discussion driven to another direction by a comment posed by another student who perceived Jardim Angela residents as being discriminated against by their zip code. Focus group data and individual student questionnaires17 responses illustrated an awareness of how Jardim Angela compared with other districts in the municipality. Overall, they expressed concerns over access to public service, job markets, health services, and public facilities. Indeed, some of them expressed their aim to move out of the favela to a ‘better’ neighborhood, aiming to escape from the stigmas Jardim Angela represents to its residents in the society at large. Let consider the following statements from the focus group discussions:

– If I could, I would move from here! If you compare this school with the ones in Moema, there it [public education] seems like private schools. Even doctors do
Focus group discussions revealed that Jardim Angela’s residents referred to the limit of their geographical area as “Da ponte pra cá”, an expression that designates the physical boundary whereby the district is divided from its neighborhood Santo Amaro. Because of this I asked Antonio, a community organizer and activist at Educafro, about the significance of Da ponte pra cá. He explained that it represented not only the literal division of the two neighborhoods by the Pinheiros River bridge but moreover it represented the social boundary that divided the halves from the have nots, similar to the proverbial “other side of the tracks” in the US.

I conducted individual questionnaires to twenty-five young Black men and women enrolled at Educafro to inquire on patterns of marginalization in the favela. 68 percent of respondents acknowledged having been a victim or personally having known a victim of urban violence. When asked if they had been victims of police violence, Black men and women related similar experiences and recounted stories of police misconduct in blitz within and outside the favela. All of them had stories of police violence; about their own experience, that of their partners or friends in general. An 18 year-old Black male recounted a personal experience in which he had been the victim of an assault and his friend was killed in a confrontation with the police. He told of how he was victim of police brutality when coming home from his work late at night. Another respondent told of how his friend was killed in a fight
with the police. He said, “I was victim of the PM. The police nowadays treat us as if we are vagabonds or criminals. I was assaulted several times. A friend of mine was beating by the police in a blitz. It is scaring, this situation. And the worst thing is that he was a good citizen, a hard-working person.”

Another student respondant who self-identified as a 17 year-old Black women wrote that some of her friends have been victims of police misconduct:

– I have seen a lot of friends of mine be beaten by the police for the simple fact of been out of their home during the night. They put drugs in the hands of a friend to take him as drug dealer.

The police is feared and hated with the great intensity in the favela. These feeling were very present among the youth interviewed. Yet explosive relationship between black youth and the police has received little attention in the Brazilian academy. This is a major fault in today’s literature as this is a critical site for understanding how the state is present in the lives of urban Black youth as well as the strategies they use to face day-to-day police terror. Any Black person in the favela knows the rituals they have to undertake when confronted by a police blitz. This ritual involves the slow movement of hands, to give the illusion of cooperative behavior, not look into their faces, showing submission, and not speaking unless they asked. The aim is to make the police believe that they are not dangerous. To Black youth in the favela, the ‘state of exception’ Agamben (2000) so provocatively evokes to explain the current moment, has been a paradigm of black suffering. The taken-for-granted rule of the law, democracy, citizenship and soon have always been suspended in a permanent state of exception for Afro-Brazilians living in the favelas.

Another recurring issue brought up by questionnaires was the complaint of being discriminated against in the job market by their zip-code, what is sardonically
labeled as zip code racism. The association between space, race, and danger in the white imagination prevents Blacks from the outskirts of the city from entering the job market. To lie about the place where one lives is an attempt to detach oneself from the stigma imposed by the assumption that the *favela* is a contagious place, one that must be avoided. The ideological frontier between purity and dirtiness is updated here by the inscription of geographical and physical boundaries in the job market. Overcoming the barriers created by such an ideological apparatus requires denying the place where one *inhabits*. Black women and men experience in the job market reproduces the same pattern of racial domination inscribed in the urban space. As a popular saying goes, *blacks are the last hired and the first fired*. Here are two revealing responses from two young Black women:

- *In my job work when I say that I’m from Jardim Angela the people get scared. The idea that I’m ‘favelada’ just comes to their mind, without education, violent.*
- *I lie when asked where I live. When I go out looking for a job I never say that I live here because they will never call me to an interview.*

These experiences are only a very limited piece of the complex social experience of Jardim Angela’s Black youth. However, it point to some of the mechanisms by which racism reproduces itself through the media, the state, and the production of the urban space itself. In other words, it shows how ritualized events spanning from the police stops to the discrimination in the job market produce institutionalized forms of violence in their everyday life. It points to how the state reinscribes its power in determined spaces by directly or indirectly inscribing violence on racialized bodies.

Foucault has argued that power is productive and has a ‘tactical efficacy’ (1990, p.120) as it constantly produces effects that make and unmake subjectivities.
Although Foucault’s concept of power would seems contradictory if one is privileging the objective structure of the state as her/his main focus, as is the case here, his formulation is important to the field of resistance in an area for which many have criticized Foucault for not paying enough attention to. If power is productive and “resistance can only exist in the strategic field of power relations” (1990, p. 96), then let us believe it is also that the urban experience of Blacks is also constant making and unmaking whereby the production of racialized space generates racialized subjectivities.

Howard Winant (2001) has argued that in Brazil the ‘povo’ has embraced the ideology of racial democracy, but they have also acted out the ‘hidden transcripts’ of race against their very racial condition at the micro-level. This ‘mass racial praxis’ (idem, p.241) arises from the ambivalent articulation between the intra-psychic politics of racism that denies blackness and the critical recognition of racial oppression. As he points out,

[n]ot just elites, but the masses too, ‘ordinary people’, engage in the production of racial meanings and actions: everybody has a racial praxis. This is likely to be contradictory, almost inevitably so, but it is a form of agency; it has sociopolitical consequences; it is something theorists cannot ignore (Winnant, 2002, p.241).

In this sense, the territorialized violence in the favela not only produces spaces of death, but also spaces of resistance for the victims of day-to-day terror who are aware of their racial condition even when race is hidden under the rhetoric of class consciousness and the struggle for citizenship. In the next section I discuss the strategies used by the community to face violence. More importantly, I show how the very situation of violence brings the community into existence in the sense of building strategic alliance to demand their claims against the state.
Section Five

The Politics of Race in a Community Resisting Violence

The homicide trends in Jardim Angela have followed a decreasing curve over the last few years. According to official records, in 1996 there were 385 assassinations, 223 homicides in 2000, and 88 in 2006. Apparently, after more than a decade as the most violent bairro in São Paulo, the district has finally left this tragic position behind. However, reduction in crimes is not particular to Jardim Angela. Waiselfisz (2006) has argued that the geography of violence in Brazil has become more complex, moving from traditionally targeted areas in metropolitan regions to the countryside, what has been called by “the interiorization of violence”. In Sao Paulo, the city registered a more than 50% drop in homicides over the last five years, a decrease from 5,979 cases in 2000 to 2,298 in 2006. In Jardim Angela, the drop was of 54%, from 223 to 88 cases in the same period (PRO-AIM, 2006). Yet during the same period, the state of São Paulo registered a 56% increase of its prison population to about 52,000 people (SSP/SP). So I ask, what is this relationship between the war on crime and drugs and the targeting of high-poverty and predominately Black neighborhoods? How did the community participate in the process of facing violence? What kind of state actions took place in Jardim Angela to decrease homicides among its youth?

Given the socio-spatial heterogeneity of the district, it is not easy to address these questions. One can argue that violence has migrated to more impoverish areas of the district or perhaps that the state’s neglect sponsored the literal elimination of the ‘undesirables’ individuals in the constant gang disputes for territory. Yet,
comparing the incarceration rate and the police occupation of the *favela*, one can argue that state has been brutally present by killing or incarcerating the sources of ‘trouble’. I would support some of these claims. What is more evident, however, is that the community has played a very important role in reducing criminality in its own *bairro*. The majority of the residents interviewed during my exploratory research in Jardim Angola stressed the role that they played in facing violence in their bairro. Community participation can be seen also by the number of popular initiatives to reduce juvenile vulnerability in the district. There are several community-based organizations acting in the region (such as *Centro de Direitos Humanos do Campo Limpo*, *Sociedade Santos Martires*, *Educafro*, *Casa da Cultura do M’Boi Mirim*). The variety of agendas in the struggles for the *bairro* indicate the lack of public policy regarding housing regulation, environmental protection, police violence, urban infrastructure, women’s rights, access to higher education and so on.

One example of the exciting political mobilization in the community was the creation, of the Forum em Defesa da Vida (Forum in Defense of Life)\(^{18}\) in 1996, a collective of social movements that meets monthly to discuss the community’s needs and demands and lobby to the state. In August 2007 I had the opportunity to participate in the Forum’s monthly meeting. About 50 people met in the Catholic church of Santos Martires in Jardim Angela to discuss the annual march against violence and the next steps in the struggle to bring public health services to the district.

After a long session of discussion, the participants decided that the next “Walk for Peace” [Caminhada pela Paz] would be focused on the social control of alcoholic drinks\(^{19}\). They then discussed strategies to call the attention of the media to
the event. A Black woman’s diagnosis of the precariousness of the public health service situation in the *bairro* let me know that the Campo Limpo Hospital\textsuperscript{20} is only one in a region that have of almost one million inhabitants. Indeed, the hospital is facing serious difficulties attending the high demand. Even worse, the Hospital of Jardim Angela has been in construction for almost a decade. “We can’t cross our arms. People are dying. This is a question of life or death,” argued Lourdes. She invites all to join the campaign SOS Hospital of Campo Limpo to “revitalize the hospital that [we] struggled for 15 years before”. She informed us that they created a webpage blog to help articulate alliance among the grassroots in the region: “To create a network of solidarity with other social movements, and to mobilize people from other regions of the city.”

The Forum em Defesa da Vida illustrates the strategies Jardim Angela’s residents use to overcome their social marginalization. These residents have creatively re-signified their reality through political mobilization; their activism in the reduction of violence in their neighborhood exemplifies strategic solidarity and the sense of belonging developed to make their claims. Indeed, they challenge the traditional assumptions that credit economic and political marginalization in the Black community to a *culture of poverty* and urban pathology (see Gregory 1998).

Another community-based organization present in Jardim Angela, is Educafro— (*Educação e Cidadania de Afrodescendentes e Carente*), a grassroots organization focused on black and poor youth. With more than 10,000 Black youth and poor whites organized into 186 nuclei based in the city of São Paulo, Educafro’s main goal is the organization of marginalized youth in the struggle for affirmative action in the job market and in Brazil’s public ‘whitened’ universities. Since its
creation in 1992, the grassroots movement has struggled along two fronts: officially it has pressured the Brazilian government to pass a law to create affirmative action through quotas in public universities, government agencies, and commercial businesses for Blacks and indigenous peoples. It has contested everyday racism and police brutality against youth in São Paulo’s ghettos by creating educational training programs to improve the chances of poor youth to access a university education, the job market and to develop their own means of expression. Indeed, Educafro has used the legal aparatus itself to confront Brazilian state institutions such as the University of São Paulo and the Bank of Brazil (among others) to take a stand against institutional racism.

In Jardim Angela, Educafro has organized a network of formal and informal education programs, job market training programs, and ‘aulas de cidadania’ [citizenship classes] to make Black youth aware of their rights and the legal procedure to approach police abuse. Although the organization is committed to embracing the struggle for democratization of public universities by expanding access to every single poor student, it has taken a “radical option” through the inclusion of black youth. The youth which attend Educafro programs in Jardim Angela also participate in the affirmative action programs developed in a partnership with private universities. This partnership has it made possible for more than 5,000 young poor people to get college degrees in Sao Paulo for the past ten years. Currently, more than 3,000 students are enrolled in a college program in the state.

Based on a Freirian pedagogy, Educafro political project privileges solidarity as important tool to empower Black and poor people. Each person that participates in the grassroots organization contributes to advancing the struggle. These include
teachers, community organizers, and former students who share their knowledge and time to help prepare students for entrance in public or private universities and in the job market. Students that get a fellowship become coordinators and usually open a new Educafro’s center, thus multiplying the chances for new students. The solidarity based on class, gender, and race goes beyond the rhetoric of volunteering that marks our moment. Solidarity at Educafro is used as tool to broaden political mobilizations. The street is as important as the classroom. The critical pedagogy in the classroom incorporates not only traditional academic disciplines of mathematics, physics, or literature, but also Black history, citizenship, reading media critically, and so on. The space of the classroom is where protests are planned, claims are forged, and alliance with the other one hundred and eighty-five nuclei is made.

Social movements like Educafro are also more than just a group of people getting around to making claims for better conditions of life. Educafro and other grassroots organizations points to not only a better world, but to a different world. Conscious about the limits of its own political agenda, Educafro has stressed the necessity to think beyond the capitalist framework towards the liberation of the Black people. To struggle for the inclusion of Black people in the capitalist society is necessary, but it is only part of the process toward a different world. A more inclusive socialist-informed philosophy appears side-by-side with the demands made apparently in capitalist terms. In a world poor of political vision and imagination, their discourses and praxis of social transformation incorporates art, poetry, spirituality, and politics in a creative concoction. Although far from being a fully progressive social movement, Educafro brings to the surface what Robin Kelley calls by “incubator of new knowledge” (2002, p.8) for embodying transformative
potential around the struggle for self-affirmation among Black youth and for the refusal of the given reality within the limitations of grassroots methodology and its being headed by heterosexual [Black] men. As the songs which they chant at protests boldly claims, “A new day will come, a new sky, a new earth, a new sea. It will be in this day that the oppressed will sing liberty in a single voice” [irá chegar um novo dia, um novo ceu, uma nova terra e um novo mar. E neste dia os oprimidos em uma só voz a liberdade irão cantar].

Reclaiming citizenship from the state is part of the struggle carried out by Educafro, but is not the only one. In the process of reclaiming full citizenship, the grassroots organization also promotes self-esteem among Afro-Brazilian youth enrolled in its projects. Co-responsibility over the destiny of others is encouraged by stressing the roots of Black solidarity to maroon communities like the Quilombo dos Palmares. “Educafro is a quilombo”, is inscribed at the NGO’s main office in São Paulo’s downtown area. Cohesion with other movements is made by exchanging knowledge, incorporating other movements’ agendas, and sharing the gains with participants in other community-based organizations (for example fellowships in private universities). The struggle for land rights, the prison population, and health services, for example, are part of the agenda of Educafro in dialogue with the Landless Peasants Movement (MST), Santo Dias Center for Human Rights, Pastoral Carceraria, and the Students National Union (UNE) among others.

The process of promoting self-esteem among Black youth is twofold: non-conventional pedagogies focus on Afro-descendant and Afro-Brazilian history. Each weekend, students discuss topics relates to human rights, gender, reproductive rights, police brutality, and so on, based on an interdisciplinary approach. In the
process of preparing for manifestations and protests for affirmative action, against
the price of public transportation, or against police brutality, racial consciousness
arises as a byproduct of these collective claims. Individuals discover themselves
through a process of racial belonging by engaging in these practices of identification
with the experience of others.

At Educafro, the different life histories of urban youth intersect.
Contradicting the official statistics on Jardim Angela, José Pedro, a 25 years old
Black male, struggles for getting his college degree in a private university in São
Paulo. The only one to go to college in his family, Pedro is a 4th year law student
thanks to a partnership between Educafro and a private university in the South Zone
of Sao Paulo. Pedro divides his time on Mondays through Fridays between his work
in the day and the university at night. Yet, every weekend he shares his free time
with the community by teaching Brazilian Literature to Educafro’s students in
Jardim Angela. When asked why he decided to study Law, he sharply responds:

– I decided to get a law degree to help people in my community demand their
  rights. I think when we get access to higher education we will debate equally
  with the cultural elite of our country. We need the cultural liberation that only
  education can give us.

Along the same line, Silvia Santos, another former Educafro student, is one
of the coordinators of the Educafro program in Jardim Angela. Silvia is fluent in
English and got a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration in one of the best
private university in Business the city of São Paulo but it was not enough. After two
years of she got her degree, she found herself unemployed and in debt with the
university. Even though she received a fifty percent fellowship for her tuition, her
salary as a sales clerk was not enough for her to pay the tuition in the university.
Silvia tells me that she does not feel that her skin color or residence in Jardim Angela played a role in the difficulties she faced entrance in the job market or in getting a college education. Her hesitation in naming the practices that prevented her from getting in the job or work easily in the public university contrasts with her involvement in the Educafro and her advocacy for affirmative action and racial equality. Her action, along with the volunteer work of others fifteen activists, is to offer educational and professional training to approximately 100 Blacks and poor whites that every Saturday occupy the public school aiming to enter in the highly racially stratified public universities.

By looking at her commitment to the struggle against racial inequalities in the educational system, we can say that Silvia is nevertheless ‘hyperconscious’ about the ‘cost of being AfroBrazilian,’ even though she prefers not to identify it as such. When I would ask her why she continues struggling for the community in Educafro’s project if she already got her degree, she replied:

– Today, I do not live here. I have moved to another neighborhood. But I come every Saturday because here is my space, here is my place. Here I was born, here I lived, and it is here that I want to help. Our project here is very important, you know. The youth of Jardim Angela’s self-esteem is dragged through the floor [na sola do pé]. Not for everybody, of course, but for the majority, yes, for sure. Because of that we opened this nucleus here.

Here, Blackness takes the form of racial solidarity in which the sharing of a same root of oppression creates the condition for a strategic identification and a feeling of belonging. The self-identification with the people of Jardim Angela also makes Silvia a vehicle of hope to other youth in the district. She presents herself as someone that overcame difficulty and struggled for her place. Even before finishing her Bachelor’s degree, she organized the community and created the Educafro
nucleus in the *bairro*. Today, three other nuclei have been formed in the district by her former students who have now entered the university.

Vagner Faustino, a 23 years old Black male, also spends his weekends at Educafro’s group in the region. Vagner is volunteer biology teacher and a college senior thanks to the Brazilian government program called *Universidade Para Todos* which provides scholarship to poor and Black youth in private universities. I asked Vagner how he identifies himself and Blackness meant for him:

– *I’m Black. I discovered that I am Black with the piadinhas de mau gosto [bad jokes] in the school. I always studied in public school. The first time I noticed prejudice against me was in the 7th series [elementary school] when the professor told me that I should study hard like a white [person].*

Vagner’s life experience as a teenage victim of racist jokes provided the context for the ‘discovery’ of his Blackness. The teacher and his classmates reminded him of his place in the classroom and in society. Here, the school is the place where racial understanding arose in a process of self-discovery and negotiation of meanings of Blackness. It is also the metaphoric place where Blackness needs to be denied to become a successful student and “to study as a white.”

Vagner’s life trajectory is a common story to the students in the focus group. The experience with the police that those students shared was also part of his own experience. He made an effort to recall the first time he had an ‘encounter’ with the police at the age of sixteen:

– *I was stopped by the police even though I was in front of my house, can you believe it? I was running from inside my house and when I went out there were a lot of police officers surrounding the house. They thought I were a thief, I guess. I was 16 years old at this time.*
Given his two recollections of racial discrimination, I asked him what advantages he gained in recognizing himself as a Black person and if his experience had been marked by prejudice and discrimination in general. He responded,

- I like to be Black, but there is some disadvantage, between quotation marks, you know? …because you note the difference. I have entered in some places that people look at me in a different way. There is a preconceived idea that you do not study, do not work…. I see that as a real disadvantage. When I was looking for a job, I felt that.

Discrimination when looking for a job was another experience that came up over and over in my interviews with youth in Jardim Angela. Indeed, this was one of Silvia's concerns despite having earned a bachelor’s degree and fluently speaking a second language, thus finding herself unemployed. The job market is the other arena where racial domination expresses itself in São Paulo. In the highly competitive economic scenario of the city, Blacks are disqualified. A Dieese’s research on income and occupation in São Paulo, for instance, has shown that 25% of Black males 15 years old or older are unemployed in the metropolitan region of São Paulo. Among Black women in the same range age the numbers were worse as 31. 3% of them are out of the job market (Fundação Dieese, 2006).

Here structural, symbolic, and physical violence are interconnected in the production of the Black experience in the favela. The school and the police are the two main entities whereby the state has been present in the lives of Silvia, Pedro, and Vagner. But violence may not always appear in their conversation as explicitly interconnected to these factors. Discussions of violence most of the time appears through discussion of violent acts that threaten to life. The struggle for keeping oneself alive in a dangerous environment makes death a central component in the
urban experience of Black youth. The experience of premature death appears Vagner recollection of a friend’s murder in the *favela*

> Some of my friends, and people that studied with me got killed very young. One died in front of the house I live today, other died in the street below my house. They got involved with drugs and ended up killed by their own friends.

Silvia and Pedro, and Vagner’s trajectories of life need more attention than can be given in this brief description. Their lives help us to understand how the experiences of young Black women and men in the *favela* shape and are shaped by the multiple faces of violence; indeed, their lives help us to see them not only as victims, but also as agents of social transformation. Moreover, they can also help us understand the ambivalent processes by which race is hidden, negotiated, and lived in everyday life. The way the community organized itself to face violence and to challenge the state in a very creative way (in Educafro’s case providing educational training) is also central to one understanding of how people resist marginalization in the *favela*. Ultimately, the strategies used by Jardim Angela’s residents in facing state-sponsored multifaceted violence (unemployment, lack of education, residential segregation, police brutality, precarious health service, horrendous public transportation, environmental degradation and so on) informs us about their solidarity, political strategies, and their consciousness of being oppressed.

The political claims of Jardim Angela’s residents are not always structured in racial terms, with the exception of a few organizations like Educafro which clearly engage with hegemonic discourses of the Black Movement. Black people respond differently to the racial terror in the *favela*. The struggle to claim basic services and facilities from the state embraces a multifaceted political collision that goes beyond the political rhetoric of the Black movement. Yet the hesitation of some of the
community-based organizations to embraces ‘race’ as political category does not imply that their struggle has nothing to do with race. On the contrary, their political and economical subordination is structured on racial terms. Yet the conundrum here is that such a category is deeply grounded on class, place, gender, and so on. Their claims may sometimes privilege one dimension, usually class, as a driving force for broad collision. The strategy at Educafé, for instance, was to embrace class and racial identity side-by-side from the very beginning as strategically located discourses to garner people around specific demands.

In Catching Hell in The City of Los Angeles João Costa Vargas (2006) has argued that Blackness is contradictory in political making for it embraces politics that sometimes excludes others in name of an ‘authentic’ identity. Indeed, sometimes it takes an individualistic, or a short-term group solidarity for the purposed of strategic mobilization. Blackness derives from, but is not determinates of political projects, he argues: “…the experience of Blackness at times points to the necessity of inventing identities that are based on politics, rather than inventing politics that are exclusively based on identities (idem, p. 216)”.

Jardim Angela residents’ political claim for full rights of citizenship embraces the contradictions expressed by Vargas. Many of the claims are apparently detached from the notion of racial identity, since the mobilization occur in apparently neutral spheres such as the claims for a new hospital, the denouncement of police abuse, and the strategies to overcome poverty. Yet, in the process of political mobilization blackness rises is a creative and dynamic pedagogy based on the lived experience of Blacks and other marginalized identities within the favela.
In that sense, the poor young women and men that come to Educafro aiming to get a fellowship in a private university give meanings to their experience, signify blackness, and create strategic coalitions by instrumentalizing their political identity as a tool to mobilize themselves toward social justice. That they use the very legal grammar of the State to make themselves be heard, and that they practices are sometimes based on a precarious equilibrium, indicates the blackness is not a sterile or static concept but is rather a self-reinvention in the an everyday, and above all a ‘praxis’ in the sense that it builds knowledge/action based on a common experience.

There is something else to be said about Black mobilizing against the neoliberal state. In a different context, Charles Hale (2002) has argued that under neoliberal multiculturalism (idem, p.487) indigenous groups have accumulated some important gains in the arena of cultural rights while continuing to be marginalized from full participation in processes of decision. The racial reform imposed by the neoliberal state also opened some important political spaces and strategic concessions. In that sense, indigenous groups find themselves in an ambiguous space between the contradictions that neoliberalism embraces and the strategic concessions it provides. Hale argues that indigenous groups should occupy the spaces opened by neoliberal multiculturalism and at the same time exercise pressure for further transformations (Hale, 2002, p.522).

In reality, indigenous groups have done that as have Afro Brazilians. The process of claiming to be part of the world and gaining full citizenship is marked by an ambivalent process whereby people use the legal grammar of the state to challenge state practices that disenfranchise them; the struggle for affirmative action in the public sector and in public universities embraces this contradictory and
strategic space occupied by Black activists in the national level. There is no doubt that racial quotas are limited solutions to structural inequalities within the anti-Black state. However, the struggle for affirmative action embodies more than that: the struggle in itself is a process of self-making and collective-making that challenges the nature of the racial state and opens new avenues toward radical transformations.

In Jardim Angela, the demands for public transportation, safety, public health services, and so on by its residents challenge the abstract concept of citizenship and reshape it toward a substantive one in which its material dimension is stressed. The Forum in Defense of Life, Educafro’s educational training to Black and poor youth, and other countless grassroots organizations in the bairro express the culture of life, the persistency in surviving and the re-invention forms of sociability where state’s technologies of terror produce death.
Conclusion

In this paper I contextualize the premature death of Black young males within the very foundation of the Brazilian national project. The Brazilian nation as we have it now is a ‘community imagined’ for and by whites. Although the hegemonic discourse of national belonging embraces the ‘fable of the three races’ (Da Matta, 1983), the anti-Black nature of this project is expressed in the physical, political, and economical subordination of this group. By looking into the racialized dimensions of urban violence in São Paulo, the paper suggests that the spatialization of death in predominantly black neighborhoods should be read as the strategies by which white supremacy expresses itself. Ultimately, the killing of black males by the police is also part of the neoliberal state strategies; in an environment of economic instability and intensified of struggles for rights of citizenship for disenfranchised groups, the state needs to reassure its power by responding with greater disempowerment, mass incarceration, and killing to the demands of Black youth for access to the rights of citizenship. Rather than seeing manifestations of racialized violence as independent, the paper encourages the reader to see physical, structural, and symbolic practices as intertwined factors that produce terror and desperation by disempowering, dehumanizing, and killing the black body. In that sense, the politics of representation in the mass media, the everyday discourse, and state policing practices are part of this web of terror by which Blacks have been erased from the nation.

A final word: the study of case at Jardim Angela represents a partial perspective from a very particular point of view. Like São Paulo itself, Jardim Angela is a very diverse and heterogeneous district. That violence takes place in a
varied form is illustrated by the fact that people at Jardim Angela do not struggle just against police brutality alone. They struggle for social justice in its broadest sense. This struggle takes shape though the instrumentalization of the grammar of citizenship and by the strategic uses of identity politics as ways to make political claims.

Endnotes

1 In this study I take homicide as the main category to analyze violent deaths in Brazil as homicide is the main indicator of violence that results in death.

2 While my use of the term is inspired by Josue de Castro’s work on the Geografia da Fome, the expression has been used also in different contexts to express a mortality patterns caused by the association between health complication death rates and areas of dense population. On that approach, a special contribution from medical geography can be found in Malcon Murray (1967) the Geography of Death in The US and UK. Annals of the Association of American Geographies Miami University, vol. 57, issue 02 pp.301-314.

3 In fact, bloody conflicts have always existed throughout Brazilian history. If we analyze even the official historiography, it is evident that the brutal power of the colonial machine was always invoked to pacify colonial rebellions. Although the famous rebellions against the colonial power were elitist revolts claiming partipation in the structure of priviledges that only benefited agents of the king (Conjuração Pernambucana, Guerra dos Emboabas, e Conjuração Mineira),, there have been popular insurgencies such as Palmares, Balaiada, Sabinada, Revolta dos Malês, among others that were essentially popular rebellions that included audacious political projects of liberation.

4 The control over racialized/gendered/sexualized bodies has been always a scientific concern, especially, but not exclusively, to anthropology. In Brazil, the work of Raimundo Nina Rodrigues (1957) is a mark in the study of black population and criminality in this country. Heir of the Italian criminalist Cesare Lombroso, Nina Rodrigues established a Legal Medicine approach to his anthropological studies on Afrobrazilians in Bahia to argue for the inferiority of blacks and that miscegenation would be the source of psychological instability to the young nation. He advocated constant psychiatric examinations of AfroBrazilians for believing in their ‘natural’ predisposition to criminality and non-civilized behavior (Correa, 1998).


6 Programs such as Brasil Urgent, in the TV Bandeirantes, Cidade Alerta, in the Record, and Linha Direta, in TV Globo are the main journalist reporting on police-crime, but they are not the only ones. More ‘sophisticated’ news production oriented to the middle and upper classes are also oriented by the same moral rhetoric on crime.
In the 1990s, the three police delegations in the region of M’Boi Mirim - the 47 DP, the 92 DP, and the 100DP - were known by the suggestive name of “the Bermudas Triangle.”

The fact that the target audience for these programs is ‘ordinary people’ shows the work of hegemony in the production of common sense. Favela residents participate in this tragically democratic popular journalism as victims of journalist abuse or as voices to legitimate media and police violence against ‘criminals’. In that sense, popular support of the death penalty, extrajudicial police practices, or the making of ‘justice’ by one’s own means [fazer ‘justica’ com as proprias mãos] receives special attention in the news (for a study on police, class position and media, see Benevides, 1983).

Law 8.072/90 was passed by the Brazilian Congress in 1990. In 2006 a new legislation (Law 11343, of August 2006) established that drug addicts would not be sent to jail, but to clinic treatment, it also established 5-15 years imprisonment to those accused of transporting, selling or trafficking drugs, and 3-10 years to those associated with those that practices such acts. Finally, the new law prevents individuals arrested under such conditions from any benefit such as parole and reduction in their prison sentence, as it reaffirmed the 1990 status of drug traffic as hediond crime. To define if a person fits in such category, the judge will consider the quantity of drug apprehended with the person and the criminal record of the accused (Gomes 2006, Gomes & Sanches 2008).


In Brazil, HRW also noted that Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo were among the most violent in the country. According to the report, police killed 694 people in the first six months of 2007 in Rio de Janeiro in situations described as “resistance followed by death,” 33.5 percent more than in same period last year. Police violence was also common in the state of São Paulo, where officers killed 201 people in the first half of 2007, according to official data. Fifteen officers were killed during the same period (HRW Universal Periodic Review of Brazil, 2008).

In June/2007 I participated with other Educafro’s member in a meeting with representatives of the Secretary of Public Security of São Paulo. Our demands were that the government release public records revealing the numbers of homicide specified by race and age. Indeed, Educafro proposed training in the human rights of minorities groups as a strategy to develop police sensibility on with this issue. The meeting ended without addressing Educafro’s demands. In order to have access to the statistics, we were held to a series of bureaucratic bars including official requests, submission of proposal for study, and so on.

The Index of Juvenile Vulnerability (IVJ) is measured by the analysis of variables such as access to public school, state sport facilities, youth homicide rate, head of household income and its impact in the live of youth in the districts of the city of São Paulo. From the performance of each district, Dieese formulates an annual rank of the social vulnerability among youth.

According to the last Brazilian Census, the official population of the city of São Paulo is 67% white, 30% Black, and 3% others, (IBGE/2000).

The inconsistency of racial classification in crime reporting was also found by Inacio Cano (2007) in of the lethal use of force by the police in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The author notes that a single document can many times present discrepancies on the racial attributes of a single individual. By analyzing Autopsy Reports and Police Incident Report the author noted that in the process of medical and judicial procedure whiten victims?????, while police tend to darken their victims, and Forensic Institute agents tend to whitening them(see Cano, 2007, p.19). Studies on the uses of race in
official statistics have suggested that official agents have used racial classification to undermine the power of anti-racist movements in Brazilian society. By analyzing a series of interviews with census takers, Piza and Rosenberg (1999) show that white interviewers tend to mark the color categories of the population themselves, even though Brazil utilizes the system of self-identification. They would only ask for color-identification if the interviewed ‘looked’ black (Piza and Rosenberg, 1999, p.45).

My exploratory research was carried out in the summer/2007. It consisted of participant observation, group and individual interviews, and mapping mainstream newspaper’s report on Jardim Angela in its most ‘violent’ period (1995-2002).

Focus group interview and questionnaire were applied as part of field work during the summer 2007. It was interviewed 53 students enrolled at Educafro, regardless their racial background, and from this group it was selected 25 Black young students (18-25 years old) with whom it was applied individual questionnaire.

The Forum in Defesa da Vida was created in 1996 by community activists – among them the Irish Priest Jaime Crowe - engaged in reducing police brutality and drug trafficking violence in the neighborhood.

Jardim Angela also has the fame for having one pub for every 10 habitants. According to The Federal University of Sao Paulo (UNIFESP), there is a relationship between the number of pubs, the consumption of alcohol and violence in the district. See, O Diario de Sao Paulo’s Newspaper, April, 3th, 2004

The Jardim Angela Hospital began to be constructed under Work Party’s (PT) administration between2001-2004. The current right wing Liberal Party (PFL) administration has still not finish its construction.

The names that appear in this section are changed to preserve the identity of the interviewees.
Jardim Ângela é campeão de violência

O barrio, na zona sul da capital, tem o maior número de homicídios, segundo o Ministério da Justiça.

Edmundo Lobo

Jardim Ângela, no bairro do Morumbi, é o campeão em número de crimes violentos. A zona sul da cidade tem a maior concentração de problemas de violência. A polícia dos bairros tem que lidar com uma constante e crescente escalada de violência. A área é conhecida por ser um dos locais mais perigosos da cidade.

CRIMES JÁ NÃO SURPREENDEM

Cada morador tem uma história de morte para contar.

A morte do vereador da zona sul foi um dos mais violentos da cidade. O vereador tinha sido eleito com um mandato de apenas um ano, mas a morte dele marcou a história da cidade. A família do vereador está em luto, tentando compreender a violência que cercou a vida do seu querido.

Os crimes continuam acontecendo, e as pessoas estão passando por momentos difíceis. O estado de São Paulo está em alerta, e a polícia está trabalhando para combater a violência no bairro.

O governo anunciou medidas para combater a violência, mas ainda falta muito para a situação ser resolvida. As pessoas estão esperando que as medidas sejam mais eficazes.

A zona sul está vivendo um momento turbulento, e a população está pedindo a segurança. O estado de São Paulo está em alerta, e a polícia está trabalhando para combater a violência no bairro.
Appendix 03: Pm é recebida a balas no Jardim Angela [PM is Received under Bullet at Jardim Angela] Folha de S. Paulo, August, 29th, 1997.
Appendix 05: Noite de Blitz no Jardim Angela. [Evening of Blitz in Jardim Angela].
Jornal da Tarde, October, 12th, 1997.
Briga em casa leva ao bar, e briga no bar, à morte

Os barões de Jardim Águas frequentemente se envolvem em briga por causa dos jovens com distinto traje. Entre um e outro são de bebida alcoólica, qualquer discussão bêbada pode se transformar em violência e morte.

A relação entre o número de barões, o consumo de álcool e a violência no distrito é algo que está se tornando um problema. A União de Pescadores e Turistas (UPT) — que integra a Universidade Federal de São Paulo (Unifac) — diz que os três elementos estão relacionados.

Há cinco anos passando, conflitos continuam e barões são perseguidos por presidência da Zona Sul e comandantes do bairro para evitar a assia de jovens.

Mesmo com mais restrições, os barões não param de se confrontar e de se enfrentar. O resultado é que muitas vezes os confrontos terminam com violência, resultando em ferimentos e até mesmo mortes.

Quando o pessoal chega ao bar, é como se estivessem em um campo de batalha. A briga é constante, e a morte é uma possibilidade.
Appendix 07: Jardim Angela has one Pub to each Ten Inhabitants. Clients Spend until Ten Hours Drinking Inside Pubs. Folha de S. Paulo, February, 01st, 1999.
Appendix 08: Ação social pode reduzir violência/ Besides Conformism, Dreams of Changes are General. O Estado de S. Paulo, August, 31st, 1998
Álcool origina homicídios

Da Reportagem Local

Briga em bar ou provocada pelo alcoolismo e pelo trânsito de drogas são responsáveis por mais de 90% dos assassinatos em bairros violentos como o Jardim Ângela, segundo dados da polícia.

“Por parte do nosso atendimento por arma de fogo tem a bebida por trás e ocorrem em discussões em bares”, diz Marcelo Alcântara, diretor clínico do Hospital de Campo Limpo, que atende o Jardim Ângela.

Cerca de 70% dos homens que não entendem na “emergência psicossocial” do hospital chegam com problemas ligados ao abuso de álcool. A emergência atende entre 50 e 60 casos por dia.

“O álcool está mais associado à violência do que a enxaqueca”, afirma o psiquiatra Arthur Xavier da Silveira, diretor do Prasad, um programa de prevenção ao abuso de drogas da Uniexpress.

Segundo Silveira, o álcool é um distúrbio, liberando as pessoas que já têm alguma tendência para a violência. “Um indivíduo que não é viciado pode beber e não fique violento, mas alguém com personalidade agressiva pode ter comportamento de bêbado.”

Além do efeito distúrbio do álcool, a longa permanência no bar e as frequentes discussões tendem a ter uma consequência.

Em geral, esse tipo de violência surge em meio a pessoas que abusam do álcool. Entre os dependentes, o maior problema são as doenças que vão do coração até a psiquiatria. Uma pesquisa do Prasad numa população alcoólica de São Paulo revelou que 44% tinham doenças depressivas e que 75% tinham problemas psicológicos. (AM)

Onde fica o Jardim Ângela

Localização: no sul de São Paulo, é um conjunto de 27 bairros pequenos que se encontram maldefinidos e confusos. O Jardim, ao lado do Castelo de São João e do Parque Leopoldina, forma o traçado do morro e é batizado em homenagem a São Paulo.

Nada há controle de consumo

Da Reportagem Local

A Organização Mundial da Saúde faz uma série de recomendações para prevenção do consumo de álcool. Além disso, o preço, diminuição de accesos regulamentação de venda, controle de propaganda, regra de tratamento e intervenção nas escolas.

Nada distante ao redor do Brasil, afirma o psiquiatra Ronaldo Langaeta, “não há nenhuma espécie de controle social sobre o álcool”, diz. Em bairros pobres, a situação é pior. No Jardim Ângela, por exemplo, além do Grande Núcleo de Bares, não há nenhum serviço médico voltado para o álcoolísta. As escolas são cercadas por bares, apesar de legislação proibir isso nas proximidades.

Estima-se que 15% da população brasileira masculina adulta e 5% da feminina abuses do álcool. Considera-se que uma cerveja com uma dose de destilado por dia seja um limite seguro. Alcântara, já se trata de álcool que pode ser constante e épisonico.

Este assunto, por tratar da matéria de casos de violência doméstica e de pelo menos um terço dos acidentes de trânsito, especialmente nos finais de semana. A violência ligada ao álcool atingiu a população mais jovem. No Jardim Ângela, mais de 80% das vítimas de homicídio têm entre 15 e 35 anos. Diferentemente do perfil de outros bairros, já morrem mais jovens do que velhos.

Em muitos bairros, o alcoolismo é a quarta principal causa de incapacidade para o trabalho, depois de depressão, ansiedade e quena. (AM)
Ação social pode reduzir violência

Um trabalho em várias frentes é a principal sugestão de especialistas para melhorar a situação do bairro, mas os técnicos alertam que, qualquer mudança, terá de ser precedida pela chamada "vontade política".

Guiny Cesari, autora do estudo sobre a violência na zona sul para a Secretaria de Segurança Pública. No distrito, há muitos casos acidentais, mas a violência é constante, constatou Cesari. O distrito é um dos mais violentos do país e os técnicos acreditam que a situação pode ser melhorada com a ação social.

O distrito, que compreende a zona sul de São Paulo, é um dos mais violentos do país e os técnicos acreditam que a situação pode ser melhorada com a ação social.

Os moradores da região, de acordo com a pesquisa, têm necessidades básicas de saúde e educação e precisam de programas de atendimento social.

Investimentos devem privilegiar jovens, mais suscetíveis aos "atraídos" do tráfico.

Moradores restam econômicos para evitar entorpecentes em precisão da área municipal.

No final, os moradores do Jardim Angélica continuam apontando que o distrito é um dos mais violentos do país e precisam de programas de atendimento social.

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Jardim Angela, um lugar aonde a vida é negociada.

[Jardim Angela, a Place Where Life is Negotiable] O Estado de S. Paulo, August, 30th, 1998.
Moradores que invadiram área de mananciais resistem a desocupação

Folha de S. Paulo, March, 03rd, 1995
Os projetos sociais na área central do bairro ganharam força depois do apoio importantes, como o de Unicef, através do programa Crescer em Esperança, promovido pela Rede Globo, e o do Instituto Sou da Paz. Pocados em crianças, jovens e suas famílias, tais projetos aumentam a cada dia a esperança de melhorias para a comunidade.

Para os moradores, a principal prova disto é a reestruturação da região de grandes redes comerciais, principalmente na altura do número 4.900 da Estrada do Índio Miriti, onde estava a base comunitária da 1ª Companhia do 1º Batalhão da Polícia Militar. Nesta área, instalaram-se lojas do Supermercado Barretelo, da Rede Madeireira e do grifo de surf Surfão. As Casas Bahia também já começaram a entrarem na vizinhança.

A comunidade ainda espera que valorização do centro traga novos benefícios. “Não há nenhum banco no Jardim Angela. Assim, o morador precisa se deslocar até o Santander, para realizar operações bancárias e gastar dinheiro em outras regiões”, lamentou Cunha.

Problemas

Mas as boas perspectivas ainda não afastaram os problemas do bairro. Com 256 mil moradores, o Jardim Angela não tem hospitais e continua tendo sérios problemas com violência. “Nesse mesmo bairro, com 1.000 famílias, há oito queixas”, comenta o sargento David Monteiro da Comandância, de 41 anos, comandante da base comunitária. “O índice de homicídios também preocupa”, afirma.

Estatísticas de setembro mostram a cara das crises violentas. Em 40 km² de área da 1ª Companhia, os homicídios ocorreram com a seguinte frequência: 18 em 98, 28 em 99, 31 em 2000 e 35 em 2001. Purão nos 12 km² da base comunitária, o número de homicídios permaneceu inalterado por quatro anos. O mesmo significa que a comunidade já não tem caminho certo. “Fracassou o trabalho comunitário de aproximação e convivência com o morador”, lamento Cunha.

David revelou que os quatro anos realizados traseiro de polícia comunitária...
Enfim, a esperança

O Jardim Ângela, que já foi considerado o bairro mais perigoso do mundo, mostra progressos no combate à violência graças à colaboração entre comunidade e governo.

LUCAS FERNANDES

Um, dois, três estampidos na maravilhada silênciosa. O coração de Neusa Nunes Alves, de 51 anos, disparou. Pelo som, ela percebeu que a tragédia aconteceu a poucos metros de sua casa — provavelmente na esquina, ao lado do batequim. Até há pouco meses, os moradores do Jardim Ângela, na Zona Sul da Cidade, faziam esses cálculos quase que instantaneamente, num estado de devoção. E nem poderia ser diferente, pois o bairro chegou a ser acreditado pela Organização das Nações Unidas (ONU) como o mais violento do mundo, superando até localidades de países em guerra, como a Bósnia, na Europa, e Ruanda, na África. “Não podia continuar daquele jeito. Os assassinos chegavam a colocar listas, nos pontos, com os nomes de suas próximas vítimas. Só a unidade da comunidade e o fim do medo de lutar nos tirarão do buraco”, lamenta Neusa, líder comunidade há 17 anos e uma das responsáveis pela criação do Conselho Comunitário de Segurança da localidade, que já contabiliza avanços significativos no combate à violência.

Conhecido como Consej, esse órgão colegiado, existente em diversas comunidades paulistas, reúne representantes da sociedade civil, iniciativa privada e do Estado para discutir, analisar, sugerir soluções e acompanhar a solução de problemas relativos à segurança pública. Foi instituído por um decreto estadual em 1985 e ganhou destaque de dois anos para cá. Hoje, há 900 deles instalados em 198 cidades, contando com a participação de 10 mil pessoas. Na Capital, são 88 núcleos. “Estamos fazendo nossa parte. O conselho do
Appendix 18: Jardim Angela Struggles to Overcome its Fame as The most Violent.
Appendix 19: Bairro de São Paulo é um dos mais violentos. [Neighborhood in Sao Paulo is Among the most Violent] O Estado de S. Paulo, May 28th, 1996.
Bibliography


Jaime do Amparo-Alves was born in Ipiaú, Bahia, Brazil on April 15th, 1979, the 4th of nine daughters and sons of Maria Conceição Paixão do Amparo and José Ribeiro Alves. He migrated to São Paulo in 1995 and completed high school at the Escola Estadual Prefeito Domingos de Souza, in Vicente de Carvalho/Guarujá. In 2003 he got a bachelor’s degree in journalism from the Universidade de Ribeirão Preto in Santos/SP. Since 2000 he worked with Educafro – Educação e Cidadania de Afrodescendentes e Carentes as a teacher, journalist, and consultant for affirmative action and public policies. In August, 2006 he entered the Graduate School at the University of Texas at Austin.

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