# BRAZIL'S NEW RACIAL POLITICS

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# Racialized History and Urban Politics: Black Women's Wisdom in Grassroots Struggles

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Late in the afternoon of August 24, 2004, residents from Gamboa de Baixo, a black coastal community in Salvador's city center, armed with whistles, banners, and a megaphone, ambushed the entrance to the state water company, EMBASA, in the Federação neighborhood. Dona Maria, a white-haired black woman in her late fifties, whom some may consider an unlikely voice of neighborhood activism, led the surprise protest. None of the EMBASA employees, including the security guards, had knowledge of the protest before it happened. No one suspected that the group comprising well-dressed, mostly women and children were on their way to a political rally. They stopped at the entrance of EMBASA, and began to shout, "*Queremos àgua!*" (We want water!) Local residents came out of their houses to see what was happening. The then-thirty-year-old activist of the Gamboa de Baixo neighborhood association, Ana Cristina, stepped up to the security guards and demanded to speak immediately with the water company's directors. Gamboa de Baixo residents wanted to discuss the lack of services in their neighborhood. "*Àgua é um direito humano* (Water is a human right!)," one protester exclaimed. Dona Maria waved her water bill in the faces of the security guards and shouted, "*É um absurdo!* (This is absurd!) Why am I receiving water bills if there are no pipes installed in my home?" The security guard informed them that the directors were not available to meet with the residents. At that moment, the Gamboa de Baixo activists, already standing in front of the gates, declared that no one would enter or leave the company's premises until they met with the directors. They were willing to wait.

The security guards immediately got on the phone with administrators who promptly agreed to meet with the leaders of the Gamboa de Baixo neighborhood association. A few minutes later, one of the directors, a white male in his mid-thirties, walked toward the crowd blocking the gate. The rally cries became louder: "*Queremos àgua!*" The director asked to speak with the president of the neighborhood association. Securing her baby on her hip, Luciene shouted back at him, "*Aqui não tem presidente. Só tem morador!*" (Here we don't have a president. We only have residents!) She demanded that he address everyone right there in front of the gates. The man turned his back and walked away claiming that he refused to speak in front of everyone. Back still turned, he shouted, "I can only speak to two people." "But why?" the protesters asked. "There are too many of you and there is no room inside my office," the man replied, now facing Gamboa de Baixo residents. They gave him a brash response: "We are willing to stand. Or we can stand here in front of the gates until tomorrow." After several minutes of exchanges, the protesters and the director finally agreed to an emergency meeting inside the offices of EMBASA that included the participation of ten Gamboa de Baixo residents. The activists also agreed to free the entrance of the company during the meeting, but their verbal exchanges with the security guards continued. One woman accused the security guards of being "*capitões de mato,*" a charged racial slur against the lighter-skinned black men. A legacy of slavery, the expression translates to mean overseers or bounty men in English. She criticized them for being on the side of the white *masters* of EMBASA. The security guards were particularly perturbed when Rita, a heavyset woman in her late twenties, belted out the provocative lyrics from Elsa Soares's hit song: "*a carne mais barata do mercado é a carne negra*" (the cheapest meat on the market is black meat). The crowd joined in and sang almost in unison. Shortly after, they received a phone call from one activist inside the meeting who informed them that the negotiations were going well. One important demand had been met: EMBASA directors signed an agreement to reduce water and sewer fees. The meeting attendees later returned to the rally participants and their cries of support in front of the gates. The directors of EMBASA had agreed to an emergency visit the following week to the Gamboa de Baixo neighborhood where they would personally examine the current conditions of water supply. They also promised to complete the installation of water pipes and sewer systems immediately.

Almost five years have passed since the black women–led organization of Gamboa de Baixo protested in front of EMBASA. Today, at least one-fourth of Gamboa de Baixo residents *still* do not have water pipes or sewer systems installed in their homes. Also, while access to water remains a basic human right that should not be debated in the twenty-first century, many black families in Salvador's *bairros populares* do not have access to clean drinking water. Brazil has some of the largest reserves of the earth's water supply; yet, there continues to exist a great disparity between citizens who lack water in these urban areas and others who have water in abundance (such as in the high-rise buildings located above the Gamboa de Baixo neighborhood that until only two years ago, emptied its waste into a sewer that passed directly through the middle of Gamboa, creating a waterfall of raw sewage that polluted the land as well as the waters of the Bay of All Saints). Gamboa de Baixo's struggle for basic citizenship and human rights such as clean running water raises concerns about the way grassroots organizations in Salvador's poorest black neighborhoods have focused on concrete changes in their material conditions. Moreover, the political experiences of Gamboa de Baixo highlight the direct relationship between urban underdevelopment and the emergence of black women's militancy at the community level in Salvador.

The EMBASA protest reveals one facet of Gamboa de Baixo's ongoing political battle for their neighborhood to be integrated socially and spatially into the rest of the city center. The grassroots movement emerged after residents witnessed the government's displacement of local black communities from the city center during the mid-1990s. As residents remember it, actual fear that they were certain to be the next Pelourinho (Salvador's Historic Center) or Preguiça (now a sculpture park) galvanized the women activists in Gamboa de Baixo to organize against expulsion. The government removed the poor black population from the Historic Center during that neighborhood's restoration process. Preguiça used to be a coastal community located in close proximity to Gamboa de Baixo along the Contorno Avenue and on the shores of the Bay of All Saints. For the purposes of constructing the Museum of Modern Art Sculpture Park on the land, all of the approximately seventy-five families of Preguiça were relocated to a neighborhood in the distant periphery of the city.

As the government advanced in their plans to expel black communities from the city center and the area along the Contorno Avenue, in Gamboa de Baixo "there were women, a dozen or so women, who began to cause alarm, to shout 'look what's happening'" (Valquiria, personal interview, August 2000). From the onset, the grassroots movement found its leadership and support base in the women of Gamboa de Baixo who pushed local resistance against slum clearance and black clearance. This chapter focuses on the competing Bahian histories and local and national identities formed around those histories during processes of urban revitalization and land expulsion. "Who writes the history of the subjugated people?" asks South Asian historian Ranajit Guha (1994: 150). In the Brazilian instance, I ask the question, "Who writes the history of blacks, women, and poor people?" Through an examination of Salvador's recent urban renewal programs, I argue that history is a mechanism of state dominance in Brazilian cities. Nonetheless, history is also a political tool used by subaltern groups, such as black women in urban communities, to fight racial and gender oppression and to claim access to resources, particularly land.

This essay reflects my broader theoretical and ethnographic concerns with why and how black women organize social movements. First, I will summarize briefly the literature on the racial politics of urban spaces and the politicization of black communities in Brazil. Second, I will outline the revitalization of history and the displacement of black communities during recent urbanization processes in Salvador. Third, I will discuss the formation of the Gamboa de Baixo neighborhood movement and its grassroots political challenges to gendered racist and class-based practices of spatial expulsion and relocation. Fourth, highlighting black women activists' narratives of collective memory and ownership, I will continue with a discussion of their proposals for more democratic and participatory urbanization practices in Salvador. Finally, I will conclude with a summary of the broader implications of Salvador's urban renewal practices as a hegemonic writing of history and black women's subaltern interpretation of history for engaging in antiracist and antisexist politics.

## Theoretical Considerations: Rethinking Black Resistance in Brazil

This focus on the role of history in black identity politics and resistance in Brazil emerges in part from past studies on race and social movements against racism in this predominantly black country. Recently, a number of Brazilianist scholars (Nascimento 1989; Guimarães 1995; Hanchard 1994; Hasenbalg 1979, 1996; Sheriff 2001; Twine 1998; Winant 1992) have critiqued the canonical work of Gilberto Freyre (1933) and others who maintain that neither blackness as a social category nor racism against blacks exists in Brazil. These Brazilianist scholars have documented institutionalized racial discrimination and oppression in Brazilian society in such areas as education and employment. Their studies produced analyses that call into question the hegemonic ideology of Brazil's racial democracy, a notion central in Freyre's work.

Some scholars (Hanchard 1994; Twine 1998) have sought to understand what they consider is the paucity of effective political mobilization on the part of Afro-Brazilians against racism. France Winddance Twine (1998: 9) claims that Afro-Brazilian movements have been unsuccessful because most Afro-Brazilians tend to reject a bipolar racial model and continue to accept the ideology of racial democracy. According to Twine, commonsense notions of race and race relations among ordinary people undermine the organization of an antiblack racism movement. The racial order, she concludes, is one of absolute white supremacy in which "Afro-Brazilians are noticeably absent from all positions of power" (Twine 1998: 27). While Twine identifies multiple acts of racism in her research, she was surprised to find that Afro-Brazilians fail to recognize aesthetic, semiotic, socioeconomic, and *institutional* forms of racism. The underlying assumption of her study is that the racial "false consciousness" among Afro-Brazilians should be attributed to their "narrowly defined conceptualizations of racism" (Twine 1998: 63). Thus, Twine's central thesis that nonelite Afro-Brazilians' acceptance of the hegemonic ideology of racial democracy explains their participation in, and their lack of resistance to, white supremacist socioeconomic structures.

Diverging from Twine's thesis, Hanchard recognizes that it is not simply the case that Afro-Brazilians accept the racial democracy myth and have racial "false consciousness." Hanchard (1994) observes that black activists, because of their focus on the politics of Afro-Brazilian cultural practices, have been unable to organize a mass political movement aimed at transforming *institutionalized* forms of racial inequality. A process in black activism, culturalism is an approach to Afro-Brazilian resistance that hypervalorizes Afro-Brazilian cultural practices (for example, Candomblé, Samba, and Feijoada) as national cultural symbols, but as removed from "the cultural and political contexts from which they originated" (Hanchard 1994: 21). Black movements in Brazil are unsuccessful at dismantling racial hegemony because these culturalist political practices commodify and reproduce the very cultural tendencies that sustain the Brazilian ideology of racial democracy. Hanchard believes that whites and nonwhites alike utilize the culturalist argument—that Afro-Brazilian culture permeates the fabric of the nation—in contradictory ways that end up supporting racist claims of Brazil as a racial paradise. Folkloric aspects of black culture are suitable for public consumption at all levels of society, but actual black people are not as easily welcomed in those spaces. A national focus on black culture in political movements does not necessarily dismantle racial hegemony, or conceive of notions of citizenship that affect concrete black subjects. In addition, black activists whose political work does make some attempt to shed light on the histories and processes of consciousness that produce Afro-Brazilian culture are overlooked as contributing to the hegemonic values of Brazilian racial democracy that they fight against (Hanchard 1994: 21).

Hanchard and Twine, because they have not explored black women's activism, gender identity politics, and grassroots organizing, fail to recognize the existence and central role of community-based movements in black identity politics. Foregrounding the political identity of black women in Gamboa de Baixo illustrates the ways in which grassroots organizations have advanced the racial, gender, and class interests of entire black communities. My approach is similar to that of black Brazilian feminist activist and scholar Luiza Bairros (1996: 184), who suggests that scholars of black politics must include in their analyses social movements that have significant women and black participation (for example, domestic workers' unions and neighborhood associations). Despite the claims of other scholars (Hanchard 1994; Twine 1998), the race question is very apparent in these movements. Though the scholarship in the United States has yet to recognize the central role of black women's political participation, according to many Brazilian scholars, black women have *always* organized through these grassroots political networks, oftentimes as leaders, to address the everyday concerns of their material existence (Bento 1995, 2000; Carneiro 1999; Santos 1999; Silva 1999).

Racial consciousness in the Gamboa de Baixo community movement is the unquestionable result of the central role of black women's activism. Another black Brazilian feminist scholar and activist, Sueli Carneiro, asks: "why did black women reach the conclusion that they had to organize themselves politically in order to face the triple discrimination as women, poor people, and blacks?" (Carneiro 2000: 27). Black women in Brazilian social movements recognize the salience of not only racial and gender inequality, but also of class-based struggles over material resources in their urban communities. In partial contrast to cultural practice–oriented politics, black women activists in Gamboa de Baixo focus on issues of basic survival for black communities. As the primary basic food producers, they perceive housing and land as a vital material resource for the survival of their families. Through community networks, they expand their grassroots political organization to mobilize against the racist practices of urban renewal.

## The Gendered Racialization of Urban Space

An ethnographic analysis of black women's activism against urban renewal in Salvador illustrates the racial politics of urban spaces, collective gender resistance, and racial solidarity. Scholars of urban politics in Brazil have focused primarily on class constructions of urban spaces, while silencing meanings of gendered blackness embedded in discourses around land and spatial location (Caldeira 2000; Holston 1991; Meade 1997; Rolnik 1994; Zaluar 1994). Nevertheless, as Thomas Sugrue (1996: 229) argues, urban space is "a metaphor for perceived racial difference." Urban spaces, created by local acts of slum clearance and forced segregation, are the marked spatial manifestations of racial, gender, and class marginality (Davis 2006; Lovell 1999). Urban revitalization is a racial project, which in the city center of Salvador is a prime example of the discursive and material effects of institutional racism and sexism in Brazilian society.[1] This analysis exposes the hegemonic ideology of racial democracy in Brazil, contributing to recent scholarship on race and the formation of antiracism social movements in that predominantly black country.

Moreover, traditionally, the urban cultural studies "culture of poverty" literature has represented black urban life in the United States and Brazil as masculine, socially pathological, and politically bankrupt (Amar 2003; Gregory 1998; Kelley 1997; Oliveira 1997; Wright 1997). Maxine Baca Zinn (1989), Patricia Hill Collins (1989), Mary Castro (1996), and numerous others have critiqued this social science treatment of black women as villains responsible for the growing self-perpetuating underclass and the deterioration in the African-American and Afro-Brazilian family. The culture-of-poverty approach underemphasizes systemic structural material inequality, racism, and the feminization of poverty as factors in perpetuating pervasive socioeconomic inequality in black communities (Cohen and Dawson 1993; Roberts 1997). My analysis of Gamboa de Baixo undermines this approach by providing an understanding of the gendered aspects of racial and class inequality in urban spaces, while offering insights into the development of the black public sphere and the formation of political organizations within it to combat racism in Afro-Brazilian communities.

Black women activists in Gamboa de Baixo and elsewhere, leading family and community networks, make race-based demands for greater social and economic rights, political recognition, and participation in urban spaces (Cohen, Jones, and Tronto 1997). This approach to grassroots organizing allows us to understand these women's politics as a challenge to racial and gender inequality throughout the African diaspora. Black urban struggle is not only for material survival and subsistence (Kelley 1997; Sanjek 1998); it is a form of black oppositional politics against racism and sexism and for social transformation. I contribute to and expand representations of black urban communities as units in political networks, highlighting the ways in which black women make racial claims for equal access to various institutions of power. In Gamboa de Baixo, their activism forces us to acknowledge the existence of black grassroots antiracism struggles often denied in the literature on race in Brazil. My focus on black women's leadership in community organizations also undermines the notion of men as natural leaders of political movements (Collins 1990; Sudbury 1998; Smith 2000).

Furthermore, black feminist theorists emphasize questions concerning the source of black women's politics and their central role in black liberation movements. Though few have centered their studies on black women's grassroots organizations (Hunter 1998; Ransby 2005; Sudbury 1998), many scholars affirm the idea of black feminist politics as integral to antiracism movements. Black Brazilian feminist theory produced by scholars such as Luiza Bairros (1991), Sueli Carneiro (1995, 1999), Lélia Gonzalez (1985), and Jurema Werneck (2007) draws this link between antiracism mobilization and gender liberation. This recognizes the crucial role of women's leadership in black social movements—what Kia Lilly Caldwell (2000: 6) identifies as "the gendered aspects of racial domination and the racial aspects of gender domination" in Brazilian society. My research highlights the socioeconomic impact of gendered racism in Brazil, but also provides key insights into black women's participation in antiracism grassroots movements. This ethnography contributes to the virtual invisibility of black-centered research in Latin American studies and to the lacuna of literature on the political organization of blacks, particularly black women, in the region.

Black women's leadership in urban struggles over land constitutes a crucial aspect of Afro-Brazilian mobilization against racism and for collective access to resources. James Holston's study (1991: 696) of land usurpation in São Paulo's urban periphery supports the notion of land as a tool used strategically by urban groups to promote political unity. Holston argues that land rights for the urban poor are entrenched in the historical foundations of colonialism in which economic elites have maintained legal and extralegal privilege to land acquisition. Recently, grassroots social movements against this form of "local hegemony" expand "the idea of a right to legal rights" within the Brazilian legal system (Holston 1991: 722). Though lacking a racial analysis of resistance within the public domain of rights, primarily property rights, Holston's work reminds us of the historical relationship between colonialism and racism and present-day land claims for urban blacks. Furthermore, this discussion of land disputes, political cohesion, and resistance exemplifies a fundamental strategy in the black urban communities' fight for power, justice, and greater access to material resources. Black political organization against land expulsion in Salvador tells the story of a broader historical struggle for space and place within economically and racially ordered cities.

Holston also defends the need for serious consideration of colonialism in studies on land conflicts in urban Brazil. Similar studies have explored the influence of colonialism but others have linked more centrally this historical process to systems of racial oppression and the emergence of urban struggles. George Reid Andrews (1991a) and Kim Butler (1998) identify colonialism as the core of racist ideologies and social stratification in Brazilian cities, including racial segregation and economic and racialized hierarchies. As Butler writes, urban black struggles against discrimination in Salvador and São Paulo have emerged "to dismantle discrimination against people of African descent" (Butler 1998: 18). One of Afro-Brazilians' most significant political successes has been the prevention of legalized segregation (Butler 1998: 128). Racial discrimination is historically entrenched in all aspects of urban spaces and has motivated urban blacks to mobilize. Nevertheless, their collective and individual activism is a further assertion of "their humanity and right to full and equal participation" (Butler 1998: 3) within the local and national citizenship community. Urban communities have reinvented notions of citizenship that fuel mass-based movements led by blacks. Neighborhood activists in Salvador employ the discourse of rights and claims to resources in organized responses to spatially determined racial hegemony.

## The Revitalization of History in Salvador

In Bahian tourism politics, both the city center and all areas along the shore of the Baía de Todos os Santos are strategically important for the development of leisure and cultural sites. Salvador has sponsored a series of projects intended to recuperate, restore, and revitalize the environment of the urban center. Founded in 1549, the city was Brazil's first capital and still holds some of the country's most historically significant monuments and buildings. In 1984, the Brazilian government declared Salvador's Historic Center, the Pelourinho (whipping post), a part of national patrimony, and in 1985, UNESCO added the Historic Center to its list of world heritage sites. Since the 1990s, the city has spent millions of dollars on revitalization projects, such as the restoration of historic buildings, fountains, and squares in the Pelourinho. In the process, the state has relocated the so-called dangerous and criminal local black population to other neighborhoods throughout the city's periphery. It has transformed the homes they previously inhabited into museums, restaurants, hotels, performance stages, and shops to serve the flourishing tourism industry.[2]

The revitalization of Gamboa de Baixo, another poor black neighborhood in the city center, constitutes a vital aspect of subsequent stages of Salvador's urban renewal program. The public image of Gamboa de Baixo is one of danger, misery, and marginality, as illustrated by police reports and local media; yet, the locale existing below the Contorno Avenue provides the ideal site for the construction of new urban spaces in Salvador. The government of Bahia began to pay special attention to the neighborhood chiefly because this predominantly black and working-class community occupies some of the most valuable land in the center of Salvador. Nevertheless, before there was an urban revitalization program for the area, there was a Gamboa de Baixo where people have lived and worked for many generations. Formerly known as the Gamboa Port or Porto das Vacas, Gamboa is a century-old fishing colony whose residents claim it began in Salvador's early colonial history.

On the shores of Gamboa de Baixo lies the São Paulo da Gamboa Fort (built in 1722 and declared a national heritage site in 1937). Some residents of the neighborhood still live inside its ruins. The Bahian Navy used the base exclusively during the eighteenth century for military reinforcement and protection of the city (Rebouças and Filho 1985). The Navy abandoned the São Paulo Fort and the surrounding area around the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, during the mid-1990s, the Bahian Navy reclaimed ownership of the fort as public land, declaring that the fort was an aspect of the city's history in need of immediate revitalization for historical preservation. As in the case of the Pelourinho, the people of Gamboa de Baixo do not fit into the government's plans for the area.

The memory of a powerful capital of Portuguese America, specifically the history of economic, military, and economic might, drives the recent restoration of the forts of Salvador. The forts of Salvador were constructed to protect one of the most important financial and cultural centers in Brazil's history and the symbol of Portuguese expansion in the Americas. For instance, the São Marcelo Fort, built more than 350 years ago in the middle of the ocean near Salvador's commercial district and Historic Center, was restored during the late 1990s. Antônio Imbassahy, the mayor of Salvador at the time of its restoration, had the following comments on this:

> What more can one say, besides our certainty of completing our duty, of our commitment that we have with our history and with our future. In a city like

> Salvador, where new and old mix with such harmony, such that the races form an ethnicity and that peculiar personality of being Bahian. . . . We share with everyone, Bahians, Brazilians and citizens of the world, more happiness, to see our São Marcelo Fort restored, joining the Mercado Modelo and the Elevador Lacerda, one of our well-known postcards. (Imbassahy 2000: 4)[3]

A civic duty that shows the government's commitment to the preservation of Bahian and Brazilian history, the restoration of forts in Salvador also creates new spaces for tourists to enjoy. As Imbassahy's statement shows, this image of Bahia, living in harmony with the old and new, the colonial and the modern, stems from the idea of racial mixture and harmony in Bahia. Nevertheless, Imbassahy fails to mention the violence involved in the acquisition of the land on which the forts were built or the forced enslavement of Africans and indigenous peoples whose labor created these present-day monuments.

The restoration of the São Marcelo and São Paulo da Gamboa forts is part of a broader municipal government initiative called Via Naútica, which will be developed along the coastal zone of the city during the next few years. Beginning from the Ponta de Humaitá, the project proposes to create a maritime tour through the Baía de Todos os Santos, linking various historical sites to include the restored forts, the Museum of Modern Art, the Historic Center, and the famous former slave-marketplace, the Mercado Modelo. In each fort, including the São Marcelo and São Paulo da Gamboa forts, there will be museums that tourists can visit. In the case of Gamboa de Baixo, the infamous cannon that fired one shot during the visit of Princesa Isabel will be on display. Other restored forts in Barra and Monte Serrat already have similar museum tours. The restoration of the São Paulo da Gamboa Fort poses a problem because of the population that inhabits the area and the local community's resistance to relocation during and after the restoration process.

This situation in Salvador characterizes global urban reconstruction practices throughout almost all Brazilian cities as well as in cities such as New York and Paris. A modernist vision of the city tends to include the aesthetic revival of "ugly, dirty, and mistreated" historical sites into "clean, pure, and distinct" remnants of the past. History becomes a viable product for public consumption in modern cities (Lacarrieu 2000: ii). The underlying logic is that appropriating these urban spaces gives new *hygienic* meanings to the past, representing the city as healthier, less dangerous, and *mais gostosa* (more desirable) for those living in it (Lacarrieu 2000: iii). Revalorizing the past translates into urban nostalgic desire in the local and national imaginary; that is, reconstructing the essential *good old days* as a means to rescue the identity of the city of Salvador—the city that generated the nation of Brazil, the culture of Brazil. From this perspective, the northeastern city of Salvador is an ideal site for the revitalization of history. The municipal secretary of Planning, Science, and Technology wrote the following:

> The vision of tourism for Salvador is centered on leisure tourism with the extraordinary content of culture and history, involving beaches, ecology, festivals, music, and an exceptional architectonic patrimony. . . . Having been the first capital of Brazil and center of the beginning of Portuguese colonization, with their political and economic displays, and more markedly, the sedimentation of the slave regime, Salvador develops the richest historic and cultural values *sui generis* of the country, that are preserved in the form of an exceptional physical patrimony and customs. (1996: 28)

The government of Bahia wants to recapture local and national history in Salvador to boost the tourism industry, including significant investments in sites such as the Pelourinho and the São Paulo Fort. Once considered dangerous, the Pelourinho, for example, is now one of Brazil's best examples of a revived neighborhood. More importantly it is a renewed space in the national identity. The revitalization of the center of Salvador means "rescuing the identity of the city of Salvador—the city which generated the nation of Brazil, the culture of Brazil" (Institute of Artistic and Cultural Patrimony quoted in Dunn 1994: 2).

As renowned Afro-Brazilian geographer Milton Santos (1996) posits, urban memory is compromised by the valorization of a political economy that privileges the market value of property such as old mansions formally occupied by a white colonial elite. This reinvention of colonial history displaces recent urban memory of local residents, oftentimes poor black people who inhabit and use the deteriorating old buildings. The restoration of the urban center is driven only by the *symbolic* valorization and preservation of the historical product distinct from present-day reality, *erasing* the memory of slavery and racial and gender violence (for example the violence associated with the *pelourinho* [whipping post] of the Historic Center). The modernizing project, Santos also asserts, involves the deliberate social abandonment by the city government, the subsequent deterioration of the historic buildings, followed by the forced displacement of local residents during and after renovations.[4]

Nevertheless, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995: 146) states, "the value of the historical product cannot be debated without taking into account both the context of its production and the context of its consumption." Urban development around the celebration of a colonial heritage excludes descendents of enslaved Africans whose labor, traditions, and customs constitute essential elements of that colonial past. Development in Bahia represents the renewal of a colonial past for both the *colonialist visitor* and the *colonized host,* reflecting the physical and spatial forms of racial and gender oppression. For example, Olodum is one of Bahia's most celebrated Afrocentric cultural organizations that moved its central offices to the Historic Center in 1990. Organized by black artists, the group creates music, dance performances, and clothing that celebrate pride in Africa and its diaspora. Even today, black cultural artifacts, such as those of Olodum, are the primary products that merchants market to tourists who visit the Historic Center. Another example is the way black people participate in this urban economy of tourism and leisure as living artifacts or representations of the colonial past. The tourism industry sells black men's and women's bodies and sexuality, creating what some scholars have identified as a production of an "Afro-Disney" in Brazil (Nascimento 1994). Examples include preparing and serving traditional Afro-Bahian food and performing Afro-Brazilian sensual dances for white audiences, and with increasing frequency, black audiences (Pinho 2008).

## The Formation of the Neighborhood Movement

In this context, the Gamboa de Baixo neighborhood association, Associação Amigos de Gegê dos Moradores da Gamboa de Baixo, was founded on October 7, 1992. This organization was a direct outcome of the previous Associação de Mulheres (Women's Association), which mobilized local women during the 1980s to demand social services such as prenatal care and milk vouchers and to plan cultural events that included Mother's and Children's Day celebrations. During the 1992 outbreak of cholera in Bahia, which caused several deaths in Gamboa de Baixo alone, a few women established the neighborhood association to institute collective governance and legal representation for the community in their demands for vital resources such as clean running water and improved sewer systems. Cholera victims included the first president's father, Gegê, after whom the organization was named. The neighborhood association in Gamboa de Baixo began around issues of life and death survival.[5] The association also struggled to deconstruct the public image of Gamboa de Baixo as a spatial container of cholera. In general, the media portrayed black urban and rural communities throughout Bahia as being the loci of the disease, which presented a health threat to the nearby affluent neighborhoods, such as Vitória and Campo Grande. During frequent visits to local newspapers and radio stations, the main goal of the neighborhood association was to improve their material conditions as well as to dispel public representations of their community as unhealthy, unsafe, and dangerous to the public. An important act of contestation was their demand for the state to test the natural water sources and the public water pipes in their neighborhood. Testing proved that the victims of cholera had died from contaminated water provided by the city and not from the neighborhood's natural water fountains.

Direct action protest has proven to be the most effective tactic of political struggle for Gamboa de Baixo community activists. At public meetings and street protests, they have engaged in confrontational politics with city officials. One important strategy for activism has been the closing of the major avenue that passes above the community, the Contorno Avenue. For example, after unsuccessful requests for the water company to complete the installation of running water and sewer systems and for the Bahian development agency to repair poorly constructed homes in the neighborhood, they blocked traffic for several hours during the morning rush hour. In other instances, they have protested in front of the agencies themselves. The Contorno Avenue as a site of public protest is significant, because it divides the Gamboa neighborhood between poor and working-class Gamboa de Baixo (Lower Gamboa) and middle-class Gamboa de Cima (Upper Gamboa).

This spatial separation has upheld and reinforced hierarchies of racial, social, and economic differences between the two neighborhoods. The construction of the Contorno Avenue in 1961 constrained the previously unrestricted movement of ideas, labor, and goods. Only in the mid-1990s, as a result of organized struggle, did the government construct a concrete staircase that provided access from Gamboa de Baixo to the rest of the city. Most residents still remember the difficulty of climbing the shaky wooden stairs to reach the Contorno Avenue. For many years, infrastructural changes within the city separated and isolated them as *those below.* As a Gamboa de Baixo neighborhood association document from 1996 states:

> This is not the first time that the government intervenes in our area, always with disastrous consequences for the local communities. In the 1970s, the construction of the Contorno Avenue brought a series of damages to our communities, standing out among them, the barring of access to the community Unhão, with the closing of the road Castelo Branco, that has its opening at the present-day Radio Bahia, in Gamboa de Cima, and that continues along the upper part of the community near the arcs. This action restricted our access to a rustic route of stone and clay that begins right after the entrance of Solar do Unhão and that, due to its precariousness, caused our relative isolation and the entrance of some *marginais* (criminals), turning the area into a poorly viewed neighborhood discriminated against by the rest of the city's inhabitants.

Former activist Elena, who has always lived *below the Avenue,* points out that some women work as domestics in Gamboa de Cima and nearby neighborhoods such as Vitória that literally look down on their homes in Gamboa de Baixo. Nearly 80 percent of females (including adults and adolescents) in Gamboa de Baixo are domestic workers. Even today, identifying Gamboa de Baixo as your place of residence might prevent you from getting a job, since, as Elena claims, some employers "still think we're all thieves" (personal communication 2001). Sentiments of inferiority and superiority have run deep since the Contorno Avenue separation of the Gamboa neighborhoods, demonstrating that the construction project had more than symbolic significance. In stark difference from the flourishing city center above the Avenue, the public relegates the community literally living *below the asphalt* to a cluster of undesirables who linger behind in both space and time.

The Gamboa de Baixo protests on the Contorno Avenue transform the ways in which we conceptualize black mobilization and resistance, particularly our understanding of black antiracism and antisexism struggles in Brazil. Getting things done for poor black women in Gamboa de Baixo has meant that, when necessary, they must collectively *get in the face* of the powerful and demystify their power and control. This political approach is unlike the culturalist tendencies that Michael Hanchard argues are the definitive characteristics of black activism in Brazil. He writes that there exists "no Afro-Brazilian versions of boycotting, sit-ins, civil disobedience, and armed struggle in its stead" (Hanchard 1994: 139). Moreover, he observes that black activists, because of their focus on the politics of Afro-Brazilian cultural practices, have been unable to organize a mass political movement aimed at transforming *institutionalized* forms of racial inequality. My research on black neighborhood struggles against state practices of land expulsion in Salvador indicates that blacks *do* identify as blacks and *do* engage in gender- and race-based political projects on a mass scale. Contrary to traditional racial formation literature in Brazil, racial inequality, racism, and white privilege exist in Brazil, though often manifested in different ways than in the United States, shaping everyday black experiences with racism and sexism in employment, housing, health care, and other vital resources. Black politics are formulated through individual and collective experiences with systems of racial and gender domination and violence, such as spatial segregation and forced displacement. Furthermore, the Gamboa de Baixo protests illustrate that black activists *do* engage in acts of civil disobedience and violent struggle for basic human rights issues such as clean water, housing, and local autonomy. Their actions confirm that social movements in Brazil are struggles for the valorization of black cultural history and identity as well as for the transformation of material conditions in black communities.

Black women's leadership in Gamboa de Baixo's political organization shows the ways in which they use race and gender to mobilize their community. What is clear is that black women's experiences with marginality and exclusion are one impetus for political mobilization. As the Women's Association and the neighborhood association show, women have always been at the leadership base of community politics in Gamboa de Baixo. They claim that this is because they, as black women, are more conscious of the short- and long-term impact that land expulsion and relocation to the periphery would have on their families. A major question for residents is "What will we do someplace else, someplace we do not know?" Displacement to a distant neighborhood diminishes their access to resources such as food (fishing), transportation, jobs, health care, and education.[6] The hospitals are located within walking distance from Gamboa de Baixo, which is essential for emergency care. As domestic workers in the nearby high-rise buildings, they can keep an eye on the happenings of the neighborhood while they work. More importantly, the beach is a central place for leisure activities such as swimming and diving, playing soccer, rowing, and just hanging out. The neighborhood's traditional proximity to the ocean is also significant for Afro-Brazilian religious ceremonies. Each year on February 2, the fishermen and -women honor Iemanjá, the goddess of the sea, placing gifts of appreciation such as flowers and perfume. A week after that celebration, a thirty-five-year-old woman, Maria José, conducts her own ceremony for Iemanjá, which also involves an elaborate procession to the oceanfront and then the delivery of the gifts to the middle of the ocean. When I asked Maria José, also a board member of the neighborhood association for several years, why she loves to live in Gamboa de Baixo, she proudly exclaimed, "Living here *é bom, bom demais* (is good, too good). Where else in the city could I have my own beach to hold these celebrations for Iemanjá?" (personal interview, August 2000).

The centrality of women's participation and their collective gender consciousness fueled the community movement for the preservation of local culture and the improvement of social conditions. Ana Cristina, a neighborhood activist, provides the following explanation:

> The women believed more, women have this thing. . . . They believed that they would remove us. And the men, I think they didn't, because the men thought, and some still think that, that no, living outside is simple. That they were going to be able to return, to come, the boat stays here, to fish, but the women had a broader vision, more clear about what it was to leave Gamboa to live in another part of Salvador. So, like that, it is as if the women were defending their territory. . . . It is not because as they say, there are men who say "meeting is a woman's little thing (*reunião é coisinha de mulher*)" but we did not see it that way. We see it like this, that women are able to reach a lot farther than the men. . . . Look, this broader preoccupation of the women was just this—preoccupation with the future. (personal interview, August 2000)

Like Ana Cristina, several of the women I spoke with in Gamboa de Baixo associate their political awareness in this situation with the recognition of their own differential knowledge as women, as key members and everyday leaders of their community. From this perspective, *this thing* that empowers black women in grassroots movements around issues of survival is their experiences, what they know about life and their position in the world. Chandra Mohanty (2003: 6) supports this understanding of experience in identity construction and recognizes the possibility of identity as a basis for progressive group solidarity and political mobilization. This argument holds true for black women's political identity produced by a complex knowledge of the depth of everyday social and economic conditions that define their existence in a poor neighborhood in the center of Salvador. For example, in Gamboa de Baixo, black women experience high rates of unemployment and police abuse, because they are racialized, gendered, and criminalized by the state as thieves, prostitutes, and drug dealers. Their specific experiences with distrustful employers and police violence illustrate the negative impact of public opinions about their neighborhood and the black people who live there. Gamboa de Baixo residents struggle to dispel racist, sexist, and classist ideas about their community and to reformulate a space-based collective identity to buttress their historical claims to territorial rights, improvement in social and economic conditions, and a safe environment.

Moreover, black women's actions in neighborhood associations illustrate the power of community building in mobilizing grassroots resistance against the appropriation of land and displacement for the purposes of tourism. As the work of Feldman, Stall, and Wright (1998: 261) informs, this form of social activism "is implicitly place-bound; that is, the networks of relationships and the activism that they support more often than not are located in and may involve conflict over places." In Gamboa de Baixo, the collective sense of community reflects women's ongoing involvement in social groups they have established with their families and neighbors in the places where they live. They play central roles in forging a sense of community through the birthday parties they organize or the support networks they create when residents need essential services such as health care assistance or babysitting. Recognizing the political aspects of maintaining households and communities allows us to understand how these networks reproduce social relations, help to "sustain the social fabric of community," and politicize place-based identities. For many generations, women in Gamboa de Baixo have nurtured and provided social services to each other. Like the previous Women's Association of the 1980s, the neighborhood association is "intimately connected to ongoing struggles for rights and control over spatial resources to house social-reproduction activities that create and sustain these communities" (Feldman, Stall, and Wright 1998: 261). Women in Gamboa de Baixo continue to be the primary organizers of social activities, providing the natural training ground for their leadership in the community-based political movement when they are under siege. The long conversations on each other's doorsteps; the sharing of vital resources such as water, gas, and food; and their mass attendance at political assemblies demonstrate how personally and politically connected female residents are.

Consequently, the centrality of black women's participation in this grassroots struggle promotes the articulation of racial knowledge, consciousness, and resistance through political uses of social memory. The political organization brings to the attention of Gamboa de Baixo the colonial legacy and racism embedded in practices of land expulsion. In addition to working with other local neighborhood associations fighting against urban removal, Gamboa de Baixo's neighborhood association finds political support from NGOs and race-based organizations such as the Unified Black Movement (MNU) and the Black Union for Racial Equality (UNEGRO). Though revitalization programs are never discussed publicly by the state in terms of being racial projects, black women confirm their racial and class claims when they link their struggle with other targeted black communities, identifying the expulsion of blackness as a pattern in modern urbanization programs. Through these citywide political networks, including the landless and homeless movements of Bahia, women acquire a broader consciousness of shared experiences with racial and economic injustice. In a community bulletin, Gamboa de Baixo activists wrote the following:

> Residents, we need to stay mobilized and alert for the violent and arbitrary actions that are being taken by the mayor and the state government. . . . When they announced the cleansing, before the elections, it was not just trash that they want to remove from the center of the city, but also the blacks, the poor people, the beggars, the street vendors, the street children and everything that they think dirties the city. We are not going to let them treat us like trash. We are working people and we have rights. (Gamboa de Baixo community bulletin 1997)

Gamboa de Baixo is an example of black Brazilians' recognition that, as blacks, women, and poor people, they bear the impact of urban revitalization. This recognition exemplifies what João Costa Vargas (2004) terms the "hyperconsciousness/negation of race dialectic" that defines social relations in Brazil. Vargas (2004: 6) asserts that, on the one hand, most Brazilians negate the importance of race in structuring institutions, shaping social relations, and determining the distribution of resources and power. On the other hand, Brazilians are "acutely aware of racial differences and utilize those to (often tacitly) justify, think about, and enforce behavior and social inequalities." This hyperconsciousness/negation dialectic is useful to understand the urbanization practices in Bahia. Bahians are simultaneously hyperconscious of the racial aspects of urbanization policies while also negating the salience of race in the new sociospatial order. Nevertheless, the black communities who are most negatively affected by forced displacement from the *better* parts of the city understand that urban renewal and gentrification shape the racial landscape of the city. Finding themselves in the path of massive "slum clearance" throughout the city center, the Gamboa de Baixo neighborhood association declared in a 1996 press release, "the dissemination of this culture of exclusion . . . principally towards the black and poor population, distances it farther and farther from the so-called 'privileged'[7] areas in our city."

From this perspective, black women in Gamboa de Baixo realize that they are capable of changing history and voice concerns against the clearance of urban land. They organize politically against the displacement of thousands of poor blacks to the periphery of Salvador, which worsens their already difficult economic situations. During these moments when even city officials said in public forums that "they didn't think that 'those black women were going to speak'" (Dona Silvia, personal interview, July 2000), the women of Gamboa de Baixo actively spoke out against slum clearance programs targeting their communities, and they continue to do so. Their participation in this social movement is an important assertion of their voice in urban space discourses that previously silenced them.

For blacks in Gamboa, contesting racial and sexual domination has meant reclaiming collective power through redefinitions of blackness. Reconstructing political identities based on their own understanding of themselves as black is a source of black women's empowerment *necessary* for political action. Nice, a member of the neighborhood association, explains,

> I thought it was really important to speak about our pride in our skin, in our color, in our race. What I liked more was to look in his (any city official) eyes, and say it like this, that "I am black, with pride (*eu sou negra com orgulho*)." We didn't go to beg them for anything. We wanted our rights. It's important for us to arrive there and say, I am black, but I am black with pride. I am proud of who I am. I didn't come here to beg from you. I want my rights. The rights are mine. (personal interview, July 2000)

To be taken seriously as poor blacks is an important task for the Gamboa de Baixo community and political organization. Women often explain that their participation in this movement transforms their previous sense of powerlessness as poor black women within the racist and sexist structures of urban governance. Nice also mentions that, "if they slammed their hands on the table, we slammed loudly too, looking at them in their faces, things I would not have done before and today I do them. . . . I learned that we can't hold our heads down because we're poor, because we're black women" (personal interview, July 2000). Despite their experiences with disrespectful treatment in their interactions with city officials and police violence, these women find power in the public assertion of their racial and gender identities. Considering black women's position at the absolute bottom of the social strata, their actions during meetings and protests mark the struggle to counter their everyday experiences with racism and sexism in the public sphere.

## Collective Memory of Ownership

Asserting political power and reconstructing the image of this black community in the center of Salvador is one important aspect of the female-led social movement for permanence in the area. Gamboa de Baixo's resistance occurs primarily in the context of defending their citizenship rights to use and control of urban land. Nevertheless, Gamboa de Baixo's political organization has fought to prove their legal ownership of the land. Only a few residents have documentation of their ownership. Claiming native rights to the land, they reject official discourses that the community is merely an invasion (*invasão*), or an illegal squatter settlement, estimated by the government to be less than thirty years old. A Gamboa de Baixo activist, Ivana, contests this term *invasion* as inaccurate, considering the history of the population.

> I do not see Gamboa as an [land] invasion (*invasão*). I see it as an occupation. It is an occupation that was permitted because the first families came here with authorization, no? And these people married, had children, their children grew up, had children. The truth is that Gamboa is practically three families. If you grab someone right here and go over to the other side, they are cousins. They might not be close cousins, but they are cousins. I see Gamboa as an occupation, a permitted occupation. Because when they deactivated the fort, the Navy gave authorization to a few soldiers to stay here to be able to keep an eye on things. These people started the life in Gamboa, the population in Gamboa. That is why I say permitted. They gave them permission to stay. Yes, and they had children, and their children grew up and had children. There are already six, seven generations of the same family in Gamboa. That is a lot of time to say that it was invaded, that we invaded [the land]. Logically, there were other people who came from the outside, but those are few. . . . The great majority have lived here since their grandfathers, grandmothers came here or their grandparents were born here. . . . That's why when they say it is an invasion, I fight with them. . . . Of course, there weren't this many people here, but it is not an invasion. (personal interview, July 2000)

Emphasizing an extensive history of residence on the land, activists consider families to be historically rooted to the land, a land they themselves have developed. They have fought to show that Gamboa de Baixo has its own culture and history that have developed on the coast and in the São Paulo Fort. Throughout Bahian history, blacks have formed several other fishing communities like Gamboa de Baixo along the coast of the Bay of All Saints. A previously disinterested government who abandoned the fort and the land that these residents have taken care of suddenly showed great interest when they perceived the profitability of the site's restoration. Furthermore, this is an example of the abandonment and subsequent decay that Milton Santos characterizes as a deliberate phase of reurbanization. Without sufficient resources to make repairs and abandoned by local development agencies, residents live in the decaying ruins of the São Paulo Fort without running water and sewers.

As Ivana's statement shows, using history to claim land rights is a common political strategy for urban black communities of resistance such as Gamboa de Baixo, reflecting David Scott's (1999) push for the political uses of history. Collective memory of ownership is a useful way for black Brazilians to contest racial hegemony, to use history as an interpretive tool of collective defiance, empowerment, and solidarity (Hanchard 1994: 150–153). Hanchard (1994: 151; author's emphasis) writes that "'other' memories must compete with a 'public past' that is itself the result of the ability of a dominant social group to preserve certain recollections, *deemphasize* or otherwise *exclude* others." History that has been cultivated from a position of marginality operates in opposition to singular notions of history as cultural dominance. Black women activists in Gamboa have utilized their own collective memory to question constructions of local and national memories articulated by those in power. Yet, as Hanchard argues, while these memories are necessary to critique dominant notions of the past, their power is insufficient to overrule contemporary practices of discrimination.

While I recognize some of the limitations Hanchard describes, collective memory *is* the principal means of defining Gamboa de Baixo's identity in relation to this urban space. Historical knowledge functions as an alternative mythmaking process that rearticulates the experiences of oppressed peoples. In Brazil, black women use social memory, a necessary basis of counter-hegemony, not just to further culturalist politics but as a basis for engagement in confrontational politics. Particularly, a radical revision of Bahian local and national history is an aspect of expressing their sense of social belonging during urban redevelopment. My research highlights the transformative role that history plays within social relations and the political possibility of collective memory for ideological and material social change. Ashis Nandy (1983: xiii) writes, using Fanon's terms, "but the meek inherit the earth not by meekness alone." The historical knowledge of subaltern groups provides a critique of dominance and oppression and defines racial, gender, and class boundaries necessary for group consciousness and community identity formation.

Making historical claims, Gamboa de Baixo activists demand permanent legal recognition of their individual and collective landownership. They also demand the cancellation of revitalization programs for the coastal areas that involve the removal of the local inhabitants. The community's quest for land considers urbanization a necessary part of permanence. The people of Gamboa de Baixo are as much a part of the traditional landscape as is the fort. Gamboa de Baixo activists define urbanization as the "improvement of the quality of the urban environment" with an emphasis on community participation (neighborhood association communiqué 1997). Residents redefine urbanization as "greater integration with other neighborhoods of the city" and not "slum clearance" or black land expulsion. Urbanization in Gamboa de Baixo is not about aesthetic changes for future tourism but for black residents who envision healthier futures on the land. Providing alternative proposals for urbanization, Gamboa de Baixo attempts to transform the view of how Brazilian society works in ways that positively transform poor black communities. Renewal and revitalization of global cities such as Salvador do not necessarily operate in opposition to one another, offering a solution to the problem of restoring urban centers for their traditional occupants (Espinheira 1989; Santos 1987).[8]

## Conclusion

Urban renewal often has been disastrous for poor black communities. For Salvador's racial and political elite, aesthetic and economic development are intertwined in their plans to promote tourism. This depends on the expulsion of blacks from key locations in the urban center and their subsequent relocation

to the city's geographical periphery. Paradoxically, the presence of blacks is not just an obstacle to urban modernization. Their presence is necessary insofar as they contribute to the reification of Brazilian national identity through commodified minstrelsy and fetishism. Nevertheless, black folkloric expressions are desired without inclusion of the bodies and communities that traditionally produce that culture. In other words, a national focus on black culture in Brazil does not necessarily conceive of notions of citizenship that affect concrete subjects. David Scott (1999: 81) states that "Caribbeans have been careless with memory," and this is one example of how Brazilians have been careless with memory in ways that exoticize black cultural artifacts while excluding actual black people.

Political movements have emerged in response to unequal socioeconomic and racial segregation in city planning. Gamboa de Baixo's political organization is just one example of a black community actively engaged in protest against the racist and sexist politics of exclusion underlying urban revitalization programs. This ethnographic analysis of the grassroots organization in Gamboa de Baixo illustrates how blacks *have* mobilized politically on the basis of black identity and in pursuit of concrete political objectives centered on their rights to land. In the Bahian urban center, permanent territorial rights constitute a local idiom for the affirmation of black consciousness and cultural insurgency. During this process, social memory is crucial for a historical critique of gendered racism in Brazilian cities, and also forms the basis of collective self-definition, empowerment, and organization of poor blacks.

Black social activism in Brazil has emerged, primarily led by women at the community level in struggles for access to material resources in urban spaces such as land and housing. Throughout this chapter, I focus on the fearless black women who wage struggle on a daily basis for the preservation of local black culture and for basic citizenship rights in Salvador. An eighty-nine-year-old woman and longtime resident of Gamboa de Baixo, Nana, stated in a newspaper article that "from here I only leave for the sky" (*Bahia Hoje* August 25, 1995). Another elderly woman, Dona Detinha, also recently assured me that "I only leave here dead." These elderly women's words resonate in the Gamboa de Baixo community hymn:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Daqui não saio* | I will not leave here |
| *Daqui ninguêm me tira* | No one will take me away from here |
| *Daqui não saio* | I will not leave here |
| *Daqui ninguêm me tira* | No one will take me away from here |
| *Onde é que eu vou morar?* | Where will I live? |
| *O Senhor tem a paciência de esperar?* | Does the Lord have the patience to wait? |
| *Eu sou mãe de tantos filhos* | I am the mother of so many children |
| *Onde é que eu vou morar?* | Where will I live? |

Black women's activism in the neighborhood association continues to be a bold statement of the community's political perseverance in a spatially and socially stratified city. Future studies on black politics in Brazil must include in their analyses social movements that have significant women and black participation and leadership, such as the neighborhood association I describe in this chapter. Grassroots activism in Gamboa de Baixo forces us to expand definitions of mass mobilization as well as to reconsider the ways in which black women's political actions draw attention to the gendered aspects of Brazilian race relations. Black women protest the historical erasure of black communities in urban revitalization policies and assert their roles as producers of knowledge on the modern city in Brazil. My approach rejects limited notions of Brazilian national identity that exclude *black* racial specification or identification, a necessary step to understanding the sexist roots of racial oppression and to developing political strategies to combat such inequalities. Black women in Gamboa de Baixo demonstrate through their thoughts and actions that it is possible to construct, as the national government advertises, *um Brasil para todos,* or rather "a Brazil for everyone."

## Notes

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1. Michael Omi and Howard Winant define racial formation as "the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed" (1994: 55). Linking this process to hegemonic processes, Omi and Winant (1994: 56) argue that a racial project is "an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines." Racial projects connect discursive dimensions of racial formation with the ways in which race organizes social structures and everyday experiences.

2. Henri Lefebvre (1996) speaks about the challenges faced in French cities, particularly the disappearance of public spaces, which is a similar logic that governs state interventions in city planning in Bahia: He writes that, "for the working class, rejected from the centres towards the peripheries, dispossessed of the city, expropriated thus from the best outcomes of its activity, this right has a particular bearing and significance."

3. My translation of Mayor Imbassahy's statement from the original Portuguese: "*Que mais dizer, além da nossa certeza do dever cumprido, do compromisso que temos com a nossa história e com o nosso futuro. Numa cidade como Salvador, onde novo e antigo se misturam com tanta harmonia, tal qual as raças que formaram a etnia e a personalidade tão peculiar do baiano, que a todos sabe bem receber e repartir sua alegria. Dividimos com todos, baianos, brasileiros e cidadões do mundo, mais esta felicidade, a de ver o nosso Forte de São Marcelo restaurado, compondo com o Mercado Modelo e o Elevador Lacerda um dos nossos mais conhecidos cartões postais.*"

4. Milton Santos (1984) also cites the case of black home owners who were denied the necessary loans to restore their deteriorating homes in Harlem during the early 1980s.

5. In São Paulo, Teresa Caldeira (2000: 63) documented the rise in the numbers of neighborhood associations to "obtain better services and infrastructure." Social movements in neighborhoods stem from an awareness of the deterioration and decline of public resources in poor regions of the city.

6. Richard Batley (1982: 233) asserts that, as a consequence of expulsion, "for poorer groups, removal from central areas implied a loss of a relatively favored situation, almost certainly in terms of access to public services and employment and probably also in terms of housing standards."

7. The term *privileged* is a direct translation from the Portuguese word *privilegiado.* It appears ironic and confusing that both the government and residents refer to the neighborhood as privileged, but it is because of the cultural and geographical importance of the land that Gamboa de Baixo occupies. To be privileged in Salvador means the neighborhood's proximity to the beach and the city center, or rather the actual dollar value of beachfront properties in Salvador.

8. Both Gey Espinheira (1989) and Milton Santos (1987) write about the Pelourinho and defend the restoration of the neighborhood for the local population. Santos predicted the mass displacement of the Pelourinho population before it occurred. As an alternative to relocation, he suggested that the Bahian government follow the housing models of cities such as Barcelona, where the old population returned to live in restored historic buildings.