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“I’ll Samba Someplace Else”:
Constructing Identity and Neighborhood in São Paulo, 1930s-1980s

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Abstract

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By Andrew G. Britt

“I’ll Samba Someplace Else” charts the interconnected histories of three São Paulo neighborhoods constructed as “Japanese” Liberdade, “Italian” Bexiga, and “Afro” Brasilândia over the middle of the twentieth century. Today a cosmopolitan, global metropolis, the city of São Paulo began its meteoric growth in the late nineteenth century with an influx of formerly-enslaved Afro-descendants and immigrants from Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. City planner-turned-mayor Francisco Prestes Maia (terms 1938-’45 and 1961-’65) ushered in a new phase of São Paulo’s development. Prestes Maia’s center-city redevelopment projects constructed new avenues, raised property values, and dislocated predominantly Afro-descendants from Liberdade and Bexiga, two of the city’s historic hubs of Afro-descendent settlement. Dislocated residents migrated to the city’s geographical margins, where they partnered with regional migrants in the construction of new neighborhoods like Brasilândia independent of official city planners. Despite the multiethnic resident populations of these neighborhoods, by the 1980s their racialized/ethnicized identities as “Japanese” Liberdade, “Italian” Bexiga, and “Afro” Brasilândia had become fixed in material space as well as popular and official discourse.

Based on archival research, oral history, and historical geographic information systems, my research shows that neighborhoods marked with ethnoracial identities are produced contingently, despite ethnoracial diversity, and through an array of official and unofficial spatial practices. From the 1930s through the 1980s, official city planners (employed by the state or real estate firms) and informal planners (local residents) engaged in contested redevelopment projects that remade the built and natural environments of these three neighborhoods along with the ethnoracialized identities associated with them. Practices of demolition, naming places, and producing roadways dislocated Afro-descendent populations from city-center neighborhoods and razed spaces with significant historical and contemporary connections to enslavement, abolition, and black self-determination. Those same practices paved the way for the construction of two whitened, immigrant neighborhoods in Liberdade and Bexiga. The making of identity and neighborhood in Brazil’s most populous, ethnoracially-diverse city details how the attachment of race/ethnicity to place contributes to identity formation as well as the reproduction of spatial and ethnoracial inequities over time.

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This project is the outcome of eighteen months of fieldwork in Brazil and one year of writing. More broadly, the dissertation is the product of academic and community historians in the United States and Brazil across generations. Jeffrey Lesser first introduced me to the frenetic, magnetic city of São Paulo. He shepherded this project with an uncompromising commitment to unconventional thinking, uncovering original histories, and developing inventive methods of exploring them. Thomas D. Rogers was the first to see the project in the form of a seminar paper. His perspicacious, meticulous, and appreciative approach to historical inquiry guided the project from its earliest stage through final edits. Yanna Yannakakis modeled broadly comparative, yet precise, historical thinking and contributed original insights about the significance of São Paulo beyond Brazil. Phil MacLeod provided fine-grained observations and analysis of each chapter of the dissertation, in addition to essential collections support. Fernando Atique generously served on my prospectus committee and provided astute suggestions on the project from initial stages through fieldwork and writing. I also thank Benito Schmidt and Ana Catarina Teixeira, who contributed shrewd comments on early sections of the dissertation.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: Positioning <i>Someplace Else</i>	1
Chapter One. From Slavery to Avenues	26
Chapter Two. Spatial Projects of Forgetting	83
Chapter Three. Vila Brasilândia and Geographies of Ethnoracial Mixture	154
Chapter Four. Making a Marked Margin: Brasilândia as “Little Africa”	218
Chapter Five. Constructions of Ethnoracial Space: Making “Japanese” Liberdade and “Italian” Bexiga	266
CONCLUSION: “Asphalt Has Today Covered Our Ground”	313
BIBLIOGRAPHY	326

Illustrations

Figures

1. Contemporary districts of Brasilândia, Bela Vista, and Liberdade	11
2. Screenshot of collaborative mapping application	21
3. Enslaved Africans and Afro-descendants producing manioc in Northern Region of São Paulo, Daniel Kidder	33
4. Demolitions linked to the <i>Avenues Plan</i>	58
5. <i>Navio Parado</i> , 1942	61
6. Cycles of formal and informal urban development: from <i>Trezentos</i> to <i>Navio Parado</i>	65
7. Navio Negreiro in Bela Vista district	70
8. Approximate location of sambista Gustavo Leite's home	75
9. Demolition of the Largo da Banana for extension of Pacaembu Avenue	77
10. Map-Mural on May 13 Street	86
11. Saracura Creeks and Saracura Street, 1907	92
12. Saracura neighborhood, 1913	93
13. Cortiço in Saracura Grande	98
14. Lowrie's map of nonwhite population in São Paulo	100
15. Praça da Bandeira, looking north up July 9 Avenue	107
16. Largo do Piques by Militão Augusto de Azevedo, circa 1862	111
17. Largo da Memória, 1954	112
18. Praça da Bandeira, image by Werner Haberkorn	114
19. Original Liberdade region, 1850	131
20. Antônio Bento's Home, Praça da Liberdade, and the Igreja dos Remédios	136
21. Igreja dos Remédios by Militão Augusto de Azevedo, circa 1862	147
22. Vila Brasilândia on Google Maps, 2018	154
23. Correct and incorrect locations of Vila Brasilândia loteamento	155

24. Aroldo de Azevedo's photo from Congo Road	161
25. Construction of Freguesia do Ó bridge, 1958	167
26. First bus line to Brasilândia, 1949	168
27. Visualization of allotments (<i>loteamentos</i>) in the contemporary district of Brasilândia	172
28. Undated photo of Vila Brasilândia	174
29. Geography of Cruz das Almas	177
30. Advertisement for Morro Grande and Via Anhanguera	181
31. "Stretch of Parapuã Street"	183
32. Bandeirante saluting the flags of São Paulo, Brazil, and Japan	197
33. "The region of Conde de Sarzedas Street, the Oasis of Japanese Immigrants, 1910-1940"	200
34. Mino-no-kuni Ogakijo ezu, Shōhō castle plans (1644)	201
35. Mãe Preta Statue	203
36. Location of Terreiro Santa Bárbara	212
37. Edeuzita's family in Brasilândia	222
38. "Favela"	234
39. Untitled image of interior in Brasilândia	236
40. Close-up of Carlos Marihella Street	253
41. Praça J. Vagliengo, Associação de Judô Yamamoto, and Sociedade Rosas de Ouro	263
42. <i>Torii</i> in Liberdade	270
43. Cine Brasilândia	274
44. Undated photograph of lamp posts in Liberdade	282
45. Undated photograph of lamp posts in Liberdade	282
46. Chapel of the Afflicted, Liberdade	286
47. Still from "Bexiga: Ano Zero," 1971	288
48. Planned streetscape for "Italian" Beixga	301
49. Lamp post along May 13 Street with the colors of the Italian flag	310

50. Pedestrian crossing light with the face of sambista Adoniran Barbosa	310
51. Construction partitions and half-demolished buildings in Brasília	313
52. Plan for Orange Line	314
53. Mural in Brasília	316
54. Lyrical Map of Samba do Congo's Anthem	324

Tables

1. Population of the city of São Paulo	9
2. Population change by district and subdistrict	10
3. Captive and Free Population in Freguesia da Nossa Senhora do Ó, 1799-1832	30

Introduction
Positioning “Someplace Else”

Samba musician Geraldo Filme repeated the same lines six times in succession: “I’m out of here / I’ll samba someplace else.”¹ Blending resolve with resignation, the lines concluded his elegy to a place razed for the building of an asphalted avenue and concrete bridge in São Paulo’s Barra Funda neighborhood. The full second verse of his early 1960s composition, titled “I’ll Samba Someplace Else,” ran:

<i>Surgiu um viaduto, é progresso</i>	A bridge rises, it’s progress
<i>Eu não posso protestar</i>	I can’t protest
<i>Adeus, berço do samba</i>	Goodbye, to the cradle of samba
<i>Eu vou-me embora</i>	I’m out of here
<i>Vou sambar n’outro lugar</i>	I’ll samba someplace else

Geraldo Filme was educated in samba at this place, known popularly as the “Banana Square.” Newly-freed Africans and Afro-descendants created this place in the decades following the formal abolition of slavery in 1888. Migrating into the city of São Paulo from plantations in the rural interior, they established the Largo da Banana as a site for the practice of samba and informal labor linked to the adjacent railway.² Known affectionately as “Big Geraldo of Barra Funda,” Filme described Barra Funda, along with São Paulo’s Liberdade and Bexiga neighborhoods, as the city’s original “black zone” (“*zona do negro*”).³

Official urban planners in São Paulo first outlined the expropriation and demolition of the Largo da Banana in the 1920s, though delays hampered the execution of their plan for decades. Filme penned “I’ll Samba Someplace Else” in the wake of the final demolition in the early 1960s. His lyrics presented a paved roadway dislocating a site significant to Afro-descendants as the essence of São Paulo-style

¹ Geraldo Filme, “Vou Sambar N’outro Lugar,” In Plínio Marcos, *Em Prosa e Samba - Nas Quebradas do Mundaréu*, Geraldo Filme, Zeca da Casa Verde, and Toniquinho Batuqueiro, 1974, CD.

² A neighborhood history commissioned and published by the City of São Paulo describes the site as follows: “the place of the ‘brave blacks’ (*negros valentões*) who by day worked alongside the railway line and at night danced *capoeira*, frequented parties, bars, and religious ceremonies of African origin.” Aideli S. Urbani Brunelli et. al., *Barra Funda* (São Paulo: Prefeitura Municipal da Cidade de São Paulo, 2006), 22.

³ Quoted in Marcos Virgílio da Silva, “Debaixo do ‘Pogréssio’: Urbanização, Cultura, e Experiência Popular em João Rubinato e Outros Sambistas Paulistanos (1951-1969)” (PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 2011), 77.

progress. Such socio-spatial dynamics were, indeed, not confined to Barra Funda. Between the 1930s and 1980s, city planners and ordinary residents in São Paulo engaged in large-scale projects and everyday practices that transformed the ethnoracial identities attached to the city's neighborhoods. While roadway projects asphalted the city's former "black zone" and paved the way for the making of two whitened and immigrant neighborhoods, dislocated residents reproduced that zone in the form of a "Little Africa" *someplace else*.

Building Arguments

This dissertation follows the interconnected histories of three São Paulo neighborhoods constructed as "Japanese" Liberdade, "Italian" Bexiga, and "Afro" Brasilândia over the middle of the twentieth century. Today a cosmopolitan metropolis of more than 11 million, the city of São Paulo began its meteoric growth in the late nineteenth century with an influx of formerly-enslaved Afro-descendants and immigrants from Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. City planner-turned-mayor Francisco Prestes Maia (terms 1938-'45 and 1961-'65) ushered in a new phase of São Paulo's development. Prestes Maia's center-city redevelopment projects constructed new avenues, raised property values, and dislocated predominantly Afro-descendants from Liberdade and Bexiga, two of the city's historic hubs of Afro-descendent settlement. Dislocated residents migrated to the city's geographical margins, where they partnered with regional migrants in the construction of new neighborhoods like Brasilândia independent of official planners. Despite these neighborhoods' multiethnic resident populations, by the 1980s their spatial identities as "Japanese" Liberdade, "Italian" Bexiga, and "Afro" Brasilândia had become fixed in material space as well as popular and official discourse.

Two related questions follow from the interwoven histories of these three neighborhoods: how do ethnoracial identities become attached to urban spaces, and what work do these neighborhood identity constructs do? Scholars of identity formation and urban studies have analyzed the ascription of

race/ethnicity to space as processes of racialization or ethnicization.⁴ Such analysis helps to show that places described as a “black neighborhood” or “Chinatown,” to take two examples, are not natural or static constructions. In São Paulo, residents as well as officials used the terminology of *marking* when discussing similar local neighborhoods. This term both reflected and participated in processes that a contemporary researcher from Brazil or the United States might classify as racialization/ethnicization.

In the 1950s Brazilian sociologist Oracy Nogueira identified the mark as the defining feature of racial identity and prejudice in Brazil. He classified the mark as a mutable constellation of an individual’s visible or performed traits like physiognomy, gestures, and accent.⁵ In the same era an array of geographers and journalists in the São Paulo press categorized urban spaces that supposedly possessed identities, such as a “Japanese” neighborhood, with the adjective *marked* (“*marcado*”).⁶ Marks and the practice of marking were not isolated to Brazil or South America. Historian Michael A. Gomez has explored, for example, the making of a shared ethnoracial identity – African-American – despite ritual scars, or “country marks,” that defined distinct African ethnic groups in the southern United States before the Civil War. In that region as in Brazil, neither marks nor marked spaces were essential or permanently fixed.⁷

⁴ Michael Omi and Howard Winant define racialization as “the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group.” *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 2015 [1986]), 142. Previous writers to develop the concept include: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2005 [1964]); Michael Banton, *The Idea of Race* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978). A more recent overview of racialization with an emphasis on comparisons across ethnoracial groups can be found in a 2008 special issue of *PMLA*, introduced in Shu-Mei Shih, “Comparative Racialization: An Introduction,” *PMLA* 123:5 (2008), 1347-1362.

⁵ Oracy Nogueira, “Preconceito racial de marca e preconceito racial de origem—sugestão de um quadro de referência para a interpretação do material sobre relações raciais no Brasil,” XXXI Congresso Internacional de Americanistas, 1954. The paper can be found in *Tempo Social, revista de sociologia da USP* 19:1 (November 2006): 287-308.

⁶ To provide two initial examples: Brazilian geographer Aroldo de Azevedo prefaced his explanation of São Paulo’s racialized/ethnicized landscape by saying that, “In terms of ethnicity, the *marcas* are well pronounced.” *A cidade de S. Paulo (estudos de geografia urbana)*, vlm 1 (1958), 19. In a newspaper article about the Liberdade neighborhood from 1935, the authors described the Japanese characters in the built environment as “*marking* the beginning of the *bairro nipônico* (Japanese neighborhood).” “A symphonia da metropole,” *Correio de S. Paulo*, August 15, 1935, 1.

⁷ Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 1998).

The construction and remaking of marked neighborhoods over time are the central subjects of this dissertation. I document the individuals and specific spatial practices involved in the construction of racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods.⁸ I examine those practices through the actions of official city planners (employed by the state or real estate firms) and what I term informal planners (local residents). From the 1930s through the 1980s, these individuals engaged in contested redevelopment projects that remade Liberdade, Bexiga, and Brasilândia. The racialization/ethnicization of these places had particularities, however my research uncovers common threads and points of intersection. Those intersections included the significance of practices of demolition, naming places, and producing roadways. These practices remade São Paulo's marked neighborhoods and, in doing so, served to reshape interethnic dynamics and reproduce ethnoracial inequities over time.

Silencing the histories of Afro-descendants through practices of demolition, naming places, and producing roadways reproduced racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods. I advance this argument through the excavation and recuperation of Brasilândia. While situated on the geographic and social margins of the city of São Paulo through the twenty-first century, Brasilândia's history is intimately woven into the development of São Paulo. More than 250,000 residents live in this district, making it among the most populous in the city.⁹ In a 1989 article urbanist Raquel Rolnik termed Brasilândia São Paulo's "Little Africa" and noted that 49% of the population was black. She provided no additional details about the neighborhood's "African" identity or the history of the place more broadly.¹⁰ More recently, sociologist Edward Telles made a significant if similarly-brief mention of Brasilândia:

...greater racial segregation, no matter what the cause, often means the existence of dynamic ethnic neighborhoods, where ethnic affinities create a greater valuation of shared residential space, promoting cultural life and helping to empower ethnic groups toward greater participation by uniting common interests and controlling political spaces. The case of black (*negro*) districts

⁸ I alternate between the terms racialization/ethnicization and marking throughout the dissertation. I see marking, along with its variants "mark" and "marked," as an earlier generation's terminology that, while used more frequently in popular discourse than "racialization" and "ethnicization," approximates the same phenomena.

⁹ In 2000, for instance, Brasilândia's 247,328 residents made it the second most populous district in the city. Censo 2000, Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística.

¹⁰ Raquel Rolnik, "Territórios Negros nas Cidades Brasileiras: Etnicidade e Cidade em São Paulo e Rio de Janeiro," *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* 17 (1989), 14.

like Liberdade in Salvador—where Afro-Brazilian music and culture are produced—Brasilândia in São Paulo, and Madureira in Rio de Janeiro are prime examples.¹¹

Despite these prominent references to Brasilândia, little research about the place exists in English or Portuguese. We have only a sketchy understanding of even basic details about the neighborhood's seventy-year history. Readers acquainted with São Paulo's robust academic culture and the popular fascination with neighborhoods and their histories may find the lack of research about this populous and symbolic place surprising.¹²

A number of factors have obscured Brasilândia's rich and significant past.¹³ A hub of informality since its settlement, Brasilândia was founded, and largely grew, off the map. The neighborhood concentrated some of the city of São Paulo's first *favelas*, a type of informal, often precarious housing settlement common in urban Brazil. By the 1970s, Brasilândia would have the highest number of favelas in the city. Because Brasilândia was an informal space, written sources about its development are not readily accessible in São Paulo's historical archives. The textual documentation I located about Brasilândia, combined with other ethnographic sources and methodologies, provide revealing insights

¹¹ Edward E. Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 212. I have located one other use of this term in published academic work: Angileli Cecilia Maria de Moraes Machado, "Paisagem revelada no cotidiano da periferia: Distrito de Brasilândia, Zona Norte do Município de São Paulo" (master's thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2007), 63.

¹² For example, the City of São Paulo has, for 49 years, bankrolled a series of books about neighborhood histories (33 volumes large as of 2006).

¹³ In contrast to the circumstances for Brasilândia, readers interested in the histories of Liberdade and Bela Vista/Bexiga have a healthy collection of secondary literature at their disposal. For Bexiga: Nádia Marzola, *Bela Vista* (São Paulo: Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo: Secretaria municipal de cultura, 1978); Célia Toledo Lucena, *Bairro do Bexiga: A Sobrevivência Cultural* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1984); Francisco Capuano Scarlato, "Bixiga: Uma Ideologia Geográfica," *Boletim Paulista de Geografia* 67 (1989); Teresinha Bernardo, *Memória em branco e negro: olhares sobre São Paulo* (São Paulo: EDUC, 1998); Márcio Sampaio de Castro, *Bexiga: Um Bairro Afro-Italiano* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2008); Ana Lúcia Duarte Lanna, "O Bexiga e os italianos em São Paulo," in Ana Lúcia Duarte Lanna et. al., *São Paulo, os estrangeiros e a construção das cidades* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2011); Sheila Schneck, "Bexiga: cotidiano e trabalho em suas interfaces com a cidade (1906-1931)" (PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 2016); Larissa Nascimento, "'Lembrança eu tenho da Saracura': notas sobre a população negra e as reconfigurações urbanas no bairro do Bexiga," *Intratextos* 6 (1), 32-33. For Liberdade: Lais de Barros Monteiro Guimarães, *Liberdade* (São Paulo: Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo: Secretaria municipal de cultura, 1978); Tomoo Handa, *O imigrante japonês: história de sua vida no Brasil* (São Paulo: T.A. Queiroz, Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros, 1987); Jeffrey Lesser, *A Discontented Diaspora: Japanese-Brazilians and the Meanings of Ethnic Militancy, 1960-1980* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2007); Alexandre Kishimoto, "A experiência do cinema japonês no bairro da Liberdade" (master's thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2009); Mieko Nishida, *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018).

into the neighborhood's past.¹⁴ Popular stigma has also kept the history of Brasilândia largely unwritten. When the name of the place appears in São Paulo's popular press, it is frequently depicted as a hub of poverty, violence, and crime. That stigma is undeniably racialized, a fact that I first discerned in warnings from strangers that my light skin color would make me unsafe in the neighborhood. Chapter Four homes in on the construction of this stigma in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The individuals and narratives I follow throughout the entire dissertation, however, serve more broadly to destabilize popular misconceptions about this place and its residents.

There are compelling reasons for analyzing the interwoven histories of Brasilândia, Bexiga, and Liberdade, along with the ethnoracial identities attached to these neighborhoods, that transcend the predominately local, place-based narratives at the core of the dissertation. The histories of Afro-descendant, Japanese, and Italian populations are intimately intertwined in São Paulo and Brazil's history from the late nineteenth century through the present. Officials in São Paulo promoted Italian and later Japanese immigration as the solution for the transition from enslaved to wage labor. Newcomers from the Italian peninsula and Japan would replace Africans and Afro-descendants on plantations in the state of São Paulo, where a nineteenth-century coffee boom helped to concentrate the nation's largest enslaved workforce.¹⁵ The promotion of Japanese and Italian immigration was also described as a means to dilute the genetic, phenotypical, and cultural Africanness of the nation through whitening, or *branqueamento*.¹⁶

¹⁴ Those sources enable me to show, for example, that the patterns of informality in Brasilândia were closely linked to, if not the direct products of, official city planning projects.

¹⁵ George Reid Andrews examines this process of replacement in the context of the labor market and immigration subsidies in the state of São Paulo. He writes that European immigrants "systematically displaced and marginalized the state's Afro-Brazilian workers, in both the countryside and the cities." My research complements his work by detailing the spatial aspects of displacement in the decades following slavery's abolition and in the context of multiethnic settlement and migration into and within the city of São Paulo. George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 54, 59.

¹⁶ Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1993); George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000* (New York: Oxford UP, 2000); Petrônio Domingues, *Uma história não contada: negro, racismo, e branqueamento em São Paulo no pós-abolição* (São Paulo: Editora SENAC São Paulo 2004); Jeffrey Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013); Barbara Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2015).

The settlement of Italian and Japanese descendants in the city of São Paulo contributed to defining São Paulo in dominant discourse as a white, immigrant, and modern metropolis.¹⁷ That construction differentiated São Paulo, the emerging industrial and financial capital of the country in the early twentieth century, from Brazil's long-recognized hubs of African and Afro-descendant culture, Rio de Janeiro and Salvador (Bahia).¹⁸ These racialized/ethnicized constructions of difference on the scales of the region and city were neither naturally-occurring nor the incidental byproducts of more significant, first-order factors like im/migrant settlement patterns.¹⁹ From regions to neighborhoods, racialized/ethnicized difference was produced and remade over time through specific, identifiable spatial practices.

“Japanese” Liberdade, “Italian” Bexiga, and “Afro” Brasilândia possess inextricably shared histories that were woven together over the middle of the twentieth century by an ambitious city planning project, the dislocation of resident populations, and the relational processes by which ethnoracial identities were constructed in and through space. Those connections show that these marked

¹⁷ George Reid Andrews explains the making of racialized São Paulo exceptionalism through the lens of labor. See Andrews, *Blacks and Whites*, esp. 88-89.

¹⁸ There is an expansive academic literature extending from the nineteenth century that has participated in the elaboration and critical analysis of these spatial identities. For Rio, see: João do Rio, *As Religiões do Rio*, translated by Ana Lessa-Schmidt (Hanover, CT: New London Librarian, 2015 [1904]); Roberto Moura, *Tia Ciata e a Pequena África no Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, 1995); Mônica Pimenta Velloso, “As tias baianas tomam conta do pedaço: espaço e identidade cultural no Rio de Janeiro,” *Estudos Históricos* 6 (1990); Bruno Carvalho, *Porous City: A Cultural History of Rio de Janeiro* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 82-91. Key authors in work on Bahia are Nina Rodrigues, Manuel Querino, Pierre Verger, E. Franklin Frazier, Ruth Landes, Donald Pierson, Roger Bastide, and Edison Carneiro. Recent works include: J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2005); Kim Butler, “Africa in the Reinvention of Nineteenth-Century Afro-Bahian Identity,” in Kristin Mann and Edna G. Bay, eds., *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (London: F. Class, 2001), 135-54; Anadelia A. Romo, *Brazil's Living Museum: Race, Reform, and Tradition in Bahia* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2010); Patricia de Santana Pinho, *Reinvenções da África na Bahia* (Editora Annablume, 2004); Christen A. Smith, *Afro-Paradise: Blackness, Violence, and Performance in Brazil* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016). John F. Collins examines the notion of Salvador and, more specifically, the Pelourinho/Maciél neighborhoods, as the “cradle” and “heart” of Africa in *Revolt of the Saints: Memory and Redemption in the Twilight of Brazilian Racial Democracy* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2015).

¹⁹ Two other works that explicitly address racialized regional difference in Brazil: Marcos Chor Maio, “UNESCO and the Study of Race Relations in Brazil: Regional or National Issue?” *Latin American Research Review* 36:2 (2001), 118-136; Barbara Weinstein, “Regionalizing Racial Difference: São Paulo versus Brazil,” in Nancy P. Applebaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Roseblatt, eds. *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2003), 237-262.

neighborhoods are not singular and unique. Their shared histories, threaded into a singular assemblage of narratives in the following chapters, provide generalizable insights into the mechanics and broad significance of space and identity formation in multiethnic metropolises in Brazil and beyond.

Between the 1930s and 1980s the city of São Paulo grew through vast interregional migration, the expansion of industrial capital, and a combination of top-down and unregulated, grassroots urban development.²⁰ Mid-twentieth-century São Paulo was one of the fastest growing cities in the world, a fact captured in the city's popular nickname as “the city that cannot stop.”²¹ São Paulo's population growth (table 1) figured centrally into Brazil's urban transition. In 1940, 31% of the national population lived in cities; by 1980, that share topped 68%.²² Territorial growth proceeded in parallel to population growth, as the city of São Paulo's footprint grew approximately ninefold between the 1930s and 1980s.²³

²⁰ Richard Morse, *From Community to Metropolis: A Biography of São Paulo, Brazil* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1958); Warren Dean, *The Industrialization of São Paulo, 1890-1945* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1969); Celine Sachs-Jeantet, *São Paulo: políticas públicas e habitação popular* (São Paulo, SP: EDUSP, 1990); Nicolau Sevcenko, *Orfeu extático na metrópole: São Paulo, sociedade e cultura nos frementes anos 20* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992); John D. French, *The Brazilian Workers' ABC: Class Conflict and Alliances in Modern São Paulo* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 1992); Nadia Somekh and Candido Malta Campos, *A cidade que não pode parar: planos urbanísticos de São Paulo no século xx* (São Paulo: Mackpesquisa, 2002); Raquel Rolnik, *A cidade e a lei legislação, política urbana e territórios na cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: FAPESP Studio Nobel, 2007); Cristina Peixoto-Mehrtens, *Urban Space and National Identity in Early Twentieth Century São Paulo, Brazil: Crafting Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Joel Wolfe, *Autos and Progress: the Brazilian Search for Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010); Nabil Bonducki, *Origens da Habitação Social no Brasil: Arquitetura Moderna, Lei do Inquilinato e Difusão da Casa Própria*, 7ª edição (São Paulo: Estação Liberdade: 2013); Paulo Fontes, *Migration and the Making of Industrial São Paulo* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2016); Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity*.

²¹ For the 1940s, the following statistics on the pace of urban population increase are illustrative: 66.9% for São Paulo versus 30% in Los Angeles, 25% in Buenos Aires, 23.3% in Rio de Janeiro, 10.4% in Chicago, and 9.45% in New York. See Tania Regina de Luca, *São Paulo no Século XX* (São Paulo: Organização Poiesis Social de Cultura, 2011), 20. I have encountered the “city that cannot stop” phrase as early as 1955 in an article in *Cine Reporter: Semanário Cinematográfico*, 67. It is a common contemporary trope about the city's development, deployed in both popular and academic contexts, including in book titles such as Somekh and Campos, *A cidade que não pode parar*.

²² “Taxa de urbanização,” Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, <https://seriesestatisticas.ibge.gov.br/series.aspx?vcodigo=POP122> (accessed June 22, 2018). Based on Censos Demográficos from 1940-2010.

²³ Milton Santos, *Metrópole Corporativa Fragmentada* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1978), 34 fn 1.

	Population of the City of São Paulo							
	1920	1934	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1991
Population	579,033	1,060,120	1,326,261	2,198,096	3,781,446	5,924,615	8,493,226	9,646,185
Sources: IBGE - Censos Demográficos, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1991, 2000 Sinopses Preliminares dos Censos Demográficos de 1950 e 1960 Sempla/Dipro - Retroestimativas e Recomposição dos Distritos para os anos 1950, 1960 e 1970 São Paulo, Recenseamento demográfico, escolar e agrícola - zootécnico do Estado de São Paulo (20 de setembro de 1934) São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, 1936.								

Table 1: Population of the city of São Paulo

Like other populous and territorially expansive cities, São Paulo grew over time through the making of new, and redevelopment of old, neighborhoods. There is a crucial distinction, however, between the categories of neighborhood, subdistrict, and district in São Paulo. The primary subjects of this dissertation are neighborhoods, yet neighborhoods in the city of São Paulo possess no formal, official definition.²⁴ They are fluid constructs produced through everyday spatial practices as well as large-scale projects. In the twentieth century São Paulo was officially organized by districts and subdistricts, which often shared the same names as neighborhoods. For example, the neighborhoods of Brasilândia, Liberdade, and Bexiga are distinct from, but located within, the districts of Brasilândia, Liberdade, and Bela Vista (table 2 and figure 1). To make matters more confusing, these classifications change over time. Liberdade and Bela Vista have been districts since the early twentieth century. Brasilândia, by contrast, changed from a neighborhood into a subdistrict and ultimately district all within the chronological period of the dissertation.

²⁴ Emílio Haddad, “Sobre a Divisão da Cidade em Zonas Homogêneas” (PhD diss., FAU-USP, 1987), cited in Bruno Dantas Hidalgo, “As divisões territoriais do Município de São Paulo: uma proposta de classificação por meio da análise dos Distritos” (undergraduate thesis, USP, 2003), 28; Márcia Lúcia Rebello Pinho Dias, *Desenvolvimento urbano e habitação popular em São Paulo: 1870-1914* (São Paulo: Nobel, 1989). For the history of the administrative division of land in São Paulo, see “São Paulo,” IBGE, <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/sp/sao-paulo/historico> (accessed May 13, 2017).

	Population by District and Subdistrict							
	1934	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1991	2000
Liberdade	49,960	43,795	55,523	68,210	71,503	82,472	76,245	61,875
Bela Vista	66329	47,440	46,340	57,364	64,704	85,416	71,825	63,190
Nossa Senhora do Ó	4,172	n/a	17,487	45,002	103,908	150,578	152,672	144,923
Brasilândia	-	-	19,329*	49,743*	114,855*	166,441*	201,591	247,328

Sources: IBGE - Censos Demográficos, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1991, 2000
Sinopses Preliminares dos Censos Demográficos de 1950 e 1960
Sempla/Dipro - Retroestimativas e Recomposição dos Distritos para os anos 1950, 1960 e 1970
São Paulo, Recenseamento demográfico, escolar e agrícola - zootécnico do Estado de São Paulo (20 de setembro de 1934) São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, 1936.
Liziane Peres Mangili, "Transformações e permanências no bairro do Bom Retiro, SP (1930-1954)" (master's Thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, São Carlos, 2009), 70.

Table 2: Population change by district and subdistrict
* Brasilândia was a subdistrict in these years

Given that neighborhoods are the central subjects of my analysis, I often omit the word “neighborhood” itself when discussing Brasilândia, Bexiga, or Liberdade. I include the word “district” when I refer to that category of official space instead of the neighborhood. Readers will note, in addition, that throughout the dissertation I use quotations when describing the racialized/ethnicized identities of these neighborhoods, as in: “Afro” Brasilândia, “Japanese” Liberdade, and “Italian” Bexiga. I do so in order to emphasize that they are sociospatial constructs and to avoid reifying them as natural, essential, or timeless.

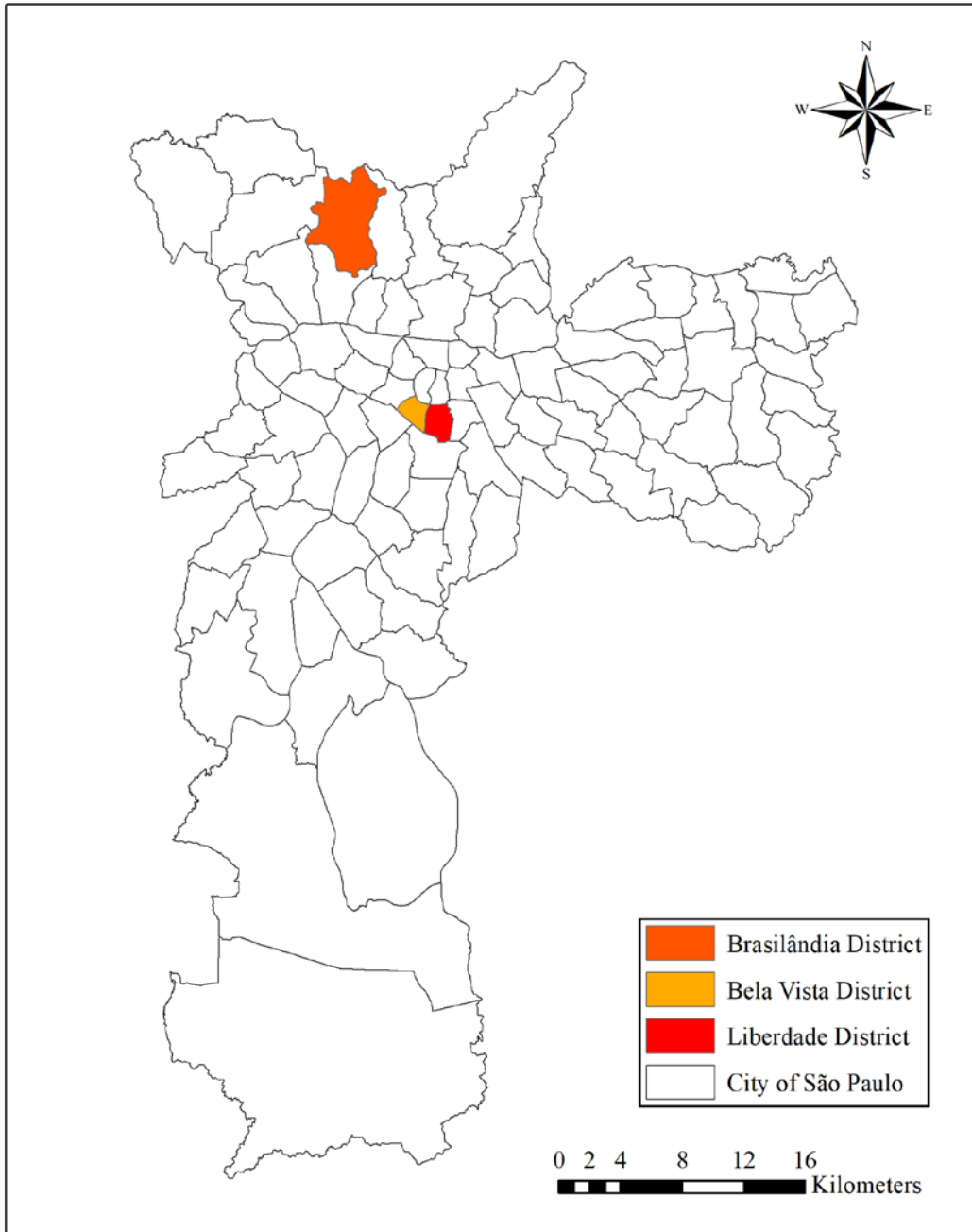


Figure 1: Contemporary districts of Brasilândia, Bela Vista, and Liberdade within the City of São Paulo.
Map by author.

At the Crossroads of Space and Identity

Race/ethnicity and space are interrelated constructs that structure unequal social relationships.

Research on the production of space and ethnoracial identity formation, however, have largely developed

independently. My dissertation brings critical theories of space into conversation with questions of social difference. I examine the intersection of these phenomena through an extensive empirical dataset and a narrative fundamentally concerned with change and continuity over time.²⁵ In doing so, I build on the work of geographers like Doreen Massey. Massey asserts that the “specificity and uniqueness” of spaces, or the identity of a place, are produced relationally. Human subjects and places are constructed at points of intersection where spatial and social difference are defined. Massey terms these intersections articulations and explains that “if places are conceptualized in this way and also take account of the construction of subjects within them, which help in turn to produce the place, then the identity of place is a double articulation.”²⁶ This interpretation shows that places and social identities are not static, homogenous, or even independent; they are codependent, nonessential, and mutable constructs produced at the intersection of socio-spatial sameness and difference.

Space is more than a neutral stage upon which social difference operates;²⁷ its very production is central to the formation and reproduction of social identities over time. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall writes: “we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position... We are all, in that sense, *ethnically located* and our ethnic identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are.”²⁸ Although geography is not a principal analytic in Hall’s work, his use of spatial language in this quote – “place,” “position,” and “located” – rightly draws attention to the centrality of space to ethnic identity formation. I examine that relationship explicitly through the histories of Liberdade, Bexiga, and Brasilândia, which reveal the production of space and construction of race/ethnicity as mutually constitutive processes.

²⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991 [1974]); Doreen Massey, “Double Articulation: A Place in the World,” in Angelika Bammer, ed. *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994); Doreen Massey, “A Global Sense of Place,” in Timothy Oakes and Patricia Price, eds., *The Cultural Geography Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (New York: Verso, 1989).

²⁶ Massey, “Double Articulation: A Place in the World,” 117-118.

²⁷ Omi and Winant write that the “organization of residential space” is a social process “in which race *operates* as a fundamental organizing principle.” This language represents space as a platform on which race operates instead of a dynamic construction constitutive with racial identity formation. *Racial Formation*, 2.

²⁸ Stuart Hall, “New Ethnicities,” in Kuan-Hsing Chen and David Morley, *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, 447. Emphasis in original.

Studies of race/ethnicity and urban space have frequently centered on North American and European cities and detailed how racialized/ethnicized spaces result from racist segregation or immigrant networks in “ethnic enclaves.” The former paradigm, centered on a black/white conception of race, privileges the role of institutional and state actors in enacting racist spatial programs.²⁹ The latter approach focuses on immigrant ethnicity and deemphasizes the role of the state in favor of non-state figures like “ethnic entrepreneurs,” whose largely economic activities help to form seemingly homogenous immigrant enclaves.³⁰ The marking of São Paulo neighborhoods calls for an alternative approach that integrates these discrete frameworks.³¹ Liberdade, Bexiga, and Brasilândia developed their ethnoracial associations contingently, in spite of ethnoracially-diverse resident populations, and through contested negotiations between individuals within and outside of institutions.

Researchers who have argued for greater attention to space and identity formation have outlined preliminary models and questions that point toward productive avenues for empirically-based research. Caroline Knowles, for example, sketches four mechanisms by which race and space interrelate: struggles over the built environment, everyday practices, migration, and social relationships.³² Brooke Neely and Michelle Samura comment on the broader and contemporary significance of this relationship: “At a time when the term ‘post-racial’ is used to signal a supposed decline in the significance of race, a spatial

²⁹ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987); Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990); Robert M. Adelman and Christopher Mele, eds. *Race, Space, and Exclusion: Segregation and Beyond in Metropolitan America* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright, 2017).

³⁰ Kenneth Wilson and Alejandro Portes, “Immigrant Enclaves: An Analysis of the Labor Market Experiences of Cubans in Miami,” *American Journal of Sociology* 86 (September 1980), 295-319; Alejandro Portes and Robert D. Manning, “The Immigrant Enclave: Theory and Empirical Examples,” in Jan Lin and Christopher Mele, eds. *The Urban Sociology Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Min Zhou, “Revisiting Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Convergencies, Controversies, and Conceptual Advancements,” *International Migration Review* 38 (Fall 2004), 1040-1074; Peter Marcuse, “Enclaves Yes, Ghettos No: Segregation and the State,” in David Varady, ed., *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), 15-30.

³¹ A pioneering study to do this in another context was Kay J. Anderson, “The Idea of Chinatown: The Power of Place and Institutional Practice in the Making of a Racial Category,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77:4 (1987), 580-598. A more recent intervention is Linling Gao-Miles, “Beyond the Ethnic Enclave: Interethnicity and Trans-spatiality in an Australian Suburb,” *City & Society* 29:1 (2017), 82-103.

³² Caroline Knowles, *Race and Social Analysis* (London: SAGE, 2003).

perspective can provide a particularly useful lens and language for locating and understanding persistent racial processes.”³³ Neely and Samura argue that analysis of space can reveal how racial inequities endure in spite of post-racialist discourses, which they locate in the twenty-first century U.S.³⁴

Although debates about post-racialism have recently surged in the U.S., Brazilian state officials, academics, and ordinary residents alike have asserted and contested representations of Brazil as a racism-free, “racial democracy” throughout the twentieth century.³⁵ In the wake of the Holocaust, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sponsored a series of studies about supposed harmonious interethnic relations and the lack of racial prejudice in Brazil. The researchers divided their study by region, and the team in São Paulo revealed attitudes of racial prejudice and racialized social inequities masked behind the ideology of “racial democracy.”³⁶ Researchers and informants who grew up or resided in the districts of Liberdade and Bela Vista were key participants in the UNESCO project. One of its leaders, Florestan Fernandes, grew up in Bela Vista.³⁷ The study was conducted in parallel to the urban redevelopment projects that made these historic centers of Afro-descendant settlement. The places served as privileged sites for the interrogation and deconstruction of this enduring national myth.

³³ They also ask productive questions like: “What social relations and social identities are being re/produced in and through social and physical spaces? How do social relations and spatial processes affect one another?” Brooke Neely and Michelle Samura, “Social Geographies of Race: Connecting Race and Space,” *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 34:11 (2011), 1934 and 1947.

³⁴ Post-racial here seems to reference the ethnoracial diversification of the U.S. population and the 2008 election of Barack Obama. For a slightly earlier study that argues that racial formation in the U.S. and Brazil are becoming more similar, see G. Reginald Daniel, *Race and Multiraciality in Brazil and the United States: Converging Paths?* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2006).

³⁵ Abdias do Nascimento, *Racial democracy in Brazil, Myth or Reality? A Dossier of Brazilian racism* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Sketch Publ. Co., 1977); Emilia Viotti da Costa, “The Myth of Racial Democracy,” *The Brazilian Empire: Myths and Histories* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2000); Telles, *Race in Another America*; Antônio Sérgio Guimarães, *Racismo e anti-racismo no Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 1999); Andrews, *Blacks and Whites*.

³⁶ Maio, “UNESCO and the Study of Race Relations in Brazil.”

³⁷ Haroldo Ceravolo Sereza, “Florestan Fernandes,” in Luiz Bernardo Pericás and Lincoln Secco, orgs. *Intérpretes do Brasil: Clássicos, rebeldes e renegados* (São Paulo: Biotempo, 2015), Kindle Edition; Florestan Fernandes and Roger Bastide, *Relações raciais entre brancos e negros em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Anhembi, 1955); Florestan Fernandes, *A integração do negro na sociedade de classes* (São Paulo : Dominus Ed., 1965); Marcos Chor Maio and Rosemary Galli, “Florestan Fernandes, Oracy Nogueira, and the UNESCO Project on Race Relations in São Paulo,” *Latin American Perspectives* 38:3 (May 2011), 136-149.

While neither São Paulo nor Brazil were multicultural paradises, spatialized racial prejudice and racialized inequity did not manifest in patterns identical to other contexts. Segregation in São Paulo was not a black and white matter. Sociologist Edward Telles finds that “racial segregation in Brazil is not self-apparent and requires systematic measurement.” He prescribes an analysis that “neither imposes assumptions from systems of legalized black-white segregation like the United States and South Africa, nor embraces the racial democracy ideology, which obscures a true understanding of how race and class operate in Brazil.”³⁸ São Paulo is by many measures a segregated city, or what anthropologist Teresa Caldeira has termed a “city of walls.”³⁹ The racialization/ethnicization of Liberdade, Bexiga, and Brasilândia offers insights into the making of ethnoracial segregation and enduring socio-spatial inequities in mid-twentieth-century São Paulo and beyond.

The marking of Brasilândia, Liberdade, and Bexiga demonstrates how social identities can become fixed – even if temporarily – in material space. Anti-essentialist analysis has shown how social identities are fluid constructs produced through performed and therefore largely intangible processes. My dissertation complements this analysis by drawing attention to the tactile significance of “construction” in our understanding of identity as a social construct.⁴⁰ While social identities are made through regimes of classification and performance, they are also tangibly constructed through visible features of the material world. I show that seemingly-mundane features of a city’s built environment – ones that, on their surface, have no explicit relationship to race/ethnicity – can acquire a meaningful and widely-held racialized/ethnicized significance.

For instance, in São Paulo as in other cities in urban Brazil, paved roadways played a central role in the production of racialized/ethnicized spaces. Asphalted streets served both destructive and productive

³⁸ Telles, *Race in Another America*, 196.

³⁹ Teresa Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000); Maria Nilza da Silva, *Nem para todos é a cidade: segregação urbana e racial em São Paulo* (Brasília: Ministério da Cultura, Fundação Cultural Palmares, 2006); Reinaldo José de Oliveira, *Territorialidade negra e segregação racial na cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Alameda Casa Editorial, 2016).

⁴⁰ On the materialization of identity, see Lars Frers and Lars Meier, eds, *Encountering Urban Places: Visual and Material Performances in the City* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007). Clara Irazábal explores ethnicized place-making via immigrant-themed parks in Curitiba in Irazábal, *City Making and Urban Governance in the Americas: Curitiba and Portland* (New York: Routledge, 2016 [2005]).

ends: as an instrument for the silencing of certain ethnoracial identities and as a mechanism for the promotion of others. The racialized/ethnicized significance of asphalted streets, I explain in the following chapters, extended beyond Brazil to both small and large urban environments in racially-stratified former slave societies elsewhere in the Americas. These parallels help us to glimpse the making of a racialized/ethnicized socio-spatial structure of cities. That structure has shaped interethnic relations and served to sustain ethnoracial inequities, including in societies that have lacked formalized racist programs and that have been championed as hubs of multicultural harmony or post-racialism.

I analyze the co-production of race/ethnicity and urban space with a theory of planning that brings together the two major drivers of the city of São Paulo's urbanization: official city planning and the production of informal settlements. Scholars have studied both in Brazil, especially high modernist planning in the national capital Brasília and favelas in Rio de Janeiro.⁴¹ São Paulo's sprawling mix of the formally-planned and seemingly-improvised invites an analysis that includes the range of individuals – located in an array of institutional and social positions – who were responsible for the city's development. That analysis has precedent in the work of urban anthropologists and planning theorists who have argued that planning theory should encompass social actors beyond state-employed technocrats and developers. Ranier Randolph, Faranak Miraftab, and James Holston describe “subversive” or “insurgent” planning through land occupation as a way that residents contest social inequality and political exclusion.⁴²

I attend both to state and grassroots planning and examine the spatial practices of the latter without a pre-determined emphasis on counter-hegemonic insurgency or subversion. I see popular

⁴¹ Aldo Paviani, *Brasília, ideologia e realidade: espaço urbano em questao* (Brasilia: Universidade de Brasilia, 2010); James Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Janice Perlman, *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Brodwyn M. Fischer, *A Poverty of Rights: Citizenship and Inequality in Twentieth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); Bryan McCann, *Hard Times in the Marvelous City: From Dictatorship to Democracy in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

⁴² Ranier Randolph, “A Nova Perspectiva Do Planejamento Subversivo E Suas (Possíveis) Implicações Para a Formação Do Planejador Urbano E Regional: O Caso Brasileiro,” *Scripta Nova (Barcelona)* X (2008), 98–110; Faranak Miraftab, “Insurgent Planning: Situating Radical Planning in the Global South,” *Planning Theory* 8:1 (2009), 32–50; James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

participation in the production of space – what I term informal planning – as sometimes but not always a counter-hegemonic practice. My examination of formal and informal planners in one frame reveals deep connections that tied local residents to officials. Detailing those formal-informal connections helps to recalibrate the overemphasis on institutions in the segregation paradigm and the privileging of non-state actors in the ethnic enclaves model.

I examine how official and informal planners made São Paulo’s racialized/ethnicized geography through the re/naming of places alongside material practices of demolition and producing roadways. As in other multiethnic metropolises, the linguistic landscape of the city of São Paulo both reflected and participated in the construction of social identities on multiple scales.⁴³ Identity has been a principal theme in the recent spate of work on linguistic landscape, including in the context of ethnic enclaves.⁴⁴ I understand the linguistic landscape as approximating the full range of visual, intangible, and often contested names that humans use to categorize a built or natural environment.⁴⁵ In the following chapters

⁴³ The field has recently cohered in Europe and North America, with publications explicitly engaging linguistic landscape ballooning over the last decade especially. A journal dedicated to the field, *Linguistic Landscape*, was founded in 2015. Most scholars date the origins of the field to Rodrigue Landry and Richard Y. Bourhis, “Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study,” *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 16:1 (1997), 23–49. For a list of the hundreds of recent citations in the field, see Robert Troyer, “Historical and emerging trends in linguistic landscape studies” (Poster presented at annual conference American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL), Portland, March 22–25, 2014). Bibliography available online at <www.zotero.org/groups/linguistic_landscape_bibliography>.

⁴⁴ Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost, *Language and the City* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); H. William Amos, “Chinatown by numbers: Defining an ethnic space by empirical linguistic landscape,” *Linguistic Landscape* 2:2 (2016), 127–56; Jackie Jia Lou, *The Linguistic Landscape of Chinatown: A Sociolinguistic Ethnography* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2016); Robert Blackwood, Elizabeth Lanza, and Hirut Woldemariam, eds., *Negotiating and Contesting Identities in Linguistic Landscapes* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Diane Johnson, “Linguistic landscaping and the assertion of twenty-first century Māori identity,” *Linguistic Landscape* 3:1 (2017), 1–24; Sebastian M. Rasinger, “Constructing Banglatown: Linguistic landscapes in London’s East End,” *Linguistic Landscape* 4:1 (2018), 72–95. The linguistic landscape work on ethnic enclaves has principally focused on deconstructing the essentialized identities of these places and documenting the fluidity of their borders.

⁴⁵ Landy and Bourhis offered the following definition: “The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration” (“Linguistic Landscape,” 25). Jackie Jia Lou asserts that the linguistic landscape “consists of all visual forms of language present in the public space of a pre-determined geographic area” (*The Linguistic Landscape*, 2). Luanga Adrien Kasanga offers the more pithy and poetic definition of linguistic landscape as the “language tapestry on display.” Luanga Adrien Kasanga, “Mapping the linguistic landscape of a commercial neighbourhood in Central Phnom Penh,” *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 33:6 (2012), 554. I argue that there are overlapping linguistic landscapes within one space, which I distinguish as popular versus official. Attending to the popular linguistic landscape leads us to recognize the significance of the non-visual (i.e. intangible) linguistic landscape. The distinction between these two also points to the salience of contested linguistic landscapes, a central theme in Chapter Three and reflective, I

I offer a diachronic analysis of linguistic landscapes that narrows in on select changes to popular and/or official place names in these three neighborhoods. These changes contributed to the remaking of the neighborhoods' racialized/ethnicized identities.⁴⁶

I position the human agents responsible for place name changes at the center of my narrative and analysis.⁴⁷ Doing so is necessary to chart the contested negotiations involved in the remaking of place names and, by extension, racialized/ethnicized neighborhood identities. This analysis also contributes historical context to linguistic landscape studies. Contemporary scholars working in this emerging field may find inspiration in the work of earlier authors like long-forgotten Afro-descendent writer Gabriel Marques. From the 1930s-'50s Marques produced a series of studies about São Paulo's roadways.⁴⁸ He documented their shifting names, chronicled the negotiations that underpinned their renaming, and interrogated their broader cultural meanings. I examine the writings of Marques and other São Paulo authors who penned interpretations about the changing meanings of local place names. The former names of places survive in their writings, I have found, as relics of silenced histories. I bring that source material into conversation with oral histories and government documents to chart the array of individuals who participated in reshaping the linguistic landscape and identities of marked neighborhoods over time.

argue, of the contingencies involved in reproducing the racialized/ethnicized identity of Brasilândia in the 1940s-'60s.

⁴⁶ Another definition of linguistic landscapes uses the "marking" language that I argue, in the context of mid-twentieth-century Brazil, carried a racialized/ethnicized significance: "The notion 'linguistic landscape', which refers to the linguistic objects that *mark* the public space, i.e. inscriptions – or LL items – includes any written sign found outside private homes, from road signs to names of streets, shops and schools." Elsewhere these same authors refer to the "marking of objects – material or immaterial – with linguistic tokens." Elana Shohamy, Eliezer Ben-Rafael, and Monica Barni, "Introduction: An Approach to an 'Ordered Disorder,'" *Linguistic Landscapes in the City* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2010), xiv and xi. My emphasis.

⁴⁷ Surveying critical advances in linguistic landscape literature, Monica Barni and Carla Bagna write: "The inhabitants of an area, the potential speakers or readers, initially perceived as almost absent or as viewers rather than authors of the LL, have taken an increasingly active role in the analysis of the LL, becoming involved as its first interpreters." Monica Barni and Carla Bagna, "The Critical Turn in LL: New methodologies and new items in LL," *Linguistic Landscape* 1:1/2 (2015), 11. I aim to advance this interpretation by describing local inhabitants who participated as *first authors* in re/making São Paulo's place names.

⁴⁸ Marques is a central figure in Chapter Two.

Methods of Spatial History

This dissertation is based on eighteen months of fieldwork that alternated between archival research, oral histories, and historical geographic information systems (HGIS). I adapted critical theories of space to identify three kinds of spatial sources. These included: material constructions, such as “Japanese”-themed storefronts in Liberdade; representations, like an annotated map from São Paulo’s Department of Urbanism; and lived experiences, such as a musician’s memories of founding a samba school in Brasilândia. Source material from these three categories enabled me to chart how officials and informal planners produced racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods over time.

The dissertation draws on two main collections of textual source material. From archives of the municipal government I collected over 300 neighborhood re/development plans for Brasilândia, Bexiga, and Liberdade. Produced by property owners, planners, and city engineers, this documentation extends from the 1930s through the 1980s and was generated mainly through São Paulo’s former Department of Urbanism. The collection includes annotated maps that planners used to track re/development progress and covers a period when policymakers sought to install city services in informally-settled favelas. Reports from official planners sent into favelas in Brasilândia include detailed observations and photos of grassroots spatial practices. Placed in the context of master planning projects, this material enables me to document planning as it occurred in practice and to chart a dialogue between informal and official planners in the making of these racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods.

Remaking São Paulo’s marked neighborhoods hinged on demolitions as much as new constructions. The second major collection of textual material is comprised of the expropriation records for the two most significant avenues involved in the remaking of Liberdade and Bexiga. These records come from São Paulo’s Department of Expropriations, which is today located in Liberdade. The material reveals the spaces razed in the course of executing redevelopment projects. I identify patterns of expropriation and demolition in these records that show how official planners remade these historic centers of Afro-descendent settlement and paved the way for the construction of “Japanese” Liberdade and “Italian” Bexiga.

I conducted recorded oral histories with thirty-two individuals in São Paulo, in addition to participating regularly in public events within the neighborhoods that informed my analysis and helped me to establish research contacts. I selected individuals for recorded interviews based on their direct participation in projects of racialization/ethnicization, involvement in practices or organizations related to those processes, or uniquely-valuable insight into the neighborhoods' histories. Two examples of "uniquely-valuable" criteria include one interviewee's experiences working as an urban planner in the 1970s-'80s and another's descentance from a prominent slaveholding family in Brasilândia.

While most recorded interviews took place within homes or public spaces, five interviewees participated in an experimental method of collaborative mapping. I developed a tablet-based application with three layers of historical maps of the city of São Paulo (figure 2). I then enlisted residents to guide me on neighborhood tours and used the application to map sites they deemed significant. Interviews brought to light an array of informal planners who participated in the making of Brasilândia, Bexiga, and Liberdade and provided context for histories seldom registered in official documentation, like dislocation caused by urban redevelopment.

I employed historical geographic information systems (HGIS) methodologies to identify the spaces in which the racialization/ethnicization of São Paulo neighborhoods took place.⁴⁹ I assembled a range of information into a database, including: sites connected to slavery, abolition, and black self-determination in Brasilândia, Bexiga, and Liberdade; changes to the built environment from the project to make Liberdade "Japanese"; and the preservation of "Italian" architecture in Bexiga. This approach has yielded valuable insights. For instance, comparing historical maps of São Paulo led me to locate a former slave market and the headquarters of Brazil's Underground Railroad, both of which were asphalted during the execution of redevelopment campaigns in the 1930s-'40s.

⁴⁹ Ian N. Gregory and Alistair Geddes, eds., *Toward Spatial Humanities: Historical GIS and Spatial History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014).

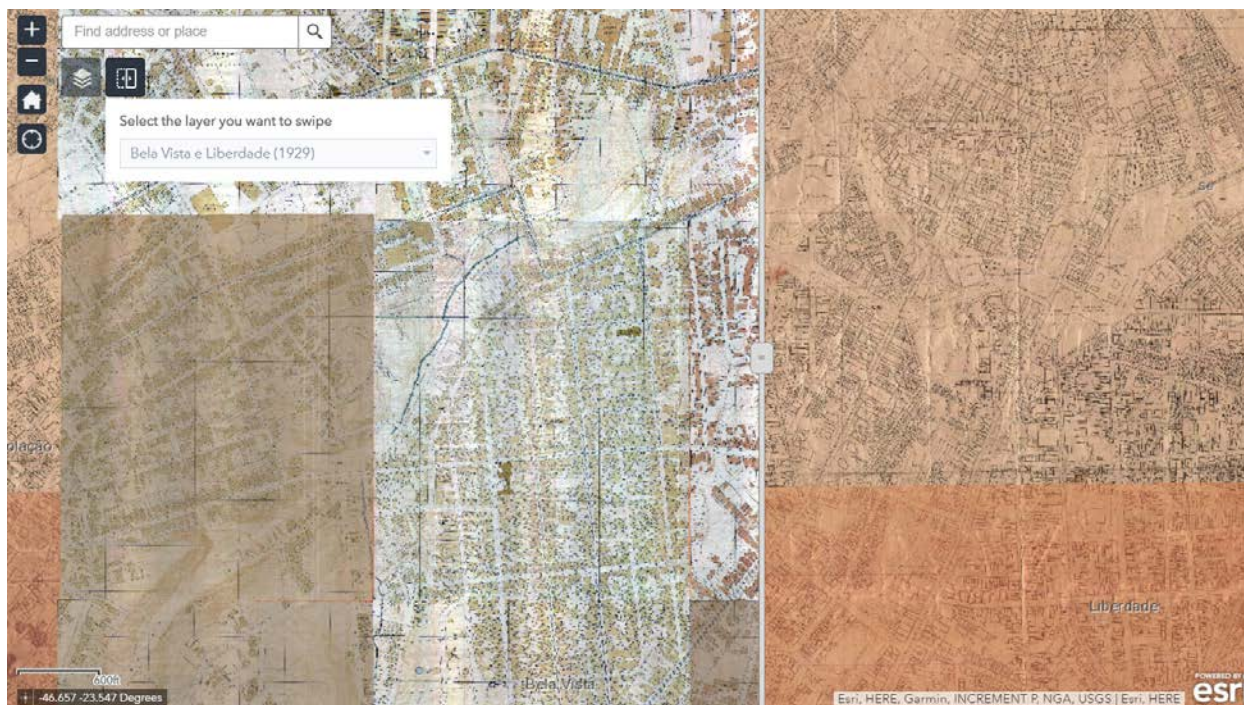


Figure 2: Screenshot of collaborative mapping application for the Liberdade and Bela Vista districts with swipe feature activated. Users can employ the feature to visualize changes between the two layers, 1929 (left) and 1954 (right), in real time.

Users can also add markers.

Sources: “Mapeamento 1930 - SARA,” GeoSampa, www.geosampa.prefeitura.sp.gov.br (accessed June 12, 2018);

“Mapeamento 1954 - Vasp Cruzeiro,” GeoSampa www.geosampa.prefeitura.sp.gov.br (accessed June 12, 2018).

Assembled by author within ArcGIS Online, ESRI.

For multiple reasons discussed throughout the thesis, textual documentation relevant to the making and marking of Liberdade, Bexiga, and Brasilândia is not readily available within São Paulo’s traditional historical archives. In some cases, official documentation likely does not exist anywhere. I have identified and triangulated an array of source material that allows me to make informed claims. In the main body of the dissertation I frequently preface these claims with explanations about the nature of the evidence that underpins my arguments and the interpretative steps that led me to certain conclusions.

Chapter Organization

Chapter One, “From Slavery to Avenues,” introduces broad patterns and long-term factors involved in the marking of Liberdade, Bexiga, and Brasilândia. I chart the nineteenth-century history of Nossa Senhora do Ó, the parish from which Vila Brasilândia was carved in the late 1940s. I show that this

parish was a center of enslavement and runaway enslaved communities in the city of São Paulo and the last of the city's regions where slaveholders granted formal abolition. In this chapter I also outline patterns of demolition and dislocation in Liberdade and Bexiga during what I term the Avenues-Making Era. The publication of Francisco Prestes Maia's *Avenues Plan* in 1930 signaled the beginning of this era. That plan continued to shape dominant approaches to the city's development – and spur the dislocation of resident populations – through the late 1960s. In this chapter I elucidate the connections that tied nineteenth-century slavery to twentieth-century avenues projects within some of São Paulo's most prominent racialized/ethnicized spaces. The chapter title is an adaptation of the more familiar term “From Slavery to Abolition” and alludes to the preservation of racialized social relationships and inequities despite the proclamation of formal abolition and São Paulo's early urbanization.

Chapter Two, “Spatial Projects of Forgetting,” serves as a complement to the broad patterns introduced in Chapter One. I detail the expropriation and demolition of singular, exceptional sites within Liberdade and Bexiga. The *Avenues Plan*, I show, razed spaces that had direct links to histories of slavery, abolition, and black self-determination, along with notably high concentrations of Afro-descendants. In what I term spatial projects of forgetting, official planners aimed to reproduce Bexiga and Liberdade and, by extension, the city more broadly in a whitened image of progress. I focus on the razing of three sites in the 1930s-40s: *Saracura* (a neighborhood), the *Largo do Bexiga* (“Bexiga Square”), and the *Igreja dos Remédios* (“Church of the Remedies”). The program to demolish and asphalt these spaces was about much more than the past. The project to forget them aimed to erase material representations of the unfulfilled promises of slavery's formal abolition and marginalize visible markers of persistent ethnoracial inequalities. It is likely that the fast-paced urbanization of São Paulo in the first decades of the twentieth century had made those inequalities acutely visible in the city's built and natural landscape.

Chapters Three and Four center on Brasilândia from the founding of the neighborhood in 1947 through the mid-1970s. Chapter Three, “Vila Brasilândia and Geographies of Ethnoracial Mixture,” traces the informal, unofficial settlement of Vila Brasilândia in 1947 on the geographical margins of the city of São Paulo within the parish of Nossa Senhora do Ó. From 1947 through the mid-1960s, an influx of

ethnoracially- and regionally-diverse migrants, including residents dislocated from center-city avenues projects, settled in and constructed Vila Brasilândia. In the same era, city officials and some notable white residents sought to remake sites associated with Afro-descendants in and around Vila Brasilândia. The most prominent of those sites was the main roadway in the region, Congo Road (*Estrada do Congo*), which was simultaneously paved and renamed by mayoral decree in 1960. In the earliest years of the neighborhood, officials and ordinary residents negotiated the transformation of this former hub of enslavement into a microcosmic “Brazil-land” that both reflected and engendered a nationalist ideal of harmonious ethnoracial mixture.

In the mid-1960s the dominant identity associated with Brasilândia began to change. Chapter Four, “The Making of the Marked Margin: Brasilândia as ‘Little Africa,’” charts the transformation of Brasilândia from a multicultural microcosm into a marginal region marked as black and Afro-descendent. The chapter centers on three related histories that remade Brasilândia as a “Little Africa”: a shift in dominant approaches to urban planning; the founding of a samba school named Rosas de Ouro; and the application of a racist nickname to the region through a novel reality radio program. These narratives span from the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s and reveal the production of a “Little Africa” that was connected to, yet in fundamental respects distinct from, the nineteenth-century “Congo” places in the same region.

Chapter Five, “Constructions of Ethnoracial Space: Making ‘Japanese’ Liberdade and ‘Italian’ Bexiga,” centers on the projects to racialize/ethnicize these neighborhoods from the late 1960s through the mid-1980s. In this period informal planners partnered with city officials on projects that combined neighborhood revitalization with the marking of space. Tourism-oriented economic development drove the campaign to make Liberdade “Japanese,” while the project to make Bexiga “Italian” occurred through state-sponsored historic preservation. The remaking of these racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods ushered in extensive material changes, including an urban infrastructure uncommon in most São Paulo neighborhoods. In doing so, the officially-sanctioned projects both reflected and reinforced the social

prestige of populations of Japanese and Italian descent and served to transform places previously associated with Afro-descendants into whitened immigrant neighborhoods.

City, Identity, and In/Equity: Echoes Beyond São Paulo

Readers may recognize salient questions facing contemporary cities within and outside of Brazil in this dissertation. For example, how can official planning projects provide desirable improvements in local standards of living without dislocating resident populations and exacerbating inequalities? City planners may find useful insights into how an earlier generation of practitioners addressed such questions and the full array of consequences their projects produced despite the best of ambitions otherwise. Residents of multiethnic cities may also come away from these chapters with an informed historical skepticism of contemporary urban redevelopment projects, including those touted for their innovativeness and broad social and environmental benefits.

Such skepticism, for instance, might be productively applied to the contemporary urban revitalization model of transit-oriented development (TOD). Planners, city officials, and private developers promote TOD as a scalable development paradigm to make mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods located near public transit. Such neighborhood models aim to reverse decades of city planning based around suburban sprawl and automobile transit, and their “sustainable” benefits will help to rectify the harmful social and environmental effects of that previous paradigm.⁵⁰ A pillar of planning practice in the twenty-first century U.S., TOD was pioneered through earlier projects, including those of planner-turned-mayor Jaime Lerner in the Brazilian city of Curitiba in the 1960s.⁵¹

In Curitiba and beyond, however, TOD has contributed to the unaffordability of rental markets, displacement, the suburbanization of poverty, and the tokenization if not erasure of the presence of

⁵⁰ Hank Dittmar and Gloria Ohland, eds. *The New Transit Town: Best Practices in Transit-Oriented Development* (Washington: Island Press, 2003); Carey Curtis, John L. Renne, and Luca Bertolini, *Transit Oriented Development: Making it Happen* (New York: Routledge, 2016 [2009]).

⁵¹ Irazábal, *City Making*.

dislocated residents.⁵² The authors, boosters, and benefactors of such projects should find uncomfortable parallels in the history of São Paulo that follows. The echoes resounding from São Paulo's past include the implementation of a pioneering transit-oriented redevelopment scheme, the dislocation of resident populations, the production of precarious peripheries with gravely substandard infrastructure, and the razing of globally-significant histories from the built environments of marked neighborhoods.

⁵² Rolf Pendall, Juliet Gainsborough, Kate Lowe, and Mai Nguyen, "Bringing Equity to Transit-Oriented Development: Stations, Systems, and Regional Resilience," in *Urban and Regional Policy and Its Effects: Building Resilient Regions* (Brookings Institution Press, 2012), 148-192; About Curitiba, Irazábal explains: "...the displacement of affordable and public housing, illegal subdivisions, and squatter settlements from the city center to the fringes of the metropolis allows the former to remain ordered and beautiful, middle class, and white." *City Making*, 112.

Chapter One
From Slavery to Avenues

I follow Fernando toward the abandoned, graffitied shell of a church. With dusk fading to night, he points to the valley-filled horizon behind the structure and traces the dim line he brought me here to see: the former Congo Road (*Estrada do Congo*). Fernando grew up a few blocks away in a more populated area of the district we are in, Brasilândia. A public administrator by day and samba musician otherwise, he commemorated the road's former name in 2011 when he co-founded the musical group Samba do Congo. I look at the tablet I have carted along with me to compare the contemporary space with historical maps of the region, and the pulsing cobalt mark reveals our location a few hundred feet east of the road. I zoom in on a map layer from 1954, confirming that the name has indeed changed: the former Congo Road is now Elísio Teixeira Leite Avenue.¹ Thoughts simmer into conscious questions: Who built, named, and renamed this roadway? Why do *roads* and *avenues* keep surfacing in my conversations about neighborhood and identity with residents of Brasilândia? What is the relationship between this “Congo” place name and the identity of Brasilândia as São Paulo’s “Little Africa?”

References to Brasilândia as a “Little Africa” do not appear in written documentation until the 1980s. The history of Congo Road, however, reveals a substantially and compellingly earlier history of Afro-descendants, roadways, and dislocation in the city of São Paulo. In this chapter I chart that earlier history beginning with Nossa Senhora do Ó, the parish out of which Vila Brasilândia was carved in the late 1940s. In addition, I outline broad patterns in the demolition of buildings and dislocation of resident populations during what I term the “Avenues-Making Era.” The publication of Francisco Prestes Maia’s *A Study for a Plan of Avenues for the City of São Paulo* (1930) signaled the beginning of this era. Structured by modern roadways, Prestes Maia’s planning scheme would shape the spatial development of the city through the late 1960s. The history of the Nossa Senhora do Ó parish and the Avenues-Making Era are the two key foundations for the twentieth-century construction of Brasilândia as a material place and Afro-descendant spatial identity.

¹ FR, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, June 29, 2017.

*A Space of Captivity:
The Origins of São Paulo's "Little Africa"*

The parish of Nossa Senhora do Ó (N. S. do Ó hereafter) was one of the earliest and most prominent hubs of slavery in the city. Enslaved populations and planters in N. S. do Ó grew sugar cane and produced a blend of *cachaça* (sugar-cane alcohol) named the “Little Cane of Ó.” By the middle of the nineteenth century, Caninha do Ó was a prestige product in the city of São Paulo, and its production relied on widespread slaveholding in the parish until the very eve of slavery’s formal abolition in 1888.² On the near margins of this local slave society, escaped slaves established sites of resistance and freed communities that captured the attention of some of São Paulo’s most powerful political figures. This section illuminates these social and spatial histories of N. S. do Ó, especially during the intensification of the slave trade in the nineteenth century. In doing so, it reveals a “Little Africa” that far predated the founding of Brasilândia in the twentieth century and one that Africans and their descendants made and marked via places like Congo Road.

The parish of N. S. do Ó is nearly as old as Brazil itself, originating in the late sixteenth century with campaigns of conquest and colonialism led by *bandeirante* Manuel Preto (mid-16th century – 1630s). Bandeirantes were early colonial settlers who commanded expeditions hunting silver, gold, and natives in the South American interior from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Their forays into Spanish territories, launched from the captaincies of São Vicente and later São Paulo, expanded the geographic reach of the colony of Brazil and provided wealth for the Portuguese Crown.³ That wealth also funded a more settled pattern of colonization in places like N. S. do Ó. In 1610 Manuel Preto appears for the first time in the historical record with his wife and a request to construct a church on the northern banks of the

² The alcohol appeared in early editions of *O Estado de S. Paulo* (from the 1870s forward): an 1882 advertisement listed it alongside imported goods such as Carlsberg and Guinness beers, while an example from 1889 celebrated its allegedly pure qualities. *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 21, 1879, 3; *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 14, 1882, 3; *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 12, 1889, 4. Records from *O Comércio de São Paulo* from the late 1890s single out Caninha do Ó among inventories of goods and advertisements as a high-value product. *O Comércio de São Paulo*, October 10, 1897; *O Commercio de São Paulo*, August 7, 1897.

³ Richard Morse, *The Bandeirantes: The Historical Role of Brazilian Pathfinders* (Knopf, 1965); Antonio Celso Ferreira, *A epopéia bandeirante: letrados, instituições, invenção histórica (1870-1940)* (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2002); A. J. R. Russell-Wood, “Rethinking Bandeirismo in Colonial Brazil,” *The Americas* 61:3 (2005), 353-371.

Tietê River, about 12 kilometers from the core of the city of São Paulo. The distance between N. S. do Ó and the city's central cathedral (Sé), along with the precarious conditions of the roadways and the passage across the Tietê River, made travel for worship in São Paulo's center onerous. A new chapel, the Pretos argued persuasively, would alleviate the challenge of distance and give the Church a foothold on the northern margins of the city.⁴ The chapel erected shortly thereafter constituted one among multiple foundations that Preto laid in the establishment of N. S. do Ó.

Slavery was fundamental to the settlement that the Pretos carved from the northern, hilly banks of the Tietê River. The bandeirante led campaigns in the 1620s raiding Jesuit missions in the interior of the South American continent along the Paraná River. There Preto enslaved, and subsequently brought to N. S. do Ó, approximately 1,000 natives. With this massive workforce, he developed large-scale agriculture that included the production of sugar cane. Records indicate that he died in the 1630s, though slave-based agriculture would persist in N. S. do Ó.⁵ That agriculture would tie N. S. do Ó to the center of the city. Wealthy families owned properties in the center and N. S. do Ó, planters from the region supplied agricultural goods to residents in the center, and the provincial government and church included N. S. do Ó as part of São Paulo's institutional geography. In addition, the regions were bound together by the surveillance at the core of a slave society, which relied on the press to circulate stories of fugitive slaves in and from N. S. do Ó.

Scanty records make the history of N. S. do Ó in the years after Manoel Preto's death hazy, however a detailed picture of the social composition of the region emerges beginning in the late eighteenth century. This picture comes from the *maços da população*, annual census-style records from 1765 to 1851. Organized by household (*fogos*), these records included detailed demographic information such as name, age, status (i.e. free or slave), marital condition, color, and occupation. For the 96 years between 1765 and 1851, there are 25 years of maço records for N. S. do Ó housed at the State Archive of

⁴ Máximo Barro, *Nossa Senhora do Ó – História de Bairros de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Prefeitura de São Paulo, 1977), 41.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

São Paulo.⁶ The level of detail in these rolls, down to the name of each household member, and their availability over time supply a rich look at the social history of the region.

Maço records depict N. S. do Ó as a slave society that rivaled, when it did not surpass, other regions in the city in terms of the pervasiveness of slave-holding. Few descendants of the natives that Manoel Preto enslaved in the seventeenth century appear in these records. A category for natives (*índios*) was instituted in the 1832 maço, and in that year just six natives lived in N. S. do Ó. Similar to other sugar regions in Brazil, the vast majority of the native population was killed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as plantation agriculture expanded.⁷ The expansion of sugar agriculture in the state of São Paulo in the late eighteenth century would increasingly depend on the enslaved labor of Africans and their descendants.

As N. S. do Ó's population grew, so too did slaveholding. Between 1779 and 1832 the total population of the parish expanded from 1,023 to 1,644. The portion of the population enslaved remained relatively steady with an average of 34% for five years during this period. In 1802 nearly half of all households in N. S. do Ó held slaves, a proportion that surpassed all other regions in the city.⁸ Other demographic trends indicate characteristics typical of a plantation society. Maço rolls included three color classifications: white (*branco*), brown (*pardo*), and black (*preto*). Among white and brown adults, a sex imbalance favored women, while the inverse was true among black adults, the principal labor force. Such an imbalance was typical among sugar producing regions elsewhere in the province of São Paulo. The sex imbalance favoring men differed from patterns in the center of the city of São Paulo, however, where single women predominated as heads of households.⁹

⁶ Maços da População, 1765-1851, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo (APESP).

⁷ Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550-1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985).

⁸ The exact figure was 49.7%. Elizabeth Anne Kuznesof, *Household Economy and Urban Development: São Paulo, 1765 to 1836* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 103.

⁹ For figures from the province of São Paulo, see Francisco Vidal Luna and Herbert S. Klein, *Slavery and the Economy of São Paulo, 1750-1850* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003), 49. On the social composition of the city and predominance of women, see Maria Odila Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life: The Lives of Working Women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1995), 15-16.

Captive and Free Population in Freguesia da Nossa Senhora do Ó, 1799-1832										
Year	Captive Population				Free Population					N. S. do Ó Total
	Gross Total	% Black	% Brown	% of N. S. do Ó Population	Gross Total	% Brown	% Black	% White	% of N. S. do Ó Population	Gross Total
1799	327	-	-	32%	696	-	-	-	68%	1,023
1804	519	69%	31%	36%	935	32%	4%	64%	64%	1,454
1817	449	71%	29%	37%	750	29%	2%	69%	63%	1,199
1825	373	71%	29%	33%	760	31%	3%	66%	67%	1,133
1832	515	76%	23%	31%	1,129	31%	2%	67%	69%	1,644
Avg.	437	72%	28%	34%	854	31%	3%	66%	66%	1,291

Source: Maços, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo
Racial categories in maços were preto (black), pardo (brown) and branco (white)

Table 3: Captive and Free Population in Freguesia da Nossa Senhora do Ó, 1799-1832.

In the early nineteenth century, black individuals made up an increasing portion of the enslaved population in N. S. do Ó, and both black and brown captives had relatively little mobility to move out of slavery. Between 1804 and 1834, the proportion of blacks among the enslaved population averaged 72%. In the same period, the proportion of enslaved pardos decreased eight percent while averaging 28%. The percentage of brown individuals among the total free population remained steady, staying at 31% for the entire period. Their proportion in N. S. do Ó well exceeded the 19% average gleaned from a survey of 41 counties throughout the province of São Paulo between 1829 and 1831.¹⁰ Free blacks decreased from the already-low 4% to 2% of the total free population in the first three decades of the nineteenth century. As

¹⁰ Luna and Klein, *Slavery and the Economy*, 161.

Luna and Klein have shown, the disparity between brown and black captives among the freed population was consistent throughout the province of São Paulo.¹¹

The intensification of slavery in the 1820s and 1830s corresponded to an increasing population of African-born individuals N. S. do Ó. In 1832, for instance, a new category for African-born was introduced into the *maço* methodology. The adult black population born in Brazil was 262 compared to 130 African-born. Indeed, through the 1820s and 1830s the names “Africanus” and “Congo,” terms of ethnic identity and origin, began to appear more frequently in *maços* for N. S. do Ó.¹² While the sex ratio was relatively balanced among the native-born black population, for those born in Africa the ratio favored males by nearly three to one.

The Africanization of N. S. do Ó’s enslaved population corresponded to the expansion of slave-based agricultural labor throughout the province of São Paulo, including in the Paraíba Valley to the northeast and the Paulista West region in the west.¹³ The development of sugar, initially, and then coffee plantations in these parts of the province would make São Paulo a center and one of the final frontiers of “Second Slavery,” or the intensification of enslavement following Britain’s 1807 abolition of the slave trade and, through the middle of the nineteenth century, slavery itself throughout the Americas.¹⁴ As slavery grew both to the east and west of the city of São Paulo, among parishes within the city a high proportion of the population in N. S. do Ó was enslaved. In 1836, for example, 31% of the N. S. do Ó

¹¹ Ibid., 165.

¹² *Maços*, APESP.

¹³ Maria Thereza Schorer, *A lavoura canavieira em São Paulo: Expansão e declínio (1765-1861)* (São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro, 1968); Emília Viotti da Costa, *Da Senzala à Colônia*, 4th Edition (São Paulo: Editora UNESP), 98-99; Joseph Love, *São Paulo in Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1980), 6; Warren Dean, *Rio Claro: A Brazilian Plantation System, 1820-1920* (Stanford: Stanford UP: 1976); Kuznesof, *Household Economy*.

¹⁴ Dale Tomich, “The Wealth of Empire: Francisco Arango y Parreño, Political Economy, and the Second Slavery in Cuba,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45:1 (January, 2003), 4-28; Dale Tomich, *Pelo Prisma da Escravidão*, trans. Antonio de Padua Danesi (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2011); Ricardo Salles and Rafael de Bivar Marquese, *Escravidão e capitalismo histórico no século XIX: Cuba, Brasil, Estados Unidos* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2016).

population was enslaved in comparison to 22% in Penha, a similarly-remote, agricultural parish situated on the eastern margins of the city.¹⁵

N. S. do Ó sat (and sits) in the shadows of the Jaraguá peak, the highest point around São Paulo. The panoramic view, combined with the region's location along the principal route into the interior of the province, made N. S. do Ó a popular stop for foreign visitors from the early nineteenth century on. One of the first people from the United States to publish an account of travels through Brazil, Methodist missionary Daniel Kidder, wrote about a night in N. S. do Ó for his 1845 *Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil*. Kidder stayed at the plantation of one "Donna Gertrudes," whose N. S. do Ó property was one of six she owned in São Paulo. The ownership of land in N. S. do Ó among São Paulo's elite was not unique to Gertrudes. A survey map from the 1890s shows that Dona Veridiana da Silva Prado, from one of São Paulo's wealthiest and most politically powerful families, also owned a stretch of territory in N. S. do Ó.¹⁶ Landowners with properties throughout São Paulo likely invited foreign guests to the parish as a rural retreat that was proximate in comparison to plantations in the state's interior.¹⁷

Foreign travelers filled their pages with observations of local agriculture and plantation life. Kidder described Gertrudes's plantation as follows: "Around the farm-house as a centre, were situated numerous out-houses, such as quarters for negros, store-houses for the staple vegetables, and fixtures for reducing them to a marketable form." Kidder included a sketch of Afro-descendent slaves processing *mandioca* (manioc), perhaps the first visual representation of nonwhite residents of N. S. do Ó (figure 3).

¹⁵ Maria Luiza Marcílio, *A Cidade de São Paulo: Povoamento e População, 1750-1850*, 2ª edição (São Paulo, EDUSP: 2014), 146.

¹⁶ "Planta de uma Sorte de Terra Pertencente a Pedro de Oliveira Simões na Freguesia da N. Senhora do Ó," 1895, Mapoteca, Arquivo Histórico Municipal da Cidade de São Paulo. For more on the Prado's landholdings throughout the state of São Paulo, see Darrell E. Levi, *The Prados of São Paulo, Brazil: An Elite Family and Social Change, 1840-1930* (Athens, GA: UGA Press, 1987), 68-73. Levi does not mention the holdings in N. S. do Ó, though he emphasizes the family's "leading role in promoting European immigration to São Paulo" after 1850, 73.

¹⁷ Marcílio, *A Cidade de São Paulo*, 85.

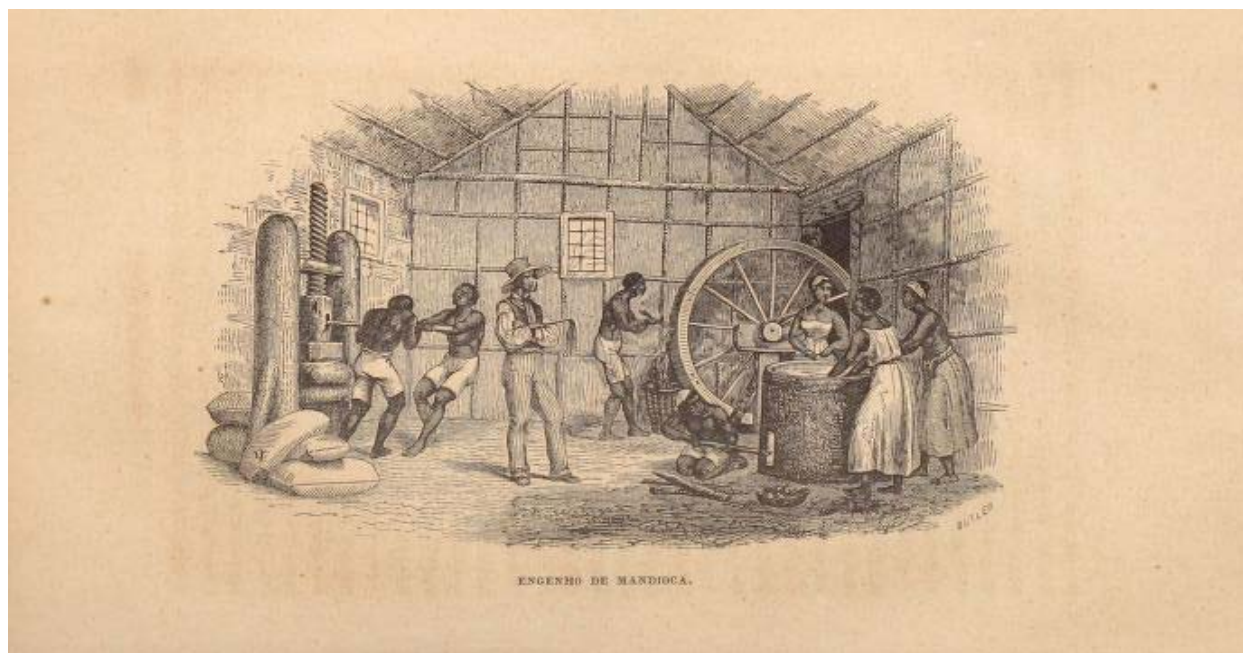


Figure 3: Enslaved Africans and Afro-descendants producing manioc in Northern Region of São Paulo.
Daniel P. Kidder, *Sketches of residence and travels in Brazil, embracing historical and geographical notices of the empire and its several provinces*, Volume 1 (Philadelphia: Sorin & Ball; London, Wiley & Putnam, 1845), 243.

Among other crops grown locally, sugar occupied a privileged place in the productive activity of the region, particularly in the service of making cachaça, sugar-cane alcohol. Portuguese traveler Luiz D'Allincourt wrote in the 1830s that the “residents of this Freguesia cultivate sugar cane to make cane alcohol, which forms the principal branch of their business.”¹⁸ Kidder elaborated: “On most of the sugar estates there exist distilleries, which convert the treacle drained from the sugar into a species of alcohol called cachassa; but on this, either from its proximity to market, or from some other cause connected with profit, nothing but cachassa was manufactured.”¹⁹ Silva Dias found records of sugar production among women small holders in N. S. do Ó: “A few of the women rural workers in Penha and Freguesia do Ó had small sugar mills, where they made brandy to sell retail.”²⁰ Luna and Klein’s findings for sugar production in the Paulista West region indicate that N. S. do Ó was typical in that sugar cane was primarily for local consumption and not the export market. The region differed from other regions in the

¹⁸ Quoted in Barro, *Nossa Senhora do Ó*, 51.

¹⁹ Daniel P. Kidder, *Sketches of residence and travels in Brazil, embracing historical and geographical notices of the empire and its several provinces*, Volume 1 (Philadelphia: Sorin & Ball; London, Wiley & Putnam, 1845), 239-240.

²⁰ Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life*, 42.

state of São Paulo, however, as cane was grown for the exclusive production of cachaça and not unrefined brown sugar (*rapadura*) and molasses.²¹

The “Congos” of Nossa Senhora do Ó

Africans and Afro-descendants resisted enslavement in N. S. do Ó, and runaway slaves in the parish preoccupied provincial officials in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The provincial governor issued an order in 1777 to the police captain of N. S. do Ó decreeing that *capitães de mato*, or overseers hired to capture escapees, should disarm any blacks seen with sticks or knives.²² Three decades later, a subsequent governor declared:

The disturbances, thefts, and offenses committed by fugitive blacks, *aquilombados* [settled in runaway communities] in the outskirts around the Capital...must be curtailed and punished: I therefore order you to bring together all of the officials in your ordinance...to send them to surround and strike the forests, and in deserted regions where the said negros are hiding, and this not just in the part of your district, but in all suspected places nearby...capture not just all the blacks that are found in hiding, but also all suspicious individuals (*peçoas de desconfiança*) found in such foreign parts, so that all be brought, accompanied by the appropriate security, and collected in the prison to be examined and punished...²³

The decree indicates the settlement of escaped slaves in *quilombos*, or runaway slave settlements, on São Paulo’s geographical margins. N. S. do Ó’s natural environment, which was lush with the dense Atlantic Forest environment, was auspicious for initial escape as well as the preservation of escapee colonies. The governor’s apprehension about fugitive slaves accompanied a concern about those aiding them, described as “peçoas de desconfiança,” and indicated the possibility of networks of escapees that included free-born, the formally-freed, and escapees alike.

As in other slave societies in the province of São Paulo, mainstream newspapers delivered announcements about fugitive slaves in N. S. do Ó to reading publics throughout the nineteenth century.²⁴

²¹ Luna and Klein, *Slavery and the Economy*, 29-30.

²² Barro, *Nossa Senhora do Ó*, 43-44.

²³ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

²⁴ For other examples and broader studies, see: Gilberto Freyre, *O escravo nos anúncios de jornais brasileiros do século XIX* (São Paulo: Nacional, 1979); Lilia Mortiz Schwarz, *Retrato em Branco e Negro: Jornais, escravos e cidadãos em São Paulo no final do século XIX* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2001); Dean, *Rio Claro*, 82; Costa, *Da Senzala à Colônia*, 373.

In 1867, *Diário de São Paulo* published a story about Domingos, identified as the “brown...slave of dr. Martinho da Silva Prado,” who was apprehended in N. S. do Ó on suspicion of having killed a man named João Martin. The murder occurred in Mogy-Mirim, a city more than 150 kilometers north of the city of São Paulo, where Martin had suspected Domingos of being a fugitive and attempted to apprehend him. Domingos resisted the apprehension and supposedly killed the attempted captor.²⁵ An 1869 announcement in the same paper by João Baptista Alves de Siqueira sought assistance in hunting down José, identified as of “black color, regular height, ugly figure; his most evident defect are small toes, nearly closed.”²⁶ In 1877 Vicente José de Campos posted an announcement in *O Estado de S. Paulo* for Manoel, a man last seen in N. S. do Ó who had previously fled from Limeira, a city more than 175 kilometers northwest of São Paulo. Manoel was described as

black, average height, no beard, he has some signs of punishment on his back: handsome figure. This slave was seen in Freguesia do Ó,²⁷ and was dressed in a black alpaca jacket, dark pants, boots cut in the shape of slippers, a vinegar-colored hat, and is said to be carrying a large knife and a linen sack with clothes.

A postscript noted that “Matheus and Cesario were captured in Ó, on the 14th of this month, and on this same day Manoel was seen passing.”²⁸ These announcements support the image of N. S. do Ó as a hub of runaways gleaned from official government sources. However, neither source collection provides substantial quantitative insight into the frequency or duration of escape. Confronting similar conditions for Rio Claro, a comparable place founded on sugar agriculture in the Paulista West region, historian Warren Dean writes: “The frequent advertisements in newspapers for escaped slaves suggest that they ran away often, but it is difficult to determine the rate of permanent desertions.”²⁹

For escaped captives, N. S. do Ó had a particular appeal: the Road to Juqueri or Jundiáí, one of the city’s main passages to the interior of the province, ran through the middle of the parish. Through the

²⁵ “Parte da Policia: Mogy-Mirim,” *Diário de S. Paulo*, May 24, 1867, 2.

²⁶ “Annuncios: Escravo Fugido,” *Diário de S. Paulo*, June 2, 1869, 3.

²⁷ Freguesia here denotes “parish,” and in the sources from this era “Freguesia do Ó” is a commonly-used, shortened version of “Freguesia da Nossa Senhora do Ó.”

²⁸ “Limeira,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 20, 1877, 4.

²⁹ Dean, *Rio Claro*, 82.

1860s this artery served as a crucial thoroughfare for the exchange of agricultural goods and livestock and functioned as an entry point for foodstuffs into the city.³⁰ When necessary, that commerce supplied an additional means of sustenance for freed slave communities. Viotti da Costa finds that escapee communities often concentrated around roadways: “Reunited in groups, fugitive slaves held up farms and roads, making the passages dangerous. Concealed in forests, they planted lots, most times insufficient, for their sustenance. Cornered, they survived by theft.”³¹ Along the main roadway of N. S. do Ó, attacks by escapees generated “abundant” complaints from “traveling traders (*estradeiros*), principally of cattle, who threaten[ed] to cut off the village’s food supply if the incursions of *quilombolas* are not curbed...”

Through the grievances of commercial travelers, the escapee colony in N. S. do Ó became infamous among city officials. Historian Máximo Barro found N. S. do Ó “cited repeated times in the City Council for having become one of the most favorable sanctuaries” in the city.³² The natural environment of the road, described by Kidder on his way out of town in 1845, indeed sounded auspicious for escape: “The route was greatly diversified, between hill and dale...each successive turn of our winding way, seemed to take us deeper into a vast labyrinth of vegetable beauty, only here and there touched by the hand of cultivation.”³³ Lacking more systematic records of quilombo settlements, such qualitative assessments serve as the best indication of the frequency – seemingly high – of runaways in N. S. do Ó and especially along this roadway.

In the nineteenth century the construction and material condition of roadways like the Road to Juquerí or Jundiáí were major concerns for provincial officials in São Paulo.³⁴ An 1866 report described roads as “the primary necessity of modern industry; today it is the dogma of civilization.” The condition of the province’s roads was rarely deemed sufficient. An 1866 report lamented the “unfortunate” state of roads to the interior, which, rather than efficient means for the transfer of agricultural goods, were cause

³⁰ Dias, *Power and Everyday Life*, 16.

³¹ Viotti da Costa, *Da Senzala à Colônia*, 371-372.

³² Barro, *Nossa Senhora do Ó*, 45.

³³ Kidder, *Sketches*, 259.

³⁴ Viotti da Costa, *Da Senzala à Colônia*, 202-216; Marcílio, *A Cidade de São Paulo*, 84-90; Dean, *Rio Claro*, 41.

for the admiration of the “preservation, the indomitable energy” of the population that had to traverse them.³⁵ N. S. do Ó received special attention in an 1861 report, as winter flooding had left “the roads most deadly.”³⁶ The railroad system expanded only in the last third of the nineteenth century, making roads the principal mode of transportation and communication. Their utility as the “necessity of modern industry” is visible in the names that officials gave them. Authorities did not define roads as places in themselves but according to the places they connected, as in the road *to* Juquerí. The practice reflected the premium on roadways as a means for the circulation of goods and information.

While provincial officials in the nineteenth century described N. S. do Ó’s main thoroughfare as the Road to Juquerí or Jundiáí, those who lived in the parish likely used an alternative name: the *Estrada do Congo*, or Congo Road. Until the late nineteenth century, the naming of São Paulo’s roads was not conducted through a centralized process. Even afterwards, into the twentieth century, local residents often constructed and named roads without official approval.³⁷ These practices lead me to surmise that Congo Road existed well before its first appearance on an official map of the city in the late 1920s, when cartographers mapped (for the first time at a detailed scale) the northern region of the N. S. do Ó parish. On that map they used the name “Congo Road,” cementing the popularly-given ascription in the official space of the city for the first time.

Though not common as an official place name in São Paulo, the name “Congo” appeared frequently as an African’s so-called *nação* (nation) in census-type registers and fugitive slave announcements. In such records from N. S. do Ó, Congo increasingly appeared as the *nação* of enslaved individuals in the first third of the nineteenth century and surfaced as the last name of free black men in

³⁵ “Relatório apresentado a Assembléa Legislativa Provincial de S. Paulo na 1.a sessão da décima sexta legislatura no dia 3 de fevereiro de 1866 pelo presidente da mesma provincia, o dr. João da Silva Carrão. S. Paulo, Typ. Imparcial de J.R.A. Marques, 1866,” *Provincial Presidential Reports (1830-1930): São Paulo*, Center for Research Libraries, http://www-apps.crl.edu/brazil/provincial/s%C3%A3o_paulo (accessed August 30, 2017).

³⁶ “Discurso com que o illustrissimo e excellentissimo senhor conselheiro Antonio José Henriques, presidente da provincia de São Paulo, abriu a Assembléa Legislativa Provincial no anno de 1861. S. Paulo, Typ. Imparcial de Joaquim Roberto de Azevedo Marques, 1861,” *Provincial Presidential Reports (1830-1930): São Paulo*, Center for Research Libraries, http://www-apps.crl.edu/brazil/provincial/s%C3%A3o_paulo (accessed August 30, 2017).

³⁷ “Dicionário de Ruas de São Paulo,” Arquivo Histórico Municipal, <http://www.dicionarioderuas.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/PaginasPublicas/Introducao.aspx> (accessed June 4, 2018).

1825 and 1842.³⁸ In 1825, there were only two free, black adult males in N. S. do Ó, with one of the families headed by Anna Maria, born in Brazil, and Pedro de Jesus Maria, identified as “Congo.”³⁹ A later *maço* from 1842 included one man, João Congo. Given that the record lists him as the head of a *fogo*, he was likely also a freed person. These figures of freed people, of course, only included those who decided to let themselves be counted. The frequency of fugitive records makes almost certain the existence of numerous other escaped Africans and Afro-descendants in the region excluded from these tabulations. The prevalence of “Congo” was not unique to Africans and Afro-descendants in N. S. do Ó.⁴⁰ However, the paucity of freed people in the parish overall and prevalence of “Congo” among them suggests a potential correlation between manumitted or escaped individuals and the name.

While the name of a road defines it, the history behind its naming is rarely so evident. Lacking sources that explain the origin of Congo Road, we are left to imagine and speculate about the possibilities. The road may have referenced a specific person, as in *the Congo*. Such an individual could have been a freedman like Pedro Congo from 1825 or João Congo from 1842. One of them might have owned land along the road, and their neighbors could have taken to describing the name by the property owner who lived along it. An alternative interpretation would suggest a broader ascription: the roadway referred to a critical mass of people identified as *nação Congo*. These could have been enslaved people at a plantation or, as the previous records suggest, a group of freed people who had established a runaway community (*quilombo*) alongside or near the roadway. A final read could place the responsibility for naming on fearful travelers (the “*estradeiros*” referenced earlier), who named the place “Congo” as a warning to others about the (perceived) threat of attack. All of these explanations could have some degree of accuracy: the singular “Congo” figure resided near the road and may have played an important role in providing assistance – if not helping to settle originally – the escapee colony. As escaped captives took

³⁸ *Maços*, 1825 and 1842, APESP.

³⁹ *Maço*, 1825, APESP. Pedro de Jesus Maria was listed in the *maço* of 1822 as 71, when he and Anna Maria’s *fogo* consisted of five children ranging in age from two to 26.

⁴⁰ In his pioneering study of a local coffee region, Stanley Stein found Congo among the four most common terms of identification for enslaved Africans in Brazil. Stanley J. Stein, *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900: The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society*, 2nd edition (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985), 76-77.

advantage of commerce along the roadway to Juquerí, the place could have become infamous and stigmatized among passersby.

In the face of multiple plausible scenarios, I see Africans and their descendants as responsible for the naming of Congo Road and driven by a distinct motivation in doing so. As noted in the announcements above, fugitive slave notices that mentioned N. S. do Ó frequently targeted captives from outside of the parish. To an extent, this frequency aligned with broader patterns of movement among freed slaves in the years immediately preceding formal abolition in 1888. During the intensification of the abolitionist campaign in the 1880s, the city of São Paulo became a destination for escapees.⁴¹ However, as indicated above, slave announcements from decades *prior* to the 1880s reveal a notable presence of runaway slaves in N. S. do Ó, pointing to the region as a destination for enslaved persons fleeing from elsewhere well before the decade of formal abolition. The places of origin for escaped slaves were, in some cases, quite far from N. S. do Ó, such as the cities Limeira (175+ km) and Mogy-Mirim (150+ km). In other cases, enslaved residents from the center of the city of São Paulo itself seemed to have fled north to N. S. do Ó. Schwartz prints, for instance, the following announcement from 1879:

Fugitive slave: From house n. 2 on Rua das Flores in the capital, the slave Maria fled, with the following appearance: tall, thin, born in Brazil, 40 or 50 years old... She was seen having a conversation, headed in the direction of Juquery [Juquerí] or [N. S. do] Ó.⁴²

These sources lead me to understand the name “Congo” as originating with escapees in order to signal to other captive Africans and their descendants throughout the province that Congo Road was a place of possible freedom. This interpretation would help to explain the frequency of escape efforts in this region, as enslaved Africans and their descendants learned of the place, through its name, and fled from enslavement to the apparent site of refuge. The increase of African slaves in the early 1800s, corresponding to the intensification of sugar production in N. S. do Ó, points to the early-to-mid nineteenth century as the likely period of origin for the naming of Congo Road.

⁴¹ Schwartz, *Retrato*, 139.

⁴² *Correio Paulistano*, September 4, 1879, printed in Schwartz, *Retrato*, 140.

Congo Road was significant as a specific category of space: a road. Brazilian anthropologist Roberto DaMatta has argued famously that two basic “social domains” structure Brazilian social reality: the house and the street. The house functions as an ordered, hierarchical, and authoritarian space of calm, respect, and rest. The street, by contrast, signifies a relative lack of control: a place of unclear, undefined, or inverted social hierarchies, where individuals engage in the field of everyday contest among themselves and with official institutions that claim authority over “public” spaces and bodies therein.⁴³ For marginalized Africans and their descendants, streets such as Congo Road functioned as places of potential liberty in hostile and violent slave societies like nineteenth-century São Paulo. The street afforded opportunities for trade and the accumulation of resources that could allow an enslaved person to buy her freedom. Theft of passersby by escapees could provide means for subsistence. Ultimately, the street held the possibility of escape to “someplace else.” In addition to the reports of theft and quilombo settlements, observers in N. S. do Ó noted just such commercial activities along Congo Road, as described by Silva Dias: “In 1854, Ferreira de Rezende noticed countrywomen going past his house on the road to Ó, selling eggs, vegetables and fresh fish ‘for next to nothing.’ In 1839, Kidder described the women sellers [who] carry jays on their heads, full of sugar cane brandy from Ó.”⁴⁴

Roadways were sometimes associated with Africans and their descendants because they held the potential for self-determination and mobility that threatened the tenuous order of a slave society. Indeed, these possibilities could elicit fear and generate a stigmatized association of the space. Among Afro-descendants themselves, however, the marking of a road with “Congo” broadcast the prospect of refuge to others and established the site as a place of autonomy. Congo Road in N. S. do Ó had parallels elsewhere in the Atlantic world. In 1861 nearly 200 Afro-Cubans were freed and settled on the Spanish-controlled island of Fernando Po off the coast of Equatorial Guinea in West Africa. There they lived in the *Barrio*

⁴³ DaMatta’s interpretation has a racialized character itself, with the street marked as a nonwhite place. See lines like: “As such, it is on the street or in the forest where *malandros* [tricksters], the marginalized, and the spirits live, these entities with whom one never has precise contractual relations.” Roberto DaMatta, *Carnavais, malandros, e heróis: Para uma sociologia do dilema brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1997), 92-104.

⁴⁴ Dias, *Power*, 10.

Congo.⁴⁵ In New Orleans, Congo Square served as a site of public gatherings that included market activities, spiritual practices, dancing, and music. Historian Rashauna Johnson writes that in Congo Square “people of African descent reclaimed their bodies and created communities even as free, predominately white spectators gazed on them with a mixture of desire and repulsion.” While Congo Road did not occupy such a public, geographically-central place in São Paulo, both the road and Congo Square had existed well before they appeared in government records (with the latter officialized in the 1810s).⁴⁶ Representing distinct forms of the built environment – a neighborhood, square, and road – these sites were tied together as places marked with the name “Congo” that held prospects of autonomy and varied degrees of self-determination for Afro-descendants in the midst of slave societies.

Through the end of the nineteenth century, N. S. do Ó maintained high proportions of enslaved Africans and Afro-descendants producing sugar cane and cachaça.⁴⁷ The region stood out from other places in the province that began as sugar colonies, such as Rio Claro, where coffee was king by the middle of the century.⁴⁸ In 1872, N. S. do Ó had 315 total slaves out of a population of 1,708, or 15.6%. The region ranked second to the city-center parish Sé, where 1,909 enslaved people made up just over a fifth of the total. N. S. do Ó had the highest proportion of African-born slaves with 34. That number amounted to nearly 60% of the non-native residents in N. S. do Ó and far exceeded the same for the next-highest region: 35% in S. João Batista (the contemporary Consolação neighborhood). Viotti da Costa finds that plantation owners had long preferred African-born captives – considered less likely to spark insurrection or rebellions than native-born – though the 1850 abolition of the slave trade made the internal

⁴⁵ Susana Castillo-Rodríguez, “African diaspora and the circulation of language: Cuban and Afro-Cuban loanwords in Equatorial Guinea,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (2016), 157-192.

⁴⁶ Rashauna Johnson, *Slavery’s Metropolis: Unfree Labor in New Orleans during the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016), 121; Freddi Williams Evans, *Congo Square: African Roots in New Orleans* (Lafayette, LA: University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press, 2011); Ted Widmer, “The Invention of a Memory: Congo Square and African Music in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans,” *Revue française d’études américaines* 98:2 (December 2003), 69-78.

⁴⁷ From 1804 to 1829 the percentage of owners producing cane alcohol in the city of São Paulo (“Capital Region”) decreased from 9 to 3, while the percentage of slaves diminished from 14 to 9. N. S. do Ó would seem to have maintained its place in what became a more limited market with the development of coffee agriculture over the nineteenth century. Luna and Klein, *Slavery and Economy*, 51-52, 124.

⁴⁸ Dean, *Rio Claro*; Joseph Love, *São Paulo*, 6-7.

trade of Brazilian-born individuals the principal source for plantations in the province.⁴⁹ Though smaller in comparison to the 1830s, the proportion of African-born among the population in N. S. do Ó remained comparatively high well after 1850.

Planters in N. S. do Ó granted formal freedom to enslaved populations later than anywhere else in the city of São Paulo. In 1944 historian Nuto Sant'Anna published *Historical São Paulo: Traits, Legends and Customs*. In a section titled "Slaves," he recounted the end of slavery in São Paulo: "the neighborhood Nossa Senhora do Ó was the last to liberate its slaves. And this was well before May 13, 1888. Because already long before that date the hour of liberty had sounded in our land."⁵⁰ Sant'Anna's rhetoric reflected the self-image that São Paulo elites cultivated in the later nineteenth century as part of intertwined campaigns to modernize Brazil through abolition, republicanism, and immigrant wage labor.⁵¹ Sant'Anna's interpretation exaggerated the actual timeline for abolition in N. S. do Ó along with the coffee-intensive regions in the Paulista West region, whose plantations depended on slavery until the very eve of formal abolition despite playing a prominent role in promoting immigrant labor as its substitute.⁵²

Slaveholders in N. S. do Ó may have acceded to formal abolition later than anywhere else in São Paulo, but this was not well before 1888. The national census of 1886 only provides data on the total number of enslaved individuals at the municipal level, however it includes tables with deaths (averaged per year) divided by sub-municipality. In 1886, only two parishes reported deaths of enslaved people: Sé and N. S. do Ó. The former counted five deaths of enslaved people, or 1.3% of the average deaths per year. N. S. do Ó also had five deaths of enslaved people, though this accounted for 9.1% of all deaths in

⁴⁹ Viotti da Costa, *Da Senzala à Colônia*, 101.

⁵⁰ Nuto Sant'Anna, *São Paulo Histórico: Aspectos, Lendas e Costumes* (São Paulo: Departamento da Cultura, 1944), 301.

⁵¹ Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1993); Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1999); Barbara Weinstein, "Regionalizing Racial Difference: São Paulo versus Brazil," in Nancy P. Applebaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Roseblatt, eds. *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2003), 237-262.

⁵² Dean characterized the contradiction of plantations in the Paulista West as "at the same time the most progressive and the most retrograde sector of Brazilian society." Dean, *Rio Claro*, 51.

the district. A record from 1887 indicated that the city of São Paulo had just 493 enslaved people. This evidence further suggests that N. S. do Ó had a sizable portion of the remaining slave population in the city on the eve of formal abolition.⁵³

The late arrival of abolition paralleled the increasing isolation of N. S. do Ó in the second half of the nineteenth century. In contrast to the growth in the first half of the century, the overall population of N. S. do Ó decreased slightly between 1855 and 1872.⁵⁴ The stagnancy owed in part to the expansion of the railway system in the province of São Paulo. In 1865 a railway line was laid between the port of Santos and the city of São Paulo, and three years later it was expanded to Jundiaí.⁵⁵ The new line (named Santos-Jundiaí) offered an alternative connection to Congo Road/the Road to Juquerí and Jundiaí. Morse writes that with the expansion of the railway, “The outlying nuclei, Penha and Ó, once lively way stations for mule teams, were now left in quiescence by trains that changed without loitering into the city’s expanding heart.”⁵⁶

As abolition came late to N. S. do Ó, so too did the parish’s place in the official cartography of the city. The parish had comprised part of the city’s institutional geography since the late eighteenth century. Only in 1897, however, did N. S. do Ó appear on a citywide map (a *planta geral*) of São Paulo.⁵⁷ Its presence on the 1897 *planta* owed in part to changes in the geographic extent of São Paulo as represented in official cartography in the 1890s. An 1893 *planta* had displayed a smaller, more densely-settled territory.⁵⁸ Likely inspired by São Paulo’s population growth and the imminent dawn of the new century, cartographers in the middle of the 1890s expanded their frame of the city to encompass pockets

⁵³ Census of 1886, IBGE.

⁵⁴ Richard Morse, *From Community to Metropolis* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press: 1958), 122. N. S. do Ó was in fact the only region in the city with negative growth during this period.

⁵⁵ Dead, *Rio Claro*, 41.

⁵⁶ Morse, *From Community*, 173.

⁵⁷ “Planta Geral da Capital de São Paulo, Organizada sob a direcção do Dr Gomes Cardim – 1897,” Arquivo Histórico da Cidade de São Paulo, <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/info/info20/img/1897-download.jpg> (accessed June 12, 2018).

⁵⁸ Ugo Bonvicini, “Planta da Cidade de São Paulo com Identificação dos Primeiros Edifícios Públicos. 1893,” Arquivo Público do Estado de S. Paulo, http://www.arquivoestado.sp.gov.br/site/acervo/repositorio_digital/mapa_carto/BR_APESP_IGC_IGG_CAR_I_S_0_289_001_001 (accessed June 12, 2018).

of settlement surrounding São Paulo along with large, empty swaths of territory represented as prime for the city's seemingly inevitable and swift growth.

Although Nossa Senhora do Ó gained a place on the 1897 map, there were, and would remain, telling silences. The Estrada do Congo would not appear on a map of the city until the end of the 1920s. In fact, only a small section of the N. S. do Ó parish actually appeared on official maps. At times, citywide maps adopted a convention of omitting the region directly north of the condensed node of settlement around the site of the chapel established centuries earlier by the bandeirante Manoel Preto.⁵⁹ By doing so, cartographic engineers represented the northern region – site of the Estrada do Congo – as empty space. The cartographic silencing of Congo Road did not displace African and Afro-descendants from N. S. do Ó, however. In the census of 1890, the population of African descent in the city of São Paulo amounted to 15.6% of the total. In N. S. do Ó, however, the figure exceeded 40%.⁶⁰ What's more, the marginal geographic position that had allowed for the late persistence of slavery also supported the preservation of the “Congos” of N. S. do Ó. Those places would ultimately be incorporated into the official linguistic landscape of the city, appearing on maps of São Paulo for 30 years in the middle of the twentieth century.

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, the city of São Paulo underwent a population and geographic boom that would ultimately earn it the nickname “the city that cannot stop.”⁶¹ Meanwhile, the parish of N. S. do Ó became a “traditional” place where little seemed to change, a space of contrast to the concrete modernity and frenzied urbanization in the city's more central areas.⁶² The Avenues-Making

⁵⁹ “Planta da cidade de São Paulo mostrando todos os arrabaldes e terrenos arruados,” Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo, http://www.arquivoestado.sp.gov.br/site/acervo/repositorio_digital/mapa_carto/BR_APESP_IGC_IGG_CAR_I_S_0306_001_001 (accessed June 12, 2018).

⁶⁰ Raquel Rolnik, *A cidade e a lei: legislação, política urbana e territórios na cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: FAPESP Studio Nobel, 2007).

⁶¹ I have encountered the phrase “a cidade que não pode parar” in documentation from as early as 1955 in an article in *Cine Reporter: Semanário Cinematográfico*, 67. It is a common contemporary trope about the city's development, deployed in both popular and academic contexts, including in book titles such as Nadia Somekh, and Candido Malta Campos, *A cidade que não pode parar: planos urbanísticos de São Paulo no século xx* (São Paulo: Mackpesquisa, 2002).

⁶² The idea of N. S. do Ó as a “*bairro tradicional*,” or “traditional neighborhood,” is frequently referenced in conversations with long-term locals and popular histories of the neighborhood. On the neighborhood's 435th

Era, beginning in the late 1920s, would break the inertia of N. S. do Ó. Center-city avenues projects entailed extensive demolitions and spurred the dislocation of residents seeking new places to live. The city's expanded transportation network carried those residents to relatively remote places like N. S. do Ó, where, in the late 1940s, they constructed the neighborhood of Vila Brasilândia from a patch of land in the parish's northern limits. This process of local migration would help to transform São Paulo's racialized/ethnicized geography.

"Saindo do Papel" in the Avenues-Making Era, 1920s-'60s

Architects and historians of São Paulo have variously described Francisco Prestes Maia as the "inventor" of the metropolis of São Paulo, a "great urbanist, engineer, architect and probably the most significant mayor in the history of São Paulo," and an artist in concrete who "installed modernity in the city."⁶³ The outsized praise has some basis in historical fact. Spanning his early work as an urbanist⁶⁴ in the 1920s through his terms as mayor (1938-'45 and 1961-'65), the city of São Paulo grew from roughly the size of Minneapolis to a global metropolis among the most important urban centers in the Americas.⁶⁵ Prestes Maia had an undeniably prominent role in realizing that trajectory. Popular and academic appraisals of Prestes Maia's legacy are not, however, uniformly positive. A former resident of and

birthday in 2015, for example, an article in the mainstream news journal *O Globo* celebrated N. S. do Ó as one "of the most traditional neighborhoods of São Paulo." "Freguesia do Ó comemora 435 anos de aniversário com festa ao ar livre," *O Globo*, last modified August 25, 2015, <http://g1.globo.com/sao-paulo/blog/o-que-fazer-em-sao-paulo/post/freguesia-do-o-comemora-435-anos-de-aniversario-com-festa-ao-ar-livre.html> (accessed September 8, 2017).

⁶³ "A Saga da Metrópole e seu Inventor – Cem Anos de Prestes Maia," *Cidade: Revista do Departamento do Patrimônio Histórico/Secretaria Municipal da Cultura* 3 (1996), 4 and 10-11; Benedito Lima de Toledo and Beatriz Mugayar Kühl, *Prestes Maia e as origens do urbanismo moderno em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Empresa das Artes Projetos e Edições Artísticas, 1996).

⁶⁴ *Urbanista* and *urbanismo* were, and to some extent remain (as seen in the quote about Prestes Maia from 1999), the predominant terms used to describe what in the U.S. are identified as city planner and city planning. Outtes finds that the terms were coined in Brazilian Portuguese in 1916 by Victor da Silva Freire. Joel Outtes, "Disciplining Society through the City: The Birth of *Urbanismo* (City Planning) in Brazil, 1916-1941" (PhD diss., Oxford University, 2000), 27-37. I use urbanist and urbanism in English as synonymous with city planner and city planning. For more discussion about the history of the term *urbanismo*, see Flávio Villaça, "Uma contribuição para a história do planejamento urbano no Brasil," in Csaba Deák and Sueli Ramos Schiffer, eds. *O processo de urbanização no Brasil* 2a edição (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2015).

⁶⁵ See Cristina Peixoto-Mehrtens, *Urban Space and National Identity in Early Twentieth Century São Paulo, Brazil: Crafting Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 54.

business owner in the Liberdade district remembered Prestes Maia as the mayor who opened a map of the city and drew avenues wherever he felt like it.⁶⁶ Historian Joel Outtes has described him critically as a fundamentally “conservative” planner.⁶⁷ Historian Richard Morse recorded that Prestes Maia’s famous works, *Study for a Plan of Avenues in São Paulo* (1930) and *Improvements in São Paulo* (1945), were termed sarcastically as “The Divine Comedy” and “Purgatory” by architects in the city.⁶⁸ Beyond this excessive praise and biting criticism, much remains to be understood about the reproduction of São Paulo at the hands of Prestes Maia.

The debate over Prestes Maia’s legacy has tended toward praise or polemic in part because observers have emphasized the grandeur of planning on paper or the mess of planning in practice. Prestes Maia understood well that the reality fell somewhere in between. In his 1930 *Avenues Plan*, he wrote that “Master plans are frequently very beautiful but destined to remain on paper (*permanecer no papel*).”⁶⁹ Here he drew the crucial distinction between the conception of planning projects and their execution. A neat, rationalized, and “beautiful” plan is put into practice – *sai do papel*, or “leaves paper” – in much messier forms. He would, over the course of his career, become intimately acquainted with the scope of administrative, legal, and financial heavy lifting required for the execution of the *Avenues Plan*. Most of that lifting would occur well before the first meters of asphalt were laid and revolve around the seizure and razing of buildings standing in the way of projected avenues.

The municipal expropriation and demolition of buildings were the hinge on which urban planning projects turned. The construction of the two crown jewels of the *Avenues Plan*, Anhangabaú Avenue and Itooró Avenue, would require extensive expropriations and demolitions. Anhangabaú bordered the Bela Vista district on its western edge. In the east, Itooró split Bela Vista from the Liberdade district. The completion of these two roadways – and the ways in which they reshaped the neighborhoods Bela Vista

⁶⁶ Interview by author with [name withheld], Liberdade, São Paulo, June 14, 2017.

⁶⁷ Outtes, “Disciplining,” 321-22.

⁶⁸ Morse, *From Community*, 284-285.

⁶⁹ Francisco Prestes Maia, *Estudo de um plano de avenidas para a cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Companhia Melhoramentos de São Paulo, 1930), 186.

and Liberdade – spanned from the 1920s to the late 1960s and define the temporal limits of the Avenues-Making Era.

Prestes Maia authored the *Avenues Plan* as the head of the Department of Traffic and Public Works of the City of São Paulo from 1926 to 1930. The project outlined a new structure of roadways for the city consisting of a ring road and radial avenues extending outward from the center. A ring road, termed the *perímetro de irradiação*, was a key element of the plan and had five main aims: “decentralize commercial activity and, in doing so, expand the city center; deflect traffic flows through thoroughfares; distribute circulation to secondary roads; integrate segregated sectors within the city center; [and] maintain the local appearance (culture), to the extent possible.”⁷⁰ Overlaying the ring road were three principal radial avenues that stretched north and south in the shape of an inverted “Y.” The two southern legs of that “Y” were the avenues Anhangabaú and Itororó.

Roadways and neighborhoods constituted the building blocks of Prestes Maia’s avenues scheme. He described the construction of Anhangabaú and Itororó as a means for the “exploitation of extensive central areas, the correction of poorly-formed neighborhoods, [and] the possibility of rapid traffic circulation in the very heart of the city.”⁷¹ The endgame for the urbanist, the quote reveals, was the “correction” of “poorly-formed” neighborhoods. These descriptors referenced the sharp topography and flooding problems in the region, which would be levelled and controlled by the new avenues. But “correction” and “poorly-formed” had broader meanings that suggested the need to “correct” certain center-city spaces that had (as we will see) high concentrations of nonwhite populations and long associations with the history of slavery, abolition, and black self-determination.

The material substance of avenues – concrete and asphalt – was fundamental to forward-thinking urban planning and modern city governance in Brazil in the Avenues-Making Era. Luiz de Anhaia Mello, mayor of the city of São Paulo in 1930-’31 and himself a prominent urbanist, concentrated on paving in

⁷⁰ Maia, *Estudo de um plano*, 46. Also see, Maria Cristina da Silva Leme, “São Paulo: conflitos e consensos para construção da metrópole: 1930-1945,” in Vera Rezende, ed., *Urbanismo na era Vargas: a transformacao das cidades brasileiras* (Niteroi: Editora da UFF, 2012), 131.

⁷¹ Maia, *Estudo de um plano*, x.

the first article he wrote about urbanism. Reminiscent of nineteenth-century complaints about provincial roads, he asserted that “São Paulo lacked sufficient paving because of little public investment.”⁷² In the *Avenues Plan*, Arthur Saboya (author of the preface) and Prestes Maia both celebrated the city’s new stone quarry, named Pires do Rio after the then-mayor, which they boasted had the largest crusher in South America. Shots of the machinery and excavated landscape accompanied “after” images of pavement on Liberdade Street.⁷³ Pavement was a crucial element for collective transportation and connected Prestes Maia’s plan to other cities redesigned around the automobile in this era. However, planners and politicians of various stripes imbued concrete and asphalted roadways with meanings far beyond their strictly practical function. The material comprised the essential feature of urban improvements, as a 1942 article on the progress of planning projects explained: “In São Paulo, when one speaks of city improvements, paving quickly comes to mind.”⁷⁴

A political revolution gave new autonomy to official urban planners and private developers in 1930s Brazil. A disputed presidential election in 1930 ended with a coup led by Getúlio Vargas, whose seizure of the presidency would end what historians have traditionally categorized as Brazil’s first republican period (1889-1930).⁷⁵ Vargas promoted the industrialization and urbanization of Brazil through a populist authoritarianism that would lead to the dissolution of the national congress and the declaration of the fascist-inspired *Estado Novo* (New State) in 1937. Vargas reshaped local politics, as well, including the suspension of São Paulo’s City Council. In the vacuum, a group of São Paulo elites formed the Society of Friends of the City, or SAC. The president at the founding in 1934 was former mayor Antonio Prado Jr., though Prestes Maia would assume the role by the second meeting. The organization produced studies and publications about urban issues and assumed responsibilities typical of

⁷² Luiz de Anhaia Mello, “Problemas de urbanismo: mais uma contribuição para o calçamento,” *Revista Polytechnica* 83 (1927), 343-344, quoted in Outtes, “Disciplining,” 340. Mello would later argue that “the paving of streets and its financing should be distributed through the adjacent properties and the secondary zone of benefit.” Outtes, “Disciplining,” 347.

⁷³ Maia, *Estudo de um plano*, 275-276.

⁷⁴ “Equidade nos melhoramentos municipais,” *Correio Paulistano*, February 3, 1942, 5.

⁷⁵ Boris Fausto, *A Revolução de 1930: Historiografia e História* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1970); Cláudia Viscardi, *O teatro das oligarquias: uma revisão da “política do café com leite”* (Belo Horizonte: Fino Traço, 2012).

a state institution. Some members held an ambitious view of the organization's reach. In an article about the purpose of SAC, Luiz de Anhaia Mello wrote that the organization "shall teach the *paulistas* [residents of the state of São Paulo] the symphony of modern life, for us to be tuned with the epoch and, like diligent spiders, build a bit of ourselves, through the golden web of the city of our dreams."⁷⁶ For Mello and like-minded urbanists, the construction of identities – "a bit of ourselves" – and the production of urban space comprised part of a singular process.

Lofty rhetoric accompanied the mundane but consequential administration of urban space for SAC members. The organization fielded complaints from city residents, "on simple issues like the improvement of a plaza or in protest to the change of the name of a street."⁷⁷ The institutional novelty of a private organization with no public accountability in charge of public spatial concerns afforded urban planners and municipal administrators seemingly unchecked latitude.⁷⁸ SAC's capacity to make decisions about the spatial management and development of the city – already impressive – would be further amplified when its president was appointed to head the municipal administration itself.

In 1938 Vargas nominated Prestes Maia to be the mayor of the city of São Paulo. Pontes writes that Prestes Maia was chosen "by the personal imposition of Getúlio Vargas, who admired him as an urbanist."⁷⁹ Vargas's rise and the initial period of his rule were characterized by tensions between power brokers on the regional and federal scales. Those tensions included armed civil conflict in 1932, when paulistas, chafing at their diminished influence under Vargas, led a revolt termed the Constitutionalist Revolution.⁸⁰ The conflict was short-lived, with federal troops suppressing the rebellion in a matter of months. In the wake of such struggles, Vargas aimed to concentrate power at the federal level and curb

⁷⁶ Here Mello uses *paulista* instead of *paulistano*, despite the reference to *city* planning focused on SAC's works within the city of São Paulo specifically. The slippage in geographic scale seems to reflect the rippling significance that figures like Mello saw in the remaking of the city. from Luiz de Anhaia Mello, "A 'Sociedade Amigos da Cidade' e sua função no quadro urbano," *Boletim do Instituto de Engenharia*, 21:115, 263. Originally in English. Quoted in Outtes, "Disciplining," 303.

⁷⁷ Leme, "São Paulo," *Urbanismo na Era Vargas*, 128.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁷⁹ José Alfredo O. Vidigal Pontes, "Francisco Prestes Maia: O Político que não Gostava de Política," *Cidade*, 7.

⁸⁰ Barbara Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2015); James Woodard, *A Place in Politics: São Paulo, Brazil, from Seigneurial Republicanism to Regionalist Revolt* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2009).

local and regional resistance by choosing state and municipal administrators himself. Many of his picks were trained urbanists and engineers, and as a result the position of mayor “came to be a place in politics for engineers” and urbanists.⁸¹ Prestes Maia arrived well-prepared to the position of mayor with his 1930 *Avenues Plan* along with a record of service in, and opinions about, municipal governance. In 1925, for example, he wrote that “To establish great guiding lines [i.e. avenues] is the principal responsibility, and the most elemental, of municipal administrations – and to establish them courageously, with a wide and assured vision, eyes to the future.”⁸²

Officials during the Vargas era promoted social unity and economic development, especially via urbanization and industrialization, through a celebratory discourse of Brazilianess (*brasilidade*).⁸³ Urbanists- and engineers-turned-mayors played leading roles in building *brasilidade* on the local scale. Key features of that ideology were evident in the five objectives of the all-important ring road outlined in the *Avenues Plan*. “Circulation” anticipated the freer flow of capital and the easier transit of the labor force from increasingly marginal areas to industrial and commercial jobs elsewhere in the city. The integration of “segregated sectors” within and between neighborhoods, especially in the central part of the city with high populations of Afro-descendants, mirrored the premium that Vargas placed on social unity. The remaking of such “segregated” neighborhoods would advance the Vargas-era project of subordinating minority racial and ethnic identities to the homogenized construction of Brazilianness.

Veiled by the shadows of political authoritarianism, Prestes Maia had substantial latitude to execute his *Avenues Plan*. The press was under official censorship by the Vargas administration, and articles like this 1939 piece from *Correio Paulistano* covered his administration favorably: “Prestes Maia, in a magnificent plan of urbanism...continues reforms in an urgent manner...Expropriating, rending new avenues, acquiring parks and great swaths of lands, soon the Mayor of São Paulo, [will] realize his

⁸¹ Peixoto-Mehrtens, *Urban Space*, 54.

⁸² Lima de Toledo and Kuhl, *Prestes Maia*, 227.

⁸³ Lesser, *Negotiating*, 130-133, especially. Also see: Emilia Viotti da Costa, *The Brazilian Empire: Myths and Histories* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2000), 204; Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930–1945* (Durham NC: Duke UP, 2001).

objectives, bringing to the population that comfort that has long been promised.”⁸⁴ The full-page article proceeded through an alphabetized list of ongoing projects that was little more than an updated, if condensed, version of the *Avenues Plan* itself. Other articles tried to anticipate readers’ concerns and impatience with the pace of progress. One argued, for instance, that Prestes Maia was committed to execution of expropriations and demolitions in the “shortest possible timeframe.”⁸⁵ The flattering tone would remain largely the same in 1941, with praise for Prestes Maia’s program as “one of the greatest urbanistic works carried out in South America.”⁸⁶

São Paulo’s urbanists appropriated the brasilidade project in a distinctly paulista manner. Victor da Silva Freire, an engineer who spent nearly forty years as director of the City’s Department of Works (1888-1926), wrote an article in the journal *Engenharia* (*Engineering*) about a 1942 speech given by Prestes Maia. Prestes Maia’s discussion of the execution of the *Avenues Plan* inspired Freire to exclaim: “I will say, at this point in time, that engineering, in São Paulo, represents a historical vocation. The bandeirantes were engineers.”⁸⁷ As Barbara Weinstein has shown, the celebration of bandeirantes in constructions of paulista and *paulistano* (meaning of the city of São Paulo) identity following the Constitutionalist Revolution of 1932 was intertwined with the ideology that equated modern progress with the whitening of the population.⁸⁸ Freire’s comments pitched paulistano urbanists like Prestes Maia as those responsible for producing whiteness through urban space. The realization of that production depended, however, on the identification, seizure, and demolition of (nonwhite) places that planners understood as barriers to progress.

Expropriation has long been a key element of city planning practice and one apt to generate controversy and consternation.⁸⁹ Urbanists in São Paulo saw expropriation as a necessary and

⁸⁴ “Os rumos do governo da cidade de São Paulo,” *Correio Paulistano*, June 25, 1939, 41.

⁸⁵ “As novas avenidas de S. Paulo,” *Correio Paulistano*, November 15, 1941, 5.

⁸⁶ “As atividades do governo Prestes Maia,” *Correio Paulistano*, December 7, 1941, 3.

⁸⁷ “Visita ao sr. Interventor Federal em S. Paulo, dr. Fernando Costa – Palestra do eng. arq. F. Prestes Maia sobre ‘Planos de Melhoramentos de São Paulo,’” *Engenharia* (March 1943), xxix-xxx. Silva Freire lamented that Prestes Maia’s speech was not transcribed, another indication of the opaque nature of government information in this era.

⁸⁸ Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity*.

⁸⁹ The social history of expropriation and demolition, especially in literature about the U.S., has expanded in recent years. Among recent works are: Susan Reynolds, *Before Eminent Domain: Toward a History of Expropriation of*

unavoidable aspect of the reproduction of urban space in accordance with territorial expansion, population growth, and the deterioration of infrastructure.⁹⁰ Yet much remained to be decided and negotiated in the fine print, including decisions about which places would be razed, the precise terms of expropriation (i.e. amounts), and the justification for certain sites instead of others. In these decisions we can discern the ideologies that shaped planners' decisions. Doing so follows in the footsteps of some contemporary observers, such as Roland Corbisier, an intellectual and later chief architect of nationalist-developmental programs in Brazil. Corbisier questioned the justification of expropriation in the name of the "social good" ("*interesse social*") in 1949: "And what should one understand exactly as social good? Will it not be the interest of the majority that prevails over those particular concerns of groups or classes?"⁹¹

Expropriation was a fundamental concern for Prestes Maia. He dedicated the first section after the introduction of the *Avenues Plan* to questions, norms, and international practices of expropriation, opening the chapter with the declaration: "[Expropriation] is the great source of expenditures and difficulties in the execution of whatever plan." In the same era, Luiz de Anhaia Mello argued that a law of expropriation was "the initial landmark on the road of urbanism."⁹² During Prestes Maia's administration federal authorities established a new tool for municipal administrators – again, many of them urbanists – throughout the country. Enacted in June of 1941, Decreto-Lei n. 3.365 established at the federal level a process for the state to seize land for public utility or interest. The first modern federal law granting

Land for the Common Good (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2010); Francesca Russello Ammon, *Bulldozer: Demolition and Clearance of the Postwar Landscape* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2016); and *Demolition means Progress: Flint, Michigan, and the Fate of the American Metropolis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

⁹⁰ For one study that considers expropriation in the context of São Paulo's 1929 flood, see Luiz Ferla, et al. "A enchente de 1929 na cidade de São Paulo: memória, história e novas abordagens de pesquisa," *Revista do Arquivo Geral da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro* 8 (2014), 149-166.

⁹¹ Roland Corbisier, "A lei do inquilinato e o conceito cristão de propriedade," *Digesto Economico* 54 (May 1949), quoted in Nabil Bonduki, *Origens da Habitação Social no Brasil: Arquitetura Moderna, Lei do Inquilinato e Difusão da Casa Própria*, 7ª edição (São Paulo: Estação Liberdade: 2013), 89-90. Also see: Rafael R. Ioris, *Transforming Brazil: A History of National Development in the Postwar Era* (New York: Routledge, 2014); "Roland Corbisier," CPDOC, http://cpdoc.fgv.br/producao/dossies/AEraVargas2/biografias/roland_corbisier (accessed September 15, 2017).

⁹² Luiz de Anhaia Mello, "Problemas de urbanismo: mais uma contribuição para o calçamento," *Revista Polytechnica* 83, 343-344, 1925. Quoted in Outtes, "Disciplining," 340.

expropriation rights, the policy was a product of the authoritarian climate of the Estado Novo. It appears to have gone through no public process of debate. The law would be cited throughout the many decrees that Prestes Maia issued pronouncing the public right to seize structures standing in the way of projected avenues.⁹³

Demolitions for grand avenues exacerbated an unstable pace of growth in the city of São Paulo. Demographically, the city saw a dramatic influx of migrants in the 1930s-'40s. During the 1940s alone, the city's population grew from 1.3 to 2.2 million. The available housing stock was already insufficient for São Paulo residents, especially low-income families, and demolitions of housing units would put serious strain on the precarious situation. Historian Nabil Bonduki writes that the "demographic increase created the additional necessity of, at the least, 12,000 new housing units, without counting the already-existing deficit and the considerable number of buildings demolished in function of the real estate boom and expropriations for transportation projects." Though perhaps more acute than elsewhere, the crisis was not exceptional to the city of São Paulo. Likeminded "improvements" projects by Vargas-appointed officials (on state and municipal levels) would generate similar problems for low-income residents seeking housing in other cities across Brazil.⁹⁴

In parallel to expropriations and demolitions, the 1930s-'40s in São Paulo saw an uptick in real estate prices and new government programs aimed at controlling the housing sector. Between 1941 and 1946 a real estate boom took off in the city, as land became an investment opportunity for industrial, agricultural, and commercial profits. Speculation generated record land prices, with median prices in 1946 up 70% from 1930.⁹⁵ The situation would be complicated by Vargas's 1942 Tenancy Law that froze rents throughout the entire country. Multiple factors motivated this unprecedented state intervention in housing,

⁹³ The decree-law was drafted by Francisco Campos, the architect of the Fascist-inspired Constitution of 1937 and Minister of Justice during the first years of the Estado Novo, along with Carlos Medeiros, who served on a variety of such commissions during Vargas's regime. "Francisco Campos," O Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil (CPDOC), http://cpdoc.fgv.br/producao/dossies/AEraVargas1/biografias/francisco_campos; Carlos Medeiros, CPDOC, <http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-biografico/carlos-medeiros-silva> (accessed September 14, 2017).

⁹⁴ Bonduki, *Origens*, 256.

⁹⁵ Sarah Feldman, *Planejamento e zoneamento: São Paulo, 1947-1972* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2005), 16.

which would last until 1964. The law represented a populist, paternalistic effort to assist the urban masses. It also had a developmentalist side, as Vargas sought to curb rental income as a primary source of capital accumulation in favor of investment in industrialization.⁹⁶ A ceiling on rental income likely disincentivized the construction of new housing stock. The already-existing and fast-increasing shortage of rentable units limited the socially-minded effects of the measure in the city of São Paulo, where landlords also found other ways to extract income.⁹⁷

Its intended aims notwithstanding, the Tenancy Law helped to reshape the patterns of urban settlement in São Paulo. Residents sought cheap housing options on new frontiers of the expanding periphery, where they would purchase and build their own homes instead of renting. Private developers would take advantage of this demand by setting up sparsely-resourced developments in ever-more remote regions. The new system of asphalted avenues, designed around automobile and bus transportation, would facilitate the daily delivery of the labor force to employment throughout the city. Real estate developers would make out especially well fueling this sprawl, which, in São Paulo's geography, was nearly unlimited by natural barriers. This "fix" for the housing crisis served to hasten the advancement of industrial capitalism and would have profound effects for the reconfiguration of the city.⁹⁸

Some observers expressed concern at the way urban Brazil and São Paulo were being remade. Luiz de Anhaia Mello criticized Prestes Maia, writing in 1945 about São Paulo's housing problem for the journal *Engenharia*. Outtes summarized the piece: "Mello criticised Maia again, saying that the planning being practised was twenty years too late, and claimed that the City Hall should have an organized service of research in order to avoid the present situation in which 150,000 people were *sem teto* [homeless]."⁹⁹ While some historians have characterized Prestes Maia's first administration as characterized by

⁹⁶ Bonduki, *Origens*, 261; Feldman, *Planejamento e Zoneamento*, 18.

⁹⁷ Marcos Virgílio da Silva, "Debaixo do 'Pogréssio': Urbanização, Cultura, e Experiência Popular em João Rubinato e Outros Sambistas Paulistanos (1951-1969)" (PhD diss., FAU-USP, 2011), 244.

⁹⁸ Bonduki, *Origens*; Milton Santos, *Metrópole Corporativa Fragmentada* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1978).

⁹⁹ Luiz de Anhaia Mello, "Habitação e urbanismo," *Engenharia* 4:37, 2-3, in Outtes, "Disciplining," 358.

“consensus,”¹⁰⁰ these critiques indicate a more nuanced landscape where other influential stakeholders contested how planning projects were “leaving paper.”

The overthrow of Getúlio Vargas and end of the Estado Novo in 1945 also meant the departure of Prestes Maia in São Paulo. In his 1945 *Improvements of São Paulo*, he reviewed the range of his projects over the last seven years. Progress on the two southern legs of the all-important “Y system” of avenues remained front and center. Prestes Maia celebrated the completion of Anhangabaú Avenue: “it is extremely original for its topographical conditions...The first expropriations date to the Pires do Rio administration; that administration began the work, that we continued and concluded, with notable modifications.” In contrast to the successful conclusion of that avenue was its “twin” Itororó, which Prestes Maia admitted had “only begun.”¹⁰¹

Periodization by political administrations – such as “the Vargas regime,” used to describe the 1930-1945 period – can obscure the sometimes-surprising continuities of urban spatial histories. Itororó Avenue (later renamed May 23 Avenue) was still incomplete in 1960 when Prestes Maia began to mount a competitive campaign for another term as mayor. His pitch included the promise to finish, once and for all, the avenues outlined three decades prior. A handful of completed sections of the ex-Itororó /May 23 Avenue were closed to traffic but had been deemed open for soccer by local residents.¹⁰² Successive delays, including challenges with expropriations, had halted the work, leaving a spacious concrete field for matches among youths from the Liberdade and Bela Vista districts. The avenue would be finished only during the administration of Maia’s successor, engineer-turned-mayor José Vicente Faria Lima (1965-’69). The messy saga of making ex-Itororó /May 23 Avenue reveals the long lifespan of the *Avenues Plan* and the continuities that bound the late 1920s to the late 1960s as the Avenues-Making Era.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Leme, “São Paulo,” *Urbanismo na era Vargas*, 144.

¹⁰¹ Francisco Prestes Maia, *Os melhoramentos de São Paulo* (São Paulo: 1945), 14-15.

¹⁰² “Há 50 anos, a começo da grande avenida,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 28, 1987.

¹⁰³ Leme, “São Paulo,” *Urbanismo na Era Vargas*, 132.

During Prestes Maia's 1960 mayoral campaign, the pro-Prestes Maia team distributed a series of pamphlets – almost on the scale of the *Avenues Plan* itself – full of examples exalting the great successes of the urbanist. Pamphlets like “Prestes Maia Did It – Prestes Maia Will Do It” cast the former mayor as the only person capable of pulling São Paulo out of the hole in which it found itself. The campaign appropriated the image of a pothole in political advertisements, referencing the supposedly ubiquitous dilapidated asphalt in the city and serving as a metaphor for the decay into which the city had allegedly fallen without Prestes Maia's leadership. Interspersed with the bloated political rhetoric were explanations for what (if anything) had not gone perfectly under his first administration: “If the mayor, who foresaw the growth of the city, did not complete a promise...it was because of the impossibility of a greater number of expropriations.”¹⁰⁴ At the end of the pamphlet, the author (likely Prestes Maia himself) reiterated the point once again with the lamentation: “If it had been possible he would have completed a greater number of expropriations and achieved the desired areas.”¹⁰⁵ The statements overlooked the extensive demolitions completed during the Avenues-Making Era, though they revealed the continuity of expropriation as the hinge on which planning schemes turned and, by consequence, the project to reproduce “poorly-formed” neighborhoods.

Marked for Demolition: Cortiços “Navios”

Standing at the meeting point of the contemporary Anhangabaú Avenue and Itororó Avenue, the products of the Avenues-Making Era dominate my view of São Paulo's center-city urban landscape. The structures cleared to make way for those avenues, however, are nowhere near as easily discernible. Seeing levelled sites requires an alternative mode of visualization. For example, figure 4 displays demolitions linked to the execution of the *Avenues Plan* in the districts of Bela Vista and Liberdade. With the sites revealed through this mapping as a guiding framework, this section explores the social and spatial composition of some of the demolished sites connected to the *Avenues Plan*. I address and endeavor to

¹⁰⁴ “Prestes Maia – Fez / Prestes Maia – Fará,” 7, Biblioteca Prestes Maia.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

answer what seem like straightforward questions, such as when the sites were built, who lived there, and what can be known about where residents moved after demolition.

Examining these sites draws our attention to local residents themselves, who participated in the planning and development of urban spaces both independent of, and in dialogue with, official city planners. They were, in this capacity, informal planners.¹⁰⁶ In the face of official planning projects motivated by a desire for rupture, informal planners drew on generations of knowledge about normative socio-spatial relations in Brazil and sought to maintain continuities of everyday life in areas like housing. By highlighting the interplay between formal planners like Prestes Maia and residents in center-city São Paulo, I show that the Avenues-Making Era was as much about the demolition of undesirable spaces as the construction of modern roadways.

¹⁰⁶ Faranak Miraftab, "Insurgent Planning: Situating Radical Planning in the Global South," *Planning Theory* 8:1 (2009): 32-50; Ranier Randolph, "A Nova Perspectiva do Planejamento Subversivo e Suas (Possíveis) Implicações para a Formação do Planejador Urbano e Regional: o Caso Brasileiro," *Scripta Nova (Barcelona)* X (2008): 98-110; James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

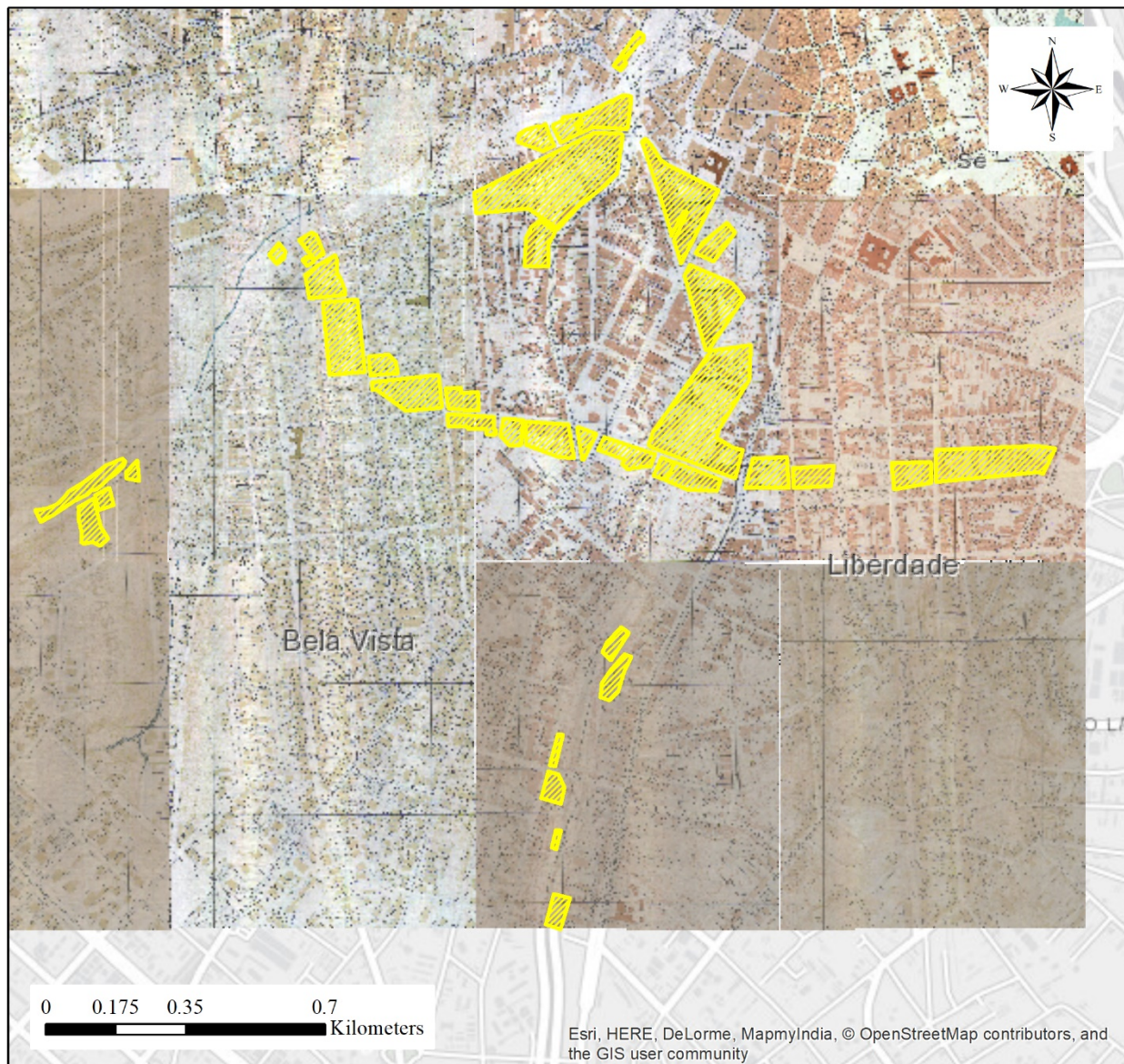


Figure 4: Demolitions linked to the *Avenues Plan*. Yellow polygons are structures demolished. Red and beige sections of the basemap are “Mapeamento 1930 - SARA,” *GeoSampa*, www.geosampa.prefeitura.sp.gov.br (accessed June 12, 2018). Light gray basemap is from 2017. Map by author.

Demolitions in the Avenues-Making Era began during the Pires do Rio administration of the 1920s, and in the first pages of the *Avenues Plan* Prestes Maia touted the progress on those projects. The three prime areas for those expropriations in the 1920s were São João Avenue, the City Center, and Anhangabaú Avenue.¹⁰⁷ The geographic focus of expropriation would move south following the 1930

¹⁰⁷ Maia, *Estudo de um plano*, x-xi.

Avenues Plan and into Prestes Maia's mayoral terms. The Anhangabaú Avenue would remain a key location for expropriations, though the urbanist-mayor would shift emphasis to the Itororó Avenue and the ring road.

Cortiços, literally "beehives," were one of the most common targets for demolition in the execution of the *Avenues Plan*.¹⁰⁸ *Cortiços* were tenement-style complexes peopled by mostly poor residents who rented, occupied, and/or built the structures themselves. A degree of precariousness is implicit in the term, as was a blurriness between public and private spaces.¹⁰⁹ Elite consensus held that *cortiços* were undesirable barriers to progress. In 1929 an article, "Cortiços: Favellas Paulistanas," ran in *Progresso*, one of the journals in São Paulo's flourishing black press in the late 1920s and early 1930s.¹¹⁰ As hinted by the title, the piece drew a parallel between São Paulo's tenements and *favelas*, the improvised, often precarious housing form prominent especially in Rio de Janeiro in the early twentieth century. The article explained: "São Paulo conserves in the midst of the rapid development of its new urbanist expansion...barbarous...almost savage nuclei." Identifying the nuclei as *cortiços*, the unnamed author wrote that they are an "anachronism to the progress of the paulista capital." The piece highlighted one *cortiço*, named "*Trezentos*" (Three-hundred), that stood along São João Avenue. Lauding the demolition of the *cortiço* and the avenue expansion, the *Progresso* article continued: "Now for the opening of São João Avenue, the City Government demolished *Trezentos*, the most infamous 'cortiço' of the capital, finishing, therefore, with the ugliest stain ("*mancha*") that stands apart from the progress of the beauty of modern S. Paulo."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ For an examination of an earlier history of official treatment of *cortiços* and their residents, see Sidney Chaloub, *Cidade febril – Cortiços e epidemias na Corte Imperial* (São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1996).

¹⁰⁹ Outtes, "Disciplining Society." Morse, *From Community to Metropolis*, 193-194. Teresa Caldeira defines *cortiços* as "a type of tenement occupied by workers who cannot afford to own a home." Teresa Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 14. They remain a prominent feature of popular housing in the city of São Paulo.

¹¹⁰ *Progresso* ran from 1928 to at least 1932 and was headed by Lino Guedes and Argentino Celso Wanderley. Paulina L. Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2011), 105-6; Petrônio Domingues, *A nova abolição* (São Paulo: Grupo Editorial Summus, 2008), 35.

¹¹¹ "Cortiços: Favellas Paulistanas," *Progresso* 18, November 24, 1929, 5. Cited in Butler, *Freedoms Given*, 82.

Prestes Maia briefly addressed cortiços in a short section on housing in the *Avenues Plan*. He included a sketch of a cortiço similar to the ones being demolished in the Pires do Rio administration, along with the caption “Popular Housing...Bexiga.”¹¹² The accompanying text did not directly reference a material or physical corollary to the drawing. Prestes Maia drew an implicit contrast, however, in explaining the desired type of housing: “The ideal housing is naturally the individual.”¹¹³ He placed a moralistic premium on single-family housing, a valorization that would anticipate the move toward individual families owning their own lots and homes in the expanding periphery in the wake of the *Avenues Plan*. Prestes Maia’s caption also reveals the centrality of Bexiga as emblematic of stigmatized cortiços, a feature that would make it prime for remaking through both the Anhangabaú and Itororó Avenues along with the ring road.

One of the most infamous cortiços demolished during the Avenues-Making Era, following Trezentos, was known as the “*Navio Parado*,” or “Stationary Ship,” and located in the northern area of the Bela Vista district (figure 5).

¹¹² Image available in Maia, *Estudo de um plano*, 309.

¹¹³ Ibid.



Figure 5: Navio Parado cortiço, 1942, Vale do Bexiga, by Benedito J. Duarte and Antônio R. Muller. Reproduced with permission from the Acervo Fotográfico do Museu da Cidade de São Paulo.

This structure formed part of a larger complex, known as Vila Barros, that included other cortiços like “Vaticano,” “Geladeira,” and “Pombal.” Among the others located between Jacarehy Street, Japurá Street, and Santo Antônio Street, Navio Parado was considered the oldest.¹¹⁴ Bonduki writes that Vila Barros was condemned by “the elite and by the press as a territory of promiscuity and lack of hygiene.”¹¹⁵ Observations in Nádia Marzola’s City-sponsored neighborhood history of Bela Vista reveal a more specific stigma attached to the cortiços in Vila Barros:

The glory days of Bexiga run parallel to the life of the cortiço Vaticano or Navio Parado. They were formed by dozens of houses of a wall-and-a-half (*parede-e-meia*) where hundreds of families lived together... The majority of the residents of cortiços were not immigrants, but domestics, factory workers without training, and principally blacks. ‘In old Bexiga, the whitest

¹¹⁴ Bonduki, *Origens*, 76.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

black was the color of the telephone,' says Paulo Vanzolini, poet for whom Bexiga was his inspirational muse.¹¹⁶

In her in-depth study of cortiços in Bela Vista, Schneck has shown that in the 1920s and 1930s these were multiracial and multiethnic complexes, with a population comprised of nonwhite residents and European immigrants and their descendants.¹¹⁷ Despite their diverse populations, cortiços like the Navio Parado were described, and marked, as hubs of blackness in discourses about the neighborhood.¹¹⁸ The racializing of these structures owed, in part, to popularly-accepted memories about their original construction. Scarlato writes that although cortiços “proliferated in typically Italian neighborhoods” like Bela Vista, Italians “were not their creators.”¹¹⁹ Afro-descendants were the original constructors of cortiços, he implies,¹²⁰ emphasizing again the association between a marked urban form – in this case a cortiço – and the population credited with the constructive labor of producing it.

Prestes Maia marked the Navio Parado for demolition in the 1930 *Avenues Plan*, but delays left it standing past his final days in office in 1945. He had secured the demolition of other cortiços in Vila Barros, as indicated in his 1945 *Improvements of São Paulo*, where he touted the completion of Jacaré Bridge, adjacent to Vila the complex of cortiços.¹²¹ Leading up to the four-hundred-year anniversary of São Paulo in 1954, a fresh round of urbanistic projects would finally spell the end of Navio Parado. A 1951 article in *Jornal de Notícias* explained: “Whole roads will be widened, old blocks destroyed as well, such as various cortiços that remain standing in the very center of the city, like the ‘Navio Parado,’ the

¹¹⁶ Nádia Marzola, *Bela Vista – 2ª edição - História de Bairros de São Paulo* (Prefeitura da Cidade de São Paulo, 1985), 81-84.

¹¹⁷ Sheila Schneck, “Bexiga: cotidiano e trabalho em suas interfaces com a cidade (1906-1931)” (PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 2016).

¹¹⁸ Other examples taken from interviews with current and former residents can be found in Teresinha Bernardo, *Memória em branco e negro: olhares sobre São Paulo* (São Paulo: EDUC, 1998), 147. Francisco Capuano Scarlato, “Estrutura e Sobrevivência dos Cortiços no Bairro do Bexiga,” *Revista do Departamento de Geografia da Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade de São Paulo – Brasil* 9 (1995), 118.

¹¹⁹ Scarlato, “Estrutura,” 118.

¹²⁰ Few sources provide detailed information about the original construction of cortiços and who was responsible for them. This absence is not necessarily surprising, given that the complexes were typically constructed informally. They appear in institutional records as places to be “sanitized” in São Paulo in the 1890s amidst concerns about Yellow Fever (Bonduki, *Habitação*, 28-34). While we cannot confirm whether Afro-descendants were responsible for their original settlement, discourses about, and assertions of, who built them themselves participated in the marking of spaces and shaped interethnic relations.

¹²¹ Maia, *Estudo de um plano*, 22.

cortiço-favela of the Jacareí Bridge.”¹²² The article continued, revealing the role the cortiço’s residents played in the daily life of the city: “This cortiço houses some five hundred people and is known as the headquarters of São Paulo’s laundrywomen, and for a while it has been threatened by demolition, since it constitutes a terrible urban stain on the progress of our city.”¹²³ The term “stain” mirrored the language used to describe the Trezentos cortiço decades earlier and, given the complex’s comparatively high nonwhite population, had a decidedly racialized undertone.

Navio Parado was the hub of São Paulo’s dirty (and clean) laundry, where many of the complex’s female residents performed domestic labor like laundering for families in nearby wealthy neighborhoods. A 1948 piece in the satirical journal *A Marmita* (“*The Lunchbox*”),¹²⁴ based on a field visit to Navio Parado, described the place with a decidedly critical take on “progress”:

This is another magnificent housing complex of our capital. It’s there on Rua Japurá. It occupies an immense valley. The ‘valley of promise.’ 2,000 people reside there in a beautiful example of civility and human fraternity. From the height of the Jacareí Bridge we had the opportunity to appreciate the panorama. Beautiful. Enchanting. As one admires a beautiful woman from behind, we appreciated this work of modern engineering, also from behind. Tall houses, slender, of solid construction... There are even doors and windows, sometimes. Great columns lift up from some of these houses, reminiscent of those in the old and marvelous Oriental legends... it is a paradise. The children, to justify such a qualification, walk nude until we don’t know how old.¹²⁵

A photo of the complex showing sprawling laundry accompanied the article and was captioned: “The Valley of Promise, with its flags of peace.” While the article critiqued the social conditions in which the residents lived, the satire also drew a parallel between skilled, degreed engineers and the builders of the cortiço. In doing so, the authors recognized the residents as legitimate producers of space – informal planners – working in the same field as official planners and engineers. What’s more, by terming the Navio Parado a “work of modern engineering,” the authors suggested that cortiços like these were, in

¹²² This is another example (in addition to the *Progresso* article from above) of the combining of “cortiço” and “favela,” two spatial forms typically pitched as different. The examples reveal the mutability of these categories.

¹²³ “Demolições,” *Jornal de Notícias*, September 27, 1951, 2.

¹²⁴ The full title of the journal was *The Lunchbox: A Journal of Great Circulation and Great Tirades (A Marmita: Um jornal de grande tiragem e grandes tiradas...)*. The National Library holds 51 issues of the journal from 1947-’48, with early editions identifying the heads as Edson Machado, Osv. da Sylveyra, and José Silan.

¹²⁵ “Entrevistas Deshumanas: Onde o amor cheira mal,” *A Martmita*, January 28, 1948, 5.

addition to the grand avenues, byproducts (i.e. “the work”) of official planning in the Avenues-Making Era.

The authors of the *A Marmita* piece recounted a visit to another, tellingly-named settlement in the Liberdade district. They wrote: “We drove ourselves to one of the aristocratic neighborhoods of the city, a peaceful and tranquil neighborhood, where the poor can die of hunger without worrying that the government will bother them with help: Jardim Glicerio, also known as Prestes Maia City.”¹²⁶ The name may have been applied by residents themselves, perhaps some of them dislocated as a result of previous demolitions, to identify the architect of urban renewal as himself responsible for its subsequent manifestations. While the 1930 *Avenues Plan* outlined Prestes Maia’s vision on paper, the favela known by his name was, according to its residents, an equally accurate representation of Prestes Maia’s city.

Amidst the demolition of various cortiços under the auspices of Prestes Maia’s *Avenues Plan*, Navio Parado and its longer trajectory brought into high relief the interconnectedness of the official and informal production of space. The construction of the complex by residents was triggered by earlier urban planning projects. From the 1951 article about its demolition we learn the history of its construction: “The cortiço has existed since 1921, when it was built by old material taken from the demolitions and widening of São João Avenue.”¹²⁷ The 1910s-’20s expansion of São João Avenue involved the demolitions of cortiços like Trezentos and the associated dislocation of resident populations. Some of those residents seem to have carried their belongings and the valuable rubble from that demolition blocks away, where they constructed, in the early 1920s, an expansive new housing complex (figure 6). Less than a decade later, Prestes Maia projected the Anhangabaú Avenue through this new, informally-produced place. Following the demolition of Navio Parado, residents then would have to migrate elsewhere and rebuild once more.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 4.

¹²⁷ “Demolições,” *Jornal de Notícias*, September 27, 1951, 2.

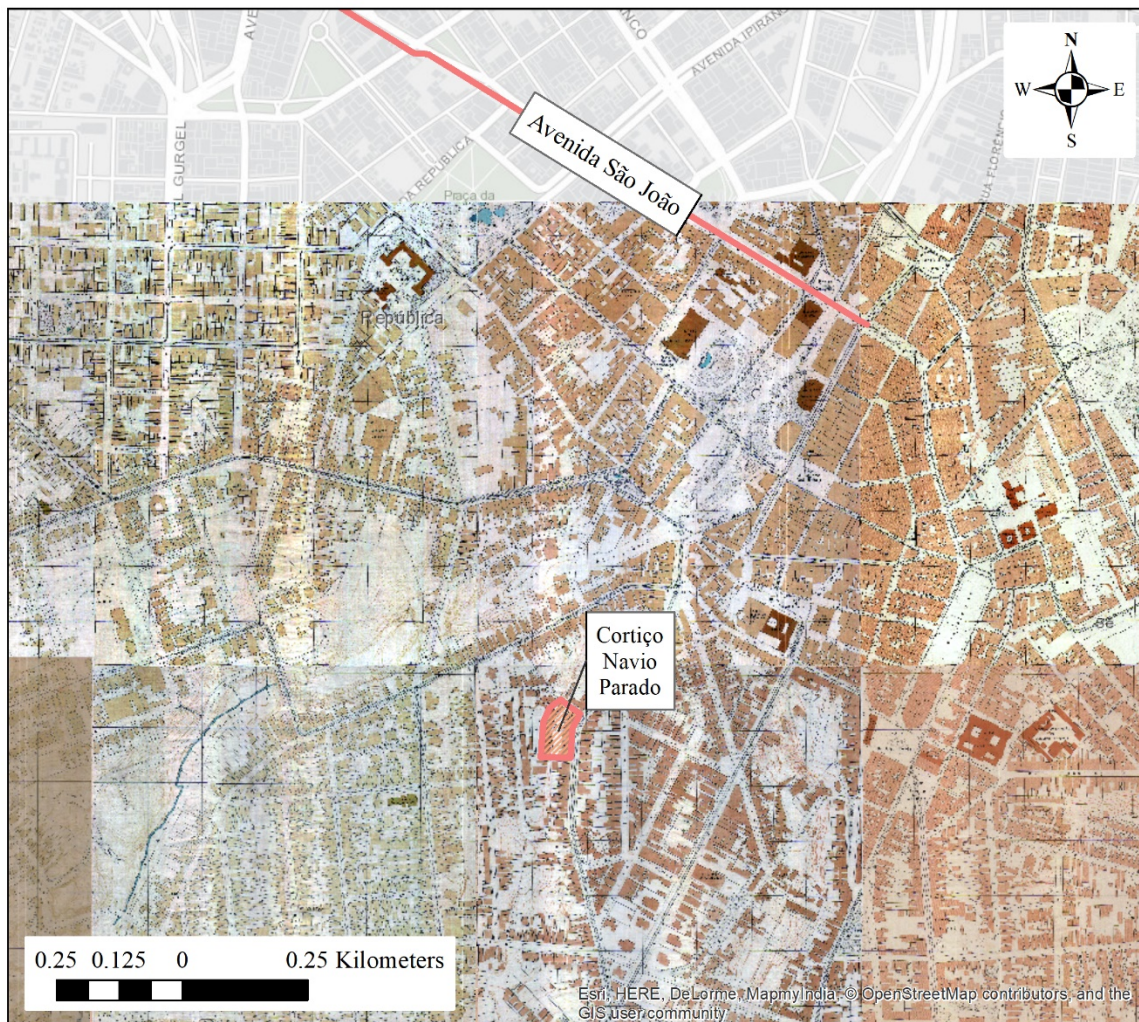


Figure 6: Cycles of formal and informal urban development: from Trezentos to Navio Parado. São João Avenue in the top of the map and the cortiço Navio Parado in the lower center. The light gray basemap is contemporary São Paulo. The other basemap is from “Mapeamento 1930 - SARA,” *GeoSampa*, www.geosampa.prefeitura.sp.gov.br (accessed June 12, 2018). Map by author.

The links between Trezentos and Navio Parado suggest that the expropriation and demolition of cortiços was not necessarily an aberration for local residents. These individuals saw, lived, and constructed spatial continuities of housing despite formal planners’ best efforts at rupture. The example reveals the multi-generational process of negotiated, official and informal planning that reproduced the space of the city in this era and beyond. The precise process that led to the migration of residents from São João Avenue to the Navio Parado in the north of Bela Vista is a clear example of movement triggered by official urban planning. The precision of this example of local migration linked to demolitions is rather exceptional. The infamy of cortiços like Trezentos and Navio Parado pushed them into the spotlight at the

moment of their demolition, prompting journalists to pen articles rich with information that reveals a specific migratory process. Dislocations caused by the demolition of Navio Parado, however, prove more challenging to chart so precisely.

The headquarters of São Paulo's Expropriation Department, or DESAP, sits today in the district of Liberdade, just a short stroll from the avenues that occupied so much of its time in the twentieth century. The records within this department would seem to hold valuable information about the social side of expropriation. DESAP documents are organized by roadways, capturing the lifespan of the former Anhangabaú Avenue, for example, from inception through completion. These spatial histories of avenues are situated at the moment when planning on paper met practice, providing an inside look at details such as the names of property owners, dimensions of the structures identified for demolition, and the amounts paid by the municipal government for the lots and structures to be demolished. DESAP maps served as the key documents to align the projected construction with the targeted space for demolition and sort out the financial and legal terms of expropriation.¹²⁸

Expropriation sometimes involved the demolition of an entire city block. One of the largest sections demolished in the early 1930s sat at the very beginning of the projected Anhangabaú Avenue. Among the 35 buildings to be demolished on this site, nearly 14 belonged to one woman: Maria Adelaide Rossi. Her complex included what was identified on the expropriation planta as a "Villa." Rossi was likely of Italian descent and was married to the Italian-born Domiziano (or Domenico) Rossi. He worked for 31 years with famed São Paulo architect Ramos de Azevedo, ultimately becoming a partner in this firm. Rossi was the architect of monumental buildings in São Paulo like the Teatro Municipal, Palácio das Indústrias, Liceu de Artes e Ofícios, and some mansions along Paulista Avenue.¹²⁹ The number of buildings in Maria Rossi's complex suggests that she used those structures adjacent to her "villa" as rental

¹²⁸ Avenida Nove de Julho and Avenida 23 de Maio, Departamento de Desapropriações, Prefeitura da Cidade de São Paulo.

¹²⁹ Aracy A. Amaral, *Artes Plásticas na Semana de 22*, 5th Edition (São Paulo: Editora 34, 1998 [1970]), fn 21, 107. See also, "Ramos de Azevedo mudou imagem de São Paulo," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 12, 1998, 21.

properties. Following the expropriation of the block, she would invest in a new urban subdivision (*loteamento*) in São Bernardo do Campo, where a name and school today bear her name.¹³⁰

A nearby settlement along Saracura Pequena Street would meet a similar fate as this block in the late 1930s and early 1940s. A December 1925 article from the widely-circulated and mainstream paper *A Gazeta* recounted an argument on Saracura Pequena Street between a black tenant, Aldemiro Benedicto Corrêa, and his Portuguese landlord, Sebastião Bernardo. Corrêa was behind a month on his rent, prompting a “violent dispute” with Bernardo wherein the landlord threatened him. Later that night Corrêa attacked and gravely injured Bernardo.¹³¹ By the time DESAP expropriated the lot, Sebastião’s property had passed to his widow, Emilia, who accepted the city government’s offer for the land and home. Combined with the fact that most properties in Saracura Pequena had large basements (as detailed in DESAP records), rental units were also likely common in this region.

Despite the details about the processes of expropriation, much is absent in the DESAP records. The sources are replete with names of individuals who lived at sites that were demolished. However, these names are of the property owners themselves, the financial beneficiaries of expropriation. Unnoticed and unrecorded in the official record was the tenant population, which was especially sizable in Bela Vista. Landlords and renters were not segregated, as property owners often lived at the same site they were renting. Scarlato explains the pattern in the formation of cortiços in Bexiga:

...in the process of building the neighborhood, houses did not occupy an entire lot. As long as the demand for housing increased...the property owners began to expand the built sections of the lots, constructing additional rooms...Besides incorporating new constructed areas, they began to rent, as well, the basements of buildings transformed into rooms. The possibility to live from rental income, through tenants, fascinated the property owners...In this manner cortiços surged.¹³²

¹³⁰ Ademir Medici, “Domiziano Rossi e sua ligação com São Bernardo,” *Diário do Grande ABC*, October 11, 2012, <http://www.dgabc.com.br/Noticia/313179/domiziano-rossi-e-sua-ligacao-com-sao-bernardo> (accessed November 15, 2017). “Vida Social,” *O Combate*, October 25, 1921, 1.

¹³¹ “Um senhorio de maus bofes,” *A Gazeta*, December 17, 1925, 3. Amélia Cohn and Sedi Hirano, “A Gazeta,” Fundação Getúlio Vargas – CPDOC, <http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-tematico/gazeta-a> (accessed September 17, 2017).

¹³² Scarlato, “Estrutura,” 118-119.

In 1942 sociologist Donald Pierson published a study about popular housing in three neighborhoods, including Bela Vista. Conducted among families who lived along Manoel Dutra Street, the article captured the centrality of renting to the housing market in Bela Vista.¹³³

Sociologist Florestan Fernandes offered a racialized interpretation of the housing landscape in Bela Vista.¹³⁴ He drew on his training as a sociologist and his childhood experiences growing up in Bela Vista: “in the USA, segregation exists. Here (in Brazil), segregation, along with prejudice, is not systematic....segregation is invisible. You could say: in the 1930s, in a neighborhood like Bela Vista, blacks and whites lived beside each other. But the black lived in the basement and the white lived upstairs.”¹³⁵ The quote presents a picture of racial stratification structuring multiracial and multiethnic housing in the neighborhood. In addition, it further reveals the limitations of the DESAP records for a more complete understanding of the social composition (i.e. the high population of nonwhite tenants) of the residences marked for demolition.

DESAP records excluded the tenant population because state officials and private developers had little interest in documenting the social effects of the *Avenues Plan*. A more socially-oriented planning ethos would begin to change planning practices in São Paulo in the late 1960s and early 1970s. That shift would lead officials to notice, observe, and ultimately *write* residents into similar kinds of institutional records. Leading planners during the Avenues-Making Era, however, did not register the processes of dislocation caused by redevelopment projects.

By the early 1940s, expropriations and demolitions left a sizable tenant population in the city of São Paulo without housing amid a severe housing shortage and real estate boom. These residents had to move somewhere. Written sources from institutions like DESAP offer little evidence of the patterns of migration stemming from demolitions. Residents’ memories – spoken and sung – remain the prime source

¹³³ Donald Pierson, “Habitações de São Paulo: Estudo Comparativo,” *Revista do Arquivo Municipal*, January-February 1942.

¹³⁴ For a detailed examination of the “Fernandes thesis” about Brazilian race relations, see George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 71-81.

¹³⁵ Florestan Fernandes, *O significado do protesto negro* (São Paulo: Cortez Editora, 1989), 89.

for charting movement triggered by avenues-making. A 2002 interview with Cacilda, a black resident of Casa Verde (the neighborhood adjacent to Freguesia do Ó and Brasilândia to the east), proves illustrative:

1950, it was 50 years ago when I came to live here. Before that I lived in Bela Vista, there in those cortiços, and they were being demolished, demolished for new constructions, they were expelling everyone, and then my spouse came and found this house to rent, and a friend told him: here you do not rent, you buy. When he bought this house, it was one room, a bathroom and a kitchen. From the kitchen I made the living room, the kid's room, the pantry, and I continued constructing, you know that I am still building even today.¹³⁶

The timeline of demolition and Cacilda's migration make it probable that she lived in one of the cortiços in Vila Barros, such as the Navio Parado. While multiple factors contributed to the migration of renters from cortiços, Cacilda's language – “they were expelling everyone” – suggests that she, at least, indeed understood the process as one of forced removal.

Over decades, informal urban planners like Cacilda had materially constructed popular housing complexes that also served in the construction and mediation of racial and ethnic identities. The popularly-constructed and -designated Navio Parado shared the “navio” ascription with another well-known complex a few blocks away. *Navio Negreiro* (figure 7), or “Slave Ship,” sat at 750-72 on May 13 Street, a street named for the date of the formal abolition of slavery. Like Navio Parado, Navio Negreiro appears infrequently in official records and, when it does so, the popular name is not used.

¹³⁶ Reinaldo José de Oliveira, “Segregação Urbana e Racial na Cidade de São Paulo: as periferias de Brasilândia, Cidade Tiradentes e Jardim Ângela” (PhD diss., PUC-SP, 2000), 180.



Figure 7: Navio Negreiro in Bela Vista district. Sits along May 13 Street.
Photo by author, May 2017.

Both white and nonwhite long-term residents of Bela Vista highlight Navio Negreiro today as a local landmark. One afternoon while standing next to the *cortiço*, a white resident asked me if I knew the name of the place. Before I could respond, he interjected: “Navio Negreiro...it’s where blacks lived.” On a separate afternoon, a long-term black resident asked me the same question and cited the history of the black resident population. To prove her point, she suggested I visit a nearby pizza joint (founded by Italian immigrants), where an enlarged photo across one wall shows a black family (“*a negrada*,” slang for a group of black people, she explained) sitting in front of the *cortiço*. Sometimes stigmatized, other times a space of spatial pride and autonomy, Navio Negreiro persists among long-term residents as a marked space of blackness in Bela Vista.¹³⁷

Navio Parado and Navio Negreiro, unofficial place names that locals attached to these complexes, shaped interethnic relationships. On the surface, “navio” referenced the design of these structures: horizontally-expansive, multi-story buildings whose shape, symmetry, and breadth resembled that of a ship. The meanings of the names also transcended architectural design. With high populations of Afro-

¹³⁷ Interview by author with [name withheld], Bela Vista, São Paulo, April 21, 2017.

descendent and immigrant-descendent families in Bela Vista, “ship” reflected the diasporic experiences that brought families of disparate origins together under one roof. Interracial and interethnic proximity did not prevent outsiders from essentializing the “navio” cortiços: reducing them to racialized/ethnicized “stains” on the city’s landscape. Despite the mark attached to it, Navio Negreiro (a much smaller complex in comparison to Navio Parado), would survive the urban reform program of Prestes Maia. Its location, well removed from any major avenue and near the center of Bela Vista, likely made demolition unjustifiable.

In São Paulo and beyond, housing types were especially significant referents in constructions of national identity in the 1930s. Prominent intellectuals like Gilberto Freyre articulated novel interpretations of *brasilidade* through housing. In Freyre’s work, the social and cultural relations at the essence of the nation were determined by pairs of dwellings: the big house and slave quarters (*Casa-grande e Senzala*, 1933) and the mansions and the shanties (*Sobrados e Mucambos*, 1936). The pairs articulated the spatial proximity at the heart, in Freyre’s eyes, of Brazilian society, a closeness that corresponded to and engendered interracial mixture and a supposed lack of prejudice. Freyre’s socio-spatial revisionism repositioned the role of Africans and their descendants, represented by the slave quarters and shanties, in the making of the nation. He asserted that the (white) big house and mansion did not exist in isolation from the slave quarters and shanties. A national identity, he argued, was forged at the points of contact that connected the two pairs. Freyre’s socio-spatial landscape symbolized the everyday symbiosis between space and identity in structuring social, and especially ethnoracial, relations in urban and rural Brazil.

*The Sounds of Demolition and Dislocation:
Samba Paulista/no*

While planners coordinated the demolition of cortiços and the construction of avenues in Liberdade and Bela Vista, an organized samba scene flourished in these very districts. This local expansion paralleled the consecration of samba as a staple of Brazilian national identity in the same era.

Beginning in the late 1920s, a diverse collection of intellectuals, musicians, and politicians promoted samba as a symbol of “authentic” Brazilianness. Disseminated on an unprecedented national scale in the 1930s-’40s, samba articulated the supposedly-unique ethnoracial mixture at the heart of the nation.¹³⁸ The celebration of a genre developed by African and Afro-descendant enslaved people also challenged the ideology that held Afro-descendant culture and genes as traits to be diluted through *branqueamento*, or whitening.¹³⁹

This section centers on samba in the state and city of São Paulo, or what musicians refer to as samba paulista (encompassing the state as a whole) and samba paulistano (referring to the city specifically). I do not understand samba as reflecting an authentic, essential, and singular Afro-descendant identity.¹⁴⁰ Instead, I am interested in how musicians constructed and negotiated ethnoracialized spatial identities, from the scale of the neighborhood to the nation, through samba.¹⁴¹ Beyond the relationship between identity formation and samba, I examine the music as a register of demolitions, dislocations, and resettlement that especially (though not exclusively) affected Afro-descendants in São Paulo during the Avenues-Making Era. Samba furnishes, in other words, a window into the silencing of the histories of Afro-descended peoples and the spaces they made in the city. The efficacy of that silencing project makes samba paulista/no, passed down over multiple generations in the city of São Paulo’s development, a precious register of history and popular memory.

¹³⁸ For one version of this foundation myth, see Hermano Vianna, *The Mystery of Samba: Popular Music and National Identity in Brazil* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press: 1995). See also Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2004).

¹³⁹ Skidmore, *Black into White*.

¹⁴⁰ This interpretation follows Maria Clementina Pereira Cunha, who writes: “Even still, it is necessary to emphasize that an absolute majority of the sambistas that we will encounter in the following pages, the protagonists of this history, is constituted by descendants of slaves. It is impossible to ignore this mark, written into the color of their skins and the memories they learned from their parents and grandparents. This does not mean, however, that samba can be taken in advance as an exclusive manifestation of the ‘race’ or as a culture unique to these realms – and, much less, as an unequivocal, conflict-free practice.” Cunha, “*Não tá sopa*”: *samba e sambistas no Rio de Janeiro, de 1890 a 1930* (Campinas: UNICAMP, 2016), 11.

¹⁴¹ On the relationship between samba and national identity formation, see especially McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil*.

The city of São Paulo has largely been relegated to the sidelines in popular culture and histories of samba.¹⁴² Famous Rio de Janeiro sambista and poet Vinicius de Moraes once declared that São Paulo was the “tomb of samba.”¹⁴³ Samba in São Paulo had a history, geography, and sound distinct from the more celebrated compositions that came out of Rio de Janeiro. The development of samba in Rio de Janeiro was local despite spirited debates about whether it emerged in the *cidade* (city) or in favelas on the *morro* (hillside).¹⁴⁴ The geography of São Paulo’s samba was more expansive, stretching over a large swath of territory deep into the agricultural interior of the state on plantations and in towns along the Tietê River like Tietê, Pirapora do Bom Jesus, and Piracicaba. The roots of samba paulista on coffee plantations in the rural interior were formative, creating a different sound that distinguished it from the more melodic rhythms of Rio de Janeiro.”¹⁴⁵ The move to waged immigrant labor on coffee farms in the interior, the construction of the railway system, and the urbanization of the city of São Paulo in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought samba into the city.

Organized samba took hold in the city of São Paulo between 1914 and 1937 in three primary regions: Liberdade, Bela Vista, and Barra Funda. These regions corresponded to what Geraldo Filme described as the city’s marked geography: “The zone of blacks here in São Paulo was Liberdade, Bixiga, and Barra Funda.”¹⁴⁶ The city’s first *cordão*, a type of samba group that played and marched during Carnival parades, was founded in Barra Funda in 1914. The cordão Vai-Vai would follow in Bela Vista in 1930. The city’s oldest surviving and arguably the first samba school (different from a *cordão*), Lavapés, was founded in Liberdade in 1937 by Deolinda Madre, known as “Madrinha Eunice.”¹⁴⁷ Eunice was born

¹⁴² Three prominent academic histories of samba in São Paulo are: Iêda Marques Britto, *Samba na Cidade de São Paulo, 1900-1930: Um Exercício de Resistência Cultural* (São Paulo: FFLCH-USP, 1986); Olga Rodrigues de Moraes Von Simson, *Carnaval em branco e negro: Carnaval popular paulistano: 1914-1988* (Campinas: EdUNICAMP, 2007); Silva, “Debaixo.”

¹⁴³ Fabiano Maisonnave, “The Girl from Shinjuku,” in Jeffrey Lesser and Matthew Gutmann, eds., *Global Latin America* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2016), 317.

¹⁴⁴ Brian McCann, *Hello*, 42.

¹⁴⁵ Marco Aurélio Guimarães Jangada, “O samba segundo São Paulo,” *Realidade*, February 1972, 54.

¹⁴⁶ Quoted in Silva, “Debaixo do ‘Pogréssio,’” 77.

¹⁴⁷ For a rare and brief audio recording of Eunice, listen to 17:10-17:35 in Osvaldinho Da Cuíca, *História Do Samba Paulista I*, 1999, cd. On Plínio Marcos’s album “Em prosa e samba,” the folklorist points to another escola, Morro de Perdizes, as founded earlier. Lavapés today is celebrated as the “marco zero” of samba paulistano, including a

in the São Paulo interior in 1909 and migrated to São Paulo in the early 1920s, settling on Rua Tamandaré in Liberdade. In 1936 she co-founded a samba group comprised of 20 women, named *Baianas Paulistas*, with her husband Francisco Papa (known as “Chico Pinga”), who was the child of Italian immigrants.¹⁴⁸

The year following they founded Lavapés, which went on to win championships in Carnival competitions 18 years in a row, from 1941 to 1958.¹⁴⁹ The migration trajectory of Eunice, one of the few prominent female figures from São Paulo’s samba scene remembered today, represents the pattern of the expansion of samba from the state’s interior into the city of São Paulo. The founding of Lavapés, in addition, highlights Liberdade as a locus for black populations and the practice of samba in the first half of the twentieth century. The significance that Afro-descendants in São Paulo attached to Liberdade by no means excluded white populations, however, as the Afro-Italian couple at the heart of Lavapés’s founding demonstrates.

While a samba scene took shape within the city of São Paulo, strong connections remained to the rural interior through events like the annual festival at Pirapora do Bom Jesus on the Tietê River. As the head of São Paulo’s Department of Culture in the 1930s, folklorist Mário de Andrade travelled to Pirapora seeking to document a supposedly unsullied version of samba. That search implied, of course, that the samba sung in urban São Paulo was somehow deficient by comparison. Narrating his experience of “Rural São Paulo Samba” from 1934 in an article published in 1937 for the *Revista do Arquivo Municipal*, Andrade expressed disappointed disdain upon learning that the leader of the festivities in Pirapora was in fact also a resident of the city of São Paulo. The leader, Gustavo Leite, was a sambista and mason “of 60 years or more” who lived on Santana do Paraiso Street in the low-lying valley between Bela Vista and Liberdade (figure 8).¹⁵⁰ As Andrade published his profile about samba in Pirapora, the

plaque at the five-point intersection where the school sits in Liberdade. Plínio Marcos, *Em Prosa e Samba - Nas Quebradas do Mundaerú*, Geraldo Filme, Zeca da Casa Verde, and Toniquinho Batuqueiro, 1974, cd.

¹⁴⁸ José Geraldo Vinci de Moraes, “Polifonia na metrópole: história e música popular em São Paulo,” *Tempo* (10) 2000, Rio de Janeiro, 39-62.

¹⁴⁹ Jangada, “O samba,” *Realidade*, 56.

¹⁵⁰ Mario de Andrade, “O Samba Rural Paulista,” *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* XLI (1937), 40.

City would begin demolishing buildings to clear the way for Itororó Avenue. Leite's home would eventually be buried beneath the asphalted avenue.



Figure 8: Approximate location of sambista Gustavo Leite's home. Transparent layer is from 1954. Basemap from 2018 shows course of May 23 Avenue. "Mapeamento 1954 - Vasp Cruzeiro," *GeoSampa*, www.geosampa.prefeitura.sp.gov.br (accessed June 12, 2018).

The Avenues-Making Era reshaped the geography of samba in the city of São Paulo. That reshaping included the demolition of the Largo da Banana, the subject of Geraldo Filme's 1960s composition "I'll Samba Somewhere Else." Located adjacent to the São Paulo Railway, the square provided labor opportunities for Afro-descendant migrants from the interior of the state of São Paulo. Historian Márcio Sampaio writes that loading bales in the area surrounding the terminal near the Largo da Banana was "one of the rare occupations allowed to the man recently freed from the yoke of slavery."¹⁵¹ In parallel to wage-earning opportunities was space for samba. As folklorist Plínio Marcos explained: "The Largo da Banana, in Barra Funda, was where the rail cars unloaded and, naturally, the people came

¹⁵¹ Márcio Sampaio de Castro, *Bexiga: Um bairro afro-italiano* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2008), 43-44.

together and, between one rail car and another, played samba, which gradually spread throughout the city.”¹⁵²

A thriving cultural scene developed at the largo, including the founding of the city’s first cordão, Camisa Verde e Branco (Green and White Shirt), named after the uniforms that its founders wore.¹⁵³ The website for Camisa Verde e Branco identifies the founder of the cordão, Dionísio Barbosa, as “the son of slaves and one of the first free-born blacks in Brazil.”¹⁵⁴ This was a site where urban samba – samba paulistano – was forged, and it differed from the style that folklorists like Andrade deemed authentic in places like Pirapora. Author and journalist João Antônio criticized Mário de Andrade – who himself lived in Barra Funda – for overlooking this place in his work. “There is a lacuna in the work of Mário de Andrade,” he wrote. “I don’t understand how he did not note even a single line about the warehouses around the station at the junction of the railroad, of the wagons pulled by oxen in the largo da Banana, that round and unforgettable fountain, the popular dances (*gafieiras*) of Barra Funda Street, of the black and mixed population...” Antônio concluded by highlighting the significance of the street as a marked site and locus of cultural practices of Afro-descendants: “It’s a shame that our intellectuals know so little of the street, of their city.”¹⁵⁵

Prestes Maia planned an extension of the Pacaembu Avenue, including a bridge over the São Paulo railway, that entailed the razing of the Largo da Banana (figure 9). The extended avenue would connect the Perdizes and Barra Funda neighborhoods to the avenues projected along the edges of the soon-to-be-canalized Tietê River. In doing so, the avenue would provide improved access to the northern region of the city, paving the way in years following for the construction of, and connections to, neighborhoods like Vila Brasilândia. A 1942 article praised the (supposed) imminent completion of the

¹⁵² Jangada, “O samba,” *Realidade*, 53.

¹⁵³ Castro, *Bexiga*, 44. In the 1930s the sambistas of the cordão would be confused with members of the Ação Integralista Brasileira, a movement inspired by Italian fascism that also used green shirts and were known as *camisa-verdes*. “História do Camisa Verde e Branco,” <http://camisaverdebranco.com/historiaimortal> (accessed November 1, 2017); Robert M. Levine, *O regime de Vargas: os anos críticos, 1934-1938* (Nova Fronteira, 1980).

¹⁵⁴ “História do Camisa Verde.”

¹⁵⁵ João Antônio, “Águas-Fortes Paulistas,” *O Estado de S. Paulo: Cultura* 337 (1986), 11.

bridge over the railway, named the Pacaembu Bridge and made of reinforced concrete, that would do away with the Largo da Banana. The article described the “work of beautification” that made up part of the “Magnificent Urbanistic Plan” to transform this area – previously “swampy” – into one of the “most beautiful points of the capital.”¹⁵⁶

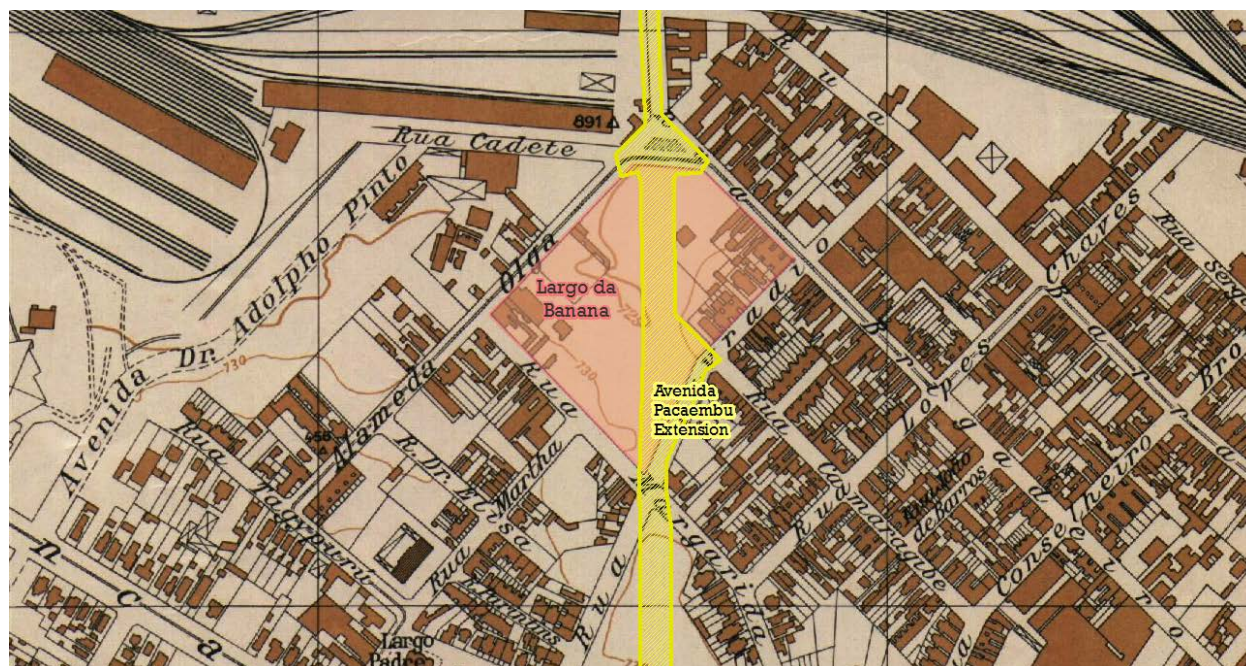


Figure 9: Demolition of the Largo da Banana for extension of Pacaembu Avenue. “Mapeamento 1930 - SARA,” *GeoSampa*, www.geosampa.prefeitura.sp.gov.br (accessed June 12, 2018). Visualization by author.

Sambista Geraldo Filme grew up frequenting the Largo da Banana, with Barra Funda “the neighborhood of his infancy and adolescence.” The neighborhood space comprised part of his identity, as he became known popularly as “Big Geraldo of Barra Funda.”¹⁵⁷ In the early 1960s, Filme recorded “*Vou Samba N’outro Lugar*,” whose full lyrics were:

*Fiquei sem o terreiro da escola
Já não posso mais sambar
Sambista sem o Largo da Banana
A Barra Funda vai parar*

I lost the territory of the samba school
Already I can’t samba there anymore
Sambista without the Largo da Banana
Barra Funda will be finished

*Surgiu um viaduto, é progresso
Eu não posso protestar
Adeus, berço do samba
Eu vou-me embora*

A bridge rises, it’s progress
I can’t protest
Goodbye, to the cradle of samba
I’m out of here

¹⁵⁶ “Em vespas de conclusão o Viaduto Pacaembú,” *Correio Paulistano*, January 17, 1942, 3.

¹⁵⁷ Vagner Gonçalves da Silva, *Artes do corpo* (São Paulo: Selo Negro Edições, 2004), 176.

Vou sambar n'outro lugar

I'll samba someplace else

The song responded directly to the expansion of the Pacaembu Avenue and the construction of the bridge over the railway line. “Barra Funda is finished” implied that, to him, the avenues-making planners had dislocated a space significant to Afro-descendants. With a brief description of the ideology behind the bridge (“it’s progress”), juxtaposed with his melancholic resignation to the place’s removal, he suggested that these are the normative socio-spatial dynamics in the city. In other words, he articulated a continuity similar to that of people across town dislocated in the course of cortiço demolitions with a mournful but resolute response to dislocation. “I know this story well,” he seemed to proclaim, and “I’m out of here” to “samba someplace else.”

In the lesser-known samba, “Last Sambista,” Filme offered a more direct critique of efforts to reproduce neighborhood spaces:

Adeus, tá chegando a hora
*Acabou o samba, adeus Barra Funda, eu vou-
 me embora*
Veio o progresso, fez do bairro uma cidade
Levou a nossa alegria, também a simplicidade

Levo saudade lá do Largo da Banana
Onde nós fazia samba todas noites da semana
Deixo este samba que eu fiz com muito
carinho
Levo no peito a saudade, nas mãos o meu
cavaquinho
Adeus, Barra Funda¹⁵⁸

Goodbye, the hour is arriving
 The Samba is finished, goodbye Barra Funda, I am
 out of here
 Progress came, and made the neighborhood into the
 city
 It took our happiness, and also our simplicity

I carry *saudade* (nostalgia) from the Banana Square
 Where we made samba every night of the week
 I left this samba that I made with much care
 I carry the *saudade* in my chest, in my hands my
cavaquinho¹⁵⁹
 Goodbye, Barra Funda

The dirge presents similar themes to “Vou Samba N’outro Lugar” with the exception of a compelling addition about neighborhoods: “Progress came, and made the neighborhood into the city.” Filme depicts the type of progress-oriented city planning practiced in São Paulo as a dislocating force for local neighborhood spaces where samba flourished.

¹⁵⁸ Geraldo Filme, “Último Sambista,” Recorded by Germano Mathias, *História do Samba Paulista*, 1999, CD.

¹⁵⁹ An instrument similar to a ukulele.

The demolition of housing complexes emerged as a prominent theme in samba paulistano during this era. Prominent Italo-Brazilian sambista João Rubinato, known popularly as Adoniran Barbosa, dealt with the subject in multiple compositions. Perhaps the most emblematic was “Saudosa Maloca” (1951), which was set up as a dialogue between two former housemates, Mato Grosso and Joca.¹⁶⁰ Similar to cortiços, malocas were old, often decaying mansions built and occupied by low-income residents. The samba opened:

<p><i>Se o sinhô não tá lembrando, dá licença de contá</i> <i>Que aqui onde agora está esse edifício arto</i> <i>Era uma casa velha, um palacete abandonado</i> <i>Foi aqui, seu moço, que eu, Mato Grosso e o Joca</i> <i>Construímos nossa maloca</i> <i>Mas um dia, nem quero me lembro</i> <i>Veio os hóme com as ferramenta, o dono mandou</i> <i>derrubar</i> <i>Peguemo todas nossas coisa</i> <i>E fumos pro meio da rua ‘preciá a demolição.</i></p>	<p>If the gentleman doesn’t recall, please let me retell That here, where now there’s this tall building There once was an old house, an abandoned palace It was here, my sir, that I, Mato Grosso and Joca We constructed our <i>maloca</i> But one day, I don’t even want to remind myself Came the fellas with the tools, the owner sent them to destroy it We got all our stuff And went to the middle of the street to appreciate the demolition</p>
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Mato Gross and Joca, two informal planers, here recount one chapter in the spatial history of demolitions in the city. Whereas Filme expressed melancholy at the demolition, Barbosa’s Mato Gross and Joca sing a mournful but almost festive elegy to their “Beloved *maloca, maloca* dearest” (“*Saudosa maloca, maloca querida*”). Both Filme and Barbosa’s Mato Gross and Joca share a sentiment of resignation, discernible in the exchange between the latter two (later in the samba): “Mato Gross wanted to cry out, but over him I yelled / The guys are right to do it, we’ll find another place.”¹⁶¹ Barbosa would return to the theme in sequel sambas and with a similar storyline in 1969’s “Eviction of the Favela.”¹⁶¹

Sambistas like Geraldo Filme and Adoniran Barbosa composed lyrics about experiences of demolition and dislocation spurred by redevelopment. The geography of dispersion was not only discernible in their lyrics. In the years following Prestes Maia’s first mayoral terms, only a handful of samba groups would maintain their place in the city center. Vai-Vai in the Bela Vista district was among

¹⁶⁰ Adoniran Barbosa (a.k.a. João Rubinato), “Saudosa Maloca,” 1951. Live filmed version available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=801MQjNJVrg> (accessed June 13, 2018).

¹⁶¹ Silva, “Debaixo do ‘Pogressio,’” 187.

the most notable. New samba schools would take root on the expanded margins, including in Vila Brasilândia, in a process that paralleled the remaking of marked neighborhoods on new frontiers of the city's periphery.¹⁶² Similar to other regions on São Paulo's margins, Vila Brasilândia would receive a sizable influx of people from center-city neighborhoods along with regional migrants, with sambistas well represented in this population. As a result, in the 1960s and 1970s, samba would occupy a central place in the construction of Vila Brasilândia as both a material place and Afro-descendant neighborhood identity. That history – itself replete with songs of asphalted avenues, progress, demolitions, and displacement – will come to the center of the frame in Chapters Three and Four.

The neighborhood of Vila Brasilândia was constructed on top of and adjacent to “Congo” sites in Nossa Senhora do Ó like Congo Road. The neighborhood also originated with urban planning projects during the Avenues-Making Era. Demolitions linked to avenues projects in city-center neighborhoods spurred local migration to the city's outskirts, where dislocated residents, along with other regional migrants, built Vila Brasilândia. The place was, in other words, one of the city's prominent destinations – “someplace else” – referenced at the end of Geraldo Filme's song, “I'll Samba Someplace Else.” In the nineteenth-century Africans and their descendants had marked N. S. do Ó as a “Congo” place. In the middle of the twentieth century, the founders of Vila Brasilândia would produce a new spatialized identity of the neighborhood as São Paulo's “Little Africa.” The projects and practices involved in that identity construction and space production span the dissertation's first four chapters.

This chapter has introduced the racialized/ethnicized geography of São Paulo and the planning projects that, over the course of the Avenues-Making Era, remade marked spaces. One distinctive feature of the mark – and by consequence the marked space – was that they could change over time. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries in Brazil, that belief manifested in a “soft eugenics” that

¹⁶² Raquel Rolnik, “Territórios Negros nas Cidades Brasileiras: Etnicidade e Cidade em São Paulo e Rio de Janeiro.” *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* 17 (1989): 29-41.

held race as a mutable, if still biological, trait and aimed to “improve” the population through its whitening.¹⁶³ Urban planners, in a similar vein, understood marked urban spaces as changeable, and they conceived of a project that would bring about the remaking of marked neighborhoods within the city of São Paulo. Residents sometimes succeeded in thwarting the ambitions of state officials in these efforts. When they fell short, as in the case of Banana Square, some registered silenced spaces through samba.

The title of this chapter, “From Slavery to Avenues,” is a variation of the phrase “from slavery to freedom.”¹⁶⁴ This adaptation highlights the continuities that stretched from enslavement past official emancipation and into the twentieth century. Other scholars have argued that the formal abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888 changed little: many freed people remained on or near former plantations, colonial land and labor patterns persisted, and racial discrimination remained virulent if not more tenacious.¹⁶⁵ Those continuities persisted in the city and province (later state) of São Paulo, which had become one of the most prominent hubs of enslaved labor in the Western Hemisphere in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. In the 1930s urban planners and politicians in the city of São Paulo outlined and endeavored to enact a spatial program of rupture that would turn the page, once and for all, from slavery to modern progress through avenues. Residents contested this program through spatial projects and practices of their own, including many concerned with maintaining continuities in the face of efforts at their redevelopment.

¹⁶³ Skidmore, *Black into White*; Nancy Stepan, “*The Hour of Eugenics*”: *Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1993).

¹⁶⁴ The phrase has circulated since at least the nineteenth century, evidenced by Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Macmillan, 1899). John Hope Franklin’s *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (Knopf, 1947), now in its 9th edition, has popularized the phrase in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Some other works that have included the term in their titles are: Seymour Drescher, *From Slavery to Freedom: Comparative Studies in the Rise and Fall of Atlantic Slavery* (Macmillan Press, 1999); Dale T. Graden, *From Slavery to Freedom in Brazil: Bahia, 1835-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); Robin Law and Paul Lovejoy, eds., *The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua: His Passage from Slavery to Freedom in Africa and America* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007).

¹⁶⁵ See, for example, Viotti da Costa, *The Brazilian Empire*, 171; Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1988); Rebecca J. Scott, “Exploring the Meaning of Freedom: Postemancipation Societies in Comparative Perspective,” in Rebecca J. Scott and George Andrews, eds., *The Abolition of Slavery in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1988); Karl Monsma, *A reprodução de racismo: Fazendeiros, negros e imigrantes no oeste paulista, 1880-1914* (São Carlos, SP: EdUFSCar, 2016).

This chapter sets the stage for, and serves as a pair to, Chapter Two. In that chapter, I detail the expropriation and demolition of specific significant sites within the neighborhoods of Bela Vista and Liberdade, such as the Igreja dos Remédios, the church that served as the headquarters for Brazil's version of the Underground Railroad.¹⁶⁶ The *Avenues Plan*, I show, targeted spaces that had direct links to histories of slavery, abolition, and black self-determination, along with notably high concentrations of Afro-descendants. In what I term *spatial projects of forgetting*, official planners aimed to reproduce undesirable neighborhoods and, by extension, the city more broadly in a whitened image of progress. They were not uniformly successful in putting this project into practice. However, the following chapter reveals forgotten episodes and episodes of forgetting where they planned and executed new spatial pasts and futures through the remaking of marked neighborhoods in São Paulo.

¹⁶⁶ Butler, *Freedoms Given*, 28.

Chapter Two *Spatial Projects of Forgetting*

While repairing Rio de Janeiro's sewer network in advance of the 2016 Olympic Games, construction workers stumbled across an unexpected past: the remains of the port that received approximately 900,000 captives in the transatlantic slave trade. The accidental discovery of the Valongo Wharf prompted Rio de Janeiro's then-mayor, Eduardo Paes, to exclaim, "when I saw the place, I was absolutely shocked. I am going to build a plaza there like in Rome. Those are our Roman ruins."¹ That plaza has yet to materialize, though in July 2017 officials from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) did add the site to its World Heritage List. Drawing comparisons to Hiroshima and Auschwitz, UNESCO's news release described Valongo as the "most important physical trace" of the slave trade in the Americas.² Recognition of the port aligns with a recent expansion in public, official sponsorship for the excavation and preservation of the material remains of the transatlantic slave trade and, to an extent, slavery itself. Reais, euros, and dollars have funded various projects in addition to Valongo, including the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool (opened in 2007) and the Whitney Plantation Museum in Louisiana (opened in 2015). The *New York Times Magazine* billed the Louisiana site as the first museum dedicated to the history of slavery "in America."³

The city of São Paulo has, to date, not appeared on the map of these myriad memorial projects. Readers would be right to ask: why should it? Dominant popular and academic discourses have long cast São Paulo as a white and immigrant metropolis whose growth had little to do with the histories of slavery,

¹ Rogério Daflon, "Escavações de obra de drenagem da Zona Portuária encontram restos dos cais da Imperatriz e do ..." *O Globo*, January 3, 2011, <https://oglobo.globo.com/rio/escavacoes-de-obra-de-drenagem-da-zona-portuaria-encontram-restos-dos-cais-da-imperatriz-do-2816387#ixzz4tzJRWOMB> (accessed September 23, 2017). "Fui lá no sábado vistoriar as obras e, quando vi aquilo, fiquei absolutamente chocado. Vou fazer uma praça como em Roma. Ali estão as nossas ruínas romanas."

² "The Outstanding universal value of the Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site," *UNESCO*, July 27, 2017, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/slave-route/sv000/news/the_outstanding_universal_value_of_the_valongo_wharf_arch/ (accessed September 23, 2017).

³ David Amsden, "Building the First Slavery Museum in America," *The New York Times Magazine*, February 26, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/01/magazine/building-the-first-slave-museum-in-america.html>. There is now, even, an application to explore sites connected to slavery in Rio de Janeiro. "Tour Rio de Janeiro's Oldest Slave Port with This New App," *NPR*, July 18, 2017, <http://www.npr.org/2017/07/18/537948535/tour-rio-de-janeiros-oldest-slave-port-with-this-new-app>.

the slave trade, and Afro-descendants, especially in comparison to Rio de Janeiro and Salvador (Bahia).⁴ Those discourses, however, have less to do with the actual history of the city and province of São Paulo – what anthropologist Michel Rolph-Trouillot would term the “the sociohistorical process” – than with subsequent stories about that process.⁵ In this chapter I argue that those stories were fundamentally spatial and specifically shaped by the reproduction of space in São Paulo during the Avenues-Making Era (1920s-’60s).⁶ In this period São Paulo’s urban planning and political elite sought to remake neighborhoods by razing specific local sites with significant histories of slavery, the slave trade, and black self-determination, along with high populations of African descent.

For example, São Paulo planners in the 1930s-’40s carried out the expropriation, demolition, and asphaltting of a museum of slavery established in the Liberdade neighborhood in the 1880s. This museum – perhaps the first of its kind in the Americas – preserved material remnants of enslavement, such as torture instruments, taken from plantations in the province of São Paulo during a radical, final phase of the abolitionist campaign also based in Liberdade. It would not be wrong to say that this museum to captivity was forgotten over the twentieth century, but such a characterization overlooks that forgetting must be done by individuals or groups and can involve a deliberate process of organized practices. In other words, forgetting sometimes amounts to a project.⁷ City planner and mayor Francisco Prestes Maia outlined the expropriation and demolition of São Paulo’s museum of slavery in his 1930 *Avenues Plan*,

⁴ Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1993); Petrônio Domingues, *Uma história não contada: negro, racismo, e branqueamento em São Paulo no pós-abolição* (São Paulo: Editora SENAC São Paulo 2004); Barbara Weinstein, “Regionalizing Racial Difference: São Paulo versus Brazil,” in Nancy P. Applebaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Roseblatt, eds. *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2003), 237-262. Also see footnote below about the representation of Bahia as the racialized/ethnicized African “Other” in contrast to “white” São Paulo.

⁵ Michel Rolph-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995).

⁶ Paul Ricoeur has argued for architectural and urbanistic practice as narrative acts: “Each new building is inscribed in urban space like a narrative within a setting of intertextuality... It is on scale of urbanism that we best catch sight of the work of time in space. A city brings together in the same space different ages, offering to our gaze a sedimented history of tastes and cultural forms. The city gives itself as both to be seen and to be read.” Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 150-51.

⁷ Ricoeur argued that “the art of forgetting... could not be constructed through a distinct project” (*Memory*, 504). This chapter indicates that such a project can very well exist despite its incompleteness. Focused on forgetting and the “memory of place,” Paul Connerton has asserted that forgetting is a fundamental feature of modernity. Paul Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.

and the church housing the then six-decade-old museum was finally levelled in 1942. That demolition comprised part of a spatial project of forgetting in the city during the Avenues-Making Era. This project aimed to silence neighborhood spaces associated with Afro-descendants within the districts of Bela Vista and Liberdade and contributed to the remaking of the city in a whitened image of modern progress.

The previous chapter outlined common aspects of, and generalizable patterns in, the history that connected slavery in the nineteenth-century to twentieth-century avenues projects in the city of São Paulo.⁸ While a complement to the first chapter, Chapter Two centers on decidedly uncommon and unordinary spatial histories: the silencing of singular, exceptional local sites where city planners buried pasts associated with Afro-descendants. I detail how avenues projects razed and remade three sites: *Saracura* (a neighborhood), the *Largo do Bexiga* (“Bexiga Square”), and the *Igreja dos Remédios* (“Church of the Remedies”). While these sites had meaningful histories of slavery, abolition, and black self-determination, the program to demolish and asphalt them was about much more than the past. The forgetting project, I conclude, aimed to erase material representations of the unfulfilled promises of slavery’s abolition and marginalize visible markers of persistent racial inequalities. It is likely that the urbanization of São Paulo in the first decades of the twentieth century had made those inequalities acutely visible in the built and natural urban landscape.

Despite the asphaltting at the core of the Avenues-Making Era, the spatial project of forgetting did not proceed like an unchecked steamroller. In this chapter I privilege histories of individuals who questioned the erasure of the past as materialized in the urban present. The most compelling among them, long-forgotten black author Gabriel Marques, understood urban spaces as possessing identities and wrote about the “souls” of roadways. Featuring individuals like Marques and the spaces he profiled, the following three sections revolve around the people and institutions who engaged in the contested remaking of prominent racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods in the city of São Paulo.

⁸ For example: the most common type of structure demolished in the execution of the *Avenues Plan* (*cortiços*); the urban planning projects that defined a discrete period from the 1920s to 1960s as the Avenues-Making Era; and the city’s “marked” geography.

Un-Mapping Saracura and Paving São Paulo's "Piece of Africa"

I frogger my way across July 9 Avenue, dodging articulated buses and chirping motorcycles (São Paulo's ubiquitous "*motoboys*") to begin the ascent from the asphalted base of the Anhangabaú valley. I am headed into the place that, in official discourse, is the district of Bela Vista. Unofficially, it is Bexiga, Bixiga, and/or Saracura, depending on who and when you ask. I'd never seen this last place, Saracura, on a city map, but at a recent gathering of São Paulo's black female samba composers, I met someone *from* this unmapped place. I try to recall a string from one of her compositions as I climb May 13 Street, the road named for the date of the formal abolition of slavery in 1888 that stretches through the center of Bela Vista. A few blocks north of the Navio Negroiro cortiço discussed in Chapter 1, I pass by an elementary school and notice a multicolor map-mural spanning three sides of a wall (figure 10).



Figure 10: Map-Mural on May 13 Street, at corner with Manoel Dutra Street. The text at the top reads, "Memories I have of Saracura." The bottom reads, "Bexiga, yesterday, today, and always!" Photo by author, May 2017.

In the map-mural, black children splash in a fish-filled creek that frames the bottom half of the wall, with one woman laundering clothes and another walking with a basket on her head toward modest houses and a verdant forest in the background. Above the landscape, the title of the map-mural reads: "Memories I have of Saracura." I wonder: "Is *this* Saracura?" I realize later that the map-mural is a type of popular

memorial to a forgotten place. That forgetting was not a passive process that saw Saracura fade gradually in materiality and from dominant memory. Instead, it was a spatial project – meaningful in terms of its material effects yet incomplete – that dated to early-twentieth-century avenues campaigns and efforts to remake marked neighborhoods in a whitened image.

Nearly 82 years to the day prior on July 9, 1935, São Paulo’s engineer-turned-mayor Fábio da Silva Prado (1934-1938) inaugurated July 9 Avenue in Bela Vista. The consecration was in fact a rechristening: July 9 was replacing the roadway’s former name, Anhangabaú, named after the valley and creek through which the avenue stretched. São Paulo urbanists and political elites had dreamed of building this roadway well before Prestes Maia’s 1930 *Avenues Plan*. Department of Works head Arthur Saboya termed it the “old aspiration of *paulistanos*” (residents of the city of São Paulo).⁹ The 1935 name change reflected dramatic spatial and political changes in the city and state of São Paulo and at the federal level in the five years since Maia’s *Avenues Plan* was first published. In 1930 Brazil’s established political order was upended with a coup and the seizure of Brazil’s presidency by Getúlio Vargas.¹⁰ Challenging the political supremacy of São Paulo elites, Vargas’s regime prompted an armed, separatist rebellion from *paulistas* (residents of the state of São Paulo) in 1932. The Constitutionalist Revolution, as the brief civil conflict would be termed, began on July 9, 1932, and was stymied by Vargas’s federal forces after four months.¹¹

Despite defeat, the 1932 uprising galvanized local elites to elaborate novel expressions of São Paulo’s identity. Urban spaces, which had served as battlegrounds of the 1932 conflict, became sites for the construction and expression of this identity. Political and urban planning elites concretized the date July 9 as a staple of São Paulo identity by attaching it to urban spaces like the former Anhangabaú

⁹ Francisco Prestes Maia, *Estudo de um plano de avenidas para a cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Companhia Melhoramentos de São Paulo, 1930), iii.

¹⁰ Boris Fausto, *A Revolução de 1930: Historiografia e História* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1970).

¹¹ Barbara Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2015); James Woodard, *A Place in Politics: São Paulo, Brazil, from Seigneurial Republicanism to Regionalist Revolt* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2009).

Avenue. For those elites, the July 9 Avenue served both constructive and destructive ends.¹² The roadway would extend through, and by consequence remake, an undesirable neighborhood space in the whitened image of modern São Paulo. This space was Saracura, a place with pasts linked to local histories of slavery, abolition, and black self-determination, along with a high contemporary population of Afro-descendants.

The urbanists-mayors who authored the July 9 Avenue project saw far beyond technical matters when describing their avenues. “This commemoration has a significance much deeper than the opening of a new road,” explained Prado at the 1935 inauguration. “It is more significant than a war that lasted the short span of three months. It represents much more, so much more, than the reaction of a people for the reestablishment of a legal regime. It synthesizes the very spirit of São Paulo.” This equation would recur over the decades following, as elite and nonelite individuals alike conflated the essence of São Paulo – here articulated as its “very spirit” – with roadways. Prado’s comments suggested, in fact, that this conflation was a customary practice in São Paulo. He explained: “The great obsession of the paulista has always been opening roads that take him further on.” He referenced, not surprisingly, the *bandeirantes*, early colonial settlers who hunted mineral wealth and slaves in the continental interior and helped to expand the colony of Brazil through path-making.¹³ Prado equated the construction of these roadways to the formation of São Paulo’s distinct racialized/ethnicized identity. As a result of the trail-blazing expeditions of the *bandeirantes*, he explained, “Native blood dispersed itself in the veins of a people, as a substantial element in the formation of a race today about to enter its adolescence.”¹⁴ He represented the

¹² Engineers were celebrated participants in the 1932 conflict. See Cristina Peixoto-Mehrtens, *Urban Space and National Identity in Early Twentieth Century São Paulo, Brazil: Crafting Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 165. Two years following the conflict a book was published profiling the engineers that had participated. Arthur Morgan, *Os Engenheiros de São Paulo em 1932: pela lei e pela ordem* (São Paulo: 1934).

¹³ Richard Morse, *The Bandeirantes: The Historical Role of Brazilian Pathfinders* (Knopf, 1965); Antonio Celso Ferreira, *A epopéia bandeirante: letrados, instituições, invenção histórica (1870-1940)* (São Paulo, SP: Editora UNESP, 2002); A. J. R. Russell-Wood, “Rethinking Bandeirismo in Colonial Brazil,” *The Americas* 61:3 (2005), 353-371.

¹⁴ Fábio da Silva Prado, “Avenida 9 de Julho,” *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* 2:14 (July, 1935), 3. “Esta comemoração tem um significado muito mais fundo do que a abertura de uma rua nova”; “Tem um significado muito mais fundo do que uma guerra que durou o espaço curto de tres mezes. Representa muito mais, muitissimo mais, do que a reação de um povo para o restabelecimento de um regime legal. É que ella synthetiza o propria espirito de São Paulo”; “A grande obcessão do paulista sempre foi a de abrir caminhos que o levassem mais para

population of São Paulo as a distinct race whose formation and progress depended on the production of roadways.

Despite Prado's foray into the long history of roadway- and race-making in São Paulo, he asserted that the inauguration of the new avenue was most meaningful as a forward-looking event.

Shifting abruptly from the tales of by-gone bandeirantes, he explained:

But all of this is history. It is behind us. In front of us is today. And, today, what is seen is what we see: a new civilization for which there will be no stumbles. The marshes and swamps flourish in culture or are cleared away through roads. The sludge from the wetlands is transformed on the asphalt of new avenues. And the conjuncture of all of this is São Paulo.¹⁵

The vivid imagery cast avenues as the civilizing force that would lead São Paulo, positioned at the crossroads of a colonial past and modern future, down the path of progress. Implied within that civilizing trajectory was a materialized temporality that held fluid, mixed, and "cultural" sludge as the stuff of history, located "behind us." The material manifestation of the future, by contrast, was the stability and fixity of asphalt, by which modern avenues were paved.

In Prado's rhetoric, substances like marshy sludge or asphalt did not passively reflect more significant factors on the actual front line of civilization-making. Instead, these tangible, visible materials themselves served as the agents of a project to achieve a desired future. That project implied the remaking of people and spaces together, and the rate of asphalt and concrete ran in direct correlation to the supposed successes of the effort. Prado's perspective was not exclusive to the Anhangabaú Valley and city of São Paulo in this era. Washington Luis, a former mayor of the city and later president of Brazil, declared in 1928 at the inauguration of the first asphalted roadway in the country that "to govern is to open roads."¹⁶ The end of Luis's term in 1930 ignited the conflict that concluded with Vargas's coup.

diante"; "O sangue indio dispersou-se pelas veias de um povo, como elemento substancial na formação da raça hoje prestes a entrar na sua adolescencia."

¹⁵ Ibid., 4. "Mas tudo isso é passado. Ficou do lado de traz. A frente é hoje. E, á frente, o que se vê é o que nós vemos: uma civilização nova para a qual não haverá tropeços. As paludes e os brejos florescem-se em culturas ou abrem-se em ruas. A lama dos paúes transmuda-se no asfalto de avenidas novos. E o conjuncto de tudo isto é São Paulo."

¹⁶ "Governar é abrir estradas," *O Globo*, 25 August 1928, <http://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/rio-de-historias/washington-luis-inaugura-primeira-rodovia-asfaltada-do-brasil-8849272> (accessed September 15, 2017).

Asphalted roadways would remain, however, foundational to political and city planning elites' projects in and beyond São Paulo.

Though he represented the Anhangabaú valley as a people-less space, the place where Prado proclaimed his vision was by no means vacant. Prado no doubt understood this demographic reality well, and, despite omitting them from his rhetoric about “what is seen is what we see,” he likely had individuals, families, and their homes in eyeshot when looking southwest down the Anhangabaú Valley in 1935. Prado, along with Prestes Maia and Washington Luis, knew that the construction of asphalted avenues of the future corresponded to the dislocation of places and people in the present. Conscious of this destructive utility of the urbanistic project, Prado characterized the local environment where July 9 Avenue would be paved as prime for redevelopment:

The Anhangabahú valley symbolizes well the final frontier of São Paulo. On that side is the civilization of the park, which converges here, at the opening of a new route. On this side everything is still in disorder. The recently-excavated land seems like a trench. The severed hills are somewhat reminiscent of the crags and the torments (*sangras*) of [author Euclides da] Cunha or the Paraíba Valley.¹⁷

This representation of the local landscape had a distinctly racialized/ethnicized nature, articulated through the references to Cunha and the Paraíba Valley. In his 1902 work *Os Sertões (The Backlands)*, journalist Euclides da Cunha presented Brazil's Northeast in the context of a regional uprising and federal attempts to quell it as a backward, uncivilized place peopled by an inferior, mixed-race population.¹⁸ The Paraíba Valley, extending from the state of São Paulo to Rio de Janeiro, likely signified plantation agriculture and Afro-descendent, enslaved labor: in other words, features of the nation's past, not São Paulo's future.¹⁹

¹⁷ Prado, “Avenida,” 4. “O valle do Anhangabahú symboliza bem a ultima arrancada paulista. Do lado de cá é a civilização do parque que se deixa para a abertura de um caminho novo. Tudo ainda em desordem. A terra recém-aberta parece uma trincheira. Os morros cortados lembram um pouco as penhas e as sangras de Cunha ou do valle do Parahyba.”

¹⁸ The English translation of Cunha's work is *Rebellion in the Backlands*, published in a recent edition (2010) by the University of Chicago Press. For a broader study of the geographic imaginary of Brazil's Northeast, see Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

¹⁹ For an expansive collection of essays on history and cultural patrimony in the “Valley of Coffee,” see Neusa Fernandes and Olinio Gomes P. Coelho, eds., *História e geografia do Vale do Paraíba* (Vassouras: Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Vassouras, 2013). Also see Matthias Röhrig Assunção, “Stanzas and Sticks: Poetic and Physical Challenges in the Afro-Brazilian Culture of the Paraíba Valley, Rio de Janeiro,” *History Workshop Journal* 77:1 (April 2014), 103–136.

Invoking these spatial histories, Prado depicted the area to be paved as July 9 Avenue as a marked space of disorder, inferiority, and the colonial past that lacked the materiality or population purportedly necessary for modern civilization. Barbara Weinstein has shown how Brazil's Northeast served as the Other against which São Paulo elites constructed a whitened regional identity.²⁰ Prado's rhetoric indicates that spaces and the populations within them in the city of São Paulo also comprised key referents in the construction of difference. By projecting the Northeast from the pages of Euclides da Cunha onto the local Anhangabaú Valley, Prado articulated a fluid and malleable conception of space, territory, and geography.

In Prado's field of vision, but absent by name in his rhetoric, sat Saracura. Few records survive about this place, which persists today predominately in memories of long-term residents, especially Afro-descendants, of the Bela Vista district. Early twentieth-century maps and chronicles of the city of São Paulo help to reconstruct the spatial and social composition of Saracura. Similar to regions elsewhere in São Paulo, numerous creeks and small rivers cut through this region. The two most prominent waterways were the Small Saracura Creek (*Saracurinha*) and Big Saracura Creek (*Saracura Grande*). They began southwest of Bela Vista along the ridge of Paulista Avenue and ran northeast through the district toward the center of the city. The creeks and topography made Saracura an aqueous environment, a fact implied by the name itself: Saracura is a bird common to swampy regions surrounding waterways, especially in Brazil's Atlantic Forest biome.

Saracura amounted to much more than two creeks and a bird. Settled originally by escaped slaves, the place appeared briefly in São Paulo's official cartography as a neighborhood. A 1907 map of the city (figure 11) shows the trajectory of the two Saracura creeks with almost no urban settlement – that is, roadways – between them. A planned but incomplete “Saracura Street” is the only discernible roadway.

²⁰ Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity*, 4.



Figure 11: Saracura Creeks and Saracura Street, 1907.

Graccho da Gama, “Planta da Cidade de São Paulo,” 1907, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo, http://www.arquivoestado.sp.gov.br/site/acervo/repositorio_digital/mapa_carto/BR_APESP_IGC_IGG_CAR_I_S_0187_001_001 (accessed June 12, 2018).

The map depicted the area largely as empty space. A subsequent map from 1913 displayed a modicum of development, with “Saracura Path” (“*Caminho Saracura*”), perhaps an informal roadway, Rocha Street, and the label “Saracura” positioned between the two creeks (figure 12).



Figure 12: Saracura neighborhood, 1913.

Eng. Civil Alexandre M. Cococi El. Fructuoso F. Costa, “Planta da cidade de São Paulo,” 1913.

Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo,

http://www.arquivoestado.sp.gov.br/site/acervo/repositorio_digital/mapa_carto/BR_APESP_IGC_IGG_CAR_I_S_0296_001_001 (accessed June 12, 2018).

This labelling signified that Saracura was a neighborhood within the district of Bela Vista. The typographic hierarchy of the map ranked Saracura on par with the nearby Vila Buarque or Tabatinguera.²¹ The neighborhood of Saracura appeared only this once on an official city map. Following 1913, “Bela Vista” and/or “Bexiga” would replace it. From 1916 through the 1920s, in fact, map-makers positioned the label Bela Vista exactly on top of the space where Saracura appeared in 1913. Mapped and unmapped in the short span of a decade, the cartographic silencing reflected and anticipated a longer effort to raze this space.

²¹ Vila Buarque, located just northeast of the historical city center, remains a neighborhood in contemporary São Paulo. Tabatinguera Street exists, though it is not commonly described as a neighborhood.

In the early twentieth century if not before, Saracura was marked as an African and black neighborhood. We can discern this spatial identity through an unsigned 1907 article, “Around the World in São Paulo: Saracura,” published in the major São Paulo newspaper *Correio Paulistano*. The brief, 250-word piece ran under the catchall section, “Diverse Facts” (“*Factos Diversos*”) and opened with the following: “It is a piece of Africa” full of the “relics of the poor race, impelled by cosmopolitan civilization that invaded the city.” Distinct from the maps that depicted a flattened, limited view of Saracura, the prose piece described the place in three vivid dimensions. The author portrayed a “line of huts on the bank of a stream” with furniture made up of “old boxes and logs of wood” in a valley both “deep and narrow.” The article continued, not coincidentally employing the word *mark*, with a more sarcastic tone: “Water wells turned green mark the places where clay has been transformed into palaces and luxurious residences.” The “poor” and “sordid” state of living conditions of Saracura contrasted with the “cosmopolitan civilization” promised by migration into the city after the abolition of slavery in 1888. Clay, representing the material precursor of modern civilization, made that contrast tactile.

The author described Saracura as a marked space while at the same time contributing to its marking with prose that blurred the boundaries between human bodies, animals, and plants. The piece described “Loose goats on the road, semi-nude little blacks (*pretinhos*) making birdcages, geldings with long beards at the feet of the old whitened kinky-haired and thick-lipped from whose mouth hangs a pipe, this gives that dark corner an air of the Congo.” The original Portuguese text, like my translation, omits the noun for the only adult human figure in this key passage. Instead, she or he is reduced to physiognomic features (hair and lips) that mark them as African or Afro-descendent. The natural space and its inhabitants are presented as evidence of Saracura’s exoticism. More than distinct geographical origins, that foreignness amounted to an incompatibility in the present space and time of São Paulo. The author telegraphs this point in the conclusion:

And there they go slowly dying, – sacrificed by the liberty that they did not know how to relish, gathered together by alcohol and agonized by the anguish of the Bright’s Disease (*Brightismo*) that decimates them, eliminated by the anthropological elaboration of the new paulista race –

those that came on the slave ships, that planted coffee, that fattened the land with sweat and tears, accumulated there, as the left-over scraps of the city, in the dark horrific base of a valley.²²

While seemingly sympathetic to the insalubrious and precarious conditions in Saracura, the conclusion places blame on the purportedly unfit constitution of the residents themselves. As “the left-over scraps of the city,” the author identifies those residents as byproducts of modern progress through urban development: bodies defined by – and conflated as – undesirable space. The “traveler’s log” distorts the human and natural landscapes of Saracura as a racialized “piece of Africa” with an “air of the Congo” that, because of its Africanness, stood apart from the materiality, space, and time of a racialized São Paulo modernity.

The 1907 travel log paralleled written and artistic production elsewhere in Brazil concerning a preoccupation with Africanness in the early twentieth century. Three years earlier, for instance, author Paulo Emílio Cristóvão Barret, who went by the pseudonym João do Rio, published *As Religiões no Rio* (*Religions of Rio*). His work was an in-depth study of African and diasporic spiritual practices in a microregion of the city of Rio de Janeiro. Musician Heitor dos Prazeres described that region as “Little Africa” in the 1960s, and anthropologist Roberto Moura helped to popularize the term in the 1990s.²³ Both Saracura and this region of Rio de Janeiro were classified as “little Africas” by writers, however the marking of Saracura in written discourse seems to have occurred earlier. The “little Africa” in Rio de Janeiro had a decidedly celebratory air in the mid-twentieth-century words of Heitor dos Prazeres. By contrast, the residents of the “Piece of Africa” in *Correio Paulistano* are depicted as a sickly “element”

²² This condition amounts to acute or chronic kidney inflammation. It is unclear why the author identifies Saracura residents as afflicted with this ailment.

²³ João do Rio, *As Religiões do Rio*, translated by Ana Lessa-Schmidt (Hanover, CT: New London Librarian, 2015 [1904]); Roberto Moura, *Tia Ciata e a Pequena África no Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, 1995); Mônica Pimenta Velloso, “As tias baianas tomam conta do pedaço: espaço e identidade cultural no Rio de Janeiro,” *Estudos Históricos* 6 (1990); Bruno Carvalho, *Porous City: A Cultural History of Rio de Janeiro* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 82-91. Carvalho uses “Little Africa” throughout his work to describe this physical and/or imagined space before it seems that records indicate it was necessarily known and described as such. See page 90 for Carvalho’s discussion of the subject. Also see: Tiago de Melo Gomes, “Para Além da Casa da Tia Ciata: Outras Experiências no Universo Cultural Carioca, 1830-1930,” *Afro-Ásia* 29/30 (2003), 175-198.

being whitened away – note the “whitened hair” of one of the figures in the article – by the forces of urban progress and modernity.

Fugitive slaves created settlements in Saracura in the nineteenth century if not before. Historian Maria Oliva Silva Dias writes that in 1831 the São Paulo City Council issued a decree that ordered the “closing of a passage between Anhangabaú creek and Bexiga, ‘on whose banks thieves and escaped slaves had sheltered.’”²⁴ Silva Dias asserts that captives long sought refuge and escape on this periphery of the city, a practice that mirrored similar patterns in cities throughout Brazil: “since the beginning of slavery, [fugitive slaves] had gone into hiding on the outskirts of the city, in the valleys of Anhangabaú, Bexiga and Pinheiros.”²⁵ Célia Toledo Lucena offers further evidence of escaped slaves in the region, writing that the

capoeiras and grasslands surrounding the Tanque Reúno [a neighborhood reservoir], in Bexiga, like in other places where the Anhangabaú and Saracura Creek ran, served as places of hiding where rebelling blacks made *quilombos*. These forests were inviting for hiding places.²⁶

Saracura existed in relative proximity to nodes of slavery, including local plantations in the contemporary Bela Vista district.²⁷ In his three-volume study of São Paulo’s history and “traditions,” Ernani Silva Bruno wrote that “In the Bexiga fields themselves, encompassing all of the lands located between Consolação Street and Santo Amaro Street, still in 1870, deer, quail, and fugitive slaves were hunted. Large farms (*chácaras*) circled, on this side, the city.” Bruno included an engraving of a *capitão-de-mato*, a fugitive slave hunter, in the Anhangabaú Valley.²⁸

²⁴ Maria Odila Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life: The Lives of Working Women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 103.

²⁵ Ibid., 97. George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 105.

²⁶ Célia Toledo Lucena, *Bairro do Bexiga: A Sobrevivência Cultural* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1984), 24, quoted in Larissa Nascimento, “‘Lembrança eu tenho da Saracura’: notas sobre a população negra e as reconfigurações urbanas no bairro do Bexiga,” *Intratextos* 6 (1), 32-33. “As capoeiras e capinzais que havia em torno do Tanque Reúno, no Bexiga, como em outros pontos que corriam o Anhangabaú e o Riacho do Saracura, serviram de esconderijo onde se aquilombavam negros rebelados. Esses matos eram convidativos para esconderijos.” Also see Ernani Silva Bruno, *História e Tradições da Cidade de São Paulo: Vlm II – Burgo de Estudantes, 1828-1872* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editôra, 1954), 738-745.

²⁷ Nádia Marzola, *Bela Vista – 2ª edição - História de Bairros de São Paulo* (Prefeitura de São Paulo, 1985), 39.

²⁸ Bruno, *História e Tradições*, 571. Engraving from page 743. “Nos próprios campos do Bexiga, abrangendo tôdas as terras localizadas entre a rua da Consolação e a rua de Santo Amaro, ainda em 1870 se caçavam veados, perdizes e até escravos fugidos. Grandes chácaras cirundavam, por êsse lado, a cidade.”

As with runaway communities in the parish of Nossa Senhora do Ó (see Chapter One), few sources survive to provide more detail about the names and stories of the escapees who produced and populated this region. Nonetheless, the official documentation referencing sites of refuge and escapees indicate that Africans and Afro-descendants produced the settlement of Saracura originally as a space of escape. The closeness of Saracura to the urbanized center of the city would draw the attention of urbanists and elites much earlier than the “Congo” places in the northern reaches of Nossa Senhora do Ó.

Though rare, photographs provide an additional perspective on Saracura in the early twentieth century. An image of Saracura from the Historical Museum of Public Health at the University of São Paulo is not dated (figure 13), however the absence of the July 9 Avenue would place the photo in the 1920s at the latest. Few individuals are discernible in the images, however various features hint at the quotidian life of Saracura. Clotheslines and laundry weave through the landscape, an indication of the type of work that employed local residents. The structures in the images also bear a similarity to the *cortiços*, tenement-style homes, like Navio Parado discussed in the third section of Chapter One. Indeed, some of the residents dislocated from Saracura by the construction of the July 9 Avenue in the 1930s-'40s may have migrated a short few blocks northeast to live in Navio Parado or other *cortiços* in the Vila Barros complex.

The photos show that housing in Saracura consisted predominately of small, one- or two-story shelters that resembled the precarious structures described in the 1907 *Correio Paulistano* article. Claude Lévi-Strauss lived in São Paulo in the mid-1930s and, in his work *Sad Tropics*, published relevant observations about housing in, and the social composition of, Saracura:

Cow pastures lay at the foot of concrete blocks, a whole area could suddenly spring into being like a mirage, and avenues bordered by palatial houses would stop suddenly on either side of ravines where, between the banana trees, flowed muddy torrents, which served both as sources of water and as sewers for the mud-walled, bamboo-frame shanties housing a black population similar to the one which, in Rio, camped up the hillsides. Goats ran along the slopes. Some exceptional areas of the town managed to combine every feature.²⁹

²⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (New York: Penguin, 2012 [1955]), 99. Though this work was first published in the mid-1950s, Lévi-Strauss's observations of São Paulo were based on his residence in the city in the mid-1930s.



Figure 13: Cortiço in Saracura Grande. Undated Image by Geraldo Horacio de Paula Souza.
Reproduced with permission from the Centro de Memória da Saúde Pública/Faculdade de Saúde Pública/USP.

Writing around the time when planners were beginning work on July 9 Avenue, Lévi-Strauss contrasted wealthy residences in areas like Paulista Avenue with the un-urbanized, precarious conditions of places like Saracura. As in the 1913 planta, Saracura was largely off the map – that is, informal – into the 1930s. Lévi-Strauss’s observations indicate that housing forms classified as “improvised” and “informal” in urban Brazil, such as *favelas*, have long made up part of the city of São Paulo’s spatial configuration and existed in close proximity to wealthier and developed areas.³⁰

The marking of Saracura as a “Piece of Africa” corresponded in part to the demographic composition of the neighborhood and the district of Bela Vista more broadly. In the first decades of the twentieth century, Bela Vista had one of the city’s largest concentrations of Afro-descendants. Historian Kim Butler located statistics about births of Afro-Brazilians by district in 1925 and 1929. In 1925, 41.4%

³⁰ Nabil Bonducki, *Origens da Habitação Social no Brasil: Arquitetura Moderna, Lei do Inquilinato e Difusão da Casa Própria*, 7ª edição (São Paulo: Estação Liberdade: 2013), 269.

of the births of Afro-Brazilians in the city occurred in Bela Vista. The figure increased to 51.6% in 1929. The adjacent Liberdade district ranked second in 1925 at 9.2% and third in 1929 at 7%.³¹ In his 1938 study “The Black Element in São Paulo’s Population,” sociologist Samuel Lowrie found similar patterns. He analyzed the racial distribution of residents in the city through school enrollment statistics, finding that between 25% and 29.99% of schoolchildren in the Saracura region of Bela Vista were either black or mixed-race (*mulato*). That statistic gave the region the highest concentration of Afro-descendants in the city at this time, a racialized geography that Lowrie mapped and published alongside his article in the publication of the City’s Department of Culture, the *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* (figure 14).³²

³¹ She includes black and brown individuals in her calculations of Afro-Brazilians. Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition, São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 76.

³² The map excluded the northern region of Nossa Senhora do Ó, the location of Congo Road and a sizable population of Afro-descendants. Samuel Lowrie, “O Elemento Negro na População de São Paulo de São Paulo,” *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* 48 (1938), 5-57.

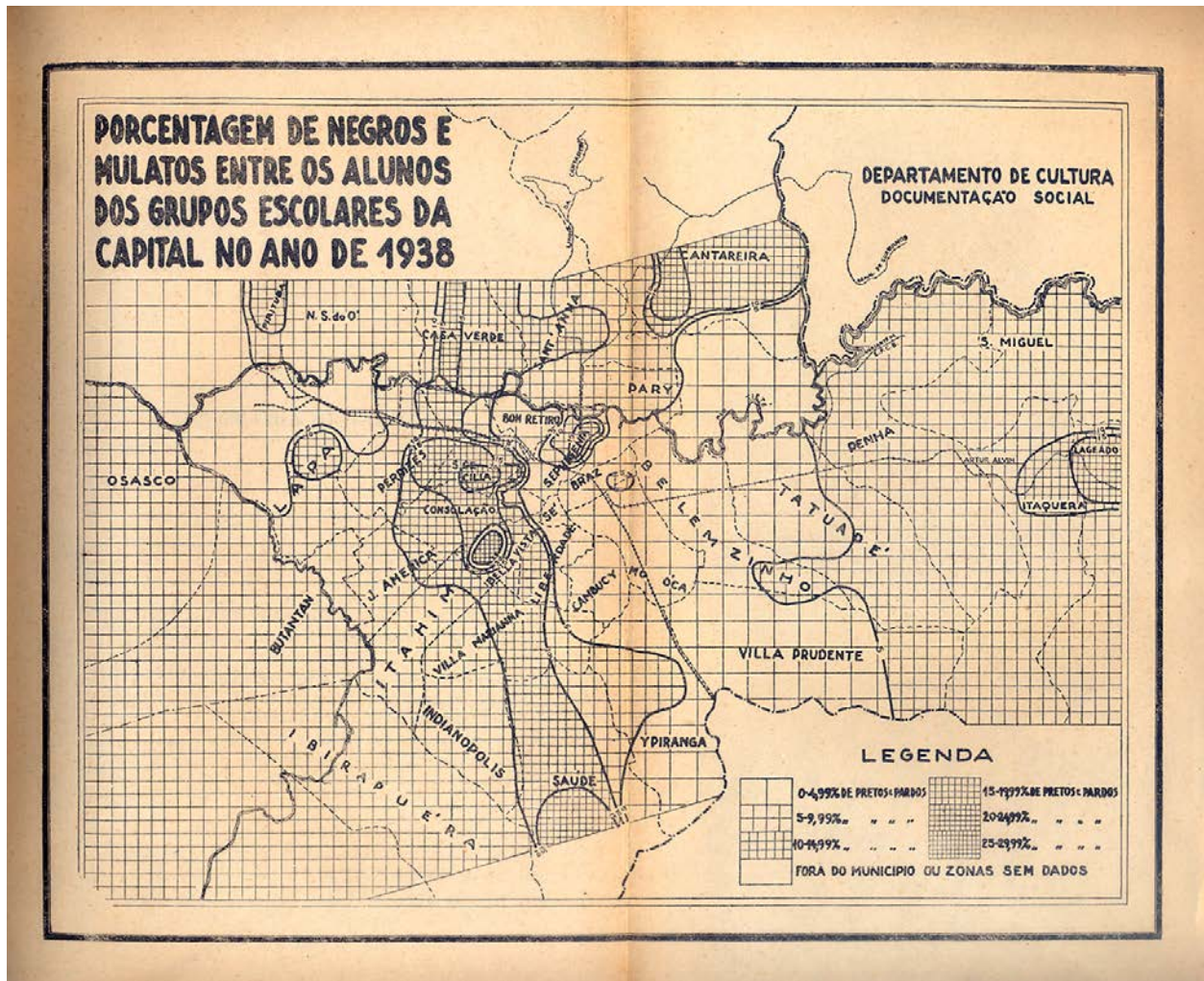


Figure 14: Lowrie's map of nonwhite population in São Paulo. Purple region in the close up is the location of Saracura, though he does not mention the neighborhood by name. Samuel Lowrie, "O Elemento Negro na População de São Paulo de São Paulo," *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* 48 (1938), 57. Reproduced with permission from the Arquivo Histórico Municipal.

Despite a high concentration of Afro-descendants, Saracura and Bela Vista broadly were not ethnoracially homogenous. Schneck offers statistical evidence to prove the point. In her analysis of police records (*Boletins de Ocorrência*) from 1911-'12, 1914-'15, and 1925, Africans and Afro-descendants made up 27.5% of the records from Saracura, while Portuguese and their descendants comprised 40%.

White Brazilians (not ethnically identified as immigrant) counted for 18% and Italians and their descendants 14%. For the district of Bela Vista broadly, Afro-descendants comprised 17% of police records.³³ Such records, of course, do not provide a complete snapshot of the makeup of the neighborhood population. However, the spatial information attached to those records – down to the street level – affords an especially local view of the demographic composition of the region. That view indicates that while Afro-descendants comprised a prominent presence in Saracura specifically and throughout Bela Vista more broadly, they were a minority. Both Saracura and the district were multiethnic, multiracial places.

Despite ethnoracial heterogeneity, some residents and observers reduced Saracura to a singular ethnoracial identity as an African or black space. Italo-Brazilian and Bexiga resident Armando Puglisi, for instance, described the neighborhood as follows: there was a place that “the people called Saracura, where many blacks and Portuguese were concentrated. . . . In Saracura, there were no *mulattoes* (mixed-race residents), it was all blacks, those blacks who were very dark, all of them descendants of slaves.”³⁴ Puglisi’s emphasis on the foreignness and blackness of Saracura residents mirrors the earlier 1907 article. At the same time, his statement indicates that this “Piece of Africa” had a multiethnic composition with a substantial presence of Portuguese residents.³⁵ These multiethnic memories point to the limits of demography in explaining the production of marked places.

The scattered extant records about Saracura help us to understand what political and urban planning elites like Prado and Maia literally and metaphorically saw when looking south down the Anhangabaú Valley in the 1930s. The contrast between the actually-existing material space and the future scheme they imagined can be visualized through a comparison of the photos from Saracura and the

³³ Sheila Schneck, “Bexiga: cotidiano e trabalho em suas interfaces com a cidade (1906-1931)” (PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 2016), 370.

³⁴ Depoimento a Júlio Moreno, *Memórias de Armandinho do Bexiga* (São Paulo: Editora SENAC, 1996), 87-88. “...a gente chamava de Saracura, onde se localizavam muitos negros e portugueses...Na Saracura, não existia mulato, era tudo negro, aqueles negros bem pretos, todos descendentes de escravos.”

³⁵ Jeffrey Lesser has identified commonplace descriptions of Portuguese and their descendants as connected to Africans and their descendants in Brazil. For instance: “For the Portuguese immigrant, the black man, and the donkey, three p’s: bread (*pão*) to eat, clothes (*pano*) to wear, and a stick (*pau*) to work with.” Jeffrey Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 103.

elaborate, cosmopolitan design of Avenue July 9 published in Maia's 1930 *Avenues Plan*. The aspirational before and after brings into high relief the grand designs of demolition and redevelopment that planners projected onto the region. While silenced for two decades in official city maps, Saracura was stubbornly persistent in material space. The establishment of Saracura was inseparable from the histories of slavery and black self-determination through absconsion, and a critical mass of Afro-descendants continued to populate the region in the 1920s and 1930s.

The paving of Saracura for the construction of the avenue had a particular goal: the remaking of marked neighborhoods. Situated between the two southern legs of the "Y" system of avenues central to the *Avenues Plan*, the region was a consistent preoccupation for Maia. In the *Avenues Plan*, he wrote:

A city's rivers, valleys, railways, etc. create dead-end alleys and *undesirable neighborhoods*, segregated from the normal urban movement: Piques, lower Bexiga, places around the Assembly, hillsides of Carmo, etc. that differ from the rest of the city. These sectors the ring road will tear open, sanitize, make accessible, and transform into points of passage and commerce. They are, therefore, areas won by the center.³⁶

The equation was that the making of avenues – specifically the ring road, in this case – amounted to the sanitation and integration of "segregated," "undesirable neighborhoods" like "lower Bexiga," also known as Saracura. Maia defined these neighborhoods as socially and geographically marginal spaces, whose "winning" by the "center" sounded like a military campaign. While during his first mayoral term Maia would have an institutional position to attempt to erase Saracura, he was not the only elite urbanist intent on razing this place. In his introduction to the *Avenues Plan*, the director of the City's Public Works Department, Arthur Saboya, had singled out July 9 Avenue with similar rhetoric. With the execution of the avenue, he wrote, "not just the sanitation of the valley and the surrounding zones is assured; also gone is the threat of transforming into new 'favelas' the marginal hillsides of the valley itself."³⁷

³⁶ Maia, *Estudo de um plano*, 57. "Nas cidades, os rios, valles, estradas de ferro, etc., cream ruas sem saídas e bairros indesejáveis, segregados do movimento urbano normal: Piques, Bexiga inferior, vizinhanças da Assembléa, encosta do Carmos, etc. que destoam do resto da cidade. Esses setores o Perímetro de Irradiação vaе rasgar, sanear, tornar accessíveis e transformar em pontos de passagem e de commercio. São emfim areas ganhas para o centro." My emphasis.

³⁷ Arthur Saboya, "Preface," in Maia, *Estudo de um plano*, iv. "não só o saneamento do vale e das zonas vizinhas ficou assegurado; desapareceu o perigo da transformação em novas 'favelas' das encostas marginais e do próprio vale." Some observers have seen a continuity between this and earlier planning projects fixated on the center. The

Much like official city maps after 1913, the mainstream press depicted Saracura as empty space. A 1939 article about Maia's ongoing avenues projects explained, for instance, that the July 9 Avenue "establishes new connections and valorizes a large nook (*rincão*) that was *abandoned*, although very central inside the city perimeter."³⁸ The "abandoned" characterization was not accurate, as sources like Lowrie's study (published the year prior) revealed. Furthermore, records from the City's Department of Expropriations, the municipal sector responsible for demolitions in advance of the construction of avenues, reveal that individuals and families lived in the region of Saracura into the late 1930s.³⁹ Through cartography, mayoral rhetoric, and in the popular press, the representation of Saracura as empty space served to legitimize its material silencing via demolition and the desired dislocation of its resident population.

Planners designed a revealing replacement for Saracura. They projected July 9 Avenue to cross the region between the creeks Little Saracura and Big Saracura. At the junction of those creeks, city officials planned and executed a new plaza, named Plaza 14 BIS (*Praça 14 BIS*), an homage to the famous airplane of Brazilian inventor and aviator Alberto Santos Dumont.⁴⁰ Redesigned as a public space with a name that indexed Brazilian modernity, the place had previously been a gathering point for Afro-descendent residents in the region. One of those local residents, Maria Aparecida de Godoy, recalled:

the blacks would hang around here, where today sits Plaza 14-BIS. The people concentrated here down below, of course everyone would concentrate where there was water and the Saracura creek

mayoral administration of Antônio Prado, for instance, is seen as one of the first coordinated efforts to displace urban undesirables. "Mas foi na gestão do prefeito Antônio Prado (1899-1911), cerca de uma década após abolição da escravatura, que a 'limpeza' do Centro Velho foi intensificada com o intuito de redefinir a espacialidade urbana aos moldes de grandes cidades europeias, além de isolar e excluir os indesejados das áreas mais centras da cidade." Larissa Aparecida Camargo do Nascimento, "Entre Sambat e Rezas: vivências, negociações e ressignificações da cultura afro-brasileira no Bexiga" (master's thesis, Federal University of São Carlos, 2014), 72.

³⁸ "Os rumos do governo da cidade de São Paulo," *Correio Paulistano*, June 25, 1939, 41. "É [Avenida 9 de Julho] uma avenida de 'thalwegg', que estabelece novas ligações e valoriza um grande rincão que *estava abandonado*, embora em perímetro bem central." My emphasis. "Thalwegg" signifies that the avenue followed the course of the deepest point in the valley.

³⁹ Avenida Nove de Julho, Departamento de Desapropriações, Prefeitura da Cidade de São Paulo.

⁴⁰ The link between modern, concrete urban forms and aviation would reach its fullest articulation in the design of Brazil's new capital, Brasília, inaugurated in 1960 and whose shape was an airplane. See James Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

passed by below, so the laundresses would wash clothes here for the mansions on Paulista [Avenue].⁴¹

Godoy's recollection references the first three decades of the twentieth century, before the construction of the new plaza. Her comments reinforce the racialized nature of the local geography and introduce a gendered perspective, as women gathered at the site with ready access to water to wash clothes for wealthy families on the nearby Paulista Avenue. The connections between women, public fountains, and waterways had been a central feature of São Paulo's geography since the eighteenth century.⁴² Historian Richard Morse drew this connection in his depiction of São Paulo's early nineteenth-century landscape, writing that in the Anhangabaú valley a traveler "would have seen women slaves crouched over their washing and, coming closer, heard their throaty songs and laughter."⁴³ The labor of laundering would remain a staple into the middle of the twentieth century, though the construction of 14 BIS Plaza would require the production of new sites for dislocated residents, including the Navio Parado cortiço discussed in Chapter One.

Prestes Maia remained fixated on so-called improvements in Bela Vista from the *Avenues Plan* through the end of the Avenues-Making Era in the 1960s. In his 1945 publication *São Paulo Improvements*, he wrote that July 9 Avenue would integrate and valorize "the very depreciated" neighborhood of Bexiga into the city.⁴⁴ In the same book he touted the construction of the Jacaré Bridge and associated demolitions as a project "that transformed the appearance (*aspecto*) of Lower Bexiga."⁴⁵ During Maia's second administration, in 1961, deputy Israel Dias Novaes delivered a defense of the mayor in the State Assembly. The speech included the following statement: "The canalization of the

⁴¹ Quoted in Nascimento, "Entre Sambas e Rezas," 77. "os negros ficavam mais aqui, onde é a Praça Quatorze Bis. O pessoal se concentrava aqui embaixo, claro que todo mundo ia se concentrar onde tem água e o riacho do Saracura passava ali embaixo, então as lavadeiras lavavam roupa aqui para as mansões da Paulista."

⁴² Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life*, 5, 10.

⁴³ Richard Morse, *From Community to Metropolis* (University of Florida Press: 1958), 23.

⁴⁴ Francisco Prestes Maia, *Os melhoramentos de São Paulo* (São Paulo: 1945), 10. "Tem a particularidade de cortar um bairro próximo, mas depreciadíssimo – o Bexiga, que valoriza e integra no conjunto urbano."

⁴⁵ Maia, *Estudo de um plano*, 22. "que transformou o aspecto do Bexiga Inferior." Focused on colonial Bogotá, Joanne Rappaport has argued that aspect (*aspeto*) – an individual's physical appearance and a term akin to the mark – was a defining feature in fluid, complex, and contingent ethnoracial classification practices. Joanne Rappaport, "'Asi lo paresçe por su aspeto': Physiognomy and the Construction of Difference in Colonial Bogotá," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 91:4 (2011), 601-631.

Saracura creek, at the intersection of São Vicente Road, has been contracted, anticipating the urbanization of this central stretch and doing away with the favela there abusively formed.”⁴⁶ Novaes’s statement is perhaps surprising in its candor, as he bluntly states that the urbanistic “improvement” of a creek’s canalization would serve to dislocate a marked, undesirable population. The “Saracura” favela sat near the former limits of the Saracura neighborhood and close to the contemporary headquarters of the samba school Vai-Vai. The frequency and consistency of these statements over time reveals both Maia’s continued preoccupation with remaking marked spaces in the Bela Vista district and the persistence of residents who contested and frustrated official aspirations.

Saracura was not the only site marked in the city of São Paulo, as examples from Nossa Senhora do Ó attest. Nonetheless, its geographic position, standing between São Paulo’s business center and its emerging elite residential centers in the 1930s, made it a particularly visible stretch of territory. Nearby elite spaces contrasted sharply the poverty and precarity of life in Saracura, which the observer from the 1907 *Correio Paulistano* piece interpreted as representing the unfulfilled promises of slavery’s abolition. Urbanist-mayors Prado and Maia designed a project that aimed to transform Saracura from an historic neighborhood marked as black and African into an asphalted roadway, the symbol of modern progress in early-twentieth-century São Paulo.

Despite the silencing of Saracura in official maps, the project to remake the neighborhood by dislocating Afro-descendant populations and associated pasts was incomplete. The name Saracura would indeed appear sparsely in official records after the completion of July 9 Avenue, however the memory of the place persisted especially among local Afro-descendants. A prominent means for the preservation and reproduction of that spatial identity across generations was samba, especially Vai-Vai, the samba *cordão* founded in Bela Vista in 1930. Fernando Penteado, child of one of Vai-Vai’s founders and long-time president of the now-samba school (*escola*), described his origins in the region:

⁴⁶ Israel Dias Novaes, “A Dramática Luta de Prestes Maia para Reabilitar São Paulo: Discurso Pronunciado da Tribuna da Assembléia Legislativa do Estado de São Paulo, Sessão de 5 de Dezembro de 1961,” Biblioteca Prestes Maia, 11. “A canalização do córrego Saracura, junto à rua São Vicente, foi contratada, visando urbanizar êsse trecho central e acabar com a favela aí abusivamente formada.”

I was born in Saracura. It was a swamp there. There is a river that passes underneath...All of the water from Paulista Avenue collected there [in the region of Vai-Vai], there it was a swamp and no one wanted to live there. So, the Italians lived on Rocha Street [higher up] and we lived down below...The blacks lived here all below. And when people talked about Saracura it was pejorative, but we assimilated the nickname. So that now in samba we say: 'It's Vai-Vai from Bexiga, the Pride of Saracura.'⁴⁷

Penteado's comments (published in 2014) highlight the salience of three-dimensional social and racial geographies. Similar to Florestan Fernandes's interpretation of housing in Bexiga discussed in Chapter One, here Penteado maps a topography of neighborhoods within the Bela Vista district that aligned with racialized social stratification. Penteado also represents Saracura as a marked place: stigmatized because of the Afro-descendent and black identities ascribed to it. The ascription from without was contested by local residents, who absorbed and resignified the place name. Vai-Vai has remained in the region through the twenty-first century, making it one of the few samba schools founded in the center of São Paulo to maintain its original space.⁴⁸ Un-mapped in São Paulo's official cartography and asphalted for the crown jewel of the *Avenues Plan*,⁴⁹ Saracura would morph after the 1940s into new imagined and material spaces that were remembered and remade by local populations of African descent.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Nascimento, "Entre Sambas e Rezas," 77. "Nasci na Saracura. Ali era um brejo. Tem um rio que passa por baixo...Toda a água da Avenida Paulista desencana ali [região da Vai-Vai], ali era um brejo e ninguém queria morar lá. Então, os italianos ficavam na Rua Rocha [mais acima] e a gente ficava em baixo...Os negros ficavam todos aqui embaixo. E quando falava de Saracura era pejorativo, mas nós assimilamos o apelido. Então falamos no Samba: 'É o Vai-Vai do Bexiga, Orgulho da Saracura.'"

⁴⁸ I met Penteado at the Casa da Cultura da Brasilândia in 2016, where he was a special guest for a program of the Samba do Congo group named Afro-Bantu Paulista. I discuss this and other historical and contemporary connections between Brasilândia and Bela Vista in Chapters Three and Four and the Conclusion.

⁴⁹ Getúlio Vargas's first visit to São Paulo following the 1932 armed civil conflict took place in 1938. The occasion was the inauguration of the July 9 Avenue tunnel, an impressive work of engineering that stretched beneath Paulista Avenue. James P. Woodard writes: "Vargas himself was not above approximations with regional tradition during the Estado Novo years. In 1938, he visited São Paulo for the first time since 1930, touring some of the larger cities of the interior before arriving in the state capital, in which he presided over the inauguration of the Ninth-of-July Tunnel. An Estado Novo propagandist, writing of the visit, argued that his reception afforded him by the 'paulista people' was 'indubitable proof of the support, of the solidarity of the bandeirante land with the Chief of the Nation.' When Vargas returned to São Paulo the following year for the inauguration of a bridge over the Tietê River, he lauded São Paulo's progress, which he linked to the bandeirante tradition." James P. Woodard, "'All for São Paulo, All for Brazil': Vargas, the Paulistas, and the Historiography of Twentieth-Century Brazil," in Jens R. Hentschke, *Vargas and Brazil: New Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 90.

*From “Bexiga Square” to “Flag Plaza”;
Or, the Forgotten (in) Gabriel Marques*

An oversized Brazilian flag towers above the plaza where July 9 Avenue and May 23 Avenue converge in the northern limits of the contemporary Bela Vista district (figure 15). I have spent afternoons lost in the labyrinthine bus terminal that sits in the middle of this plaza, now named the *Praça da Bandeira* (“Flag Plaza”), and along the web of pedestrian passages that span across the adjoining avenues. I have spent substantially more time making sense of 170 years of maps of this space, which reveal extensive geographic and name changes. *Praça da Bandeira* was once named the *Largo da Memória* (“Memory Square”), the *Largo do Riachuelo* (“Creek Square”), the *Largo do Piques* (“Pike Square”), and the *Largo do Bexiga* (“Bexiga Square”).



Figure 15: Praça da Bandeira, looking north up July 9 Avenue. Photo by author, April 2017.

This century and a half of changes have helped to obscure the earlier history of this place. Prior to its consecration as a hallowed plaza uniting two of São Paulo’s most important roadways and, symbolically, the nation itself, the area served as a site of commerce in enslaved people. This past was not passively

overlooked but actively unremembered, decades after formal abolition in 1888 and during the Avenues-Making Era, through the spatial project of forgetting.

We have a decidedly sketchy understanding of the geography of slave traffic in the city of São Paulo.⁵⁰ We know little, for example, about the location/s of sale, the nature of those sites, and, to some extent, the routes that connected markets within São Paulo to the rest of the province (today state) of São Paulo. One would expect to find some of these details in studies of slavery and economy in the city, such as Maria Odila Silva Dias's *Power and Everyday Life: The Lives of Working Women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*. Silva Dias charts spaces of sociability and the commercial activities of slaves, asserting that in the city "slavery was felt as an overwhelming presence." Nevertheless, the study provides no insight into the commerce *in captives*.⁵¹ Maria Helena P. T. Machado writes that while "the province [of São Paulo] had become, across the nineteenth century and, especially, after 1850, the country's most important purchasing market for slaves, São Paulo had no slave market like the *Valongo* of Rio de Janeiro, and information about transactions of buying and selling captives in São Paulo's sugar and coffee regions are scarce."⁵² Given the importance of São Paulo's sugar and coffee plantations in the expansion of nineteenth-century slavery – what some historians have termed "Second Slavery" – this is a substantial gap in the historiography.⁵³

⁵⁰ This is not necessarily rare for urban centers throughout the Americas. Few studies have addressed the geography of slave markets as explicitly as Walter Johnson's study of New Orleans, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999). Kwesi DeGraft-Hanson explores the "hidden landscape" of a slave market in Savannah, GA, in "Unearthing the Weeping Time: Savannah's Ten Broeck Race Course and 1859 Slave Sale," *Southern Spaces*, February 18, 2010, <https://southernspaces.org/2010/unearthing-weeping-time-savannahs-ten-broeck-race-course-and-1859-slave-sale> (accessed March 2, 2018). More recently, The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration opened on top of a former warehouse for enslaved people in the city of Montgomery, Alabama. See "The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration," <https://eji.org/legacy-museum> (accessed June 22, 2018).

⁵¹ Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life*, 73.

⁵² Maria Helena P. T. Machado, *Crime e Escravidão: Trabalho, Luta e Resistência nas Lavouras Paulistas (1930-1888)* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2014), 173. "Embora a província tenha se tornado, no correr do século XIX e, sobretudo, após 1850, o mais importante mercado comprador de escravos do país, decerto São Paulo não conheceu um mercado de escravos como o Valongo do Rio de Janeiro e são escassas as informações a respeito das transações de compra e venda de cativos realizados nos distritos açucareiros e cafeeiros paulistas."

⁵³ Dale Tomich, "The Wealth of Empire: Francisco Arango y Parreño, Political Economy, and the Second Slavery in Cuba," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45:1 (January 2003), 4-28; Dale Tomich, *Pelo Prisma da Escravidão*, trans. Antonio de Padua Danesi (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2011); Ricardo Salles and Rafael de Bivar

The transatlantic slave trade generated a paper trail that has enabled subsequent generations of historians to reconstruct the social history of the Middle Passage.⁵⁴ The inter-American trade, particularly following the prohibition of the slave trade and of slavery throughout the nineteenth century, proves more difficult to chart.⁵⁵ As detailed in Chapter One, the growth of the city of São Paulo was intimately connected to the nineteenth-century expansion of agriculture (especially coffee) in the province, particularly in the West Paulista region. The city of São Paulo became a way-station for the transport of goods along with enslaved Afro-descendants between the ports of Rio de Janeiro and Santos and the interior of the province. Ian Read calculated that many of the enslaved people who entered in the port of Rio de Janeiro in the 1870s (he estimates between 5,680 and 6,034 per year) travelled overland into the interior of the province São Paulo, thereby passing through the city of São Paulo.⁵⁶ Writing about the internal trade in Rio de Janeiro, Richard Graham explains that planters interested in buying captives “relied on upland middlemen who had contact with fellow merchants in Rio or on mule drivers who delivered coffee in Rio and brought back slaves on consignment for eventual sale.”⁵⁷

Marquese, *Escravidão e capitalismo histórico no século XIX: Cuba, Brasil, Estados Unidos* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2016).

⁵⁴ Phillip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Paul E. Lovejoy, “The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis,” *Journal of African History* 23: 4 (1982), 473–501; David Eltis, “The Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Slave Trade: An Annual Time Series of Imports into the Americas Broken Down by Region,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 67:1 (February 1987), 109–38.

⁵⁵ Despite being the most dynamic market for the internal slave trade in the nineteenth century, the province of São Paulo has received substantially less attention than Rio de Janeiro. Slenes’s work is an exception, as is Ian Read’s recent work. Herbert Klein, “The Internal Slave Trade in Nineteenth-Century Brazil: A Study of Slave Importations into Rio de Janeiro in 1852,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 51:4 (1971), 567-585; Robert Slenes, “The demography and economics of Brazilian slavery, 1850-1888” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1975); Zephyr Frank and Whitney Berry, “The Slave Market in Rio de Janeiro circa 1869: Context, Movement and Social Experience,” *Journal of Latin American Geography* 9:3 (2010), 85-110; Robert W. Slenes, “The Brazilian Internal Slave Trade, 1850–1888: Regional Economies, Slave Experience, and the Politics of a Peculiar Market Ian Read,” in Walter Johnson, ed., *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 325-372; Richard Graham, “Another Middle Passage? The Internal Slave Trade in Brazil,” in Johnson, *The Chattel Principle*, 291-324; Ian Read, “Off the Block but within the Neighborhood: The Local Slave Trade in São Paulo,” *Slavery & Abolition* 33:1 (2012), 21-42. The HGIS methods of Frank and Berry reveal the wide distribution and mobility of enslaved populations in Rio de Janeiro, however the geography of transactions *in* slaves is not a central feature of their article.

⁵⁶ Read, “Off the Block,” 27.

⁵⁷ Graham, “Another Middle Passage?” 303.

The sale, purchase, and transfer of captives does not appear to have taken place at an officially-sanctioned site in the city of São Paulo. While the market was not geographically delimited by official ordinances, neither was it randomly disbursed in space. The geography of the local, regionally-connected trade seems to have followed a particular and practical logic: ready access to potable water. As Maria Helena P. T. Machado explains:

Important points of encounter in the city, as much for slaves within the city as for the captives that only passed through its streets and alleys, accompanying or even driving troops, were the huts (*ranchos*)...The most sought-after hut for those who travelled from Santos were Lavapés and Bexiga, with the latter, located next to the Piques Fountain, at the Memory Square (today Praça da Bandeira), having the best and most abundant waters and therefore becoming the most frequented.⁵⁸

Aroldo de Azevedo wrote that “The then Largo do Piques...ever since the Bexiga guest house (*Hospedaria do Bexiga*) was put in, became a meeting place for merchants and troops; it was an important ‘commercial center of farms, footwear, and leather,’ always quite busy.”⁵⁹ These records suggest that, owing to ready access to good water and a place for lodging, the Largo do Piques (figure 16) functioned as a commercial and social hub in São Paulo, including the commerce in enslaved people.

⁵⁸ Maria Helena P. T. Machado, “Sendo Cativo nas Ruas: a Escravidão Urbana na Cidade de São Paulo,” in Paula Porta, ed., *História da Cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2004), 25-26. “Um importante ponto de encontro da cidade de São Paulo, tanto dos escravos da cidade, quanto dos cativos que apenas transitavam pelas suas ruas, becos e vielas, acompanhando ou mesmo tocando tropas, eram os ranchos...Os ranchos mais procurados por quem demandava Santos eram os do Lavapés e Bexiga, mas sendo este último próximo do Chafariz do Piques, no Largo da Memória (hoje Praça das Bandeiras), possuidor de águas melhores e mais abundantes, tornou-se o mais freqüentado.”

⁵⁹ Aroldo de Azevedo, *A cidade de S.Paulo: Estudos de geografia urbana* vlm 3 (1958), 133. “O então Largo do Piques...desde que ali se instalara a Hospedaria do Bexiga, transformara-se em ponto de reunião de mercadores e tropeiros; era um ‘importante centro de comércio de fazendas, calçados e couros’, sempre movimentada.” He explains further: “No vale principal do Anhangabaú, onde hoje existe a vasta Praça da Bandeira, encontrava-se o *Piques* – lugar em que, nos princípios do século XIX, existia uma rancho de tropeiros, junto ao qual se erguia o ‘Curral do Conselho.’ Até meados do século passado, tal porção da cidade continuou a representar o papel de uma de suas portas, ponto de pouso das tropas que iam no rumo do Sul ou de lá procediam.” *A cidade de São Paulo: Estudos de geografia urbana* vlm 3 (1958), 278.



Figure 16: Paredão do Piques, Militão Augusto de Azevedo, circa 1862. Acervo Instituto Moreira Salles.
Reproduced with permission.

After a year of fieldwork in São Paulo’s archives, I had no suspicion of a connection between the Praça da Bandeira and São Paulo’s commerce in captives. Throughout that year I regularly passed by and sometimes paused at the sole surviving remnant of this space before it was the Praça da Bandeira. That place today consists of a waterless public fountain, granite obelisk, and elaborate tilework, all decorated with São Paulo’s particular brand of graffiti, *pixação*. Searching for this space on a 1954 map of the city (figure 17), I found its former name – Memory Square (“Largo da Memória”) – and realized that in the 1950s it occupied the fulcrum of the July 9 Avenue and the May 23 Avenue.

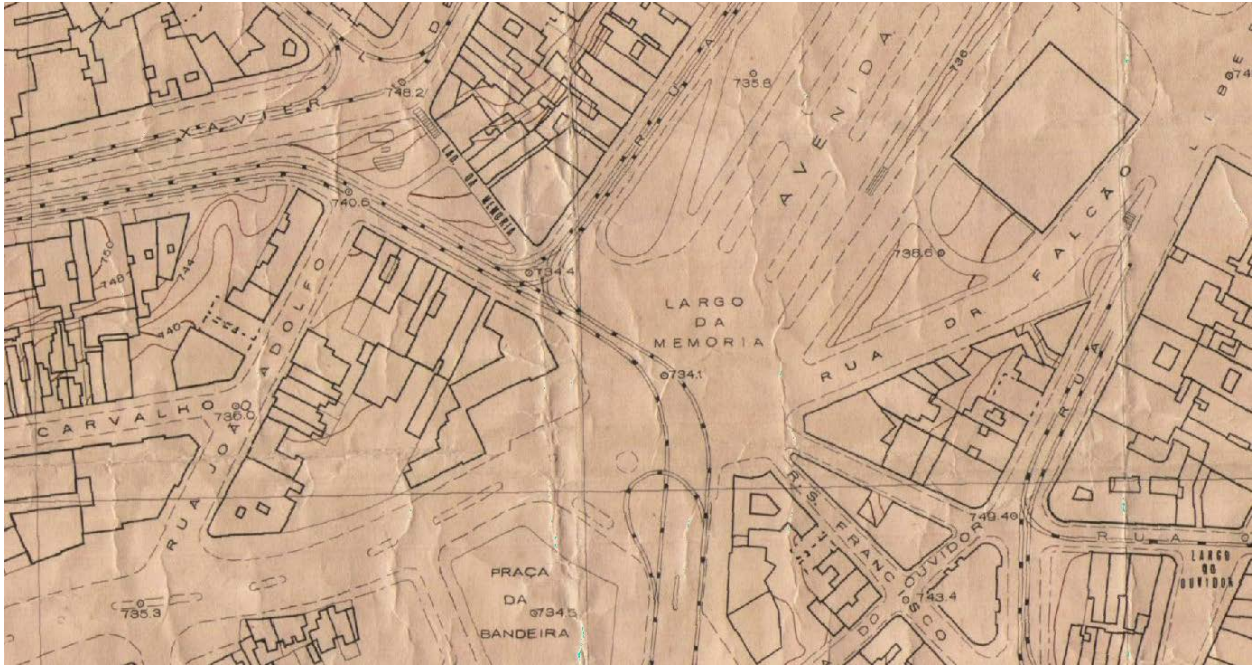


Figure 17: Largo da Memória, 1954. “Mapeamento 1954 - Vasp Cruzeiro,” *GeoSampa*, www.geosampa.prefeitura.sp.gov.br (accessed June 12, 2018).

The 1954 map displayed a much smaller Flag Plaza adjacent to the larger Memory Square. The latter had been nearly completely remade, I subsequently discerned, into Flag Plaza during the Avenues-Making Era and in the course of constructing July 9 Avenue and May 23 Avenue.

For planners in the Avenues-Making Era, the juncture of these two avenues was no ordinary intersection. The public square sat at the fulcrum of the “inverted Y” system of avenues at the heart of the 1930 *Avenues Plan*: the two southern legs of the “Y” were July 9 Avenue and May 23 Avenue, and the northern branch was originally named Tiradentes Avenue (later renamed Prestes Maia Avenue). The remaking of São Paulo’s new and improved transportation network hinged on the successful redevelopment of this central site. Urbanist and historian Raquel Rolnik writes that the region, which she identifies as Piques, had become a “red light district, a zone of black prostitution.”⁶⁰ Consigning the region to redevelopment, planners projected new roadways and a plaza that would dislocate this population. They justified the project by pointing to the supposed dilapidated material condition of the

⁶⁰ Raquel Rolnik, *A cidade e a lei legislação, política urbana e territórios na cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: FAPESP Studio Nobel, 2007), 76. “zona de baixo meretrício na cidade, a zona da prostituição negra.”

site. In his 1945 book *São Paulo Improvements*, for instance, Maia characterized the region as troubled because of storm water drainage problems.⁶¹ Historian Benedito Lima de Toledo wrote subsequently that “it was very dangerous to pass through that region of the valley at night,” leaving ambiguous the source of the supposed danger as either the built environment or the resident population.⁶² As with the avenues that it joined, the plaza project encountered delays throughout the 1930s and past Maia’s first terms as mayor. In 1945, Maia wrote optimistically about a relatively new decree that he hoped would permit a “more radical” transformation of the place.⁶³

While city planners pursued the plaza’s material redevelopment in Maia’s first term as mayor, its name captured the attention of members of São Paulo’s City Council. In 1949, councilmember Décio Grisi introduced a measure to rename the place – variously referred to as Largo da Memória or Largo do Piques at this time – as Praça da Bandeira. He asserted that, in fact, the site was already known popularly as Flag Plaza and that the name merited officialization. His formal petition, signed by fellow City Council member and future Brazilian president Jânio Quadros, proclaimed: “If the people make the language – and few, perhaps none, of the moldy grammarians and pedantic purists can stop this – it is also the people that have decisively contributed, in many, many cases to the naming of roads.”⁶⁴ A newspaper article from the year prior lamenting the “legitimate pandemonium” of pedestrian and automobile traffic at the site referred to the place as the Praça da Bandeira, seemingly confirming Grisi’s assertion.⁶⁵ In a session

⁶¹ Maia, *Melhoramentos*, 11-12, 25.

⁶² “O Prefeito, Razões e Desrazões,” Interview with Benedito Lima de Toledo by Marcos Faerman in “A Saga da Metrópole e seu Inventor – Cem Anos de Prestes Maia,” *Cidade: Revista do Departamento do Patrimônio Histórico/Secretaria Municipal da Cultura* 3 (1996), 38. “Aquele região do Vale era muito perigosa de passar à noite. Ali, periodicamente, inundava tudo, por isso nenhum comerciante queria ficar lá embaixo e ele dizia que era porque essas bacias não tinham escoamento. Então, ele fez um túnel (galeria pluvial) unindo o Largo do Piques ao Tamanduateí.”

⁶³ Maia, *Melhoramentos*, 11-12, 25. “A transformação do Piques ainda não terminou todavia, e o decreto 372 de 1942 permite prevê-lhe um prosseguimento mais radical.

⁶⁴ “Parecer 109-40 da Comissão da e Educação e Cultura, Sobre o Processo de Lei 74-49,” December, 15, 1949. “Se é o povo que faz o idioma, e contra isso podem pouco, talvez quase nada, os gramáticos bolorentos e puristas pedantes, é também o povo que contribui decisivamente, em muitíssimos casos para a denominação de vias.”

⁶⁵ “O Transito na Praça da Bandeira,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 13, 1948, 21. “verdadeiro pandemonio.”

the following year, the City Council approved the name change, thereby making Praça da Bandeira official.⁶⁶

Ironically, no flag seems to have hung in the Praça da Bandeira in the 1940s-'50s (figure 18).⁶⁷ Where did the name come from, then? Writer Gabriel Marques posed this question in a series of articles about São Paulo's history that first ran in the mainstream, widely-circulated newspaper *Folha da Noite* in the mid-to-late 1950s. Marques later compiled and expanded these pieces in his book *Streets and Traditions in São Paulo: A History in Each Street*, published in 1966. In one of its sections, he proposed competing interpretations for the origins of the “flag” moniker at the central plaza.

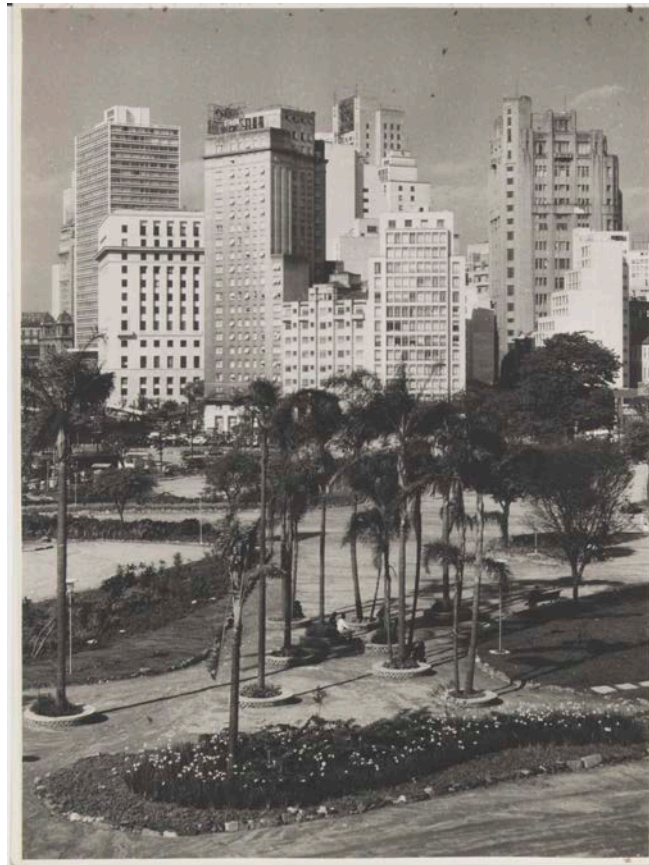


Figure 18: Praça da Bandeira, undated. No flag is visible. Werner Haberkorn, “Vista parcial da Praça da Bandeira. São Paulo/SP,” Public domain / Museu Paulista (USP) Collection, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/Werner_Haberkorn_-_Vista_parcial_da_Pra%C3%A7a_da_Bandeira._S%C3%A3o_Paulo-SP.jpg (accessed June 12, 2018).

⁶⁶ Lei 3865, April 5, 1950. The place remained “Largo da Memória” on official maps of São Paulo into the 1950s, reflecting the limited effects that the officialization of São Paulo’s place names could have.

⁶⁷ Also see images in Maia, *Melhoramentos*, where no flag is visible.

Perhaps the plaza was named for the flag of the Brazilian Empire, Marques opined. He elaborated on this possibility by reprinting part of the 1869 poem “*Navio Negreiro*” (“Slave Ship”), written by abolitionist Castro Alves (known popularly as “the poet of the slaves”)⁶⁸:

<i>Auriverde pendão da minha terra</i>	Green and gold cloth of my land
<i>Que a brisa do Brasil beija e balança,</i>	That the Brazilian breeze kisses and sways,
<i>Estandarte que à luz do sol encerra</i>	Banner bathed in sunlight
<i>As promessas divinas da Esperança!</i>	The divine promises of Hope!

Alternatively, Marques wrote, perhaps the plaza referenced the flag of the State of São Paulo, which he depicted through the celebratory verses of São Paulo writer Guilherme de Almeida:

<i>Bandeira da minha terra,</i>	Flag of my land,
<i>bandeira das treze listas:</i>	flag of the thirteen stripes:
<i>são treze lanças de guerra</i>	they are thirteen spears of war
<i>cercando o chão dos paulistas!</i>	surrounding the soil of the paulistas!

The paired verses present two distinct referents of Brazil’s history: the optimism and promise of abolition in the late nineteenth century, and the regionalist identity of São Paulo, which had engulfed the country in war in 1932. Marques concludes that the São Paulo flag must be the true referent, since the square once served as a point of encounter for bandeirantes headed on expeditions into the continental interior. Yet this conclusion, delivered quickly and without elaboration, reads as half-hearted if not half-baked. Marques’s real interest was not in determining the true origins of the flag but in asking how – and by what means – certain pasts were being obfuscated in the present. This intention is clear in his lines: “Thus, Progress made it so that the square would get bigger, beautifying it and modernizing it. And it went further, that witch called Progress: it obligated the public officials to change its name, devalorizing tradition. From Largo do Piques it thus became designated Praça – Praça da Bandeira.”⁶⁹

As symbols of political and territorial identity, flags can elicit revealing discourses about race, region, and nation. In his comparative study of Brazil, the United States, and South Africa, Anthony W.

⁶⁸ Vicente de Azevedo writes that a trip through the state of São Paulo inspired Alves’s poems *Navio Negreiro* and *Vozes d’África*. Vicente de Azevedo, *O Noiva da Morte* (São Paulo: Clube do Livro, 1970), 83.

⁶⁹ Gabriel Marques, *Ruas e Tradições de São Paulo: Uma História em Cada Rua* (São Paulo: Conselho Estadual de Cultura, 1966), 145. “Destarte, fez êle com que o Largo mais se ampliasse, embelezando-o e modernizando-o. E até fêz mais, o bruxo: obrigou os podêres públicos a lhe mudarem o nome, menosprezando a tradição. De Largo do Piques passou assim a denominar-se Praça – Praça da Bandeira...”

Marx focuses on this issue and writes that in all three countries the “issue of how to construct a racial order was central to the historical process of nation-state consolidation, as symbolized by the respective flags.”⁷⁰ Both of the verses that Marques cites above emphasize the composition of the flags. Their design also caught the interest of Afonso de E. Taunay, the director of the Museum of the State of São Paulo (*Museu Paulista*), professor at the University of São Paulo, and prolific author of histories of the city and state, such as *História da cidade de São Paulo*.⁷¹ In 1931, Taunay wrote an article for the mainstream press about Brazilian heraldry (ceremonial forms), which included the following appraisal of São Paulo’s flag:

...a dreadfully ugly symbol, originating in the era of Republican propaganda, they say that Julio Ribeiro invented the flag, the improperly designated ‘paulista flag,’ bleak, unaesthetic, insignificant. Thank God it was never made official, but to our misfortune it is widely adopted...[It is] insignificant today more than ever, because it attributes to the paulista population a dosage of African blood entirely false since in the lands of São Paulo the percentage of Euro-Americans always was immensely superior to the dosage of Afro, Euro-African, or Afro-American elements.⁷²

Taunay saw in the black stripes of the state’s flag an inaccurate representation of São Paulo’s racial composition. His statement reflected his elite, perhaps singular position as one of São Paulo’s most prominent historians, however this sentiment was not marginal among influential members of the São Paulo elite in the lead up to abolition and through the early decades of the twentieth century. The ethos of *branqueamento* (whitening) prescribed the negation and silencing of Afro-descendants through programs

⁷⁰ Anthony W. Marx, *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 81-82. For compelling episodes on the intersection of flags, religion, and black identity in Brazil, see John Burdick, *The Color of Sound: Race, Religion, and Music in Brazil* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), especially Chapter Three, “The Flags of Jesus and Brazil: Body, History, and Nation in Samba Gospel.” Also see Paul Gilroy, *There Ain’t no Black in the Union Jack’: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

⁷¹ Ana Claudia Fonseca Brefe, *O museu paulista: Afonso de Taunay e a memória nacional, 1917-1945* (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2005); “Afonso d’E. Taunay,” *Academia Brasileira*, <http://www.academia.org.br/academicos/afonso-de-taunay> (accessed June 2, 2018).

⁷² Afonso de E. Taunay, “Heraldica Municipal Brasileira,” *Jornal do Commercio*, April 5, 1931. “Já basta a herança de um symbolo pavorosamente feio, oriundo dos tempos da propaganda republicana, a bandeira que se diz ser da invenção de Julio Ribeiro, a impropriamente chamada ‘bandeira paulista’, lugubre, inesthetica, insignificativa. Graças a Deus nunca foi oficializada, mas por infelicidade é muito adoptada. Assim desapareça de todo o emprego desse panno mortuario alvi-negro arvorado em pendão estadual. Insignificativa hoje mais do que nunca, porque attribue á população paulista uma dosagem de sangue africano inteiramente falsa pois em terras de São Paulo a porcentagem dos euramericanos sempre foi immensamente superior á dosagem dos elementos afros, o eurafricanos e aframericanos.”

of immigration, republicanism, and industrialization.⁷³ With the authority to establish official versions of São Paulo's history, Taunay projected a whitewashed narrative of progress and modernity onto the São Paulo past with such interpretations of the state's sacred symbol. Marques, who cited Taunay's histories in his work, critiques the silencing of histories of Afro-descendants. By questioning the eponym of the Praça da Bandeira, he asserts that this silencing was constitutive with "that witch called Progress" in São Paulo.

Only fragments survive about even basic details of Marques's biography. From the 1920s through the publication of *Streets and Traditions* in the 1960s, he authored works of imaginative nonfiction and historically-informed fiction that blurred the lines that traditionally distinguish those genres. His career spanned the breadth of the Avenues-Making Era, during which he narrated the histories of spaces being forgotten in the city, including the pasts buried beneath the Praça da Bandeira. His compelling yet hazy biography is worth examining in detail, as the lack of contemporary memory of the writer himself parallels the broader amnesia about the pasts beneath the Praça da Bandeira.

Streets were fundamental to Marques's writing about São Paulo. He opened *Streets and Traditions* with epigraphs from two other authors. The first came from journalist João do Rio, the writer cited in the section above who chronicled African diasporic religious practices in Rio de Janeiro: "There is nothing more moving than the beginning of a street." The second reference, from prominent São Paulo figure Guilherme de Almeida, read: "The street lives: the street suffers, the street enjoys / Because of this I believe unwaveringly / That the street has a mysterious soul."⁷⁴ Almeida's lines personified streets, ascribing human-like emotions of suffering and enjoyment to this supposedly inanimate feature of the urban built environment. Marques seems to have shared the "unwavering" belief: he filled his pages with stories of "mysterious souls" buried beneath – and constitutive with, he asserted – São Paulo's roadways, past and present.

⁷³ Skidmore, *Black into White*; Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1999); Weinstein, "Regionalizing Racial Difference."

⁷⁴ Marques, *Ruas e Tradições*, n.p. "Não há nada mais enternecedor que o princípio de uma rua"; "A rua vive: a rua sofre, a rua goza. / É por isso que eu creio inabalavelmente / Que a rua deve ter uma alma misteriosa"

Marques worked at the postal service by day and frequented São Paulo's literary and coffee house scene at night.⁷⁵ One of his earliest books was 1922's *The Condemned: Atrocious Tales*, a collection of horror stories set in the city. Prominent São Paulo literary figure Monteiro Lobato published *The Condemned*, and biographers suggest that the editor had a particular motivation in doing so. Cilza Carla Bignotto writes that Lobato wanted to include a black author in his "Gallery of Published" ("*Galeria dos Editados*"), a series of portraits of the authors that Lobato published. Lobato biographer Edgard Cavalheiro recalls an anecdote about an unknown black author who one day entered Lobato's office and asked him to review his work for publication. Lobato replied that it wasn't necessary to read the book and agreed to publication sight (of the book) unseen. He supposedly explained his choice thusly: "What I need is a black in my editorial gallery. From you I just want one thing: a very black portrait, with no hat on, showing your kinky hair (*gaforinha*)."⁷⁶ The cover of *The Condemned* would feature a full-page photo of Marques that fit this description. Lobato may have fixated on this racialized visual representation as part of a broader effort to extend the reach of his business to the city's black readership. Marques's book was cheaper than other works published by Lobato's press, leading Bignotto to surmise "that the editor used the image of the black author to win over a *specific* readership."⁷⁷

Neither Marques nor Lobato appear to have left written sources about the circumstances described above. One of the sole unpublished sources penned by Marques that I located in São Paulo's archives is in fact a birthday letter that he sent to Lobato in 1945. He accompanied a note with a brief story that he wrote about Lobato for broadcast on *Rádio Cultura*, where Marques seems to have been a sometimes host.⁷⁸ In his letter Marques wrote playfully, "Well then, Monteiro Lobato, I am around. And

⁷⁵ In a preface to *Ruas e Tradições*, Schmidt wrote "Êle, funcionário da Repartição dos Correios! Pensionista de hábitos morigerados, na Rua Tabatinguera! Frequentador do Brandão, do Acadêmico e do Guarani! Mistério..."

⁷⁶ Edgard Cavalheiro, *Monteiro Lobato: vida e obra* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1962), 245, cited in Cilza Carla Bignotto, "Novas perspectivas sobre as práticas editoriais de Monteiro Lobato (1918-1925)," (PhD diss., UNCAMP, 2007), 54-55. "O que preciso é de um preto no galleria dos meus editados. De você só quero uma coisa: o retrato bem preto, sem chapéu, mostrando a gaforinha."

⁷⁷ Bignotto, "Novas perspectivas," 245. "não é difícil supor a intenção, por parte do editor, de usar a imagem do escritor negro para conquistar um grupo *específico* de leitores."

⁷⁸ An article from *O Estado de S. Paulo* described him as "editor of the Radio Cultura and the author of various *radio-novelas* that achieved great success" ("redator da Radio Cultura, autor de varias radio-novelas que alcançaram grande exito"). "Aniversarios," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 24, 1945, 4.

don't forget that I continue to be your number one '*fan*.'"⁷⁹ In the radio story he described Lobato as "My great and marvelous writer" and "idol of children, and also idol of men young and old!"⁸⁰ The story and letter alike imply a relationship of patronage between the two, a conceivable dynamic given that Lobato gave Marques one of his earliest, if not indeed his first, publishing breaks.⁸¹

While few records survive about Marques's biography, sources suggest he was a unique figure. For starters, and as the episode with Lobato indicates, black authors did not occupy a prominent place in São Paulo's literary scene in the 1920s and 1930s. Marques's race was rarely mentioned outright in the few press articles about him.⁸² I located, in fact, just one interview with him, printed in the mainstream São Paulo newspaper *A Gazeta* in 1931. Most of his comments and responses were pithy, however Marques offered a telling, expository reply when the interviewer asked about contemporary social problems. He said:

The capitalist mentality is predominant in the world and from there the stifling environment in which we all live. Wild, cynical, egotistic, inhuman, as it is, it transforms itself into a canker that needs to be and will be fatally eradicated. The poor distribution of capital and silly 'favoritism,' the profound and painful difference that separates those that have from those that have nothing, those who die from an intoxication of hyper-capitalism on the banquet of life to those that perish on sober streets, from cold and hunger...⁸³

⁷⁹ Letter from Gabriel Marques to Monteiro Lobato, Biblioteca Monteiro Lobato, 1945. "Bem, Monteiro Lobato, fico por aqui. E não se esqueça de que continuo sendo o seu 'fan' numero 'um.'" "Fan" in English and italics in the original.

⁸⁰ Ibid. "Meu grande e maravilhoso escritor, patricio, - idolo das crianças, e tambem idolo dos homens moços ou velhos!"

⁸¹ Though not a central figure, Lobato appears throughout the dissertation. Chapter Three recounts a petition by residents in a region of the parish of Nossa Senhora do Ó to change the name of their neighborhood to "Monteiro Lobato Village." Chapter Four describes the ascription of a racist moniker to the neighborhood of Brasilândia – "Macacolândia," or "Monkey-land" – whose purveyor likely drew inspiration from one of Lobato's stories.

⁸² The only (near) direct mention of his race in a source from the time appeared in a 1931 interview he gave to *A Gazeta*. The author described him as "from the same land and same race as [João] Cruz e Souza" a black poet from Santa Catarina. "Gabriel Marques," *A Gazeta*, October 8, 1931, 2. "da mesma terra e da mesma raça do [João] Cruz e Souza."

⁸³ "Gabriel Marques," *A Gazeta*, October 8, 1931, 2. "A mentalidade capitalista é a predominante no mundo e dahi o ambiente irrespiravel em que todos nós vivemos. Desvairada, cynica, egoistica, deshumana, como é, transformou-se em canero que precisa ser e será fatalmente extirpado. A má distribuição do capital e o 'favoritismo' destrambelhado, a profunda e dolorosa diferença que vae dos que tudo pôdem aos que nada têm, dos que morrem nos banquetes da vida numa intoxicação do hiper-capitalismo aos que succumbem nas ruas sobrias, de frio e de fome..."

The lines reveal Marques as a political radical and social critic disdainful of capitalism. While those opinions might have aligned with some of his contemporaries in São Paulo's lettered press and literary scene, they sharply contradicted the project of modernity and progress getting under way through the redevelopment of the city just a year after the publication of Maia's *Avenues Plan*.⁸⁴ Marques articulated his critique through various metaphors in the response, including the space of the street, a "sober" site where those that have nothing die from "cold and hunger." Note, as well, that the street serves in his response as a space that defines social difference.

Marques's early works would advance this social critique through stories about life in urban São Paulo. In 1926 he published *God's Forgotten Ones (Os esquecidos de deus)*, which received an honorable mention from the Brazilian Academy of Letters. The author of an article about the prize struggled to classify Marques, describing him as "a singular figure among new Brazilian authors," whose "field of observation is, ordinarily, the anonymous life of the humble people, the human wasteland (*o monturo humano*) where great physical and moral suffering ferments." The author characterized his writing style as "bizarre, audacious, insolent, and irregular." The article further revealed that a member of the prize committee had criticized Marques for only writing about "the tragic side of life." Another member disagreed, replying that the "human wasteland" in Marques's work reflected the urban realism of places like São Paulo, or the "life of hunger, of anguishes, of miseries, of unnamable sufferings and the deaf revolt of humble people in great cities." He concluded: "This misery exists; these sufferings are real; this revolt ferments, and grows in the shadows, and this author [Marques] registers them."⁸⁵

⁸⁴ A useful contrast can be drawn between Marques's view here and the article about the *Trezentos* cortiço published in the black newspaper *Progresso* in this same era and discussed in Chapter One.

⁸⁵ "Os Concursos Literários de 1927: Os Esquecidos de Deus," *Diário Nacional*, September 5, 1928, 8. "uma figura singular nas novas letras do Brasil...O seu campo de observação é, de ordinario, a vida anonyma dos humildes, o monturo humano onde fermentam as grandes dores physicas e moraes. Sob esse aspecto, o livro...tem, mais que um fim litterario, uma finalidade social"; "A sua fôrma é bizarra, audaciosa, insolente, irregular"; "por aproveitar, da vida, apenas o lado tragico." "Convém accentuar que a expressão 'monturo humano' que a comissão emprega no seu parecer, não se refere á vida de vicios, de infamia, de baixezas, de prostituição; mas á vida de fome, de angustias, de miserias, do soffrimentos innominaveis e de revolta surda, da gente humilde das grandes cidades modernas. Essa miseria existe; esses soffrimentos são verdadeiros; essa revolta fermenta, e cresce na sombra, e um autor os registro."

The phrase “God’s forgotten ones” appeared in widely-circulated newspapers in this era to describe residents facing the precariousness of urban life in São Paulo. A 1928 piece from the short-lived newspaper *Diário Nacional*⁸⁶ focused on Canindé, a favela that three decades later would become internationally known through the publication of the gripping diaries of one of its black female residents, Carolina Maria de Jesus.⁸⁷ Describing the “marvelous ills” of São Paulo, the author wrote about a “great number of neighborhoods where the people, with great ownership, call themselves ‘God’s forgotten ones.’” Roads, once again, functioned to illustrate social conditions: the piece’s text bookended two pictures of unpaved, uneven, and muddied streets in Canindé. The author commented: “It is a legitimate punishment for the passerby to cross these public roadways.”⁸⁸ It is feasible that Marques himself authored this unsigned article, though no records indicate that he worked for *Diário Nacional* at the time. Another article from *Diário Nacional* in 1928 used the same phrase and addressed similar themes.⁸⁹ These sources suggest that “the forgotten” signified, among some observers and possibly residents of precarious neighborhoods themselves, the socio-spatial contradictions of capitalist progress in the ballooning metropolis.

While his earlier works were mostly fictional stories inspired by real life, in *Streets and Traditions* Marques inverted the equation with imaginative historical narratives. In the collection he penned a section called “Slaves and the Largo do Bexiga” (“*Os Escravos e o Largo do Bexiga*”), prefaced with a dramatic epigraph where he introduces the neighborhood of Bexiga as a hub for runaway slaves and Bexiga Square specifically as the city’s slave market. He addressed the reader directly in the subsequent section “Slave Auction” (“*Leilão de Escravos*”): “The reader should know – if they do not

⁸⁶ The publication ran from 1927 to 1932 and was known as the “instrument of action” of the Partido Democrático, a party founded in 1926 to contest the long dominance of the Partido Republicano Paulista. “Diário Nacional,” CPDOC, <http://cpdoc.fgv.br/sites/default/files/verbetes/primeira-republica/DI%C3%81RIO%20NACIONAL.pdf> (accessed June 13, 2018).

⁸⁷ Carolina Maria de Jesus, *Quarto de Despejo: Diário de uma favelada* (São Paulo: Ática, 2014 [1960]).

⁸⁸ “O Canindé tal que se acha...O que são as ruas do popular bairro,” *Diário Nacional*, April 4, 1928. “o grande numero de bairros que o povo, com muita propriedade chama [se] de ‘esquecidos de Deus’”; “É um verdadeiro castigo para o transeunte atravessar...essas vias publicas.”

⁸⁹ “Os Esquecidos de Deus: a Vida Apagada de uma Classe Utilissima,” *Diário Nacional*, July 1, 1928.

already,” he began, “that it was precisely in this Plaza, next to the Memory Obelisk, that, once per week, auctions of slaves occurred.” Aiming to rectify the assumed amnesia among readers about the space, he recreates the scene of a slave auction at the square.

In the reimagined scene Marques depicts the social isolation and objectification of African and Afro-descendent captives. He alternates between descriptions of the bodies of captives and the process of their objectification as “pieces” (“*peças*”), such as the auctioneer’s calls and the tablature where they are listed by price. Social death corresponded to a spiritual seclusion, as well: “And their protector spirits (*orixás*)? What are they doing given that they’re not protecting them? ... In these moments, their *orixás* were travelling far away, very far from there, leaving them forgotten.”⁹⁰ He establishes a dialogue between figures at the auction in a distinctly-African dialect of Portuguese. The exchanges include the following plea from a captive to the young daughter of an interested buyer:

“ – Sinhazinha! Sei cuzinhá! Sei lava! Sei passá c’um fero! Sei tamê m fazê taxada di doce! Sei faze cafuné! Mi compri, iaiá!”

“ – Little miss! I know how to cook! I know how to wash! I know how to iron! I also know how to make *taxada di doce* [sweet treats]! I know how to do *cafuné* [head caresses]! Buy me, little miss!”⁹¹

The repetition of “I know” juxtaposes the intellectual life of the captive with the rampant signs of her objectification, though at the same time the laundry list of skills reminds the reader of the productive labor that defined her (market) value. Marques ends the “painful scene” with a baron inspecting and

⁹⁰ “E seus *orixás* protetores? Que fazem êles que os não amparam?...Naqueles instantes seus *orixás* andavam longe, muito longe dali e dêles estavam assim esquecidos.”

⁹¹ “[S]aiba o leitor – se já não sabe,” he writes, “que era precisamente nessa Praça, próximo ao Obelisco da Memória, que, uma vez por semana, se procedia a concorridos leilões de escravos.” I have not encountered a source that explicitly outlines the meaning of *taxada di doce*. The script Marques uses here and throughout the scene aims to mirror a spoken dialect. In more common usage this phrase is *tachada de doce*, which seems to translate to “pan of sweets.” It may have been a specialty that Afro-descendent captives were known for making. Author Magalhães de Azeredo referred to an enslaved woman making *tachada de doce* in his *Alma primitiva* (1895), 188. *Cafuné* is a practice of simultaneously scratching and caressing another person’s head, traditionally done by an enslaved person for a member of the master’s family. It was associated with looking for lice as well as bodily pleasure. Roger Bastide interpreted that pleasure to its fullest Freudian extent in “Psicanálise do Cafuné,” *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* 6:70 (1940), 118-130. Gilberto Freyre discusses the practice in *The Masters and the Slaves* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986 [1933]), 355, 397.

purchasing a man named Binidito. His sale, along with that of the other captives – including “a future black mother (*‘mãe preta’*) with a far-off glance and robust complexion” – ends the auction.⁹²

Marques emphasized continuities despite the auction’s end. The captives, he wrote, “came to live under a new whip. The environment changed, but the suffering not at all.”⁹³ He specified that environment of suffering: “Sold, they did not have the right to cry. And cry for what? Because they were not going to give their blood and sweat to the enrichment of São Paulo and Brazil? If they didn’t know already, they’d learn quickly, as the poet *Ciro Costa* said well...

‘...That the fruits of the coffee tree are red globules
Of the blood that flowed from the enslaved black.’⁹⁴

Like *Taunay’s* comments on São Paulo’s flag, the poet *Costa* invoked the blood of enslaved Africans. Rather than an “element” to be erased from São Paulo’s past and future, however, *Costa* – and by extension *Marques* – presents the labor and violence of Africans and their descendants as the source of Brazil’s wealth. The lines collapse bodies and commodities in a statement of equivalence: globules of blood are not *like* coffee fruits, they *are* them. The lines thus emphasize slavery as a racial system of objectification and, at the same time, the foundation of Brazil’s wealth. In this section it seems likely that *Marques* implied the extension of continuities past the formal end of slavery in 1888. His earlier critiques suggest that he understood capitalist urban modernity as the manifestation of a new “whip” that preserved racial stratification, violence, and oppression.

In *Streets and Traditions* *Marques* connected the construction of asphalted urban space in the name of progress to the negation of Afro-descendent populations and pasts. About the remaking of the *Praça da Bandeira* in the course of redevelopment for the *Avenues Plan*, he wrote: “Progress gave a new soul to the place. Progress even changed the name for the purpose, perhaps, of erasing the black past.”

⁹² “uma futura mãe preta de olhar distante e compleição robusta.”

⁹³ “passavam a viver sob nova chibata. Mudava o ambiente, mas não mudava o sofrimento.”

⁹⁴ *Marques, Ruas e Tradições*, 150. “Vendidos, não tinham o direito de chorar. E para que chorar? Pois não iam contribuir seu sangue e seu suor para o engrandecimento de São Paulo e do Brasil? Se já não sabiam, ficariam disso sabendo, como bem escreveu o poeta *Ciro Costa*... ‘...Que os frutos do café são glóbulos vermelhos / Do sangue que escorreu do negro escravizado.’”

The sentences recall Almeida's earlier personification of the street as possessing a soul, and they show Marques's understanding of the redevelopment of the site – materially and through its name – as a project of forgetting that silenced the history of Afro-descendants. That project was fundamentally spatial and materialized (as in, made material by city planners) through the substance at the core of the *Avenues Plan*: “It is true that nothing else there records, today, what was, yesterday, that rough piece of paulistano soil... They buried it beneath the *asphalt*.”⁹⁵

In Marques's writing we see the ambivalence of roadways that connected formal slavery in the nineteenth century to the Avenues-Making Era. Marques wrote:

Também, quando podiam, na senzala ou na rua, os pobres filhos de Angola, prêtos retintos, como carvão, cantavam seus ingênuos versinhos em tom de amargurada súplica ...
 Minha sinhá, minho sinhô,
 Eu peço porô caridade:
 Dá minha carta di forô,
 Eu quero minha liberdade!

Depois?

Depois, *vêm as avenidas*, a da Saude, a das Lágrimas e aquelas que escondem seus milhares de Antônio Tristes, tal aquêlo descrito, melancolicamente, pelo nosso inspirado Paulo Bomfim...⁹⁶

Also, when they could, in the slave quarters or on the street, the poor children of Angola, deeply black, like charcoal, would sing their ingenious little verses in a tone of bitter pleading ...
 My miss, my mister,
 I plea for your charity:
 Give me my card of manumission (*carta di forô*),
 I want my liberty!

And After?

After, *came the avenues*, the avenue of Saude (“Health”), of Lágrimas (“Tears”) and those that hide thousands of Antônio Tristes, such as described, melancholically, by our inspired poet Paulo Bomfim...⁹⁷

⁹⁵ “Depois, o Largo do Piques ligou-se ao do Bexiga num longo e fraternal amplexo formando, ambos, uma só Praça. O progresso deu alma nova ao local. Até lhe mudou o nome com o propósito, talvez, de apagar-lhe, de vez, o passado negro”; “Verdade seja que nada mais ali recorda, hoje, o que foi, ontem, aquêlo então áspero pedaço de chão paulistano... Sepultaram-no sob o asfalto.” My emphasis.

⁹⁶ Marques, *Ruas e Tradições*, 28-29, my emphasis.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 28. Marques references here the poem “Antônio Triste” (1946) by Paulo Bomfim, which opens: “Esguio como um poste da Avenida / Cheio de fios e de pensamentos” (“Slender like a lamppost on the Avenue / Full of currents and thoughts”).

Marques here represents streets as places of autonomy in colonial and imperial Brazil, wherein enslaved populations could petition for liberty through “ingenious verses.” The period following – postemancipation Brazil – was defined by avenues: the urban spatial form that in São Paulo signaled the supposed coming of modernity and progress. Roadways were not just sites for the mediation and negotiation of social relationships in a racialized slave society, Marques asserts. Their construction served to structure social difference and inequality by displacing inconvenient pasts along with undesirable populations in the present. In charting a direct link between slavery and avenues, Marques argues that social and spatial continuities overshadowed formal proclamations of change in 1888 and after.

Marques witnessed the asphaltting of São Paulo as an inquisitive researcher residing in the city center. In one of the introductions to *Streets and Traditions*, Marques’s peer and author Afonso Schmidt described him as “the pensioner with refined habits, of Tabatinguera Street.”⁹⁸ This street sits just north of the Liberdade district and east of the city’s principal cathedral at Sé.⁹⁹ Schmidt asserts that Marques frequented stigmatized places rarely visited by other members of the literary elite. About *The Condemned*, for instance, he wrote:

In his stories were Bexiga’s basements, holes from which, every afternoon, the men went out into the streets, like ants. In the stories were the little bars (*botecos*) of Piques, where vagabonds drank until they dropped and the women, when they fought, would pull a razor from their garters and stab at the face of their opponent. In the stories were pigsties without food, where children, deprived of breakfast, drank booze (*aguardente*). In the stories were all the miseries, all the crimes, all the painful things that people find in the last section of the newspaper. [Marques] was a chronicler of sub-humanity that did not come to the urban center, but a population that, to find, you must catch the streetcar and get off at the end of the line.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Marques, *Ruas e Tradições*, 10. “Pensionista de hábitos morigerados, na Rua Tabatinguera.” In the 1910s Schmidt participated in the founding of a literary collective, “Grupo Zumbi,” named after the leader of the seventeenth-century Palmares quilombo. Today, Schmidt has a municipal library named after him. The library opened in 1966 at the beginning of the former Estrada do Congo, now Elísio Teixeira Leite Avenue, in the Cruz das Almas neighborhood within Brasilândia. Maria Célia Rua de Almeida Paulillo, *Tradição e modernidade: Afonso Schmidt e a literatura paulista, 1906-1928* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2002).

⁹⁹ In the 1920s and 1930s, this area had a high concentration of Japanese immigrants and their descendants. Jader Tadeu Fantin, “Os japoneses no bairro da Liberdade – SP na primeira metade do século XX,” (master’s thesis, FAU-USP, 2013), 79.

¹⁰⁰ Marques, *Ruas e Tradições*, 10. “Nos contos estavam os porões do Bexiga, buracos de onde, tôdas as tardes, os homens saem em carreiros, como saúvas. Estavam os ‘botecos’ do Piques, onde os vagabundos bebem até cair e as mulheres, quando brigam, tiram a navalha da liga e lanham a cara uma da outra. Estavam as pocilgas sem pão, as crianças que, não tendo café pela manhã, bebem aguardente. Estavam tôdas as misérias, todos os crimes, tôdas as coisas dolorosas que a gente encontra nas ultimas páginas dos jornais. Era o cronista da sub-humanidade que não vem ao centro urbano, da gente que para encontrar é preciso tomar o bonde e descer no fim da linha.”

The geography of this quote is telling. In narrating stories about both paved-over pasts and problematic presents, Marques aimed to articulate the quotidian nature – often defined by horror, in his stories – of Bexiga and Piques. These sites did not form part of the “urban center” in the geography Schmidt described, a depiction perhaps more reflective of social rather than geographic marginality. While Schmidt implied such lifeways and practices were uncommon, Marques in his various works positioned them at the center of São Paulo’s past and present.

Captivated by histories of São Paulo’s literal and symbolic periphery, Marques himself would come to occupy a marginal position following the publication of *Streets and Traditions*. He likely died in May or June of 1980.¹⁰¹ Historian Célio Debes, who was a member of the State of São Paulo Historical Academy (*Academia Paulista de História*), wrote that Marques was a “constant presence” of the academy.¹⁰² Debes writes that “in the memories of his contemporaries, only a cloudy image of him remained; his works, and those were not few, remain totally forgotten among the leading literary figures.”¹⁰³ The unknown nature of Marques, a black author and political radical who excavated forgotten spatial histories in the city, parallels and is intertwined with the silencing of those spaces themselves.

In addition to asphalted avenues, São Paulo officials covered over pasts linked to enslavement at the Largo do Bexiga/Praça da Bandeira by rewriting the local history of slavery. In May of 1954, in the same era when Marques first published histories of São Paulo’s streets, City Council member Paulo Vieira proposed the construction of a memorial at the Praça da Bandeira. He envisioned “a monument commemorating the dates May 23 and July 9, referencing the memory of the young paulistas Martins,

¹⁰¹ A notice for a funerary mass for Gabriel Marques, “Escritor e Jornalista,” ran in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 6, 1980, 23.

¹⁰² Célio Debes, “Gabriel Marques, um injustiçados lidador das letras,” *Suplemento cultural: Revista APM (Associação Paulista de Medicina)* 175 (November 2006), 6. “dividia suas atividades entre os fazeres de funcionários dos Correios, a militância na imprensa e o cultivo das letras.” He explains further that Marques “divided his activities between the tasks of a Post Office functionary, militancy in the press and the cultivation of letters.”

¹⁰³ Debes, “Gabriel Marques,” 6. “na lembrança dos seus coetâneos, reste dele a imagem envolta em névoa; seus escritos, e não foram poucos, permanecem na mais completa deslembração dos lidadores das letras.”

Miragaia, Drausio and Camargo and the volunteers that fell in the Constitutionalist Revolution.”¹⁰⁴ The proposed monument would coincide with the 400-year celebration of São Paulo’s founding in 1554, and Vieira could count on broad support for the spirit of the proposal. However, he encountered a significant obstacle: across town at the new, Oscar Neiemeyer-designed Ibirapuera Park, construction was already underway of a monument commemorating the martyrs of the Constitutionalist Revolution. No records indicate whether the councilmembers discussed building both monuments, but they ultimately decided that the project underway at Ibirapuera took precedence.

Councilmember Vieira presented a re-written spatial history of slavery with his rhetoric in support of the monument. In June of 1955, the City Council reallocated the money that Vieira had originally requested for the monument for the project at Ibirapuera Park. The official resolution for the reallocation explained: “It is right that we erect this monument to our heroes so that future generations can know the sacrifice of the paulistas at the hour in which they broke the *shackles of slavery* to shout their yearning for liberty.”¹⁰⁵ This shackle-breaking referenced the “slavery” supposedly imposed on the paulista population by Getúlio Vargas in the course and wake of the Revolution of 1930. This discourse may well have been fringe and eyebrow-raising in the City Council chambers. Or perhaps it was greeted with approval from onlookers then knee-deep in a project to remake the city that buried pasts associated with racialized slavery under asphalted avenues. The subject of race, in either case, followed quickly behind the exclamation about slavery in the official statement: the monument to 1932 would recognize the movement that the paulistas led “with their blood in order to dignify the traditions of a race (*raça*).”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ “Martins, Miragaia, Drausio and Camargo” were the four students killed on May 23, 1932, in an anti-Vargas demonstration. The event pre-dated the open conflict that erupted a few weeks later on July 9, which would become closely associated with the acronym MMDC in memory of the dead students. “construção de um monumento homenageando as datas de 23 de maio e de 9 de julho de 1932, reverenciando a memória dos jovens paulistas Martins, Miragaia, Drausio e Camargo e os voluntários que tombaram na Revolução Constitucionalista.”

¹⁰⁵ “É justo que ergamos esse monumneto aos nossos heróis a fim de que as gerações vindouras possam conhecer o sacrificio dos paulistas numa hora em que quebravam os grilhões da escravidão para gritarem os seus anseios de liberdade.” My italics.

¹⁰⁶ “Parecer 43/55 da Comissão de Educação e Cultura, Sobre o Processo de Lei N. 229/54,” June 6, 1955. “será uma página de civilismo que os paulistas escreveram com o seu sangue para dignificarem as tradições de uma raça.”

With such official declarations, slavery, race, and freedom – connected to the Largo do Bexiga but extended beyond – were rewritten in official, elite discourse.

Following the Avenues-Making Era, historic preservation authorities would promote the official preservation (*tombamento*) of the sole remaining sliver of space that had served as a market for slaves. A group of São Paulo architects in the 1970s petitioned the State of São Paulo’s preservation arm, the Council for the Defense of Historical, Archaeological, Artistic and Tourist Heritage (CONDEPHAAT), for the preservation of the Largo da Memória. The group was led by Carlos Lemos, a prominent architect, urbanist, and historian.¹⁰⁷ Lemos penned multiple letters of support of the preservation with evidence of the historical significance of the square. Although the records claimed the project intended to restore the site to its “original workmanship,” the goal was in fact to restore it to its condition from the early twentieth century, itself the product of a restoration project commissioned by then-mayor Washington Luis.¹⁰⁸

The history of slavery at the Largo da Memória received a passing mention in the *tombamento* record. The *tombamento* packet is itself a type of spatial history: a compilation of original evidence and supporting literature organized in linear time and designed to prove the site’s historical significance. Articles from the mainstream press, some authored by the architects pushing the *tombamento*, were included in the packet. Those articles wedged the history of slavery between other pasts. Pitched at a broad reading public, the articles captured, and would help to shape, popular recollections of the place. Representative among them is an *O Estado de S. Paulo* piece from January 9, 1972, “Largo da Memória to be Reformed.” The article explained the early history of the site as follows: “There was a well where the animals headed to the livestock market, slaves, and wood (everything had the same value) quenched

¹⁰⁷ Lemos led Oscar Niemeyer’s office in São Paulo, participating in the construction of Ibirapuera Park and the Copan building. He was also involved in multiple historic preservation initiatives, including as the first head of CONDEPHAAT. “Homenagem aos 90 anos do arquiteto e urbanista Carlos Lemos,” *Conselho de Arquitetura e Urbanismo no Brasil*, June 18, 2015, <http://www.caubr.gov.br/homenagem-aos-90-anos-do-arquiteto-carlos-lemos/> (accessed April 5, 2018).

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Carlos Lemos, *Tombamento Record*, CONDEPHAAT, October 20, 1971, n.p.

their thirst or where students, on festive nights, took a dip in the waters.”¹⁰⁹ The piece asserts the equivalence of the social and commercial activities that occurred at the site. Aside from a handful of similar newspaper articles, the preservation file made no mention of the former use of the place. Throughout the packet and in the official resolution of preservation from April 1975, the architectural characteristics of the Largo received prime attention as symbols of a paulista prestige set to be “reborn” through the restoration project.¹¹⁰ Amnesia about the spatial history of the space variously named Bexiga, Piques, Memória, Riachuelo, and ultimately Bandeira reflects the effectiveness of the spatial project of forgetting.

Sitting at the Memory Square one afternoon, I recalled reading historian Pierre Nora’s work on *Sites of Memory*. Nora argued that sites of memory exist because of the “will to remember” and that they serve “to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize death.”¹¹¹ Gazing at the graffitied fountain and the residents enjoying a space of respite and leisure in the center of the metropolis, I could not discern any clear “will to remember” at “Memory Square.” Maybe I, and by extension Nora, were missing something. I then recalled historian James Young’s work on Holocaust memorials, *The Texture of Memory*, where he argued that making a monument does not necessarily serve to preserve memories. Instead, the concretization of the past through austere stone in the present can serve to externalize and, in fact, aid the process of forgetting.¹¹² I

¹⁰⁹ “Largo da Memória vai ser reformado,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 9, 1972. “...era só um trilho que descia do caminho da boiada até a ponte do Piques sôbre o Anhangabaú. Havia um poço onde os animais que iam ao mercado de bois, escravos e madeira (tudo tinha o mesmo valor), matavam sua sêde ou onde os estudantes, em noites de alegria, atiravam-se às águas.”

¹¹⁰ There was no mention, expectedly, of this history despite a section on the square in Benedito Lima de Toledo and Beatriz Mugayar Kühl, *Prestes Maia e as origens do urbanismo moderno em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Empresa das Artes Projetos e Edições Artísticas, 1996), 236.

¹¹¹ Nora differentiates sites of memory from sites of history. Separated by the “will to remember,” sites of memory “originate with the sense that there is no spontaneous memory, that we must deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organize celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and notarize bills because such activities no longer occur naturally.” He continues, “without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep [*les lieux de mémoire*] away.” Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* 26 (Spring, 1989), 12.

¹¹² He writes that “the more memory comes to rest in its exteriorized forms, the less it is experienced internally...In effect, the initial impulse to memorialize events like the Holocaust may actually spring from an opposite and equal desire to forget them.” James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 5.

surmised that perhaps an alternative memory project was indeed at play at the contemporary Memory Square: the desire to forget. Despite Marques's efforts to counter that forgetting through alternative histories and imaginative prose, planners actively forgot the spatial history of the Praça da Bandeira through the program of asphalted avenues that spanned throughout the Avenues-Making Era.

The "Pickaxe of Progress": Sacred Demolitions in and of Liberdade

Construction workers unearthed a common grave while installing a new telephone cable in the Liberdade neighborhood in 1929. Journalists from the newspaper *Diário Nacional*, whose headquarters sat across the street from the site, chronicled the findings in an article with the lengthy title: "In excavations made surrounding the church of the Remedies, human bones were encountered: Stories say that in this place, a century earlier, the members of the religious brotherhood were buried." The article recounted the role of the brotherhood in the campaign to abolish slavery in the 1880s, which was headquartered at the *Igreja dos Remédios* (Church of the Remedies). "The role of the Remedies brothers," the article explained, "was most important to the abolition campaign, the church becoming a legitimate refuge against slavery. United in life by religious faith and by the ideas that they put forward, the brothers remained united after death, in the common grave."¹¹³ The buried bodies were not the only nineteenth-century relics at this site: the Church of the Remedies housed a museum of slavery, replete with material objects of enslavement, torture, and punishment, that abolitionists founded in the 1880s. Although the *Diário Nacional* journalist concluded that the "skeletons found yesterday were the last resistance to the expansionist project of progress," the new telephone cable in fact signaled the beginning, not the end, of planning and executing progress in this significant region.¹¹⁴ The year following the discovery, Prestes

¹¹³ "Em Excavações feitas nas proximidades da igreja dos Remedios, foram encontradas ossadas humanas: No local, dizem as crônicas, eram sepultados, há um século atrás, os irmãos da ordem religiosa," *Diário Nacional*, March 21, 1931. "Foi importantíssimo o papel representado pela irmandade dos Remedios na campanha pela abolição, tornando-se um verdadeiro reducto contra escravagismo. Unidos em vida pela fé religiosa e pelos ideais que impulsionavam, continuaram os irmãos unidos depois da morte, no cemitério commun." John F. Collins has addressed a related set of events in Salvador da Bahia in his work *Revolt of the Saints: Memory and Redemption in the Twilight of Brazilian Racial Democracy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* "Os esqueletos hontem encontrados eram as ultimas resistencias á obra expansionista do progresso."

Maia would publish the *Avenues Plan*, which called for the construction of the ring road through this common grave and the Church of the Remedies. The Avenues-Making Era did not aim to recover long buried pasts. Instead, its designers sought to raze, asphalt, and thereby erase from both collective memory and the urban landscape undesirable histories and their meanings in the present.

Forty years prior to the formal abolition of slavery in 1850, the place named Liberdade did not exist in the official geography of the city of São Paulo.¹¹⁵ In that year, the place later designated as Liberdade consisted of two plazas connected by a street (one block long) running north-south (figure 19).



Figure 19: Original Liberdade region, 1850. Gastão Cesar Bierrembach de Lima, “Planta da cidade de São Paulo 1850,” Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo, http://www.arquivoestado.sp.gov.br/site/acervo/repositorio_digital/mapa_carto/BR_APESP_IGC_IGG_CAR_I_S_0245_001_001 (accessed Nov 12, 2017).

¹¹⁵ A state law of 1905 changed the name of the southern section of Sé (Sul da Sé) to Liberdade. The northern section would officially remain Norte da Sé until 1910, when the “Norte” was removed. See Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, <http://cidades.ibge.gov.br/painel/historico.php?lang=&codmun=355030&search=sao-paulo|sao-paulo|infograficos:-historico>.

In 1850, the label printed on the map for the northern plaza in this region was “September 7 Square, (Pillory)” (“*Largo Sete de Setembro (Pelourinho)*”). The first part of the name commemorated the date when Pedro, Prince of Brazil, declared independence from Portugal: September 7, 1822. The parenthetical “Pillory” referenced the previous name for the square, which had served as the site of public punishment in São Paulo. On the same 1850 map, the southern square was labelled the “Hanging Square” (“*Largo da Forca*”) and “Hanging Hill” (“*Morro da Forca*”). On the adjacent block to the east of the Hanging Square was the “Our Lady of the Afflicted” (“*Nossa Senhora dos Afflictos*”) chapel and cemetery, dated 1786. This was the first cemetery built for African and Afro-descendent slaves in the city.¹¹⁶

The label “Liberdade” appeared in official cartography for the first time in this region in 1868 with Liberty Street (*Rua da Liberdade*), the road that connected the two squares.¹¹⁷ By 1877, maps indicate that the earlier names for those squares had been removed from the linguistic landscape: “Pillory” had been dropped from “September 7 Square,” and “Hanging Square” had been renamed “Liberty Square” (“*Largo da Liberdade*”).¹¹⁸ Between 1868 and 1877, therefore, Liberdade gained the place names that would survive into the twenty-first century. The district of Liberdade is today known in popular and official discourse as a Japanese neighborhood, a spatial identity constructed later in the middle of the twentieth century and the subject of Chapter Five. To avoid confusion with this more recent history of Liberdade, I refer in this section to this much earlier local space as the *original Liberdade*. This territory was the first place in the city of São Paulo where ideals of Independence and Liberty were

¹¹⁶ “Igreja Nossa Senhora dos Aflitos,” Arquidiocese de São Paulo, <http://www.arquisp.org.br/regiao/se/paroquias/mosteiros-igrejas-historicas-oratorios-da-regiao-se/igreja-nossa-senhora-dos-aflitos> (accessed September 22, 2018); Renato Cymbalista, *Cidades dos Vivos: Arquitetura e atitudes perante a morte nos cemitérios do estado de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2002), 41. Igreja dos Aflitos from “Além Muros...” by Paula Ester Janovitch, *Revista Cidade*, 126-127. See also: Ernani da Silva Bruno, *História e Tradições da Cidade de São Paulo*, 1953; Vicente Azevedo, *O noivo da morte* (São Paulo: Clube do Livro, 1970).

¹¹⁷ Carlos Frederico Rath, “Planta da Cidade de São Paulo,” Arquivo Histórico Municipal, 1868, <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/info/info20/img/1868-download.jpg> (accessed June 12, 2018).

¹¹⁸ Fr.do de Albuquerque and Jules Martin, “Mappa da Capital da Cidade de S. Paulo,” Arquivo Histórico Municipal, 1877, <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/info/info20/img/1877-download.jpg> (accessed June 12, 2018).

inscribed in the linguistic landscape. In an irony not lost on observers in years following, those lofty principles were grafted onto a region previously defined by violence, punishment, and death.

Various narratives circulate about the origins of the place name “Liberdade.” Some describe it as popularly-given in the early nineteenth century, well before it appeared on official city maps. One story holds that the name referenced the freedom that souls gained as individuals condemned to death were executed in the “Hanging Square.” Another story references the thrice-failed hanging of a defiant soldier named Francisco Chagas in 1821, who nearly escaped death and became a saint of the local “Chapel of the Hanged” (“*Capela dos Enforcados*”).¹¹⁹ The area also held meaning for freed and enslaved Africans and their descendants in São Paulo. For instance, a nineteenth-century samba group was founded in Liberdade in 1857 by freed people and advocated for slavery’s abolition.¹²⁰

Replacing “Pillory Square” and “Hanging Square” with the ideals of Liberty and Independence occluded the local history of captivity along with racialized violence. This practice of renaming contrasted the city of Salvador in the state of Bahia, the place long touted in popular and academic discourse as Brazil’s true hub of Afro-descendant culture and history.¹²¹ In Salvador, two separate neighborhoods bear the names Pelourinho and Liberdade. There, the neighborhoods were and remain

¹¹⁹ Paulo Cursino de Moura, *São Paulo de Outrora: evocações da metrópole* (São Paulo: Editora Comp. Melhoramentos de S. Paulo, 1932), 126-36.

¹²⁰ Osvaldinho Da Cuíca, *História Do Samba Paulista I*, 1999, cd. The group, about which very little has been written, was named the *Zouavos*. This word may be the same as “Zouaves,” soldiers from North Africa who fought for the French from 1830-1891. Their distinctive attire would later be copied by units in the North and South during the U.S. Civil War (and be featured in Winslow Homer’s 1864 painting, “The Briarwood Pipe”). The São Paulo group also seems to have employed military styles and tropes. An announcement for a festival in *Correio Paulistano* in 1862 was pitched more like a military than Carnival parade. It is plausible that this group was comprised of veterans, though no records confirm or deny the supposition. *Correio Paulistano*, February 27, 1862, 2.

¹²¹ There is an expansive academic literature stretching to the nineteenth century that has participated in the elaboration and critical analysis of this spatial identity. Key authors in a less recent bibliography would include Nina Rodrigues, Manuel Querino, Pierre Verger, E. Franklin Frazier, Ruth Landes, Donald Pierson, Roger Bastide, and Edison Carneiro. More recent works include: J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2005); Kim Butler, “Africa in the Reinvention of Nineteenth-Century Afro-Bahian Identity,” in Kristin Mann and Edna G. Bay, eds., *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (London: F. Class, 2001), 135-54; Anadelia A. Romo, *Brazil’s Living Museum: Race, Reform, and Tradition in Bahia* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2010); Patricia de Santana Pinho, *Reinvenções da África na Bahia* (Editora Annablume, 2004); John F. Collins examines the notion of Salvador and, more specifically, the Pelourinho/Maciél neighborhoods, as the “cradle” and “heart” of Africa in *Revolt of the Saints*; Christen A. Smith, *Afro-Paradise: Blackness, Violence, and Performance in Brazil* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

adjacent and coterminous in space and time. In the geography of São Paulo, by contrast, the former Pelourinho was buried beneath Liberdade. That burial likely reflected an optimism in the era of abolition in the late nineteenth century, including the hope that idealistic place names would not only reflect, but serve to advance, change in the years following.

The original Liberdade became the hub of a crucial, final phase of Brazil's abolitionist movement in the 1880s. The head of the movement in São Paulo since the 1860s was ex-slave and black lawyer Luís Gama. Gama was himself a product of the internal slave trade referenced above. Gama's mother, Luísa Mahin, was implicated in the 1835 Malê slave uprising in Bahia. Forced to flee, she left the young Gama in Salvador. At the age of eight, Gama's Portuguese father sold him into slavery. Traders carried him to Rio de Janeiro, then to Santos, and finally over land to the city of São Paulo, where he may have been sold at the market at the Largo do Bexiga.¹²² Gama died in 1882 and in his place the white lawyer Antônio Bento de Souza e Castro assumed the leadership of the organized abolitionist campaign.

Antônio Bento shifted strategies toward direct action and abolition by force.¹²³ He co-founded the *caifazes*, a collective comprised of freed slaves, enslaved persons, immigrants, artists, journalists, lawyers, and masons. I have not found an explanation of the origins of the group's name. One likely possibility is that they drew their name from the Biblical story of Caiaphas, who in the Book of John is quoted as saying, about Jesus Christ, "that it would be good if one man died for the people."¹²⁴ The tone of martyrdom and the implied justification of violent means for just ends likely inspired the group. The *caifazes* made their headquarters at the Church of the Remedies, which sat at the northern pole of

¹²² Graham, "Another Middle Passage?" 306. A group led the remaining of a public plaza in the 1980s in Brasilândia for Gama's mother. It is today named Praça Luísa Mahin. João José Reis, *Slave rebellion in Brazil: the Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

¹²³ Renata Ribeiro Fransisco, "Periodização e Práticas Antiescravistas na Cidade de São Paulo (1850-1871)," *Sankofa. Revista de História da África e de Estudos da Diáspora Africana* XII (December 2013). Also see Alice Fontes, "A Prática Abolicionista em São Paulo: os caifazes (1882-1888)" (master's thesis, USP, 1976). Emilia Viotti da Costa characterizes this change as a move from the theoretical field to "luta direita." Emília Viotti da Costa, *Da Senzala à Colônia*, 4th Edition (São Paulo: Editora UNESP), 491-92.

¹²⁴ I have not encountered any explanation for the name in the literature about the group. I reached this conclusion by translating the Portuguese *caifas*.

Liberdade Street on the September 7 Square (ex-Pillory Square). Explaining the group's composition and strategy, historian Emilia Viotti da Costa writes:

...the caifazes did not content themselves with denouncing the horrors of slavery in the press. The printing press of their journal, *The Redemption (A Redenção)*, constituted a legitimate revolutionary nucleus, where members of the brotherhood of the Nossa Senhora dos Remédios church gathered, a majority being 'working-class blacks.'¹²⁵

While based in the original Liberdade, the caifazes's campaign stretched both east and west in the province of São Paulo as members encouraged mass flight from plantations and resettlement in the city or in quilombos. Comparing the caifazes to anti-slavery projects in the United States, Kim Butler asserts that they constituted Brazil's Underground Railroad.¹²⁶

The nominal leader of the caifazes, Bento, himself resided in the neighborhood. An 1886 directory of lawyers in the city of São Paulo lists his address at Liberdade Street, number 17.¹²⁷ A 1911 map with the numeration of addresses allows us to locate the exact site of Bento's home, just north of the edge of Liberdade Square (figure 20). Bento's home served as a node for abolitionist activities. An 1883 article from *O Estado de S. Paulo* noted that an enslaved woman had been "deposited at the house of Dr. Antônio Bento, to take care of her liberty."¹²⁸ Antonia Aparecida Quintão describes this as a common practice: "In his house and from his own account he sustained blacks on the run."¹²⁹ Bento's home and the original Liberdade became destinations for captives escaping by flight and/or force from plantations in the interior of the state.

¹²⁵ Viotti da Costa, *Da senzala à colônia*, 491-92. "Os caifazes não se contentavam com denunciar pela imprensa os horrores da escravidão. A tipografia da *Rendação*, jornal mantido por eles, constituíra-se um verdadeiro núcleo revolucionário, onde se reuniam os membros da Irmandade de Nossa Senhora dos Remédios, na maioria 'operários negros.'"

¹²⁶ Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, 28.

¹²⁷ *Almanach Administrativo, Commercial e Industrial da Provincia de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Jorge Seckler & Cia, 1886), 103.

¹²⁸ "Grande sucesso," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 1883. The curious situation seemed to be that she was convinced to return to the farm from which she had fled. "depositada em casa do sr. dr. Antônio Bento, para tratar de sua liberdade, como era de direito por ela ser africano."

¹²⁹ Antonia Aparecida Quintão, *Irmandades negras: outro espaço de luta e resistência, São Paulo: 1870-1890* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2002), 81. "Em sua casa e a sua própria conta sustentava os negros foragidos."

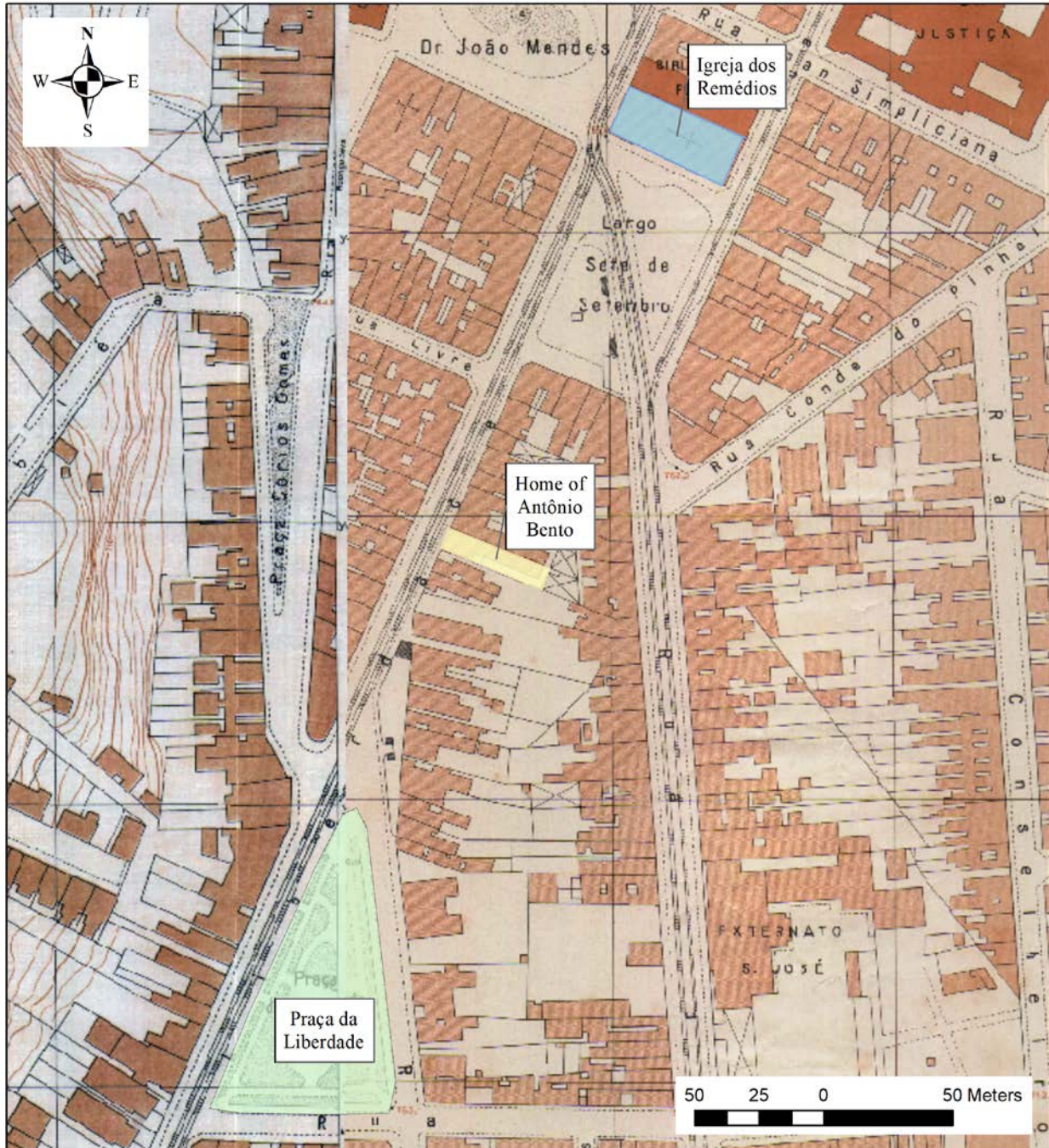


Figure 20: Antônio Bento's Home, Praça da Liberdade, and the Igreja dos Remédios. Map assembled by compiling information from an uncredited 1911 map with numeration and a city directory. Basemap is from "Mapeamento 1930 - SARA," *GeoSampa*, www.geosampa.prefeitura.sp.gov.br (accessed June 12, 2018). Map by author.

In the 1880s the original Liberdade became a stage for the dramatization of the violence of slavery. Castro Alves's poem "*Navio Negroiro*" ("Slave Ship") – cited in the work of Gabriel Marques discussed above – was set to music and staged at least twice in the 1880s in São Paulo. One of the

performances occurred at the S. José Theatre, a block northwest of the Church of the Remedies.¹³⁰ In the 1880s the caifazes rescued a tortured slave in the interior and sent him to the city of São Paulo. Bento received him at his home and decided to exhibit the man at the front of a religious procession comprised of the members of the Remedies brotherhood. The scene was recorded by Antonio Manuel Bueno de Andrada, a friend of Bento and sympathizer of the abolitionist cause:

Among the saints on the processional floats (*andores*), suspended on long rods, appeared instruments of torture: shackles, yokes, scourges, etc. In the front, beneath the image of crucified Christ, the miserable captive walked unsteadily and vacillating... The impression on the city was profound. The police did not dare impede the march of the popular mass... Everyone felt profoundly disturbed, except for the wretched, tormented black, whose pains had made him mad.¹³¹

Exhibiting the violence and punishment of slavery as represented by the tortured man, the caifazes dramatized the moral campaign against slavery in an effort to elicit support for abolition.

While violence and punishment formerly defined *Liberdade*, the abolitionist campaign made it a sacred space for black and white abolitionists alike. An optimism had been inscribed in the title of the caifazes's antislavery periodical: *The Redemption (A Redenção)*. The 1888 declaration of formal abolition seemed auspicious for the prospect of atonement, and the original *Liberdade* was host to celebrations that reflected that hope. On the first anniversary of formal abolition in 1889, for instance, *O Estado de S.*

Paulo recorded the following event:

The day before yesterday, in São Paulo the commemorative festivities for the 13th began. Diverse *jongos* of blacks, in great joy, covered *Liberdade Square* and *Liberdade Street*, parking various times in front of the house of Dr. Antônio Bento. At the side of the house of the beloved abolitionist, they raised an elegant bandstand, where the Remedies band played during the 12th and 13th.¹³²

¹³⁰ The poem itself was printed in *Jornal da Tarde*, May 31, 1881, 2. The poem was staged on April 30, 1882. (*Correio Paulistano*, April 30, 1882, 4). The other performance was held at the Theatro Baquet on the Sunday, May 6, 1888. Exactly one week following, formal abolition would be proclaimed in Brazil. *Correio Paulistano*, May 6, 1888, 3.

¹³¹ Antonio Manuel Bueno de Andrada, "A Abolição em São Paulo," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 13, 1918, 3. "Entre os andores dos santos, suspensos em longas hastes, apareciam instrumentos de tortura; grilhões, cangas, relhos etc. Na frente, debaixo da imagem lívida de Cristo crucificado, caminhava trôpego e vacilante o infeliz cativo... A impressão na cidade foi profunda! A polícia não ousou impedir a marcha da massa popular... Todos sentia-se profundamente comovidos, menos o infeliz preto matriciado, que às dores enlouquecera."

¹³² "Os festejos," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 14, 1889, 1. "Ante-hontem, começaram nesta capital as festas comemorativas do dia 13. Diversos *jongos* de negros, em grande alarido, percorreram o largo e a rua da *Liberdade*, estacionando diversas vezes em frente á casa do dr. Antônio Bento. Ao lado da casa deste benemerito abolicionista, estava levantado um elegante coreto, onde a banda de musica dos Remedios tocou durante o dia 12 e o dia 13."

Bento himself seems to have played a significant role in the meaning that Afro-descendants attached to the local region. José Correia Leite explained, for instance: “As for the Church of the Remedies, the presence of blacks owed to the fact that Antônio Bento had been its trustee. He was so adored among blacks. So much that, when he was alive, on each May 13, blacks would samba at the door of his house.”¹³³

The original Liberdade, including the Church of the Remedies, remained a sacred site in decades following and through the beginning of the Avenues-Making Era. Festivities for the 45th anniversary of formal abolition in 1933 commenced at the church. The *Frente Negra Brasileira* (Brazilian Black Front), a pioneering black associative organization founded in 1932 in São Paulo, organized the day’s events and published the program in their official journal, *A Voz da Raça* (*The Voice of the Race*). The day began “In the morning, at 6:30, with a solemn mass, at the Church of the Remedies, proceeding to the João Mendes Plaza, in memory of the warrior Francisco Costa Santos along with black and white abolitionists.”¹³⁴ Costa was one of the founders of the *Frente Negra Brasileira* (FNB hereafter) who died soon after the founding of the organization.¹³⁵ The FNB headquarters itself was located two blocks south along Liberdade Street at number 196, across from the former Hanging Square.¹³⁶ The decisions to base the FNB in Liberdade and to commence May 13 commemorations at the Church of the Remedies indicate efforts to preserve the memories and meaning attached to these sites.

¹³³ José Correia Leite and Cuti, ...*E disse o velho militante* (São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, 1992), 56-57. Rua Vergueiro here is Avenida da Liberdade. “Quanto à Igreja dos Remédios, a presença de negros se devia ao fato de que o Antônio Bento tinha sido o provedor. Ele era queridíssimo no meio negro. Tanto que, quando era vivo, nos treze de maio, os negros iam sambar na porta da casa dele, ali no começo da Rua Vergueiro.” George Reid Andrews notes the first instance of this tradition in 1888 and its continuation into the twentieth century. George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 212-213.

¹³⁴ “13 de Maio de 1933,” *A Voz da Raça*, April 22, 1933, 4. “De manhã, às 6,30, missa solemne, na igreja dos Remedios, á Praça João Mendes, em memoria do batalhador Francisco Costa Santos e dos Abolicionistas Negros e Brancos.”

¹³⁵ André Côrtes de Oliveira, “Quem é a ‘Gente Negra Nacional’? Frente Negra Brasileira e *A Voz da Raça* (1933-1937)” (master’s thesis, UNICAMP, 2006), 90.

¹³⁶ *A Voz da Raça*, April 22, 1933, 4; Letie, *E disse*, 96.

Aside from providing social service programs for black residents of São Paulo, the FNB advocated to change policies or practices of racial discrimination. For instance, organizers in the early 1930s redoubled earlier efforts to overturn the exclusion of blacks from the São Paulo police force, the *Guarda Civil*.¹³⁷ Leite discussed this issue in the following, possibly fictionalized, scene, which he connected to the original Liberdade:

Na porta de um botequim, um negro já de certa idade, meio cachaçado, estende suas mãos espalmadas e caolosas para o guarda-civil, estrangeiro, de cabelos louros, olhos de gato, majestoso feito de um gigante.

-- Olha para isto, diz o negro. São cinquenta anos no guatambu.¹³⁸ *Meio século. Meio século! Minha mocidade, meu sangue, meu suor.* Enxada, senzala, cafezal, tudo ficou na terra. Depois, 13 de maio. Há anos, eu sambei na Rua da Liberdade, em frente da casa de Antônio Bento. Bebi muita pinga. 13 de maio. Você não compreende nada disso. Olha pra minhas mãos. Eu sou livre, moço. Deixe que eu me afogue na cachaça. Eu sou livre. Parece incrível. Preto não pode ser guarda-civil...Que triste meio para justificar um fim tão simples: ganhar a vida.

At the door to a bar, a black man already of a certain age, half drunk, extends his flattened, calloused hands to a civil guard, an immigrant, with blond air, eyes like a cat, a majestic prowess like a giant.

-- Look at this, the black man said. This is fifty years behind the plow (*no guatambu*). *Half a century! Half a century! My youth, my blood, my sweat.* Hoe, shanty, coffee plantation, I left everything in the ground. Afterwards, May 13. For years, I would samba on Liberdade Street, in front of the house of Antônio Bento. I drank a lot of sugar-cane alcohol (*pinga*). May 13. You do not understand any of this. Look at my hands. I am free, young man. Let me drown myself in booze (*cachaça*). I am free. It seems incredible. And blacks can't even be civil guards...What a sad means to justify an end so simple: earn a living.¹³⁹

With the exclamation “I left everything in the ground,” the unnamed freedman emphasizes the link between land and the history of enslavement. Plowed into and marked on the earth in those fifty years was his identity, as “everything” stood for essential elements of his self: youth, blood, and sweat. He critiques the failed promises of abolition and persisting inequalities, especially the state’s racialized monopoly on violence through the practice of discrimination in the Civil Guard.¹⁴⁰ The participants in the

¹³⁷ The FNB successfully appealed to Vargas himself, who ordered the Guard Civil to admit black members. Andrews, *Blacks and Whites*, 150-151.

¹³⁸ A tree whose wood was commonly used for hoes.

¹³⁹ This story was from *O Alvorecer de uma Ideologia*, written by José Correia Leite and published as an annex in *E disse*, 290. Emphasis in original.

¹⁴⁰ Service in armed units was long a means for social mobility in various regions of Latin America. See, for instance, Ben Vinson’s study on New Spain. Ben Vinson, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2001).

conversation are additionally significant: the Afro-descendent freedman engages the supposedly naive white immigrant, a stand-in for the “free” labor valorized by São Paulo politicians and planters as the country’s future beyond abolition. The freedman engages the immigrant as a personification of that historical process and argues for his rights by invoking his participation in abolitionism in the original *Liberdade*. The geography in his plea casts that region as a notable site of memory for the project of formal abolition *as well as* a mournful, contemporary representation of the incompleteness of political and socioeconomic liberty following the formal end of slavery.

The Church of the Remedies remained a hallowed site because of the museum of slavery housed within its walls. In a 1961 issue of *O Novo Horizonte* (*The New Horizon*), a later newspaper of São Paulo’s black press, journalists remembered the museum: “In the vestry [a room or building adjacent to a church] of the Church of the Remedies, [Bento] organized a museum with instruments of the martyrdom of slaves, which were presented with the following label: ‘All these instruments are authentic and were used.’”¹⁴¹ Leite similarly recalled that “The church had a museum of instruments of slave torture.”¹⁴² Viotti da Costa writes that there were “instruments of torture like hooks, irons, chains, found by the members of the brotherhood.”¹⁴³ The macabre memorial preserved the material realities of enslavement, torture, and punishment in a space where that past had been occluded in favor of place names – “Liberdade” and “Sete de Setembro” – that indexed triumphalist narratives about national independence and liberty.

In the *Avenues Plan* Maia projected the ring road through the Church of the Remedies. His proposal outlined the combination of the João Mendes Plaza (*Praça João Mendes*) with the September 7 Square, effectively doing away with the latter and in the process creating both an expanded avenue and a sizable new public space. That avenue and plaza would serve as a central transportation node for

¹⁴¹ Brasil Bandecchi, “O Fabuloso Antônio Bento,” *O Novo Horizonte*, March 1961, 4. “Na sacrista da Igreja dos Remedios, [Bento] organizou um museu com os instrumentos de martirio dos escravos, e que eram apresentados com este distico: ‘Todos estes instrumentos são autênicos e foram empregados.’”

¹⁴² Leite, *E disse*, 57. “A igreja tinha um museu de instrumentos de totura da escravidão.”

¹⁴³ Viotti da Costa, *Da Senzala à Colônia*, 347. “instrumentos de suplício como ganchos, ferros, correntes, encontrados pelos irmãos da confraria.”

streetcars and the expanded system of bus transportation. The project would require the expropriation and demolition of a sizable city block. As early as 1938, an article in *Correio Paulistano* reported that Maia, then in the first year of his first term, had signed a decree “declaring for public use, to be expropriated, all of the block between the roads August 11, Irmã Simpliciana and plazas João Mendes and September 7.”¹⁴⁴ The expropriation decree appeared in the records of the City Council later in 1941, with this justification for the demolition: “These structures are necessary, in their totality, for the expansion of João Mendes Plaza.”¹⁴⁵ The article from *Correio Paulistano* in 1938 offered the following aside about the fine print of demolition: “A curious detail...with the expropriations to be made, one of the oldest Catholic temples of the city, the Church of the Remedies, will disappear.”¹⁴⁶ The official 1941 decree, signed by Maia along with Director of Public Works Ulhôa Cintra, made no mention of the name or nature of the structures to be demolished, as was common practice in similar decrees.¹⁴⁷

The proposed demolition provoked commentary from journalists and others in São Paulo’s mainstream press. An unsigned article in *O Estado de S. Paulo* interpreted the demolition as the confrontation between history and modern progress: “Yielding to the progressive impulse of the city, within a short time, in order to make space for the Circular avenue [the ring road], the traditional Church of the Remedies will cease to exist, at the João Mendes Plaza, however it will live in the history of São Paulo as one of the most significant *marks* of the old capital.”¹⁴⁸ As at other related sites, the term “mark”

¹⁴⁴ “Vai Ser Ampliada a Praça 7 de Setembro,” *Correio Paulistano*, February 26, 1938. “declarando de utilidade publica, afim de ser desproprado, todo o quarteirão compreendido entre as ruas 11 de Agosto, Irmã Simpliciana e praças João Mendes e 7 de Setembro.”

¹⁴⁵ Decree 252 of October 14, 1941. “A igreja tinha um museu de instrumentos de tortura da escravidão.”

¹⁴⁶ “Vai Ser Ampliada,” *Correio Paulistano*. “Uma nota curiosa, conseqüente as medidas do governo da cidade, é que, com as desapropriações a serem feitas, desaparecerá um dos mais antigos templos catholicos da capital, isto é, a Egreja dos Remedios.”

¹⁴⁷ Cintra was the first to propose the ring road. See Joel Outtes, “Disciplining Society through the City: The Birth of *Urbanismo* (City Planning) in Brazil, 1916-1941” (PhD diss., Oxford University, 2000).

¹⁴⁸ “Igreja dos Remedios: Decreto da autoridade eclesiastica reduzindo o tradicional templo ao uso profano para que possa ser demolido,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 6, 1942. “Cedendo ao impulso progressista da cidade, dentro em breve, para dar lugar á avenida Circular, deixará de existir a tradicional igreja dos Remedios, á praça João Mendes, que não obstante viverá na história de S. Paulo como um dos marcos mais significativos da velha capital.” My emphasis.

here signified a space with a racialized/ethnicized identity. Another observer drew a direct connection between the church and the history of slavery in São Paulo:

When during the rush of everyday life we pass by the João Mendes Plaza, we remember that that little grandfatherly church already completed 218 years. Then, it seems that we rediscover a familiar world impregnated with interior resonances. The world from that era when São Paulo had slaves and lived drowned in a pearly gray drizzle...¹⁴⁹

The article proceeded to highlight the church itself as a refuge for freed slaves during the era of abolition. A separate piece from 1939 in *Correio Paulistano* termed the church an “Authentic colonial monument.”¹⁵⁰ Focusing on its age, construction in the colonial era, and links to slavery and abolition, the articles made the case for the church as a significant and marked historical site.¹⁵¹

The Church of the Remedies appeared prominently in author Paulo Cursino de Moura’s *Bygone São Paulo (São Paulo Outrora)*. Moura first published his stories in the newspaper *S. Paulo-Jornal* and subsequently collected them in book-length editions in 1932 and 1943. The subtitle of the book was the “Psychology of Roads,” and Moura described his work as “the book of streets.”¹⁵² Like Gabriel Marques, Moura described streets as much more than paved passages. Employing the term “psychology,” he asserted that streets were living sites that bore the collective, socio-spatial memory of the city.

Spatial histories of Afro-descendants in São Paulo are a central theme of *São Paulo Outrora*. In a section titled “The Pillory” (“*O Pelourinho*”), Moura depicts Pai-João,¹⁵³ identified as a black man of “90 or 100,” standing in front of the Church of the Remedies. Scanning the church up and down and peering

¹⁴⁹ “Nossa Senhora dos Remedios,” *Correio Paulistano*, December 4, 1942. “Quando dentro do corre-corre cotidiano passamos pela praça João Mendes, lembramos que aquela igrejinha avoenga já completou seus duzentos e dezoito anos. Então, parece que redescobrimos um mundo familiar fecundo de ressonancias interiores. O mundo daquele tempo em que São Paulo possuía escravos e vivia afogado dentro da garôa ‘gris-perle,’ complemento do paulista ensimesmado.”

¹⁵⁰ “A Tradicional Igreja dos Remedios Vae Ser Demolida,” *Correio Paulistano*, March 19, 1939, 16. “Verdadeiro monumento colonial.”

¹⁵¹ One would imagine the black press a useful resource to gain other perspectives on the demolition. The declaration of the Estado Novo by Getúlio Vargas in 1937 had done away with political parties, however, which included the Frente Negra Brasileira and its associated publications.

¹⁵² Moura, *São Paulo Outrora*, 8 and 10. “Psychologia das Ruas”; “o livro das ruas.”

¹⁵³ Pai-João is the name of the Ciro Costa poem that Gabriel Marques cites in *Ruas e Tradições*. Marques writes, at and about the scene of the slave auction: “Os mais velhos têm sempre o nome Pai-João.” He includes the poem: “Quano iô tava ni mim téra, / Iô chamava capitão; / Chêga ni téra dim branco, / Iô mi chama Pai-Zuão!” Marques, *Ruas e Tradições*, 147.

into the adjacent square, Pai-João looks for a sign with the square's name, which he is unable to read. He asks a passerby, who tells him that it is the September 7 Square. "Well then, they changed it," he responds. "Here was the Pillory Square." He observes the material changes of the region: "The old black man did not recognize the local place...Everything had changed. The flagstones of the street, the drains, how they had been so flattened." The man's observation about the material nature of streets emphasizes again the role of roadways as indications of change in São Paulo. While invisible in material space, Pai-João recalls the former pillory in the adjacent square with acute detail: "A pillar of crude stonework. Solid stones, where two large rings, cemented into the block, hung. Underneath, currents flowing, like snakes, on the flooring, a little taller than the height of the road, forming a type of stage (*palanquim*)." He comments on how that spatial history has been buried: "The pillory disappeared. It's good. The memory of the past dies down in the popular soul."¹⁵⁴ A personification of that buried and disappearing past, Pai-João represents the persistence of memories of racialized violence in the original Liberdade and at the Church of the Remedies in the 1930s.

Cursino de Moura published this history in 1932 in the early years of the Avenues-Making Era. In that edition he commented on the changes that had already reshaped the original Liberdade, with one notable exception:

...there was sanctuary...in other farms of abolitionists, in modest people's homes and in churches. At the Church of the Remedies, at [the Church] of Misericórdia, in the square of that name (demolished in 1888, coinciding with the abolition law (*lei aurea*), as if to say – 'I am no longer needed') and at [the Church] of São Gonçalo. The oldest relic of the times gone by, that the pickaxe of progress has to date still respected – the Church of the Remedies – solemnly attests to the protection of slaves.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ "Entonces, mudaram"; "Aqui era o Largo de Pelourinho"; "Negro velho não reconheceu o local...Tudo mudado. As lages da rua, das sarjetas, como tinham aplainado tanto!"; "Uma coluna de cantaria tósca. Pedras firmes, donde duas argolas grandes, cimentadas ao bloco, pendiam. Em baixo, correntes derramando-se, como cobras, pelo lagedo, um pouco mais alto que o nível da rua, formando um palanquim"; "O pelourinho desapareceu. Ainda bem. A lembrança do passado se apagou na alma popular."

¹⁵⁵ Moura, *São Paulo de Outrora*, 89. "...havia o refúgio...em outras chácaras de abolicionistas, em modestas casas e nas igrejas. Na Igreja dos Remédios, na da Misericórdia, no largo dêste nome (demolida em 1888, coincidindo com a *lei aurea*, como a dizer – 'não precisam mais de mim') e na de São Gonçalo. A velhíssima relíquia dos tempos idos, que a picareta do progresso ainda está respeitando – a Igreja dos Remédios – atesta solenemente a proteção aos escravos.

Writing in the early 1930s, the significant Church of the Remedies seemed secure from the “pickaxe of progress.” The fixture served as the point of reference for Pai-João, representative of a generation for whom the memories of the local space remained too acute to level so easily. As with Gabriel Marques’s stories about the layers of history beneath the Praça da Bandeira, Cursino de Moura drew attention to the pattern of demolishing places associated with Afro-descendants. His alternative history – a type of prose memorial – countered the spatial project of forgetting.

The razing of the Church of the Remedies paralleled the expropriation of another historic black church in São Paulo. Between 1903-1905 the City of São Paulo expropriated the *Igreja Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos* (Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men), a black brotherhood founded in 1711. The church relocated to the northeast of the old city center at the Paissandu Square.¹⁵⁶ In the *Avenues Plan* Maia set the City’s sights on that church again, arguing it should be demolished and re-erected in the Barra Funda neighborhood. In his map of demolitions in the *Avenues Plan*, Maia marked the site in red, thereby including it in the open-ended, catchall category of projects related to “new alignments or modifications.” The church sat multiple blocks from the nearest avenue projected for enlargement and, therefore, was an oddly-remote choice for demolition.¹⁵⁷

Maia, in fact, had no avenue-making plans for the site of the Igreja Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos. Instead, he intended to erect a monument to Duque de Caxias, a prominent military and political figure of nineteenth-century Brazil, once the church had been cleared.¹⁵⁸ Despite the auspices under which it was conceived, therefore, the proposed expropriation had no connection to the redevelopment of São Paulo’s transportation network. This example reveals that the scope of Maia’s plan well exceeded the strict confines of transportation planning, even if his program was structured by

¹⁵⁶ Butler, *Freedoms Given*, 78. Alicia Monroe, “Brotherhoods of their Own: Black Confraternities and Civic Leadership in São Paulo, Brazil, 1850-1920” (PhD diss., Emory University, 2014). This site was in the core of center-city São Paulo at what is now identified as the Praça Antonio Prado.

¹⁵⁷ Maia, *Estudo de um plano*.

¹⁵⁸ Raul Joviano do Amaral, *Os Pretos do Rosário de São Paulo – subsídios históricos* (São Paulo: João Scortecchi Editora, 1991), cited in Reinaldo José de Oliveira, “Segregação Urbana e Racial na Cidade de São Paulo: as periferias de Brasilândia, Cidade Tiradentes e Jardim Ângela” (PhD diss., PUC-SP, 2000). He included an image of the monument in his 1945 publication *Melhoramentos*.

questions about traffic and the road network.¹⁵⁹ The significance of the historic site he marked for demolition and the specifics of the proposal for replacement suggested the mayor desired to push to the margin a sacred and historic center of black associative life in the city. In her 1945 doctoral thesis, “Study of Racial Attitudes of Blacks and Mixed-Race People in São Paulo,” researcher Virgínia Leone Bicudo recorded the following observation from a black resident about the demolition of the church:

That attitude of prejudice in São Paulo is not exceptional – by the same motive, one thinks about the removal of the church of the Rosary from the Paissandu square, they say to erect a monument. Discussing the subject with a white Catholic, he told me: ‘It is necessary to clean that place, to remove the church from there.’¹⁶⁰

The comments of Bicudo’s interviewee suggest a broader consensus about the project to remove the church that extended beyond Maia himself.

Maia’s effort to dislocate the church represented the futurist-oriented project of forgetting at the heart of the *Avenues Plan*: the desire to raze or marginalize undesirable pasts in the name of producing alternative futures. Those desired futures were not without pasts themselves. As with the proposal for a monument in the Praça da Bandeira, Maia’s project of forgetting entailed a process of re-remembering in concrete through the monument to Duque de Caxias. Maia did not succeed in the expropriation of the Igreja Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos in the 1930s-’40s, however, and the church has remained at the Largo de Paissandu through the twenty-first century.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Peixoto-Mehrtens terms Maia a “traffic engineer” who “viewed the metropolis largely as an economic and transportation problem, not as a delicate interplay of families, business, and neighborhoods.” I would argue that while the focus of the project was transportation infrastructure, its full scope – in both plan and practice – was more ambitious. Cristina Peixoto-Mehrtens, *Urban Space and National Identity in Early Twentieth Century São Paulo, Brazil: Crafting Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 2010), 107.

¹⁶⁰ “Tal atitude de preconceito em São Paulo não é única – pelo mesmo motivo, cogita-se de tirar a Igreja do Rosário do largo Paissandu, dizem que para erigir ali um monumento. Discutindo o assunto com um branco católico, respondeu-me: ‘É preciso limpar aquele local, tirar a Igreja dali.’” Virgínia Leone Bicudo, *Estudos Raciais de Pretos e Multos em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Editora Sociologia e Política, 2010).

¹⁶¹ Amaral, *Os Pretos do Rosário de São Paulo*, cited in Oliveira, “Segregação,” 159. The following chapter includes a discussion on the construction of a “Mãe Preta” statute in front of the church in the 1950s, a subject that has received substantial attention in other work on São Paulo, such as: Paulina Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2013); Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity*. Prestes Maia expert and one of the chief apologists of the mayor-urbanist, architectural historian Benedito Lima de Toledo, did not recall the motivations for this aspect of the *Avenues Plan*: Prestes Maia “queria demolir a Igreja dos Remédios – não me lembro mais de argumentação dele – e arrumou motivos para a demolição.” “O Prefeito, Razões e Desrazões,” *Revista Cidade*, 37.

Where he failed in the demolition of one iconic church associated with Afro-descendants, Maia succeeded on the southern edge of the ring road in Liberdade. We do not have to speculate about Maia's motives for demolishing the Church of the Remedies. In 1942 he submitted an extensive report with an update on his projects to the State of São Paulo Assembly. In structure, tone, and detail, the exhaustive 1942 document mirrored the *Avenues Plan* itself. Different from that earlier publication, Maia used the first-person singular in this report, indicating that the printed words were fully his own. In the early pages of the report, he addressed the ring road and the Church of the Remedies:

The great expansion of the João Mendes Plaza, extended all the way to Tabatinguera Street, required almost 3 million cruzeiros of expropriation expenditures, including the Church of the Remedies, *of debatable historical and artistic value*, and whose location strangulated the best passage to the neighborhoods of Glória and Liberdade.”¹⁶²

The “debatable” modifier called into question the church's worth. The adjective did not amount to a wholesale negation of its history, but cast sufficient doubt to legitimize the demolition and the sum spent on expropriation.

Maia's decision to demolish the church reflected an indifference, if not disdain, toward the site and those who considered it sacred. His interpretation of the “debatable” value of the church cannot reasonably be attributed to ignorance. Articles about the history of the church had circulated in São Paulo's mainstream press since the early 1930s. The church was deemed of significant enough historical value for inclusion in Militão Augusto de Azevedo's collection of photos of São Paulo, snapped between the 1862-1887 (figure 21).

¹⁶² “A Vida Administrativa de São Paulo,” Report by Interventor Federal, Fernando Costa, Presented to Getulio Vargas, 1943, 369, emphasis mine. “A grande ampliação da praça João Mendes, estendida até a rua Tabatinguera, exigiu cerca de 3 milhões de cruzeiros de despesas com expropriações, inclusive a da igreja dos Remédios, de valor histórico e artístico discutível e cuja situação estrangulava a melhor passagem para os bairros da Glória e Liberdade.” My emphasis.



Figure 21: Igreja dos Remédios, Militão Augusto de Azevedo, circa 1887. Acervo Instituto Moreira Salles. Reproduced with permission.

What's more, Maia had a well-worn copy of *São Paulo de Outrora* in his personal library, wherein his few annotations revealed a particular interest in the history of Afro-descendants in Brazil.¹⁶³ Behind the veneer of positivistic neutrality in the *Avenues Plan*, a literal value judgement animated the effort to erase the past preserved in and represented by the Church of the Remedies. That past was undesirable in the scheme of modernity and progress inscribed in the *Avenues Plan*.

¹⁶³ Biblioteca Prestes Maia. Also in Prestes Maia's personal library was a copy of *Tradições e Reminiscências Paulistanas* by Affonso de Freitas. Inside the inside cover were four notes with page numbers, the first being: "negro (vs tapanhaumo) 155." The corresponding footnote on page 155 explains how original Portuguese colonizers called native Brazilians "negros." It then explains the "appropriate" term used for Africans in Brazil: "Aos negros, propriamente dittos, ao africano, chamavam 'tapanhumo', do tupí guarani, tapiinhuna: tapanhuno de Guiné, Cassange, da Mina, do Congo."

Some observers critiqued the demolition of the church as an example of the city's disdain for its built heritage. The director of the São Paulo State Archive, Lelis Vieira, penned a sardonic critique in *Correio Paulistano* in 1942. He wrote:

It is clear that civilization does not respect boldness [*cara*]; that progress ignores everything; that comfort is more important than traditions; that so-called aesthetics destroys museums; that urbanism spoils eaves (*beirais*), mutilates moldings (*platibandas*), punctures blinds (*rotulas*), puts out light fixtures (*candieiro*), and achieves the perfection of turning a village into a capital.¹⁶⁴

The criticism pitched the faceless force of urbanism against the city's ornate and rich built environment.

Vieira's critiques in the same article also got personal, targeting Maia himself: "Prestes Maia, a type of Pygmalion of the city, Pericles of the Triangle, Celini of the Avenues, already initiated the demolition of the old Church of the Remedies in order to tear space and open up a passage."¹⁶⁵ Another article depicted São Paulo as careless with its built past, referencing in particular the demolition of the original *Igreja do Colégio*, the site of the sixteenth-century founding of the city. The author explained the circumstances around the demolition of the Church of the Remedies as such:

[for] the expansion of the place and decongestion of traffic, it was necessary to sacrifice nothing less than this historical patrimony of the city, and, with it, the entire block. The brotherhood of the Church of the Remedies did everything to avoid the demolition, within the City. But the municipal pickaxe was relentless.¹⁶⁶

A different critique asserted that the demolition of significant sites within specific neighborhoods constituted the remaking of the city broadly: "Old São Paulo disappears in space. It remains only in time and the memories of the people...The little provincial city goes disappearing in space...It yields slowly, but irredeemably yields nonetheless to the aluminum age."¹⁶⁷ Prompted by the demolition of the church,

¹⁶⁴ "Está claro que a civilização não respeita cara; que o progresso desatende a tudo; que o conforto passa por cima de tradições; que a chamada estetica destróe museus; que o urbanismo estraga beirais, mutila platibandas, fura rotulas, apaga candieiro, e chega à perfeição de virar aldeia em capital."

¹⁶⁵ Lelis Vieira, "Templo que desaparece..." *Correio Paulistano*, December 19, 1942, 3. "Prestes Maia, uma especie de Pigmalio da cidade, Pericles do Triangulo, Celini das Avenidas, já iniciou a demolição da velha Igreja dos Remedios para rasgar espaços e abrir caminho!"

¹⁶⁶ "Patrimônios Historicos da Cidade," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 11, 1946, 5. "o alargamento do local e desafio do transito, foi necessario sacrificar esse não menos historico patrimonio da cidade, e, com ele, todo o quarteirão. A Confraria de Nossa Senhora dos Remedios tudo fez para evitar a demolição, junta da Prefeitura. Mas a picareta municipal foi inexoravel."

¹⁶⁷ "Nossa Senhora dos Remedios," *Correio Paulistano*, December 4, 1942, 4. "São Paulo antigo desaparece no espaço. Fica apenas no tempo e na lembrança da gente do planalto...A cidadinha provinciana vai sumindo no espaço...Céde devagar, mas irremediavelmente céde lugar a idade do aluminio."

the observers articulated a moralistic critique of the forgetting Maia was pursuing through the remaking of São Paulo. Though not referencing Maia and the Church of the Remedies specifically, Gilberto Freyre made a similar critique in his 1926 “Regionalist Manifesto” (“*O Manifesto Regionalista*”). He lambasted “the most simplistic engineers – the mystics of reinforced concrete and mystagogues (*mistagogos*) of wide avenues, people that for years dominate this city [Recife] as other Brazilian cities and, different from more enlightened engineers, only know how to demolish churches...”¹⁶⁸

While some observers levied criticisms against the mayor and his roadways project, others – even those who appreciated the church’s history – accepted the razing of the Church of the Remedies as the acceptable price of progress. A November 1942 article asserted that the “Church of the Remedies, which in that stretch of the city represented old São Paulo,” would “open up space, under the pickaxe of urbanism, to the works devised by Mr. Prestes Maia, works that in the short space of almost five years made our central capital among the most beautiful cities of Brazil and America.”¹⁶⁹ A March 1939 article described the traffic bottleneck near the church as a “serious threat to the future expansion of the metropolis” before concluding: “Now, 218 years later, the traditional paulistano temple will disappear, in order to attend to the growth of the city’s progress.”¹⁷⁰ Though noting the church was “one of the few monuments from the colonial epoch,” a February 1942 article conceded that “The old temple, however,

¹⁶⁸ “É outro ponto em que venho insistindo nos meus artigos desde que aqui cheguei; e, como no caso dos mucambos, tal atitude me tem valido não só o soberano desprezo dos engenheiros mais simplistas – místicos do cimento armado e mistagogos das avenidas largas, gente que há anos domina esta como outras cidades do Brasil e, ao contrário dos engenheiros mais esclarecidos, só sabe derrubar igrejas, sobrados de azulejos, arcos como o da Conceição, palmeiras antigas, gameleiras velhas, jardins ou hortos coloniais, contanto que os velhos burgos de fundação portuguesa se assemelhem às mais modernas cidades norte-americanas ou francesas - como a pecha de ‘blagueur.’”

¹⁶⁹ “O Edifício do Congresso,” *Correio Paulistano*, November 21, 1942, 4. “Igreja dos Remedios, que naquele trecho da cidade representavam o São Paulo antigo,” “abrir espaço, sob a picareta do urbanismo, às obras idealizados pelo sr. Prefeito Pretes Maia, obras que no curto espaço de quase um lustro colocaram a nossa capital centro as mais belas cidades do Brasil e da America.”

¹⁷⁰ “A Tradicional Egreja dos Remedios Vae Ser Demolida,” *Correio Paulistano*, March 19, 1939, 16. “séria ameaça para a futura expansão da metropole”; “Agora, passados duzentos e doze annos, vae desaparecer o tradicional templo paulistano, para attender ao crescimento do progresso da cidade.”

for necessities imperative to the development of the paulista capital, is, now, condemned to disappearance.”¹⁷¹

The demolition of the Church of the Remedies required the dismantling of the museum to slavery housed within it for over half a century. The last mass was held in December of 1942, and the São Paulo archbishop issued a decree with instructions on how to “reduce the above cited temple of the Remedies to profane use, so that it could be demolished.”¹⁷² His decree mandated that “All of the objects and sacred implements show be removed by the Brotherhood of the Remedies and stored in a secure place, from those recorded in an inventory that will be registered in the minutes of the brotherhood and in this Metropolitan Curia.”¹⁷³ The early 1940s demolition, therefore, constituted the peripheralization of the material remnants of slavery and abolition significant in the original Liberdade and Brazil more broadly. In the course of fieldwork, I was not able to locate the material objects that the caifazes had collected and assembled in the church in the 1880s and that were supposedly relocated in the 1940s.

The effort to reconstruct the temple in the nearby Cambuci neighborhood faced financial challenges. An observer in 1946 asserted that the value given for the reconstruction was half of what had been originally promised. The fact seems confirmed by Maia’s 1942 comment above about the value of three million cruzeiros being allotted for the expropriation (double the 1,410,250 cruzeiros ultimately given). The increased cost of materials during the wartime further hampered the effort to rebuild: “the construction had to withstand the incredible and absurd inflation of the materials most necessary for its progress, such as iron, wood, bricks, etc. Result: – the money didn’t suffice. The project stopped midway.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ “Vai ser ampliada a Praça Sete de Setembro,” *Correio Paulistano*, February 26, 1939, 3. “O velho templo, entretanto, por necessidades imperiosas do desenvolvimento da capital paulista, está, agora, condenado ao desaparecimento”; “un dos poucos monumentos da época colonial.”

¹⁷² “reduzir o supra citado templo de Nossa Senhora dos Remedios ao uso profano, para que possa ser demolido.”

¹⁷³ “Igreja dos Remedios: Decreto da autoridade eclesiastica reduzindo o tradicional templo ao uso profano para que possa ser demolido,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 6, 1942, 11. “Todos os objetos e alfaias sacras deverão ser retirados pela Confraria de Nossa Senhora dos Remedios e guardados em lugar seguro, deles lembrando-se um inventário que será registrado no livro de atas da Irmandade e nesta Curia Metropolitana.”

¹⁷⁴ “Patrimônios Historicos da Cidade,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 11, 1946, 5. “a construção teve de suportar o incrível e absurdo encarecimento dos materiais mais necessarios ao seu andamento, como ferro, cal, cimento, madeira, tijolos, etc. Resultado: — o dinheiro não bastou. A obra ficou em meio.”

As with Saracura and the Largo do Bexiga, the remaking of marked neighborhoods occurred at the hyper-local scale, hinging on the demolition of specific, significant sites within neighborhoods like the Church of the Remedies. Prestes Maia likely knew this socio-spatial dynamic well and counted on it in his plan to raze such sacred sites. Displacement, then, comprised part of a practice by official producers of space aiming to remake neighborhoods. The demolition of the Church of the Remedies formed one front in the spatial project of forgetting to raze and displace sites associated with slavery, abolition, and black self-determination. The identities associated with significant local spaces persisted among Afro-descendants in São Paulo from the nineteenth-century through the Avenues-Making Era, though the projects of that era would serve to silence many beneath asphalt in São Paulo's center and push others toward new frontiers on the city's expanding periphery.

City planners responsible for state-sponsored urban redevelopment rarely described their practice as ideological. Packaged as broadly-beneficial, "improvement" campaigns (*melhoramentos*) claimed to ameliorate broadly-felt problems like traffic congestion, ineffective storm water drainage, and precarious housing. Prestes Maia represented this logic visually in his 1945 *São Paulo Improvements* (*Melhoramentos de São Paulo*), in which he juxtaposed "before" and "after" images of the Praça da Bandeira with captions that emphasized improvements in construction quality. In that image as throughout his writings and public comments, Prestes Maia did not explicitly address race/ethnicity or racial/ethnic prejudice. Individuals and social groups in fact rarely featured in Prestes Maia's often people-less representations of existing and imagined cities.

The spatial patterns charted in this chapter, however, elucidate the racialized aspects of modernizing the city's infrastructure. The extant historical sources from the redevelopment project do not include explicit statements of anti-black racism. The episodes and analysis above make it plausible that

the discourse of neutrality masked anti-black prejudice among officials.¹⁷⁵ The effects of the project, however, had an unmistakable racialized significance: the dislocation of predominately Afro-descendants and the demolition of material structures that housed and symbolized internationally-significant histories of abolition and black self-determination. The project, in other words, razed and resignified some of the most significant spaces – from the scale of individual buildings to the neighborhood and the city as a whole – for Afro-descendants in São Paulo.

Some readers might read this analysis as an unfair critique of officials who faced real world concerns in real time and, understandably, endeavored to improve the everyday functioning of the city with limited concern for the histories of sites and spaces. These programs of city officials helped to lay spatial foundations for São Paulo's growth into one of the most significant industrial, financial, and population hubs in the Americas. If asked pointedly, those officials may have been quite candid about the desire to demolish sites connected to histories of slavery in Bela Vista and Liberdade. An extension of this critique might assert that I have unjustly privileged, if not unjustifiably concocted, a racialized interpretation of sites of memory in these places.¹⁷⁶ Beyond attributing undue significance to the histories of slavery and abolition in the 1930s-'40s, this interpretation could be described as obfuscating the contemporary concerns of Afro-descendants in São Paulo during the Avenues-Making Era. One response to this interpretation would be that, for official city planners as much as local São Paulo residents, the contested spatial project of forgetting was indeed as much about the mid-twentieth-century present as about the nineteenth-century past.

The 1930s present was, however, indivisibly connected to the nineteenth century, especially through the lack of social change following the formal abolition of slavery. The density and proximity of life in the bustling urban metropolis made persistent racial inequalities an unmistakable feature of the urban landscape. The spatial project of forgetting reflected a disregard for sites connected to the history of

¹⁷⁵ For an earlier episode of clear anti-black prejudice among City officials in the context of São Paulo's public spaces, see Andrews, *Blacks and Whites*, 138.

¹⁷⁶ This imagined critique resembles the arguments offered by Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant in "On the Cunning of Imperialist Reason," *Theory, Culture & Society* 16:1 (1999), 41-58.

slavery, abolition, and black self-determination, as Prestes Maia's comments about the Church of the Remedies reveal. However, the project of forgetting in the Avenues-Making Era targeted material remains in the built environment that were, simultaneously, connected to undesirable pasts *and* representations of the lack of change in the present. São Paulo's urban planning and political elite erased such sites and their material remains through a future-oriented forgetting project that counted on the promise of rupture at the core of *redevelopment*. That rupture was not the ultimate realization of change proposed by the abolition of slavery, for, as Viotti da Costa wrote, "The abolitionist movement withered with Abolition."¹⁷⁷ Instead, the change endeavored to reproduce neighborhoods marked as Afro-descendant in São Paulo through demolition, dislocation, and asphalted avenues.

Local residents in São Paulo, ranging from Afro-descendants dislocated by the demolition of *cortiços* to author Gabriel Marques and sambista Geraldo Filme, countered that project of rupture with songs, histories, and practices that emphasized continuities. For FNB organizers, that continuity was expressly political; for Gabriel Marques, it was ethnographic. Yet, perhaps most often, the emphasis on continuity was mundane and practical: a keen understanding of the racism, violence, and inequality that structure/d Brazilian society and a store of practices, including the production of space, that served to open avenues of navigation, mobility, and survival therein.

¹⁷⁷ Viotti da Costa, *Da Senzala à Colônia*, 511. "O movimento abolicionista extinguiu-se com a Abolição."

Chapter Three
Vila Brasilândia and Geographies of Ethnoracial Mixture

70 years after the unofficial settlement of Vila Brasilândia (“Brazil-land Village”), even Google Maps could not correctly identify the neighborhood in space. Google’s digital cartographers placed Vila Brasilândia four kilometers south of its actual location (figures 22 and 23). Their mistake was, in part, understandable: real estate developers originally settled Vila Brasilândia off the map, selling the first parcels in 1947 without official approval from the municipal government and generating decades of spatial confusion. Perhaps accidental, Google’s cartographic error was, nonetheless, revealing. Their misplaced neighborhood label covered up a place named Vila do Congo (“Congo Village”).¹

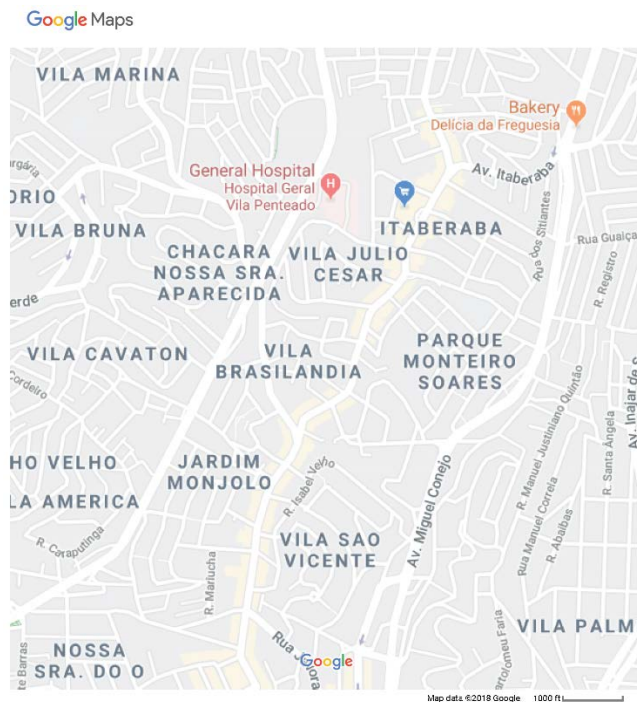


Figure 22: Vila Brasilândia on Google Maps, 2018. This misplaced label is covering up the location of another place named Vila do Congo.

Adjacent to Congo Road and Congo Creek, Congo Village was a product of the high population of Africans and their descendants in the surrounding parish, Nossa Senhora do Ó.² The present-day

¹ Vila do Congo is listed in the print directory of roads and neighborhoods of São Paulo, *O Mapograf Guia* (São Paulo: Editora Online, 2015).

² Máximo Barro, *Nossa Senhora do Ó – História de Bairros de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Prefeitura de São Paulo, 1977). Also see Chapter 1.

superimposition of Vila Brasilândia over Vila do Congo captures the core dynamic in the neighborhood's early history. From 1947 to 1966, city officials and prominent white residents sought to bury sites associated with Afro-descendants and replace them with a microcosmic “Brazil-land” that both reflected and engendered a nationalistic ideal of harmonious ethnracial mixture.³

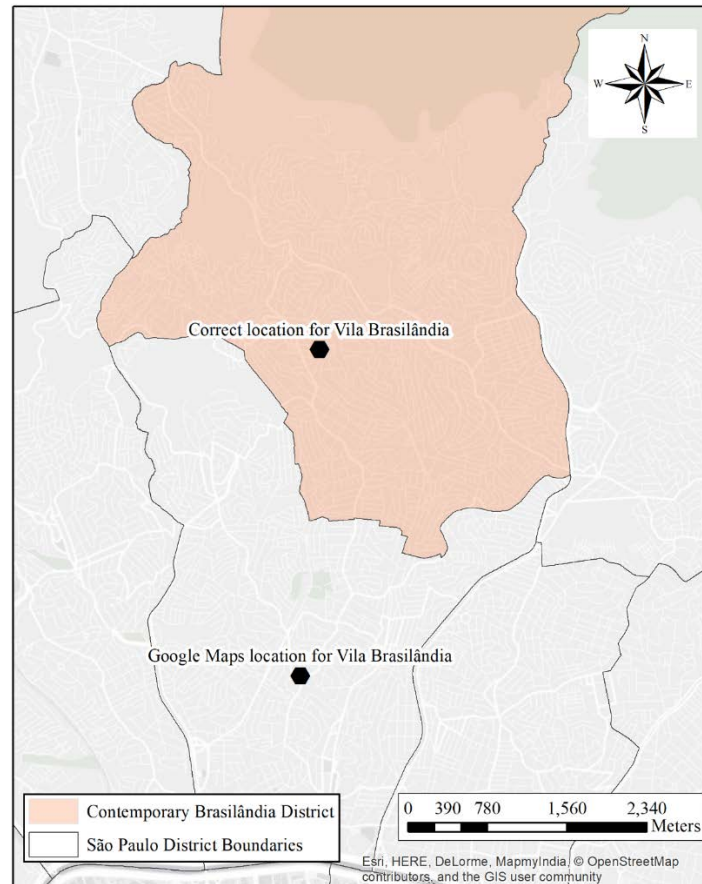


Figure 23: Correct and incorrect locations of Vila Brasilândia loteamento. Basemap from 2017. Map by author.

This chapter charts the history of Vila Brasilândia from its foundation in 1947 through 1966, when local residents literally purchased a place for the neighborhood on São Paulo's official map.⁴ While

³ Abdias do Nascimento, *Racial democracy in Brazil, Myth or Reality? A Dossier of Brazilian racism* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Sketch Publ. Co., 1977); Thomas Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); Edward E. Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁴ The purchase coincided with the establishment of the sub-district of Brasilândia (sans the “Vila”), which elevated the administrative status of the neighborhood. Lei N° 8.092, February 28, 1964. “Brasilândia: Uma história de amor,” *Jornal Interbairros* (2nd edição), 2000, 21.

the chapter focuses on the foundation of this singular neighborhood, the history of Vila Brasilândia was deeply connected to citywide patterns of migration, redevelopment schemes, and the production of racialized/ethnicized space. The 1930s-'40s execution of city planner-turned-mayor Francisco Prestes Maia's redevelopment project, the *Avenues Plan*, dislocated center-city populations to the city's rural outskirts. There, dislocated residents bought cheap lots and constructed neighborhoods like Vila Brasilândia from scratch. Within two decades, the informally-settled neighborhood of Vila Brasilândia would become an official subdistrict encompassing approximately 13 other neighborhoods and more than 45,000 residents.

These new neighborhoods were also the products of migration networks that stretched throughout a globally-connected Brazil. An array of migrants – ranging from residents of São Paulo's city center and migrants from Brazil's Northeast to Italian and Japanese immigrants and their descendants – settled in and constructed Vila Brasilândia in the 1940s-'60s. In the midst of center-city urbanistic reforms, anti-immigrant prejudice during and following World War II, and interregional migration, these newcomers connected over shared experiences of dislocation and displacement. This population influx would give credence to the idea of Vila Brasilândia as a microcosm of the nation, constitutive with the ideal of harmonious ethnoracial mixture at the heart of officials' constructions of Brazilianness (*brasilidade*).

Residents and officials negotiated ethnoracial difference through maps and mapping in the course of making Vila Brasilândia. Cartography and race/ethnicity have a long and often lamentable history. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, so-called anthropogeographers aided European imperialist projects by mapping the distribution of racial/ethnic groups and projecting ethnoracial hierarchies onto space.⁵ In the same era, San Francisco City officials aimed to raze "Chinatown" by producing a map that presented Chinese residents as "the source of vice and disease" whose

⁵ H. Winlow, "Mapping Race and Ethnicity," *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, 398-408; Jesse Gilley, "Anthropogeography," *Encyclopedia of Geography*, ed. Barney Warf. Vlm. 1 (SAGE Reference, 2010), 93.

“neighborhood posed a threat to the city as a whole.”⁶ In the midst of Jim Crow segregation in the mid-twentieth century, officials in cities like Atlanta employed mapping to enact policies of racial segregation and a program of “race zoning.”⁷ In these contexts, the practice of mapping race/ethnicity and its product, racialized/ethnicized space, served as an imperialist and racist means of segregation, surveillance, and control.

Mapping race/ethnicity did not always serve segregationist ends, however. For instance, while officials in the United States in the 1940s-’60s used cartography to differentiate and separate white and nonwhite populations, map-makers in São Paulo in the same era endeavored to realize the ideal of the nation as a segregation-free, racial democracy through local spaces of mixture. Researchers affiliated with the state created maps of the ethnoracial distribution of the city population, especially of immigrants and Afro-descendants, in an effort to record and ultimately help produce neighborhoods of mixture. Local residents also constructed ethnoracial difference through urban space, both in dialogue with officials and independently. For example, some residents in Vila Brasilânida led popular appeals to silence sites named “Congo” in Vila Brasilândia’s linguistic landscape. Their ultimately successful requests served to erase spaces associated with Afro-descendants from literal maps of the region. Being off the map, however, provided a measure of autonomy for some locals, facilitating the preservation of practices of language and religion persecuted in São Paulo in this era. This chapter charts these competing constructions of social difference and urban space in mid-twentieth-century São Paulo, especially but not exclusively through the founding of the microcosmic neighborhood of mixture, Vila Brasilândia.

⁶ Carl H. Nightingale, *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 152; Kay J. Anderson, “The Idea of Chinatown: The Power of Place and Institutional Practice in the Making of a Racial Category,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77:4 (1987), 580-598.

⁷ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liverlight Publishing Corporation, 2016), 46. For digitized versions of the city planning maps of Atlanta’s black population, see “Planning Atlanta - A New City in the Making, 1930s - 1990s,” Georgia State University Library- Digital Collections, <http://digitalcollections.library.gsu.edu/cdm/planningatl> (accessed June 16, 2018).

*The Beginnings of Brasilândia;
Or, “Unofficial São Paulo Neighborhoods” is Repetitive*

The official from the municipal department responsible for maintaining land records of the city of São Paulo delighted in telling me that São Paulo’s neighborhoods do not exist. The assertion seemed remarkable: since my first days in São Paulo, residents had explained the city to me by describing its neighborhoods. What’s more, the City government itself has, for 49 years, bankrolled a series of books about *neighborhood* histories (33 volumes large as of 2006).⁸ Was the neighborhood, the spatial category I understood as the organizing principle of the metropolis, in fact a fiction? The places that São Paulo residents refer to as neighborhoods (*bairros*) indeed possess no official definition.⁹ Instead, the city of São Paulo is divided officially by the administrative units of subdistrict and district. Neighborhoods are constructed through an array of practices, from official cartography that lists them on maps to residents who describe them in everyday discourses about space.¹⁰ Because they were (and remain) unofficial, popularly-produced, and unfixed, neighborhoods in São Paulo serve as especially mutable categories for the construction of meaning.

If São Paulo neighborhoods have no official institutional basis, then where did they originate? Many mid-twentieth-century São Paulo neighborhoods originated in *loteamentos* (literally “allotments”): developments consisting of the division of a tract of rural land into parcels and the installation of an often-rudimentary street grid. In a 1942 article Synesio Cunha Barbosa, a leader of the urban affairs

⁸ The first volume published in this collection was about the neighborhood *Brás* in 1968. The most recent, about *Itaim Paulista*, was published in 2006. All editions have recently been digitized and are available online at http://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/cultura/arquivo_historico/publicacoes/index.php?p=8313.

⁹ Emílio Haddad, “Sobre of Estudo da Divisão da Cidade em Zonas Homogêneas” (PhD diss., FAU-USP, 1987), cited in Bruno Dantas Hidalgo, “As divisões territoriais do Município de São Paulo: uma proposta de classificação por meio da análise dos Distritos” (undergraduate thesis, USP, 2003), 28; Márcia Lúcia Rebello Pinho Dias, *Desenvolvimento urbano e habitação popular em São Paulo: 1870-1914* (São Paulo: Nobel, 1989). For the history of the administrative division of land in São Paulo, see “São Paulo,” IBGE, <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/sp/sao-paulo/historico> (accessed May 13, 2017).

¹⁰ Zueleide Casagrande de Paula, *A Cidade e os Jardins: Jardim América, de Projeto Urbano a Monumento Patrimonial (1915-1986)* (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2008); Pierre Mayol, “The Neighborhood,” in Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life, Vol. 2: Living and Cooking* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998). About Jardim América, the first Garden City in Latin America, Casagrande de Paula writes: “O bairro é, portanto, uma especialidade ambígua: ao mesmo tempo em que integra o espaço da cidade, mantém-se singular; entretanto, essa singularidade impregna o todo da urbe, à medida que estreita laços com ela. O bairro perde-se na cidade que, contudo, se econtra nele. O que distingue os dois são os relatos.”

organization the Society of the Friends of the City, described loteamentos as “the initial rationale of the city.”¹¹ He asserted that this “beginning rationale” had not comprised part of traditional urbanizing practices in Brazil:

Brazilian cities, in general, were formed without any concern for the future. They erected themselves by chance, which has led administrators today to encounter multiple difficulties like supplying them with water, sewage and so many other indispensable improvements for the development of the lives of their populations. Innumerable cities confirm this assertion. Narrow cities, serpentine, unaesthetic and precarious that, only through violent and difficult means, could be able to adjust themselves to the conditions of progress that they have now reached.¹²

Barbosa advocated for heavily-regulated loteamentos as the means for productive, future-oriented urban development. This ideal scenario would create planned, ordered, and well-serviced neighborhoods out of those loteamentos. Barbosa’s vision relied on the supposedly exceptional character of São Paulo residents: “the *paulista* [resident of the state of São Paulo], hard-working and disciplined, proud of his progress and of the greatness of his Brazil, will make of his Capital [São Paulo] a modern city, with a perfect loteamento, adequate pathways for future movement and rapid communication.”¹³ These literal and symbolic pathways to the future hinged on the organized development of new neighborhoods from loteamentos.

From the 1940s forward, the execution of Prestes Maia’s *Avenues Plan* spurred the rapid expansion of loteamentos on São Paulo’s rural outskirts. Extensive demolitions, especially of tenements (*cortiços*) in the city center, led many residents to seek new housing elsewhere. The freezing of rent prices by Brazilian President Getúlio Vargas’s Tenancy Law (1942), real estate speculation, and extensive

¹¹ About the history of this organization, see Maria Cristina da Silva Leme, “São Paulo: conflitos e consensos para construção da metrópole: 1930-1945,” in Vera Rezende, ed., *Urbanismo na era Vargas: a transformação das cidades brasileiras* (Niterói: Editora da UFF, 2012).

¹² Synesio Cunha Barbosa, “O Loteamento em São Paulo,” *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* 82 (mar/apr 1942), 145. “o início racional de uma cidade, pelo que deve obedecer a leis que obriguem a sua perfeita execução.” “As cidades brasileiras, em geral, foram formadas sem a preocupação do futuro. Erigiram-se a esmo, de onde as múltiplas dificuldades hoje encontradas pelos seus administradores para dotá-las de água, de esgotos e de tantos outros melhoramentos imprescindíveis ao desenvolvimento da vida de suas populações. Inúmeras cidades aí estão confirmando essa asserção. Cidades estreitas, serpeantes, inestéticas e precárias que, só por meios violentos e difíceis, poderão ajustar-se às condições de progresso que atingiram.”

¹³ *Ibid.*, 153. “leis com determinações claras e positivas.” “o paulista, operoso e disciplinado, orgulhoso do seu progresso e da grandiosidade do seu Brasil, fará da sua Capital uma cidade moderna, com loteamento perfeito, vias adequadas ao moviemento futuro e comunicações rápidas.”

migration into the city exacerbated the shortage and unaffordability of existing housing stock.¹⁴ Real estate developers capitalized on these circumstances and met the growing demand with loteamentos on new frontiers of São Paulo's periphery. The developers of these projects, named *loteadores*, purchased and subdivided tracts of land into parcels, which they sold at low prices. After the sale of individual lots, the loteador often passed the responsibility to new lot owners to construct their homes and other features of the built environment. The main vehicle for São Paulo's mid-century urbanization, loteamentos regularly defied guidelines set forth by state institutions and were often founded without official approval.¹⁵ Historian Nabil Bonducki describes the scale and implications of loteamento development in this era:

Between 1940 and 1950, around one hundred thousand families, more than half a million people, began to live in and own their own homes. The great majority of them lived in peripheral loteamentos... To confront and dominate the periphery came to be a daily task of hundreds of thousands of workers, who constructed in silence a city much larger than official São Paulo.¹⁶

The “silently constructed” city referenced neighborhoods throughout the region, including in the forested hills north of the geographical center of São Paulo, where the developer of the Vila Brasilândia loteamento sold the first parcels in 1947.

The natural geography of the region in and around Vila Brasilândia was not particularly auspicious for urban settlement. Politician and geographer Aroldo de Azevedo visited the northern limits of the Nossa Senhora do Ó parish in the mid-1950s, near the new loteamento Vila Brasilândia, and he snapped a picture from Congo Road (figure 24).

¹⁴ Sarah Feldman, *Planejamento e zoneamento: São Paulo, 1947-1972* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2005), 18.

¹⁵ Csaba Deák e Suelo Ramos Schiffer, eds, *O processo de urbanização no Brasil* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1999); Milton Santos, *Metrópole corporativa fragmentada*, 2^o edição (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2009 [1990]); Nabil Bonduki, *Habitar São Paulo: reflexões sobre a gestão urbana* (São Paulo: Estação Liberdade, 2000).

¹⁶ As Bonducki indicates, the shift to loteamento development also signaled a change in the housing market from tenancy to individual home ownership. Nabil Bonducki, *Origens da Habitação Social no Brasil: Arquitetura Moderna, Lei do Inquilinato e Difusão da Casa Própria*, 7^a edição (São Paulo: Estação Liberdade: 2013), 302. Also see Celine Sachs-Jeantet, *São Paulo: políticas públicas e habitação popular* (São Paulo, SP: Edusp, 1990). “Entre 1940 e 1950, cerca de cem mil famílias, mais de maio milhão de pessoas, passaram a morar em casas próprias. A grande maioria em loteamentos periférico, que não estavam mais desocupados como nos anos 1920. Enfrentar e dominar a periferia passou a ser a tarefa cotidiana de centenas de milhares de trabalhadores, que construíram em silêncio uma cidade muito maior do que a São Paulo oficial.”

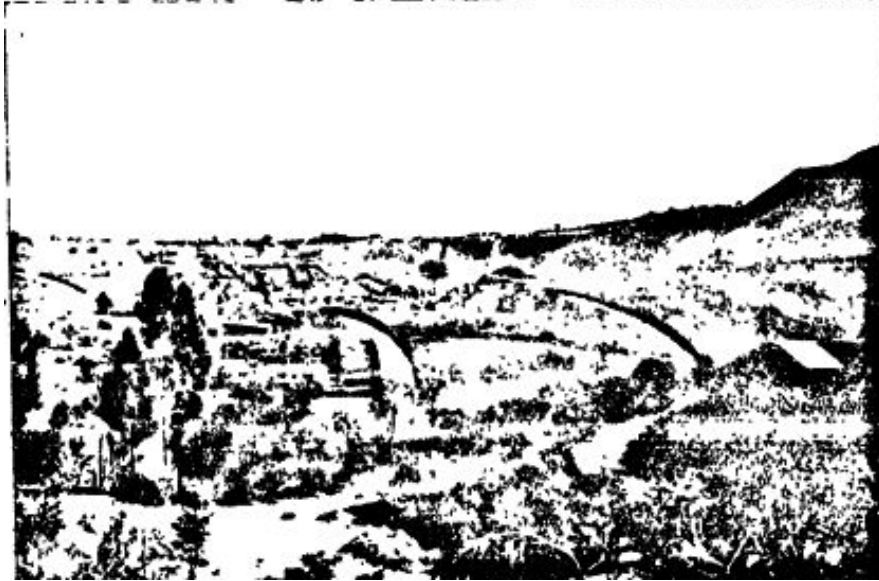


Figure 24: Aroldo de Azevedo's photo from Congo Road. Notice the structure in right middle section of the image. *A cidade de S. Paulo: estudos de geografia urbana* v. 1 (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1958), 136.

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<http://www.brasiliana.com.br/obras/a-cidade-de-spaulo-estudos-de-geografia-urbana-v01/pagina/136/foto>
 (accessed June 12, 2018).

Azevedo cast the natural environment as harsh and inhospitable: “In the proximities of Freguesia do Ó, in the direction of Piqueri and Pirituba, granite alone is visible,” he wrote. “A true labyrinth of valleys wide and narrow” crisscrossed the region.¹⁷ Although the granite outcrops could provide for profitable commercial activity, Azevedo suggested that humans could best settle elsewhere.¹⁸ Emphasizing the harsh nature of the natural geography, he failed to comment on the populations long settled in the region. He also overlooked a built structure in the right corner of his photo from Congo Road, a material remnant of the parish's long history of settlement. Silva Dias offers more detail about that landscape in the early twentieth century. She cites the memoirs of São Paulo author Bernardo Guimarães from 1914, who described N. S. do Ó's landscape as defined by “ownerless estates, surrounded by old, ruined walls,

¹⁷ Aroldo de Azevedo, *A cidade de S. Paulo: estudos de geografia urbana* v. 1 (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1958), 226 and 136. His only mention of Brasilândia by name came in this passage: “é extremamente nítida a delimitação da superfície de São Paulo em face da zona pré-Serra da Cantareira, conforme se pode verificar nas proximidades da Vila Brasilândia, a três quilômetros a NW da Freguesia do Ó.”

¹⁸ Azevedo, *A cidade de S. Paulo* v. 4, 45-46.

abandoned to the ants and the pigs.”¹⁹ Such observations indicate that the material remnants of plantation agriculture and enslavement survived in the region’s landscape into the mid-1950s.

Vila Brasilândia was produced literally and symbolically off the map. The municipal sectors responsible for urban planning and infrastructure did not learn about its existence until 1955, eight years after its initial construction. In 1955 José Munhoz Bonilha, the loteador and owner of Brasilândia Enterprises of Land and Constructions Ltd., requested authorization from São Paulo’s Department of Urbanism for a *new* loteamento. Basing their evaluation on a *planta* (a mapped urban plan) and seemingly no field visits, architects and engineers from the Department of Urbanism and the Department of Works reviewed his proposals and responded with a lengthy list of modifications necessary to bring the development up to code. Their requests ranged from the expansion of too-narrow alleyways to the installation of a drainage system. In March of 1957, a City engineer reviewing the project declared: “It seems to us that the development, in accordance with the plans presented, does not find itself in condition to be approved by the City.”²⁰ The officials were unaware that Vila Brasilândia was not a proposed loteamento but an already-existing material reality.

The earliest residents of Vila Brasilândia faced grave local conditions. São Paulo City Councilman Homero Silva toured loteamentos like Vila Brasilândia in the early 1950s and reported his observations in the City Council. Following a tour of the region in May 1953, he described “30,000 souls” that lived in the area as “relegated to the interior and abandoned by the City of São Paulo.” The residents were integrated into the city, he said, “by geography, but they are separated from São Paulo in all other respects.” Focusing on asphalt, he lamented the condition of the neighborhood’s sole commercial artery, Parapuã Street, calling it “a kind of unpaved country road that could be better classified as a narrow path through the woods, a tortuous route on which various buses have already suffered repeated

¹⁹ Maria Odila Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life: The Lives of Working Women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 165. She is quoting from Bernardo Guimarães, *Rosaura, a Enjeitada* (Rio de Janeiro: Garnier, 1914).

²⁰ Processo 50.235/55, March 12, 1957, Coordenadoria de Gestão de Documentos Públicos (CGDP), Prefeitura de São Paulo.

disasters and in which various people were injured and lost their lives.” Mortality surfaced again in Silva’s conversation with the only doctor of the region, Luciano Rossi, who reported a staggering 80% mortality rate among children under age two. Silva implored his colleagues in the City Council with the biting plea: “you must go to the periphery, you must see for yourselves the abandonment in which they are living, or better, the abandonment in which they are dying.”²¹

The conditions of Vila Brasilândia spurred far-reaching debate in the City Council around existential questions like, “What is a city?” In 1953 councilmember Marcos Mélega argued that Vila Brasilândia in fact did not qualify as part of the city:

Materially, we do not consider a place as part of the city where there are not, at the very least, substantial public services, such as water, light, sewage, telephone and transportation. What is occurring in these neighborhoods can be considered more as people living in encampments than, truly, people living in the city.

Mélega’s solution was to bulldoze neighborhoods like Vila Brasilândia and for the state to organize the migration and settlement of the residents into the official city as he defined it. Other councilmen proposed less destructive measures. Among them was William Sálem, who argued that poorly-serviced neighborhoods owed not to a lack of resources but to administrative inefficiencies in the expanding metropolis.²²

Some City Council officials explicitly pinned the conditions of Vila Brasilândia on Prestes Maia and the unequal distribution of so-called “urban improvements.” In the same discussion where Homero Silva recounted his visit to Vila Brasilândia, councilmember Paulo Serei implicated the architect of the *Avenues Plan*. “The principal person responsible,” he exclaimed, “and guilty for this is Mr. Prestes Maia, who took exclusive care of the center of the city, without remembering that São Paulo was also

²¹ Comparing Vila Brasilândia to cities of the extreme interior, Silva concluded that the latter were generally better serviced. Silva saw the condition of the neighborhood despite its proximity to the center of São Paulo as particularly unacceptable: “Vila Brasilândia, just a few kilometers from Praça da Sé,” he said, “is completely abandoned.” 159th Sessão Ordinária da Câmara Municipal, May 6, 1953.

²² Ibid. For the history of the administrative organization of São Paulo’s municipal government, see Feldman, *Planejamento*.

constituted of poor neighborhoods.”²³ Prestes Maia had been out of office for nearly a decade in 1953. Serei’s comment revealed that the shadow of the urbanist-mayor still loomed large. His admonishment also drew a direct link between Prestes Maia’s avenues projects in the city center and the precariousness of peripheral neighborhoods like Vila Brasilândia.

Long-term residents of the Brasilândia district also connected the genesis and condition of the neighborhood to the *Avenues Plan*. Born in Vila Brasilândia in 1954, Célio Pires became a journalist and co-founded the first long-running neighborhood newspaper. Pires had a keen interest in the history of the neighborhood and conducted interviews with residents who had first settled in the neighborhood. Much of what we know about Vila Brasilândia’s early history comes from his research with its first residents. Pires recorded the link between dislocation from the city center and the foundation of the neighborhood, with Prestes Maia’s *Avenues Plan* a principal push factor for early residents. In 1984 he wrote that the loteamento began “in virtue of the expropriations that occurred in the center of the city...from the construction of São João, Ipiranga and Duque de Caxias Avenues. That region was occupied by old mansions (*casarões*) that, subdivided, functioned like cortiços, inhabited by an immensity of families that from there were expelled to make way for the avenues.”²⁴

In this narrative Pires describes demolitions and displacement caused by avenues projects northwest of the historic city center. Planners executed some of these projects in the 1920s and early 1930s, well before 1947 when Vila Brasilândia’s developers sold the first parcels.²⁵ As explained in Chapter 1, the execution of Maia’s *Avenues Plan* spurred multiple local migrations throughout center-city districts like Liberdade and Bela Vista. For instance, residents dislocated by demolitions for the expansion of São João Avenue in the late 1920s were dislocated once again with the demolition of the complex of

²³ Ibid. “o principal responsável e culpado disso é o Sr. Prestes Maia que cuidou, exclusivamente, do centro da cidade, não se lembrando que São Paulo era constituído também de bairros pobres.”

²⁴ “Uma repasada de olhos na vida de Brasilândia nos seus 37 anos de existência,” *Jornal da Brasilândia*, January 1984. “em virtude das desapropriações ocorridas no centro da cidade...da construção das Avenidas São João, Ipiranga e Duque de Caxias. O local era ocupado por casarões que subdivididos funcionavam como cortiços, habitados por uma imensidão de famílias que dali foram expulsas para dar lugar às avenidas.”

²⁵ Francisco Prestes Maia, *Estudo de um plano de avenidas para a cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Companhia Melhoramentos de São Paulo, 1930).

cortiços in Bela Vista named Vila Barros in the 1950s.²⁶ It is telling, therefore, that in their conversations with Pires, Vila Brasilândia's earliest residents drew a connection between their settlement in the neighborhood and projects from decades earlier linked to Prestes Maia and the *Avenues Plan*. While broader structural forces figured into this process, Pires himself pulled no punches in his judgement of the responsible parties: expropriation, demolition, and avenues-making connected to Maia's projects *expelled* center-city residents to Vila Brasilândia.

Other Brasilândia residents recall similar histories of dislocation and resettlement. The former president of the neighborhood association, the Society of Friends of Brasilândia (*Sociedade Amigos da Brasilândia*), confirmed that avenues projects in the city center led to migration and pointed specifically to the construction of May 23 Avenue (that bisects the Bela Vista and Liberdade districts) as a source for dislocation.²⁷ Given that demolitions for May 23 Avenue continued into the 1960s, his recollection indicates that local migration to Brasilândia may have continued through Prestes Maia's last mayoral term in the early 1960s. Another resident remembered that his aunt and uncle lived in Bela Vista before migrating to Vila Brasilândia during this era. Based on his observations growing up in the neighborhood and stories from neighbors, he also affirmed that center-city demolitions and avenues spurred a stream of migrants into Vila Brasilândia. He further implied that this history was common knowledge among long-term residents.²⁸

The developer responsible for Vila Brasilândia, José Munhoz Bonilha, himself linked the neighborhood's origins to center-city avenues projects. São Paulo's most prominent newspaper, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, published a profile of Bonilha in advance of the 48th anniversary of the neighborhood in 1995. The unsigned article included a description about Vila Brasilândia's origins: "The loteamento was a success. Professor [Bonilha] remembers that the then-mayor Prestes Maia began to expropriate the central region to widen July 9 Avenue and many people that lived there afterwards went to Brasilândia. 'The

²⁶ See the second section of Chapter 1, especially the histories of the cortiços *Trezentos* and *Navio Parado*.

²⁷ LS, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, March 7, 2016.

²⁸ Interview by author with [name withheld], Brasilândia, São Paulo, August 8, 2016.

prices were low.”²⁹ The geography in this description aligns with the high number of expropriations and demolitions along July 9 Avenue in the Anhangabaú Valley. A skeptic might critique the memories of displacement of Vila Brasilândia residents above as slanted by the unevenness of urban development and lack of public investment in the region. That critique is harder to levy against Bonilha, who lived across town in the southern region of São Paulo. Despite being a beneficiary of dislocation, in other words, Bonilha’s recollections mirrored those of Vila Brasilândia residents themselves. His language is softer than the discourse of expulsion in the quote from Célio Pires: residents, in his estimation, were not expelled from the city center, they simply “went to Brasilândia.” The content of the historical memories, however, is the same. Bonilha could have adopted another narrative so as not to appear exploitative. His perspective proves valuable, therefore, as further evidence of the links between demolition, avenues projects, and local migration in a geography that tied central districts like Bela Vista to the origins of Vila Brasilândia.

Demolitions and the construction of center-city avenues were not the only drivers of settlement in Vila Brasilândia. Prestes Maia’s *Avenues Plan* outlined the canalization of the Tietê River, São Paulo’s major waterway, that ran serpentine-like from east to west and formed the northern margin of the city. The canalization of the waterway – confining it to a linear shape through concrete borders – would permit the construction of adjoining, high-speed avenues. The predictable flow of the waterway would also permit the urbanization of surrounding areas, such as Nossa Senhora do Ó, and the construction of bridges connecting the region north of the Tietê River to the city center (figure 25).

²⁹ “Apaixonado pelo País,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 27, 1995. “O loteamento foi um sucesso. Professor [Munhoz Bonilha] lembra que o então prefeito Prestes Maia começou a desapropriar a região central para ampliar a Avenida Nove de Julho e muita gente que morava lá foi para a Brasilândia. ‘Os preços eram baixos.’”

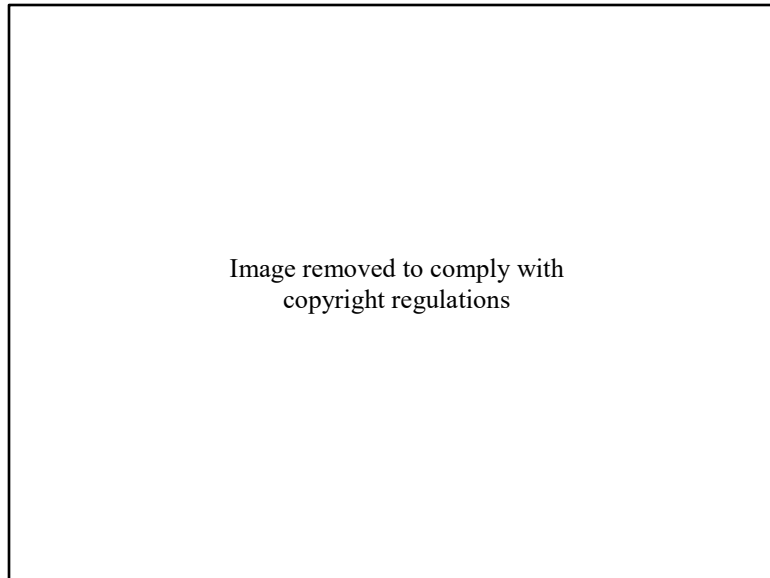


Figure 25: Construction of Freguesia do Ó bridge, 1958.
 Acervo Fotográfico, Arquivo Histórico de São Paulo.
<http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/foto/images/12/1262.jpg> (accessed June 13, 2018).

Prestes Maia boasted about the completed channelization of the Tietê in his 1945 book *São Paulo Improvements*, in which he included pictures of himself on a ferryboat on the waterway.³⁰ Engineers completed, and city officials inaugurated, the Freguesia do Ó bridge across the Tietê fifteen years later. This project would establish an asphalted link between the city center and places like N. S. do Ó, paving the way for local migrants and the production of settlements like Vila Brasilândia.

The horizontal expansion of São Paulo as a result of the *Avenues Plan* required a more extensive and higher-capacity public transportation system. In 1939 Prestes Maia commissioned a study, the Commission of Studies of Collective Transportation in the Municipality of São Paulo, that led to the founding of the Municipal Company of Collective Transportation, or CMTC, in 1947.³¹ This new organization reflected a shift from streetcar transportation to a system based on bus transit.³² That shift would be facilitated by the development of the asphalted roadway network in the *Avenues Plan*.³³ The

³⁰ Francisco Prestes Maia, *Melhoramentos de São Paulo* (1945), 17. Also see Janes Jorge, *Tietê, o rio que a cidade perdeu: São Paulo 1890-1940* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2006).

³¹ Eduardo Alcântara de Vasconcellos, *Circular é preciso, viver não é preciso: a história do trânsito na cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: ANNABLUME, FAPESP, 1999), 70-71. Comissão de Estudos do Transporte Coletivo no Município de São Paulo and Companhia Municipal de Transportes Coletivos.

³² Bonducki, *Origens da Habitação*, 301.

³³ *Ibid.*

guaranteed daily delivery of a low-cost workforce to the urban center depended on an effective public transportation system along with the extension of asphalted roadways.³⁴



Figure 26: First bus line to Brasília, 1949. Reproduced with permission from photo from archive of Célio Pires.

The extension of the first bus line to Vila Brasília occurred in 1949 (figure 26), though service seems to have been inconsistent throughout the following decade. Bus transportation to Vila Brasília remained inadequate through the late 1950s, when the neighborhood came to the center of a public controversy about municipal transportation. Officials sought to privatize bus lines to distant, peripheral areas like Vila Brasília, arguing that their operation was too costly. Critical articles in the press noted that riders along the privatized lines would be susceptible to “changing busses mid-way and [therefore] paying double fares.”³⁵

In 1958 members of the City Council asserted that an “irregular concession” had been granted for the privatized Vila Brasília line. Some accused Mayor Adhemar de Barros of having business ties to the company that received the contract.³⁶ Eight days after the initial story broke, the superintendent of the CMTA, Durvalina Vieira, admitted to irregularities with the following explanation:

...that line [to Brasília], despite having been made available for competition, never had a party interested in operating it. With complaints increasing, in the form of legitimate petitions from

³⁴ Milton Santos, *Metrópole Corporativa*.

³⁵ “Transporte Coletivo: Cassação de licenças de empresas particulares,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 1, 1958, 9. “baldeações e do duplice pagamento de passageiros.”

³⁶ *Ibid.* “concessão irregular.”

residents, and there being difficulties for the Company to dispatch more vehicles with that itinerary, it was resolved to give away the contract, in an insecure and transitory manner, until the announcement of a new competition, to a group of people with interests connected to the neighborhood. There is no permanent contract. Just the provision of services, without a secure contract, that will be legalized with the firm that wins the competition for the contract.³⁷

Vieira here revealed broad aversion to the operation of the line to Vila Brasilândia. Residents had petitioned authorities for reliable service, and the City's fix was to make official the temporary bus transport facilitated by "a group of people with interests connected to the neighborhood." If the accusations against Adhemar de Barros were correct, those interests included the financial dealings of the mayor himself. The controversy over the bus line suggested a prejudice against the neighborhood ("that line... never had a party interested in operating it") as well as a willingness among city officials to let Vila Brasilândia's residents fend for precarious transportation themselves.

Despite speeches about Vila Brasilândia in the City Council as early as 1953 and the bus controversy in 1958, officials from the Departments of Urbanism and Works seem to have not known about the actual condition of the loteamento until after the developer requested its authorization in 1955. As those officials pushed for rectifications to what they thought was a *proposed* development in the late 1950s, they forced the hand of the loteador Bonilha. He confessed that, in fact, he had already sold most of the lots and new residents occupied them. The "planned" development already existed. With Vila Brasilândia residents living on properties that they owned within the loteamento, modifications to correct what one City architect described as "grave irregularities" could not be made. Contrary to the shady permissiveness of City officials regarding the irregular bus line, these records suggest an under-resourced Department of Urbanism unable to keep tabs on the practices of private developers on São Paulo's swelling periphery.³⁸

³⁷ "Admite a CMTC irregularidades na concessão de linha à TUSA," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 9, 1958, 16.

"...aquela linha, não obstante ter sido posta em concorrência, jamais teve quem se interessasse pela sua exploração. Avolumando-se as queixas, em forma de autênticos abaixo-assinados, e havendo dificuldades para Companhia destacar mais veículos com aquele itinerário, deliberou-se entregar sua exploração, em forma precária e transitória, até que o editorial de concorrência fôsse publicado, a um grupo de pessoas com interesses ligados ao bairro. Não há nenhum contrato efetivo. Apenas se trata de prestação de serviços, em forma precária, que serão legalizados com a firma que vencer a concorrência."

³⁸ Nabil Bonducki characterizes the institution similarly: "Not by accident, the City Government never could properly structure the Division (later Department) of Urbanism, a sector responsible for establishing guidelines,

The conflict between the City and Bonilha escalated rapidly, with both sides reinforcing their positions rather than acquiescing to compromise. Municipal engineer Antonio Fiorito concluded in 1958: “From the motives that were exposed it seems to us, we repeat, the fact the developer sold *aquatic lots* does not justify the non-observance of the minimum that is required in relation to drainage and rainwater. Consequently the developer should fully observe our requests.”³⁹ Shortly thereafter Department of Works Director Marcello de Godoy resolved, “The acceptance of the present development will provoke severe damages to the City, for the exclusive benefit of the developer himself.”⁴⁰

Bonilha aimed to turn the tables. He argued that because he sold the lots in 1947, before a new series of urban regulations were passed in 1953-'54, the City could not hold him responsible for the stricter, more recent standards. His argument ignored, of course, the fact that he sold the lots originally without official approval and that he had subsequently misrepresented the status of the development when requesting permission for its construction in 1955. Bonilha, predictably, did not fare well in the eyes of municipal officials. In 1959 official José Fernandes Berlula wrote that it was clear that “the entirety of the lots has already been sold by the developer, desirous of immediate profits and, also, of dividing his responsibility with approximately 1,400 buyers who, in their faith and respectful humbleness, were certain they were conducting business in accordance with all legal requirements.” Berlula derided Bonilha’s subsequent legal maneuvering as “clever and Machiavellian.”⁴¹

City officials condemned the clandestine construction of irregular loteamentos along with the developers responsible for them. City councilman Farabulini chided loteadores like Bonilha as “urban

approving and inspecting loteamentos, in addition to regularizing clandestine loteamentos. The sector in charge of loteamento approval always had an insufficient number of functionaries, resulting in the extreme slowness of bureaucratic proceedings and in the absence of inspections.” Bonducki, *Origens*, 299. “Não por acaso, a Prefeitura nunca conseguiu estruturar devidamente a Divisão (depois Departamento) de Urbanismo, órgão encarregado de estabelecer as diretrizes, aprovar e fiscalizar a abertura de loteamentos, além de estabelecer as diretrizes, aprovar e fiscalizar a abertura de loteamentos, além de regularizar os clandestinos. O setor de aprovação de loteamentos sempre contou com número insuficiente de funcionários, o que resultava na extrema morosidade dos procedimentos burocráticos e na ausência de fiscalização.”

³⁹ Processo 50.235/55, July 23, 1958, CGDP, Prefeitura de São Paulo, my italics.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Processo 50.235/55, November 27, 1959, CGDP, Prefeitura de São Paulo.

latifundiários” who sell lots that they know will “never receive the necessary public improvements.”⁴² Latifundiários were the landowning heads of feudal, large-scale farms, or *latifundios*.⁴³ The application of this term to real estate developers in the urban context asserted a continuity between loteamentos and prior spatial forms characterized by inequality and abuse. That continuity likely had an acute historical resonance in Vila Brasilândia, echoing the local history of slavery in the nineteenth century and the sixteenth-century founding of the parish through the large landholdings and enslaved natives of Manoel Preto (discussed in Chapter One). The dispute between the City and Bonilha was ultimately transferred to judicial authorities, ending when a São Paulo judge decided that the developer would pay for his actions. In 1965, a full ten years after Bonilha’s request for official approval of the loteamento, and nearly twenty after the actual material construction of Vila Brasilândia, he received a fine of 5,000 cruzeiros.⁴⁴ The fine was likely trivial for Bonilha: 5,000 cruzeiros made up 7.58% of the monthly *minimum wage* for a worker in São Paulo in 1965.⁴⁵ The fine did not alter or rectify the “grave irregularities” of the urban development itself.

Vila Brasilândia was the earliest of approximately 13 loteamentos produced in the contemporary district of Brasilândia in the 1940s-’60s.⁴⁶ São Paulo’s historical archives, such as one of the city’s principal historical repositories, the *Arquivo Histórico Municipal*, contain almost no records of these loteamentos. I located and gained access to sources about them in still-active municipal institutions charged with regulating urban redevelopment and real estate. These institutions have produced a paper trail in the course of attempting to rectify what they describe as the “urbanistic irregularities” of loteamentos settled off the map. These documents, therefore, retain a practical utility less common for the sources in places like the Arquivo Histórico Municipal. Indeed, I was denied access to some of the

⁴² 159th Sessão Ordinária da Câmara Municipal, May 6, 1953.

⁴³ For a survey of recent and not-so-recent work on this subject, see Márcia Maria Menendes Motta, “Classic Works of Brazil’s New Rural History: Feudalism and the Latifúndio in the Interpretations of the Left (1940/1964),” *Hist. Crit.* 51 (September-December, 2013), 121-144.

⁴⁴ Processo 50.235/55, 1965, CGDP, Prefeitura de São Paulo.

⁴⁵ “Anuário estatístico do Brasil – 1965,” Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística 26 (1965), 319, https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/periodicos/20/aeb_1965.pdf (accessed June 12, 2018).

⁴⁶ GINFO.

loteamento records in 2016 because planners, architects, and engineers from the City were actively working with them in an effort to address neighborhood conditions in a process termed regularization. Figure 27 displays the loteamentos (represented as blue polygons) founded within the district of Brasilândia. The void in the center of that gap is the original loteamento Vila Brasilândia, which remains “irregular” and, in that respect, off the map, a full seventy years after its original settlement in 1947.

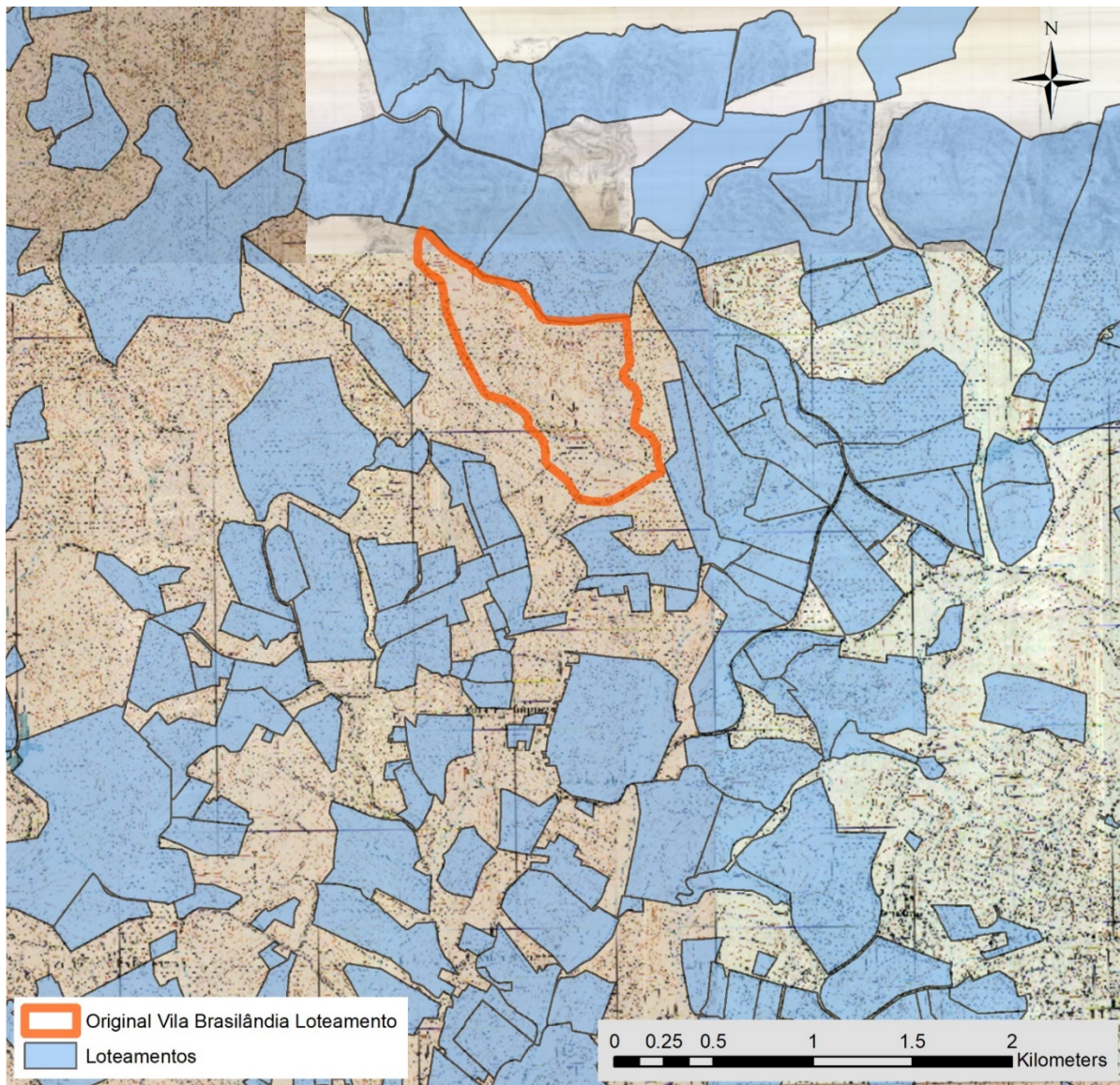


Figure 27: Visualization of allotments (*loteamentos*) in the contemporary district of Brasilândia. Basemap is from “Mapeamento 1930 - SARA,” *GeoSampa*, www.geosampa.prefeitura.sp.gov.br (accessed June 12, 2018). Map by author.

*Autoconstruction, beyond Bricks and Tiles:
From “Congo” to “Brazil-land”*

I had no idea what *tijolos* were, and my ignorance seemed to faze Célio. The journalist and long-time Brasilândia resident pantomimed bricklaying and proceeded to explain the original location of the kiln that cooked Vila Brasilândia’s foundational bricks (*tijolos*). That was my first visit to the neighborhood but not the last mention of bricks in Vila Brasilândia and elsewhere. A former resident of the Bela Vista district, for instance, would later tell me about how pioneering Brazilian educator Paulo Freire privileged bricks in his adult literacy initiatives. Freire used the word and physical object to spur his mostly-poor students, many of whom worked in construction, to question social inequalities, as in: “I make houses. Why don’t I have one made of bricks?”⁴⁷

Bricks occupied a central role in the literal and symbolic construction of Vila Brasilândia. In a clever marketing scheme, the developer of the loteamento José Munhoz Bonilha offered the materials to construct a house, including bricks and roof tiles, to anyone who purchased a parcel. In the 1995 interview with *O Estado de S. Paulo*, he explained: “the brickyard produced the bricks and we gave 2 or 3 thousand units and 300 roof tiles to the residents.” The demand exceeded even the developer’s expectations: “people would purchase the land on Saturday and by Monday they were already living in at least a provisional house: ‘It was so fast no one believed it,’” he recalled.⁴⁸ An undated photo (figure 28) exhibits what this neighborhood in the making looked like.

⁴⁷ RA conversation with Andrew Britt. São Carlos, São Paulo State. February 10, 2017. The quote is from Sílvia Bessa, “Eu faço casa. Por que não tenho uma de tijolo?” *Diário de Pernambuco*, 30 March, 2017, http://www.diariodepernambuco.com.br/app/noticia/brasil/2017/03/30/interna_brasil,696638/eu-faco-casa-por-que-nao-tenho-uma-de-tijolo.shtml (accessed June 17, 2018).

⁴⁸ “Apaixonado pelo País,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*. The article was prompted by the 48th anniversary of the neighborhood’s founding. The nostalgic, largely celebratory piece was a product of the 1990s, as well, when Brasilândia had gained widespread infamy as (supposedly) one the most violent and dangerous regions of São Paulo. The article indeed took a decidedly “before Paradise was Lost” tone. The neighborhood journal of Vila Brasilândia, *O Jornal da Brasilândia*, recorded other figures: 5,000 bricks and 200 roof tiles. “Uma repasada de olhos na vida de Brasilândia nos seus 37 anos de existência,” *O Jornal da Brasilândia*, January 1984.



Figure 28: Undated photo of Vila Brasilândia. Reproduced with permission from photo from archive of Célio Pires.

As with similar loteamentos on São Paulo's periphery, residents produced Vila Brasilândia through the process of autoconstruction (*autoconstrução*). The "auto" prefix denotes that ordinary residents themselves constructed homes gradually over time and in lieu of the real estate developer or state institutions. Autoconstructing residents built São Paulo's expanding periphery from the 1940s through the 1980s, however the significance of that practice transcended the obvious material utility of bricks and roof tiles.⁴⁹ The autoconstruction of Vila Brasilândia as a material place and a neighborhood

⁴⁹ Anthropologist Teresa Caldeira highlights the cumulative, gradual nature of autoconstruction as "a lifetime process in which the workers [homeowners] buy a lot and build either a room or shack at the back of it, move in, and then spend decades expanding and improving the construction, furnishing, and decorating the house." Teresa Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2010), 222; James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009). Caldeira and Holston emphasize autoconstruction as a mechanism for making citizenship claims. Caldeira writes, for instance, "Workers simultaneously become property

identity calls for an alternative reading of “auto” as synonymous with “self.” While producing the loteamento’s built environment by themselves, Vila Brasilândia residents also engaged in the production of themselves. In this process, new and long-term residents alike confronted the region’s spatial history of slavery and reconstructed spatial identities in negotiations over the local built and linguistic landscapes.

Vast slaveholding, sugar-cane agriculture, and high concentrations of enslaved and runaway Afro-descendants characterized the parish of Nossa Senhora do Ó in the nineteenth century. N. S. do Ó served as a way-station for transportation between the city center and the interior of São Paulo until the late 1860s, when the construction of a rail line between Santos and Jundiaí isolated the parish. With negligible population growth and scanty urban development, N. S. do Ó would change little from the end of the nineteenth century through the 1940s, when developers began to produce loteamentos like Vila Brasilândia.⁵⁰ The developers and autoconstructing residents who produced those new loteamentos encountered a built and linguistic landscape replete with references to the region’s Afro-descendant populations. That landscape included places marked with Afro-descendent identities, such as Congo Road, Congo Creek, and Vila Congo. In the course of the region’s urbanization, some residents sought to unmap these marked spaces and replace them with a microcosmic Brazil-land that reflected the ideal of harmonious ethnracial mixture and proximity. Place names and roadways served as two principal sites for the production and contestation of this autoconstructed space and identity.

In 1956 a group of residents of Cruz das Almas sent a petition to the City Council to replace three local place names.⁵¹ Situated to the southwest of the Vila Brasilândia loteamento, Cruz das Almas bordered Congo Road on its western side. Presented in the City Council by councilman Agenor Lino de Mattos, the petition called for “the change of the name of the neighborhood to ‘Vila Monteiro Lobato,’”

owners, urbanize the outskirts of the metropolitan region, and are politicized.” *City of Walls*, 13. Holston terms autoconstruction “a domain of symbolic elaboration,” and comes close to exploring the relationship to identity when he writes, “This autoconstruction of house, self, and citizen in the periphery is both individual and collective.” Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship*, 8 and 263.

⁵⁰ These histories are covered in detail in Chapter One.

⁵¹ Cruz das Almas forms part of the contemporary district of Brasilândia and has long comprised part of the imagined space. For instance, the first neighborhood newspaper, *O Jornal da Brasilândia*, included Cruz das Almas in the region of Brasilândia.

and of Congo Road to “Estilac Leal Avenue.”⁵² The proposal envisioned a renovation of the local linguistic landscape to celebrate the two notable individuals: the prolific author Lobato (discussed in Chapter 2) and Leal, a Brazilian general and minister of war during Brazilian president Getúlio Vargas’s term from 1951-’54.⁵³ These were major features of the local environment: Cruz das Almas was the name by which the local region was identified on official maps, and Congo Road served as a principal roadway connecting the center of the parish of N. S. do Ó in the south with Cruz das Almas and the interior of the state of São Paulo to the north. The request also, significantly, entailed a redefinition of the category of the “Congo” roadway: from *estrada*, a word for road associated with rural areas, to avenue, the symbol and way of modern progress that planners had, in the two decades prior, employed in reshaping the city of São Paulo.

What motivated the residents of Cruz das Almas to petition for the name changes? In a 2006 interview conducted by reporters from a local newspaper, the *Jornal Cantareira*, long-term Cruz das Almas resident Adelina Gomes da Costa Leal provided insight into the popular significance of these names. Born in Portugal in 1944, Leal arrived in Brazil in 1948. She recalls the history of Cruz das Almas as such:

It is said that in the time of slavery, here close by there were slave quarters. It is said as well that many blacks (*negros*) died near here, and in memory of the souls of the slaves it became known as Cruz das Almas (“Crossing of the Souls”). Cruz das Almas Street, today Manoel José de Almeida Street,⁵⁴ was the path of blacks from the slave quarters to Itaberaba.⁵⁵

Figure 29 displays the geography that Leal outlines. She was 12 years old, and just eight years in Brazil, when local residents petitioned for a new name for Cruz das Almas. Despite her young age, therefore, she learned of the connection between enslaved Afro-descendants and the place. Her recollection of that

⁵² Indicação N. 737-56, Atas e Anais da Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, March 5, 1956.

⁵³ I discussed Lobato in Chapter Two, particularly concerning his relationship to author Gabriel Marques.

⁵⁴ I have yet to locate the year or circumstances surrounding the renaming of this street. Through the mid-1950s, the road was still Cruz das Almas.

⁵⁵ “Cruz das Almas,” *Jornal Cantareira*, April 22, 2013, <http://www.cantareira.org/noticias/periferia-brasilandia-cruz-das-almas> (accessed August 21, 2016).

connection is passive (“it is said”), suggesting that the association of Cruz das Almas with enslaved Afro-descendants was part of popular geographic knowledge about the region.

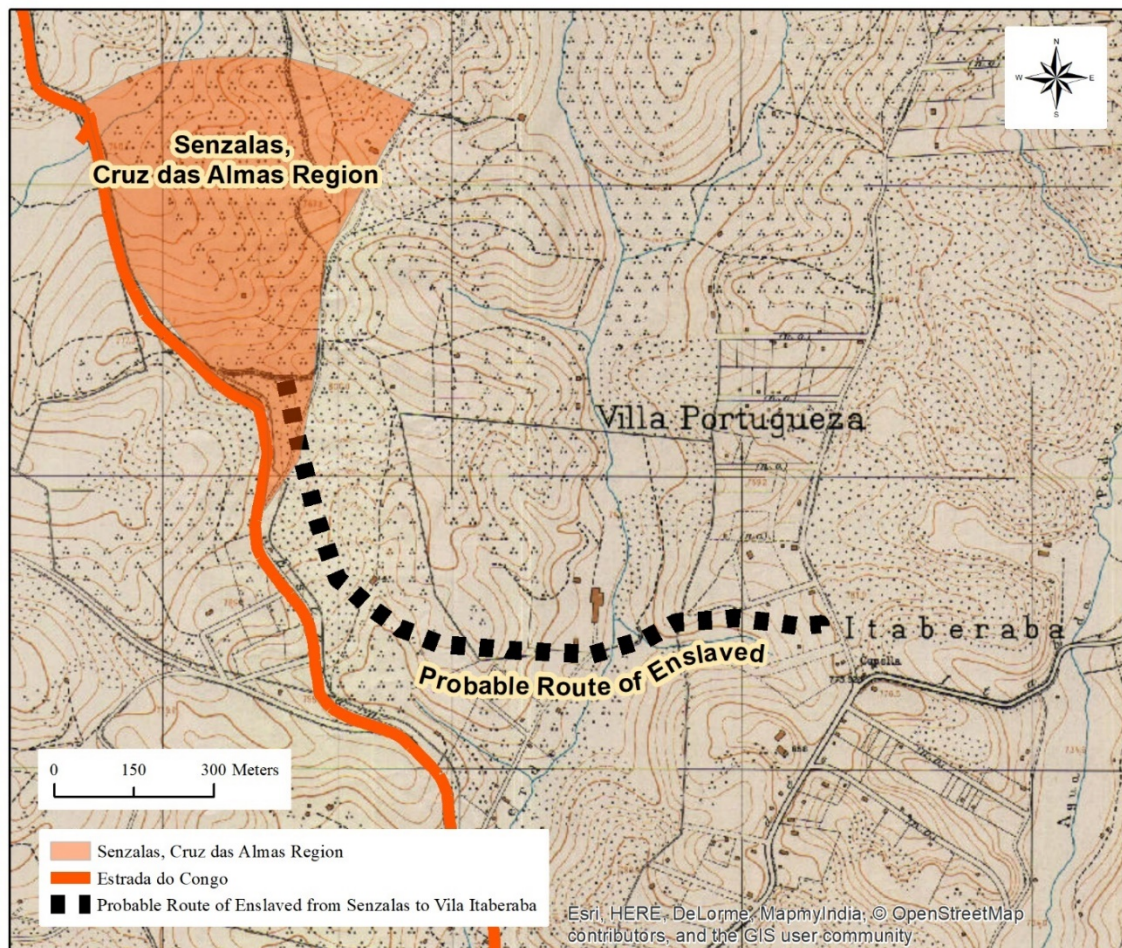


Figure 29: Geography of Cruz das Almas as described by Leal and LS. Basemap is from “Mapeamento 1930 - SARA,” *GeoSampa*, www.geosampa.prefeitura.sp.gov.br (accessed June 12, 2018). Map by author.

Another resident LS was born in Vila Itaberaba, a loteamento south of Vila Brasilândia and east of Cruz das Almas, in 1928. LS spent his career as a bus driver with routes throughout São Paulo. After marrying he began autoconstructing a home near the former Cruz das Almas Street, where he has remained ever since. The route of enslaved persons to Itaberaba mentioned in the passage above likely followed a line very close to his home. What’s more, his relatives possessed substantial land holdings in this area through

the mid-twentieth century, including Brasília Simões, the man commonly credited with owning the tract that was sold to Bonilha and later subdivided as Vila Brasilândia.⁵⁶

Google Maps positions LS's home within the Cruz das Almas neighborhood. If you repeat this place name to him, however, he will quickly correct you. His home sits in Vila Timoteo, he explained to me, the given name of his ancestor Timoteo, whose portrait hangs in the living room of the original part of the house. Timoteo was a landowner and slaveholder in N. S. do Ó.⁵⁷ Historian Máximo Barros asserts that Timoteo was one of the earliest producers of the local brand of cachaça (sugar cane alcohol), the “*Caninha do Ó*” (“Little Cane of Ó”), the principal product from the local production of sugar.⁵⁸ LS's insistence on the preservation of the place name of his ancestor reflects a familial pride. That pride is especially acute because most of the inheritors of these landholdings sold to loteamento developers in the middle of the twentieth century. His contemporary emphasis on “Vila Timoteo” also echoes the petition from Cruz das Almas residents sixty years earlier. LS aims to maintain the identity of the space in popularly-imagined, if not official, geographies with a name that recalls his ancestor, not local Afro-descendants.

São Paulo's City Council did not approve the 1956 request to rename Cruz das Almas, which retains this name to the present. However, in the immediate years following municipal officials accepted other, similar appeals, including the renaming of Congo Road. The stone quarry Morro Grande sat between Congo Road and Vila Brasilândia. Morro Grande was one of the sole sources of non-agricultural employment and commercial activity in the region, and its managers seem to have played a fundamental role in the renaming of Congo Road. In 1957 representatives of Morro Grande sent a request to the City government to pave Congo Road.⁵⁹ Asphalt would ease the transfer of stones from the rock quarry to a

⁵⁶ LS, interview by author, Brasilândia district, São Paulo, July 5, 2016. The qualification “commonly credited” is explained in detail below.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Barro, *Nossa Senhora do Ó*, 71. “outro muito comentado também como sendo um dos iniciantes da fabricação é o de Thimoteo de Oliveira Simões.” “another producer also much discussed as beginning the fabrication was Thimoteo de Oliveira Simões.”

⁵⁹ Indicação N. 1037-57, 180 Sessão Ordinária, Atas e Anais da Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, April 30, 1957.

processing site a few kilometers south. Adelina Gomes, who like other residents often measures historical periods by the conditions of roadways, remembers that the “only street that had gravel was Congo Road...where ox carts passed pulling stones from the stone quarry Morro Grande to be crushed near Itaberaba Avenue.”⁶⁰

The municipal government consented to replace the gravel on Congo Road with asphalt in 1960, the same year that São Paulo Mayor Adhemar Barros issued a decree to rename Congo Road. The previous name would be replaced with “Elísio Teixeira Leite Avenue – Meritorious.” Leite founded the Morro Grande quarry, at this time under the management of his son-in-law, Thomaz Melo Cruz.⁶¹ The unilateral nature of a mayoral decree means that the action produced neither debate in a forum like the City Council nor a paper trail as other executive or legislative procedures might have. Other than the request from the Cruz das Almas residents a few years previous, therefore, no official evidence attests to the mayor’s motivation for issuing the decree.

The simultaneous asphaltting and renaming of Congo Road was not coincidental. LS recalls that a representative from Morro Grande helped to lead the initiative to rename Congo Road. LS suggests that the unidentified representative’s desire reflected a broad sentiment within the region that the name was “not appropriate.”⁶² The mayor and other government officials may have acceded to the renaming because the asphaltting had been delayed. The action likely also, however, reflected a consensus among Morro Grande’s leadership and officials that “Congo” was indeed inappropriate. The paving and renaming of Congo Road paralleled the asphaltting of city-center sites marked with Afro-descendent identities in the course of executing Prestes Maia’s *Avenues Plan*.

The stones carted down Congo Road from the Morro Grande quarry were not just any stones. Similar to the autoconstructing residents producing a microcosmic “Brazil-land” surrounding Morro Grande, the quarry’s products served in the literal and symbolic construction of São Paulo’s and Brazil’s

⁶⁰ “Cruz das Almas,” *Jornal Cantareira*, April 22, 2013.

⁶¹ Municipal Decree 4568, January 15, 1960.

⁶² LS, interview.

future. Not surprisingly, roadways figured centrally into those constructions. Aroldo de Azevedo described granite extraction in the northern limits of N. S. do Ó:

Another economic activity of the Cantareira region consists in the exploration of its diverse granite outcrops, which is carried out by the Municipality of São Paulo, by the State of São Paulo Department of Roads and Roadways and also by private companies, that from these quarries they extract paving stones for the paving of *paulistana* [of the city of São Paulo] streets and material destined for the paving of roads and civil construction projects. Many of the stones can be found in very visible locations; but there are others that hide themselves in the forest or behind breaks in the terrain (*acidentes do relevo*).⁶³

Morro Grande supplied the raw stone material for the asphaltting of Via Anhanguera, a path used as early as the seventeenth century for bandeirante expeditions to the interior and re-inaugurated in the 1940s as one of the first modern, asphalted highways in the country.⁶⁴ Advertisements for Morro Grande appropriated the rhetoric and imagery of the bandeirantes, the colonial settlers who hunted mineral wealth and slaves in the interior of the Brazilian colony and served to expand its territorial reach.⁶⁵ A 1948 advertisement from Morro Grande for Via Anhanguera (figure 30) read: “Eloquent demonstration of paulista dynamism, Via Anhanguera opens new horizons for our economy, by connecting our productive centers, for which it offers a wide path” for the “driving force of our progress.”⁶⁶

⁶³ Azevedo, *A cidade de S. Paulo* v. 4 (1958), 45-46. Outra atividade econômica da região da Cantareira consiste na exploração de seus diversos afloramentos do granito o que é feito pela Prefeitura Municipal de São Paulo, pelo Departamento Estadual de Estradas de Rodagem e também por particulares, que dessas pedreiras retiram paralelepípedos para o calçamento das ruas paulistanas e material destinado à pavimentação de estradas e às construções civis. Muitas delas acham-se em locais bem visíveis; mas outras existem que se escondem em plena floresta ou por detrás de acidentes do relevo.

⁶⁴ José Tadeu Balbo, *Pavimentação asfáltica: materiais, projeto, e restauração* (São Paulo: Oficina de Textos, 2007).

⁶⁵ Richard Morse, *The Bandeirantes: The Historical Role of Brazilian Pathfinders* (Knopf, 1965); Antonio Celso Ferreira, *A epopéia bandeirante: letrados, instituições, invenção histórica (1870-1940)* (São Paulo, SP: Editora UNESP, 2002); A. J. R. Russell-Wood, “Rethinking Bandeirismo in Colonial Brazil,” *The Americas* 61:3 (2005).

⁶⁶ *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 22, 1948, 9.

VIA ANHANGUERA

**Bandeira moderna
a ampliar os horizontes
de nossa grandeza**

• Demonstração eloquente do dinamismo paulista, a Via Anhanguera rasga novos horizontes à nossa economia, pela aproximação de centros produtores, aos quais oferece um amplo caminho por onde irá a força propulsora de nosso progresso. É, pois, mais um feito grandioso que enaltece nossa terra. É um serviço inestimável prestado a Piratininga pela engenharia bandeirante que, em colaboração com uma equipe de eficientes técnicos do Departamento de Estradas de Rodagem, pôde acrescentar, ao nosso acervo de realizações mais essa obra monumental que afirmará, através dos tempos, pelo contínuo engrandecimento de nosso Estado, a capacidade realizadora de nossa gente.

Colaborer fornecendo parte da Pedra britada •

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Homenagem aos diretores da Pedreira Morro Grande Ltda. em identificação
• aos que participaram da construção desta grandiosa obra rodoviária

Materiais essenciais na construção de pilares de concreto na Via Anhanguera em São Paulo a seguir:

Sacos de cimento 60000
Pedra britada . . . 45.000 mts.2
Areia para lastro •
concreto . . . 65.000 mts.2
Papel para lastro 60.000 quilos
Movimento de terra para construção de talus que dará lugar a duas pistas . . . 4.000 mts.2

Foram empregadas no pavimento-geral desta obra operações durante o período que vai de Julho de 1947 a Março de 1948, tendo-se empregado a obra de arte C.R. 24 em 200.000. Custo de pavimentação de concreto: Cr\$ 24.400.000,00

Das 200 propriedades avaliadas em 1.000.000 mts.2 em 1948, 100 foram empregadas na obra. Produção mensal: 5.000 mts.2

Figure 30: Advertisement for Morro Grande and Via Anhanguera. *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 22, 1948.

While Morro Grande commercialized the mineral extraction for large-scale projects in the twentieth century, other records suggest that stones from N. S. do Ó had long served in local construction. In her study of colonial São Paulo, historian Maria Odila da Silva Dias makes the following passing, but significant, reference: “women would bring stones in their carts for building works in town, or firewood for the inhabitants to use: those who came from Freguesia do Ó travelled along the borders of Santa Ifigênia and, from there, came across the Acu and Constituição bridges, driving their carts towards Largo de São Bento at the heart of the old commercial centre of São Paulo.”⁶⁷ The observation indicates that residents in, and raw material from, N. S. do Ó had long participated in building the city of São Paulo.

The Morro Grande advertisement for Via Anhanguera resembled the discourse of Fábio da Silva Prado about July 9 Avenue (discussed in Chapter Two) and further emphasizes the high stakes that political and urban planning elites in São Paulo attached to roadways. While Morro Grande’s marketing

⁶⁷ Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life*, 11-12.

pitched the business as the force paving the path for the locomotive of São Paulo to drive the country into the future, the unpaved Congo Road represented the past. Linked to Afro-descendants and slavery, the past was considered undesirable by the quarry's leadership and the city officials who approved the name change. They likely deemed Congo Road particularly inappropriate because the raw material transported along it would comprise the building blocks of São Paulo's material and symbolic future.

Roads feature centrally in the recollections of local resident MB when describing Vila Brasilândia's history. She describes travelling across them between the neighborhood and more central regions of the city. Women would gather in early mornings at a spring in the center of Vila Brasilândia to launder clothes. Following the early-morning labor, they would walk across steep hills to Parapuã Street and then to the nearest bus stop in Vila Itaberaba. The bus would transport the women to more central areas of the city, where most worked as domestic laborers. Roads, in her memories, are rarely paved, with the material substance of clay (*barro*) occupying a central role in people's daily lives. She emphasized the strategies used to traverse muddy roads and arrive clean at work. Most commonly, they used galoshes (waterproof overshoes) and switched to clean shoes once they arrived on asphalt.⁶⁸

An undated photo (figure 31) from the collection of the journalist Célio Pires shows a group of residents, most of them seemingly nonwhite, walking down the unasphalted Parapuã Street. The composition of the picture, faceless individuals together travelling down the dirt road, appears mundane at first. The fact that someone deemed the scene worthy of a photographic image, however, suggests they understood it as a meaningful event. Perhaps the photographer was motivated to record residents along the route to or from parts of the city where they had lived previously, before urban redevelopment in the name of asphalted avenues led them to unpaved peripheries like Vila Brasilândia.

⁶⁸ MB, interview by author, Brasilândia district, São Paulo, June 22, 2017.



Figure 31: “Stretch of Parapuã Street.” Reproduced with permission from photo from archive of Célio Pires.

The asphaltting and renaming of Congo Road as Elísio Teixeira Leite Avenue signaled a continuity in the story of asphalted avenues silencing spaces associated with Afro-descendants in São Paulo from the 1930s through the 1960s. While one chapter in this avenues history occurred in Vila Brasilândia, Prestes Maia’s original project continued to unfold in the city center. The urbanist-mayor won an additional term in 1961 with the campaign pledge to complete the avenues first outlined decades before, especially the successively-delayed May 23 Avenue separating the districts of Bela Vista and Liberdade. Those projects would continue to reshape the material environments and spatial identities of the Liberdade and Bexiga neighborhoods decades after the razing of Saracura, the Largo do Bexiga, and the Igreja dos Remédios (discussed in Chapter Two). Meanwhile, in the northern zone of the city, the silencing of Congo Road and the development of the Vila Brasilândia loteamento would also remake marked geographies at the scale of the neighborhood.

Remaking the Local Marked Geography

The autoconstruction of Vila Brasilândia reshaped a racialized/ethnicized geography that divided the parish of N. S. do Ó in the decades before 1947. One local resident recalls this racialized socio-spatial division. He described the contemporary area of the Brasilândia district in the north as a locus of black settlement. He remembers that whites were concentrated in areas to the south, closer to the center of the parish, and were unwelcome in the northern region.⁶⁹ In an article about the parish's history, journalist and historian Sandra Santos describes a similar geography with a particular focus on religious practices: "Like in other churches in São Paulo, in the central church of the parish there was no place for the religiosity of black people, whose geographic space, since very early, was delimited: the periphery of the parish is black; the center of the parish is white."⁷⁰

While few records survive to shed light on this geography of racial segregation, land records provide some insight into the potential concentration of Afro-descendants in the northern reaches of N. S. do Ó. The following announcement ran in *O Estado de S. Paulo* in 1879: "Emancipations: Refer to the *Tribuna* [another newspaper] that Dona Joaquina Alves de Siqueira died leaving free 17 slaves she possessed, bequeathing to them a large farm (*sítio*) in Freguesia do Ó and a house in the city."⁷¹ Siqueira's 1874 will provides more details about the inheritance, including the names of some of the individuals who gained their freedom and property upon her death:

[...] and by not having any older relatives, nor descendants, for the lady to freely dispose of her goods, I leave them to my freedman (*liberto*) Francisco Alves, who I institute as the universal heir. I confirm the liberty I granted to Ignacio, Benedicta, and as such to Benedita, their daughter, João Pedro, Anna, Antonio, and Balbina, whose freed papers you will find registered in the records of the first and second notary...these freed people are to serve me while alive and I will send each one [illegible] from their work and they will say six masses for my soul.⁷²

⁶⁹ LS, interview.

⁷⁰ Sandra Santos, "Marcas de pé descalço," in Cremilda Medina, org., *Ó Freguesia, quantas histórias* (São Paulo: ECA/USP, 2000), 29. "Assim como em outras igrejas de São Paulo, na matriz da Freguesia não havia lugar para a religiosidade do povo negro, cujo espaço geográfico, desde cedo, foi delimitado: a periferia da Freguesia é negra; o centro da Freguesia é branco."

⁷¹ *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 10, 1879.

⁷² Dated October 19, 1874, and printed in Patrícia Garcia Ernando da Silva, "Últimos desejos e promessas da liberdade: os processos de alforrias em São Paulo (1850-1888)" (master's thesis, USP, 2010), 186-187. "[...] e por não ter ascendente algum, nem descendente, senhora de dispor libremente de meus bens, os deixo á meu liberto Francisco Alves a quem delles instituto herdeiro universal. Ratifico as libertações que concedi a Ignacio, Benedicta, e assim mais á Benedita, filha dos mesmos, João Pedro, Anna, Antonio, Balbina cujas cartas se achão registradas nas

These freedpeople may have been part of a settlement of Afro-descendants in the northern reaches of N. S. do Ó. The name Francisco Alves Siqueira appears on an eligible voter list from the region in 1906, suggesting that the executor of her estate remained in N. S. do Ó.⁷³ The name Siqueira also appeared in loteamento projects in areas adjacent to Vila Brasilândia in decades following: to the southeast, Vila Siqueira Penteado, and to the northwest, Vila Siqueira. The names of the loteamentos make it plausible that the sítio was located in one of these areas. Francisco Alves de Siqueira's sítio, in other words, might have spurred the settlement of other Afro-descendant freed people after those original seventeen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, creating a locally-prominent nonwhite settlement.

We find an additional, though still vague, clue about the region's racialized social geography in the original deed of sale for the Vila Brasilândia loteamento. There was a surprising degree of ambiguity in the record of sale, which read:

...this tract, which they together own and in the following proportions, - of the following signees:- Dona Esperança Alves de Oliveira had one fourth of said farm in the will of Dona Francisca Maria de Jesús, processed by the 4th Notary of Orphans of the capital, ratified on October 13, 1919 and transcribed under number 13,785 in Record of the 2nd Circumscription (Circunscrição) of this region; Ernesto Alves de Oliveira and his wife had a sixth in the same will, according to transcription number 10,279 of the same Record of the 2nd Circumscription; and each one of the remaining grantors had a dozen grandparents on said farm, in the inventory of dona Julia Alves de Oliveira Simões...⁷⁴

The sale occurred in an official context recorded by a notary, yet the precise ownership of *more than half* of the farm was unaccounted for. Esperança Alves de Oliveira possessed a fourth and Ernesto Alves de Oliveira and his wife owned a sixth, totaling 41.67%. The record describes the other approximately 60% of the sítio as having been occupied (and/or still being occupied) by the vague quantity of “dozens” of

notas do primeiro e segundo tabellião sujeitos os mesmos libertos a me servirem enquanto viva e á mandarem cada um com [ilegível] de seu trabalho digão seis missas em sufragio de minha alma.”

⁷³ *Correio Paulistano*, January 11, 1906, 7.

⁷⁴ Processo 50.235/55, CGDP, Prefeitura de São Paulo, my italics. “...imóvel êsse, que possuem em comum e na proporção que cada um houve, - pelos títulos seguintes:- Dona Esperança Alves de Oliveira houve uma quarta parte de dito sítio no inventário de dona Francisca Maria de Jesús, processado pelo Cartório do 4^o. Ofício de Orfãos da capital, homologado em 13 de outubro de 1.919 e transcrito sob n.o. 13.785 no Registro da 2a. Circunscrição desta comarca; Ernesto Alves de Oliveira e sua mulher houveram uma sexta parte no mesmo inventário, conforme transcrição n.o. 10.279 do mesmo Registro da 2^a. Circunscrição; e os demais outorgantes houveram cada um deles um doze avos em dito sítio, no inventário de dona Julia Alves de Oliveira Simões, processado pelo Cartório do 6.o. Ofício de Orfãos da Capital, - transcrito sob n.o. 8.977 no Registro da 8^a. Circunscrição desta comarca.”

grandparents presumably related to those selling the sítio to the loteador Bonilha. The record describes those grandparents as listed in the will of Julia Alves de Oliveira Simões, and an obituary for a person by that name ran in a newspaper article in 1929.⁷⁵ Were those dozens of “grandparents” still alive? If so, why had they not been present at or at least mentioned by name in the selling of what was, ostensibly, *their* property? If not alive, why were their wills not cited as proof that those listed as selling that sixty percent of the property were the lawful inheritors of it?

The lack of clarity about the ownership of the original nucleus of Vila Brasilândia, combined with the high presence of Afro-descendants in the north of N. S. do Ó, pose important questions about land transfer across time and the details of the original sale. Instead of a term of biological relation, “grandparent” may have been an affective term used to describe formerly-enslaved Afro-descendants who lived on the farm without official title to it. Perhaps those individuals had settled there in the aftermath of the formal abolition of slavery, or perhaps runaway slave populations had long lived on the land.⁷⁶ The urbanization of this region through the loteamento Vila Brasilândia would have constituted, in this scenario, the dispossession of land held by Afro-descendent populations. While a plausible conclusion, the extant sources do not provide sufficient insight to resolve the matter. The name/s of the sítio itself are not identified in the deed of sale, and to date I have not located land ownership records from the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries for this far northern region. Those records would likely provide information that could be cross-referenced with other sources to compile a more complete picture of occupation and property ownership in the region before the 1947 sale.

The development of Vila Brasilândia remade the region’s racialized geography in a nationalist image of harmonious ethnoracial mixture. LS credited the loteamento with improving the racial segregation that had divided the parish of N. S. do Ó. The establishment of the new urban settlement, he asserted, reduced divisions and reestablished physical as well as social proximity.⁷⁷ This process of

⁷⁵ “Noticias do Foro,” *Diario Nacional*, August 13, 1929, 4.

⁷⁶ Barro, *Nossa Senhora do Ó*. See Chapter One for a detailed examination of the runaway enslaved population in the parish.

⁷⁷ LS, interview.

integration hinged on the diversification of the resident population through vast local and regional migration.⁷⁸ In addition to the erasure of certain socio-spatial relations and histories, therefore, the urban development of Vila Brasilândia had a futurist orientation that intersected with a racialized reimagining of the composition of the nation through local neighborhood space.

The name of the new loteamento was fundamental to this futurist orientation. At least two stories purport to explain the origin of the name “Brasilândia.” One indicates that the name was almost an afterthought. The credited owner of the original tract, Brasília Simões, arrived at the notary to register the then-nameless area before selling it to the developer Bonilha. The notary indicated that Simões would have to choose a name. He decided to give his own, thereby creating the “land of Brasília,” with Brasilândia. Affirming this version of the history, the neighborhood newspaper *O Jornal da Brasilândia* indicates that Simões “was the inspiration for the loteamento.”⁷⁹ The second story holds that the name came from Bonilha himself. The 1995 article in *O Estado de S. Paulo* supports this version: “The patriotism of Bonilha was decisive in deciding the name of the village. ‘I always liked anything related to the name Brazil,’ he affirmed. ‘I named the company Brasilândia Enterprises of Land and Construction and, later, the place Brasilândia itself,’ he recounts. ‘It stuck.’”⁸⁰ The fact that the development company also bore the name, and that the source comes directly from him, leads me to see Bonilha’s story as the more accurate version. Whichever of the origin stories is correct (if either), local residents likely interpreted “Brazil-land Village” as a nationalist space.⁸¹

The practice of constructing the nation through urban space extended far beyond Vila Brasilândia in this era. On the federal level in the 1950s, urban planners, architects, and politicians designed

⁷⁸ Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Jeffrey Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013); Paulo Roberto Ribeiro Fontes, *Um Nordeste em São Paulo: trabalhadores migrantes em São Miguel Paulista (1945-66)* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora, 2008).

⁷⁹ “Uma repassada de olhos na vida de Brasilândia nos seus 37 anos de existência,” *O Jornal da Brasilândia*, January 1984.

⁸⁰ “Apaixonado pelo País,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*.

⁸¹ For a similar example of imagining the nation through local space, see Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Wurttemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

nationalist development schemes around modern urban forms. Brazilian president Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1960) committed to “50 years of development in 5,” with the crown jewel of his program the city of Brasília, to be the nation’s new capital.⁸² Designed by internationally-renowned architect Oscar Niemeyer and urban planner Lúcio Costa, Brasília celebrated the ascendant country and paved a concrete path for its continued progress. The construction of Brasília drew migrant laborers from around the country, including at least one resident from Vila Brasilândia.⁸³ As those residents built the nation symbolically through the new national capital, they also autoconstructed Brazil and Brazilianness on the local scale of the neighborhood. In silencing spaces marked with Afro-descendent identities, especially the Congos of N. S. do Ó, the producers of “Brazil-land Village” created an urban space that aimed both to reflect and engender ideals of ethnoracial harmony, proximity, and mixture.

*Spaces of Mixture throughout São Paulo:
The “Brasilandense Race” and Japanese-Brazilian Bandeirantes*

Vila Brasilândia appeared in São Paulo’s mainstream press for the first time in the year following the clandestine sale of its first lots. Headlined “With 10,000 Residents and 3,000 Buildings, Vila Brasilândia Continues without Transportation,” the 1948 *Jornal das Notícias* article described the place as a quintessential São Paulo neighborhood, defined by rapid growth and ethnoracial mixture:

São Paulo is a metropolis that grows dizzyingly. Neighborhoods that emerged yesterday today are true cities, with their necessities, their suffering, and their problems. As during the war, whose effects we feel until now, the city does not stop growing. Skyscrapers continue rising here and there, the population grows considerably, *individuals of all races and all creeds*, they come here to try their luck, with that very human and understandable desire to find a better life. New neighborhoods appear miraculously, attesting to the capacity for progress and achievement among our people.⁸⁴

⁸² James Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

⁸³ Interview by author with [name withheld], Brasilândia, São Paulo, July 21, 2016. This resident’s father was one of the “Candango” workers who helped to build the new capital. Brasilândia’s connection to the construction of Brasília was highlighted in the 2005 play “BR3” at the University of São Paulo, which explored questions of geography and migration through a fictional family that over multiple generations lived in three spaces: Brasilândia, Brasília, and Brasiléia (a small city in the far interior in the state of Acre that borders Bolivia). See “O Brasil através do Tietê,” *Jornal da USP* 757 (April 2006), <http://www.usp.br/jorusp/arquivo/2006/jusp757/teatro.htm> (accessed June 16, 2018)..

⁸⁴ “Com 10.000 Habitantes e 3.000 predios, Vila Brasilandia continua sem transportes,” *Jornal das Notícias*, October 17, 1948, 5. My italics.

The influx of populations of “all races and creeds” into Vila Brasilândia aided efforts to remake the marked geography of N. S. do Ó in an image of harmonious ethnoracial mixture. That effort was not confined to Vila Brasilândia, however. Officials and individuals connected to state institutions in São Paulo in the 1940s-’50s expressed preoccupations about the ethnoracial distribution of immigrant and nonwhite populations in space. Displacement sparked by state officials, combined with networks of more willing migration, helped to create neighborhoods of ethnoracial mixture. In the face of the official premium on mixture, some residents responded by producing alternative, unofficial spaces that facilitated the expression of ethnoracial difference. The following sections chart the production and negotiation of spaces of mixture with a focus on Vila Brasilândia, São Paulo’s first “Japanese neighborhood,” Conde de Sarzedas, and public monuments designed to epitomize harmonious ethnoracial relations.

In the 1940s-’60s, migrants from the center of the city of São Paulo, the interior of the state of São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and the North and Northeastern regions of Brazil constructed Vila Brasilândia. Italian, Japanese, and Portuguese immigrants and their descendants lived alongside longtime white and nonwhite residents whose roots stretched deeper into N. S. do Ó’s past, including a high concentration of Africans and their descendants.⁸⁵ The influx of migrants propelled what the *Jornal das Notícias* article above described as a “frightening” rate of population growth in Vila Brasilândia.⁸⁶ Urbanist Jorge Wilhelm calculated N. S. do Ó (inclusive of Vila Brasilândia), among the top five fastest-growing districts in São Paulo in the 1950s in terms of population.⁸⁷ Sparse records mean that estimates about numbers and the composition of the population in the 1940s vary drastically. For instance, while the article above estimates 10,000 residents in 1948, councilmember Homero Silva suggested 30,000 in 1953, and City urbanists indicated 1,400 in 1959. This inconsistency may have reflected the imprecision of the limits of Vila Brasilândia: observers like Silva may have calculated 30,000 based on a geography that

⁸⁵ In the census of 1890, the population of African descent in the city of São Paulo amounted to 15.6% of the total. In N. S. do Ó, however, the figure exceeded 40%. Raquel Rolnik, *A cidade e a lei legislação, política urbana e territórios na cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: FAPESP Studio Nobel, 2007). See the first section of Chapter 1 for other demographic data from throughout the nineteenth century.

⁸⁶ “Com 10.000 Habitantes,” *Jornal das Notícias*, October 17, 1948, 5.

⁸⁷ Jorge Wilhelm, *São Paulo Metrópole 65: Subsídios para seu plano diretor* (São Paulo: 1965), 15.

encompassed the entirety of the northern section of the N. S. do Ó parish (i.e. all loteamentos), while City urbanists might have restricted their estimates to the borders of the Vila Brasilândia loteamento itself.

The image of Vila Brasilândia as a space of ethnoracial mixture appears prominently in early editions of *O Jornal da Brasilândia*, the first long-running neighborhood newspaper. This publication printed some of the earliest written accounts of local history through interviews with older residents in the 1970s-'80s. Similar to the recollections of LS discussed above, the newspaper's articles celebrated the foundation of the Vila Brasilândia loteamento as a triumph of multiculturalism owing especially to the influx of immigrants. An article in one of the earliest editions, headlined "The Founders of the *Brasilandense* Race," privileged Italian, Japanese, Spanish, and Portuguese immigrants as the pioneers of the neighborhood.⁸⁸ The piece represented the place as quintessentially Brazilian because of its multiethnic immigrant and immigrant-descendent populations. That celebratory discourse also connected the foundation of the neighborhood to the creation of a new race: the "*Brasilandense* Race." In doing so, the article collapsed biological, ethnoracial, and spatial referents of belonging into a new, racialized/ethnicized neighborhood identity construct. Afro-descendant residents, long prominent in the region, were silenced in that construction.

Another celebratory narrative about the neighborhood's foundation, compiled in a 2006 documentary, privileges Italian and Japanese immigrants and their descendants in the neighborhood's foundation. Produced with financial support from the City of São Paulo, the documentary is titled "The Brasilândia District and its Histories." The first two interviewees are Dante Coiro, born in Santo Arsênio, Italy, and Lídia Yamasaki, whose father's family immigrated to Brazil from Japan. The documentary weaves their stories, which stretch across the globe, into Vila Brasilândia's origin story.

Coiro recalls a double displacement. His family fled Italy during World War II and settled in a cortiço in the center of São Paulo, which he characterizes as peopled largely by Italians. The demolition of that cortiço in the course of executing Prestes Maia's *Avenues Plan* required the family to move again,

⁸⁸ "Uma repasada," *O Jornal da Brasilândia*.

this time to Vila Brasilândia. Depicting the founders of Vila Brasilândia as unified by shared experiences of dislocation and hardship, Coiro explained that the neighborhood was founded “by the humblest people: northerners, people from the interior, foreigners.”⁸⁹ As in the article about the “*Brasilandense* Race,” however, the 2006 documentary about Vila Brasilândia’s history privileges the presence of immigrants and their descendants. The region’s historic and contemporary Afro-descendent populations remain unrecognized until a prominent local samba composer appears with the film’s score. In another allusion to the salience of roadways in Brazilian social life, the principal line of his song runs, “The roads were just *poeira* [dirt]...our cinema made just from *madeira* [wood].” The visibility of Afro-descendants increases as the documentary continues, especially through interviews with actor and musician known as Black Gero, whose family lived in Bela Vista before moving to Brasilândia.⁹⁰

While praising the immigrants who helped to found Brasilândia, the documentary also highlights the prejudices that Japanese-Brazilians faced during and in the decade following World War II. Brazil’s entry into the war on the side of the Allies, combined with the emergence of militant secret societies (among the most well-known being Shindo Renmei⁹¹), fueled both official and popular anti-Japanese sentiment. During the fascist-inspired New State (*Estado Novo*) regime (1937-1945), Brazilian president Getúlio Vargas initiated a Brazilianization campaign. The “homogenization program,” Jeffrey Lesser writes, “sought to preserve Brazilian identity from the encroachment of ethnicity by eliminating distinctive elements of immigrant culture.”⁹² Especially after 1942, officials in São Paulo sought to restrict the concentration of Japanese-Brazilian populations. Officials targeted the space that journalists and some residents had deemed the city of São Paulo’s first “Japanese neighborhood,” named Conde de Sarzedas (after the street along which it sat) and located north of the Liberdade district.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ “Distrito da Brasilândia e suas Histórias,” DSS Produções, 2006, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrYdz0a78Tw> (accessed June 13, 2018). Pandeiro is an official “ambassador of São Paulo samba.”

⁹¹ Lesser emphasizes the importance of space to Shindo Renmei, finding that the “society’s main goal, which became public in August 1945, following Japan’s surrender, was to maintain a permanent Japanized *space* in Brazil through the preservation of language, culture, and religion among Nikkei and the reestablishment of Japanese schools.” Lesser, *Negotiating*, 138. My italics.

⁹² Ibid., 130.

Most Japanese immigrants in the early-twentieth century worked in agriculture as colonists (*colonos*) in the interior of São Paulo and the adjacent state to the south Paraná.⁹³ From 1912 forward, some Japanese immigrants and their descendants began to establish an urban “colony” in the city of São Paulo along Conde de Sarzedas Street. In popular discourse, this place was both a street and a neighborhood, though the name derived most obviously from the roadway along which it stretched.⁹⁴ Conde de Sarzedas attracted immigrants and rural-to-urban migrants because of its proximity to employment opportunities in the city center and the availability of cheap housing.⁹⁵ Demographic records indicate that in the 1910s-’30s Conde de Sarzedas Street concentrated the largest population of Japanese families and businesses owned by them in the city.⁹⁶ The region’s built environment was not decorated or designed to emphasize Japaneseness, however. Handa explains that “perhaps some imagined that Conde was a commercial street with a strong Japanese color.” Aside from Japanese language characters outside of commercial sites, he continued, “in its external aspect it was like any other São Paulo suburb, with nothing particularly special.”⁹⁷

Outside observers, however, described Conde de Sarzedas as a Japanese space. A 1936 article from one of São Paulo’s most prominent newspapers, *Correio de S. Paulo*, referred to Conde de Sarzedas as São Paulo’s “Japanese neighborhood” (“*bairro nipponico*”).⁹⁸ The authors of a 1935 article from the same paper, “The symphony of the metropole,” suggested that the marked space of Conde de Sarzedas *made* local residents, even those born in Brazil, Japanese. The article related a telling exchange with a young boy along a street parallel to Conde de Sarzedas:

“Are you Japanese?”

⁹³ Lesser, *Immigration and Ethnicity*.

⁹⁴ Tomoo Handa, *O imigrante japonês: história de sua vida no brasil* (São Paulo: T.A. Queiroz, Editor, Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros, 1987), 176. “A rua Conde de Sarzedas era como se fosse um núcleo de colonização dentro da cidade de São Paulo.”

⁹⁵ Handa, *O imigrante japonês*, 154-156.

⁹⁶ Jader Tadeu Fantin, “Os japoneses no bairro da Liberdade-SP na primeira metade do século XX” (master’s thesis, USP São Carlos, 2013), 79.

⁹⁷ Handa, *O imigrante japonês*, 588. “Pelo fato de se dizer que na rua Conde se concentravam muitas lojas e moradores japoneses, alguns talvez imaginem que ela fosse uma rua comercial com forte coloração japonesa.” “no seu aspecto externo era como uma outra qualquer do subúrbio paulistano, sem nada de especial.”

⁹⁸ “Masasuk Sato é um japonês que reside ali na rua Conde de Sarzedas, em pleno bairro nipponico.” “O japonês morreu brincando,” *O Correio de S. Paulo*, June 13, 1936, 1.

I am, yes sir.
 Where were your born?
 Over there. And the boy points to Tabatinguéra Street.”⁹⁹

The same article endeavored to explain why Japanese immigrants and their descendants concentrated in a singular space: “they gather in neighborhoods, where they seek to establish the customs of their country. This is human. Any Brazilian would feel at home in a Brazilian neighborhood installed in the middle of a foreign nation.”¹⁰⁰ While the author identified phenotypical characteristics of the local population as distinguishing the neighborhood from others, he or she pointed to the most salient characteristic of the racialized/ethnicized spaces as part of the built environment. “Here and there,” the author explained, “the crude characters of their complicated language, mark (*marcam*) the principle of the Japanese neighborhood.”¹⁰¹ As with the other examples like Congo Road, the popularly-determined, local linguistic landscape served to *mark* the neighborhood space as ethnoracially different.

Fueled by wartime anxieties, the government-led Brazilianization campaign aimed to impose ethnoracial mixture on the neighborhood scale by prohibiting ethnically-different and -defined spaces. Among restrictions on the use of certain foreign languages (Japanese, Italian, and German), the seizure of assets, and prohibition on schooling, a specific tactical operation sought to displace immigrant families from Conde de Sarzedas Street.¹⁰² Twice in 1942 the Estado Novo police force, the Department of Social Order, forcibly removed Japanese immigrants and their descendants. Sachio Negawa recounts an interview with local resident Mr. Me, who related the experience of one of the evacuations:

I believe it was 1942 when an evacuation order was given by the Security Bureau to leave the Conde within 24 hours. My older brother and I went to the police and asserted that we were Brazilians who had even done military service. However, the policeman stated that, ‘All you

⁹⁹ Nicolau Sevcenko characterized São Paulo as an “inverted babel” because of the multitude of language spoken on its streets. *Orfeu extático na metrópole : São Paulo, sociedade e cultura nos frementes anos 20* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000).

¹⁰⁰ “se reunir em bairros, onde procuram implantar os costumes dos seus paizes. É humano isso. Qualquer brasileiro se sentiria bem num bairro brasileiro instalado em plena nação estrangeira.”

¹⁰¹ “A symphonia da metropole,” *Correio de S. Paulo*, August 15, 1935, 1. My emphasis. “Aqui e ali, os caracteres para nós grosseiros do seu complicado idioma, *marcam* o principio do bairro niponico.”

¹⁰² See, for example, Decreto-Lei no 4.166 from 11 March 1942, reprinted in Jader Tadeu Fantin, “Os japoneses,” 82-83. Lesser, *Immigration*. Also see Cynthia Machado Campos, *A Política da Língua na Era Vargas: Proibição do Falar Alemão e Resistências no Sul do Brasil* (UNICAMP: 2006).

people with Japanese faces are Japanese.’ In the end, we had to close down our business and move out.¹⁰³

Fleeing families would spread into other regions around the city, such as Acclimação, Vila Mariana, and Saúde, leaving Conde de Sarzedas uninhabited in the years following.¹⁰⁴

Anti-Japanese discrimination in São Paulo prompted the settlement of Japanese immigrants and descendants in Vila Brasilândia. Lídia Yamasaki (featured in the 2006 documentary discussed above) was born in Vila Brasilândia in 1947, the same year the developer sold the first lots. Yamasaki’s father and paternal grandparents emigrated from Japan and first lived in Sorocaba in the agricultural interior of the state of São Paulo. The family then moved to Pedra Grande, a region north of the contemporary Brasilândia district. Anti-Japanese prejudice prompted the family’s next move in the mid-1940s, as Yamasaki explains: “my father was on the farm of a Brazilian who expelled the Japanese, who said the Japanese could not live here. So my father came to live here in Brasilândia.”¹⁰⁵ Yamasaki’s memory echoes narratives of displacement among other local populations, including Italian immigrants and their descendants and Afro-descendants, when describing the origins of the neighborhood. Those common experiences of dislocation and displacement, despite distinct circumstances and different geographies, likely created bonds among the diverse newcomers to Vila Brasilândia.

The homogenization campaign tried to dissolve Japaneseness by destroying distinctive cultural practices but succeeded mostly in pushing them underground.¹⁰⁶ In the commercial heart of Vila Brasilândia on Parapuã Street, for instance, locals established a Japanese-language and Judo school. The founders gave the school a “typical” Portuguese name to conceal it from authorities. One migrant born in Japan moved to Brasilândia in the 1950s from the interior of São Paulo and opened a watchmaking shop a

¹⁰³ Sachio Negawa, “The Conde District - Brazil’s First Japantown,” April 27, 2007, <http://www.discovernikkei.org/es/journal/2007/4/27/brazil-nihonjinmachi/> (accessed June 12, 2018).

¹⁰⁴ Jader Tadeu Fantin, “Os japoneses,” 82; Handa, *O imigrante japonês*, 638. While noting that the evacuation campaign was not as rigorous as a similar order in the port city of Santos, Handa described the uncertainty facing evacuees: “Mudar, mas mudar para onde?! A maioria não tinha dinheiro nem para mudança, e todos estavam agoniados, sem saber o que fazer.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁵ “Distrito da Brasilândia e suas Histórias,” 2006.

¹⁰⁶ Lesser, *Negotiating*, esp. 135-46.

few blocks north of the school on Parapuã Street. A future president of the local commercial association, he autoconstructed his shop along with an adjoining house, today a sprawling, two-story complex with an elaborate garden. His son travelled a few blocks down Parapuã Street to attend the Japanese-language school through his adolescence. Despite an improved climate that permitted instruction in Japanese, in this era the school retained its original Portuguese name, a relic of its clandestine founding in the midst of the war.¹⁰⁷

While displacement and underground practices characterized the wartime years for Japanese-Brazilians throughout São Paulo, the decade following would see public efforts aiming to promote Japanese-Brazilian reconciliation. In 1952 Japan and Brazil restored diplomatic relations.¹⁰⁸ Parallel to increasing commercial and political relations were spatial projects that aimed to make the rekindled friendship publicly visible. The 1954 celebrations of the city of São Paulo's 1554 founding offered a privileged opportunity for demonstrating reconciliation. The anniversary prompted the construction of the monumental Ibirapuera Park, and celebration organizers included a Japanese Pavilion in the space. An external group, the "Collaborative Commission of the Japanese Colony for the Fourth Centenary of São Paulo," proposed the idea to the organizers, petitioning "to be permitted the construction, by our risk and payment, of a *genuinely*-Japanese pavilion."¹⁰⁹

Surrounded by a "garden also characteristically Japanese," the pavilion was supposedly a "reproduction of the Summer Palace of the Japanese emperor constructed in Kyoto in 1590."¹¹⁰ Designed and constructed in Japan, the pavilion was shipped to and assembled in São Paulo. There it would serve as a "demonstration of architectonic originality" and exhibit exclusively "Japanese art...painting, sculptures, engravings, and other objects produced by Oriental artistic artisanry (folklore)." The

¹⁰⁷ M. family, interview by Andrew Britt, Brasilândia, São Paulo, July 21, 2016.

¹⁰⁸ In 1953 the first post-war Japanese immigrants arrived at the São Paulo port of Santos. Célia Sakurai, "A imigração dos japoneses para o Brasil no pós-guerra (1950-1980)," in Francisco Hashimoto, Janete Leiko Tanno, Monica Setuyo Okamoto, orgs., *Cem anos da imigração japonesa: História, memória e arte* (UNESP, 2008), 218.

¹⁰⁹ Letter from Kinroku Awazu to Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho. Processo 1629, September 2, 1953, Arquivo Histórico Municipal, my italics.

¹¹⁰ Processo 1629, September 23, 1953, Arquivo Histórico Municipal.

Commission organized buses for tourists and festival-goers staying in São Paulo's center and decorated the route with "typical" Japanese lanterns.¹¹¹ Visually distinct from the predominately concrete, Modernist structures elsewhere at the Ibirapuera Park celebration, the architects of the Japanese Pavilion project aimed to showcase ethnically-distinct authenticity imported straight from the old country.

Produced a decade after the wartime swell of anti-Japanese sentiment and Vargas's Brazilianization decrees, the public, officially-sanctioned, and "typically" Japanese Pavilion represented the ambiguities of reintegration. As space was fundamental to the *brasilidade* project of homogenization, the pavilion would, the planners imagined, signal a step toward reconciliation. Situating the pavilion within the monumental Ibirapuera Park signified both a privileging of Japaneseness and a subordination of that immigrant ethnic identity to the seemingly more important categories of belonging: regional *paulista* and national Brazilian identities. The production of the Japanese Pavilion as ethnic space was one of the first coordinated efforts of its kind in São Paulo and a crucial precursor that would inform the neighborhood-wide "Orientalization" project to remake Liberdade in the 1960s (the subject of Chapter 5).

In addition to the Japanese pavilion, the Collaborative Commission of the Japanese Colony organized a bilingual publication, the "Album of the 4th Centenary of the Foundation of São Paulo." A message from Brazilian president Getúlio Vargas in the album linked São Paulo's prosperity to the contributions of "Japanese colonists" ("*colonos nipônicos*"). Vargas's comments betrayed a continued preoccupation with ethnic difference and nationalist integration: "The sentiment of cordial hospitality," he implored, "will serve, without question, as incentive for the continued productive efforts of the Japanese colony and its complete identification with the people and customs of our country."¹¹² São Paulo mayor Jânio Quadros penned a more grounded message, praising Japanese-Brazilian skill at growing tomatoes, cotton, and potatoes, in addition to their work in the "rationalization and technical advancement of farming itself."¹¹³ This tepid praise was less ambiguous in one of the album's full-page images (figure

¹¹¹ Processo 3781 (1954) and Processo 5615 (1955), Arquivo Histórico Municipal.

¹¹² Vargas's statement here invokes the archetype of the Brazilian male as the "*homen cordial*," or "cordial man," discussed most prominently in Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's 1936 *Raízes do Brasil*.

¹¹³ "Album do IV Centenário da Fundação de São Paulo," Library of the Museum of Japanese Immigration.

32). The image depicts a bandeirante towering over São Paulo's cityscape and saluting the unified flags of the state of São Paulo, Brazil, and Japan. In addition to signaling the iconic bandeirante's approval of reconciliation, the image absorbs Japanese immigrants and their descendants into that same historical myth, casting them as quintessential paulistas: bandeirantes of the twentieth century.

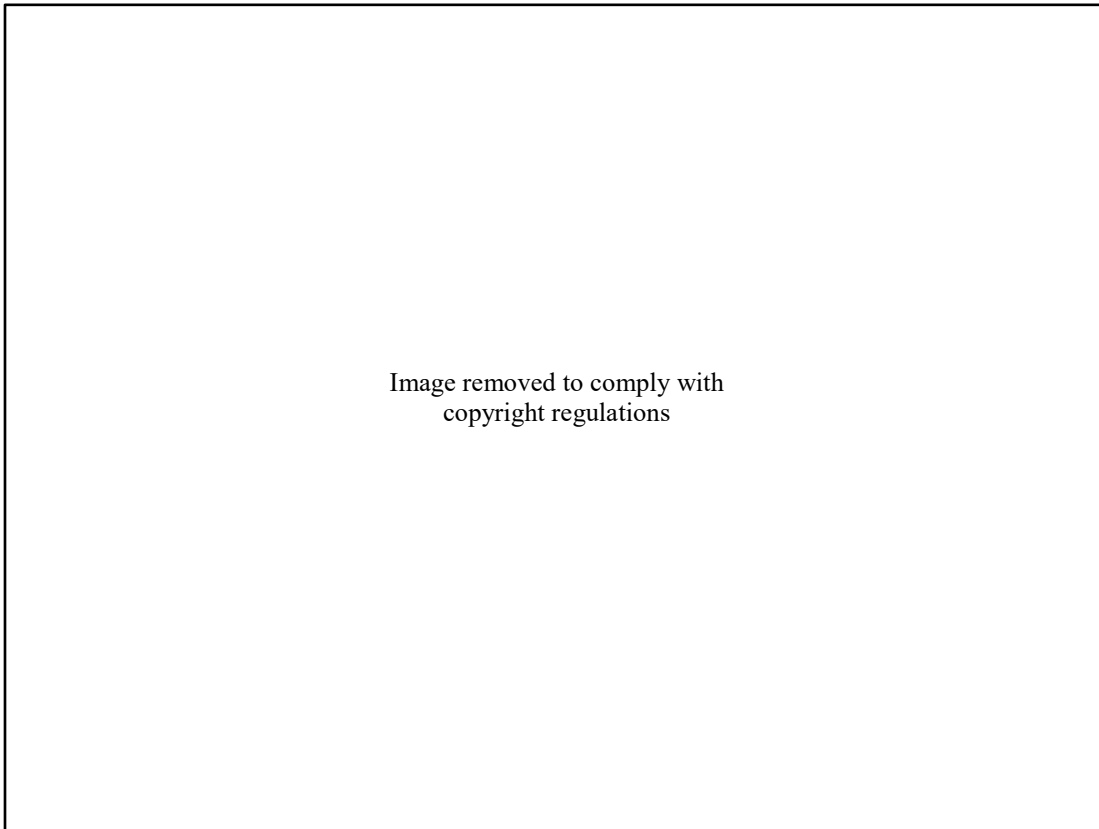


Figure 32: Bandeirante saluting the flags of São Paulo, Brazil, and Japan.
Album do IV Centenário da Fundação de São Paulo,
 Biblioteca do Museu Histórico da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil.

Behind the celebratory rhetoric and optics of reunification, the album communicated a subtler message about ethnoracial difference and space. The “album” of the title alluded to a vast collection of photographs that fell into two categories. The first consisted of “before and after” images of the city of São Paulo that compared iconic sites from the late nineteenth century (well before Japanese immigration to Brazil began in 1908) with images of the same sites in the 1940s-'50s. Ignoring the overwhelming rural history of Japanese-Brazilians in the country, the images aimed to rewrite Japanese-Brazilians into the narrative of modern urban progress in the city of São Paulo. The second, more numerous collection

entailed hundreds of photos of Japanese-Brazilian families pictured in front of sites of commerce or agricultural production. In addition to the names of the families, the album listed the addresses of their businesses and/or homes. While concentrated mostly in the state of São Paulo, the authors of the album organized the locations so as to emphasize their diffuseness. The collection and composition of the photographs stress the productive value of Japanese-Brazilians while simultaneously aiming to alleviate any concerns about the threat of ethnic spatial concentration or an inability to assimilate.

The authors of the 1952 album might have created it in response to ethnoracial mapping of Japanese populations conducted over the preceding decade. Unlike their peers elsewhere in the Americas, who in this period employed maps to ensure ethnoracial separation, government-affiliated researchers in São Paulo employed maps with the stated goal of measuring, and thereby guaranteeing, neighborhoods of mixture. In his 1940 study “Ethnic Cysts” (“*Enquistamentos Étnicos*”) in the municipal government-sponsored *Revista do Arquivo Municipal*, researcher Oscar Egidio de Araujo wrote about the ethnic distribution of Japanese, Syrians, and Jews in the city. Araujo wrote: “It is in São Paulo where best can be analyzed the many-sided foreign influence over the untamed spirit of savagery, the romanticism of the blacks and the courage of the Portuguese.”¹¹⁴ He emphasized the exoticism of the “Japanese neighborhood,” Conde de Sarzedas: “In periods of intense daytime movement...many are the physiognomies of oriental traits that we see headed for this part of the city. We could even think that we are in some symbolic piece of Japan...”¹¹⁵ Araujo measured the distribution of Japanese populations in the city, calculating an especially notable concentration in one block (presumably along Conde de Sarzedas Street): “in one block alone, with 1.08 hectares, more than 35% of the Japanese lived.”¹¹⁶

Araujo used elaborate methods to map the distribution of Japanese populations in space. He explained his approach: “[The map was] elaborated by the process of isometric curves devised by

¹¹⁴ Oscar Egidio de Araujo, “Enquistamentos Étnicos,” *Revista do Arquivo Municipal*, 229. “É em São Paulo que melhor poderá ser analisada a multiforme influência estrangeira sobre o espirito indomável do selvagem, o romantismo do negro e a coragem do português.”

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 237. “Em periodos de movimento intenso do dia...são muitas as fisionomias de traços orientais que vemos dirigirem-se para essa zona da cidade. Até podemos pensar que estamos em algum trecho simbolico Japão...”

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 238. “somente um quarteirão, com 1,08 hectares, apresentou mais de 35% dos japoneses.”

engineer Bruno Rudolfer, which consists of the application of the principle of levelled curves in ecological representations.”¹¹⁷ I have not found source materials that outline this methodology with more intelligibility or precision. Araujo published a map of the Liberdade district, titled “Ecological Distribution of Japanese by Block and Isometric Curves.”¹¹⁸ He explained the importance of research on concentrations of immigrant populations in São Paulo as a matter of measuring assimilation, writing that

some ethnic groups present an accentuated tendency to form concentrations, while others spread themselves out...But, we also arrive at these inevitable questions: which of these two immigrant groups is more advantageous and what is the grade of assimilation of each? Precise answers to these questions represent, for Brazil, an incalculable importance.¹¹⁹

Araujo’s study was one among multiple conducted in this era that mapped race/ethnicity in São Paulo.

Two editions of the *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* in 1938 also included maps of the ethnoracial distribution of São Paulo’s populations.¹²⁰

A map titled “The region of Conde de Sarzedas Street, the Oasis of Japanese Immigrants, 1910-1940” (figure 33) today hangs in a historical exhibit in the Museum of Japanese Immigration in Liberdade.¹²¹ Painter and author Tomoo Handa authored this map and published it in the 1970s.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 239. He is citing here Bruno Rudolfer, “Novo metodo de representação ecologica,” conferencia na Associação dos Geografos de São Paulo, resumida em *Diário Popular*, August 11, 1937. “[A planta foi] elaborada pelo processo de curvas isometricas ideado pelo eng. Bruno Rudolfer, o qual consta da aplicação do principio das curvas de nivel nas representações ecologicas.”

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 235. “Distribuição Ecologica de Japoneses por Quarteirão e Curvas Isometricas.”

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 244. “Chegamos à verificação,” he wrote, “de que algumas etnias apresentam tendencia acentuada para formar concentrações, enquanto outras espelham-se...Mas, chegamos, tambem, a estas indagações inevitavies: quais destes dois grupos imigrantistas é mais vantajoso e qual o grau de assimilação de cada um? Respostas exatas a estas perguntas representam, para o Brasil, importancia incalculavel.”

¹²⁰ Samuel Lowrie, “O Elemento Negro na População de São Paulo de São Paulo,” *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* 48 (1938); “Anexo: Densidade Geral da População Por Quarteirão,” *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* 43 (1938).

¹²¹ Handa, *O imigrante japonês*, 170. “A Região da Rua Conde de Sarzedas, o Oásis dos Imigrantes Japoneses (1910-1940).”

¹²² An October 2017 exhibition, aligned with 100 years after Handa’s arrival to Brazil in 1917, celebrated Handa’s work. “Exposição: Tomoo Handa, 100 anos de Brasil,” Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa e de Assistência Social, <http://www.bunkyo.org.br/pt-BR/noticias/157-2017/1310-exposicao-tomoo-handa-100-anos-de-brasil> (accessed June 18, 2018). The first book published by the Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros in 1970 was Handa’s *O imigrante japonês — história de sua vida no Brasil*.

Image removed to comply with
copyright regulations

Figure 33: Tomoo Handa, “The region of Conde de Sarzedas Street, the Oasis of Japanese Immigrants, 1910-1940.” Handa, *O imigrante japonês*, 170.

Contrary to the maps produced by researchers like Araujo, Handa’s map aimed to subtly preserve ethnoracial difference in the face of an official emphasis on mixture and assimilation. The map depicts commercial and social sites, including stores, restaurants, hotels, a tennis court, and a school. Handa labelled the topography of the region, especially the steepness of Conde de Sarzedas Street, and the location of basements that residents rented, areas where sidewalks sat lower than the street, and places especially humid from flooding. These details emphasized the hardships of housing and highlighted the productive local commercial activity. The map does not, on its surface, depict the neighborhood as ethnically-defined space different from surrounding neighborhoods.

The very structure of the map, however, harkens to distinctive Japanese cartographic traditions. Handa seems to have mirrored the style and form on the Shōhō castle plans (*shiro ezu*), a series of maps commissioned in Japan in 1644-1648 (figure 34).

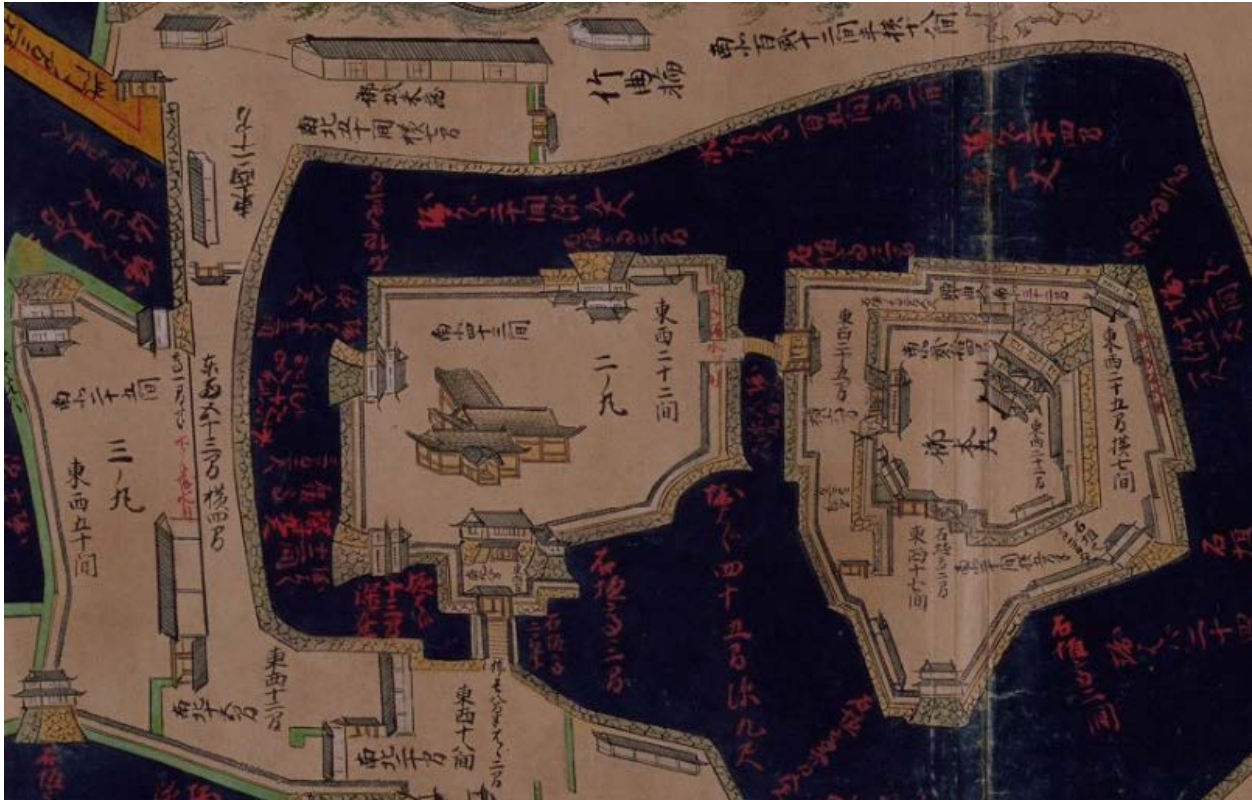


Figure 34: Mino-no-kuni Ogakijo ezu, Shōhō castle plans (1644). National Archives of Japan Digital Archive, https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/DAS/pickup/view/detail/detailArchivesEn/0305000000_4/0000000439/00 (accessed June 12, 2018).

Officials from Japan’s then-political authority, the Tokugawa Shogunate, ordered castle towns throughout Japan “to compile and to submit plans showing the locations of their capitals.”¹²³ The Conde de Sarzedas castle, located near the geographical center of Handa’s map and still standing along that street, perhaps reminded the author of this distinct cartographic form.

The orientation of the map also followed Japanese cartographic customs that differed from Euclidian representations of space in Western cartographic and visual traditions. As Kaxutaka Unno explains: “Users would then sit or kneel around them and rotate the maps as necessary, and so multiple points of view were preferred over a single one.”¹²⁴ By concealing overt references to Japanese identity, the map of Conde de Sarzedas communicated the full potential for integration of Japanese immigrants and

¹²³ Kaxutaka Unno, “Cartography in Japan,” in J. B. Harley and David Woodward, eds., *History of Cartography: Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies*, Vlm II, Book II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 399-400.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 349.

their descendants. Yet Handa embedded in the map cartographic traditions preserved from the old country. In doing so, he carefully asserted the preservation of ethnoracial difference in a coded message that would, perhaps, only be legible to immigrant and immigrant-descendent families.

While Japanese-Brazilians in the 1940s-'50s negotiated prejudice and assimilation through spaces of mixture, some local Afro-descendant populations in the same era also contested official projects that privileged ethnoracial mixture and harmony. The organizers of the 1954 celebration supported the construction of a monument to the *Mãe Preta* (Black Mother), the idea for which stretched back to the 1920s. Then, a majority of the lettered black public in São Paulo supported the project as a means “to proclaim the unequivocal centrality of blackness in Brazilian society.”¹²⁵ Three decades later, the officials co-leading the new effort described its significance quite differently. For example, an article from the mainstream paper *Folha da Manhã*, “The Black Mother and the City Councilman,” offered the following statement of support for the project:

This is the great miracle of our generous land that dissolves all into one unity of understanding and love. And those who arrived later also participate in the present of our new land and work toward the creation of its future. But the greater beauty is...when the children of immigrants themselves begin to participate in our past, distant from the land in which they were born.¹²⁶

The author interpreted the Black Mother as a representation of ethnoracial mixture and harmony, with all differences “dissolved” into a singular “unity.” The *true* “beauty” emerges, however, when immigrants (i.e. “those who arrived later”) embody the nationalist ideal of integration and come to identify fully with the nation’s past and future. The comment achieves impressive rhetorical acrobatics by celebrating immigrant, ethnoracial integration through the figure of the enslaved, Afro-descendant mother.

The statue was inaugurated in 1955 at the Largo do Paissandú (figure 35), adjacent to the *Igreja Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos* (Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men) that had been saved from demolition during the execution of the *Avenues Plan* in the prior decade. The

¹²⁵ Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 213.

¹²⁶ “A Mãe Preta e o Vereador,” *Folha da Manhã*, September 2, 1953, cited in Maria Aparecida de Oliveira Lopes, “As representações sociais da mãe negra na cidade de São Paulo (1945-1978),” *Patrimônio e Memória* 3:2 (2007), 135.

narrative of the monument proved controversial: an enslaved woman breastfeeding, a practice that slaveholders commonly required black women perform for their children.



Figure 35: Mãe Preta Statue. Photo by author, May 2017.

The monument did not draw broad acclaim from São Paulo's lettered black elite.¹²⁷ *Frente Negra Brasileira* (FNB) organizer José Correia Leite, for example, criticized its design, especially the figure's exaggerated features.¹²⁸ Historian Micol Seigel writes: "Celebrating the Black Mother's self-sacrificing

¹²⁷ As detailed in the previous chapter, during his first term as mayor Prestes Maia unsuccessfully attempted to secure the demolition of the church in this plaza, the Igreja Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos, to make way for an urban reform project along with the construction of a monument to Duque de Caxias. Rual Joviano do Amaral, *Os Pretos do Rosário de São Paulo – subsídios históricos* (São Paulo, João Scortecci Editora, 1991), 132.

¹²⁸ Paulina L. Alberto, "A Mãe Preta entre sentimento, ciência e mito: intelectuais negros e as metáforas cambiantes de inclusão racial, 1920-1980," in Flávio Gomes and Petrônio Domingues, orgs., *Políticas da Raça: Experiências e legados da abolição e da pós-emancipação no Brasil* (São Paulo: Selo Negro, 2014), 377-402. The winner of the contest to design the statue was Júlio Guerra, a local sculptor who would go on to design a monument to bandeirante Borba Gato a short few years later. Fernando José De Sousa, *A República Dos Gafanhotos* (Clube de Autores, 2008), 213.

dedication to the well-being of her master and his family, [the monument] supporters buried any discussion of the present under an unctuous nostalgia.”¹²⁹ The memorial reflected the limited scope of acceptable memorials to slavery and/or Afro-descendants and brought into high relief the contradictions in the rhetoric of harmonious ethnracial mixture. Historian Paulina Alberto writes that the silence of São Paulo’s black press in reaction to the statue reflected “an increasing disenchantment on the part of black thinkers with the direction that the discourse of racial democracy seemed to take in the mid-1950s.”¹³⁰

While FNB organizers replied with muted criticism to the Mãe Preta, demolitions related to avenues projects in center-city neighborhoods prompted a more active response. The FNB launched a resettlement campaign for Afro-descendants to move to, and autoconstruct houses on, São Paulo’s periphery. Miriam Ferrara cites FNB member Pedro Paulo Barbosa, who explained the effort:

...many blacks began to buy lands on the periphery: in São Judas, São Mateus, Barra Funda, Freguesia do Ó, Bairro do Limão, Cantareira. And all of them were poor, they lived hand to mouth. In this way our movement started at the bottom and went up. Priests, various teachers, politicians, and dentists – all blacks – came from our movement.¹³¹

As the statement indicates, N. S. do Ó, which encompassed Vila Brasilândia in this era, was a destination for organized resettlement. The leadership of the FNB also temporarily relocated its headquarters to the Casa Verde neighborhood, located in the Northern Zone and adjacent in the east to N. S. do Ó.¹³² George Reid Andrews makes a brief mention of this project, concluding that “the campaign seems to have met with some success, judging from contemporary observations concerning the movement of black people into those newer sections of the city.”¹³³ In my research I did not encounter anyone in Brasilândia or N. S. do Ó who had migrated as a part of the FNB project, and few records remain about the effort or its results

¹²⁹ Seigel, *Uneven Encounters*, 212.

¹³⁰ Alberto, “A Mãe Preta,” *Políticas da Raça*.

¹³¹ Miriam Nicolau Ferrara, *A imprensa negra paulista (1915 – 1963)* (São Paulo, FFLCH/USP, 1986) 13 and 49, cited in Antonia Terra Calazans Fernandes, “A imprensa negra através do jornal A Voz da Raça: uma São Paulo de negros para negros,” <<http://lemad.fflch.usp.br/en/node/9086>>. “...muitos negros começaram a comprar terrenos na periferia: São Judas, São Mateus, Barra Funda, Freguesia do Ó, Bairro do Limão, Cantareira. E todos eram pobres, viviam de salário. Assim, nosso movimento agiu de baixo para cima. Nosso movimento formou padres, vários professores, políticos, dentistas, todos negros.”

¹³² José Correia Leite and Cuti, *...E disse o velho militante* (Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, 1992), 194.

¹³³ George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 149.

despite the sizable volume of work on the FNB.¹³⁴ Reinaldo Oliveira sees this process as part of a broader migration: “From 1940, with the implantation of the ideology of single-family homes (autoconstruction), the poor and black workforce dislocated itself to the São Paulo peripheries, aiming to reduce expenses and make (*compor*) families.”¹³⁵ Oliveira stresses the agency of migrants in this process, who put into practice “the idea of leaving basements (*porões*) of the city and marching to the periphery.”¹³⁶

The FNB organizers developed the project of self-determination through migration and autoconstruction as a response to the execution of Prestes Maia’s *Avenues Plan*. The execution of that redevelopment scheme included the demolition of housing units and singular significant sites, such as the Church of the Remedies, in city-center districts like Liberdade. That church sat a few blocks away from the headquarters of the FNB as well as Conde de Sarzedas, and the demolition of the former occurred within months of the forced displacement of Japanese-Brazilians from the latter. By planning a move in mass to ostensibly unmapped regions on São Paulo’s periphery, FNB organizers imagined and sought out spaces of autonomy. Those spaces would serve for the autoconstruction of communities along with black identities and an organized program of social uplift.

In the decade following the end of the Second World War, supposedly harmonious ethnoracial relations in Brazil caught the attention of officials at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO commissioned a series of studies about how the last nation to abolish enslavement had supposedly rid itself of the prejudice and segregation that structured societies elsewhere. Initially concentrated on the state of Bahia alone, the project ultimately expanded to include research teams in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Pernambuco. Marcos Chor Maio explains that the project organizers expanded the geographical scope beyond Bahia because it seemed “important to

¹³⁴ Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition, São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993); Seigel, *Uneven Encounters*; Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*.

¹³⁵ Reinaldo José de Oliveira, “Segregação Urbana e Racial na Cidade de São Paulo: as periferias de Brasilândia, Cidade Tiradentes e Jardim Ângela” (PhD diss., PUC-SP, 2000), 227. “A partir de 1940, com a implantação da ideologia da casa própria (autoconstrução), a mão-de-obra negra e pobre desloca-se para as periferias de São Paulo, tendo como objetivo reduzir os gastos e compor a família.”

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 162. “refletia o ideal [ou ideia] de deixar os porões da cidade e caminhar rumo à periferia.”

investigate race relations in São Paulo, a state experiencing rapid industrialization and urbanization and showing clear signs of racial tension.”¹³⁷ The urban redevelopment project remaking the city through demolitions and dislocation exacerbated those tensions, widening further the gulf between the ideal and reality of harmonious ethnoracial relations.

In this context, officials and some residents in São Paulo promoted the ideal of “racial democracy” through urban space on the scale of entire neighborhoods along with singular, representational sites like the Japanese Pavilion and Mãe Preta monument. These spaces extended throughout the city of São Paulo, stretching from, and thereby connecting, geographically-central areas like Conde de Sarzedas to emerging peripheries like Vila Brasilândia. Forced and incidental migration, combined with the avenues-making projects that silenced the presence of Afro-descendants in center-city districts like Bela Vista and Liberdade, helped to generate places that, to some, symbolized the ideal of ethnoracial harmony and mixture.

Neighborhoods of mixture in particular could serve as evidence to support the representation of Brazil as lacking the social divisions that plagued societies elsewhere. A 1952 article focused on Japanese immigration from *Jornal Folha Carioca*, for instance, articulated the official premium on spatial integration:

Racial discrimination is anachronistic, at least official discrimination. We recognize that there are certain ethnic groups that isolate themselves strategically, always causing hassles of unfortunate consequences. But to officialize racism, this is revolting and inadmissible for a future world that has the present as its beginning. Much less in Brazil, which an eminent sociologist has classified as the sole racial democracy that exists in the whole world.¹³⁸

While unofficial ethnic or racial isolation may have occasionally occurred, the article proposed, it was an aberration. The author positioned integration and assimilation as fundamental to the futurist project of Brazil and antithetical to “anachronistic” racial prejudice. In postwar São Paulo, multicultural neighborhoods were privileged, local, and everyday manifestations of this futurist project. They did not

¹³⁷ Marcos Chor Maio, “UNESCO and the Study of Race Relations in Brazil: Regional or National Issue?” *Latin American Research Review* 36:2 (2001), 131.

¹³⁸ “Editorial Imigração Japonesa,” *Jornal Folha Carioca*, June 30, 1953, apud *Revista de Imigração e Colonização* XIII, 168 in Sakurai, “A imigração dos japoneses,” 212.

just reflect constructions of *brasilidade*; they participated in the everyday project of socio-spatial nation-building by affirming the multicultural ideal at the core of the ideology of “racial democracy.”

Despite the discourse of neighborhoods of mixture, some residents in places like Vila Brasilândia maintained a more nuanced understanding of ethnoracial difference and space. Resident WB spent much of his youth in Vila Brasilândia, and his extended family lived in the neighborhood. He indicated that while a multiethnic and multiracial population indeed made up Vila Brasilândia and surrounding loteamentos, from within some residents still perceived internal divisions.¹³⁹ A child of Japanese immigrants similarly recalled experiencing anti-Japanese prejudice as a child.¹⁴⁰ These residents’ observations suggest an alternative interpretation of the experience of neighborhoods of mixture from within. Jeffrey Lesser proposes an understanding of mixture that contests the idea of “the emergence of a new and uniform Brazilian ‘race’ out of the mixing of peoples.” A similar discourse circulates about Vila Brasilândia itself, whose foundation supposedly generated the “*Brasilandense* race.” Lesser suggests that we understand *mestiçagem* instead as amounting to “a joining (rather than mixing) of different identities, as the creation of a multiplicity of hyphenated Brazilians rather than a single, uniform one.”¹⁴¹ Indeed, some Vila Brasilândia locals saw the neighborhood through this lens: joining, juxtaposition, and proximity rather than mixture that dissolved social difference.

Locals in São Paulo negotiated these competing meanings of mixture through discourses about space. Early in his 1958 *A cidade de S. Paulo (estudos de geografia urbana)*, Azevedo offered a map of the city of São Paulo’s racialized/ethnicized geography:

From the ethnic point of view, the *marks* are very visible: Syrian-Lebanese and Armenians concentrated at March 25 Street and surrounding; Japanese, in the blocks around Conde de Sarzedas Street; Jews from west-central Europe, in Bom Retiro; Italians in Brás, Mooca and Bela Vista; blacks, in Barra Funda, Casa Verde and also in Bela Vista; foreigners of varied provenance disseminated in many ‘Garden City neighborhoods’ (*bairros-jardins*), and all of them coexisting, in the most complete harmony, with those that pride themselves in descending from old colonial

¹³⁹ WB, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, June 17, 2016. Florestan Fernandes makes a related point about Bela Vista, asserting that while segregation did not exist on the scale of the neighborhood as a whole (thus seemingly making it a spatial representation of mixture), other patterns of separation prevailed. Florestan Fernandes, *Significado do protesto negro* (São Paulo, SP: Cortez Editora: Editora Autores Associados, 1989), 89.

¹⁴⁰ M. family, interview.

¹⁴¹ Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity*, 5.

stock (*troncos*) or of proceeding from other corners of the State of São Paulo (*rincões paulistas*) and other regions of the country.¹⁴²

Employing the language of the mark, Azevedo depicted a racialized/ethnicized geography of the city of São Paulo broadly as a place of mixture. On the same page, he described the city's growth as "an incessant fever of constructions...of popular loteamentos executed in a disordered manner, symbolizing the staggering growth of the city, which, in the last few years, has come to construct, on average, one house every 20 minutes!"¹⁴³ In these adjacent paragraphs, Azevedo connected the city's "disordered," fertile urbanization with its marked and supposedly "harmonious" landscape of ethnoracial mixture.

Commentators applied the discourse of spaces of mixture to different geographic scales, from the nation and city to local neighborhoods. In Azevedo's racialized/ethnicized map, marked neighborhoods at the scale of the city as a whole served to reinforce the discourse of racial democracy. In contemporary discourses about Vila Brasilândia's founding, ethn racially-diverse populations on the scale of the neighborhood serve as proof of the idea of a harmonious space of mixture. Residents themselves, in Vila Brasilândia and elsewhere, sometimes pushed back against this type of representation, including by aiming to be on or off the map and seeking space that allowed for the preservation of distinctive cultural practices.

*Terreiro Santa Bárbara:
Continuities amidst Change for Afro-descendants in São Paulo*

Pulquéria Albuquerque had resolved to stay quiet. Her lawyer would do most of the talking in the October 2016 meeting with the City officials pushing the new avenue project. The proposed extension of

¹⁴² Azevedo, *A cidade de S. Paulo* v. 1, 19. My italics. "Sob o ponto de vista étnico, as marcas são bem sensíveis: sírio-libaneses e armênios concentrados na Rua 25 de Março e vizinhanças; japoneses, nos quarteirões próximos à Rua Conde de Sarzedas; judeus oriundos da Europa centro-oriental, no Bom Retiro; italianos, no Brás, na Mooca e na Bela Vista; negros, na Barra Funda, na Casa Verde e também na Bela Vista; estrangeiros de variada procedência disseminados em muitos dos "bairros-jardins", todos eles convivendo, na mais completa harmonia, com os que se orgulham de descender de velhos troncos coloniais ou de proceder de outros rincões paulistas e outras regiões do país."

¹⁴³ Ibid. "uma febre incessante de construções, de terraplenagens, de loteamentos populares executados de maneira desordenada, a simbolizar o espantoso crescimento da cidade que, nos últimos anos, chegou a construir, em média, uma casa em cada 20 minutos!"

Avenue João Paulo I, which began at the Tietê River and ran north five kilometers into Brasilândia, would require the municipal expropriation and demolition of Pulquéria's home. In the two years prior, that residence and the surroundings had been recognized by federal and state historic preservation entities as the first Candomblé *terreiro* (spiritual complex) in the city of São Paulo. Pulquéria's spiritual mother, Manudê, had established the terreiro over 50 years before, and Pulquéria had worked to gain official recognition of Terreiro Santa Bárbara from historic preservation authorities since Manudê's death in 2004. With City officials angling to demolish the site for the extended transportation corridor, Pulquéria decided to speak up for the histories rooted in the space that she and Manudê constructed over decades.¹⁴⁴

Despite efforts to produce a microcosmic Brazil-land and to silence certain Afro-descendant histories from the late 1940s through the early 1960s, newcomers to Vila Brasilândia produced new spaces significant to Afro-descendent populations. The migration streams that brought thousands of newcomers to Vila Brasilândia in this period included Julia Lima da Silva, born in Bahia sometime in the late nineteenth century.¹⁴⁵ Lima came to São Paulo by way of the northeastern state of Sergipe. In 1965, Lima – also named Mãe Manudê (sometimes Manodê or Manaundê) – registered the Candomblé terreiro she had founded in Vila Brasilândia in the mid-1950s with the local notary. This act made Terreiro de Candomblé Santa Bárbara the first official terreiro in São Paulo, perhaps the first south of Rio de Janeiro.¹⁴⁶

Manudê long maintained distance from journalists and researchers. Only a handful of written sources remain about the history of Terreiro Santa Bárbara or her biography. One of the sole sources comes from an interview she gave to anthropologist Reginaldo Prandi in the mid-1980s. Manudê's commentary was:

I arrived here in São Paulo and when I opened my Candomblé, I registered my house at the notary as a house of Candomblé. Directly from Sergipe to São Paulo. My spouse had a house in São Paulo and another in Sergipe. Because I had in-laws in São Paulo and when I visited, I gave a party there at the site and they made a *barracão* [place where ceremonies are held], with true Candomblé. But before this I spent time with my mother [mãe-de-santo] in Sergipe, where she

¹⁴⁴ Pulquéria Albuquerque, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, June 6, 2016 and August 16, 2016.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid..

¹⁴⁶ Vagner Gonçalves da Silva, *Orixás da metrópole* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1995), 83.

was sick. I went, talked with my mom and there she taught me, and everything that she taught me I did in my house. I opened the house and my mãe-de-santo came to inaugurate it and all of this I did there in Sergipe. It was when this girl here [Oiadeci or Pulquéria?] left from here in São Paulo to search for me and went to Salvador, but she did not find me in Salvador, I was in Sergipe. Then she went from here to Salvador by plane and from Salvador to Sergipe by bus. Her family brought me. She is always with me and *fez a obrigação* of twenty-five years here in the *barracão*. After I arrived here, I did, I also brought also her sister [Oiadeci?]. These my two daughters are within the old rhythm really, everything in the old rhythm really. I went making *iaô*, much *iaô* [creating many spiritual children, or *filhos-do-santo*]. I continued here... I came to São Paulo because the family of this girl that I raised there brought me, so that I would work with her. And when I arrived here there was no Candomblé, the first that registered Candomblé was Manudê, in 1965. There was no one that had Candomblé here. For this reason the first Candomblé in São Paulo was Manudê. Here before there was only Umbanda.¹⁴⁷

The testimony provides a number of illuminating historical details, such as her migration path and social relationships. Manudê also affirms that when she arrived in São Paulo she did not encounter other Candomblé terreiros. Despite these insights, some core questions about time and the sequence of events remain unclear. The only firm date offered here is 1965. Two other sources provide further information into the compelling life of Manudê and the founding of Santa Bárbara: oral histories with Pulquéria Albuquerque, Manudê's daughter and the current saintly mother of Santa Bárbara, and a magazine profile, "The first Candomblés of São Paulo – Manaundê, pioneer of the Northern Zone of São Paulo."¹⁴⁸

While we know that Manudê arrived in São Paulo from Sergipe, the date of her arrival could have been as early as the 1940s and as late as the early 1960s. It seems that shortly after her arrival she secured employment as a domestic worker in the home of Jânio Quadros, who during these years served as mayor of São Paulo, governor of São Paulo, and then (briefly) president of Brazil. Manudê's first residence was a rental house (potentially procured with Quadros's assistance) in Vila Itaberaba, a loteamento-turned-neighborhood just south of Vila Brasilândia.¹⁴⁹ Through the 1950s Itaberaba was relatively sparsely populated, affording Manudê space "to live and play with hands (*tocar com palmas*), clandestine sessions

¹⁴⁷ Reginaldo Prandi, *Herdeiras do axé: sociologia das religiões afro-brasileiras* (São Paulo: Editora Hucitec, 1996), 172-173. Interview conducted on August 25, 1987. Bracketed sections are from the original.

¹⁴⁸ Silvio de Oxumaré, "Os primeiros Candomblés de São Paulo – Manaundê, pioneira da zona norte de São Paulo," *Revista Orixás, Candomblé e Umbanda* 2:8, 44, quoted in Irinéia Maria Franco dos Santos, "Nos Domínios de Exu e Xangô o Axé Nunca se Quebra: Transformações Históricas em Religiões Afro-Brasileiras, São Paulo e Maceió, 1970-2000) (PhD diss., USP, 2012), 125.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

to the orixás.”¹⁵⁰ The distinction of playing with hands instead of the usual drums (along with the sessions being clandestine, of course), suggests Manudê’s aimed to avoid discrimination against Candomblé in São Paulo at this time.

While living in Vila Itaberaba, Manudê began working in the house of the family of the developer of Vila Brasilândia, José Munhoz Bonilha. While in this role one of the Bonilha daughters became ill and the doctor who normally attended to the family could not resolve her sickness. Manudê intervened with a treatment that proved successful. As a recognition of gratitude, Bonilha gave Manudê a plot on Ruiva Street. In the years following – likely after 1958 but before the notarial registration in 1965¹⁵¹ – Manudê established the terreiro, registered officially in 1965 as Santa Bárbara. Manudê’s use of the saint’s name may have reflected an interest in appropriating Catholic symbols into her practice, however it was also a strategic move to head off harassment from authorities.

Despite substantial development nearby, the north side of Ruiva Street where Manudê opened the terreiro remained nearly empty through the late 1950s (figure 36). A zig-zagging creek, Rock Creek (*Córrego das Pedras*), ran parallel to Ruiva on this northern side of the low-lying street.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ The “likely” here derives from analysis of aerial photographs from the VASP aerial photography project (1952-1957), which shows the creek side of Rua Ruiva (where the terreiro was established) empty. A separate map source, published at <<http://www.geoportal.com.br/memoriapaulista/>> with aerial photography from 1958 similarly shows the site as empty.

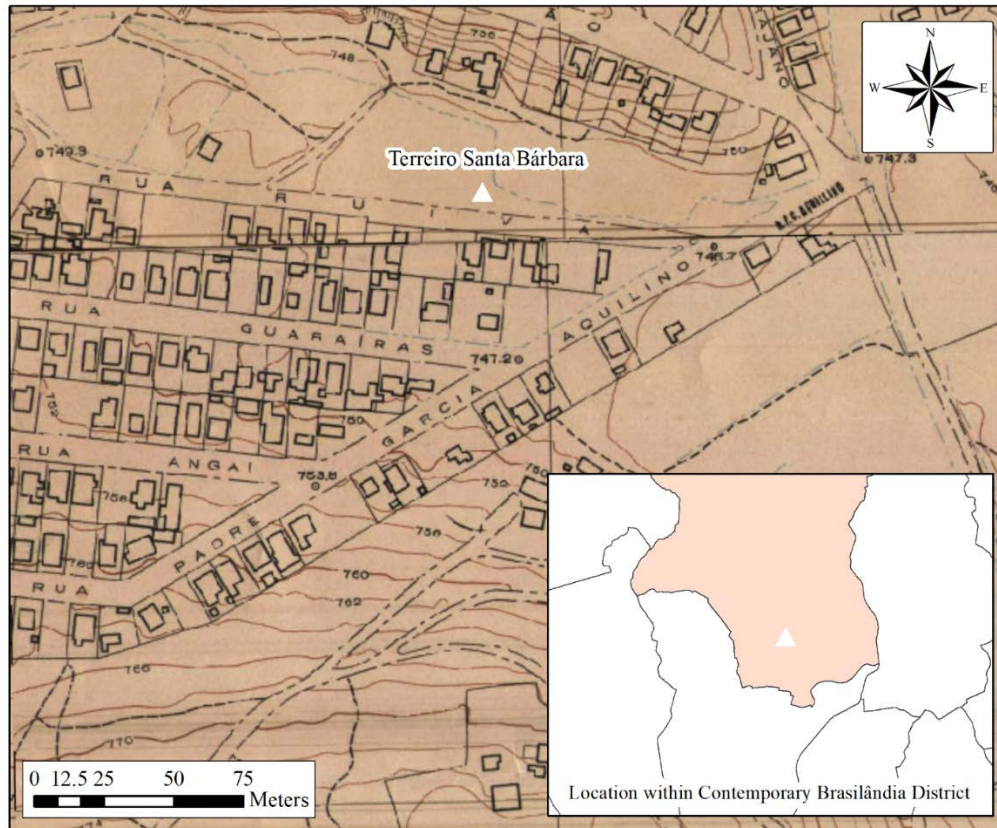


Figure 36: Location of Terreiro Santa Bárbara. Basemap is from “Mapeamento 1930 - SARA,” *GeoSampa*, www.geosampa.prefeitura.sp.gov.br (accessed June 12, 2018).

The certainty of flooding in the area might have explained the lack of settlement and availability of the land. In fact, Ruiva Street appeared in the City’s investigation into living conditions in Vila Brasília in the late 1950s. In 1957 engineers requested copies of the receipts for lots sold on Ruiva.¹⁵² There was no indication in the engineers’ documents of why, out of dozens of streets within Vila Brasília, Ruiva would be one of only two streets for which they solicited more detailed information from the developer. Given the topography and Munhoz’s willingness to part with the land, however, the area may have been precarious from an urban development perspective. City engineers may also have been trying to confirm that Munhoz had given title to those who purchased the lots.

¹⁵² Folha 124, Processo 50.235/55, November 19, 1957, CGDP, Prefeitura de São Paulo. Presumably these are the lots on the south side of Ruiva Street, which appear on the map from 1954.

However precarious in the eyes of urban planners and engineers, the stretch of land on Ruiva Street served as an opportunity for Manudê to establish a space of her own and move beyond what a later terreiro founder in Brasilândia termed the “artificial Candomblé” practiced in rental houses.¹⁵³ Manudê planted roots on Ruiva Street, taking advantage of the natural/spiritual resources provided by the surrounding Atlantic Forest and planting trees of her own at the entrance to the site. She autoconstructed the place, beginning with an “improvised shed covered with canvas.”¹⁵⁴ Pulquéria explains that over the years Manudê carried out expansions and reforms, such as the installation of bricks, by herself. Pulquéria further explains that Manudê produced the terreiro with her orixás, making decisions about design and autoconstruction in dialogue with spirits.¹⁵⁵

The production of space is an important part of Candomblé practice. The Portuguese word *terreiro*, “maker of land,” itself indicates this aspect of the religion. Crucial to Manudê’s project was the making of a covered, interior space with an earthen floor where Candomblé ceremonies would be held, known as the *barracão*. That interior space was surrounded by a compound of homes where dozens of Manudê’s spiritual children lived, many of them having followed her migration path from the Northeast to São Paulo from the 1950s on. Terreiro Santa Bárbara was the first among other São Paulo terreiros to follow. Daniele Ferreira Evangelista describes “the Candomblé terreiro as a specific kind of architectural complex – with a building pattern more or less characteristic – where the forces and divine energies act in a way to create and perpetuate the connections with human beings.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ This quote is from Walmir Damasceno, who settled in Brasilândia in the late 1980s. He later opened Inzo Tumbansi, a Candomblé terreiro in Itapecerica da Serra in Grande São Paulo. Renato Ubirajara Dos Santos Botão, “Para Além Da Nagocracia: A (Re)Africanização Do Candomblé Nação Angola-Congo Em São Paulo” (master’s Thesis, UNESP, 2007), 101.

¹⁵⁴ Silvio de Oxumaré, 44, quoted in Irinéia Maria Maria Franco dos Santos, “Nos Domínios de Exu e Xangô o Axé Nunca se Quebra: Transformações Históricas em Religiões Afro-Brasileiras, São Paulo e Maceió (1970-2000) (master’s thesis, USP 2012), 125.

¹⁵⁵ Albuquerque, interview.

¹⁵⁶ Daniele Ferreira Evangelista, “Fundando um axé: reflexões sobre o processo de construção de um terreiro de candomblé,” *Religião & Sociedade* 35:1 (2015). “O terreiro de candomblé é um conjunto arquitetônico específico – com um padrão de edificação mais ou menos característico 11 – onde forças e energias divinas atuam de modo a criar e perpetuar o vínculo com os seres humanos.”

Mãe Manudê faced popular and official anti-Candomblé sentiment. Pulquéria recalls regular police harassment and multiple incidences where Manudê was arrested.¹⁵⁷ Silvio recorded that “it was a daily routine, constantly the police would come by and the persecution took control of her [Manudê’s] life, various times it got to the point where they invaded the terreiro and even broke saintly objects (*assentamentos de santo*).”¹⁵⁸ Manudê confronted resistance from some neighbors, as well, who, “upset with the installation of a Candomblé terreiro in the region,” collected a petition against it.¹⁵⁹

One of Manudê’s chief strategies to address the prejudice entailed hanging a large Brazilian flag under the roof in the barracão where ceremonies took place. Pulquéria recalls that Manudê used the Brazilian flag to allay the fears of police. The national symbol would indicate, Manudê believed, that the space and its inhabitants were unthreatening. Situated in the midst – both spatially and temporally – of an emerging microcosmic Brazil-land, the placement of the flag symbolized the contradictions in the discourse of racial democracy in mid-twentieth-century São Paulo. While a strategy of defense, it also represented a local rewriting of the meanings of *brasilidade*, with the symbol of the nation subsumed within a structure that housed Afro-Brazilian spiritual-spatial practices.

Through the migration of individual priestesses like Manudê and the foundation of sites like Santa Bárbara in urban metropolises like São Paulo, Candomblé practices changed. Anthropologist Reginaldo Prandi describes how cities drove that change. Prandi describes the Candomblé of “Bahia and other states as black populations’ religion,” different from the “universalized heiress” of Umbanda in São Paulo. He elaborates: cities like São Paulo are where

ethnicity is lost, where the gods are involved in the plot of social relations of capitalism already to the fullest, where the time that controls work and leisure already is the time of the salaried regime, where the buildings and the asphalt eliminate the space of the forest and of the beaten earth (*chão batido*) of the gods in the old Bahian way.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Albuquerque, interview.

¹⁵⁸ Silvio de Oxumaré, 44, quoted in Irineia, 125.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Reginaldo Prandi, *Os Candomblês de São Paulo: a Velha Magia na Metrópole Nova* (HUCITEC, 1991), 21.

Asphalt here symbolizes broader forces and change, but it also serves as an active force engendering it: a threat to Afro-descendant cultural practices and ethnoracial identity. The interring of Congo Road with asphalt, which occurred roughly in the same years that Manudê established the terreiro, indeed reflected the significance of the substance as a material that reproduced marked, Afro-descendent spaces.

The production of the terreiro signaled continuities despite efforts in Vila Brasilândia and beyond to raze spaces associated with Afro-descendants. Corresponding to high populations of African-born, the parish of Nossa Senhora do Ó was long a locus for African and Afro-descendant spiritual practices. In her study of Afro-descendants and Italians in São Paulo, Teresinha Bernardo finds that Freguesia do Ó was one of the city's privileged spiritual spaces for black women, in particular. "There were festivals also in remote places like Freguesia do Ó, or even Pinheiros, where the 'drums sang loudly,' in the words of one old black woman."¹⁶¹ The distance facilitated an autonomy unavailable in more central regions: "[Black women] did not want to be in the same space, because they did not want to leave their mark; these happenings were the target of persecutions, of discriminations: 'a black thing,' 'macumba,' it was 'badness' that emerged from the drumming (*atabaques*), according to the official reading."¹⁶² Bernardo explains that the women who conducted these spiritual practices "lived in places with few residents, the majority blacks, like Casa Verde or Freguesia do Ó."¹⁶³ The remoteness of N. S. do Ó from the city center provided a measure of autonomy for these spiritual practices.

It may be a coincidence that Manudê established her terreiro in Vila Brasilândia, situated within a region that had long been a privileged site for African and Afro-descendent spiritual practices. However, the histories in this chapter and Chapter One point to the more likely conclusion that N. S. do Ó had a special significance as a marked place of black self-determination and autonomy. The identity attached to

¹⁶¹ Teresinha Bernardo, *Memória em branco e negro: olhares sobre São Paulo* (São Paulo: EDUC, 1998), 51.

"Aconteciam festas também em locais afastados como Freguesia do Ó, ou mesmo Pinheiros, onde os 'atabaques cantavam alto,' no dizer de uma velha negra."

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 51-52. "[Mulheres negras] não querem estar no mesmo espaço, pois não desejam deixar a sua marca; esses acontecimentos eram alvo de perseguições, de discriminações: 'coisa de preto,' 'macumba,' era 'o malfeito' que emergia dos atabaques, segundo a leitura oficial."

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 70.

the region, in other words, drew her to it originally. Vila Brasilândia provided to Manudê a site for the preservation of Candomblé and ethnoracial identity. Being off the map, in other words, helped to facilitate the continuation of desired cultural practices despite the persecution and prejudice she faced. Her action in 1965 of officially registering the terreiro – putting it on the map – appears as an assertion of Afro-descendant and religious identity in the face of official programs and projects that privileged more narrow constructions of ethnoracial mixture.¹⁶⁴

This era of making a microcosmic “Brazil-land” (Brasilândia) would conclude with a cartographic victory: what began as an irregular, invisible settlement gained a place on the map. In February of 1964 an administrative-territorial reform led to the creation of the city’s 40th sub-district, Brasilândia (without the “Vila”).¹⁶⁵ Two years later in 1966, a group of local and “particularly active residents” succeeded in getting Brasilândia on the official state map by paying a fee to the Geographical Institute of the State of São Paulo.¹⁶⁶ The process of securing this position – of becoming part of the formal city in terms of cartographic representation – corresponded with the erasure of the area’s spatial history of slavery and construction of a neighborhood as a microcosm of the nation.

In the early stage of Brazil’s urban transition and during an era when urban forms occupied a privileged place in the national imaginary, Vila Brasilândia came to symbolize and participate in spatial-identity projects on multiple scales. The neighborhood was wrapped up in a larger project of nation-building, including some of the local residents who migrated to Brasília to help construct the new national capital in the late 1950s. Gaining a place on the map in 1964 affirmed the material and identity work of

¹⁶⁴ Abdias do Nascimento, *Brazil, Mixture Or Massacre?: Essays in the Genocide of a Black People* (The Majority Press, 1989).

¹⁶⁵ Lei Nº 8.092, February 28, 1964.

¹⁶⁶ “Brasilândia: Uma história de amor,” *Jornal Interbairros* 2nd edição (2000), 21. The amount was supposedly 32,000 cruzeiros.

autoconstructing a micro-Brazil. However supposedly razed and asphalted pasts, as the following chapter shows, would not remain silenced for long.

Chapter Four
*Making a Marked Margin:
 Brasilândia as “Little Africa”*

Surrounding a circular table draped with the state flag of São Paulo, the group of samba composers and Brasilândia residents ends each Tuesday night singing in unison the anthem of the group Samba do Congo. The lyrics resonate throughout the *Casa da Cultura da Brasilânida*, a community center in the contemporary district of Brasilândia. Many of the musicians share new compositions, ranging from a song about roots samba on São Paulo’s coffee plantations to a clever ditty about industrial labor told through a worker’s lunch pail. The composers distribute the lyrics for new songs on quartered sheets of paper for us to follow and help develop melodies and rhymes. No one needs a copy of the lyrics for the concluding anthem,¹ which we begin rotely, slightly tired from the three hours of music, until the familiar lyrics and driving instruments lift the room’s energies:

*Sangue paulistano
 Nascido no terreiro
 Samba do Congo, Fruto brasileiro*

*Paulistano² blood
 Born in the terreiro³
 Samba do Congo, Fruit of Brazil*

While Samba do Congo is only six years old, the past permeates the group’s music and mission. Composers seem to take as much pride in the songs they write as the stories and histories with which they preface them. The story that binds them together is the former Congo Road, one of Brasilândia’s principal roadways that was, I argue in Chapter One, a principal site for runaway enslaved people in the nineteenth century. São Paulo’s mayor approved the renaming and asphaltting of Congo Road as Elísio Teixeira Leite Avenue in 1960. That roadway served as the inspiration for the founding of Samba do Congo. In their lyrics, stories, and gatherings, the group’s members excavate forgotten and silenced histories that extend from the history of Congo Road to encompass significant pasts and presents for African descendants in Brasilândia and beyond.

¹ “Hino do Samba do Congo,” Wagner Loitero and Fernando Ripol, *Samba do Congo: Nossa Quebrada*, 2016, CD.

² *Paulistano* means from or of the city of São Paulo.

³ *Terreiro* references sacred spaces in Afro-descendant religious practices like Candomblé and Umbanda.

A research contact in Brasilândia told me about Samba do Congo in 2014. My introduction to the group came shortly thereafter at an event titled “Afro-Bantu Paulista” that showcased the *velha guarda*, or old guard, of samba composers in Brasilândia and the Bantu, or Central African, roots of samba and Afro-Brazilian culture in São Paulo. That project paralleled other twenty-first century initiatives aiming to investigate and valorize the Bantu cultural origins of Afro-descendants in São Paulo.⁴ “Afro-Bantu Paulista” and eighteen months of subsequent Samba do Congo gatherings served as key sites in an effort to understand the historical construction and contemporary meanings of Brasilândia as a “Little Africa.” This chapter draws heavily on informal conversations, formal interviews, and the music of Samba do Congo played at the Casa da Cultura da Brasilândia and throughout the city of São Paulo.

The discourse of a “Little Africa” or “black territory” recurs in urban contexts throughout Brazil and beyond. Academics have played prominent roles in chronicling, if not indeed creating, these spatial identities. Perhaps the most familiar Brazilian spaces in this type of geographic imaginary are the “Little Africa” region of Rio de Janeiro and the historic center of the city of Salvador (Bahia).⁵ “Black

⁴ One of the most active of these initiatives is led by Renato Dias and named Kolombolo Diá Piratininga in 2002. Located in the Vila Madalena neighborhood, the organization sponsors weekly samba gatherings, historical and cultural research, and a suite of media production related to Afro-descendant and especially Bantu culture. These contemporary phenomena align in compelling ways with the academic prescriptions offered by Edna G. Bay and Kristin Mann for historical research on specific sociocultural connections between places within the African subcontinent and Afro-descendants in the diaspora. See *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁵ João do Rio, *As Religiões do Rio*, translated by Ana Lessa-Schmidt (Hanover, CT: New London Librarium, 2015 [1904]); Roberto Moura, *Tia Ciata e a Pequena África no Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, 1995); Mônica Pimenta Velloso, “As tias baianas tomam conta do pedaço: espaço e identidade cultural no Rio de Janeiro,” *Estudos Históricos* 6 (1990); Bruno Carvalho, *Porous City: A Cultural History of Rio de Janeiro* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 82-91. Carvalho uses “Little Africa” throughout his work to describe this physical and/or imagined space before it seems that records indicate it was necessarily known and described as such. See page 90 for Carvalho’s discussion of the subject. Also see: Tiago de Melo Gomes, “Para Além da Casa da Tia Ciata: Outras Experiências no Universo Cultural Carioca, 1830-1930,” *Afro-Ásia* 29/30 (2003), 175-198. There is an expansive academic literature stretching to the nineteenth century that has participated in the elaboration and critical analysis of this spatial identity. Key authors in a less recent bibliography include Nina Rodrigues, Manuel Querino, Pierre Verger, E. Franklin Frazier, Ruth Landes, Donald Pierson, Roger Bastide, and Edison Carneiro. More recent works include: J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2005); Kim Butler, “Africa in the Reinvention of Nineteenth-Century Afro-Bahian Identity,” in Kristin Mann and Edna G. Bay, eds., *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (London: F. Class, 2001), 135-54; Anadelia A. Romo, *Brazil's Living Museum: Race, Reform, and Tradition in Bahia* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2010); Patricia de Santana Pinho, *Reinvenções da África na Bahia* (Editora Annablume, 2004); John F. Collins examines the notion of Salvador and, more specifically, the Pelourinho/Maciél neighborhoods, as the “cradle” and “heart” of Africa in *Revolt of the Saints*; Christen A. Smith,

territories” have also been identified in regions less commonly associated with Afro-descendants, such as the city of São Paulo or Porto Alegre, located in Brazil’s southernmost state, Rio Grande do Sul.⁶ I first encountered a reference to São Paulo’s Brasilândia neighborhood as a “Little Africa” in an article by urbanist Raquel Rolnik. Rolnik termed Brasilândia “Little Africa” and noted that 49% of the neighborhood’s population was black. She did not elaborate on the meaning or the genealogy of the term.⁷ While the social composition of a place (i.e. that 49%) plays a role in the construction of an identity attached to it, the history of Brasilândia and similar spaces reveals that demographics explain relatively little about the construction of race/ethnicity in and through geographic space. In this chapter I show that constructions like a “Little Africa” or “black territory” or neither natural nor static; they are historical and ideological constructs that can serve surprisingly different, if not altogether contradictory, ends.

From 1947 through the mid-1960s, an influx of ethn racially- and regionally-diverse migrants settled in and constructed Brasilândia. Some locals in this period imagined the neighborhood as a microcosmic “Brazil-land,” representative of the harmonious ethn racial mixture supposedly at the heart of mid-twentieth-century constructions of Brazilianness (*brasilidade*).⁸ In the mid-1960s, however, the dominant identity associated with Brasilândia began to change. Spatial projects originating from within and outside of the region would transform the place from a multicultural microcosm into a marginal region marked as black and Afro-descendent. In this chapter I chart three histories involved in the production of Brasilândia as a “Little Africa” in the 1960s-’70s: a shift in dominant approaches to urban

Afro-Paradise: Blackness, Violence, and Performance in Brazil (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

⁶ Marcus Vinicius de Freitas Rosa, “Além da invisibilidade: história social do racismo em Porto Alegre durante o pós-abolição (1884-1918)” (PhD diss., UNICAMP, 2014).

⁷ Raquel Rolnik, “Territórios Negros nas Cidades Brasileiras: Etnicidade e Cidade em São Paulo e Rio de Janeiro,” *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* 17 (1989), 14. I have located two other uses of this term in published literature: Edward E. Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 212; Angileli Cecilia Maria de Moraes Machado, “Paisagem revelada no cotidiano da periferia: Distrito de Brasilândia, Zona Norte do Município de São Paulo” (master’s thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2007), 63.

⁸ Abdias do Nascimento, *Racial democracy in Brazil, Myth or Reality? A Dossier of Brazilian racism* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Sketch Publ. Co., 1977); Thomas Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); Edward E. Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

planning; the founding of a samba school; and the application of a racist nickname to the region through a novel “reality radio” program. These narratives span from the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s and reveal the production of an Afro-descendant spatial identity connected to, yet in crucial respects distinct from, the nineteenth-century “Congo” places produced in the region.

From Multiethnic Microcosm to Marked Margin in an Era of “Integration”

In August of 1975, Brasilândia arrived on over one hundred thousand newsstands and mailboxes across Brazil. The magazine *Veja*, which supplied national and global news to Brazil’s expanding professional and intellectual class, published two articles with references to Brasilândia in their special August issue, titled “How to Measure Urban Poverty.”⁹ The first issue of the weekly in 1968 had a massive circulation of 695,000 and a readership of potentially four times that.¹⁰ While those figures had contracted in the mid-1970s (before ballooning again in the decades following), *Veja*’s impact on the dominant classes remained consistent.¹¹ One of the 1975 articles that mentioned Brasilândia, “Living without Water,” profiled the family of Edeuzita Souza Silva. She was described as a “resident of the *catastrophic* neighborhood Vila Brasilândia, whose living children have gastrointestinal infections – as did 2 of 3 that already died.” The apocalyptic description continued: “Along with millions of other poor São Paulo residents, the family of Edeuzita consumes water from a private well...literally contaminated from physical, chemical, and bacteriological points of view.”¹² Paired with the Silva family story were

⁹ Mira cites the paid circulation (including subscriptions and newsstands) in 1972 as 97,000 and in 1976 as 215,000. Maria Celeste Mira, “O Leitor e a Banca de Revistas: O caso de Editora Abril” (Ph.D. diss., UNICAMP 1997), 147.

¹⁰ By the 1990s *Veja*’s circulation would rank fourth about major global magazines behind *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News and World Report*. See Cristine Maria Famer Rocha, “A Escola na Mídia: nada fora do controle” (PhD diss., UF-Rio Grande do Sul, 2005).

¹¹ Mira details *Veja*’s appeal to university students and professional class, in particular. See Mira, “O Leitor,” especially 135-36 and 145. Also relevant to this section’s discussion of “integration” is the way that *Veja*’s editors framed their ambitions for the publication in the first edition: “Brazil can no longer be the old archipelago separated by distance, by geographic space, by ignorance, by the prejudices and the regionalisms: it needs information in order to choose a new path.” “O Brasil não pode mais ser o velho arquipélago separado pela distância, o espaço geográfico, a ignorância, os preconceitos e os regionalismos: precisa de informação a fim de escolher novos rumos.” Cited in Mira, “O Leitor,” 120.

¹² “Vivendo sem água,” *Veja*, August 6, 1975, 51, my emphasis.

images snapped by the *Veja* photographer: six wincing children, huddled around their mother and the insalubrious well (figure 37).

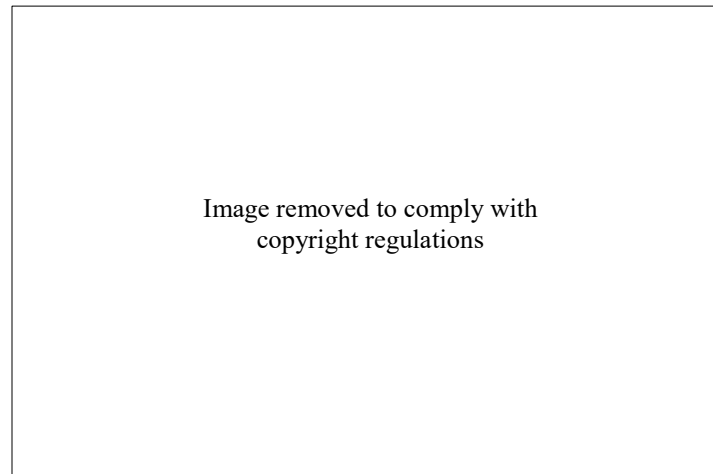


Figure 37: Edeuzita's family in Brasilândia. Caption reads, "Edeuzita, her children, her well: waiting for piped water." *Vivendo sem água*, *Veja*, August 6, 1975, 51. Image available at <<https://acervo.veja.abril.com.br/#/edition/34191?page=51§ion=1>>. Last Accessed June 11, 2018.

Through the wrenching image and sensationalist prose, the piece presented the space of Brasilândia and its residents as symbolic of urban social and environmental pathology in the 1960s-'70s. Circulated throughout Brazil, this representation and the grave social realities it reflected marked Brasilândia as an emblematic margin in this era, dangerous both to its inhabitants and to residents of the city of São Paulo.

National as well as local changes in approaches to urban planning contributed to the identification of Brasilândia as a marked margin. A coup in 1964 and the installation of a technocratic military dictatorship contributed to the consolidation of new approaches to official city planning on multiple scales in Brazil.¹³ In São Paulo, that approach concentrated on efforts to curb four decades of unchecked horizontal expansion. The municipal and state governments had helped to facilitate that growth with a hands-off approach to urbanization, a sentiment epitomized by São Paulo governor Adhemar Barros's

¹³ Sara Feldman, *Planejamento e zoneamento: São Paulo, 1947-1972* (EdUSP, 2005); Rafael R. Ioris, *Transforming Brazil: A History of National Development in the Postwar Era*; Céline Sachs, *São Paulo: políticas públicas e habitação popular* (São Paulo, SP: EDUSP, 1990).

1947 statement: “you can construct your houses without official plans; the City will close its eyes.”¹⁴ The construction of neighborhood urban developments (*loteamentos*), often without state approval and without concern for building or city planning regulations, helped to grow the city’s footprint fivefold between 1950 and 1970.¹⁵ As São Paulo’s limits continued to balloon, national and local planning officials developed a new planning doctrine that prescribed a more comprehensive approach to city planning and the incorporation of the scattered *loteamentos* that residents and real estate developers settled literally and symbolically off the map. Those planners termed this approach *integrated development* or *integrated planning*.¹⁶

While planners developed projects of integrated development for cities throughout Brazil, the ethos had special purchase for the nation’s most populous city and the country’s financial and industrial hub. Decades of unregulated growth and informal, illegal settlements had produced precarious conditions and a disconnected city. Urbanist and historian Céline Sachs describes “the immense São Paulo periphery” in this era as an “archipelago of *loteamentos* in different stages of consolidation.”¹⁷ Integrated development promised improved conditions in peripheral places through expanded utility networks, public housing programs, and more functional transportation systems. Planners, however, found the ideal of integration much easier to study and elaborate in discourse than to realize in practice. Paradoxically, their efforts to integrate peripheries like *Brasilândia* would ultimately exacerbate urban precarity.

¹⁴ Lúcio Kowarick and Nabil Bonduki, “Espaço urbano e espaço político: do populismo à redemocratização,” in Clara Ant and Lúcio Kowarick, eds., *As Lutas Sociais e a Cidade: São Paulo, Passado e Presente* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1988), 151.

¹⁵ The exact numbers are 175.7 km² to 742.2 km². Milton Santos, *Metrópole Corporativa Fragmentada: o caso de São Paulo* (São Paulo, SP: Secretaria de Estado da Cultura, Nobel, 1990), 24.

¹⁶ Flávio Villaça, “Uma contribuição para a história do planejamento urbano no Brasil,” in Csaba Deák and Sueli Ramos Schiffer, eds., *O Processo de urbanização no Brasil* (São Paulo, SP: Edusp 2015), 211-218; Rubens de Mattos Pereira, “Planejamento Local Integrado,” *Folha de São Paulo*, Suplemento Especial “Grande São Paulo, Desafio do Ano 2000,” Sept-Out 1967, 375; Renato Lagos Mentone, “Plano Metropolitano de Desenvolvimento Integrado da Grande São Paulo/PMDI-GSP, 1970. Da expectativa ao desconhecimento” (masters thesis, FAU-USP 2015). Feldman explains: “Em 1964, cria-se o Serfhau – Serviço Federal de Habitação e Urbanismo...Juntamente com o Serfhau, cria-se um Fundo de Financiamento de Planos de Desenvolvimento Local Integrado, no Banco Nacional de Habitação para financiar os planos e estudos de desenvolvimento local integrado, mas a liberação de recursos fica condicionada á criação, pelas regiões e municipalidades, de órgãos permanentes de planejamento e desenvolvimento local...Com essa concessão de verbas para o planejamento e abertura para contratação externa de planos, os órgãos de planejamento se multiplicam...” Feldman, *Planejamento*, 216.

¹⁷ Sachs, *São Paulo*, 71.

Increasing awareness of precarious conditions, documented and disseminated by urbanists and journalists on an unprecedented scale in this era, brought the realities of *disintegration* to a broad audience. That awareness would make Brasilândia recognizable in São Paulo and beyond.

The first step toward the integration of Brasilândia into the city of São Paulo occurred in 1964, when a municipal government reorganization made the unofficial neighborhood of Vila Brasilândia the city of São Paulo's 40th subdistrict. The institutional realignment paralleled fast-paced population growth in the region: from just under 20,000 residents in 1950, Brasilândia reached 50,000 residents by 1960 and grew to 115,000 by 1970.¹⁸ The elevation of status to subdistrict marked a step towards incorporation into the formal city of São Paulo, though the multiple promises of integration – improved transportation, housing, and parity in public services – remained unrealized in practice. Continued in-migration and the failures of integrated development strained Brasilândia's carrying capacity throughout the 1960s-'70s.

In São Paulo, the project of integrated development promised a shift from what was long the predominant approach to city planning: growth and development through transportation infrastructure. Transportation planning dominated planning on paper and in practice in São Paulo since the 1930 publication of Francisco Prestes Maia's *Avenues Plan*. As discussed at length in Chapter One, the *Avenues Plan* outlined the structure of the city from the 1930s through the 1960s, during what I term the Avenues-Making Era. Prestes Maia endeavored to execute the *Avenues Plan* in practice through his three terms as São Paulo's mayor between 1938-'45 and 1961-'65.¹⁹ The completion of his 1961-'65 term

¹⁸ The exact figures are: 1950 (19,329), 1960 (49,743), 1970 (114,855). Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE).

¹⁹ "A Saga da Metrópole e seu Inventor – Cem Anos de Prestes Maia," *Cidade: Revista do Departamento do Patrimônio Histórico/Secretaria Municipal da Cultura* 3 (1996), 4 and 10-11; Benedito Lima de Toledo and Beatriz Mugayar Köhl, *Prestes Maia e as origens do urbanismo moderno em São Paulo* (São Paulo, SP, Brasil: Empresa das Artes Projetos e Edições Artísticas, 1996); Cristina Peixoto-Mehrtens, *Urban Space and National Identity in Early Twentieth Century São Paulo, Brazil: Crafting Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Joel Outtes, "Disciplining Society through the City: The Birth of *Urbanismo* (City Planning) in Brazil, 1916-1941" (PhD diss., Oxford University, 2000); Francisco Prestes Maia, *Estudo de um plano de avenidas para a cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Companhia Melhoramentos de São Paulo, 1930); Francisco Prestes Maia, *Os melhoramentos de São Paulo* (São Paulo: 1945); Maria Cristina da Silva Leme, "ReVisão do Plano de Avenida: estudo sobre o planejamento urbano em São Paulo, 1930," (PhD diss., FAU-USP, 1990); Bonduki, *Origens*.

signaled the beginning of the end of the Avenues-Making Era, as urbanists and politicians in the decade following began to develop alternative approaches to planning, including integrated development.

The first significant step in that shift occurred in 1968. In that year the City of São Paulo released the Basic Urbanistic Plan (*Plano Urbanístico Básico*), or PUB, which was (despite its name) a study for a plan and not a plan proper. The PUB represented, nonetheless, an effort to outline a proposal of integrated development for the metropolitan region of São Paulo. The authorship of the PUB included “an international consortium of business consultants” and represented, in the words of anthropologist Teresa Caldeira, “the basis for the first general urban plan of the city.”²⁰ The study broached an array of issues, ranging from “social development” and “public administration” to questions of land use and zoning. While prevalent, transportation planning reminiscent of the *Avenues Plan* formed just one part of a larger, more comprehensive whole. The PUB’s authors aimed “not just to orient the construction of avenues and viaducts, but to serve the sectors of education, culture, and health, parks and gardens.” The study also revealed the multiple meanings of integration as a spatial and cultural project. The PUB singled out, for instance, the immigrant population of São Paulo as being “subjected to constant and painstaking effort in the search for economic and social improvement. The challenges of access to the labor market and the inadequacy of services and social programs restrict opportunities for greater mobility and social integration.”²¹ The comprehensive approach to city planning in the PUB outlined a shift from the almost exclusive emphasis on transportation planning during the Avenues-Making Era. Furthermore, it provided a roadmap for the geographic and social integration of spaces and populations throughout the metropolis.

Officials did not support the transformation of the PUB from study into a plan. Instead, the São Paulo City Council approved a narrower proposal, the *Directing Plan for Integrated Development*, or

²⁰ The creation of the PUB was coordinated by the Grupo Executivo de Planejamento, or GEP, a division of the City created to introduce, institutionalize, and implement new planning concepts in the Prefeitura. See Feldman, *Planejamento*, 212-13 and 233; Teresa Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 404n27.

²¹ Nadia Somekh and Candido Malta Campos, *A Cidade que Não Pode Parar: São Paulo em Quatro Planos* (São Paulo: Editora Mackenzie, 2008), 114; Feldman, *Planejamento*, 212-16, 237-42; Csaba Deák, “À Busca das Categorias da Produção do Espaço” (Concurso de Livre Docência, FAU-USP, 2001).

PDDI, three years later in 1971.²² The PDDI was the first comprehensive plan adopted by city officials since Prestes Maia's avenues proposal forty years earlier.²³ The PDDI maintained the principle of curtailing São Paulo's unwieldy horizontal expansion but otherwise little resembled the PUB. Lacking the more comprehensive approach to planning, the PDDI signaled for urbanist historian Sara Feldman "the negation of the concept of a master plan."²⁴

Despite efforts to develop a more comprehensive planning practice, prominent City officials continued in the 1960s to privilege the São Paulo mainstay of transportation planning. The shadow of Prestes Maia loomed large. Urbanist and Prestes Maia biographer Benedito Lima de Toledo writes that the urbanist-mayor's 1961-'65 term focused on "putting the municipal government in order." Prestes Maia set the stage, however, for the more project-centered mayoral administration of his successor, trained engineer José Vicente Faria Lima. Toledo explains that

when Faria Lima was elected, he found it possible to execute all of the projects that Maia had elaborated in his second term. And Faria Lima stayed from '61 to '65...the dinner was already served up for him. When he was elected, he used the famous expression: 'I don't want planning (*planejamento*), I want doing (*fazejamento*).'²⁵

Like Prestes Maia, Faria Lima privileged projects like the widening and elongating of avenues in an effort to update the transportation system. He aimed, for instance, to grow circulation capacity from 160 thousand vehicles in 1960 to 3.6 million by 1990.²⁶ Similar to the *Avenues Plan*, Faria Lima's project of integrated development sought to bring together spaces in the metropolis through a new and improved transportation infrastructure.

²² *Plano Diretor de Desenvolvimento Integrado*.

²³ Feldman, *Planejamento e zoneamento*, 22.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 243. Also see Villaça, "Uma contribuição," 213; Somekh and Campos, *A Cidade*, 108-118.

²⁵ "O Prefeito, Razões e Desrazões," interview with Benedito Lima de Toledo by Marcos Faerman, *Revista Cidade*, 39. "Então o Prestes Maia, de 61 a 65, foi praticamente pondo a Prefeitura em ordem. Mas ele começou a reestudar todo o planejamento da cidade de tal forma que quando Faria Lima assumiu, encontrou as condições para executar todos os projetos que tinha elaborado na segunda gestão. E o Faria Lima ficou de 65 a 69. Quer dizer, ele foi importante porque pegou o jantar servido. Quando Faria Lima assumiu ele usou, então, a famosa expressão: 'Não quero planejamento, quero fazejamento.'"

²⁶ Bonduki and Kowarick, "Espaço urbano e espaço político," 159.

An urbanization project involving Brasília during Faria Lima's administration reflected the premium on integration through transportation infrastructure. Despite the similarities in name, this project was distinct from plans like the PUB and PDDI. Those were guiding frameworks for city planning on the scale of the city as a whole or substantial parts of it. The plan for urbanization, by contrast, centered on a more limited set of projects of urban re/development. The 1968 Plan for Urbanization outlined the construction of a massive, 60-meter-wide avenue running north-south along Brasília's eastern edge. The City Council approved the proposal despite complaints from three councilmembers, who asserted that the studies for the project were half-baked and that another avenue of comparable size, running in the same direction just 600 meters to the west, had already been approved.²⁷ Instead of elaborating programs to address dismal public services, an ambitious, potentially redundant roadway project took precedence in one of the first plans spearheaded by the state for urban development in Brasília.

Brasília residents themselves entered the debate over integration through roadways. In 1967 a commission of residents from Brasília took a request to Faria Lima for the paving a road from the region of Vila Santa Terezinha. This loteamento sat north of the original Vila Brasília loteamento and was identified as a locus of black settlement in an interview with one resident.²⁸ The new road would connect Terezinha to areas in the west of Brasília along the former Congo Road. Deep, parallel valleys running north-south in Brasília made such east-west connections uncommon. Faria Lima balked at their request, asserting that the project "would be a piece of junk, because the roads are only slightly wider than 8 meters and we cannot throw away money on this." Faria Lima complained further that the Brasília commission had approached him with "inadequate solutions" multiple times.²⁹ Faria Lima's support for the possibly redundant 1968 north-south avenue proposal contrasted sharply with his disdain for this grassroots request.

²⁷ Plano de Urbanização, Prefeitura Municipal de São Paulo, Processo 2598, Projeto de Lei N° 54, May 27, 1968.

²⁸ Interview by author with [name withheld], Brasília, São Paulo, August 8, 2016.

²⁹ "Mais Luz para Evitar Crimes," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, August 17, 1967, 21.

While municipal administrators continued to privilege planning through transportation infrastructure, housing became an urgent concern. Migration into the city of São Paulo continued in the 1960s-'70s, propelled by an economic boom, or the so-called “Brazilian Miracle,” between 1968-'73 especially.³⁰ Migrants confronted a severe housing shortage. A 1967 special edition of the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo*, titled “Poor Great City,” calculated that 72,000 houses needed to be built per year in the metropolitan region by 1970 to meet the deficit.³¹ Federal and local government authorities created new institutions, like the National Housing Bank (BNH) and Metropolitan Company of São Paulo Housing (COHAB), in an effort to meet housing needs.³² The units generated through these public housing and mortgage assistance programs, however, fell far short of demand.³³

The ubiquity of irregular housing developments further challenged municipal and federal urban reform efforts. Since the 1930s the City of São Paulo’s Department of Urbanism had identified many loteamentos as irregular, including the original settlement of Vila Brasilândia. This diagnosis meant that the developments did not conform to municipal regulations in terms of infrastructure, the minimum size of parcels, and the allocation of spaces for public use as roads, parks, and schools. The loteamentos that private developers and residents produced often bore little resemblance to the ideal types outlined in municipal guidelines. A common practice for families in Brasilândia and elsewhere, for instance, was to purchase a single lot and subdivide the parcel into mini-lots.³⁴ These practices helped families to generate capital and create rungs for social mobility, even if they disobeyed the required minimum size of a lot established by municipal legislation. Over four decades urban policymakers successively reduced the

³⁰ Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Paul Singer, *O Milagre Brasileiro: Causas e Conseqüências*, Caderno Cebrap 06 (1972); Werner Baer, *The Brazilian Economy: Growth and Development*, 7th edition (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008); Thomas Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-85* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Joel Wolfe, *Autos and Progress: The Brazilian Search for Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Paulo Roberto Ribeiro Fontes, *Um Nordeste em São Paulo: trabalhadores migrantes em São Miguel Paulista (1945-66)* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora, 2008).

³¹ “Grande São Paulo: o desafio do ano 2000; Pobre cidade grande,” *Folha de S. Paulo* (Sept. 1967, Série Realidade Brasileira), 289.

³² *Banco Nacional de Habitação; Companhia Metropolitana de Habitação de São Paulo*.

³³ Sachs, *São Paulo*, 21-22.

³⁴ Interview by author with [name withheld], Brasilândia, São Paulo, August 1, 2016.

minimum size of lots in the hopes of bringing municipal codes in line with actually-existing, informal spatial practices.³⁵

After decades of half-measures, urban policymakers got serious in the 1960-'70s. They increasingly enforced code regulations or, alternatively, relaxed requirements so that irregular developments became regular overnight. Municipal laws passed in 1967 and 1972 required developers to prove the successful completion of basic infrastructure like roads, sewage, and water networks before a project was approved by the City. Crucially, they provided mechanisms to penalize developers if they failed to meet code. The 1972 law proved more effective in enforcing regulations, representing the “first profound change in the intervention of public authorities” in the era of permissive urban development.³⁶

The enforcement of new, stricter regulations resulted in the freezing of legal urban developments. In other words, effective enforcement inadvertently cut off the supply of cheap housing and moved the production of loteamentos fully underground. Between 1972 and 1979, São Paulo’s Department of Urbanism only approved seven new loteamentos. This corresponded to a boom in the production of clandestine and, most often, irregular loteamentos. In sharp contrast to the seven authorized developments, informal planners and developers co-produced an estimated 3,567 irregular loteamentos in the 1970s. Those places covered nearly 35% of the city’s territory by the end of the decade.³⁷ By finally succeeding in curbing the state’s permissiveness in the face of irregular loteamentos, state officials inadvertently spurred an even more precarious pattern of urban development and spatial disintegration.

Irregular and clandestine loteamentos were the norm rather than the exception in the urbanization of Brasília. The region’s first loteamento, Vila Brasília, was developed without approval from the

³⁵ Sachs, *São Paulo*, 76-77. Also see Bonduki, *Origens*, 299, for midcentury efforts to curb irregular loteamentos.

³⁶ Ibid. The concrete actions of the law included: steps taken against fraudulent developers (*loteadores*); a census of irregular loteamentos; the shift of responsibility to district administrations to uphold the law; a mechanism to halt the construction of a loteamento if it did not obey norms; and public illumination for streets that local residents had constructed by themselves. The law stipulated that the legal authorization of a loteamento required confirmation of the construction of infrastructure by, and on the dime of, the developer.

³⁷ Ibid., 78.

Department of Urbanism in 1947 and has remained irregular ever since.³⁸ In the late 1960s and 1970s, these loteamentos increasingly pushed into the dense Atlantic forest in the northern region of the district.³⁹ The remote environment likely appealed to developers keen on producing an irregular settlement away from the increasingly watchful eyes of authorities.

The settlement of Jardim Damasceno, a loteamento whose boundaries stretch deep into the Atlantic forest, exhibits this pattern. One of the first settlers in the area, QV, purchased his lot in 1971 and realized the year following that the developer had only given him a bill of sale for the purchase of his parcel, not title to the land itself. QV worked building São Paulo's first metro line, and he constructed his home in the loteamento along with many neighbors' residences. He sought title for his property in the City government, an act that unwittingly informed the City of the existence and condition of the clandestine development. Municipal urbanists then initiated an effort to regularize and legalize the development.⁴⁰ Filling the vacuum in housing previously met by permissive urban expansion, clandestine and precarious loteamentos/neighborhoods like Jardim Damasceno stretched the limits of Brasilândia into ever more remote, forested regions throughout the 1970s.

The restriction on loteamentos prompted a sharp increase in *favelas* in São Paulo, with Brasilândia a principal area of their concentration. While favelas surged in Rio de Janeiro at the beginning of the twentieth century, they appeared for the first time in the city of São Paulo in the 1940s and as a result of the housing crisis discussed in Chapter One. One of the most noteworthy favelas in Brazil, São Paulo's Canindé, became internationally famous as a result of the 1960 publication of the diaries of one of its poor black residents, Carolina Maria de Jesus.⁴¹ Prestes Maia coordinated the removal of Canindé and resettlement of residents in the first year of his 1960s term in office, describing it as a "stain" on the

³⁸ Processo 50.235/55, Coordenadoria de Gestão de Documentos Públicos (CGDP), Prefeitura de São Paulo. Also see Chapter Three.

³⁹ Machado, "Paisagem revelada."

⁴⁰ QV, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, June 8, 2016.

⁴¹ Carolina Maria de Jesus, *Quatro de Despejo*, 1960. The book was subsequently published in English as *Child of the Dark: The Diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus* in 1962.

city.⁴² While prevalent since the 1940s and internationally known in the 1960s, São Paulo's favelas did not comprise an especially prominent feature of São Paulo's landscape. Historian Nabil Bonduki affirms that their growth "remained restricted until the 1970s, as much a result of the discrimination and repression that their inhabitants suffered as the enormous offering of peripheral lots [i.e. loteamentos]."⁴³

The number of residents living in favelas and the number of favelas themselves surged in São Paulo in the 1970s. The occupation of land and construction of favelas helped to meet housing demands given the restrictions on loteamentos. From 41,000 residents in 1971 (.75% of the city's total population), the number of São Paulo residents living in favelas grew to 117,237 (1.60%) in 1975 and 866,500 (8.63%) by 1985.⁴⁴ One article described São Paulo as "The City that Became a Favela."⁴⁵ A 1967 article in *Folha de São Paulo* commented on the then-incipient phenomenon: "The favela is not only the place where samba is danced. It is also a place where comfort is an unknown word. Hygiene, electric light, piped water, sanitation systems do not exist. The shacks stack up in any way possible and do not receive the light of the sun nor vegetation."⁴⁶

Favelas emerged in the 1950s in Brasilândia, however the spike in the early 1970s resulted in the subdistrict having one of the largest numbers of informal settlements in all of São Paulo. In 1973, the district within which the subdistrict of Brasilândia was situated, Freguesia do Ó, accounted for the highest

⁴² This use of "stain" paralleled the discourse about *cortiços*, or tenements, described in Chapter One. The full quote from Prestes Maia was: "Favela: 'Um dos empreendimentos do ano, pela Prefeitura, foi a eliminação da favela do Canindé, uma das manchas da cidade. Estudantes e particulares têm auxiliado êsse movimento, que se completa pela assistência aos favelados, auxílio para mudança, e até, muitas vezes, encaminhamento à casa própria e a um aprendizado ou profissão útil. Foi, em São Paulo, o primeiro exemplo, não de uma simples mudança, mas de uma verdadeira eliminação do aglomerado. Outros casos acham-se em estudo. Importa, entretanto, notar, acrescentou o Prefeito, que o desfavelamento dever ser considerado problema nacional e não de mero urbanismo. Êle nasce fora de nossas divisas, mas aqui se manifesta na fase final, saco sem fundo em matéria de despesa, e incontrolável por medidas comuns.'" "Um Ano de Administração – 1961: Entrevista pelo prefeito Francisco Prestes Maia," Prefeitura de São Paulo, 1962, 34, Biblioteca Prestes Maia.

⁴³ Bonduki, *Origens*, 272. "No entanto, o crescimento das favelas em São Paulo permaneceu restrito até a década de 1970, tanto em decorrência da discriminação e repressão que seus habitantes sofriam, como devido à enorme oferta de lotes periféricos, que funcionou como alternativa de moradia mais bem aceita e acessível com pequeno despendio monetário e grande sacrifício."

⁴⁴ Santos, *Metrópole*, 54.

⁴⁵ Suzana P. Taschner, "Depois da Queda ou a Cidade Que Virou Favela," *Espaço e Debates* 12 (1984), 37-65.

⁴⁶ "Grande São Paulo: o desafio do ano 2000," 89. "Favela não é só lugar onde se dança samba. É também um lugar onde conforto é palavra desconhecida. Higiene, luz elétrica, água encanada, instalação sanitária não existem. Os barracos se amontoam de qualquer maneira e não recebem luz do sol nem ventilação."

number of favelas in the city of São Paulo at 110 (or 20% of the total number, 542). The next highest was the Santo Amaro district at 82.⁴⁷ From three in the 1950s, favelas in Brasilândia specifically grew to 23 in the 1960s and reached 61 by the end of the 1970s.⁴⁸ Brasilândia presented two crucial distinctions from other regions where informal settlements emerged in large numbers. First, they did not materialize near nodes of industrialization as in other peripheral areas, especially the southern region of São Paulo. Founded as a type of bedroom community where individuals lived on the periphery yet depended on work in the city center, most residents with formal employment crossed the Tietê River to São Paulo's traditional business core for work each day. The second distinction concerned Brasilândia's distinct topography and natural environment. The region's deep north-south valleys had long made human settlement challenging. A study from the 1980s about favelas in São Paulo in fact cast the region as a place of last resort for many:

the Northern Zone does not afford favorable topographic conditions for the construction of adequate housing, suffering an intense process of land devaluation. As a result many areas were occupied by low income populations...[who] stretched into empty areas, forming favelas, despite these areas' considerable, life-threatening risks.⁴⁹

Despite harsh conditions, the remoteness of the neighborhood, especially in Atlantic forest regions, provided a measure of autonomy for individuals and families seeking to occupy land without the means to purchase a titled lot.

The multiplication of favelas and clandestine developments corresponded to poor public services. An estimate from 1970 indicated that of the 20,769 buildings in Brasilândia, only 2,262 (or 10.9%) had piped water and just 82 (.004%) had access to the municipal sewage network. Those numbers compared unfavorably to the adjacent neighborhood to the south, Nossa Senhora do Ó, where 10,768 (47%) of buildings had running water and 2,991 (13%) had access to the sewage network. The statistics for the Freguesia do Ó district broadly, however, paled in comparison to the rest of the city of São Paulo: in

⁴⁷ Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo, SEHAB/HABI, "Favelas em São Paulo: Caracterização Físico-Espacial" (1987), 34.

⁴⁸ Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo, SEHAB/HABI, "Programa Bairro Legal - Brasilândia," 2002.

⁴⁹ Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo, "Favelas em São Paulo," 58-59.

1973, 56% of houses citywide had running water, while 35% were connected to the sewage network.⁵⁰ The Northern Zone had a notably high percentage of favelas on the margins of creeks and rivers. In an area disconnected from basic services, those sources of water came to serve as informal sewage networks.⁵¹ While precarity could be found throughout the city, Brasilândia proved among the direst neighborhoods in São Paulo in the 1960s-'70s.⁵²

From its founding in 1947 through the middle of the 1960s, Brasilândia existed outside of the formal, official space of the city of São Paulo. An array of ethn racially-diverse residents and real estate developers produced the informal neighborhood in that era as a microcosmic, multiethnic “land of Brazil.” The ethos of integrated development in the late 1960s and early 1970s presented a new geography for the city of São Paulo premised on the incorporation of informal places like Brasilândia. That “integrated” approach glossed over the connections that had long tied the neighborhood and its residents to more central areas of São Paulo. Such ties included, for example, the dislocation of residents from the city center to Brasilândia as a result of redevelopment projects in the 1930s-'40s and the daily migration that many residents made to work in geographically-central areas through the 1970s. Integrated development promised to formalize these connections: planners would integrate Brasilândia and its residents into the formal city, affording both to the space and its residents the benefits therein. In practice, the ambitious urbanism of integrated development did little to improve conditions in Brasilândia. The incompleteness of integration transformed Brasilândia from a multiethnic microcosm into a marked margin.

That transformation hinged on the publication of visual evidence of the continuities of urban precarity in Brasilândia despite the promises of integration. Photographer André Cservenka snapped striking images of Brasilândia for the magazine *Movimento*, an anti-dictatorship publication founded in

⁵⁰ Bonduki and Kowarick, “Espaço urbano e espaço político,” 165.

⁵¹ Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo, “Favelas em São Paulo,” 74.

⁵² For more on conditions of São Paulo’s periphery in this era, see Caldeira, *City of Walls*, especially 228-230 and Santos, *Metrópole*, 52-67.

1975.⁵³ His photographs gave a face to the urban crisis and to the quotidian realities of Brasília as an emblematic and racialized periphery. Figure 38 displays one of Cservenka's images: a landscape of wooden shacks built on top of one another on a Brasília hillside. A young resident, almost indiscernible, peers casually and cautiously toward Cservenka's lens. The exposure, or degree of lightness/darkness in the photo, obscures the young man, whose body is darkened by the shadows of the doorway and made nearly indistinguishable from the surrounding built environment itself. The composition, nonetheless, positions him at the center of the image, representing him as the concealed human reality at the core of the marginal place.



Figure 38: "Favela," by André Cservenka. Collection from the magazine *Movimento*, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo. Reproduced with permission.

⁵³ Bernardo Kucinski, *Jornalistas e revolucionários: nos tempos da imprensa alternativa* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2003); Inara Bezerra Ferreira Sousa, "O jornal Movimento: a experiência na luta democrática" (master's thesis, Universidade de Brasília, 2014).

Another photograph by Cservenka (figure 39) depicts the interior of a residence in Brasilândia. An elderly black woman in the background, feet resting on the dirt floor, stares directly at the camera over the shoulder of a child, perhaps her grandson, in the foreground. The composition of the image proposes continuities across time: the woman, representative of the past, occupies the space of the present along with the young boy, symbolic of future generations. The young man's distracted and curious visage contrasts with the woman's ambivalent, knowing stare. That stare seems to articulate the continuities of everyday life in Brasilândia and the socio-spatial inequalities in São Paulo despite the passing of generations and city planning projects designed to realize change.



Figure 19: Untitled image of interior in Brasília, by André Cservenka. Collection from the magazine *Movimento*, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo. Reproduced with permission.

Circulated in major national publications, these images helped to define Brasilândia's marginality in both geographic space and time. The subheading of a 1979 article in *O Estado de S. Paulo* about local conditions in the region made a similar point: "Images from the Beginning of the Century."⁵⁴ They also educated Brazilians about the social composition of the "catastrophic" Brasilândia. City planners rarely discussed race explicitly in relation to Brasilândia or other regions. However, the photographs of shadowed, nonwhite Brazilians with – and confused as – a landscape of urban precarity and disintegration helped to make Brasilândia recognizable in the 1960s-'70s as a nonwhite periphery. The images and realities of disintegration laid the groundwork for more explicit processes of racialization. In the following two sections I examine those processes: first, through the founding of a samba school, and second, through the popularization of a racist nickname for Brasilândia on São Paulo's radio waves.

Samba, Asphalt, and Ethnicity

There were few obvious signs that I was standing *someplace else*. In the early 1960s, prominent São Paulo sambista Geraldo Filme composed "I'll Samba Someplace Else" ("*Vou Sambar N'Outro Lugar*"). The song was an elegy for one of the city's oldest centers of samba, the Largo da Banana (Banana Square), located in São Paulo's Barra Funda neighborhood and demolished by an avenues project during Prestes Maia's third mayoral term. His urban redevelopment projects spurred dislocation and local migration throughout the city of São Paulo from the 1930s forward, and by the 1960s a critical mass of samba composers and musicians had settled in Brasilândia.⁵⁵ In the process, the neighborhood became *someplace else*. More specifically, what is today an abandoned, overgrown lot in the commercial heart of Brasilândia became the headquarters of one of São Paulo's most celebrated samba schools, Rosas de Ouro (Roses of Gold), in 1971.⁵⁶ The site and school replaced the demolished

⁵⁴ "Freguesia do Ó, imagens do início do século," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 14, 1979.

⁵⁵ One of the most famous, perhaps, was Noite Ilustrada, a composer who penned songs with other notable sambistas in Rio de Janeiro. LN, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, July 10, 2016. See Chapter One for more on the dislocation caused indirectly and directly by avenues projects in the city center.

⁵⁶ The school would win seven titles at Carnival in the three decades following its founding.

Largo da Banana, and in its earliest years the residents who built Rosas de Ouro produced songs about space and identity that helped to define Brasilândia as a “Little Africa.”

Two competing stories explain the origins of Rosas de Ouro. The official version (described by the school’s leadership) locates the foundation to 1971 when an interracial group of individuals secured a vacant lot in the heart of the neighborhood along Parapuã Street. Eduardo Basílio, a white businessman from Brasilândia, helped to acquire the space and assumed the presidency of the school, which he would occupy until 2003.⁵⁷ Rosas de Ouro stayed at this site until the early 1980s, when it moved to the more developed, adjacent neighborhood to the south. The move meant parting ways with many of the original, Brasilândia-based musicians who had founded and frequented the school in these early years.⁵⁸

Some residents point to older spatial origins for Rosas de Ouro. WB, a former member of the samba school, places its roots in an area of the original Brasilândia settlement called the Catimbó. WB’s spouse, MB, grew up in this area and her father participated in the formalization of the school in 1971. MB also remembers the samba scene consolidating originally in the Catimbó, which was both a locus of black settlement with houses where musicians played and stored their instruments.⁵⁹ Such spaces were hard to come by at the time. An image from an early 1970s article titled “Samba According to São Paulo” in the national magazine *Realidade* depicted the crowded corner of a living room with instruments strewn about. The caption read, “Without practice areas and without headquarters, the São Paulo leaders transform their homes into rehearsal studios and instrument depositories.”⁶⁰

Catimbó does not exist on formal maps of Brasilândia. Like the Largo da Banana and other popularly-designated spaces throughout São Paulo, the area existed principally in popular geographic

⁵⁷ “Rosas de Ouro,” Liga de São Paulo, <http://ligasp.com.br/escolas-de-samba/rosas-de-ouro> (accessed June 17, 2018); “Rosas de Ouro comemora os 43 anos da sua fundação,” *Freguesia News*, October 23, 2014, http://freguesianews.com.br/?opc=meio_variedades&id_noti=3907 (accessed June 17, 2018). *Realidade* was modeled after *Life* magazine. Mira, “O Leitor,” 30.

⁵⁸ *Jornal da Brasilândia* 1:2 (June 1982).

⁵⁹ WB, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, June 22, 2017. Also see André Luís de Araújo Atunes, “Avaliação de Projetos Sociais: Um estudo de caso do projeto social ‘Samba se aprende na escola’ da Sociedade Rosas de Ouro,” (undergraduate thesis, Federal University of Santa Catarina), 60.

⁶⁰ Marco Aurélio Guimarães Jangada, “O samba segundo São Paulo,” *Realidade*, February 1972, 56.

imaginaries. Born in the interior of the state of São Paulo in 1923, Geralda Luiz Galdino settled in Freguesia do Ó in the 1930s and later participated in Rosas de Ouro for many years. She remembers the Catimbó as “a village of houses where blacks lived, at the corner with the deep pit (*cava funda*).”⁶¹ At the center of the Catimbó was a fork in the road that led uphill. With windows stretching along the same horizontal line of these houses, some locals remember this collection of structures resembling, and known locally as, the “slave ship” (*navio negreiro*).⁶² The shape of the roads in this locale created a sharp oval, itself reminiscent of the outline of a vessel. *Navio Negreiro* was also the name for the *cortiço*, or tenement, on May 13 Street in Bexiga, the neighborhood of origin for some residents who settled in Brasilândia. The area’s name also referenced Afro-descendent culture: Catimbó was an Afro-Brazilian and Amerindian spiritual practice common in Brazil’s Northeast.⁶³

The concentration of Afro-descendants in the Catimbó challenged dominant ideologies of mixture and integration, which Brazil’s military government had promoted and policed on an unprecedented scale since assuming power in 1964.⁶⁴ Interviewees recalled that police authorities were hostile to samba gatherings.⁶⁵ Black populations in the Catimbó likely endeavored to conceal the space from authorities. These individuals were accustomed to producing such spaces: they composed and put music to stories about the city but also conceived of, and did the labor of constructing, many parts of it themselves. The

⁶¹ Machado, “Paisagem revelada,” 63.

⁶² Interview by author with [name withheld], Brasilândia, São Paulo, São Paulo, June 22, 2017.

⁶³ Roger Bastide, “Catimbó” in Reginaldo Prandi (org.), *Encantaria brasileira: o livro dos mestres, caboclos e encantados* (Rio de Janeiro: Pallas, 2004), 146-59. Also see Lindsay Hale, “Catimbó,” in Anthony P. Binn, ed. *African-American Religious Cultures* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 135-136.

⁶⁴ George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 225; Paulina Alberto, “When Rio Was *Black*: Soul Music, National Culture, and the Politics of Racial Comparison in 1970s Brazil,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 89:1 (2009), 20. Alberto writes, for example: “Under the military dictatorship that began in 1964, ideologies of *brasilidade* and racial democracy took on an even more totalizing, indeed suffocating character. The military government sought to enforce the image of a racially harmonious, Africanized Brazil at home and abroad, while preempting the development of homegrown or U.S.- or African-inspired, racially oppositional politics. These objectives led them to emphasize Brazil’s Africanness in terms of a folkloric, ancient, and depoliticized African presence, heavily mediated by cultural and racial mixture and contained by processes of nationalization.”

⁶⁵ CF, interviews by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, July 12 and July 19, 2016; HP, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, July 22, 2016. On this subject, see also Lúgia Nassif Conti, “A Memória do Samba na Capital do Trabalho: os sambistas paulistanos e a construção de uma singularidade para o samba de São Paulo (1968-1991)” (PhD diss., USP, 2015), 139-40, 171-2, 179, 200-01, 204.

local spaces they produced facilitated the preservation of mutual assistance in the midst of socio-spatial inequalities.

Paulo Sérgio de Oliveira, known popularly by his nickname “Mug,” grew up in Brasilândia and composed some of Rosas de Ouro’s earliest sambas. Mug’s father settled in Brasilândia in the 1950s, purchased a lot, and constructed his home along with his wife. Those original bricks, oversized in comparison to the kind commonly used today, are exposed along the entryway to his home. “Black people built this community,” Mug remembers.⁶⁶ His conception of built was not metaphorical. In addition to concentrating many black Brazilians, Brasilândia urbanized through the spatial practices of residents themselves. These practices included the autoconstruction of homes, a widespread method of home building (discussed in Chapter Three) wherein families construct residential complexes gradually over time and without trained architects or engineers.

Locals in Brasilândia produced the neighborhood on more collective scales that transcended individual homes. While grand avenues occupied the minds of São Paulo’s formal planners, informal planners in Brasilândia concerned themselves with local roads and the material that covered them. Almost invariably and without provocation during interviews, residents broach histories of paving. Like Mug, other residents articulate precise timelines for when and how a road came to be paved and who locally participated in the labor or negotiations with urban services authorities to make the project happen.⁶⁷ These recollections trace a trajectory, emphasizing the transformation from the time when “everything was forest” (“*era tudo mata*”) to the arrival of stone or concrete roadways. Mug tells multiple stories of locals taking road construction into their own hands. When he was a child his father organized other residents of Plínio Rocha Pinto Street to plan a paving project. They contracted to purchase stones from the nearby rock quarry. Having assembled the stones, the group paved the road themselves.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Paulo Sérgio de Oliveira, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, August 3, 2016.

⁶⁷ Ibid. BS, interview by author, August 15, 2006; MB, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo. June 17, 2017. Also see interviews in “Distrito da Brasilândia e suas Histórias,” DSS Produções, 2006, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrYdz0a78Tw>>.

⁶⁸ Oliveira, interview.

The prominence of asphalt in the local collective memory might be dismissed as an unexceptional, mundane facet of the lived experience of urbanization. Asphalt, however, means much more in Brazil. A common view of Rio de Janeiro divides the city between *morro* (hill) and *asfalto* (asphalt). These terms distinguish the formal city, defined by asphalt, from unpaved favelas on hills. This distinction also connotes a division between rich and poor and white and nonwhite.⁶⁹ The hill-asphalt binary is more commonly associated with Rio de Janeiro than São Paulo, perhaps because of the latter's distinct patterns of urban development across a larger expanse of territory and a more recent history of favelas. Brasilândia, however, proves an exception to this rule, as lyrics about hills and pavement surfaced in early songs of Rosas de Ouro and in interviews with some of Brasilândia's earliest residents.

Hills featured prominently in the lyrics of the first song that Rosas de Ouro produced for a carnival in São Paulo (in 1971). Mug recalls the song "History of Vila Brasilândia," which contrasted (while also connecting) the hills of Brasilândia with the geographic center of the city: "Sing the high hills / A monumental panorama / From which you can see / All of our city."⁷⁰ In a city where broad, horizontal landscapes are hard to glimpse, Brasilândia's uniquely sharp typography provided clear views of the verticalizing center (the tallest in Latin America at the time) since the 1940s.⁷¹ Despite the 12 kilometers between Brasilândia and the center, the view from the steep hills generated a perception of proximity with the city's geographic core. The daily experience of traversing unpaved roads from the Atlantic forest in Brasilândia to the city center and back put a premium on pavement. The persistence of roads (even primary arteries) without asphalt into the 1960s – the era of integrated development – signified a lack of integration and, therefore, the definition of the margin. The absence of pavement thereby defined a spatial hierarchy dividing the city along lines of rich/poor and white/nonwhite, with Brasilândia falling on the

⁶⁹ Celso Athayde and Renato Meirelles, *Um país chamado favela* (Gente, 2014); Janice Perlman, "The Myth of Marginality Revisited," in Lisa Hanley et al., eds., *Becoming Global and the New Poverty of Cities* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2005), 9-55.

⁷⁰ Oliveira, interview.

⁷¹ Nadia Somekh, *A cidade vertical e o urbanismo modernizador : São Paulo, 1920-1939* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1997).

marginal periphery. Singing about “*our* city,” Rosas de Ouro members countered that geography and made a claim to belonging within both the material and symbolic space of São Paulo.

The City of São Paulo’s tourism arm officialized carnival celebrations in 1968, meaning that the municipal government assumed responsibilities for the organization and regulation of the festivities and parades. Ethnomusicologist Shuhei Hosokawa asserts that this officialization “transformed carnivals into less dangerous, less marginal, more industrialized and concomitantly more inclusive events. The commercial development of samba schools also facilitated easier access to the world of carnival for the middle and upper classes and the non-Black population.”⁷² The City of São Paulo likely recognized the business potential in samba and aimed to capitalize on the transformation of the supposedly “marginal,” “dangerous,” and black form into an accessible and tamed feature of São Paulo’s cultural life.

The Brasilândia residents who travelled to the newly-officialized carnival in the city center used the captive if jovial audience to articulate subtle social critiques. Roadways sometimes formed a central theme of their carnival lyrics. From 1968 to 1977 the carnival parade marched down São João Avenue, one of center-city São Paulo’s principal arteries. Many Brasilândia residents knew the area well, having lived on or near São João when Prestes Maia’s avenues projects demolished scores of housing units in the process of redevelopment. On São João Avenue in 1975, Rosas de Ouro marched with the song “The Street.”⁷³ Composers from the school put a melody to the poem of the same name written by Guilherme de Almeida, the prominent literary and cultural figure discussed at more length in Chapter Two.⁷⁴

For individuals accustomed to decades of urban redevelopment and living on the daily front lines of what Brazilian geographer Milton Santos termed the “fragmented metropolis,”⁷⁵ Almeida’s lines hit home. The poem ran:

<i>A rua que eu imagino, desde menino, para o meu destino pequeninho [...]</i>	“The street I have imagined, since I was a boy, as my little destiny [...]
--	---

⁷² Shuhei Hosokawa, “Dancing in the Tomb of Samba: Japanese-Brazilian Presence/Absence in the São Paulo carnival,” in Hae-kyung Um, ed., *Diasporas and Interculturalism in Asian Performing Arts: Translating Traditions* (New York, NY: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 68.

⁷³ André Luís de Araújo Atunes, “Avaliação de Projetos Sociais,” 61. Ellipses in original.

⁷⁴ Aline Ulrich, “Guilherme de Almeida e a construção da identidade paulista,” (master’s thesis, USP, 2007).

⁷⁵ Milton Santos, *Metrópole Corporativa*.

*é uma rua como todas as ruas, com suas duas
calçadas nuas,
correndo paralelamente, como a sorte diferente
de toda gente, para a frente,
para o infinito; mas uma rua que tem escrito um
nome bonito, bendito, que sempre repito
e que rima com mocidade, liberdade,
tranquilidade: RUA DA FELICIDADE...*

is a street like any street, with its two bare
sidewalks,
running parallel, with a luck different from
everyone else's, forward,
to infinity; but it's a road written in a name
beautiful, blessed, that I always repeat
and that rhymes with youth, freedom, and
tranquility: the STREET OF HAPPINESS..."

With "The Street" Rosas de Ouro musicians appropriated the road as a metaphor for life. They fixated on the linguistic landscape with the "beautiful, blessed" name of the street, an indication of the salience of place names for residents just a decade following the renaming of Congo Road. Despite its references to youth, liberty, tranquility, and happiness, the reverie had a melancholic tone. The "Street of Happiness" is unrealized in material space; it remains fixed in a dream space, imagined "since childhood" and located out of reach on the "infinite" horizon. Sung in a temporarily occupied space at a moment of carnivalesque suspension of the usual socio-spatial order, the song articulated a critique of the failed promises of integrated development and marginalization of populations in peripheries like *Brasilândia*.

Rosas de Ouro also employed samba during carnival to comment on interethnic relations and ethnoracial identity formation. In the carnival of 1973, for instance, the school paraded with the song "Ethnic Formation" ("*A Formação Étnica*"). The lyrics were:

*Índios, brancos, negros
Iniciaram a evolução
E seus nomes e seus feitos
A nossa história contarão*

Indians, whites, and blacks
Began the evolution
And their names and deeds
Our history will tell

*Diogo Álvares Correia Caramuru
Entregou seu coração
A jovem índia Paraguaçu*

Diogo Álvares Correia Caramuru
Gave his heart
To the young Indian Paraguaçu

*Dessa mistura de sangue surgiu
O povo forte Brasil*

From this blood mixture emerged
The strong Brazilian folk

*Os negros como sofriam
Na senzala
Procuravam refugio
No quilombo dos palmares*

The blacks how they would suffer
In the slave quarters
Seeking refuge
In the *quilombo* of Palmares

*Ao som da chibata se ouvia
O grito forte*

At the sound of the whip you could hear
The loud shout

De um feitor que dizia

*Segura o negro
Esse negro
Quer fugir pro quilombo dos palmares
Onde está o rei Zumbi⁷⁶*

Of the overseer proclaiming

Catch hold of the black
This black
Wants to flee to the *quilombo* of Palmares
With the King Zumbi

The 1973 samba amounted to a spatial history of race and ethnicity in Brazil. The first two stanzas present one myth of Brazil's founding with references to tri-racial mixture between "Indians, whites, and blacks." That narrative focuses on an affective relationship between an indigenous woman and Diogo Álvares Correia (known by the name Caramuru in the indigenous language Tupi), a Portuguese colonist and icon of cultural in-betweenness.⁷⁷ In this composition, black Brazilians had no role in the original social relationship of mixture. Instead, they enter in the final three stanzas as native Brazilians are disappeared. At the same time, the tone shifts markedly from a vague ethnonational celebration to a specific story of racialized violence and lamentation.

"Ethnic Formation" reproduces the myth of a racially-harmonious Brazil in the first two stanzas while presenting a competing foundational narrative in the final three. The combination suggests that both myths – of mixture and non-mixture – guided the ethnoracial formation of the nation and, by extension, places like Brasilândia. The lines also link identity formation to spatial forms over the long duration, asserting a continuity between the slave quarters (*senzala*) and runaway slave communities (*quilombo*) of old to *favelas* and marginal peripheries of new.⁷⁸ The lyrics re-signified those spatial forms to the realities of urban life and decades of local migration and displacement in Brazil's most populous city. Sung on the center-city avenues that were themselves hubs of urban renewal, Rosas de Ouro's lyrics critiqued Brazil's development over centuries and São Paulo's redevelopment over decades.

⁷⁶ Oliveira, interview. Also available at "Samba Enredo: 1973,"

<http://www.sociedaderosasdeouro.com.br/carnaval/samba-enredo/?ano=1973> (accessed July 12, 2016).

⁷⁷ Alida C. Metcalf, *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil: 1500–1600* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2006), esp. 80–86.

⁷⁸ This assertion is also fundamental to the writings of geographer Beatriz Nascimento, discussed in the conclusion of the dissertation. A similar argument is also made by Lourdes Carril in *Quilombo, favela e periferia: a longa busca da cidadania* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2006).

The “someplace else” of Rosas de Ouro in Brasilândia would last for a decade before the school’s president, Eduardo Basílio, coordinated its move to the adjacent district of Freguesia do Ó in the late 1970s. In the local newspaper *Jornal da Brasilândia*, Basílio explained the move as a matter of acquiring more space and aiming to avoid complaints about sound in the densely-populated center of Brasilândia.⁷⁹ The move proved controversial for some residents in Brasilândia, including some prominent participants of Rosas de Ouro, who saw Afro-descendant membership in the school diminish consistently after the relocation of the headquarters to Freguesia do Ó.⁸⁰

For carnival in 2006, Rosas de Ouro marched with the song, “The African Diaspora: A Crime Against the Human Race.” Their production included a float in the shape of a slave ship, described in an article by *O Estado de S. Paulo*: “The slave ship...will be a living sculpture. The form will be totally made of blacks, including both the shell and the holding areas.”⁸¹ The opening of the article asserted that “The school of Freguesia do Ó has not forgotten its roots in Vila Brasilândia and will give a just homage to the black,” a statement that itself indicated the racialization of Brasilândia and implied that it had been whitened in its move to Freguesia do Ó.⁸² The then-president of the school proclaimed that “we are all Afro-descendants.”⁸³ Former participants of Rosas de Ouro note that the membership of the school in this period was overwhelmingly white, and that organizers of the 2006 parade had to seek out Afro-descendants in Brasilândia to form the social composition of the slave ship.⁸⁴

In the 1960s-’70s residents of Brasilândia faced increasingly negative characterizations of the neighborhood as a marginal space. They responded with critical and lyrical spatial histories that recast Brasilândia as a “Little Africa” and the continuation in a long line of sites of refuge for poor and

⁷⁹ *Jornal da Brasilândia* 1:2 (June 1982).

⁸⁰ MB and WB, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, June 17, 2016.

⁸¹ “O Navio Negreiro...trará uma escultura viva. A forma será feita toda de negros, o que inclui o casco e o porão.”

⁸² Robson Fernandjes, “Rosas toca a ferida da escravidão,” *O Estado de S. Paulo: Estadão Zona Norte*, February 17, 2006. “A escola da Freguesia do Ó não esqueceu suas raízes na Vila Brasilândia e faz uma justa homenagem ao negro.”

⁸³ “*todos somos afrodescendentes.*”

⁸⁴ Interview by author with [name withheld], Brasilândia, São Paulo, São Paulo, June 2017. Robin E. Sheriff discusses white participation in Carnival in Rio de Janeiro in Robin E. Sheriff, *Dreaming Equality: Color, Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 24.

especially nonwhite Brazilians. What's more, they produced alternative material and lyrical spaces that held two seemingly conflicting definitions of the neighborhood in parallel: Brasilândia was, simultaneously, black and ethnoracially-mixed. That spatial discourse asserted black solidarity and self-affirmation while aspiring to anti-racist ideals and attempting to mollify white and elite anxieties in the midst of a mounting, nationwide urban crisis.

Composers and musicians founded multiple samba schools in São Paulo's peripheral neighborhoods in the 1960s-'70s, but some sources suggest that the social composition of Brasilândia and Rosas de Ouro specifically stood out.⁸⁵ In the early 1970s Afro-Brazilian academics and activists Eduardo de Oliveira e Oliveira and Thereza Santos co-wrote and staged a play, "And now... We Speak," at São Paulo's *Centro de Cultura e Arte Negra* (CECAN), a black cultural center founded in 1971. The play covered centuries of history of Africans and Afro-descendants in the diaspora, ranging from slavery in the African subcontinent to police brutality in the city of São Paulo in the 1960s-'70s. In her book about CECAN, Joana Maria Ferreira da Silva writes that "the theatrical group was heterogenous: they ranged from black students from the [elite private university] Mackenzie to individuals with almost no schooling. The group was composed of a middle-class segment and of poor members, residents of Vila Brasilândia."⁸⁶ I did not encounter anyone in the course of fieldwork who participated in this production, and the reference to Brasilândia is singular and brief. Nonetheless, it suggests that Brasilândia was exceptional as a hub of both Afro-descendant *and* poor, nonelite populations. That social composition would make sense given the precarious conditions outlined in the section above, and, if accurate, expands our understanding of a range of social positions of Afro-descendant populations in mid-twentieth-century São Paulo.

⁸⁵ Olga Rodrigues de Moraes von Simson, *Carnaval em branco e negro: carnaval popular paulistano 1914-1988* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2007).

⁸⁶ Joana Maria Ferreira da Silva, *Centro de Cultura e Arte Negra – CECAN: Retratos do Brasil Negro* (São Paulo: Selo Negro, 2012). "o grupo teatral era heterogêneo: havia desde estudantes negros da Faculdade Mackenzie até indivíduos com quase nenhuma escolaridade. O grupo era composta por uma classe média negra e por membros mais pobres, residentes na Vila Brasilândia."

Much remains to be understood about the everyday social realities and ethnoracial identities of Afro-descendants in São Paulo in the middle of the twentieth century. Historians have typically privileged the eras bookending this period: the 1920s-'30s, when the black press and associative organizations like the Brazilian Black Front (*Frente Negra Brasileira*) thrived, and the 1970s, especially the 1978 foundation of the MNU or Unified Black Movement (*Movimento Negro Unificado*).⁸⁷ In his pioneering history of Afro-Brazilian activism, for instance, Michael Hanchard devotes just a few pages to the period between 1945 and 1964. Hanchard explains that, owing to officials' promotion of the racial democracy ideology, "Afro-Brazilian activists had to couch their language and praxis in indirect, ambiguous, and fragmented forms under the veil of cultural practice."⁸⁸ Surveying the emphasis on political activism and social movements, Kim Butler has called for a reassessment of work on "the aspirations of *the* black community" in São Paulo. She suggests that the activists who made up the Frente Negra Brasileira, for example, may have been a black elite distinct "from the majority of Afro-Paulistanos." To examine that possibility, Butler expands, "it will be important to conduct further research on the less visible strategies of those who retreated into universes of their own creation as yet another expression of self-determination in the post-abolition era."⁸⁹

Brasilândia, the Catimbó, and Rosas de Ouro are examples of what Butler termed "universes of their own creation." The foundation of the neighborhood spans the gap in literature about Afro-Paulistanos (roughly, 1947-1978). The historiographical gap reflects the sociohistorical disruptions and dislocations of Afro-descendent populations in São Paulo during the Avenues-Making Era. Brasilândia's history, therefore, helps to broaden our understandings of Afro-descendent experiences in São Paulo beyond organized social movements and (narrowly defined) political history. In doing so, we see Afro-

⁸⁷ Michael Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil, 1945-1988* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Paulina Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2011); Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

⁸⁸ Hanchard, *Orpheus*, 102.

⁸⁹ Kim Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1998), 87.

descendants in mid-century decades engaged in spatial practices that concerned everyday survival as well as the forging of spaces of resistance on São Paulo's geographic and social margins.

*Broadcasting Brasilândia:
Violent Crime, Reality Radio, and Racist Stigma*

In 2017 the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* published an article with the alarming title, “Map of Death.” Based on a study conducted by newspaper staff, the piece offered a map of the spatial distribution of murders in the city of São Paulo in 2015. The subheading, “The Map of Death in São Paulo Goes from Switzerland to Mexico; Locations of Crimes Recur,” referenced the gulf between the comparatively low murder rates in certain São Paulo neighborhoods (likened to those in Switzerland) and the much higher rates in others (likened to those in Mexico). The post-semicolon subheading asserted a continuity in the geography of violence in São Paulo, and the authors presented the district of Brasilândia as a long-time locus of “recurring” crime.⁹⁰ They stated, for example, that Brasilândia had the sixth-highest rate of murders in the city. Seven murders occurred on Elísio Teixeira Leite Avenue (the former Congo Road) in 2015, the second-highest of any roadway in the city. The authors noted that violence was not evenly distributed within districts, but concentrated at what they termed “marked places” (“*lugares marcados*”).⁹¹

The *Folha de S. Paulo* article presents a narrow definition of violence in “marked places” in Brasilândia and throughout the city of São Paulo as exceptional moments of bodily harm inflicted by stigmatized perpetrators on innocent victims. That definition excludes more quotidian forms of structural violence, such as poverty and gravely substandard urban infrastructure.⁹² In doing so, the article

⁹⁰ The figure was 27 deaths, corresponding to a rate of 10.2 per 100,000 residents, in the period stretching from July 2016 to June 2017.

⁹¹ The study's authors use this term in the singular, as in “marked place.” I translated it into the plural to explain that the authors are generalizing about specific local places throughout the city. “Mapa da Morte: Mapa da morte em SP vai da Suécia até o México; locais dos crimes se repetem,” *Folha de São Paulo*, October 12, 2017.

⁹² Johan Galtung coined “structural violence” in the 1969 article “Violence, Peace and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research* 6:3 (1969), 167–191. Anthropologist Katherine Hirschfeld recently published a review essay of the term and its mis(uses) for the field of global and public health, most notably concerning Paul Farmer's

participates in what anthropologist Teresa Caldeira has termed the “Talk of Crime,” a discourse about perceived violence and crime that she argues exacerbated socio-spatial segregation and inequality in São Paulo in the 1980s-’90s especially.⁹³ Brasilândia has occupied a central role in discourses about violence and crime in the city since well before the 1980s. However, in the late 1960s the stigmatization of the neighborhood as a center of danger took on a decidedly racialized character. In this section I trace the construction of Brasilândia as a marked place of danger and blackness, a process that occurred through the pioneering reality radio programs of a popular broadcaster named Gil Gomes. From the late 1960s through the 1970s, Gomes broadcast sensationalized stories of violent crime in Brasilândia and helped to popularize a racist epithet, “Monkeyland” (“*Macacolândia*”), to describe the neighborhood.

I first learned about the neighborhood of Brasilândia because of its supposed identity as São Paulo’s “Little Africa.” In the course of fieldwork, however, São Paulo residents who did not live in Brasilândia rarely brought up the “Little Africa” neighborhood identity without my prompting. Instead, my casual mention of the neighborhood most often elicited comments about the place as a locus of danger and violent crime. Some warned me that the light color of my skin made me unsafe in Brasilândia. One such interaction took place when registering with Brazil’s Federal Police (a process all foreigners must complete early after arriving). Casual conversations with the functionaries at the multiple stages in this process are common. The affable person charged with reviewing my documentation had previously lived in a district to the east of Brasilândia. Realizing the connection, I mentioned to her that my research focused on Brasilândia. She responded with a cautious sigh and explained that my light skin complexion would make problems for me in the neighborhood. I did not push her to explicitly outline the logic of her comment, which I nonetheless interpret as an allusion to the supposedly high index of violent crime and

“Anthropology of Structural Violence,” *Current Anthropology* 45:3 (2004), 305–325. Katherine Hirschfeld, “Rethinking ‘Structural Violence,’” *Soc* 54 (2017), 156–162. For a more empirical and contemporary study of place, race, and violence, see Rachel Breunlin and Helen A. Regis, “Putting the Ninth Ward on the Map: Race, Place, and Transformation in Desire, New Orleans,” *American Anthropologist* 108:4 (Dec 2006), 744–64.

⁹³ Caldeira focuses on discourses about crime in the late 1970s and early 1980s, arguing that, paradoxically, exaggerated perceptions of crime exacerbated segregation and inequality at a moment of political opening in the course of Brazil’s re-democratization. Caldeira, *City of Walls*.

nonwhite population. Although anecdotal and informal, the interaction suggests a common conception about the neighborhood defined by criminalized and racialized stigma.

I have deleted this section twice and twice clicked “undo” out of concern that the following narratives will reinforce a simplified and racist stigma of Brasília. My aim is, to state the obvious, much to the contrary. By documenting the constructedness of the stigma, I aim to complicate and counter it. The following is not a comprehensive analysis of actually-existing patterns of violent crime over time. Instead, the section centers on the history of the stigma of Brasília as a dangerous, marked place, how the stigma took on a racialized form, and some of the strategies that residents employ/ed in navigating it. This enduring stigma, a racist version of the “Little Africa” neighborhood identity, serves to pathologize the space and its residents. The mark also helps to obfuscate broader meanings of violence as poverty and substandard urban infrastructure, both acute realities (as detailed in the first section above) of daily life in Brasília in the 1960s-’70s.

Despite the sensationalized discourse of the “Talk of Crime,” it is important to state initially that violent crime has indeed comprised a feature in the everyday lives of many Brasília residents. In my interviews some residents who grew up in Brasília recalled violence and places where it concentrated.⁹⁴ Prominent in local memories, for example, is the *inferninho* (little hell), a stretch of buildings southwest of the Catimbó connected by bars on sequential blocks and perceived as particularly dangerous.⁹⁵ One resident, HP, born in Brasília in the early 1960s, had a unique perspective on violent crime in the neighborhood. His father served in the civil police (*guarda civil*), and HP remembers violence as a fact of daily life. To prove his point, he described descending his staircase as a child on the way to school and finding a dead body at the doorstep of his family’s home. HP recalls the infamy of the *inferninho*, a place his parents prohibited him from visiting, along with other specific locations perceived as especially dangerous.⁹⁶ Similar to the spatial emphasis in the 2017 *Folha de S. Paulo* article, families

⁹⁴ HP, interview; CF, interview.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ HP, interview.

like HP's maintained, and passed down over generations, a geography of perceived and/or actual danger in Brasilândia.

While HP's recollections indicate the prevalence of violent crime in Brasilândia, it does not follow that the neighborhood's residents were exceptionally violent. As explained in section one, Brasilândia was singular in São Paulo for having a severe lack of public services and for exceptional rates of urban poverty. These issues were causes, symptoms, and indeed forms of violence. Some locals drew the link between the lack of adequate urban infrastructure, for example, and conventional definitions of violent crime. Neighborhood organizations, known as Societies of Friends of the Neighborhood (*Sociedade dos Amigos do Bairro*) sprouted throughout São Paulo from the late 1950s through the 1980s.⁹⁷ The Society of Friends of Brasilândia lobbied the municipal government for resources for the neighborhood, such as electricity and public illumination, with the explicit aim of improving safety.

A 1972 article in *O Estado de S. Paulo* drew the connection between infrastructure and public safety, noting that “the installation of lanterns on roads and in plazas and the extension of police patrolling to more distant, less frequented places are the primary demands from Societies of Neighborhood Friends on the São Paulo periphery.”⁹⁸ The article singled out Vila Brasilândia for inadequate policing: “The existing police precincts, as well as military detachments, don't have the means to cover the full area. While some neighborhood roads have lots of movement that help to keep delinquents away, the Vila also has the so-called Catimbó, situated in a tumultuous region difficult to patrol.”⁹⁹ Similar to the 2017 *Folha de S. Paulo* study, the author of this article flattened the more complicated social reality of violence as relating to structural poverty and poor urban infrastructure. That simplified representation presented the Catimbó and Brasilândia as supposed nodes of criminality, peopled by stigmatized and marginalized “delinquents.” The explanations for violent crime in Brasilândia in the 1960s'-70s rarely conformed to such neat characterizations of good and bad.

⁹⁷ Caldeira, *City of Walls*; Paulo Fontes, “Trabalhadores e associativismo urbano no governo Jânio Quadros em São Paulo (1953-1954),” *Revista Brasileira de História*, São Paulo 33:66 (2013), 71-94.

⁹⁸ “Mais luz para evitar crimes,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 16, 1972.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

State authorities, including some officially responsible for public safety, sometimes contributed to violent crime in Brasília. In addition to increased police scrutiny and surveillance of neighborhood residents, dramatic confrontations between residents and state security officials occurred in the neighborhood during Brazil's military dictatorship. In 1968, for instance, Brasília became a shooting ground for a group of rogue police detectives known as the *Esquadrão da Morte* (Death Squad). José Francisco dos Santos Filho, known as Cabo Verde, lived in Brasília and newspaper reports suggested that he controlled the local traffic in marijuana. In late December of 1968, two members of the *Esquadrão da Morte* tracked Cabo Verde in the Catimbo. They subsequently captured and drove him to a city in the São Paulo interior, where they murdered him.¹⁰⁰ In the years following, members of the *Esquadrão da Morte* faced trial for the murder along with allegations of being involved in the drug trade themselves. They were accused of murdering competing traffickers or, in the case of Cabo Verde, traffickers who would no longer supply pay-offs.¹⁰¹

The military dictatorship also prompted violent resistance in Brasília. In November of 1971, five participants from the anti-dictatorship organization the Popular Liberation Movement (*Movimento de Libertação Popular*), or MOLIPO, set a bus on fire at a plaza in Brasília. A member of the military police named Nelson Martinez Ponce happened upon the scene and attempted to intervene. The MOLIPO militants supposedly killed the officer, and the press in São Paulo ran stories about the five "terrorists" accused of the murder. The caption of an image of Ponce's funeral in *Veja* magazine described him as "the latest victim of the violence."¹⁰² An article in *O Estado de São Paulo* from three months later identified the militant Hiroaki Torigoi as one of the five participants in the bus bombing and murder.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ "Esquadrão: Mais uma Baixa," *Veja*, June 6, 1973, 28 and "Decretada a prisão de policial" *O Estado de S. Paulo*, August 4, 1972.

¹⁰¹ "O Esquadrão, consequência?" *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 26, 1970.

¹⁰² "Franco-Atiradores," *Veja*, November 10, 1971, 34.

¹⁰³ "Terrorista é morto a tiros," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 20, 1972. For more information about Torigoi, Japanese-Brazilian involvement in anti-dictatorship activities, and ethnic militancy, see Jeffrey Lesser, *A Discontented Diaspora: Japanese Brazilians and the Meanings of Ethnic Militancy, 1960-1980* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 76, 90.

MOLIPO adopted urban guerilla warfare tactics made famous by Brazilian Carlos Marighella, who influenced militant movements across the globe.¹⁰⁴

The bus incident aligned broadly with those tactics, however their decision to set fire to a bus and in Brasília may have had a broader significance. I have not located sources that indicate why MOLIPO militants chose Brasília or if the neighborhood served as a site for organized anti-dictatorship networks. The fact that a street in the Jardim Elisa Maria region of Brasília today commemorates Marighella (figure 40) suggests a plausible link.¹⁰⁵ The 1971 incident, nevertheless, likely provided further evidence to support the stigma of the neighborhood as a locus of dangerous crime.

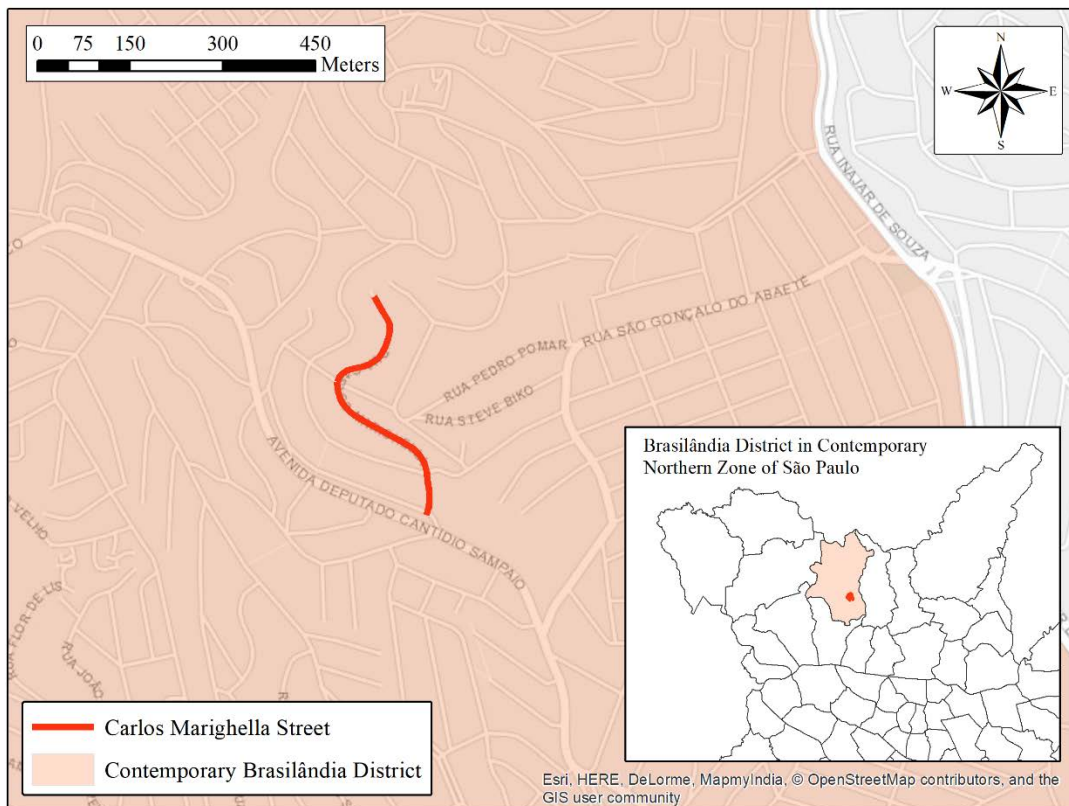


Figure 40: Close-up of Carlos Marighella Street in the east of the contemporary Brasília district and within the Jardim Elisa Maria neighborhood. Note two adjacent streets also named for other historical figures: anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko and the founder of the Communist Party of Brazil, Pedro Pomar.

Map by author.

¹⁰⁴ Mário Magalhães, *Marighella: O guerrilheiro que incendiou o mundo* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2012).

¹⁰⁵ The street naming occurred by decree of the São Paulo City Council in 1992. Other streets were named in honor of Steve Biko and Patrice Lumumba. Decree 31.230, February 13, 1992.

A novel series of sensationalized radio programs exaggerated popular perceptions and realities of violent crime in São Paulo in the 1960s-'70s. These programs drew on a much longer tradition of popular cultural production about crime in Brazil and beyond.¹⁰⁶ Broadcaster Gil Gomes was one of the most prominent purveyors of the genre on São Paulo's radio waves. He got his start in 1968, when a man attempted (unsuccessfully) to kidnap an administrative assistant in the office building where he worked as a sports reporter. Gomes grabbed his microphone and covered the unfolding drama in real time. The experience provoked "a new and dazzling emotion," Gomes remembers. "When everything finished I sensed that this could be my new path. A live police program. We would transform police news into facts that would be narrated."¹⁰⁷ In the years following he would make a name for himself as a "truth-bearing" journalist and amateur detective, narrating violent crime along with "various types of everyday drama in a large city...stories of abandonment, of homosexuals, of prostitutes, of transvestites, or cases whose themes were supernatural forces, like the one about a 'spirit that fought with a drunk in a *terreiro de macumba*.'"¹⁰⁸

Journalist José Wilson penned a scathing critique of Gomes's program and others like it in *Lua Nova*, a publication founded in 1984 by the São Paulo-based Center for Studies of Contemporary Culture as a forum for articles on contemporary issues.¹⁰⁹ The broadcasters described, Wilson wrote, "in a sensational and frightening form the most terrible crimes of daily life, making clear that these could happen to anyone." Though other cities broadcast comparable programs, São Paulo distinguished itself with "specialized narrators" who became celebrity millionaires on par with television and soccer stars. "Mornings on São Paulo radio," Wilson wrote, "are bathed with blood, terror and hate."¹¹⁰ Gomes's

¹⁰⁶ One notable print precursor in Brazil was *Vida Policial*, a weekly published in Rio de Janeiro between 1925-'27. See Sueann Caulfield, "Getting into Trouble: Dishonest Women, Modern Girls, and Women-Men in the Conceptual Language of *Vida Policial*," *Signs* 19:1 (Fall 1993), 146-76; Elena Camargo Shizuno, "A Revista *Vida Policial* (1925-1927): Mistérios e Dramas em Contos e Folhetins" (PhD diss., UF-Paraná, 2011).

¹⁰⁷ Gomes cited in Maria Tereza Paulinho da Costa, "A Justiça em ondas médias: o programa Gil Gomes" (master's thesis, UNICAMP, 1989), 28.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 30. Macumba here references Afro-Brazilian religious and spiritual practices.

¹⁰⁹ *Centro de Estudos de Cultura Contemporânea*. "Lua Nova," <http://www.scielo.br/revistas/ln/paboutj.htm> (accessed June 6, 2018).

¹¹⁰ José Wilson, "O crime pelo rádio," *Lua Nova: Revista de Cultura e Política* 1:3 (December 1984).

shows opened with the tagline, “the greatest reporter of Brazilian radio” before proceeding to the “fantastic cases” of the day.¹¹¹

Gomes’s show made an impact. He shared a daily audience of two million listeners with the other major broadcaster in the genre, Afanásio Jazadji.¹¹² Wilson describes how fabricated parts of Gomes’s stories were sometimes adopted by authorities as the official version of events.¹¹³ Beyond official or popular perceptions of crime, the programs served to stoke anxieties and, in fact, had the potential to increase crime rates. Gomes incentivized, Wilson asserted, “the population to participate in assassination operations against criminals who operate in the neighborhood or, at the very least, to remain silent in the face of the groups that formed to hunt bandits.”¹¹⁴ A 1979 article celebrating 52 years of radio in Brazil noted that “Gil Gomes, by drawing attention to violence in the greater region, ends up being a harbinger of spectacular crimes.”¹¹⁵

With stories about often petty crimes in marginalized areas in poor regions on the outskirts of the city, the programs aided in the criminalization of geographically marginal regions in São Paulo like Brasilândia. The broadcasters assumed roles as spokespeople for popular justice, and the listening audience often lived in the very areas where the “fantastic” cases took place. Poor residents formed long lines at radio stations to solicit judgements from broadcasters like Gomes, while others sent letters requesting “solutions for cases that the police were not able to solve.”¹¹⁶ One resident described Gomes as “my only hope for justice. The police, you know how they are, they don’t do anything.”¹¹⁷ Gomes would ultimately be recognized by police authorities as a popular arbiter of justice: “Gomes has already received various trophies from the police, for his prominence and his contribution in the fight against crime in

¹¹¹ A taste of Gomes’s style can be ascertained by watching his appearance as a detective-journalist in the semi-fictional, feature-length film *O Outro Lado do Crime* (*The Other Side of Crime*) from 1978.

¹¹² Wilson, “O crime pelo rádio,” 80.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹¹⁵ Wanda Jorge, “Srs. saudosistas, liguem o rádio,” *Jornal da República*, September 25, 1979, 13.

¹¹⁶ Maria Tereza Paulinho da Costa, “A Justiça em ondas médias,” 41.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

Brazil. One of them was a trophy with his name, given by the First Battalion of the Metropolitan Military Police.”¹¹⁸

Oral histories with Brasilândia residents indicate Gomes helped to popularize a nickname for the neighborhood as “*Macacolândia*,” or “Monkeyland.” I encountered the term first in the dissertation of Reinaldo José de Oliveira, who conducted interviews in Brasilândia and cited a resident who described broadcasters using the phrase.¹¹⁹ In my own research, interviewees LN and CF brought up the nickname without prompting in discussing the history of the neighborhood. They described hearing the term on Gomes’s broadcasts as children and interpreting it as a racist epithet.¹²⁰ Resident CP remembers first hearing a related association when he commuted to the neighborhood Braz, known as a hub of Italian culture and immigrants and their descendants in São Paulo, for work in the early 1970s. After CP told a new coworker that he lived in Brasilândia, a colleague responded: “Aren’t there are just a bunch of monkeys there?”¹²¹ Another resident suggests that Gomes exaggerated the significance of Brasilândia in the distribution of crime in the city of São Paulo. He explains that Gomes would attribute any crime that happened in the Northern Zone, the expansive region of the city of São Paulo above the Tietê River, to Brasilândia.¹²² To date, I have not located transcripts of Gomes’s broadcasts to track the precise usage of this term.

Decades before the ascription of “*Macacolândia*” to Brasilândia, prominent and best-selling São Paulo author Monteiro Lobato published a collection of children’s fables with one pithy entry, “Two Voyagers in *Macacolândia*.”¹²³ Released in 1922, *Fables (Fábulas)* was celebrated by an article in *O Estado de S. Paulo* for being “enormously distributed throughout the whole country” and adopted in São

¹¹⁸ “Ouçá, o Rádio está no ar,” de Azeni Passos, *Diário Popular*, June 20, 1977, 12. “Gomes já recebeu diversos troféus da polícia, pelo seu destaque e a sua contribuição ao combate ao crime no Brasil. Um deles foi um troféu que trouxe o seu nome, idealizado pelo Primeiro Batalhão da Polícia Militar Metropolitana – BPM/M.”

¹¹⁹ Reinaldo José de Oliveira, “Segregação Urbana e Racial de São Paulo: as periferias de Brasilândia, Cidade Tiradentes e Jardim Ângela,” (PhD diss., PUC-SP, 2006), 151.

¹²⁰ LN, interview; CF, interview.

¹²¹ CP, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, May 7, 2016.

¹²² Interview by author with [name withheld], Brasilândia, São Paulo, August 8, 2016.

¹²³ Lobato is discussed in Chapter Two concerning his relationship with Gabriel Marques and in Chapter Three regarding a popular petition to rename the “Cruz das Almas” neighborhood “Vila Monteiro Lobato.”

Paulo for classroom curricula.¹²⁴ The fable opens with two travelers lost in the *sertão*, an arid and impoverished region of Brazil's Northeast commonly represented in political and literary discourses as an uncivilized, mixed-race region standing in the way of national order and progress.¹²⁵ Lobato's two travelers – one a “diplomat,” the other an “irritated, bitter friend of truth” – stumble accidentally upon the kingdom named “Macacolândia.” They are seized by “fierce guards” who take them to meet the king, named Simão III.

Lobato represents “Macacolândia” as a farcical kingdom ruled by an unthinkable monkey king. With “that monkey curiosity,” Lobato writes, the sovereign Simão examines each of the travelers and then asks them to appraise his kingdom. Responding first, the diplomat offers lavish praise: “I have never seen a people more handsome, a court more brilliant, nor a king of more noble appearance than Your Majesty.” Responding second, the “friend of truth” dithers through his evaluation: “What do I think? It's good! I think it is!” Simão cuts him off, demanding candor. “It's nothing,” he tells the king, “Monkey here, monkey there, monkey on the throne, monkey on the flagstaff.” Furious, the king sentences “the miserable slanderer” to a week in a burning caldron. “Friends of truth,” Lobato concludes, must “cover their backs with armor.”

Lobato does not situate “The Two Voyagers in Macacolândia” in a specific historical era, however certain details within the story seem to reference large runaway slave communities (*quilombos*), perhaps especially the famous Palmares kingdom. Founded as a runaway slave settlement in the early seventeenth century, Palmares was the largest documented runaway collective in Brazilian history and lasted for nearly ninety years before being overtaken.¹²⁶ By placing “Macacolândia” in the *sertão*, located

¹²⁴ “Anno Escolar de 1929: Livros Escolares Aprovados e Adoptados Pela Directoria Gera da Instrucção Pública de São Paulo,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 31, 1928, 5.

¹²⁵ In his 1902 work *Os Sertões (The Backlands)*, Euclides da Cunha presented Brazil's Northeast in the context of a regional uprising and federal attempts to quell it as a backward, uncivilized place peopled by an inferior, mixed-race population. The English translation of Cunha's work is *Rebellion in the Backlands*, published in a recent edition (2010) by the University of Chicago Press. For a broader study of the geographic imaginary of Brazil's Northeast, see Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

¹²⁶ Stuart B. Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels: Reconsidering Brazilian Slavery* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

in the Northeast region where Palmares rose and fell, Lobato makes a subtle allusion to the quilombo. The fact that Simão is the third generation on the throne also parallels Palmares, where the name of the leading figure Zumbi repeated over generations. Lastly, the final place to fall in the war to destroy Palmares – and, by some accounts, the capital of the kingdom itself – was deemed the “Royal Court of Monkeys” (“*Cerca Real dos Macacos*”).¹²⁷ Lobato may have avoided the name Palmares in order to hew to the fable genre, which derives its moral force in part from anthropomorphized, ahistorical unreality. Palmares figured prominently in the surge of black associative life in São Paulo in the 1920s, including the 1926 founding of the Palmares Civic Center.¹²⁸ Seen in that historical context, the fable suggests apprehensions about black political leadership and the challenging of racialized hierarchies.

Lobato’s works remained prominent in the decades following, and even today the official children’s library in the city of São Paulo bears the author’s name.¹²⁹ A 1972 article from *O Estado de S. Paulo* noted Lobato’s firm place in “the pantheon of national letters,” especially through continuing high sales of children’s books.¹³⁰ Stories like “The Two Voyagers in Macacolândia” provided didactic material for young Brazilians about racialized social hierarchies as manifest both in geographic space and human bodies. Historian Carl Degler writes about the significance of Lobato’s racialized discourse in relation to Lobato’s 1934 book *Voyage to the Sky (Viagem ao Ceu)*. Degler describes the prominent character Aunt Nastacia within that book as

nothing less than that of the Negro mammy as she used to appear in the United States in the form of Aunt Jemima. The sketches...show her with a fat, shapeless body, thick lips, large eyes, large flat feet, and a kerchief on her head. As a personality she is loving, hard-working, superstitious, fearful, subservient, and ignorant.

¹²⁷ Décio Freitas, *República de Palmares: Pesquisa e comentários em documentos históricos do século XVII* (Maceió-Alagoas: EDUFAL, 2004), 20-21.

¹²⁸ Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, 68.

¹²⁹ The author’s racial discourse has generated legal cases and popular debates about race in Brazil over the last five years, especially around figures like Tia Nastácia, who, in *Caçadas de Pedrinho*, Lobato termed a “charcoal monkey.” See João Feres Júnior, Leonardo Fernandes Nascimento, and Zena Winona Eisenberg, “Monteiro Lobato e o Politicamente Correto,” *DADOS – Revista de Ciências Sociais* 56:1 (2013), 69-108, and Paula Arantes Botelho Briglia Habib, “Eis o mundo encantado que Monteiro Lobato criou: raça, eugenia e nação,” (master’s thesis, UNICAMP, 2003).

¹³⁰ “Monteiro Lobato, que Jeca Tatu inventou,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 9, 1972, 20.

Degler explains that such racial caricatures proved consequential for generations of children: “From such books children, principally middle- and upper-class whites, learned how to perceive blacks.”¹³¹ The story about “Macacolândia,” similarly, helped to naturalize racialized hierarchies in the guise of aphoristic universals for generations of young Brazilians.

Gomes grew up in São Paulo when Lobato’s children’s literature was a staple of public instruction. No records indicate, however, that the appropriation of “Macacolândia” derived directly from Lobato’s *Fables*. The prominent history of slavery and especially of runaway slave settlements in the region of Brasilândia, formerly the Freguesia do Ó parish, bore compelling similarities to Palmares. The composers of Rosas de Ouro had invoked the history of Palmares directly in their theme for carnival in 1973, drawing an implicit connection between Brasilândia as a “Little Africa” and the Palmares kingdom. Even if these parallels did not register directly with Gomes, in the ears of some of his listeners the use of the spatialized monkey metaphor would have drawn on generations of racist “common sense” in Brazil and throughout in the Americas.¹³²

The racist nickname depicted Brasilândia as the modern manifestation of a dangerous, farcical “Macacolândia” populated and ruled by black Brazilians. Updated to 1970s concerns about violent crime on reality radio programs, the term cast the neighborhood as a primitive black periphery, antithetical to order and progress. Gomes’s broadcasts reflected an anxiety about blackness on the geographical and social margins, including the social consequences of centuries of racialized slavery and enduring structural inequalities that correlated to race.

¹³¹ Carl Degler, *Neither Black no White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 122.

¹³² For example: Tracy Devine Guzmán writes that during the War of the Triple Alliance, Paraguayans “obsessively disdained the Brazilians as an empire of ‘black stinking monkeys’ and ‘black dirty pigs.’” Tracy Devine Guzmán, *Native and National in Brazil: Indigeneity after Independence* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2013), 74. I use “common sense” here in reference to Stuart Hall’s reading of Antonio Gramsci: Despite being “usually ‘disjointed and episodic’, fragmentary and contradictory,” common sense is the second and all-important “floor” on which ideology contends for efficacy, “the terrain of conceptions and categories on which the practical consciousness of the masses of the people is actually formed.” Stuart Hall, “Gramsci’s Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity,” in Kuan-Hsing Chen and David Morley, eds., *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1996), 431.

“Macacolândia” was not the only racist nickname applied to Brasilândia or its residents. CF recalled a nickname popularly associated with the company that ran the Brasilândia bus line through the early 1970s, TUSA (*Transportes Urbanos Sociedade Anônima Ltda*). The nickname based on the acronym was “*Transporte de Urubú Sem Asa*.” A literal translation for the nickname is, “Transportation for Vultures without Wings.” I did not know the meaning of “urubú” as vultures in my initial conversation with CF, who subsequently explained that it had a meaning similar to calling someone a monkey.¹³³ I later found Degler’s explanation of common usage of *urubú*: “black children are instructed quite directly on the low value of their color. At an early age little black boys are called *urubu* (a black vulture) or *anu* (a small black bird).”¹³⁴

The racialization of the TUSA bus line in Brasilândia mirrored other marginal regions in São Paulo. In talking about a song written by WB, “Navio Negreiro,” or “Slave Ship,” a friend suggested I listen to the rapper Projota. He grew up in the district of Lauzane Paulista, also in the Northern Zone of São Paulo, located two districts east of Brasilândia. In Projota’s song, “How Much” (“*Quanto*”), he connects the history of transatlantic slave commerce to contemporary public transit in São Paulo and urban Brazil broadly:

<i>A cidade flagela, chicoteia, assusta</i>	The city flogs, whips, frightens
<i>Infesta que testa e prega o valor que cê custa</i>	Infests that tests and nails the value you cost
...	...
<i>Se o preto é escuridão e o branco é paz</i>	If black is darkness and white is peace
<i>Por que foram os branco que levaram a guerra até meus ancestrais?</i>	Why was it the white that waged war even against my ancestors?
<i>Trazendo pra trabalhar pra eles, navio negreiro</i>	Brought them to work for them, slave ship
<i>Não é diferente dos buzo hoje no Brasil inteiro</i>	It’s not different from buses today across Brazil
<i>As 5 da manhã, tá preparado?</i>	At 5 in the morning, you ready?
<i>Melhor que esteja, porque pior que ser escravo é ser desempregado</i>	You better be, because worse than being a slave is to be unemployed
<i>E passar fome, morar na calçada</i> ¹³⁵	And going hungry, living on the sidewalk

The song parallels the tone and imagery of the stories of author Gabriel Marques, discussed at length in Chapter Two, and similarly levies its social critique by emphasizing continuities (in this case, between the

¹³³ CF, interview.

¹³⁴ Degler, *Neither Black no White*, 122.

¹³⁵ Projota, “Quanto,” <https://www.vagalume.com.br/projota/quanto.html> (accessed June 13, 2018).

slave ship and buses). The contemporary and 1970s racialization of public transportation in São Paulo has roots that date back at least two centuries. Historian Emília Viotti da Costa describes, for example, discriminatory laws relating to public transportation in São Paulo in the 1870s: “When the street lines of oxen were inaugurated, slaves were prohibited from entering in a car, except as valets or as lovers accompanying masters.”¹³⁶ Not new in time, the racialization of public transportation was also not unique to the space of São Paulo and Brazil broadly. Geographer Jason Henderson has recorded a nickname cited commonly in public discourse about the city of Atlanta’s transportation system, officially named the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority or MARTA. He writes that “Since it was established in the 1960s...[MARTA] was jokingly referred to as ‘Moving Africans Rapidly Through Atlanta.’”¹³⁷ Such racist nicknames likely served to reinforce inequalities that are both socio-spatial and racial.

With the broadcasting of a racist nickname on São Paulo’s airwaves, nonwhite and white *Brasilândia* residents alike confronted the stigma associated with the neighborhood throughout the city. In his dissertation on segregation in São Paulo, Oliveira recorded the following commentary from a resident about this experience:

When I was young, *Brasilândia* carried a heavy weight of prejudice. To live in *Brasilândia* was to be considered a thug (*bandido*)...*Brasilândia* was synonymous with everything that didn’t work out (“*tudo que não prestava*”) [...] everything that happened in *Brasilândia* would appear in the press: Crime in Vila *Brasilândia*, they killed so and so! And businesses didn’t hire people that lived in *Brasilândia*.

Locals developed strategies to counter the stigma of *Brasilândia* as a marked margin. For instance, residents would claim residence in another neighborhood or district when talking with a potential employer.¹³⁸ Oliveira’s interviewee explains: “people, when they went to look for work, would omit this [the name *Brasilândia*]...People would say they lived in Freguesia do Ó, that they lived wherever, but like

¹³⁶ Emília Viotti da Costa, *Da Senzala à Colônia*, 4th Edition (São Paulo: Editora UNESP), 281. “Quando se inauguraram as linhas de bonde de burro, era proibido ao escravo entrar num coletivo, salvo em se tratando de pajens ou amas acompanhando os patrões.”

¹³⁷ Jason Henderson, “Secessionist Automobility: Racism, Anti-Urbanism, and the Politics of Automobility in Atlanta, Georgia,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30:2 (2006), 298.

¹³⁸ CF, interview; LN, interview.

this, you didn't say you lived in the subdistrict of *Brasilândia*, no one ever said it."¹³⁹ This sentiment endures: a documentary film produced in a precarious region of the neighborhood included a group interview with adolescent residents. They all admitted to using names other than *Brasilândia* when talking with non-locals to describe where they lived and to avoid the stigma.¹⁴⁰ A taxi driver explained a similar sentiment to me with a creative twist: "When it's for a job, I say I'm from *Freguesia do Ó*. When it's the taxman, I'll say *Brasilândia*." These strategies reveal residents keenly aware of, and adept at navigating, the racist social stigma attached to *Brasilândia*.

Not everyone I met, including long-term residents deeply invested in the history of the region, had heard of the nickname of *Brasilândia* as "*Macacolândia*." Most, however, likely confronted the consequences of the broadcasting of that nickname. Gomes's program, along with other media that exaggerated violent crime in the region, served to make *Brasilândia* a racialized point of reference throughout São Paulo. That racist nickname would set *Brasilândia* apart from similar places throughout the city's geographical periphery, where poverty, a grave lack of public investment, and precarious living conditions were types of everyday, state violence that many locals knew well. The stigmatization of *Brasilândia* served to gloss over those more complicated manifestations of violence and mark the residents and the space of the neighborhood itself as a dangerous and nonwhite margin.

¹³⁹ Oliveira, "Segregação," 152. "Na verdade, era assim. Quando eu era pequena, a *Brasilândia* carregava uma coisa assim muito pesada de preconceito. Morar na *Brasilândia* era passar atestado de bandido. Tanto que as pessoas, quando iam procurar trabalho, omitiam isso. Na verdade, de fato, ali é subdistrito de *Brasilândia*. Mesmo que não fosse *Brasilândia*, a gente nunca ia dizer que era *Brasilândia*, porque era muito pesado...A gente dizia que morava na *Freguesia*, morava em qualquer lugar, mas assim, falar que morava no subdistrito da *Brasilândia* a gente não falava, nunca ninguém falou. Quando a gente brincava, porque a *Brasilândia* era sinônimo de tudo que não prestava, e tinha também a própria imprensa, como hoje, naquela época a imprensa não era tão né, mas assim, tudo o que acontecia na *Brasilândia* passava um folhetim: Crime na Vila *Brasilândia*, matou não sei o quê! E as empresas não contratavam gente que morava na *Brasilândia*, a gente falava que morava em *Itaberaba*, parque *Hollywood*. Outro dia eu fui resgatar isso no mapa, falei: nossa, gente. Que época que nós paramos de morar no Parque *Hollywood*, porque ninguém mais fala, mas existe, subdistrito de Vila *Brasilândia*."

¹⁴⁰ "Narradores do Jardim *Paraná*," Do Morro Produções, 2011, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByQyVXSyUWk>>.

In the turn from the 1960s to the 1970s, urban planners, samba composers and musicians, radio broadcasters, and ordinary residents alike negotiated the construction of *Brasilândia* as a “Little Africa.” That construction signaled a shift from the previous decades and earliest years of the *loteamento*, when migrants of diverse ethnoracial and geographic backgrounds constructed “Brazil-land” as a harmonious, multiethnic microcosm of the nation. From within the neighborhood in the period following, some locals sought to construct *Brasilândia* as a locus of both harmonious ethnoracial intermixture *and* black self-affirmation and -determination. From without, dominant characterizations of the neighborhood came nowhere close to accommodating such complexity. In an era when urbanists privileged an ethos of integration as the solution to a burgeoning urban crisis, journalists and others helped to define *Brasilândia* as a racialized other and marked margin.

Like all neighborhood identity constructions, *Brasilândia* as “Little Africa” was as much fiction as fact in the 1960s-’70s. That neighborhood identity concealed, for instance, the substantial ethnoracial diversity of the district’s population. We can glimpse that diverse demographical reality visually and spatially through a 1972 map (figure 41) produced by a state planning institution.

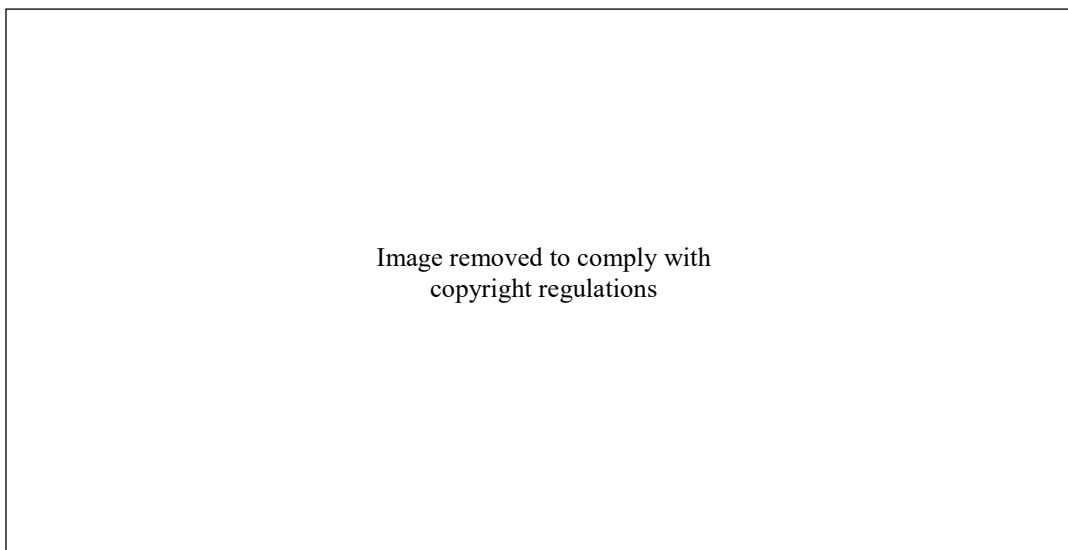


Figure 41: Praça J. Vagliengo, Associação de Judô Yamamoto, and Sociedade Rosas de Ouro.
From 1972, EMPLASA - Empresa Paulista de Planejamento Metropolitano S/A.

In the commercial core of Brasilândia, along Parapuã Street, labels for significant local spaces on the map revealed the ethnoracial diversity of Brasilândia. Parapuã Street bisected Rosas de Ouro Street, along which sat the headquarters of the samba school, a new and prominent voice for the expression of black identity in the neighborhood. A block southwest was the Yamamoto Judo Association, the Japanese language and Judo school discussed in Chapter Three that was founded clandestinely in the early 1950s.¹⁴¹ On the same block was J. Vagliengo Plaza, named in 1966 by a City Council decree for the Italian-born head engineer of the railway between Santos-Jundiaí.¹⁴² Concentrated within the span of two blocks in the commercial heart of the neighborhood, these place names reflect the African-Japanese-Italian demographic and spatial reality of Brasilândia and similar spaces throughout the city of São Paulo.

Brasilândia was one of the destinations that Geraldo Filme anticipated in his defiant resolution, “I’ll Samba Someplace Else.” The silencing and asphaltting of center-city spaces associated with Afro-descendants set the stage for the production of Brasilândia as a “Little Africa.” While some urbanists and journalists defined the neighborhood as a pathological periphery, residents appropriated that spatial designation and resignified the meanings of the margin. Their construction of Brasilândia as “Little Africa” echoed bell hooks’s definition of the margin as a “site of radical possibility, a space of resistance.” In *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, hooks wrote:

To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body. As black Americans living in a small Kentucky town, the railroad tracks were a daily reminder of our marginality. *Across those tracks were paved streets*, stores we could not enter, restaurants we could not eat in, and people we could not look directly in the face. Across those tracks was a world we could work in as maids, as janitors, as prostitutes, as long as it was in a service capacity. We could enter that world but we could not live there. We had always to return to the margin, to cross the tracks to shacks and abandoned houses on the edge of town...Living as we did – on the edge – we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside in and from the inside out. We focused our attention on the center as well as on the margin. We understood both. This mode of seeing reminded us of the existence of a whole universe, a main body made up of both margin and center. Our survival depended on an ongoing public awareness of the separation between margin and center and an ongoing private acknowledgement that we were a necessary, vital part of that whole.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ *Associação de Judô Yamamoto*.

¹⁴² Indicação 1810, Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, November 7, 1966. The degree curiously and incorrectly identified Vagliengo as the “author of the loteamento” of Brasilândia.

¹⁴³ bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000 [1984]), xvi. My emphasis.

Despite the thousands of miles and differences that separate Kentucky and São Paulo, hooks's reflection mirrors the language and content many residents of Brasilândia use when describing the neighborhood's history and the socio-spatial dynamics of São Paulo broadly. hooks's characterization of segregation and racial division as determined by, and defined as, pavement would have been immediately recognizable to many Brasilândia residents along with notable figures like Geraldo Filme and Gabriel Marques. These parallels point to the racialized significance of material features of the built environment and their work in structuring and reinforcing racialized social inequalities throughout the Americas.

While Brasilândia in the 1960s-'70s became a marked margin, spatial actors across town in São Paulo's center began developing new projects that would redefine former neighborhood centers of black settlement into ethnically immigrant neighborhoods. Official spatial projects would make Liberdade "Japanese" and Bexiga "Italian" through tourism-oriented economic development and architectural preservation. Working in concert with municipal and state institutions, locals raised material signifiers that concretized model-minority Japanese and high-prestige Italian identities in neighborhoods placed in a privileged position between São Paulo's early-twentieth-century commercial center and its successor, Paulista Avenue. The following chapter examines those parallel, intertwined projects of racialization/ethnicization at and in the core of the city of São Paulo.

Chapter Five
*Constructions of Ethnoracial Space:
 Making “Japanese” Liberdade and “Italian” Bexiga*

On his first tour of South America in October of 1997, United States President Bill Clinton spoke to business leaders in the city of São Paulo.¹ Clinton complimented the commercial elite at the gathering, describing São Paulo as the “economic heart of the continent” and the “city of the future.” He also flexed his knowledge of local culture, which he described through São Paulo’s neighborhoods:

The neighborhoods of São Paulo are a window on the world. The colors of Italy enliven the Bixiga. The flavors of Japan infuse Liberdade. The spirit of the Middle East fills Bom Retiro. The rhythms of Africa pervade every quarter. People from everywhere call this place home.²

Clinton’s lines cast São Paulo’s racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods as timeless and essential elements of the city’s seemingly-distinctive brand of ethnoracial mixture and supposedly-harmonious interethnic relations. The Brazilian attendees may have nodded with agreement and satisfaction at Clinton’s depiction of the multicultural metropolis, yet some of them likely also recalled the more complicated pasts involved in making this local landscape of mixture. One significant space from that past sat remarkably close by. The gathering took place at the Memorial to Latin America in the Barra Funda neighborhood, just a few blocks from the former Banana Square. City officials buried that sacred space for Afro-descendants beneath an asphalted avenue and concrete bridge in 1960. For those who remembered Banana Square or similar places throughout São Paulo, that silenced site attested to the planning and dislocations involved in producing the city’s racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods.

For readers familiar with large, multiethnic cities in the Americas and beyond, Clinton’s depiction of racialized and ethnicized neighborhoods likely sounds familiar if not mundane. Chinatown in San Francisco and Little Italy in New York are two well-known examples of similar spaces in North America. These racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods are, in part, the products of historical and

¹ In his autobiographical *My Life*, he described the trip (his first to South America) thusly: “I traveled to Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina to express the importance of Latin America to America’s future and to keep pushing the idea of a free trade area covering all the Americas.” Bill Clinton, *My Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 766.

² National Security Council, Speechwriting Office, and Antony Blinken, “Brazil - Speech to Business Leaders 10/15/97,” *Clinton Digital Library*, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/9732> (accessed February 15, 2018).

contemporary settlement patterns among immigrants and their descendants. They are not, however, timeless, natural, or the organic result of those settlement patterns.³ Centered on two of São Paulo's most iconic neighborhoods, "Japanese" Liberdade and "Italian" Bexiga, this chapter details the planning that made these places and shows how their production established social difference with material and spatial markers.⁴

The reproduction of Liberdade and Bexiga occurred between the mid-1960s and early 1980s. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, from the late 1920s through the mid-1960s urban redevelopment centered on the construction of avenues began to remake these two historic centers of Afro-descendent settlement. Expropriation and demolitions dislocated many long-term Afro-descendent residents, paving the way for the redefinition of Liberdade and Bexiga as *former* cores in what Geraldo Filme described as São Paulo's "black zone." The previous chapter charted the remaking of that zone on São Paulo's geographical periphery in the "Little Africa" neighborhood of Brasilândia. This chapter returns the frame to the city center, where from the mid-1960s through the early 1980s business leaders, city officials, architects, urban planners, and ordinary residents remade these spaces into "Japanese" Liberdade and "Italian" Bexiga.

Ambitious urban development schemes and unchecked, unwieldy urbanization created an urban crisis in the metropolitan region of São Paulo from the late 1960s through the mid-1970s.⁵ Official city

³ Seminal work on ethnic enclaves includes: Kenneth Wilson and Alejandro Portes, "Immigrant Enclaves: An Analysis of the Labor Market Experiences of Cubans in Miami," *American Journal of Sociology* 86 (September 1980), 295-319; Alejandro Portes and Robert D. Manning, "The Immigrant Enclave: Theory and Empirical Examples," in Jan Lin and Christopher Mele, eds. *The Urban Sociology Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Min Zhou, "Revisiting Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Convergencies, Controversies, and Conceptual Advancements," *International Migration Review* 38 (Fall 2004), 1040-1074; Peter Marcuse, "Enclaves Yes, Ghettos No: Segregation and the State," in David Varady, ed., *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), 15-30.

⁴ A pioneering study to make a similar argument in another context was Kay J. Anderson, "The Idea of Chinatown: The Power of Place and Institutional Practice in the Making of a Racial Category," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77:4 (1987), 580-598. A more recent intervention is Linling Gao-Miles, "Beyond the Ethnic Enclave: Interethnicity and Trans-spatiality in an Australian Suburb," *City & Society* 29:1 (2017), 82-103.

⁴ Caroline Knowles, *Race and Social Analysis* (London: SAGE, 2003).

⁵ Milton Santos, *Metrópole Corporativa Fragmentada* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1978); Teresa Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2000); Céline Sachs, *São Paulo: políticas públicas e habitação popular* (São Paulo, SP: EDUSP, 1990).

planners in São Paulo identified the districts of Liberdade and Bela Vista as key sites of decay, all the while pursuing disruptive transportation projects that exacerbated local conditions. Self-appointed neighborhood representatives, who I term informal city planners, partnered with official city planners on projects of neighborhood revitalization based on the logic that historic centers of Japanese and Italian settlement deserved better. Tourism-oriented economic development drove the campaign to make Liberdade “Japanese,” while the project to make Bexiga “Italian” occurred through state-sponsored historic preservation. As in decades past, paved roadways figured centrally in the remaking of these neighborhood identities. Asphalt served both destructive and productive ends as an instrument for the silencing of certain ethnoracial identities and the promotion of others. The making of these racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods had more than a symbolic significance. These projects ushered in extensive material changes, including an infrastructure of urban services rare in most São Paulo neighborhoods. In doing so, the officially-sanctioned projects to make Liberdade “Japanese” and Bexiga “Italian” both reflected and reinforced the social prestige of these ethnoracial groups and contributed to the redefinition of neighborhoods previously associated with Afro-descendants.⁶

In this chapter I examine these two seemingly different projects in the same frame, showing that they in fact comprised part of larger project that transcended any singular neighborhood space or ethnoracial group. As will become clear, the planners of the Liberdade project served as direct inspiration for the planners of the same in Bexiga. As a result, making “Japanese” Liberdade and “Italian” Bexiga is a shared history that cannot be understood properly without crossing and transcending neighborhood boundaries. Viewing these projects together also lifts up the intersections that made these racialization/ethnicization campaigns more similar than different. For instance, this chapter reveals a central irony about both initiatives: the making of “Japanese” Liberdade and “Italian” Bexiga occurred

⁶ On the multiple views of Japanese-Brazilians – from “model minority” to “yellow peril” – see Jeffrey Lesser, *A Discontented Diaspora: Japanese-Brazilians and the Meanings of Ethnic Militancy, 1960-1980* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2007), xx and xxix. On changing constructions of whiteness in Brazil, see Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999). For a compelling revisionist work on the discourse of “Italian” São Paulo, see Carlos José Ferreira dos Santos, *Nem Tudo era Italiano: São Paulo e Pobreza, 1890-1915* (São Paulo, SP: Annablume, 1998).

despite ethnoracially-diverse resident populations and in a period when many residents of Japanese or Italian descent called other neighborhoods home. Liberdade became “Japanese” at a time when migrants from Brazil’s Northeast along with immigrants from China, Korea, and Vietnam made up sizable minorities of the resident population. Planners recognized the non-Japanese residents of East and Southeast Asian descent who lived in Liberdade with its new name: the “Oriental Neighborhood” (*Bairro Oriental*). Similarly, migrants from Brazil’s Northeast comprised a substantial portion – if not in fact a majority – of Bexiga’s population in the 1960s-’70s. These demographic realities show that “ethnic enclaves” are not homogenous, impervious places produced organically through the settlement of immigrants and their descendants.

As noted in previous chapters, there is a crucial distinction between the categories of district and neighborhood in São Paulo. The narratives in this chapter take place *within* the spaces officially classified as the districts of Bela Vista and Liberdade. Those districts have existed formally – with officially-defined boundaries – since the first decade of the twentieth century. The *neighborhoods* of Liberdade and Bexiga are distinct from, but located within, these formal districts. As with all São Paulo neighborhoods, these places have no formal or official definition. They are fluid constructs remade through everyday spatial practices and exceptional, large-scale projects alike. The making of the “Bairro Oriental” and “Italian” Bexiga are examples of just such large-scale projects. Both projects aimed to define these informal, unofficial neighborhoods through the production of ethnoracial space. Readers will note that throughout the chapter I use quotations when describing the racialized/ethnicized identities of these neighborhoods (as in, “Italian” Bexiga and “Japanese” Liberdade or “Bairro Oriental”). I do so in order to emphasize that they are sociospatial constructs and to avoid reifying them as natural, essential, or timeless.

Demolitions and the Business of Ethnoracial Space

At first, the president of the Liberdade Shopkeeper’s Association, Tsuyoshi Mizumoto, rejected the proposition. *Torii* were hallowed gateways placed at entrances to temples in Japan, and the streets of Liberdade were not sacred. At least, not yet. Other Liberdade business owners helped convince Mizumoto

to adapt the sacred symbol for the extensive project to make Liberdade São Paulo’s “Bairro Oriental.”⁷ The project sought to capitalize on popular fascination with exotic, “Oriental” space through the remaking of Liberdade into a marked neighborhood fit for tourism and commerce. The neon red torii towered over the neighborhood along Galvão Bueno Street at the inauguration of the “Bairro Oriental” in 1974 (figure 42). The erection of the gateway consecrated the neighborhood as the “Bairro Oriental,” however the reproduction of Liberdade began years earlier with a more destructive practice: expropriations and demolitions relating to avenues projects.



Figure 42: *Torii* in Liberdade, June 2017. Photo by author.

The following two sections chart the planning and production of the “Bairro Oriental.” Extending from the late 1960s through mid-1970s, the campaign involved the near complete reproduction of the local built environment with recognizably “Japanese” forms. The effort drew an array of participants into collaboration, from Japanese-Brazilian business elite and neighborhood locals to authorities from the

⁷ Interview by author with [name withheld], Liberdade, São Paulo, June 14, 2017.

municipal and state governments of São Paulo. The project provided the district of Liberdade with an improved urban infrastructure, including public illumination, sidewalks, parks, and bridges, all valuable urban amenities scarce in most São Paulo neighborhoods in the era. These changes did not transform Liberdade into a middle- or upper-class neighborhood in the years following.⁸ Nonetheless, the project's completion represented official support for, and the concretization of, Japaneseness in the geographical center of São Paulo. While valorizing Japaneseness, the inauguration of the "Bairro Oriental" further dislocated Afro-descendants from Liberdade and helped to bury internationally-significant local histories relating to the abolition of slavery, black political mobilization, and black self-determination.

Racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods typically change over time in ways that belie clear beginnings or endings, however one of São Paulo's original "Japanese" neighborhoods came to a decisive conclusion in 1942. As discussed in Chapter Three, in June of 1942 state officials dealt a destructive blow to the Conde de Sarzedas neighborhood, located north of the contemporary Liberdade district along Conde de Sarzedas Street.⁹ The declaration of war against Japan and Germany prompted a nativist Brazilianization campaign that demanded the at least superficial assimilation of Japanese-Brazilians.¹⁰ Assimilation meant the suppression of minority cultural practices like language as well as the desegregation of Japanese-Brazilians within the space of the city of São Paulo. State authorities forced the dislocation of residents from Conde de Sarzedas in 1942, sparking the dispersion of families into other

⁸ Into the following decades municipal officials and planners would author other plans for the "reurbanization" of Liberdade. SP-Urbanismo Archive.

⁹ Tomoo Handa, *O imigrante japonês: história de sua vida no brasil* (São Paulo: T.A. Queiroz, Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros, 1987), 176. "A rua Conde de Sarzedas era como se fosse um núcleo de colonização dentro da cidade de São Paulo"; Sachio Negawa, "The Conde District - Brazil's First Japantown," April 27, 2007 <<http://www.discovernikkei.org/es/journal/2007/4/27/brazil-nihonjinmachi/> (accessed February 26, 2017). Chapter Three includes early depictions of the "Japanese" neighborhood in the popular press, as in: "Masasuk Sato é um japonês que reside ali na rua Conde de Sarzedas, em pleno bairro nipponico." "O japonês morreu brincando," *O Correio de S. Paulo*, June 13, 1936, 1. Guilherme de Almeida also depicted Conde de Sarzedas in one of his articles about São Paulo's ethnic enclaves, later collected as *Cosmópolis: (São Paulo/29) oito reportagens* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1962).

¹⁰ Lesser, *Negotiating*, esp. 130-133. Also see: Emilia Viotti da Costa, *The Brazilian Empire: Myths and Histories* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2000), 204; Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930-1945* (Durham NC: Duke UP, 2001).

districts throughout the city.¹¹ Few sources remain about the precise timeline or geography of this migration. Some of the residents dislocated from Conde de Sarzedas did not remain gone for long. Sachio Negawa explains that many families returned to the area in the second half of the 1940s and throughout the 1950s. Some of these returnees, he writes, “avoided the Conde District and resettled in different parts of the Liberdade District along Galvão Bueno Street and São Joaquim Street.”¹² The reconstitution of a “Japanese” neighborhood, beginning in the 1950s and extending through the mid-1970s, aligned with this new geography of settlement south of Conde de Sarzedas Street.

Economic development drove postwar reconciliation between the Japanese and Brazilian governments as well as neighborhood-level changes in Liberdade. In 1953, a prewar immigrant and successful grain dealer named Yoshikazu Tanaka founded a 1,500-seat movie theater, Cine Niterói, on Galvão Bueno Street.¹³ Anthropologist Alexandre Kishimoto describes Cine Niterói as “the first cinema dedicated exclusively to showing Japanese films in Brazil.”¹⁴ The earliest years of the theatre coincided with a golden era of Japanese cinema, and Cine Niterói showed films by famed Japanese directors like Akira Kurosawa. Kishimoto and Negawa describe the Cine Niterói as the initial spark, and long-time hub, for Japanese-Brazilian commercial activity in postwar Liberdade.¹⁵ That activity included an especially vibrant film scene, spread over five different cinemas by the end of the 1950s, and the establishment of neighborhood commercial organizations.¹⁶ Cine Niterói’s founder Tanaka became the first president of the Collective Association of the Shopkeepers of Liberdade in 1965. In 1974 that organization was

¹¹ Alexandre Kishimoto, “A experiência do cinema japonês no bairro da Liberdade” (master’s thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2009), 38; Mieko Nishida, *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2018), 27. Lesser describes other episodes of forced displacement in Belém do Pará, Recife, and Álvares Machado. See Lesser, *Negotiating*, 135.

¹² Sachio Negawa, “Chapter 6: The Formation and Development of Bairro Oriental: The Birth of Cine Niterói and Bunkyo,” *Discover Nikkei*, September 6, 2007, <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2007/9/6/brazil-nihonjinmachi/> (accessed February 28, 2018).

¹³ For more on cinema in São Paulo, see: Inimá Simões, *Salas de Cinema em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura de São Paulo, 1990); Lena Suk, “Becoming Modern at the Movies: Gender, Class, and Urban Space in Twentieth-Century Brazil,” (PhD diss., Emory University, 2014). About cinema and Japanese films, also see Lesser, *A Discontented Diaspora*.

¹⁴ Kishimoto, “A experiência,” 20. “a primeira sala de cinema voltada exclusivamente à exibição de filmes japoneses no Brasil.”

¹⁵ “o bairro começava a aglutinar o comércio nikkei nas cercanias do Cine Niterói.”

¹⁶ Lesser, *A Discontented Diaspora*, 29-30.

reorganized as the Cultural and Assistance Association of Liberdade with Mizumoto at the helm.¹⁷ The leaders of those organizations would lead the “Bairro Oriental” effort in years following.

Official and academic histories present the founding of Cine Niterói in 1953 as the beginning of the reconstitution of a “Japanese” neighborhood in Liberdade. Negawa, for instance, asserts that “What caused the area to become the new Japantown that replaced the Conde District was definitely the opening of the Cine Niterói.”¹⁸ Kishimoto classifies the 1953 inauguration as the “retaking (*retomada*) of the Japanese neighborhood.”¹⁹ “Retaking” encompassed both the reconstitution of Liberdade’s identity *and* the expansion of local commercial activities: “Cine Niterói transformed the residential area into a shopping district.”²⁰ A 1982 article similarly explained that the “Bairro Oriental” began at Cine Niterói.²¹ This narrative about Liberdade’s transformation has cemented in official discourse, as evidence by a 2017 decree from São Paulo’s City Council about Liberdade: “Galvão Bueno Street came to be the center of the Japanese Neighborhood, growing around Cine Niterói, having received a part of the businesses expelled from Conde de Sarzedas Street. It was there that the Japanese could find a little corner of Japan and bite their nostalgia for the homeland.”²²

Liberdade’s Cine Niterói was not the only center for Japanese-Brazilian cultural and commercial life in São Paulo. Similar spaces elsewhere in São Paulo included, for instance, Vila Brasilândia, the destination for some residents dislocated from Liberdade in the course of urban redevelopment projects in decades prior. In the same year of Cine Niterói’s founding, a Japanese-Brazilian Association based in the district of Freguesia do Ó founded a movie theatre in Vila Brasilândia.²³ Kishimoto writes that the

¹⁷ “O bairro da Liberdade,” ACAL, <http://www.feiraliberdade.com.br/o-bairro-da-liberdade.html> (accessed April 2, 2018).

¹⁸ Negawa, “Chapter 6.” He is quoting from the “Association for the History of Art and Entertainment in the Japanese Brazilian Colony (1986).”

¹⁹ Kishimoto, “A experiência,” 20. “Cine Niterói: a retomada do bairro japonês.”

²⁰ Negawa, “Chapter 6.”

²¹ “Na Liberdade, um mundo de sons e cores: Antigo reduto de japoneses, o bairro hoje é um pedaço do Oriente, onde convivem também chineses, coreanos e vietnamitas,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, September 4, 1982.

²² Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, Projeto da Lei 0357/2017. “A rua Galvão Bueno passa a ser o Centro do Bairro Japonês, crescendo ao redor do Cine Niterói, tendo recebido parte dos comerciantes expulsos da rua Conde de Sarzedas. Era ali que os japoneses podiam encontrar um cantinho do Japão e matar saudades da terra natal.”

²³ “No pós-guerra, o circuito de projeções ambulantes continuou funcionando, e uma prova de sua vitalidade foi a inauguração, em 1953, no mesmo ano do luxuoso Cine Niterói, do Cine Brasilândia (Simões: 1982, 154 e 158): um

Association existed since 1933 (nearly 15 years before the founding of Vila Brasilândia), and records of neighborhood developments (*loteamentos*) indicate that Japanese-Brazilians owned land in the contemporary district of Brasilândia since before World War Two.²⁴ Figure 43 shows the wooden cinema in Vila Brasilândia, which multiple current residents of the district mentioned in interviews.²⁵



Figure 43: Cine Brasilândia, Undated.
Reproduced with permission from the archive of Célio Pires.

galpão de madeira que abrigou o primeiro cinema da Vila Nova Brasilândia, bairro da zona norte de São Paulo, construído pelos japoneses e nikkeis residentes na região (Fig. 16). Desde 1933, oito anos antes do primeiro loteamento do bairro, eles mantinham uma associação própria, a Associação Nipo-Brasileira.” Kishimoto, “A experiência,” 38.

²⁴ Loteamento processos for the district of Brasilândia, Coordenadoria de Gestão de Documentos Públicos (CGDP), Prefeitura de São Paulo.

²⁵ Vila Brasilândia’s wooden cinema was substantially more modest than Cine Niterói in Liberdade. In February of 1953, engineers from the City conducted an examination of 48 cinemas throughout São Paulo and closed Brasilândia’s for its lack of safety precautions. “Examinados 48 cinemas,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 17, 1953. “Acrescentou o prefeito que apenas uma sala de projeções foi interditada – o Cinema Brasilândia – que não apresenta condições de segurança aos espectadores.” An article from the month following indicated that the examination had expanded to include all of the city’s 160 cinemas, of which six (including Brasilândia) had been deemed unsafe.

While Japanese-Brazilians founded cinemas in both Liberdade and Vila Brasilândia in 1953, in decades following the former neighborhood would become known as the “Bairro Oriental” and the latter a “Little Africa.” This divergence points to the significance of other factors – beyond the founding of the Cine Niterói – in the construction of Liberdade as the “Bairro Oriental.”

City planning projects relating to transportation infrastructure set the stage for the making of Liberdade as the “Bairro Oriental.” City planner and two-time mayor Francisco Prestes Maia ran successfully for a third term in 1960 with the promise to complete his *Avenues Plan* once and for all. In his 1960s term Prestes Maia expanded the scope of his scheme to include the construction of the first stretch of São Paulo’s metro system.²⁶ Cleverly, he pitched the avenues and metro projects as a package deal, with the first line of the metro running parallel to the May 23 Avenue along Liberdade’s western edge.²⁷ Demolitions and excavation for the metro line began in the early 1960s and continued into the mid-1970s.²⁸ State officials pursued a third ambitious transportation scheme in this area in the same period. Starting in 1968 residents in Liberdade and Bela Vista had to contend with the construction of the Radial Leste-Oeste Avenue. Spearheaded by the military dictatorship, this avenue extended east-west through the Liberdade and Bela Vista districts and connected to the elevated highway known popularly as the *Minhocão* (“Big Worm”).²⁹

The 1960s-’70s transportation projects took a substantial toll on the landscape and commercial activity in the district. Representatives from the City’s Department of Urbanism, Public Works and City Services admitted that the projects had caused violent, potentially irreversible changes: “The scars left in the urban landscape by the opening of the grand avenues and the implantation of the Metro may never be

²⁶ Urban planners and municipal officials had discussed building a subway system since the 1920s, however only in the 1960s did they begin to pursue the project seriously. The decades-long efforts to realize Prestes Maia’s *Avenues Plan* in the city may have siphoned financial resources and political capital from efforts to construct a metro system. “Após 6 anos de obras, Metrô de São Paulo, o primeiro do país, é inaugurado em 1974,” Acervo: *O Globo*, June 5, 2014, <http://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/em-destaque/apos-6-anos-de-obras-metro-de-sao-paulo-primeiro-do-pais-inaugurado-em-1974-12730229> (accessed April 3, 2018).

²⁷ Celso Leite Ribeiro, “Quinze quilômetros de metrô na administração do P. Maia,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 24, 1962, 20. Remarkably, Maia argued in the mainstream press that the metro “will cost almost nothing, or perhaps, will end up a bit more than the City Government will have to expend to construct the May 23 Avenue.”

²⁸ “Após 6 anos,” Acervo: *O Globo*.

²⁹ Richard J. Williams, *Brazil: Modern Architectures in History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), 191-192.

restored without more planning.”³⁰ A Liberdade restaurant owner told a journalist from *O Estado de S. Paulo* in 1974 that “we have suffered much in these last three years from the metro construction.”³¹ The same article indicated that demolitions and construction had caused up to a 60% decrease in sales among neighborhood businesses.³² A later publication from 1987 explained that the Radial Leste-Oeste Avenue “mutilated a considerable stretch of the urban fabric, demolishing a great number of buildings...it created an unpassable division in the total extent of the neighborhood...”³³ Demolitions for the Radial Leste-Oeste Avenue included the iconic cornerstone of the postwar “Bairro Oriental”: the Cine Niterói. The cinema would relocate, however, a few blocks away and continue to project films into the 1980s.³⁴

Rather than razing the nascent “Bairro Oriental,” the 1960s demolitions in Liberdade in fact helped to lay the foundation for a much more expansive racialization/ethnicization project. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, City officials began to address the negative effects of transportation schemes in Liberdade. In 1973 they promised to “recompose the landscape” along the eastern side of May 23 Avenue.³⁵ Their proposal went further, however, to envision a wholesale remaking of the neighborhood through what they termed its “reurbanization”. The official municipal document approving the plan explained that “there will be constructed commercial buildings, institutional buildings, buildings for

³⁰ “Parecer Conjunto Nº 72/73 das Comissões de Urbanismo, Obras e Serviços Municipais e de Finanças e Orçamento sobre o Projeto de Lei Nº 188/73,” Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, 1973. “As cicatrizes deixadas na paisagem urbana pelas obras de abertura de grandes avenidas e de implantação do Metrô, quasi nunca seriam recompostas espontaneamente.”

³¹ Roberto Camargo, “A Liberdade inicia sua transformação,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 2, 1974. “Nós temos sofrido muito nesses tres anos de obras do metrô.”

³² Ibid. “Depois de sofrerem muito com as obras do metro, que chegaram a provocar quedas de até 60 por cento no movimento de vendas, os comerciantes do bairro da Liberdade contemplam com um misto de resignação e esperança as excavações iniciadas sexta-feira no largo da Pólvora: elas representam o ponto de partida de um plano da Prefeitura que pretende fazer a Liberdade voltar aos seus melhores dias, caracterizando-a ‘um bairro tipicamente oriental.’”

³³ “Liberdade,” Inventário Geral do Patrimônio Ambiental, Cultural e Urbano de São Paulo, 1987, Arquivo Histórico Municipal, 47. “mutilou uma faixa considerável do tecido urbano, demolindo um grande número de edificações...originou um corte intransponível em toda a extensão do bairro, seccionado de forma estanque duas grandes áreas e quebrando sua continuidade e integração.”

³⁴ Kishimoto, “A experiência,” 24.

³⁵ “Parecer Conjunto Nº 72/73 das Comissões de Urbanismo, Obras e Serviços Municipais e de Finanças e Orçamento sobre o Projeto de Lei Nº 188/73,” Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, 1973. “recompor a paisagem”; “melhores condições de vida urbana.”

offices, public buildings, hotels, parking for vehicles, community resources and public areas.”³⁶ São Paulo mayor Miguel Colasuonno (1973-’75) endorsed the reurbanization project in 1973, explaining that the “impact triggered by the Metro on the development of adjacent areas will be considerable.”³⁷ The official documentation from the 1973 plan made no explicit mention of Japanese-Brazilians or of the notion of Liberdade as “Japanese” or “Oriental” space. However, the plan’s open-ended, expansive scope provided substantial latitude for a broad interpretation of “reurbanization” as the transformation of the identity of the neighborhood.

Making the “Bairro Oriental”

The idea for the “Bairro Oriental” appears to have originated with *O Estado de S. Paulo* journalist Randolfo Marques Lobato. A 1993 article from *Diário Nippak*, one of Liberdade’s Japanese-language newspapers, chronicled the genesis of the project with the headline, “The History of Liberdade: A ‘Gaijin’ [foreigner or non-Japanese-Brazilian] Created the Bairro Oriental.” In 1969 Lobato attended a meeting of the recently-appointed Municipal Secretary of Tourism, Amadeo Papa. “In 30 seconds,” the piece explains, Lobato conceived of the “Bairro Oriental” project and suggested it to the new secretary as a way to “‘mark’ his time in the administration.”³⁸ Lobato argued that this public investment in the neighborhood would create both a tourist attraction and improve safety conditions. Paulo Maluf, São Paulo’s then-mayor and a second-generation Lebanese, supposedly “shook” (*vibrou*) with excitement at the idea.³⁹ Maluf and Papa named Lobato head of the project to make Liberdade “Japanese.” Lobato was not Japanese-Brazilian and had admittedly few close associations who were. Through a connection with the Japanese consulate, he made contact with Liberdade business leader Tsuyoshi Mizumoto. Mizumoto,

³⁶ Parecer N^o 151/73 da Comissão de Justiça e Redação sobre of Projeto de Lei, November 27, 1973. “serão implantados edificios comerciais, edificios institucionais, edificios para escritórios, edificios públicos, hotéis, estacionamentos para veículos, equipamentos comunitários e áreas públicas.”

³⁷ Projeto da Lei 188/1973, Processo 172.937/73. “O impacto provocado pelo Metrô no desenvolvimento das áreas adjacentes será considerável, e particularmente importante junto às estações.”

³⁸ “sugeriu algumas idéias ao novo secretário para ‘marcar’ sua passagem na administração.”

³⁹ On Maluf’s biography and Syrian-Lebanese ethnicity in Brazil, see John Tokif Karam, *Another Arabesque: Syrian-Lebanese Ethnicity in Neoliberal Brazil* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2007).

who is commemorated in contemporary São Paulo with a statue in the Praça da Liberdade, assembled more than 100 of Liberdade's business owners for a meeting about the proposal.⁴⁰

The Commission for the Implantation of the Bairro Oriental, composed of Lobato and business owners in Liberdade, steered the project. They coordinated the reproduction of the local built environment through the construction of tangible and recognizably "Japanese" forms. In addition to the torii mentioned above, the changes carried out in the project included: red light posts with three white lanterns designed to resemble cherry blossoms (*suzuran-tô*); Japanese pine trees; a "typical" Japanese garden; an original, Japanese-themed sidewalk design; bridges crossing the Radial Leste-Oeste Avenue; and a remodeling of the exteriors of businesses "painted in strong colors" and with Japanese-language signs.⁴¹ Initiated in 1969, the project remained unfinished until the mid-1970s. Like all places described as neighborhoods in São Paulo, the neighborhood of Liberdade (located within the district of Liberdade) did not have a set legal definition. The project, however, established ethnically-identifiable markers in the built environment that defined the limits of the racialized/ethnicized Liberdade neighborhood.

Roadways were central to the reproduction of Liberdade as the "Bairro Oriental." Their importance surfaced in official discourse about the project. City Councilmen Mario Osassa, for instance, explained that the project intended "to make it so that the *streets* [of Liberdade] present those typically Oriental characteristics and therefore cause attraction."⁴² Key material changes involved in the "Bairro Oriental" project centered around roadways: the torii, sidewalks, the decorative light posts, and bridges crossing the Radial Leste-Oeste Avenue. The sidewalks are the singular element of the project that I found discussed in official documentation. They were the subject of a decree about the "so-called 'Oriental zone'" by Mayor Paulo Maluf in November of 1969. The decree outlined the locations for the installation of new or refurbished sidewalks, with the stipulation that they were "to be executed in the

⁴⁰ "História da Liberdade: Um 'Gaijin' Criou o Bairro Oriental," *Diário Nippak*, August 20, 1993.

⁴¹ "Liberdade: o coração oriental da cidade," *Diário de S. Paulo*, November 6, 1974.

⁴² "fazer com que ruas apresetem aquelas características tipicamente orientais e assim provoquem atração."

Portuguese type of mosaic, with a design characteristically oriental.”⁴³ The design ultimately installed along the refurbished sidewalks displayed *mitsudomoe*, a symbol associated with Japanese samurai.

The authors of the project named the neighborhood “Bairro Oriental” instead of “Bairro Japonês.” In doing so, the name transcended the more narrow reference to Japanese populations and their descendants to encompass other residents of East and Southeast Asian descent.⁴⁴ Lobato recalled, in fact, that the initial idea was “not to create a Chinatown, per se, but a neighborhood for the Japanese, Korean and Chinese communities.”⁴⁵ The residents not of Japanese descent made up sizable minorities of Liberdade’s population.⁴⁶ While Japanese comprised the primary migratory group from East Asia from 1908 through World War II, postwar migratory streams included Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese immigrants. Liberdade’s ethnoracial diversity compelled journalists from São Paulo’s mainstream press. A 1982 piece entitled “Liberdade: A World of Sounds and Colors,” sensationalized the subject with rhetorical questions like: “where else in the world do Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, and even Vietnamese coexist peacefully? [...] [Liberdade] is a piece of the Orient.”⁴⁷ The same article asserted that many of the immigrants in Liberdade did not have legal immigration status in the country, and that some of the newcomers developed creative strategies to navigate their undocumented status. An anonymous resident described one “common practice” among locals: “Friends loan each other identification documents and, since for Brazilians all Orientals look alike, there is not the least danger in being discovered.”⁴⁸ Despite

⁴³ Decreto 8.476, “Dispõe sobre a construção e reconstrução de passeios no bairro da Liberdade, na chamada zona oriental,” November 4, 1969. My italics.

⁴⁴ There is some deviation from this official term in both primary source material from the 1970s and contemporary scholarship. For example, a 1974 article in *Diário de S. Paulo* explained: “No próximo sábado, o prefeito Miguel Colasuonno e várias autoridades da cidade irão à Liberdade para inaugurar o ‘pequeno Japão’ nome pelo qual já é chamado aquele bairro, no momento em que encerram-se os trabalhos de decoração.” “Liberdade: o coração oriental da cidade,” *Diário de S. Paulo*, November 6, 1974. For an example in the secondary literature, see Negawa, who consistently describes the neighborhood as a “Japan Town.” These deviations reflect the tension between distinct constructions of the neighborhood’s identity.

⁴⁵ “História da Liberdade: Um ‘Gaijin’ Criou o Bairro Oriental,” *Diário Nippak*, August 20, 1993. “A ideia não era, propriamente, criar uma Chinatown, mas um bairro das comunidades japonesa, coreana e chinesa.”

⁴⁶ Lais de Barros Monteiro Guimarães, *Liberdade* (São Paulo: Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, 1978), 105-110.

⁴⁷ “em que lugar do mundo japoneses, chineses, coreanos e até vietnamitas convivem pacificamente?...é um pedaço do Oriente.”

⁴⁸ “Na Liberdade, um mundo de sons e cores: Antigo reduto de japoneses, o bairro hoje é um pedaço do Oriente, onde convivem também chineses, coreanos e vietnamitas,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, September 4, 1982. “Os amigos

adopting the more inclusive, umbrella category “Oriental,” the architects of the project chose material symbols – like the torii, cherry blossom lanterns, and samurai-inspired sidewalks – exclusively from Japan.

The labor of constructing the “Bairro Oriental” in material space involved an array of trained city officials along with ordinary local residents. A *Diário Nippak* article explained that “It was decided that the City would take care of the infrastructure works and the community would take care of painting the facades and placing signs on shops in the oriental style, with translation to the Portuguese.”⁴⁹ A 1974 article described extensive popular participation in the project, with residents involved in “the process of eliminating all Western traits and the concomitant valorization of everything Oriental.”⁵⁰ A Japanese-Brazilian architect named Tomio Kimura participated in the effort. Kimura drafted a plan to remake the Liberdade Plaza and metro station with a Japanese theme: “there will be a pagoda, stones, a mirror of water, a fountain, plants, and vegetation of Japanese origin.”⁵¹ Despite support from both the mayor and engineers from the metro, the full-scale reproduction of the plaza and station did not occur. These examples indicate, nonetheless, the extent of official and popular participation in the production of the racialized/ethnicized neighborhood.

The “Bairro Oriental” project drew inspiration from earlier constructions of racialized/ethnicized space in São Paulo. Postwar reconciliation efforts between the Brazilian and Japanese governments included the production of a “Japanese” space in Ibirapuera Park (see Chapter Three). The wooden structure, fabricated in Japan and modeled after a sixteenth-century imperial palace in Kyoto, was named the “Japanese Pavilion” and inaugurated as part of the celebration of the city of São Paulo’s four-hundred-year anniversary. In 1969 Japanese-Brazilian city councilman Mario Osassa praised São Paulo’s head

emprestam os documentos de identificação e, como para brasileiros todos os orientais são parecidos, não há perigo algum de serem descobertas.”

⁴⁹ “História da Liberdade: Um ‘Gaijin’ Criou o Bairro Oriental,” *Diário Nippak*, August 20, 1993.

⁵⁰ “Liberdade: o coração oriental da cidade,” *Diário de S. Paulo*, November 6, 1974.

⁵¹ “Uma destas cenas não combina com o nosso bairro oriental: Proposta – redecorar a estação Liberdade. À moda oriental,” *Jornal da Tarde*, August 23, 1976, Liberdade Neighborhood File, Arquivo Histórico Municipal. “haveria um pagode, pedras, um espelho de água, uma fonte, plantas e vegetação de origem japonesa.”

tourism officer Papa, who he described as “preoccupied with characterizing the São Paulo neighborhoods considered typical, like Liberdade, and Bom Retiro...to accentuate the characteristic customs they present.”⁵² At the same time, Osassa urged Papa to remember that the municipal government already possessed a “historical space (*patrimônio*) donated exactly by the Japanese collectivity.”⁵³ Osassa noted that the Ibirapuera pavilion was “almost completely abandoned” and requested that officials restore “that relic, that corner of Japan within the city of São Paulo” for “all tourists and paulistanos to see.”⁵⁴ The Secretary of Tourism did not heed Osassa’s request, but instead went all in on the “Bairro Oriental” initiative for Liberdade.

What might be considered mundane features of the urban built environment like street illumination, sidewalks, and public parks were amenities unknown to the vast majority of São Paulo residents. The City of São Paulo’s investment in the “Bairro Oriental” project transformed Liberdade’s streetscape in ways that positively impacted the built environment and, potentially, the daily lives of local residents.⁵⁵ The extensive public illumination system received particular attention in the press. Photographs of a handful of the 450 newly-installed street lamps exhibit the drastic change they created (figures 44 and 45). Journalists identified public illumination as a key feature of the “Bairro Oriental.” A 1974 article about the neighborhood’s inauguration in *Diário de S. Paulo* explained, “When the three keys that light the new lanterns on Galvão Bueno Street and adjacent streets were activated, last night...Liberdade came to have a new name: ‘Bairro Oriental.’”⁵⁶

⁵² “está preocupado em caracterizar os bairros da Capital, considerados típicos, como por exemplo o da Liberdade, o do Bom Retiro, e outros mais...acentuar os hábitos característicos que apresentam.” Câmara Municipal, July 2, 1969.

⁵³ “exatamente pela coletividade japonesa”

⁵⁴ “êsse pavilhão está quase totalmente abandonado e seria de desejar que a Prefeitura tomasse conhecimento da situação...e fizesse um plano de obras para que aquela relíquia, aquêlê recanto do Japão dentro da cidade de São Paulo possa apresentar, realmente, aquêlê aspecto que todos os turistas e paulistanos desejam ver.”

⁵⁵ “Liberdade, um bairro oriental,” *Diário de S. Paulo*, November 4, 1974.

⁵⁶ “Ao ascender das luzes surgiu o Bairro Oriental,” *Diário de S. Paulo*, November 10, 1974. “Quando as três chaves que acendem as novas luminárias da rua Galvão Bueno e suas transversais foram acionadas, ontem, à noite, pelo prefeito Miguel Colasuonno, governador Laudo Natel e o governador eleito, Paulo Egydio, a Liberdade passou a ter um novo nome: ‘Bairro Oriental.’”



Figures 45 and 45: Undated photographs of lamp posts in Liberdade.
Reproduced with permission from the Fundação Energia e Saneamento.

In *Veja*, Brazil's most widely-circulated national magazine, the lighting and electricity company Peterco ran an advertisement with stunning images of the neighborhood at night and the tagline, "the first Brazilian company that makes light in Japanese."⁵⁷ Public illumination and electricity represented urban modernity, a sentiment that *Veja* journalists emphasized in the article about the inauguration of the "Bairro Oriental." A photograph of the torii included a text overlay with the words: "modern life" (*"vida moderna"*). The significance attached to public illumination in Liberdade also owed to the scarcity of this resource in most neighborhoods throughout the city of São Paulo at the time. The 1968 Basic Urbanistic Plan (*Plano Urbanístico Básico*) indicated that 76% of all streets in São Paulo lacked public illumination.⁵⁸ A business owner involved in the project indicated that, not surprisingly, the substantial public investment in the "Bairro Oriental" generated complaints from residents of other neighborhoods.⁵⁹

Not all residents of Liberdade or Japanese-Brazilians approved of the project and the production of commercialized ethnoracial space. Sociologist Hiroshi Saito expressed ambivalence about the campaign in a 1973 article in *Veja*. He lamented the lack of "research about the neighborhood population, their customs and their needs," and he predicted that the result of the project "will be the capitalization of

⁵⁷ "a primeira luminaria brasileira que ilumina em japonês." *Veja*, November 20, 1974, 120.

⁵⁸ Cited in Caldeira, *City of Walls*, 228.

⁵⁹ Interview by author with [name withheld], Liberdade, São Paulo, June 14, 2017.

an entire culture for the sake of commercial profit.”⁶⁰ An article from the following year in *O Estado de S. Paulo* recorded discontent among both “young second-generation Japanese-Brazilians” and “the Japanese of the old guard.”⁶¹ The author concluded that “the transformation of Liberdade into a typically-Oriental neighborhood is received with an almost total indifference.”⁶² That indifference may not have surprised or troubled the authors of the “Bairro Oriental” initiative. Explaining the motivation behind the project, the president of the Shopkeeper’s Association, Mizumoto, said that “We are working so that Liberdade truly distinguishes itself as a typically oriental neighborhood.” Local business owners did not simply hope to increase sales, he continued, “but also to motivate the population of São Paulo to know the culture and customs we represent, in a truly touristic sense.”⁶³ Mizumoto’s comments indicate the organizing committee’s intentions to boost tourist traffic and commercial development by predominately, though not exclusively, targeting a public that was not of Japanese descent.

While the “Bairro Oriental” project displeased or proved disinteresting to some locals, its execution helped to cement the neighborhood as a significant, representational space of Japanese-Brazilian identity, culture, and history. The effort helped to pave the way for other state-sponsored initiatives. In 1978, for example, the City of São Paulo assisted financially in the construction of the Historical Museum of Japanese Immigration in Brazil along São Joaquim Street in Liberdade.⁶⁴ Japan’s Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko and the president of Brazil’s military government, Ernesto Geisel, attended the inauguration of the museum, which coincided with the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the first ship of Japanese immigrants to Brazil. Though based in the neighborhood, the museum would have a

⁶⁰ “O bairro oriental,” *Veja*, January 1973, 40-41. “pesquisas sobre a população do bairro, seus costumes e suas necessidades”; “será a capitalização de toda uma cultura em favor dos lucros comerciais.”

⁶¹ “os jovens nisseis”; “os japoneses da velha guarda.”

⁶² “A Liberdade inicia a sua transformação,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 2, 1974. “a transformação da Liberdade num bairro tipicamente oriental é recebida com uma indiferença quase que total.”

⁶³ *Ibid.* “Estamos trabalhando para que a Liberdade se destaque realmente como um bairro tipicamente oriental e já possuímos todas as condições para isso.” He continued, noting that the concern of local business owners was not only to increase sales, “mas também motivar a população de São Paulo para a cultura e os costumes que representamos, num sentido realmente turístico.”

⁶⁴ Projeto de lei N.º 236-78, December 18, 1978. “Fica o Executivo autorizado a conceder à Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa auxílio de Cr\$ 200.000,00 (duzentos mil cruzeiros), a título de colaboração do Município, para dar continuidade a implantação do Museu Histórico da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil.”

broad geographic reach, housing archival material relating to Japanese-Brazilian immigrants throughout the nation.⁶⁵

The “Bairro Oriental” initiative prompted some locals in Liberdade to make comparisons with similar racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods beyond Brazil. The head of Cine Niterói, Tanaka, described the differences of Liberdade from San Francisco’s Chinatown. While “known internationally,” he explained, “it is very different from our ‘Bairro Oriental.’ For starters, it is typically Chinese, not Japanese. Second, it is very old and not cared for like the one we are making. When completely finished...I can guarantee it will be one of the greatest tourist and commercial attractions in the world.”⁶⁶ A 2009 neighborhood guide that commemorated 40 years of the “Bairro Oriental” struck a similar tone. The editor of the guide, Luis Handa, explained: “Liberdade is the face of São Paulo...it was constructed in the mold of Chinatown and Little Tokyo, but it is very Brazilian, it has sushimen from Bahia and Brazilian churches frequented by Orientals.”⁶⁷

The inauguration of the “Bairro Oriental” marked a significant step in rewriting Liberdade’s significance as a core neighborhood in São Paulo’s “black zone.” That rewriting owed both to the explicit campaign of racialization/ethnicization and the demolitions caused by transportation planning schemes. The expansive demolitions involved in the construction of the Radial Leste-Oeste Avenue may have, like avenues projects in the preceding decades, dislocated Afro-descendent populations from the district of Liberdade. Dislocation relating to that project took place in the adjacent district of Bela Vista (as the following section shows), however few sources remain to shed light on that history in Liberdade. One of

⁶⁵ “Príncipes japoneses chegam amanhã,” *Diário Popular*, June 16, 1978.

⁶⁶ “Finalmente, na Liberdade, nasce o ‘Bairro Oriental,’” *Folha de S. Paulo*, November 7, 1974. “Para provar que a nova decoração da Liberdade é única no mundo, Tanaka não gosta que a comparem com a existente no famoso bairro oriental de San Francisco, nos Estados Unidos...’O “Chinatown”, norte-americano, embora muito conhecido internacionalmente, é muito diferente do nosso ‘Bairro Oriental’. Para começar, é tipicamente chinês, e não japonês. Depois, é bem antigo e não tão bem cuidado como o que estamos fazendo. Quando estiver inteiramente concluído, no ano que vem, posso garantir que será uma das grandes atrações turísticas e comerciais de todo o mundo.”

⁶⁷ Luis Handa, ed. *Nossa Liberdade*, 2nd Edition (2009), 13. “O bairro se transformou ainda mais, recebem chineses e coreanos e seus descendentes, que formaram uma mistura bastante peculiar. ‘A Liberdade é a cara de São Paulo’, comenta Hanada, ‘foi construída nos moldes de Chinatown e Little Tokyo, mas é muito brasileira, tem sushiman que veio da Bahia e igreja brasileira frequentada por orientais’, completa. Para ele, assim como para outros moradores, que acompanharam e que estudam o desenrolar dessa história, a Liberdade é um pedaço de tudo de bom que há no Brasil.”

the sole and admittedly suggestive source comes from the samba school Lavapés, recognized as São Paulo's oldest surviving samba school and founded in the district of Liberdade in the early twentieth century.⁶⁸ In the carnival of 1969, Lavapés marched with the theme, "Old São Paulo and Modern São Paulo." The samba contrasted the "modest and beautiful" São Paulo of old with the modern city. That modernity is represented by what sound in the sung version like almost plaintive lines: "The new avenues are there, the new viaducts are there, O, O, O, here comes the metro."⁶⁹ The Lavapés musicians who also resided in Liberdade had witnessed the coming of modern São Paulo up-close in the 1960s, and the transportation schemes that heralded it shortly preceded the "Bairro Oriental" project. Following nearly four decades of destructive demolitions, that project fully reconstructed the built environment of the place that had once been the headquarters of Brazilian abolitionism and a hub of twentieth-century black political mobilization.⁷⁰

Neither demolitions nor the "Bairro Oriental" project could fully erase the historical and contemporary significance that Afro-descendants attached to the neighborhood. The samba school founded by Geraldo Filme, Paulistano da Glória, continued to gather and play along Glória Street with "Japanese" lanterns hanging along the street in front of its windows. The eighteenth-century Chapel of the Afflicted, protected from demolition by the state's historic preservation board, remained standing in the Alley of the Afflicted into the twenty-first century (figure 46).⁷¹ The uniformity of the "Oriental" built environment masked the demographic fact and lived realities of ethnoracial diversity and cross-cultural exchange. A 1982 article from *Folha de S. Paulo* explained, for instance, that the Chapel of the Afflicted "receives daily visits from Orientals who pay for prayers and light candles."⁷² Later, in the Carnival of

⁶⁸ Lavapés today is celebrated as the "marco zero" de samba paulistano with a plaque at the five-point intersection where the school sits in the Liberdade district.

⁶⁹ "São Paulo Antigo e São Paulo Moderno," Lavapés enredo, 1969. "As novas avenidas estão aí, os novos viaductos estão aí, ô, ô, vem aí o metrô."

⁷⁰ Chapter Two describes these histories in detail.

⁷¹ Processo 20125/76, Conselho de Defesa do Patrimônio Histórico, Arqueológico, Artístico e Turístico do Estado de São Paulo.

⁷² "Na Liberdade, um mundo de sons e cores: Antigo reduto de japoneses, o bairro hoje é um pedaço do Oriente, onde convivem também chineses, coreanos e vietnamitas," *Folha de S. Paulo*, September 4, 1982. "recebe diariamente visita de orientais que vão pagar promessas, acender velas."

1998, Bela Vista's Vai-Vai samba school would celebrate the 90th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Brazil with the theme "Banzai Vai-Vai!"⁷³



Figure 46: Chapel of the Afflicted, Liberdade. Image by author, 2017.

The demographic and cultural mixture in Liberdade was not unique to São Paulo. For instance, in 1942 U.S. officials forcibly displaced Japanese-Americans from the place popularly known as "Little Tokyo" in Los Angeles. Shortly thereafter during World War Two, African-Americans settled in the neighborhood, which subsequently became known as "Bronzeville." Japanese-Americans returned to the area following the war, and in the 1940s and 1950s the area became what historian Hillary Jenks termed "Little Bronze Tokyo." A 1946 article in *Ebony* magazine described the neighborhood of mixture: "Bronzeville and Little Tokyo have been betrothed. Out of a marriage of convenience has come a genuine

⁷³ See Shuhei Hosokawa, "Dancing in the Tomb of Samba: Japanese-Brazilian presence/absence in the São Paulo carnival," in Hae-kyung Um, ed. *Diasporas and Interculturalism in Asian Performing Arts* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2005), 61-74.

attachment and affection between the two peoples.”⁷⁴ Beginning in the 1960s, however, Japanese American and state officials collaborated to remake “Little Tokyo.” Over three decades, Jenks explains, “the enclave was physically remade and packaged for Japanese tourists and Pacific Rim consumption.”⁷⁵ The trajectory of the Los Angeles neighborhood bears striking similarities to Liberdade. Those parallels indicate that cross-cultural mixture, ethnoracial diversity, and planned projects of racialization/ethnicization have characterized the production and lived realities of “ethnic enclaves” across space and time.

Post-apocalyptic Urban and Ethnoracial Renewal

The short film opens with a close zoom from an aerial view of seven children gamboling around a sandy pit. One of the kids face-plants and the camera pans out, revealing a rugged landscape of skyscrapers adjacent to excavations and two-story homes that seem centuries old. A solemn voice intercedes: “Caetaninho went out one afternoon like always to play soccer and was hit by a car. That is progress.”⁷⁶ A critique of progress in the form of modern roadways suffuses this 10-minute, 1971 film entitled “Bexiga: Year Zero.” The short depicts Bexiga as a site of post-apocalyptic urban deterioration, where demolitions, real estate speculation, and new highways obliterated what the narrator characterizes as the “most *paulistano* of neighborhoods,” built by and for Italian immigrants. The film climaxes with a deep-space shot of land cleared for new avenues stretching through the center of the neighborhood. The somber voice-over returns: “Bexiga, a heap of doors and windows stacked between the caverns (*bolsas*) of grand avenues and viaducts. Bexiga did not change, it simply disappeared.”⁷⁷ The film’s mostly

⁷⁴ “The Race War That Flopped,” *Ebony*, July 1946, 3-9, cited in Hillary Jenks, “‘Home is Little Tokyo’: Race, Community, and Memory in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2008), 107.

⁷⁵ Jenks, “Home,” 23. Also see: James M. Smith, “Identities and Urban Social Spaces in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles: Japanese Americans in Two Ethno-Spiritual Communities,” *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 90, no. 4 (2008), 389-408; K. A. Yokota, “From Little Tokyo to Bronzeville and Back: Ethnic Communities in Transition” (master’s thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996).

⁷⁶ “Caetaninho saiu uma tarde como sempre para jogar pelada na rua e foi atropelado. É o progresso.”

⁷⁷ “Bexiga, um punhado de portas e janelões empilhados entre as bolsas de grandes avenidas e viadutos. O Bexiga não se transformou, simplesmente desapareceu.”

funereal piano music then gives way to an up-tempo, vaguely-Italian⁷⁸ jingle. Seven older, presumably Italian women – the supposed last vestiges of “Italian” Bexiga – walk across the avenue that replaced their homes and turned the clock on *their* neighborhood back to “year zero” (figure 47).



Figure 47: Still from “Bexiga: Ano Zero,” 1971. Film produced with support from: Governo do Estado de São Paulo; Secretaria de cultura, esportes e turismo; Conselho estadual de cultura; and Comissão estadual de cinema. Filmoteca da Emplasa, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee5xRCsbsSE> (accessed June 13, 2018). Still image reproduced with permission from EMPLASA.

To many viewers (myself included) “Bexiga: Year Zero” reads as an exaggerated representation of rupture. However, the following sections reveal that an array of individuals – from state urban planners and preservation officials to local journalists and self-appointed neighborhood representatives – diagnosed changes of apocalyptic proportions transforming Bexiga. Beginning in the late 1960s and continuing through the mid-1980s, those individuals negotiated the material and social consequences of urban re/development through the lens of Italianness. Some pointed to Bexiga’s supposed “Italian” identity as a legitimation for much-needed urban improvements. At the same time, they created a project to realize those improvements through an “Italian” built environment. Their project centered especially on architectural preservation and aged structures in the neighborhood, and it conflated urban renewal with a

⁷⁸ The song may be a version of the music that accompanies the Tarantella folk dance common in southern Italy.

celebration of Italianness through racialized/ethnicized space. Their effort helped to construct an incomplete, yet enduring, “Italian” identity for Bexiga that stood in opposition to both historical and contemporary alternatives.

As in the adjacent district of Liberdade to the east, roadways projects took a substantial toll on Bela Vista in the 1960s-'70s. The City expropriated and demolished scores of structures for the completion of the May 23 Avenue along with the Radial Leste-Oeste Avenue and the Minhocão. While earlier avenues projects involved extensive expropriations and demolitions, they stretched through low-lying valleys whose inhospitable environmental conditions had, to an extent, limited human settlement. The Radial Leste-Oeste Avenue, by contrast, extended through an area of dense settlement and involved comparatively more expropriations and demolitions. Rodrigues Porto estimates the construction of the Radial Leste-Oeste alone involved the demolition of “more than one thousand houses, shacks and livelihoods, in an extension of one kilometer long by 50 meters wide.”⁷⁹

City planners maintained an optimistic tone in public comments about the long-term prospects for the affected districts. In 1971 the Director of the Department of Urbanism, Werther Krauss, downplayed the impact of these roadways project as a transitory, unexceptional feature of urban development in São Paulo and other cities. He explained: “The urban phenomenon transformed the area into a zone of urban deterioration, which is a global problem of large metropolises...But when the area arrives at the lowest rate of deterioration, the recovery (*arrancada*) begins and the neighborhood escapes the decomposition.”⁸⁰ Krauss concluded that the natural cycle of the market would help to rectify conditions in Bela Vista, along with three plazas that the Department of Urbanism planned to build locally: “More or

⁷⁹ Antônio Rodrigues Porto, *História Urbanística da Cidade de São Paulo (1554 a 1988)* (São Paulo: Carthago e Forte, 1992), 172, quoted in Larissa Aparecida Camargo do Nascimento, “Entre Samba e Rezas: vivências, negociações e ressignificações da cultura afro-brasileira no Bexiga” (master’s thesis, Universidade Federal de São Carlos, 2014), 87. “mais de mil casas, barracos e vivências, numa extensão de um quilômetro por 50 metros de largura.”

⁸⁰ “O fenômeno urbano transformou a área em zona de deterioração urbana, que é um problema mundial das grandes metrópoles...Mas quando a área chega ao índice mais baixo de deterioração, acontece a arrancada e o bairro sai da decomposição.”

less 10 years from now, these areas will be recuperated.”⁸¹ Like other generations of planners before and after him, Krauss’s prediction would prove wildly optimistic.⁸²

The construction of the Radial Leste-Oeste Avenue/Minhocão dislocated local residents from Bexiga. Geographer Francisco Scarlato Capuano explained that

countless expropriations disfigured the neighborhood’s landscape and expelled a significant part of the long-term residents. Between the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, a large part of the neighborhood became a ‘job site.’ The view of the neighborhood on the ground-level was of mutilated houses and streets.⁸³

The dislocation of residents occurred through the expropriation of parcels but also as a result of broader market forces. A 1971 article in *O Estado de S. Paulo* addressed the thorny relationship between expropriation, public works projects, and real estate speculation. Expropriations raised the value of adjacent, non-expropriated lands, putting pressure on those property owners to sell, deal with a higher tax burden, and/or charge higher rents. That relationship had preoccupied urbanists in São Paulo since the early twentieth century,⁸⁴ and Bexiga proved to be another example where market forces shaped how redevelopment plans were put into practice. The 1971 article cited one property owner on the subject: “I am going to sell this lot soon because it is easier in the beginning, the valorization of this plot is going to give me a big headache, and also I don’t have the means to demolish the house and build a better one or an apartment building.”⁸⁵ The valorization of land in Bela Vista paralleled the verticalization of some

⁸¹ “Bexiga: o que resta é sòmente saudade,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 24, 1971, Arquivo Histórico Municipal. “Daqui há 10 anos mais ou menos, estas áreas estarão recuperadas.”

⁸² An article from the year following heralded “O velho Bexiga” as “a part of the city reborn” (“uma parte da cidade que renasce”). The piece described the neighborhood as “almost a favela,” which had been “threatened to death by viaducts, avenues and real estate speculation. “ameaçado de morte pelos viadutos, avenidas e especulação imobiliária.” Paulo Sergio Markun, “O velho Bexiga: uma parte da cidade que renasce,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 19, 1972.

⁸³ Francisco Capuano Scarlato, “Bixiga: Uma Ideologia Geográfica,” *Boletim Paulista de Geografia* 67 (1989), 29-30. “Inúmeras desapropriações desfiguram sua paisagem e expulsaram parte significativa de seus antigos moradores. Entre final dos anos sessenta e início dos anos setenta, grande parte do bairro transformou-se em um ‘canteiro de obras.’ Pelas ruas do bairro a visão que se tinha era de casas e ruas mutiladas.”

⁸⁴ Joel Outtes, “Disciplining Society through the City: The Birth of *Urbanismo* (City Planning) in Brazil, 1916-1941” (PhD diss., Oxford University, 2000).

⁸⁵ “Bexiga: o que resta é sòmente saudade,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 24, 1971, Arquivo Histórico Municipal. The article also noted that of the 200 property owners whose lots were expropriated by the city, just 10% had received payment from the City. “Eu vou vender logo isso aqui porque no início é mais fácil, vai me dar muita dor de cabeça a valorização dêsse terreno, e também não tenho como derrubar a casa e construir uma melhor ou um prédio de apartamento.”

parts of the district, as developers constructed high rise apartment buildings for middle- and upper-class consumers.⁸⁶ Such development would remain decidedly uneven through the following decades.

Some popular and academic histories of Bexiga in the 1970s gave the impression that Italians were the only ones dislocated from the neighborhood. A 1973 article cited then 70-year-old resident Luiza Tulsi: “Today everything is ending. There are few Italians still here. Many died from grief, with the expropriations. Others got together and went to live in these new neighborhoods.”⁸⁷ Her words implied a constitutive, essential relationship between Italian residents and neighborhood structures. The same piece featured an image of a tight cobblestone street with the caption: “The Bexiga of old constructions, of narrow streets...Everything is coming to an end to give way to the new reality of viaducts and avenues.”⁸⁸ Scarlato identified the descendants of Italian immigrants as the primary category of “long-term residents” displaced by the roadways projects. He wrote: “The population of Italo-Paulistas that was always dominant, began to diminish each day more.”⁸⁹ These individuals described demolitions and displacement as an existential threat to the Italian identity of Bexiga.

These popular and academic discourses made no mention of the effects of roadways projects and real estate speculation on the contemporary Afro-descendants who lived in the district of Bela Vista. Ferando Penteado, former president of the Vai-Vai samba school and a native of Saracura, explained in a 2012 interview: “Today the neighborhood has few black families. The construction for the Minhocão created the first great devastation of Bexiga. It passes through the very center of Bexiga. Because of it a

⁸⁶ Reinaldo José de Oliveira, “Segregação Urbana e Racial na Cidade de São Paulo: as periferias de Brasilândia, Cidade Tiradentes e Jardim Ângela” (PhD diss., PUC-SP, 2000), 119.

⁸⁷ Silvio Sayão, “O Bairro que se Transforma,” *Diário de S. Paulo*, June 3, 1973, Bela Vista Neighborhood History File, Arquivo Histórico Municipal. “Hoje está tudo acabando. Os italianos que ainda estão aqui são poucos. Muitos morreram de desgosto, com as desapropriações. Outros se juntaram e foram morar nesses bairros novos.”

⁸⁸ Ibid. “Bexiga das construções antigas, das ruas estreitas...Tudo isso está acabando para dar lugar à nova realidade dos viadutos e das avenidas.”

⁸⁹ Scarlato, “Bixiga,” 30. “A população de italo-paulistas que sempre fora dominante, passou a diminuir cada vez mais.” Elsewhere, Scarlato used the same language of the 1971 film cited at the introduction of this section: “From the period that we called ‘year zero,’ in which all of those transformations happened, the landscape of way of life in Bexiga began to change. In parallel to the demolitions and the implantation of expressways, the verticalization of the neighborhood began.” “A partir do período por nós chamado do ‘ano zero’ no qual aconteceram todas aquelas transformações, o Bexiga passou a mudar em sua paisagem e forma de viver. Paralelamente às demolições e implantação das vias expressas começou o processo de verticalização do bairro.” Scarlato, “Bixiga,” 32.

bunch of families had to leave.”⁹⁰ Reinaldo Oliveira interviewed a former resident of Bela Vista, Milton, who was dislocated by real estate speculation and roadways projects in Bela Vista. Oliveira writes: “Many cortiços and old homes in Bexiga were demolished for the construction of high-rise apartments for the middle and upper class...Milton and the poor and black population that lived in Bexiga in this era had no other choice, involuntary segregation or center-periphery.”⁹¹ “Center-periphery” means living in marginal (i.e. “peripheral”) conditions despite residing in the geographic center of the city.

As in decades prior, expropriation and demolitions from the roadways projects spurred another wave of dislocation to both new and old peripheries on the frontiers of São Paulo. Nascimento and Oliveira identify the district of Casa Verde and housing complex Cidade Tiradentes as primary destinations for dislocated black populations from Bela Vista in this era.⁹² That dislocation reshaped the racialized/ethnicized geography of the city’s neighborhoods, whitening center-city districts like Bela Vista and producing new centers of black settlement on the geographical periphery. Nascimento cites one resident from Casa Verde, Maria Aparecida de Godoy, who explained: “I arrived in Casa Verde, where I saw this large black population, and I said: ‘What is this?’ I was used to never seeing black people anywhere I went. There [in Casa Verde] it was different, blacks are on every corner, and I said: ‘Now I know where the folks from Bela Vista ran to.’”⁹³ Casa Verde borders Freguesia do Ó to the east, and it was not a new destination for dislocated black paulistanos. Organizers from the *Frente Negra Brasileira* had relocated the headquarters of the organization to Casa Verde and coordinated a program of planned resettlement in the middle of the twentieth century.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Nascimento, “Entre Sambas e Rezas,” 87. “Hoje no bairro tem poucas famílias negras. Quando começaram as obras do Minhocão, deu-se a primeira grande devastação do Bexiga. Ele passa bem no centro do Bexiga. Então na época um monte de famílias teve que sair.”

⁹¹ Oliveira, “Segregação,” 119. “Muitos cortiços e casarões do Bexiga foram derrubados para a construção das habitações verticais voltadas para atender os segmentos sociais de média e alta rendas...O Milton e a população negra e pobre que habitou o Bexiga nessa época, não tiveram outra escolha, a segregação involuntária ou centro-periferia.”

⁹² Nascimento, “Entre Sambas e Rezas,” 87-88.

⁹³ Ibid., 89. “Aí eu cheguei na Casa verde, aí eu olhava e via uma negreda, falei: ‘Gente, o que é isso?’ Eu estou acostumada de em todo lugar que a gente vai, a gente não vê negro. Lá não, os negros estão todos naquele pedaço, aí eu falei, ‘Já sei para onde o povo da Bela Vista correu.’”

⁹⁴ I have not found sources that explain how many individuals relocated to the region in this era as a result of the resettlement program. For more, see Miriam Nicolau Ferrara, “A imprensa negra paulista (1915 – 1963)” (master’s

Articles in the popular press made no mention of the contemporary dislocation of Afro-descendants from Bela Vista, rendering that population as a bygone element of the neighborhood's nineteenth-century past. For example, a 1971 piece from *O Estado de S. Paulo*, entitled "Beixga: All that Remains is Nostalgia," described the neighborhood in 1902 as an "agglomeration of houses and shacks, constructed by blacks and Italians."⁹⁵ The same article noted that Bexiga became famous in the nineteenth century "as a place of refuge where runaway slaves were hunted."⁹⁶ The piece prominently mentioned Saracura, the name of a creek and a neighborhood settlement for freed people paved for the construction of the July 9 Avenue (see Chapter Two).⁹⁷ A separate piece from 1973 described blacks as "the first residents of the neighborhood."⁹⁸

While crediting the foundation of Bexiga to Afro-descendent freed people and noting silenced places like Saracura, these articles ignored the actually-existing Afro-descendants who still lived in Bexiga. They did not broach the histories of how some of those individuals, along with the spaces where they lived, disappeared. They did not draw a parallel to the avenues projects of decades past that had already dislocated residents from Bexiga, including to peripheries like Brasilândia. Instead, the authors described a natural and linear progression of the neighborhood's social composition: founded by Afro-descendant, the settlement of immigrants transformed the neighborhood into an essentially Italian place. That process, the following section shows, was nowhere near that organic.

Making "Italian" Bexiga

Beginning in the 1970s a handful of locals in Bela Vista developed grassroots initiatives to preserve neighborhood history associated with Italian immigrants and their descendants. In 1978 resident

thesis, FFLCH/USP, 1986) 13 and 49, cited in Gisele Matos Chaves, "A imprensa negra através do jornal A Voz da Raça: uma São Paulo de negros para negros," 2016, http://lemad.fflch.usp.br/sites/lemad.fflch.usp.br/files/2018-04/a_imprensa_negra_atraves_do_jornal_voz_da_raca.pdf (accessed June 7, 2018).

⁹⁵ "Bexiga: o que resta é somente saudade," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 24, 1971, Arquivo Histórico Municipal. "o aglomerado de casas e barracos, construídos por negros e italianos."

⁹⁶ "como local de refúgio em que se acoitavam escravos."

⁹⁷ "Bexiga: o que resta é somente saudade," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 24, 1971, Arquivo Histórico Municipal.

⁹⁸ Sayão, "O Bairro que se Transforma."

Armando Puglisi founded the Museum of Bixiga in his childhood home along Ingleses Street. Puglisi was the youngest of four sons of an Italian immigrant and tailor. He was born in Bexiga but had what one article described as a “very strong accent” from his father’s homeland.⁹⁹ Puglisi’s neighborhood museum consisted of an array of memorabilia, from the unsurprising (i.e. photographs from the early twentieth century) to the unconventional: index cards with the nicknames of the “first” residents of the neighborhood (all Italians), boxing gloves, and an English sewing machine brought to São Paulo by Italian immigrants in the nineteenth-century.¹⁰⁰ Though the museum sits closed as of 2017, a plaque on the museum’s exterior still displays “Museu do Bixiga” and the year of its founding. An adjacent sign proudly exhibits the segment of Bill Clinton’s 1997 speech about São Paulo’s racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods.

Historic preservation initiatives expanded in the district of Bela Vista in the early 1980s. Officials from the State of São Paulo historic preservation agency, Condephaat, and local residents developed a new initiative in a meeting at the Museu do Bexiga in 1982. Dubbed “Street of the Past,” their project aimed to recreate “old Bexiga” in a one-block stretch of May 13 Street, named for the date of the formal abolition of slavery. The restoration sought to rectify the apocalyptic urban decay depicted in “Bexiga: Year Zero” and turn the clock back to the perceived glory days of the neighborhood in the 1920s-’30s. An article about the project from *Jornal da Tarde* explained that “the visual panorama of the 1920s will be recreated, the era when the majority of the homes in this part of the street began to be constructed.”¹⁰¹ Though not framed as a project to create “Italian” space with ethnic identity markers, the effort centered on the buildings that Italian immigrants had (supposedly) constructed.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ “Pintando o Bexiga,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, September 23, 1992.

¹⁰⁰ “O Bexiga vai à luta: O velho enclave boêmio quer ser bairro independente para preservar suas tradições,” *Veja*, March 31, 1982.

¹⁰¹ Maria Indes de Carmargo, “A Treze de Maio, de volta aos anos 20,” *Jornal da Tarde*, September 9, 1982. “deverá ser recriado o panorama visual dos anos 20, quando começaram a ser construídas grande parte das casas da rua.”

¹⁰² *Ibid.* Puglisi recommended that “the project to restore the neighborhood” (“o projeto de restauração do bairro”) include “small signs” (“pequenas placas”) with the names of former residents and brief biographies.

“Street of the Past” received official support from the Secretary of Culture of the State of São Paulo, Bexiga native João Carlos Martins. Martins explained that he hoped the initiative would “transform the street into even more of a tourist attraction that it already is.”¹⁰³ Officials did not supply resources to refurbish those structures’ interiors, which one journalist described as, “in general, deteriorated.” Structures that did not represent the Italian identity of the neighborhood were prevalent, but their connection to non-Italian populations went unmentioned. The plan included, for instance, the restoration of the exterior of what one article termed “the most imposing mansion on this block of May 13 Street – the so-called ‘*Navio Negreiro*,’ today the headquarters of a *cortiço*.”¹⁰⁴ The author made no further mention on the past or then present of the *cortiço*, which likely remained a place of settlement for black residents of Bela Vista.

The museum and May 13 Street preservation set the foundation for a neighborhood-wide project that combined historic preservation, urban revitalization, and the production of a recognizably “Italian” built environment. I first met the man responsible for this initiative, Walter Taverna, at the annual neighborhood festival “Cake of Bexiga.” Founded with the (ultimately successful) goal of baking the world’s biggest cake, the festival featured Taverna reverently as the informal mayor of Bexiga. Taverna owned a restaurant along May 13 Street and in 1980 established the “Society for the Defense of the Traditions and Progress of Bela Vista” (SODEPRO). I interviewed Taverna at the headquarters of the newly-named “Cultural Center for the Memory of Bexiga” along May 13 Street.¹⁰⁵ The headquarters doubles as a museum to Taverna’s nearly four decades of promoting the Italian, and more specifically Calabrian (from the southern Italian region of Calabria), history and culture of Bexiga. Taverna extended other neighborhood historic preservation efforts, which did not have an openly racialized/ethnicized

¹⁰³ “Restuarada, rua lembrará Bexiga do início do século,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, August 5, 1982. “Queremos dar uma fisionomia à rua, explica o secretário, transformando-a numa atração turística ainda maior do que é hoje.” Sources indicate the Secretary of Culture spent between 15-25 million cruzeiros to restore the exteriors of around 50 properties.

¹⁰⁴ Maria Helena Passos, *Isto É São Paulo*, December 15, 1982. “o mais imponente casarão dessa quadra da rua 13 me Maio – o chamado ‘*Navio Negreiro*,’ hoje sede de um *cortiço*.”

¹⁰⁵ Walter Taverna, interview by author, Bela Vista, São Paulo, February 5, 2017.

character, into an explicit project to make Bexiga “Italian.” Taverna had (or made) friends in high places, and in the early 1980s his project received buy-in from top municipal officials in the city of São Paulo.

Taverna’s project called for the construction of material signifiers of Italianness and the installation or refurbishing of decaying features of the built environment. He outlined his project in letters to tourism, urban planning, and historic preservation officials. Taverna deemed it “crucial” for City tourism authorities to install three signs in the neighborhood to read “Welcome to the Italian touristic center of Bela Vista / Sponsorship: SODEPRO – City of São Paulo – Paulistur.”¹⁰⁶ Other proposals included: a restoration of the urban tree canopy (*arborização*); creation of pedestrian walkways with tiles that showed the map of Italy; Italian-themed public illumination; repaving of roads and sidewalks; marketing to promote the neighborhood; increased policing; tourist attractions, such as a streetcar tour of the neighborhood; the official tombamento of a sub-region of an area he described as “more than integral to the formation of old Bexiga”¹⁰⁷; and improved signage, especially stoplights and signs for one-way streets. Taverna envisioned an ambitious, multifaceted remaking of the neighborhood that would define Bexiga as unmistakably Italian. He outlined a geography for the “area to be demarcated as the Italian touristic center of Bela Vista.”¹⁰⁸ This geography would define the racialized/ethnicized neighborhood – a fluid construct without official definition or limits¹⁰⁹ – in official discourse and material space.

In the requests he submitted to the municipal government, Taverna asserted that the making of “Italian” Bexiga would return the neighborhood to its glory days. He defined those days with a particular focus on streets and sidewalks. In a letter to São Paulo’s mayor, Taverna explained: “The construction of these pedestrian sidewalks will bring back, at least in a part of Old Bixiga, the tranquilities of our old

¹⁰⁶ “Benvindos ao centro turístico italiano da Bela Vista / Promoção: SODEPRO – Prefeitura – Paulistur.”

¹⁰⁷ “uma parte mais do que integrante da formação do velho Bexiga”

¹⁰⁸ “área a ser demarcada como do centro turístico italiano da Bela Vista”

¹⁰⁹ As discussed in Chapter Three, São Paulo’s neighborhoods have no formal definition. For more, see Emílio Haddad, “Sobre of Estudo da Divisão da Cidade em Zonas Homogêneas” (PhD diss., FAU-USP, 1987), cited in Bruno Dantas Hidalgo, “As divisões territoriais do Município de São Paulo: uma proposta de classificação por meio da análise dos Distritos” (undergraduate thesis, USP, 2003), 28; Márcia Lúcia Rebello Pinho Dias, *Desenvolvimento urbano e habitação popular em São Paulo: 1870-1914* (São Paulo: Nobel, 1989). For the history of the administrative division of land in São Paulo, see “São Paulo,” IBGE, <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/sp/sao-paulo/historico> (accessed May 13, 2017).

streets, where our ancestors could get together in front of their homes...”¹¹⁰ A piece from *Jornal da Tarde*, “Let’s go to Bexiga. The Past is There,” echoed this sentiment by remembering the neighborhood’s sidewalks as “a natural continuation of living rooms, where people pulled out chairs and spent hours in conversation with neighbors.”¹¹¹ Scarlato identified this practice as emblematic of the Italian identity of the neighborhood: “It was in this space that we can invoke the symbolic image of that Italianism of the neighborhood – the ‘*oriundi*’ [an Italian-born immigrant] and his chair on the sidewalk.”¹¹² The construction of new avenues threatened this supposedly-distinct Italian neighborhood culture built around the street. If successful, Taverna’s project would stem the tide of change.

The project to make Bexiga “Italian” bore strong similarities to the “Bairro Oriental” effort in the adjacent district of Liberdade. In at least one case, the nearby project served as a direct inspiration for Taverna. In his original proposal as submitted to municipal urbanism and tourism authorities, he requested that Paulistur, the state organization responsible for tourism, develop an original type of “Italian” lamppost in the same way the “typically Japanese” lampposts were “developed for the Liberdade neighborhood.”¹¹³ The development of tourism was, as in Liberdade, an explicit goal of the project, and Taverna communicated directly with the head of the tourism agency Paulistur. Whereas the Liberdade Businessowner’s Association blended tourism with commercial development, however, Taverna insisted that the project to produce “Italian” Bexiga was not driven by any motivation for profit.¹¹⁴

Also similar to the project in Liberdade, high-ranking City officials participated in the campaign in Bexiga. In 1974, officials in the City Council had raised the idea of creating a special zoning provision

¹¹⁰ Letter from Walter Taverna to Reynaldo de Barros, September 25, 1981, SP-Urbanismo Archive. “A construção desses Calçadões trariam de volta, pelo menos a uma parte do Velho Bixiga, a tranquilidades de suas antigas ruas, onde os nossos antepassados podiam se reunir na frente de suas casas...”

¹¹¹ “uma continuação natural das salas, onde colocavam cadeiras e passavam horas conversando com os vizinhos.”

¹¹² Scarlato, “Bixiga,” 32. “Foi neste espaço que pudemos invocar a imagem simbólica daquele italianismo do bairro – o ‘*oriundi*’ e sua caldeira na calçada.”

¹¹³ Letter from Walter Taverna, President, SODEPRO, to Domingos Mantelli Filho, President of Paulistur, December 1, 1980, SP-Urbanismo Archive. His exact request called for “um tipo sui-generis de iluminação para toda a area...e a proposito de tipo de iluminação permitimo-nos lembrar o tipo desenvolvido no bairro da Liberdade (tipicamente japonês).”

¹¹⁴ “Bela Vista poderá ter um Centro Turístico Italiano,” *Folha da Tarde – LUX Jornal*, January 6, 1981, SP-Urbanismo Archive.

to control land use and development in the districts of Bela Vista and Luz, the latter located on the northern side of the historic city center. The suggested provision seemed particularly suited for Bela Vista's aged architecture, as it called for "specific projects of reurbanization, for the preservation of buildings of historic and cultural value."¹¹⁵ In 1980-'81, planners from EMURB, a department responsible for city planning projects, began drafting plans for an initiative that aimed to improve local conditions and "preserve" the Italian character of the neighborhood. The director of city planning for the state of São Paulo, Paulo Julio Valentino Bruna, also took part in the project to make Bexiga "Italian." He attended at least one neighborhood meeting about the campaign, and in a 1982 letter to another official about the initiative explained, "We developed the project in question...as a process of urban renovation and revitalization."¹¹⁶

The Bexiga project had a distinct focus on the neighborhood's built environment. Common discourses about the identity of Bexiga presented the neighborhood's Italianness as synonymous with its buildings and the individuals often credited with constructing them: the *capomastri*, or Italian master craftsmen. The film "Bexiga: Ano Zero," celebrated the *capomastri*, crediting them with the construction of the neighborhood and noting that they worked "without using blueprints."¹¹⁷ Similarly, in the *Jornal da Bela Vista*, Italo Bangnoli wrote:

With the passage of years, many of the Italian customs and traditions were lost to time and the principal *mark* left by this population was its architecture, which could be observed in the details of antique homes. However, these details are also getting lost...the Italian presence in Bexiga will enter into history only as a memory.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Projeto da Lei 0200-1974, 33-34. For more on the history of zoning in São Paulo, see Sarah Feldman, Sarah Feldman, *Planejamento e zoneamento: São Paulo, 1947-1972* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2005). "as Z8-008, na área da Bela Vista e da Luz, respectivamente, mereceram também estudos particularizados que possibilitaram, a par do estabelecimento da regulamentação de uso e ocupação, identificar projetos específicos de reurbanização, de preservação de edificações de valor histórico e cultural, passíveis de serem promovidos pelo Município, dentro de um plano global para essas unidades territoriais."

¹¹⁶ Letter from Paulo Julio Valentino Bruna, October 16, 1982, SP-Urbanismo Archive. "Desenvolvemos o projeto em questão...como um processo de renovação e revitalização urbana."

¹¹⁷ "sem usar plantas."

¹¹⁸ Italo Bangnoli, "A Introdução das Tradições Italianas no Bexiga," *Jornal da Bela Vista*, February 22, 1986. My emphasis. "Com o passar dos anos, muitos dos costumes e das tradições italianas se perderam no tempo e a principal marca deixada por este povo foi suas arquiteturas, que podem ser observadas nos detalhes das antigas casas. Porém, estes detalhes também estão se perdendo com a ação do tempo e, se as autoridades não forem alertadas para esta questão, a presença italiana no Bexiga entrará para o história apenas como lembrança."

Scarlato repeated this narrative in an academic context a few years later: “In Bexiga, the Italian ‘capomastri’ built the neighborhood, leaving their cultural influence on its landscape...”¹¹⁹ This discourse endures to the present. In 2011 the governor of the state of São Paulo, Geraldo Alckmin, commemorated the migration of the more than 1.6 million Italians to Brazil in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by declaring the “Year of Italy” in São Paulo.¹²⁰ His proclamation centered on Italian contributions to the city’s built environment, including the “great number of revered buildings...constructed or designed by Italians.” He continued: “But it was not only the great Italian architects and engineers who marked their passage through São Paulo. Workers, master craftsman, the ‘capo-maestri,’ as they were called, changed the face of the city, substituting constructions of mud and wattle and daub, for modern buildings that reproduced European patterns.”¹²¹

The celebration of Italianness through and, crucially, *as* São Paulo’s built environment excluded non-Italian populations. In her neighborhood history of Bela Vista, Nádia Marzola argued that of the many manifestations of Italian culture in São Paulo – from language to music and food – the spatial reigned supreme. “It was in relation to the art of building, and therefore, the very physiognomy of the city that we find...the most important contribution of the *peninsulares* (immigrants from the Italian peninsula) who settled in the city of São Paulo.”¹²² The silencing of non-Italians in these spatial histories is

¹¹⁹ Francisco Capuano Scarlato, “Estrutura e sobrevivência dos cortiços no bairro do Bexiga,” 118. “No Bexiga, os ‘capomastri’ italianos edificaram o bairro, deixando na paisagem do mesmo, sua influência cultural, assim como nas formas de uso destas edificações os cortiços.”

¹²⁰ Figure covers 1872-1972 and is from Jeffrey Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 15. For more on Italian immigration, see: Zuleika M. F. Alvim, *Brava Gente! Os italianos em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1986); Franco Cenni, *Italianos no Brasil: ‘Andiamo in ‘Merica’* (São Paulo, SP: EDUSP, 2002); Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, et al, *História do Trabalho e Histórias da Imigração: Trabalhadores Italianos e Sindicatos no Brasil (Séculos XIX e XX)* (São Paulo, SP: EDUSP, 2010).

¹²¹ “Alckmin discursa em assinatura de decreto para preparativos do Ano da Itália no Brasil,” March 5, 2011, <http://www.saopaulo.sp.gov.br/discursos/alckmin-discursa-em-assinatura-de-decreto-para-preparativos-do-ano-da-italia-no-brasil> (accessed August 15, 2017). “Mas não só grandes arquitetos e engenheiros italianos marcaram sua passagem por São Paulo. Operários, mestre de obras, os ‘capi-maestri’, como eram chamados, mudaram a feição da cidade, substituindo as construções de taipa e de pau-a-pique, por edificações modernas, que reproduziam padrões europeus.”

¹²² Nádia Marzola, *Bela Vista* (São Paulo: Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo, 1978), 75. “Mas foi sobretudo em relação à arte de edificar, e portanto, à própria fisionomia da cidade que se verificou...a contribuição mais importante dos peninsulares que se fixaram na capital de São Paulo.”

sometimes striking, as in the case of Marzola's interpretation. On the next page, following the paragraphs about the "great influence" of Italians on the architecture of the city of São Paulo, she included a picture of the "Navio Negreiro" cortiço on May 13 Street. Marzola made no mention of the historic and contemporary significance of this cortiço for Afro-descendants in the neighborhood.¹²³

The representation of Italianness as constitutive with the built environment differentiated the remaking of Bexiga from the project in Liberdade. Changes to the built environment figured centrally into the "Bairro Oriental" project, of course, as the extensive material constructions throughout the streets of Liberdade in the 1960s-'70s indicated. However, that project's organizers did not describe their effort as the preservation of a Japaneseness already manifest in the built space. They sought instead to concretize a Japanese identity through *additions* to the built environment. By contrast, Taverna, Puglisi, and other self-appointed neighborhood preservation authorities in Bela Vista conflated the neighborhood's built environment and Italianness and asserted that neither could be saved without the conservation of both.

São Paulo City officials adopted the grassroots plan for "Italian" Bexiga in the 1980s. EMURB published a 1984 study that outlined the wholesale remaking of the neighborhood. The introduction to the study explained: "With the goal of strengthening the character of the Bela Vista neighborhood as the Tourist 'Center' of the Italian Colony, EMURB has drafted a reurbanization plan." The authors of the plan conducted "meetings with representative people from the neighborhood," who offered proposals relevant to tourist development and the conditions of the built space. The project called for sidewalks with the map of Italy, the painting of street lights with the colors of the Italian flag, and the hanging of flags on a gateway that represented different regions of Italy.¹²⁴ Mock-ups of the latter (figure 48) bore a clear resemblance to the torii erected in Liberdade.

¹²³ Ibid., 76.

¹²⁴ Luigi Biondi points to the early twentieth century for the consolidation of a shared "Italian" identity in São Paulo. Bondi in Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, et al, *História do Trabalho e Histórias da Imigração: Trabalhadores Italianos e Sindicatos no Brasil (Séculos XIX e XX)* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2010), 73. Gloria La Cava offers an alternative interpretation: "The idea of a comprehensive Italian ethnicity does not seem applicable to Sao Paulo, as to many other Italian American communities. Rather, it seems more appropriate to consider a number of different ethnic sub-groups, each maintaining an organized system of behavior and symbols: that created cultural boundaries to distinguish insiders from outsiders. Southern Italians, in particular, arriving in huge numbers after 1900, concentrated in different urban neighborhoods according to their geographical origins: Neopolitans in Bras,

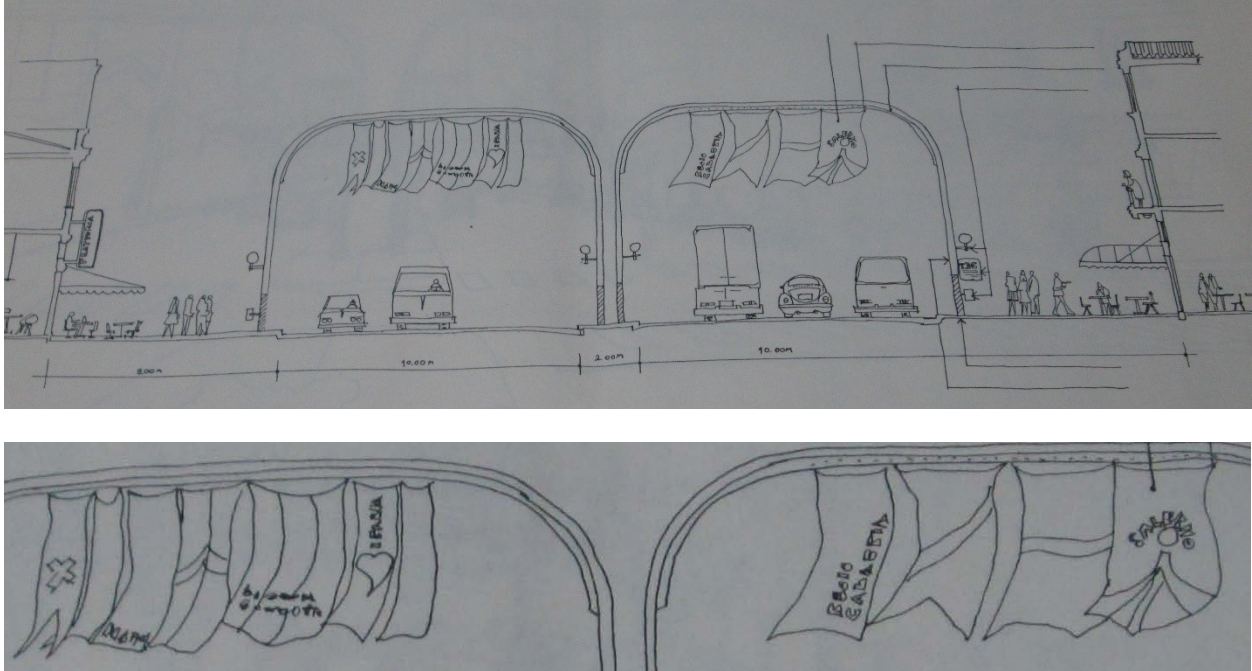


Figure 48: Planned streetscape for “Italian” Beixga. “Bela Vista: Plano de Reurbanização,” EMURB, Architect Vera Lucia de A. S. Kitazato, October 1984. Reproduced with permission by the São Paulo Urbanismo archive.

The study also repeated the claim about the exceptionalism of the local built environment: “Here, different from other neighborhoods of immigrant colonies, like Liberdade, for example, the typology of the old constructions still standing define and characterize the area.”¹²⁵ The 1984 study did not express tacit support for a project predominately centered on the installation of new urban services. Instead, the study represented an explicit endorsement for what its architects imagined as the simultaneous revitalization of the neighborhood and its transformation into an explicitly “Italian” place.

Calabresi in Bexiga, etc.; Veneti, on the other hand, settled in Bom Retiro.” Gloria La Cava, *Italians in Brazil: The Post-WWII Experience* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 100.

¹²⁵ “Bela Vista: Plano de Reurbanização,” Architect Vera Lucia de A. S. Kitazato, October 1984, SPUrbanismo Archive. “Com o objetivo de reforçar no bairro da Bela Vista o caráter de ‘Centro’ Turístico da Colônia Italiana, a EMURB vem realizando um plano de reurbanização, baseado em pequenas intervenções. Foram realizadas reuniões com pessoas representativas do bairro, de onde surgiram algumas propostas. Uma reforçando o caráter turístico e outras visando o próprio morado do bairro”; “Aqui, diferentemente de outros bairros de colonia estrangeira, como a Liberdade, por exemplo, a tipologia das construções antigas ainda existentes definem e caracterizam a área.”

A “Northeast” in “Italian” and “Japanese” São Paulo

As with the making of the “Bairro Oriental,” there was a central demographic paradox to the making of “Italian” Bexiga. The neighborhood received official, state recognition as “Italian” at a moment when relatively few residents of Italian descent actually lived in the neighborhood. Marzola chronicled these demographic changes in the late 1970s: “But today, the population [of Bela Vista] is not predominantly Italian; the neighborhood has changed very much, the Italians moved out and only memories survive of ‘old Bexiga.’”¹²⁶ A 1983 article from the neighborhood newspaper, the *Jornal da Bela Vista*, noted that the Municipal Secretary of Culture had conducted a study on the “environmental heritage” (“*patrimônio ambiental*”) of São Paulo. The authors launched the study, to be conducted throughout the city of São Paulo, first in Bela Vista and Liberdade. That decision reinforced the perception of these districts as historically significant spaces. While the built and natural heritage of the neighborhoods figured prominently in the study, the author of the article emphasized a different finding that “has already been expressed by neighborhood leaders...the large presence of northeasters.”¹²⁷

The settlement of migrants from Brazil’s Northeast generated tensions between newcomers and longer-term residents. The 1983 Municipal Secretary of Culture study explained that “the old population of the neighborhood, not only those of Italian origin, but also the blacks that participated in the formation of the neighborhood, do not look fondly on the Northeastern migrants in the neighborhood.”¹²⁸ Anti-northeasterner sentiment surfaced in interviews with local residents and in the built space of the

¹²⁶ Marzola, *Bela Vista*, 78. “Mas hoje, sua população já não é predominantemente italiana; o bairro mudou muito, os italianos foram se mudando e do ‘velho Bexiga’ só restam as recordações. Com a crescente metropolização, São Paulo passou a receber, em vez de imigrantes europeus, migrantes nacionais, que deixavam suas terras de origem em busca de uma vida melhor.”

¹²⁷ “já havia sido manifestada por líderes do bairro...: a presença em larga escala de nordestinos.” In his thesis on Afro-Brazilian culture in Bexiga, Nascimento similarly noted the in-migration of northeasters, with interviewees noting that “today the population of the neighborhood is more Northeastern than black or Italian.” Nascimento, “Entre Sambas e Rezas,” 84, 87-89, 92. “atualmente a população do bairro é mais nordestina, do que propriamente negra ou italiana.” For the history of another “Northeast” in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, see Paulo Fontes, *Um Nordeste em São Paulo: trabalhadores migrantes em São Miguel Paulista (1945-66)* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2008). Also see the more recent English translation: Paulo Fontes, *Migration and the Making of Industrial São Paulo* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2016).

¹²⁸ “a população antiga do bairro, não só os de origem italiana, mas também os negros que tiveram participação importante na formação do bairro, não vê com bons olhos os moradores do bairro migrados do nordeste.”

neighborhood. The *Jornal da Bela Vista* article pictured a graffitied wall with a swastika and “Get Out Dirty Bahians.” Bahians referred most literally to residents from the Northeastern state of Bahia, however the term was likely used as a more general reference to nonwhite individuals from the Northeast.¹²⁹

The author interpreted this “repulsion” as symptomatic of either racial prejudice or the fact that migratory populations did not (supposedly) participate in neighborhood activities and institutions.¹³⁰ Scarlato writes the “traditional population” of the neighborhood considered the influx of Northeasterners and their occupation of abandoned structures as “one of the most important causes of the loss of the cultural identity of the neighborhood.” Those residents established a “strong xenophobia...carrying themselves as a retrograde minority beneath an unfurled flag of Italo-Paulistanism.”¹³¹

Observers who conflated Italianness with the built environment of Bela Vista also “materialized” northeasterners, confusing them with cortiços. In the *Jornal da Bela Vista*, Italo Bagnoli wrote: “Across the years Bexiga took on a new appearance, leaving the European profile introduced by Italian immigrants behind.”¹³² He continued: “Time also brought new residents to Bixiga, and in the tenements (*habitações coletivas*) of Rui Barbosa Street, you don’t anymore find Mr. Giuseppe, Geovani, Pepino, Mrs. Concheta, Marieta and Assunta.”¹³³ These archetypical Italian residents had been replaced, the quote implied, by migrants from the Northeast in the “collective dwellings,” a euphemism for cortiços. “Bexiga:

¹²⁹ Caldeira, *City of Walls*, 32-33.

¹³⁰ “Pesquisa revela presença de grande número de Nordestinos no Bexiga,” *Jornal da Bela Vista*, November 16, 1983. “Fora Baianos Sujos.” On nordestino as a euphemism for black individuals, see Caldeira, *City of Walls*, esp. 88-89.

¹³¹ Scarlato, “Bixiga,” 30, 31. “À medida que as antigas famílias abandonavam o bairro ‘voluntariamente’ ou expulsas pelas desapropriações, aqueles nordestinos foram ocupando seus ‘lugares.’ Para a população tradicional, a chegada daqueles nordestinos que ocuparam os antigos casarões abandonados pelos antigos moradores, passou a ser considerada como uma das causas importantes da perda da identidade cultural do bairro. Idéia esta que acabou se difundindo no interior da grande cidade. Assim, aquela população tradicional firmou um forte xenofobismo para com os mesmos, comportando-se como uma minoria retrógrada a desfraldar a bandeira do ítalo-paulistanismo”; “Tradicional” residents develop a “tendência segregacionista em relação aos nordestinos por parte daquela população...O que percebemos é que existe naqueles discursos um sentimento de ‘usurpação’ pela chegada dos mesmos.”

¹³² Italo Bagnoli, “O Bexiga de antigamente,” *Jornal da Bela Vista*, January 17, 1983. “Através dos anos o Bexiga tomou nova feição, deixando para trás seu perfil europeu introduzido pelos imigrantes italianos.”

¹³³ Ibid. “O tempo trouxe também novos moradores no Bixiga, e nas habitações coletivas da Rua Rui Barbosa, não se encontram mais o Seu Giuseppe, o Geovani, o Pepino, a Dona Concheta, a Marieta e a Assunta, através dos quais obtínhamos todas as informações a respeito dos acontecimentos do bairro.”

Year Zero” also linked the settlement of migrants from Brazil’s Northeast to cortiços in the district of Bela Vista. The film depicted the dislocation of “traditional families” from the neighborhood, opening the door for newcomers who “will continue following the path of demolitions.”¹³⁴ In other words, these residents continued seeking available housing in expropriated structures that municipal authorities had not yet demolished. The narrator of the film termed these families “marginals” and featured footage of them within the crumbling interiors of expropriated homes. The video portrayed the mostly dark-skinned individuals as both symptoms and causes of Bexiga’s deterioration.

Scarlato similarly drew a connection between the settlement of northeastern migrants in Bela Vista and the expansion of precarious housing, especially cortiços, throughout the neighborhood. Quoting a study conducted by the Municipal Secretary of Planning (SEMPPLA) in 1989, Scarlato noted that Bela Vista and Liberdade had the highest density of cortiços in the city of São Paulo at 155 per square kilometer.¹³⁵ Both “Bexiga: Ano Zero” and Scarlato described the deterioration of the neighborhood’s “Italian” identity through changes to the built environment. Those changes transformed the supposed masterpieces of the “capomastri” into cortiços occupied by poor northeastern migrants. Scarlato wrote:

the neighborhood gradually lost its romantic air as a residential place, where the presence of the ‘capomastri,’ and close relationships between neighbors, people that in the majority lived nearly two generations in the same cortiços, gave way to a neighborhood that transformed into the symbol of one of the cruelest forms of housing exploitation – the cortiço.¹³⁶

The sources I located indeed provide evidence for extensive demolitions and material disruptions from the execution of public works projects like the May 23 Avenue, metro, and Minhocão/Radial Leste-Oeste. I did not locate sources on the expansion of cortiços in the neighborhood to confirm the discourse that suggests as much. The supposed expansion of cortiços locally and associated degradation of the

¹³⁴ “vão manter-se tendo a trilha das demolições.”

¹³⁵ Scarlato, “Estrutura,” 121.

¹³⁶ Ibid. “o bairro foi gradativamente perdendo seu ar romântico como lugar de moradia, onde a presença dos ‘capomastri’, e as estreitas relações destes com sua vizinhança, gente que na maioria convivia quase duas gerações nos mesmos cortiços, foi cedendo lugar para um bairro que se transformou no símbolo de uma das formas mais cruéis de exploração da moradia – o cortiço.”

neighborhood may well have been exaggerated by the negative perceptions of newcomers from the Northeast.¹³⁷

What is surprising about the blaming of Northeastern migrants for the expansion of cortiços is that prior residents of Bexiga, especially Italians, constructed and/or lived in cortiços since the nineteenth century.¹³⁸ Cortiços figured centrally in the built landscape of Bela Vista since the earliest days of the neighborhood's formal existence. Such structures included iconic cortiços like those of the Vila Barros complex, demolished in the execution of Prestes Maia's *Avenues Plan* in the 1940s. The identification of northeastern migrants as responsible for the proliferation of cortiços glosses over this history and falsely implies that these newcomers introduced a novelty into Bela Vista's landscape.¹³⁹ Historical sources suggest instead that the predominant groups who lived in those cortiços changed: "From the 1950s forward the principal social alteration that occurred in the neighborhood was the type of resident of cortiços – the Italian immigrant and black gave way to the national migrant who generally came from the North and Northeast of the country."¹⁴⁰

The project to make "Italian" Bexiga, replete with the romanticization of the capomastri and construction of a visible and tangible "Italian" built environment, occurred in direct opposition to the local settlement of Northeasterners. A 1982 article in *Veja*, titled "Bexiga puts up a fight," observed that the "projects designed by immigrants and their descendants could sour the racial cauldron of Bexiga."¹⁴¹ The article quoted a 19-year-old Bahian who lived in a cortiço on May 13 Street. "Society wants to throw us under the bridge," he began. "And I ask: who works in the neighborhood's restaurants? You can write this: if the Italians expel us I will set fire to all of Bexiga's restaurants and bakeries."¹⁴² In years following

¹³⁷ Caldeira, *City of Walls*, esp. 31.

¹³⁸ Scarlato, "Estrutura."

¹³⁹ This discourse is most striking, perhaps, given that some sources romanticize "Italian" cortiços while simultaneously disparaging those established by Northeasterners. For example: Scarlato, "Estrutura," 124.

¹⁴⁰ Clara Correia d'Alambert and Paulo Cesar Gaioto Fernandes, "Bela Vista: a preservação e o desafio da renovação de um bairro paulistano," *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* 204 (2006), 154. "A partir dos anos 50 a principal alteração social ocorrida no bairro foi a mudança do tipo de morador dos cortiços – o imigrante italiano e o negro cederam lugar ao migrante nacional proveniente, em geral, das regiões Norte e Nordeste do país."

¹⁴¹ "projetos desenhados por imigrantes e seus descendentes podem azedar o caldeirão racial do Bexiga."

¹⁴² "O Bexiga vai à luta: O velho enclave boêmio quer ser bairro independente para preservar suas tradições," *Veja*, March 31, 1982, 54. "A sociedade quer botar a gente debaixo da ponte," he said. "E eu pergunto: quem trabalha nos

northeastern migrants also came to occupy a central role in Liberdade's restaurants, including, as Leo Nishihata writes, as the majority of local sushi chefs.¹⁴³

In addition to food, the built environment as a physical and imagined space mediates interethnic relationships and contributes to identity formation. Listen, for example, to a song titled, "Every building constructed in São Paulo has the salt of the sweat of the northeasterner."¹⁴⁴ Sung in a traditional form from the Northeast (*repentista*), the song was composed by Sebastião Marinho, a native of the state of Paraíba, and Andorinha (José Saturnino dos Santos), from Pernambuco. Marinho and Andorinha both migrated to the city of São Paulo in the mid-1970s, and in 1988 they founded an organization dedicated to Northeastern culture on the edges of the Liberdade district on Teixeira Leite Street.¹⁴⁵ A section of lyrics near the introduction of their undated song run:

*Cada prédio em São Paulo construído
Tem o sal do suor do nordestino*

Every building constructed in São Paulo
Has the salt of the sweat of the Northeasterner

*Nordestinos constroem casas belas
Ganham pouco fazendo construções
Fazem casas bonitas e mansões
Só não tem é direito a morar nelas*

Northeasterners construct beautiful homes
They don't earn much working on constructions
They make pretty houses and mansions
Only they have no right to live within them

*Vão morar nos barracos das favelas
Onde a voz da esperança ecoa um hino*

They live in the shacks of favelas
Where the voice of hope echoes an anthem

The song later comments on racialized regional difference through a reference to the different colors of land in Brazil's Northeast and the state of São Paulo:

*Deixar a terra que tem a sua cor
Sapecada do sol esmeraldino
Troca a cor do vermelho purpurino
O cenário opaco e poluído*

To leave the land that has your color
Lazing in the emerald sun
To exchange for a reddish purple color¹⁴⁶
The setting all dull and polluted

restaurantes aqui no bairro? Pode escrever: se os italianos nos expulsarem eu boto fogo em todas as cantinas e padarias do Bexiga."

¹⁴³ Leo Nishihata, "Sushi oxente," in Alfredo Ogawa, ed. *100 anos da imigração japonesa: as surpreendentes histórias do povo que ajudou a mudar o Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora Abril, 2008), 86-91.

¹⁴⁴ Sebastião Marinho and Andorinha (José Saturnino dos Santos), "Cada prédio em São Paulo construído tem o sal do suor do nordestino" <http://www.letrasdemusicas.fm/francis-lobes/cada-predio-em-sao-paulo-construido-tem-o-sal-do-suor-do-nordestino> (accessed June 13, 2018).

¹⁴⁵ UCRAN - União dos Cantadores, Repentistas e Apologistas do Nordeste, <http://www.ucran.com.br/> (accessed March 31, 2018). Though part of the district of Liberdade, this area does not comprise part of the *bairro oriental*.

¹⁴⁶ This line references the "terra roxa," or red soil, of São Paulo.

The lyrics aimed to counter the anti-migrant sentiment and racist stigmatization that many northeasterners faced as “marginals” in neighborhoods like Bexiga.¹⁴⁷ Marinho and Andorinha counter that prejudice and make a claim to belonging by highlighting the daily hardships and social inequalities of migrant life. That discourse has likely recurred among migratory populations across time and region. In the refrain of the song, however, they make a more specific and distinctive claim of belonging based on the productive labor of northeasterners in constructing the city’s built environment. Like the neighborhood residents, officials, and journalists of Bexiga who idealized the *capomastri*, Marinho and Andorinha negotiated social difference and interethnic relations with a claim to constructing São Paulo.

The “Italian” Bexiga project excluded contemporary northeastern migrants in Bela Vista along with Afro-descendants. Journalists rarely asked either group for their opinions on the effort. The author of the 1982 *Veja* article, however, attempted to capture popular sentiment among Afro-descendants in conversations with members of the Vai-Vai samba school: “The rosy Italian appearances that decorate bakeries, cantinas and pizzerias of Bexiga – or Bixiga, for the traditionalists – provoke (*reservam*) resigned smiles from the members (*batucadas*) of Vai-Vai.”¹⁴⁸ I located just two articles in the popular press criticizing the making of “Italian” Bexiga for excluding Afro-descendants.

Historian Ernani Silva Bruno authored both articles. Bruno cited figures for the high presence of Afro-descendants in Bela Vista at midcentury and noted that “The subject seems not irrelevant, at a moment when São Paulo’s neighborhoods, through the productive enterprise of their own residents, seek to identify their roots and preserve their cultural values.”¹⁴⁹ He addressed the organizers of the Bexiga initiative more directly elsewhere: “Nothing prevents, obviously, the organizers...to seek to preserve the

¹⁴⁷ Teresa Caldeira exams anti-Northeasterner sentiment in the São Paulo neighborhood Moóca. See *City of Walls*.

¹⁴⁸ “O Bexiga vai à luta,” *Veja*, March 31, 1982. “As rosadas fisionomias italianas que decoram as padarias, cantinas e pizzarias do Bexiga – ou Bixiga, para os tradicionalistas – reservam sorrisos resignados tanto para as batucadas do Vai-Vai quanto para os barulhos e modismos promovidos por artistas e intelectuais: o Bexiga, ponderam, é assim mesmo.”

¹⁴⁹ Ernani Silva Bruno, “Bixiga, de italianos e negros,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, December 12, 1983. “O assunto parece não ser irrelevante, em um momento em que os bairros de São Paulo, através da fecunda iniciativa de seus próprios moradores, procuram identificar suas raízes e preservar seus valores culturais.”

marks that residents of Italian origin left on the appearances of the neighborhood...But a question remains in our spirit: can the traces left by residents of black descent be excluded from the Memory of Bexiga?”¹⁵⁰

In 2002 the Department of Historic Preservation for the City of São Paulo declared the historic preservation, or *tombamento*, of a sizable portion of the “neighborhood of Bela Vista, in the district of Bela Vista.”¹⁵¹ The action meant that modifications to any of the 906 buildings included in the historic area would have to be approved by municipal preservation authorities. Without any reference to the culture of the neighborhood, the official preservation document described Bela Vista as exceptional because it still preserved many older buildings, not because of its Italianness. The choice to describe both the neighborhood and the district as “Bela Vista” seemed a subtle rejection of “Italian” Bexiga and/or evasion of the spatialized identity altogether. Scarlato argues that from the 1950s through 1970s, Bela Vista was the name commonly ascribed to the region. The use of “Bexiga” from the 1970s forward, he asserts, coincided with the “rediscovery of the neighborhood” as an area of “Italian traditionalism.”¹⁵² Though absent in the official declaration, Taverna preserved the Italian association in the press. An article about the tombamento quoted him as saying: “A neighborhood that has neither a memory or a history does not have value and this place is precious. Here, various Italian immigrants made their lives.”¹⁵³

The contemporary tombamento of Bexiga shows how popular and official discourse about neighborhood identities shift over time. Clara Correia d’Alambert and Paulo Cesar Gaioto Fernandes offer the following appraisal of the 2002 action:

The preservation of Bela Vista, as related in the [2002] tombamento record, involved not only architectural and urbanistic aspects, but also others of a socioeconomic, even anthropological

¹⁵⁰ Ernani Silva Bruno, “Bexiga, um bairro de várias influências,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, January 29, 1982. “Nada impede, obviamente, que os idealizadores...procurem preservar as marcas que os moradores de origem italiana imprimiram às feições do bairro...Mas fica uma interrogação no espírito da gente: da Memória do Bexiga poderiam ser excluídos os traços nela impressos por seus moradores de ascendência negra?”

¹⁵¹ Resolução no. 22/2002, Conselho Municipal de Preservação do Patrimônio Histórico, Cultural e Ambiental da Cidade de São Paulo.

¹⁵² “A partir dos anos cinquenta, as plantas da cidade suprimiram o nome Bexiga, prevalecendo para todo o bairro o nome Bela Vista. A partir dos anos setenta, com a ‘redescoberta’ do bairro, como área de boemia e do tradicionalismo italiano, voltaram a chamá-lo de Bexiga.” Scarlato, “Estrutura,” 118.

¹⁵³ Taverna quoted in “Patrimônio: Conpresp determina tombamento de 906 imóveis na Bela Vista,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 17, 2002. “O bairro que não tem memória nem história não tem valor e esse local é precioso. Aqui, vários imigrantes italianos fizeram suas vidas.”

nature, such that the urban space of the neighborhood reflects, in a broad sense, the *unquestionable cultural and ethnic miscegenation* that took place there.¹⁵⁴

The assertion of neighborhood-level “cultural and ethnic miscegenation” in Bela Vista accurately reflects the contemporary and historical diversity of resident populations. That demographic mixture is, it should be said, not exceptional: all São Paulo neighborhoods, perhaps especially those explicitly marked with racial and ethnic identities, exhibit an unmistakable degree of ethnoracial heterogeneity. However, the premium on mixture in the twenty-first-century preservation of Bela Vista reveals a notable shift away from official sponsorship of the essentialization of space. As with similar discourses of ethnoracial mixture in Brazil, the discourse dissolves actually-existing historic and contemporary social difference. In doing so, it glosses over enduring interethnic tensions between the various ethnoracial and regional groups, including northeasterners, who call Bexiga home.

While recent official historic preservation and planning documents omit references to “Italian” Bexiga, the traces of decades of efforts can still be seen in the contemporary built environment. The posts of street lights throughout the neighborhood are painted with the red, white, and green of the Italian flag, including the post in front of the Saracura mural discussed in Chapter 2 (figure 49). The visage of prominent samba composer and musician Adoniran Barbosa, whose parents came from Italy and who chronicled São Paulo’s Italian culture in song, features in the lit signs for local pedestrian crosswalks (figure 50).¹⁵⁵ These features attest to the discernible, yet incomplete, campaign to create “Italian” Bexiga. That incompleteness endures as well in the continued settlement of northeastern and Afro-descendent populations.

¹⁵⁴ d’Alambert and Fernandes, “Bela Vista,” 159. “A preservação da Bela Vista, como foi encarada neste tombamento, envolveu não só aspectos arquitetônicos e urbanísticos, mas também, outros de caráter sócio-econômico, e até mesmo antropológico, ao entender que o espaço urbano do bairro retrata, num sentido mais amplo, a incontestável miscigenação cultural e étnica ocorrida ali.” My italics.

¹⁵⁵ Locals coordinated the construction of a bust of Barbosa in 1983, and a street bears his name in the north of the district. Recent São Paulo mayor João Doria attended the inauguration of the bust as the head of São Paulo’s tourism agency. “No Bixiga, um busto lembrando Adoniran,” *Jornal da Tarde*, August 8, 1983.



Figures 49 and 50: On left, lamp post along May 13 Street with the colors of the Italian flag. On the right, a pedestrian crossing light with the face of sambista Adoniran Barbosa. Photos by author.

Racialized/ethnicized neighborhoods like Liberdade and Bexiga seem exceptional, singular places. The array of planners who produced the neighborhoods described them as unique, and the custom collection of visible and material markers they designed for their streets only bolstered those claims. However the unmistakable similarities between the projects that made these two São Paulo spaces challenge the exceptionalist claims of their planners. By 1978 both neighborhoods had a museum dedicated to the ethnoracial group most identified with the neighborhood. By the mid-1980s, the state had bankrolled projects of simultaneous racialization/ethnicization and urban revitalization that reshaped their built environments. In the course of demolitions and new constructions, both projects sought to transform two historic centers for Afro-descendants in the city of São Paulo into neighborhoods associated with immigrants their descendants. By charting the parallels that made these two projects more similar than different, this chapter counters the representations of places like the “Bairro Oriental” or “Italian” Bexiga as singular in São Paulo or beyond.

While social identities are unstable, continuously in flux, and negotiable, the production of ethnoracial space in Liberdade and Bexiga elucidates two cases when social difference becomes fixed in – and as – material space. Social identities are not constructed solely through performance or regimes of classification, but through visible and tangible features of the material world. Such constructions serve to

concretize race and ethnicity in ways that circumscribe the agency of individual social actors. The remaking of Liberdade as the “Bairro Oriental” – a project that hinged on the material construction of a racialized/ethnicized built environment – helped to define popular meanings of Japaneseness. This chapter lifts up, in other words, the tactile significance of “construction” in our understanding of identity as a social construct.¹⁵⁶

The construction of ethnoracial space in Liberdade and Bexiga also provides necessary historical context for contemporary planning practices and development schemes in multiethnic metropolises worldwide. These histories are useful, in part, because almost identical projects continue to capture the imaginations of state officials. One such official is recent São Paulo mayor João Doria (2017-'18), who headed the City's now-extinct tourism division during the campaign to produce “Italian” Bexiga. In 2017 Doria outlined his aspirations for a tourism/revitalization project in São Paulo's Bom Retiro neighborhood, a population hub of Korean immigrants and their descendants, on a trip to South Korea. Partnering with multinational corporations based in Korea like Samsung and Hyundai, Doria proposes to reproduce Bom Retiro as a “Little Seoul” (“*Little Séul*”).¹⁵⁷

The making of “Italian” Bexiga and “Japanese” Liberdade should give officials like Doria pause, or at least serve to moderate the often-ambitious reach planned for such projects. The parallel projects of urban revitalization and racialization/ethnicization fell well short of city planners' expectations. Those shortcomings suggest that “place-making” initiatives, which sometimes can (inadvertently or intentionally) double as racialization/ethnicization projects, are poor engines for economic development and instruments for spatial changes that actually improve living conditions for local residents.¹⁵⁸ Public or

¹⁵⁶ On the materialization of identity, see Lars Frers and Lars Meier, eds, *Encountering Urban Places: Visual and Material Performances in the City* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub Co, 2007). Clara Irazábal also explores ethnicized place-making via immigrant-themed parks in Curitiba. See Clara Irazábal, *City Making and Urban Governance in the Americas: Curitiba and Portland* (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005).

¹⁵⁷ Pedro Venceslau, “Doria quer revitalizar e mudar nome do bairro para ‘Bom Retiro Little Seul,’” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 11, 2017.

¹⁵⁸ For two interesting recent works about place-making, see: Simon Pemberton and Jenny Phillimore, “Migrant place-making in super-diverse neighbourhoods: Moving beyond ethno-national approaches,” *Urban Studies* 55:4 (2018), 733-750; Sako Musterd, Zoltán Kovács, and Zoltán Kovács, eds. *Place-Making and Policies for Competitive Cities* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). For a local example from São Paulo, see Daniela Sandler, “Place and Process: Culture, Urban Planning, and Social Exclusion in São Paulo,” *Social Identities* 13:4 (2007), 471-493.

private investments in those projects can serve to exacerbate, rather than ameliorate, social exclusion along with racialized/ethnicized inequities.

Conclusion
“Asphalt Has Today Covered Our Ground”
Spaces of Continuity

November 2016: Behind graffitied partitions that line one of Brasília’s oldest streets, the buildings continue to disappear (figure 51). Most locals need no explanation for the impetus of the demolitions, but the orange stripes on every other barrier remind them anyway. The metro is coming, with Brasília the planned northern terminus of the city’s new Orange Line.



Figure 51: Construction partitions and half-demolished buildings in Brasília.
 Intersection of Estrada do Sabão and R. Prof. Viveiros Raposo.
 The building is now fully demolished. Photo by author, November 2016.

Similar white and orange barriers enclose razed spaces on the southern end of this new line at the penultimate station in the district of Bela Vista (figure 52). Eight decades earlier, demolitions linked to avenues projects in Bela Vista and Liberdade began spurring dislocations that would pave the way for the production of Vila Brasília. Some of those dislocated residents likely built the structures being levelled for the metro in Brasília today. I tried to locate these people, but most have already acquiesced to the official expropriation of their homes for the metro and moved once again to new frontiers on São Paulo’s periphery. Echoes from the earlier era of transportation schemes resound in the present, even as the crumbling bricks from demolitions conspire to conceal the continuities.

Linha 6-Laranja - Brasilândia - São Joaquim

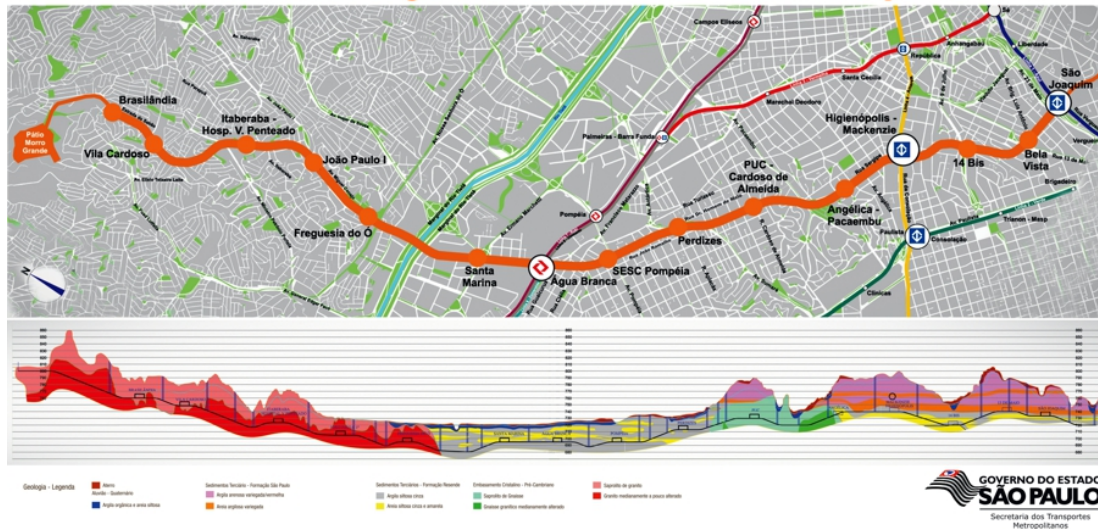


Figure 52: Plan for Orange Line. Reproduced with permission from the Secretaria dos Transportes Metropolitanos (STM).

It is tempting to interpret the arrival of the metro in Brasilândia as a moment of fundamental rupture in the neighborhood's history. Since the settlement of Vila Brasilândia in 1947 and through the first decades of the twenty-first century, marginality and a lack of integration within the city of São Paulo have largely defined this place. In the words of one interviewee, Brasilândia has long been “the periphery of the periphery.”¹ The metro will alter this spatial dynamic, providing residents with an alternative means of transportation to the clogged busses and congested roads that make daily commutes both long and precarious. The unprecedented connectivity between Brasilândia and center-city districts like Bela Vista will also generate structural changes whose repercussions extend beyond commute times. The Orange Line will spur growth in local land values, new real estate development, and the installation of a more robust infrastructure of urban services long-absent in the region. The metro, in other words, portends progress, with all its prices and costs.

Despite these impending changes, the metro signals as much continuity as rupture across São Paulo's twentieth-century history. A block north of these demolitions for the future metro station, musician Luz Nascimento regularly leads her co-members of the group Samba do Congo in a composition

¹ WB, interview by author, Brasilândia, São Paulo, August 28, 2016.

titled “Brasilândia’s Metro” (“*Metrô da Brasilândia*”).² Nascimento lived in the Bela Vista district as a child before moving to Vila Brasilândia in the 1960s. She co-authored this samba in 2013 with Luiz do Pandeiro, an official ambassador of São Paulo samba (a distinction awarded by the governing organization of samba schools in São Paulo) and a photojournalist for the regional newspaper. In the latter capacity, Luiz has snapped hundreds of photos of structures demolished for the metro; he even considered filming a music video of “da Brasilândia” in a half-razed building. Their song opens:

*Eu vou ligar
Para o Mato Grosso e Joca
Meus amigos de verdade
Que já passou por esse drama*

I’m going to call
Mato Grosso e Joca
My real friends
Who already went through this drama

*Andam dizendo
Que o metrô vai chegar
E por causa dele
A gente vai ter que mudar*

The people are saying
That the metro will come soon
And because of it
We’ll have to move

Mato Gross and Joca were the two protagonists in one of São Paulo’s most iconic sambas, “My Beloved Ruin” (“*Saudosa Maloca*”). Adoniran Barbosa, the child of Italian immigrants and much revered throughout São Paulo (including “Italian” Bexiga³), penned “Saudosa Maloca” in 1955. His song chronicles the demolition of a center-city building that the fictitious Mato Grosso and Joca occupied.⁴ Nascimento and Pandeiro summon the memory of Mato Grosso and Joca for wisdom in a contemporary moment clouded by the certainty of demolitions and prospect of displacement linked to the Orange Line. Their ambivalence about the project appears in the song’s refrain, which sounds as much like a defiant proclamation as a beseeching appeal: “I’m not leaving Brasilândia / Because I know / That progress is on its way.”⁵

Residents’ ambivalent attitudes about the Orange Line also surface in the mural obscured behind the construction partitions in Figure 51. Figure 53 displays the mural in full. A fire-haloed metro car rips

² Luz Nascimento and Luiz do Pandeiro, “Metrô da Brasilândia,” 2013, CD.

³ As discussed in Chapter Five, in 1984 a bust of Barbosa was installed along May 13 Street. Today, Barbosa’s likeness is visible in Bexiga’s crosswalk lights and he has a street named after him.

⁴ Celso de Campos, Jr. *Adoniram: Uma Biografia* (Editora Globo: São Paulo, 2003), 230-231.

⁵ “Não vou me mudar da Brasilândia / Por entender / Que o progresso vem chegando.”

through homes on the southern side of the street. The metro follows the direction of white, wizard-like hands and a smoky green substance whose color recalls the U.S. dollar. The car crashes into the head of the black woman at the center of the scene. The mural presents the woman, her son, and her daughter as those threatened by the Orange Line. While the metro enters the composition from the south, the woman gazes to the northern side of the street, where a skull implies impending doom. The family has no expectation of benefitting from the Orange Line. The composition traps them, though their gazes transcend the threatened space to a someplace else on the horizon. The mural presents progress in the form of the metro as a whitening and dislocating force for Afro-descendants, including those who helped to build this “Little Africa” in the wake of another era of displacement and dislocation. The metro is not so different, the mural implies, from the asphalted avenues of years past.

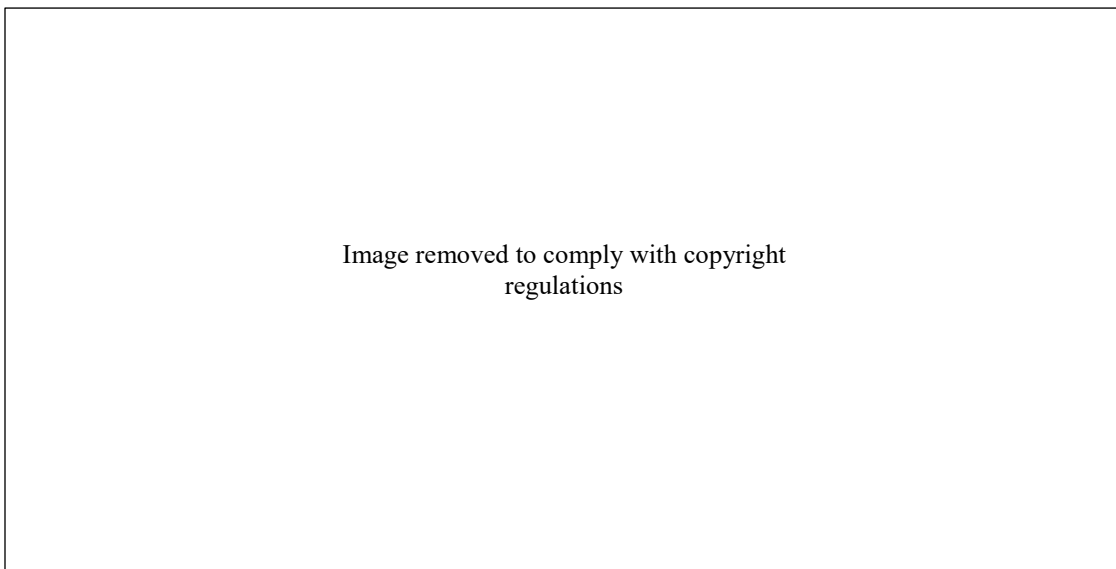


Figure 53. Mural in Brasilândia,
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/joksone/14703230369/> (accessed June 13, 2018).

The echoes between the *Avenues Plan* and the Orange Line resound in other São Paulo spaces associated with Afro-descendants. Each week, before they sing original compositions like “Metrô da Brasilândia,” the members of Samba do Congo like to warm up by playing roots samba, or *samba de raiz*, from São Paulo’s old guard. One favorite is Geraldo Filme’s “Tradition (Go to Bexiga and See)” or

“*Tradição (Vai no Bexiga Para Ver)*,” composed in the 1970s.⁶ Though Filme founded and directed Liberdade’s *Paulistana da Glória* samba school, in the 1970s he became a regular at Bexiga’s *Vai-Vai*. The headquarters of *Vai-Vai* sits a block away from July 9 Avenue on a perch that overlooks the long-asphalted Saracura neighborhood.

Vai-Vai survived the asphaltting of Saracura during the execution of the *Avenues Plan*. However municipal authorities have recently threatened to expropriate the headquarters of the samba school for the Orange Line’s Bela Vista metro station.⁷ As yet, those plans have been thwarted. Similar to the invocation of Mato Gross and Joca, the playing of Filme’s “Tradition” seems to provide hope for continuity in the midst of urban redevelopment. The main two verses of “Tradition” are:

*O samba não levanta mais poeira
Asfalto hoje cobriu o nosso chão
Lembrança eu tenho da Saracura
Saudade tenho do nosso cordão*

Samba no longer raises any dirt
Asphalt has today covered our ground
Memories I have of Saracura
Nostalgia I have for our *cordão*⁸

*Bexiga hoje é só arranha-céu
e não se vê mais a luz da Lua
mas o Vai-Vai está firme no pedaço
é tradição e o samba continua.*

Bexiga today is only skyscrapers
And you don’t anymore see the moonlight
But *Vai-Vai* is steady in its place
It’s tradition, and the samba continues.

The “Italianization” project discussed in Chapter Five invites one interpretation of Filme’s “Tradition” as a product of its immediate historical context. The 1970s-’80s campaign to make Bexiga “Italian” was spearheaded by an organization with “tradition” in its very name: The Society for the Defense of the Traditions and Progress of Bela Vista. Filme composed this samba in that era, and his lyrics counter the representation of Bexiga as Italian with an alternative history centered on Saracura, asphalt, and *Vai-Vai*.

Filme’s take on tradition extends beyond and before 1970s-’80s Bexiga. The silencing of places like Saracura, he suggests, was a customary and recurring practice – a *traditional* one – in the city of São Paulo throughout the twentieth century. Through the execution of the *Avenues Plan*, asphalted roadways

⁶ Geraldo Filme, “Tradição (Vai no Bexiga Para Ver)” *Geraldo Filme: Memória Eldorado*, CD, 1980.

⁷ Márcio Sampaio de Castro, “Vai-Vai, não vai,” *CartaCapital*, May 1, 2013, <https://www.cartacapital.com.br/revista/747/vai-vai-nao-vai>.

⁸ *Vai-Vai* was originally founded as a *cordão* and remained as such until the 1970s, when it became an *escola de samba*.

remade Bexiga as well as Liberdade, two of the most significant neighborhoods for Afro-descendants in the city of São Paulo since the nineteenth century. Progress entailed the razing of structures throughout the neighborhoods and the paving of significant, sometimes sacred places for Afro-descendants. Pavement had a special resonance for the Afro-descendant cultural practices in Brazil that attach a spiritual significance to unimpeded contact between bare feet and beaten earth (*chão batida*).⁹ Asphalted avenues disrupted that spatial relationship. They were the material trappings of progress, both reflective and generative of urban and industrial modernity.

These musical and visual expressions lift up continuities across decades in São Paulo. Those continuities include: city officials promising progress in the form of an ambitious transportation planning scheme, the specter of displacement, and the potential for demolitions to reproduce places made by, and prominently associated with, Afro-descendants. This interpretation of continuity bucks the conventional wisdom that change is the central, defining feature of São Paulo. The metropolis is typically cast as a frenzied capital of production where rupture is not just a constant, it is a commandment. Claude Lévi-Strauss captured this sentiment in 1935 when he wrote that São Paulo “is developing so fast that it is impossible to obtain a map of it; a new edition would be required every week.”¹⁰ This sentiment persists and is perhaps also mandated in two of the city’s prominent nicknames: “the fastest growing city in the world” and the “city that cannot stop.”

The celebration of change as central to São Paulo’s identity better reflected elite aspirations than everyday experiences throughout the mid-twentieth century. Prestes Maia and other planners made rupture official policy from the 1930s-’80s. They authored projects that sought to *redevelop* and fundamentally *remake* supposedly undesirable urban spaces. Ordinary residents of São Paulo – the inhabitants of those spaces – grew accustomed to the dislocations that accompanied redevelopment schemes. They responded by constructing spaces where they could maintain the continuities of everyday

⁹ See Reginaldo Prandi, *Os Candomblês de São Paulo: a Velha Magia na Metrópole Nova* (São Paulo: HUCITEC, 1991), 21.

¹⁰ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Sad Tropics* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012 [1955]) 96. Translated by John and Doreen Weightman.

life and group identity. They produced places like Brasilândia, where “the samba [also] continues” as a relic and register of dislocation and long-silenced places within the city of São Paulo.

While an argument for continuity may contradict the conventional wisdom about the city of São Paulo, the assertion is not without precedent. Historian, activist, poet, and filmmaker Beatriz Nascimento conducted fieldwork in Brazil and Angola in the 1970s-'80s and mapped the locations of *quilombos*, communities of runaway enslaved persons. Nascimento theorized quilombo as more than a material place; quilombo was “also a verb – the ideological practice of encampment against the oppression of slavery.” She defined slavery broadly, considering it a condition that encompassed “racialized poverty, the disparagement of Black aesthetics, urban segregation, and the erasure of history.”¹¹ She argued that favelas were a contemporary manifestation of quilombos, and through historical mapping she aimed to show that twentieth-century favelas were sometimes located in the same geographic and material space as historical quilombos.¹²

Nascimento was interested in the relationship between space and Afro-descendant identity, including in familiar places in São Paulo. She adapted and expanded the research from her master’s thesis for a documentary, produced with director Raquel Gerber, titled *Ori*.¹³ A scene towards the end of the film opens with an aerial shot of São Paulo’s urban landscape. A text overlay reads: “Saracura Valley, Bixiga, São Paulo.” Nascimento narrates:

The quilombo is a history. This word has a history. It also has a typology according to region and according to chronology. Your relationship to your territory. It is important to see that today the quilombo is for us no longer a geographical territory but a territory at the level of a symbology. We are people, we have the right to the territory, to the land. Many parts of my history tell me that I have the right to the space that I occupy in the nation. This is what Palmares was telling us. I have the right to the space that I occupy within this system, within this nation, within this geographical limit that is the captaincy of Pernambuco.¹⁴

¹¹ Christen Anne Smith, “Towards a Black Feminist Model of Black Atlantic Liberation: Remembering Beatriz Nascimento,” *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 14:2 (2016), 79.

¹² *Ibid.*, 81.

¹³ Defining “*ori*,” Smith explains that the word “literally means head, but it is also a spirit in Afro-Brazilian religious tradition.” *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Raquel Gerber e Beatriz Nascimento, *Ori*, 1:12:49 – 1:14:14. “O quilombo é uma história. Essa palavra tem uma história. Também tem uma tipologia de acordo com a região e de acordo com a ordem no tempo. Sua relação com seu território. É importante ver que hoje o quilombo traz pra gente não mais o território geográfico mas o território a nível de uma simbologia. Nós somos homens, temos direito ao território, à terra. Várias e várias partes da minha história me contam que eu tenho direito ao espaço que eu ocupa na nação. E é isso que Palmares está dizendo

The helicopter and camera circle the headquarters of Vai-Vai as Nascimento articulates this radical claim of territorial belonging in the nation and across time through the changing “typologies” of quilombos, from Palmares to Saracura and Vai-Vai. The Saracura Valley was indeed an apt setting for this assertion. The valley represented the dislocation, dispossession, and asphaltting of the space and identity of the freed slaves who founded the quilombo of Saracura in the nineteenth century and made it a neighborhood in the twentieth. At the same time, Vai-Vai symbolizes the preservation of black self-determination and the histories and identities of Afro-descendants through material and symbolic space.¹⁵ That symbolism had a special significance in 1989: just a year earlier, Brazil’s new constitution recognized the property rights of the descendants of the enslaved who occupied “remnants” of quilombos throughout the country.¹⁶

The making of Brasilândia as a “Little Africa” followed a related, though distinct, trajectory to other spaces associated with Afro-descendants in twentieth-century São Paulo. Avenues projects, the completion of São Paulo’s first metro station, and the organized campaign to make the “Bairro Oriental” reproduced Liberdade’s Afro-descendent spatial identity. The headquarters of Vai-Vai was a salvaged sliver of Saracura, saved from redevelopment, expropriation, and demolition during the *Avenues Plan* and, more recently, the Orange Line project. While Brasilândia came into existence in the wake of displacement linked to these projects, the place was not produced out of thin air.

Dislocated center-city residents chose to migrate to the parish of Nossa Senhora do Ó and produce a “Little Africa” out of many possible alternative destinations. It was not coincidental that Nossa Senhora do Ó had been a hub of quilombos and enslavement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The name of the region’s principal roadway – Congo Road or *Estrada do Congo* – was meaningful to

naquele momento. Eu tenho direito a um espaço que eu ocupo dentro desse sistema, dentro dessa nação, dentro desse limite geográfico que é a capitania de Pernambuco.”

¹⁵ Elsewhere in *Ori*, Nascimento drew the connection between identity and territory more explicitly: “Recapturing identity through knowledge of the land...as a person who has migrated. Quilombo is a geographic space where human beings can feel the ocean...all of the cosmic energy enters in your body...I feel big here. It’s a black thing, but it’s a black thing because of the connection to the land. The black man [sic] is the one that knows the land best...just like the Dogon people. The black man, the color of soil...the black earth exists. It is that which we fear losing the most.”

¹⁶ See Jan Hoffman French, *Legalizing Identities: Becoming Black or Indian in Brazil's Northeast* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2009).

these local migrants. It is further relevant that the Nossa Senhora do Ó/Brasilândia region would have some of São Paulo's earliest favelas and, by the 1970s, concentrate the largest number of favelas in the city in absolute terms.¹⁷ These continuities across time and in the singular space of Nossa Senhora do Ó/Brasilândia reflect the durable, deeply-rooted spatialized identities that Africans and their descendants maintained and reproduced across generations.

The interwoven histories of Brasilândia, Liberdade, and Bexiga challenge the organization of change in Brazil's history by political administration or regime type. This is not to say that politics did not matter in these neighborhoods; the opposite was in fact true. For example: Afro-descendants placed the headquarters of Brazil's first black political party, the Brazilian Black Front, in Liberdade in the early 1930s.¹⁸ Florestan Fernandes, a native of the district of Bela Vista, drew on his childhood environment and a network of local informants for his contribution to the UNESCO-sponsored project that helped to upend Brazil's "racial democracy" ideology in the 1950s.¹⁹ More recently, the Freguesia do Ó/Brasilândia region was the home and electoral base for Benedito Cintra. An anti-dictatorship militant during the 1970s-'80s, Cintra was in the early 2000s named the head of the federal organization responsible for addressing racial prejudice, the Special Secretary of Policy for the Promotion of Racial Equality.²⁰

A spatial perspective illuminates alternative patterns of change and continuity that political timelines can too easily obscure. Transitions from an authoritarian regime to a democratic regime (and

¹⁷ Further research may help to reveal whether, as Nascimento hypothesized, quilombos and favelas in Brasilândia were produced in the same spaces.

¹⁸ Petrônio Domingues, "Um 'templo de luz': Frente Negra Brasileira (1931-1937) e a questão da educação," *Revista Brasileira de Educação* 13:39 (2008).

¹⁹ Haroldo Ceravolo Sereza, "Florestan Fernandes," in Luiz Bernardo Pericás and Lincoln Secco, orgs. *Intérpretes do Brasil: Clássicos, rebeldes e renegados* (São Paulo: Biotempo, 2014), Kindle Edition. "A integração do negro na sociedade de classes revela uma profunda identificação pessoal de Florestan Fernandes com as dores e os sofrimentos dos trabalhadores e marginalizados... Baseado na própria experiência pessoal de marginalizado... morador de bairros pobres em que conviviam negros e italianos, como o Bexiga, Florestan parece ter compreendido de forma profundamente empática as privações que a 'população de cor' de São Paulo sofria." Florestan Fernandes and Roger Bastide, *Relações raciais entre brancos e negros em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Anhembi, 1955); Florestan Fernandes, *A integração do negro na sociedade de classes* (São Paulo: Dominus Ed., 1965); Marcos Chor Maio and Rosemary Galli, "Florestan Fernandes, Oracy Nogueira, and the UNESCO Project on Race Relations in São Paulo," *Latin American Perspectives* 38:3 (May 2011), 136-149.

²⁰ Gabriel Cabral, "Evento na Freguesia celebra os 62 anos de Benedito Cintra," *Folha Noroeste*, January 14, 2015, <http://www.folhanoroeste.com.br/noticia/detalhe/8864/evento-na-freguesia-celebra-os-62-anos-de-benedito-cintra.html> (accessed May 5, 2018). Secretaria Especial de Políticas para Promoção da Igualdade Racial.

back) did not necessarily alter the quotidian realities for many Brazilians. For example, José Pompílio da Hora, a leader in the black movement organization *Union of Men of Color (União dos Homens de Cor)*, appraised the significance of political change in 1946, one year following the end of the authoritarian New State (*Estado Novo*) regime and democratization of the nation. Pompílio asserted: “democracy for blacks has been the right to clean roads, to build buildings where they are not allowed to live.”²¹

Roadways for Pompílio symbolized the *absence* of actually-existing change for Afro-descendants despite the supposed triumph of democratization.

We can find similar assertions of continuities on roadways in the present. Annually on May 13, the date of slavery’s formal abolition in 1888, an all-female samba group (*bloco*) named Ilú Obá de Min gathers along May 13 Street in Bela Vista. Both founders of this group grew up in Brasilândia.²² The membership is multiethnic and the music and performances center on Afro-descendant spiritual practices like Candomblé. On May 13 each year the members of Ilú Obá de Min lead an event that begins at a site known locally as the “grand staircase of Bexiga.” This site sits adjacent to the Navio Negreiro cortiço, which, like Vai-Vai, is one of the surviving testaments to the Africans and Afro-descendants who settled this place. Organizers start the event with speeches from the staircase, with the central focus a critique of May 13 as a date of “False Abolition” that masks continued racialized inequalities.²³ Following the speeches, the group proceeds down the staircase and May 13 Street, passing Italian restaurants (*cantinas*) and Italian-flag-themed lampposts on their way into the heart of the neighborhood.²⁴

Like Ilú Obá de Min, the “Little Africa” spatial identity of Brasilândia did not exclude populations of other ethnoracial groups. Similar to Liberdade and Bexiga, Brasilândia has always been and remains an ethnoracially-diverse neighborhood. That diversity contradicts the essentialized identities

²¹ Cited in Antonio Sérgio Alfredo Guimarães and Márcio Macedo, “*Diário Trabalhista e democracia racial negra dos anos 1940*,” *Dados* 51:1 (2008).

²² They are Beth Belí and Girlei Luiza Miranda. See: “Gigi: nascida para bater,” *Museu da Pessoa*, October 10, 2017; Marina Rossi, “A força do tambor feminino,” *El País Brasil*, March 8, 2015, https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2015/03/06/politica/1425665356_175973.html (accessed June 17, 2018).

²³ George Rein Andrews discusses historical and contemporary celebrations of May 13 in *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 224-233.

²⁴ Nádia Garcia, “Lavagem da Escadaria do Bexiga e da Rua 13 de Maio é realizado pelo grupo Ilú Obá de Min no dia da Abolição,” *Portal do Bixiga*, May 19, 2016.

attached to these neighborhoods in popular and official discourse and material space. This contradiction reveals the salience of marked neighborhoods in mid-twentieth-century São Paulo. Paulistanos of African, Japanese, and Italian descent reconstructed ethnoracial identities and negotiated the shifting meanings of social difference over time through the material and symbolic production of neighborhoods.

From its founding in 2011 through early 2018, Samba do Congo has played at the Casa da Cultura da Brasilândia, a type of local community center. In May 2018 the group acquired their own space in the Morro Grande region. The site sits between the future metro station and the former Congo Road (now Elísio Teixeira Leite Avenue), a symbol and space of continuity in the midst of uncertain urban change. The ethnoracially-diverse members of Samba do Congo will, for the foreseeable future, continue to assemble in this space in a circle beneath the group's orange and white flag (*estandarte*). They will continue to compose and play songs about their individual and collective histories and the spaces that tie them to each other and the past. They will continue to bring each night to a close by handing out lyrics to newcomers and singing the group's concluding anthem in unison:

*Chega pra cantar o nossa samba
É samba de roda de bamba
Vem gente de todo lugar*

Come sing our samba with us
It is samba *de roda de bamba*²⁵
People come from everywhere

The pace will quicken as the group arrives at the last two verses: a lyrical map (figure 54) of the many places – neighborhoods, ex-quilombos, loteamentos, and favelas – that today comprise the Brasilândia district.

*Tem gente da Brasilândia e Divineia
Pirituba, Jardim Maristela
Guarani, Vila Iório e do Paquetá
Paulistano e a Vila Iara Não Pode Faltar
Buraco do Sapo, Mirante e Mangue
Valeu Morro Grande
É Nosso Lugar*

There are folks from *Brasilândia* and *Divineia*,
Pirituba, Jardim Maristela,
Guarani, Vila Iório and from *Paquetá*
You Can't Forget *Paulistano* and *Vila Iara*
Buraco do Sapo, Mirante and Mangue
Thank you *Morro Grande*
This is our place

Terezinha, Iraceme, Siqueira, Jardim Carumbé

Terezinha, Iraceme, Siqueira, Jardim Carumbé

²⁵ “Roda” signifies in the round, i.e. gathered in a circle. “Bamba” translates roughly to “expert” in samba lexicon.

Vila Zatt, Elisa Maria
E o Morro da Pinga é só vim pra somar
Cruz das Almas, Vila Penteadó
É para homenagear
A nossa quebrara que é berço do bamba
Valeu Morro Grande
É Nosso Lugar

Vila Zatt, Elisa Maria
 And the *Morro da Pinga* I want to add too
 To commemorate
Cruz das Almas, Vila Penteadó
 Our neighborhood is the cradle of the *bamba*
 Thank you *Morro Grande*
 This is our place

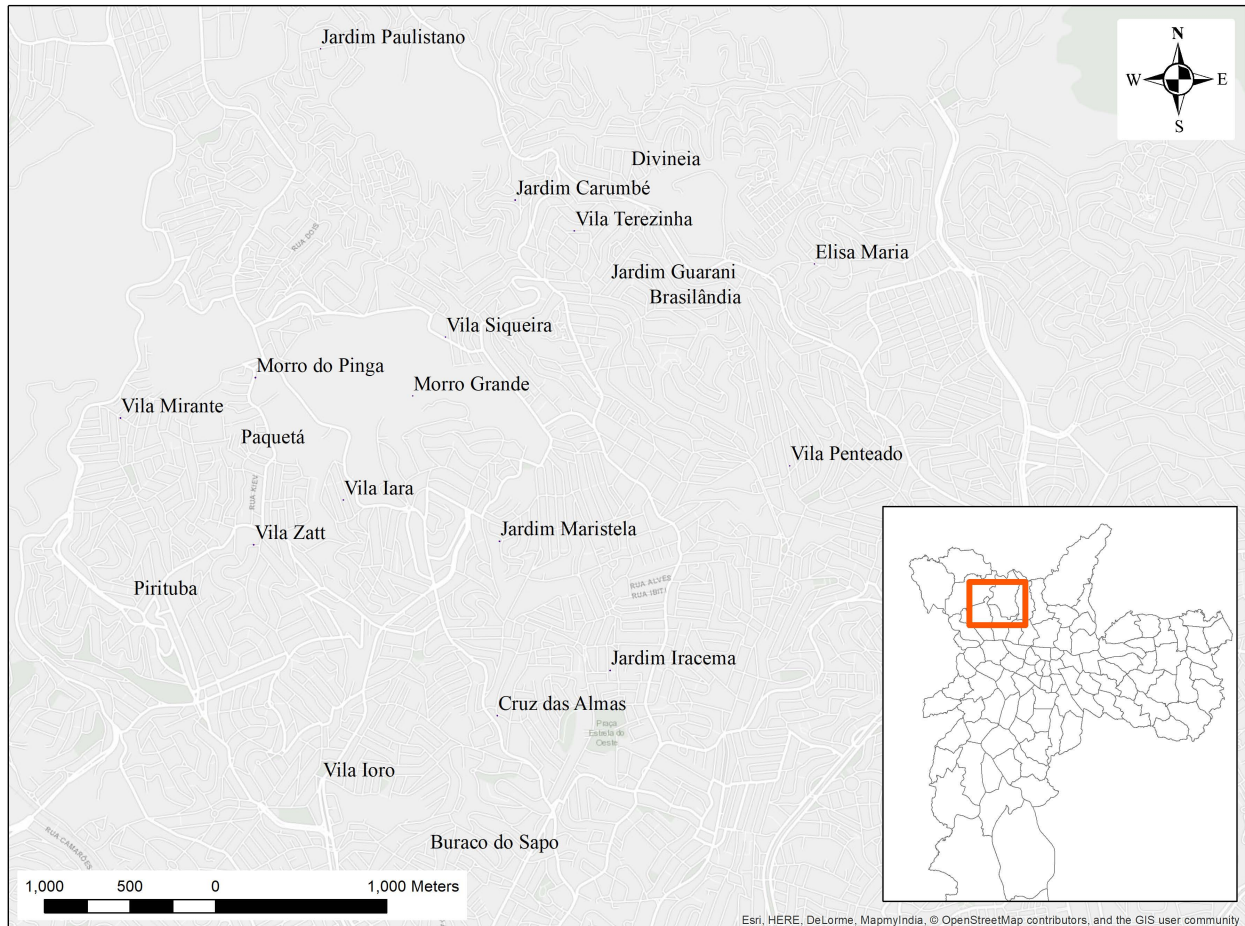


Figure 54: Lyrical Map of Samba do Congo's Anthem. Map by author.

The final “É nosso lugar” will cue a pause. Everyone will stand as the group’s leader offers a few concluding words, maybe about the night’s newest compositions, maybe about the importance of making music and singing histories in and of Brasilândia. He will then beckon a child from the audience to the middle of the circle. She will set up the finale with a spirited “3...2...1.” The group will follow with the

parting musical notes and booming proclamation: “*Vem Gente de Todo Lugar!*” (“People Come from Everywhere!”).²⁶

²⁶ The version that the group sings at gatherings combines the anthem with another song, titled “Nossa Quebrada.” “Hino do Samba do Congo,” Wagner Loitero and Fernando Ripol, *Samba do Congo: Nossa Quebrada*, 2016, CD; Fernando Ripol and Márcio Bonfim, “Nossa Quebrada,” *Samba do Congo: Nossa Quebrada*, 2016, CD.

²⁶ *Paulistano* means from or of the city of São Paulo.

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Biblioteca Monteiro Lobato
Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil (CPDOC), Fundação Getúlio Vargas
Conselho de Defesa do Patrimônio Histórico, Arqueológico, Artístico e Turístico do Estado de São Paulo (CONDEPHAAT)
Conselho Municipal de Preservação do Patrimônio Histórico, Cultural e Ambiental da Cidade de São Paulo (CONPRESP)
Coordenação de Gestão Documental (CGDP), Prefeitura Municipal da Cidade de São Paulo
Departamento de Desapropriações (DESAP), Prefeitura Municipal da Cidade de São Paulo
Empresa Paulista de Planejamento Urbano (EMPLASA)
Grupo Técnico de Informatização dos Cadastros e de Desenvolvimento de Sistemas (GINFO)
Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE)
Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (IPHAN)
Biblioteca da Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa e de Assistência Social (Bunkyo)
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