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Anti-Blackness in the New World

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An abstract of
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
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Bachelor of Arts with Honors

African-American Studies

2019

Abstract
Anti-Blackness in the New World
By Aiyanna Sanders

Through an analysis of historical and ethnographic sources, I investigate the intersections of slavery, citizenship, and anti-Blackness in order to demonstrate how deeply rooted the structures of anti-Blackness are in all aspects of life within Brazil and the United States. In these countries, anti-Blackness transcends culture, language, geography, and ideology, as it is at the core of the institutions and structures within these nations. Both countries have presented to the world the fictional idea that every citizen within these countries, regardless of race, skin color, sex, has access to the same resources, safety, and economic opportunities. This thesis critiques the logics of racial democracy and color-blindness from an Afro-Pessimist perspective. My thesis shows the contradictions in the dominant racial narratives of both of these countries through an analysis of Brazilian and American slavery, residential segregation, and police violence. I argue that Blackness has been racialized as inherently non-citizen, which normalizes the continuation of anti-Black oppression, marginalization, and genocidal acts that occur within Brazil and the United States. I contend that these racial ideologies, such as "racial democracy" in Brazil and "color-blindness" in America are concepts presented to mystify race and race relations in these countries. These discourses, which I argue are inherently anti-Black, get framed as racially progressive while simultaneously hiding the ways that Black people are being marginalized, oppressed, and killed. My thesis engages an emerging transnational discourse on the centrality of anti-Blackness in societies that emerged in the context of the Post-Columbus "New World". More specifically, I am looking at North and South America, the "New World", a world defined by not only racial slavery, but also settler-colonialism. Using and Afro-pessimist perspective, I am exploring the implications this history of colonialism and slavery has for informing the ways in which Black people in both Brazil and the United States are viewed today.

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Introduction

On February 14, 2019, a 19-year old Afro-Brazilian named Pedro Gonzaga was apprehended by a security guard at the Extra supermarket located in Barra da Tijuca, an upscale neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro. In a video that has now gone viral across several social media platforms, Gonzaga can be seen approaching the security guard of the market where he proceeds to fall to the ground and get up, and fall to the ground and get up once more.[1] It is unclear what provoked the action taken by the security guard, but a struggle ensued between Gonzaga and the guard. The security guard began to place Pedro Gonzaga in a "sleep hold" to restrain him, which immobilized Gonzaga. As a result of the immobilization, Gonzaga was taken to the hospital in an unconscious state, where he later died.[2]

Gonzaga's death sparked the emergence of the Black Lives Matter Movement in over five major cities in Brazil. According to many protesters, the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement is not solely in response to Gonzaga's death, but also in response to the death of 11-year old Jenifer Gomes who was killed the week before by police, as well as the nearly three-quarters of all homicide victims in Brazil who are Black.[3] As printed in The Guardian, "According to the government-produced 2018 annual Violence Atlas, 71.5% of the 64,000 people killed each year in Brazil are Black or mixed race".[4] Rene Silva, an organizer of the protest in Rio de Janeiro stated, "we want to talk more about Black Lives Matter, for society

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[1] Dom Phillips. "Protests Erupt in Brazil after Death of Black Teenager Who Was Restrained." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 17 Feb. 2019, www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/17/brazil-protests-restraint-death-black-teenager-rio-de-janeiro.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*

to understand we can't stand racism anymore".[5] This is a very recent example that confirms

what Black Brazilian scholars have argued for decades about the lethal nature of anti-Blackness

in Brazil, a specific type of racism, prejudice and discrimination reserved for and used against

Black people, due to what Afro-pessimist scholars would call, Black people's ontology of

existence that is defined by their slave relation and informs their social standing in civil society.

Theoretical Framework

Afro-pessimism is a body of theory, insistently 'focused on the historical specificity of

anti-Blackness," and the significance of this meaning for contemporary civil society and racial

social structures. [6] Afro-pessimist scholars would categorize the type of violence imposed on

Pedro Gonzaga as gratuitous violence. These scholars argue that "violence against Blacks is

gratuitous, without any prior reason or justification," and "is the direct relation of force as the

basis of the slave relation, which essentially structures the dispossession of Black existence".[7]

Afro-pessimist theory is rooted in the argument that the place Black people hold within society

and the way Black people exist in present everyday life, is a product of the social standing of

Black existence that was established through slavery. This social standing is characterized by

inhumanness, objectification, and social and physical control by white people which establishes

Black people as the bottom tier of civil society. The view of Black existence allows and invites

this specific type of violence, and through this violence, Blackness continues to be devalued and

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[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Victor Erik Ray, et al. "Critical Race Theory, Afro-Pessimism, and Racial Progress Narratives." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, vol. 3, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 147–158, doi:10.1177/2332649217692557.

[7] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.

susceptible to control. The death of Pedro Gonzaga is an example of the constant violence

imposed on Black people, which Afro-pessimists argue produces and negates Black existence

through racial domination imposed on Black people during these specific encounters with the

police.

The concept of anti-Blackness, as defined by scholars who engage with Afro-Pessimism

and have crafted the foundation of the theory, is that "civil society as we understand and live it

is (in)formed by the dehumanizing condition of chattel slavery. (Afro-pessimist scholars) claim

that civil society, therefore, is inherently antithetical to all manifestations of Black social life, yet

requires Blackness for its political, economic, ontological, epistemological and … spatial

coherence".[8] To unpack and fully grasp the argument put forth to define anti-Blackness by

Afro-pessimist scholars, such as Frank B. Wilderson lll, Jared Sexton, Hortense Spillers, and

Sadaiya Hartman, requires an understanding of Afro-pessimism.

Afro-pessimism is a constellation of "theorists, ideas and artistic works ruminating upon

the structural condition of Black existence as indelibly marked by the residual echoes of the

slave relation".[9] The root of Afro-pessimist theory is that slave relation is the essential principle

of Black existence.[10] Racial slavery is the origin of the history of Black subjection. Slavery in the

New World used African and African-descendant peoples as a source of free labor and

relegated Black people to mere objects, meaning that they were no more than property to be

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[8] Adam Bledsoe, and Willie Jamaal Wright. "The Anti-Blackness of Global Capital." Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, vol. 37, no. 1, Feb. 2019, pp. 8–26, doi:10.1177/0263775818805102.
[9] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.
[10] *Ibid.*

owned by their European (white) counterparts. This allowed their owners to profit from their

existence and, thus, demonstrates the relationship between racial slavery, Black subjection, and

capital. Afro-pessimist scholars argue that racial slavery coincides with capitalism and

therefore, "the structural position of the slave paved the way for the genesis of the white

bourgeois subject. To be white was to not be a slave. To be a slave was to define and guarantee

white livelihood".[11] Racial slavery is characterized by domination over a population of people

facilitated by a vastly unequal distribution of power which truncates the opportunities for

slaves to express any sort of agency.[12] Tying Blackness and Black existence to the slave relation

places Black people on the fringes of social life. In Saidaiya Hartman's, *Scenes of Subjection:*

Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America, Hartman states, "The slave is

the object or the ground that makes possible the existence of the bourgeois subject and, by

negation or contradistinction, defines liberty, citizenship, and the enclosures of the social

body".[13] Through this demarcation between whiteness and slave, slaves and, therefore, Black

people became the quintessential standard of "other". Without access to subjecthood, agency,

and whiteness, Black people are expelled from humanness and human relation, which is

predicated on social recognition, volition, subjecthood, and the valuation of life itself.[14] This

establishes a social hierarchy with 'white' people at the top tier of civil society and 'Black'

people at the bottom. This is the basis for the argument of anti-Blackness. The establishment of

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[11] *Ibid.*

[12] Saidiya V. Hartman. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. , 1997. Print.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.

the association between Black existence and slave, paved the way for white people to establish

themselves as the quintessential standard for human, granting access to specific benefits such

as access into civil society and agency. The establishment of this standard stationed Black

people outside the delineated boundaries of humanity making Black people the opposites of

white, and created a structural position for Black people (slaves) as other. This explains why

Afro-pessimist scholars who have crafted and defined the concept of anti-Blackness posit that

contemporary civil society is (in)formed by chattel slavery.[15]

Afro-pessimist scholars argue that Blackness, Black life, and Black existence are a

necessity for civil society to function, as Blackness forms the bottom line and is the standard

from which all other races base their place within society. Despite the fact that civil society is

anti-ethical to all manifestations of Black existence and social life, it is a necessity for the

coherence of civil society and its racial hierarchy.[16] Blackness is used by non-black groups to

"wage their struggle," and therefore, the oppression of Blacks continues to mutate constantly

throughout time.[17] Distancing oneself from Blackness determines the access non-Black groups

have to integration into civil society.[18] As argued by several Afro-pessimist scholars,

"Black existence forms the bottom line, the condition of possibility, of general social and
material integration. It is not necessarily one's 'whiteness' that matters inasmuch as one is *not
black* enabling entrance and participation in civil society. Barred from the immanent capacities
of living, anti-blackness is the necessary ground for the definition and propagation of life in
general."[19]

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[15] Adam Bledsoe, and Willie Jamaal Wright. "The Anti-Blackness of Global Capital." Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, vol. 37, no. 1, Feb. 2019, pp. 8–26, doi:10.1177/0263775818805102.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] *Ibid.*

Black existence forms the basis for identity within civil society and, therefore, is a necessity for society's successful function. Without it, the basis and criteria for human identity and existence vanishes.

For Afro-pessimism, Blackness was intricately constructed to establish the concept of ontology. In its essence, Blackness has become the quintessential requirement of inhumanness. This has allowed the world to construct systems based on the belief that Black existence is a fungible object that is "susceptible to all aspects of material and social containment, control and debility", and is therefore socially dead.[20] Through institutions like housing, Black people are forced to endure inhumane conditions which reify and produce Black existence. These institutions solidify Black peoples' place within civil society as the standard for inhumanity, and demonstrating how their position in civil society today is informed by the conditions of chattel slavery. For example, in the late 1800's and early 1900's, in an effort to situate the nation as an emerging world power, Brazilians attempted to "whiten" Brazil, allowing white individuals to immigrate, while prohibiting the immigration of Africans and other non-white groups. Brazil, a country where Black people make up nearly fifty percent of the nation, incentivized white migration as they simultaneously flooded Black people into government-sanctioned public housing within the outskirts of Brazil. Rather than allowing all races to immigrate and coexist, Brazil felt it necessary to privilege white existence while simultaneously subjecting and relocating Blacks, defining the boundaries between who they deemed as acceptable citizens. Evidenced by their actions, Brazilians could not privilege whiteness without subjecting Black

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[20] *Ibid.*

existence. In effect, using Blackness to form the basis from which white life can make meaning.

This is significant because it demonstrates, as Afro-Pessimists argue, that within Brazil, and

similarly in the United States (US), these societies would cease to function effectively if they

could not function without excluding Blacks. The basis of Afro-pessimist theory is as follows:

> *"there is no black identity, there is no black subject, there is no black life as such. As a consequence, black existence is fundamentally marked by social death, materially living as a sentient object but without a stable or guaranteed social subjectivity. And as such, the status of blackness forms the basis upon which white life can subjectivise itself, socially and materially through the negation of the black body. White life recognises itself as a positive counterpart to the non-subjecthood of blacks."[21]*

Afro-pessimism and My Research

Anti-Blackness, in the United States of America and Brazil, is the product of a specific

type of racism that extends beyond Black people's history as chattel slaves. Afro-pessimism is

the lens through which I frame my understanding of anti-Black racism in both the United States

and Brazil because it explains the existence of Black people in the contemporary world. In this

position, it is necessary to evaluate the foundation slavery sets for Black existence, and how this

existence continuously informs every aspect of Black people's lives. For two countries defined

by settler colonialism and slavery, this foundation is crucial to understanding the contemporary

racial structures that persist in these nations. Further, using Afro-pessimism is crucial in

understanding Brazil and the US because of the framework of anti-Blackness that Afro-

pessimist scholars produced, which explains the necessity of subjecting Black people to the

bottom social standing in society. Anti-Blackness structures how these two civil societies

function, and therefore, is a requirement for both societies' coherence. Afro-pessimism

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[21] *Ibid.*

specifies the distinctness of anti-Blackness from other forms of prejudice, racism, and discrimination, in that Afro-pessimism argues that "anti-Blackness is the notion that the construction of Blacks as nonhuman, structures the status of all other racial groups".[22] For Afro-pessimists, "anti-Blackness, not white supremacy, explains the social conditions of Blacks across the globe".[23] In this thesis, I use Afro-Pessimist theory to inform the ways that I critically analyze anti-Blackness within the context of the United States and Brazil. My focus is on how Black existence is indelibly marked by slave relation and will inform my analysis of how Black people are perceived and the place they hold within contemporary society. By analyzing slavery, residential segregation, and state violence on both the United States and Brazil, this thesis examines how Black (in)existence is reproduced, subjected, and reinforced as the counterpart to whiteness and humanity, and structures the status of all non-Black racial groups because of Black's unique existence that is characterized by slavery and the middle passage.

Transnational Blackness

Through an analysis of historical and ethnographic sources, I investigate the intersections of slavery, citizenship, and anti-Blackness in order to demonstrate how deeply rooted the structures of anti-Blackness are in all aspects of life within both of these countries. Many scholars have produced literature rooted in Afro-pessimist theory that draws parallels between anti-Blackness in the United States and Brazil. In "Blackness, Citizenship, and the Transnational Vertigo of Violence in the Americas", anthropologist Christen Smith does a

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[22] Victor Erik Ray, et al. "Critical Race Theory, Afro-Pessimism, and Racial Progress Narratives." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, vol. 3, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 147–158, doi:10.1177/2332649217692557.
[23] *Ibid.*

comparative analysis on anti-Black state violence to demonstrate how this violence by the state

acts as a process of embodiment and subject making that have tangible and material effects for

Black people.[24] This means that at the moment of state encounter, the extreme and spectacular

violence Black people are subjected to at the hands of the police demonstrates who is and is

not Black, as police violence is used to reinforce which citizens have the full rights and

protections of the state. In her monograph *Afro-Paradise: Blackness, Violence, and Performance

in Brazil*, Smith exposes Brazil as a paradoxical state in which Black people are used for

performances to entertain tourists while simultaneously being broken down and destroyed by

the state through both state and structural violence.[25] Smith uses the example of Salvador,

Bahia in Brazil to illustrate her claim of a system that thrives off of Black culture while killing

Black people. For tourism purposes, Bahia is marketed as a Black paradise where Black culture

can be consumed, while simultaneously thriving from a system built on the subjugation and

annihilation of Black people.

      Further, in *The Inner City and the Favela: Transnational Black Politics*, João Costa Vargas

draws parallels between United States ghettos, and Brazilian favelas, to discuss the effects of

housing segregation in both of these contexts.[26] While these scholars have engaged the topic of

Brazil and the United States on many different levels, from housing to race relations, my work

adds to those analyses by asking: why, in 2019, Black people are not afforded full protections of

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[24] Christen A. Smith, (2015), Blackness, Citizenship, and the Transnational Vertigo of Violence in the Americas. AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST, 117: 384-387. doi:10.1111/aman.12242
[25] Christen A. Smith, "Introduction." *Afro-Paradise: Blackness, Violence, and Performance in Brazil.* University of Illinois press, 2016.
[26] Joao Costa Vargas. "The Inner City and the Favela: Transnational Black Politics." *Race & Class*, vol. 44, no. 4, Apr. 2003, pp. 19–40, doi:10.1177/03063968030444002.

the rights and privileges that citizenship grants to other racial groups within these nations?

Further, why is it that Black people, such as Pedro Gonzaga and Jenifer Gomes, can be publicly

executed by security guards and the police without repercussions? The Black populations in

both Brazil and the United States are an oppressed group of people. As defined by scholar Iris

Marion Young in *Five Faces of Oppression*, "oppression means the exercise of tyranny by a

ruling group" and refers to "structural phenomena that immobilize or diminish a group".[27] My

research explores the anti-Black oppression within these countries that create these outcomes

for Black people in both Brazil and the United States. In evaluating, anti-Blackness, "the notion

that the construction of Blacks as non-human structures the status of all other racial groups"

and the negation of the Black body, this thesis explores why exclusion of Black people and the

reinforcement of Black subjugation are the foundations of the systems within the United States

and Brazil.[28]

Research Topic

I argue that racial ideologies, such as "racial democracy" in Brazil and "color-blindness"

in America are concepts presented to mystify race and race relations in these countries. These

discourses, which I argue are inherently anti-Black, get framed as racially progressive while

simultaneously hiding the ways that Black people are being marginalized, oppressed, and killed.

My thesis engages an emerging transnational discourse on the centrality of anti-Blackness in

societies that emerged in the context of the Post-Columbus "New World". More specifically, I

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[27] Iris Marion Young. "Five Faces of Oppression." *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 2011, pp. 39–65., doi:10.2307/j.ctvcm4g4q.7.

[28] Victor Erik Ray, et al. "Critical Race Theory, Afro-Pessimism, and Racial Progress Narratives." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, vol. 3, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 147–158, doi:10.1177/2332649217692557.

am looking at North and South America, the "New World", a world defined by not only racial slavery, but also settler-colonialism, which is "an ongoing system of power that perpetuates the genocide and repression of indigenous peoples and cultures" through the displacement of indigenous peoples from their land.[29] Colonizers destroy natives' lives and culture to replace the native population and establish themselves as the rightful owners and inhabitants of the land.[30] I am exploring the implications this history of colonialism and slavery has for informing the ways in which Black people in both Brazil and the United States are viewed today. Why is it that in nations that pose ideas of racial democracy, color-blindness and detachment from race, there is often persistent structural and state violence that works to oppress, marginalize, and kill Black people? In the United States, the color-blind approach is in the claim that both white Americans and the United States have evolved and transformed their ideas surrounding race bringing us to the "Post-Racial" period in which the nation is proclaimed to exist within currently. "Post-Racial" is the term used to label an era in which society is no longer functioning through discriminating on the basis of race. In Brazil, progress is framed as all races coming together to create a uniquely multi-racial and multi-cultural society, united under Brazil's unique ethnic identity, in a nation characterized by social equality. Meanwhile, in the United States, racial progress is framed from a position of "color-blindness," or not seeing race. I argue that both forms of "progress" are rooted in ignoring and erasing Black existence. Further, the foundational arguments of these ideologies are static, but their meaning in relation to specific

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[29] Alicia Cox. "Settler Colonialism ." *Oxford Bibliographies*, Oxford University Press, 26 July 2017, www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780190221911/obo-9780190221911-0029.xml#firstMatch.
[30] *Ibid.*

situations and conditions mutates to fit the narrative of progress that is being circulated at the time. Which leads me to the question, is it actually progress if certain groups have to be wiped out of the body politic or ignored to claim this progress?

In Brazil and the United States, anti-Blackness transcends culture, language, geography, and ideology, as it is at the core of the institutions and structures within both of these nations. Both countries have presented to the world the fictional idea that every citizen within these countries, regardless of race, skin color, sex, has access to the same resources, safety, and economic opportunities. This thesis critiques the logics of racial democracy and color-blindness from an Afro-Pessimist perspective. My thesis shows the contradictions in the dominant racial narratives of both of these countries through an analysis of Brazilian and American slavery, residential segregation, and police violence. I argue that Blackness has been racialized as inherently non-citizen, which normalizes the continuation of anti-Black oppression, marginalization, and genocidal acts that occur within Brazil and the United States. As defined in Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Genocide is defined as "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group".[31] With this kind of exclusion and marginality, Black

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[31]*OFFICE OF THE UN SPECIAL ADVISER ON THE PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE (OSAPG).* ttps://www.un.org/ar/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/osapg_analysis_framework.pdf.

people become even more vulnerable to certain types of violence imposed directly by the state, including, but not limited to, both physical and structural violence which create conditions that force a racially identifiable group to premature and preventable death.

In my first chapter, I explore the histories of racial slavery within the United States and Brazil to connect how these histories have shaped contemporary anti-Blackness. For many scholars and lay-people, slavery has been traditionally seen as a labor relationship between a master and the physical work output of the slave. I argue that slavery has more expansive implications than this. Using insights from Black Studies and Afro-pessimism, I investigate both the political and libidinal economies of slavery which is the economy fueled by the profitability of slave labor and the economy fueled by the profitability of the spectacle of Blackness and the desensitization of Black pain. Looking closely at the institution of slavery which provided Black people with centuries of pain through "rape, whippings, murder, the dismemberment of families, and forced subjugation, illiteracy and abject poverty, as described by Dr. Carol Anderson in *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*, my thesis analyzes the implications that racial slavery has for Black people's legal and social status in these nations today.[32] Further, I explore how racial slavery and citizenship were mutually constituted in both of these countries, and look closely at the implications slavery has for citizenship in both of these countries today. Looking at how the New World ideologies of slavery, citizenship and humanity overlap which helps to reinforce the social standing of different racial groups within these countries.

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[32] Carol Anderson. *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*., 2016. Print.

The second chapter of this thesis focuses on the ideologies of racial democracy and racial color-blindness. Using statistics and government census reports, I provide a summary of how race is socially constructed in different ways in Brazil and the United States. I analyze the histories of racial democracy in Brazil and racial color-blindness in America to provide the contextual background of when and why these ideologies were created, and to analyze the intent behind the terms. Using an Afro-pessimistic lens, I investigate how these ideologies embellish the façade of racial progress within their respective nations, and the implications this façade has for Black people and their existence.

The third chapter of this thesis investigates the connections between anti-Blackness and the physical marginalization of Black people through a brief history and comparative analysis of the formation and state maintenance of favelas in Brazil and ghettos in the United States. Using works from Saar and Palang and Katherine McKittrick, I differentiate between the terms space and place, and critically analyze how Black people create a Black sense of place within these residentially segregated neighborhoods to further their communities and create an identity and culture. Thinking through the favela and the ghetto using an Afro-pessimistic framework, I analyze how residential segregation began as a way to oppress and disenfranchise Black people, but over time has become a genocidal force that produces specific outcomes for Black people. Lastly, I evaluate the implications that ideologies such as racial democracy and racial color-blindness in regards to housing segregation have for Black people, and how these ideologies reinforce the paradox of anti-Blackness, obscuring the genocidal acts that are enacted upon Black people in these neighborhoods everyday.

The final chapter discusses state and police violence, by exploring police brutality, mortality, and the lethal violence imposed on Black people in both the United States and Brazil. I compare significant events of police brutality within the United States and Brazil, using statistics from both nations on violence and homicide by the police over a wide range of years, and the literature written on this topic by Afro-Brazilian and Black American scholars. I posit that these analyses expose Brazil and the US as countries in the New World, that build on their histories of slavery to produce nations rooted in anti-Blackness, and use tactics such as state violence to reinforce Black people's positions in society. I draw connections between the instances of Black people constantly being abused, beaten and killed by state officers (police/ military personnel) and the meaning this violence has for Black people, Black life, and citizenship.

I employ a comparative analysis between the United States in Brazil throughout each section of my paper. I am specifically citing from ethnography, cultural studies, and historical sources to inform and craft my discussion on anti-Blackness. My methods also consist of thematic analysis, multi-media analysis, and a conceptual analysis to investigate and explore the multiple layers of my thesis project. First, I became familiar with my data which consisted of the literature I use to ground and inform my arguments. Then, I searched for overarching themes within the texts, identifying which texts explored topics pertaining to one or both of the countries. I also determined which themes or practices appeared in both the United States and Brazil to establish which institutions, ideologies, and systems I would cross-analyze in my paper. I made sure to choose themes that appeared in both contexts, as well as had an extensive literature in which I could pull from to efficiently compare and contrast the two. I reviewed

these themes, defined them, and ensured that I thoroughly understood the literature
surrounding them, in addition to any underlying concepts that may be associated. I cross-
referenced different texts, identifying arguments for these themes and concepts to highlight
the similarities and differences between the existing literature. Then, I documented the major
themes, concepts, and arguments that I wanted to address in my research. I relied on different
forms of media, specifically books, peer-reviewed articles, and television/ videos to inform my
research and several of the arguments I advance throughout my thesis. My research questions
are as follows:

- How do Black people experience anti-Blackness in both the United States and Brazil?

- What is the relationship between Blackness and citizenship in both the United States
  and the Brazil?

- What is the connection between Blackness and residential segregation in these two
  contexts?

- How is anti-Blackness experienced and institutionalized in Brazil and the United States?

Chapter 1

Introduction

The institution of slavery in both the United States and Brazil is critical to understanding and explaining Black existence, Black life and the position of Black people in the racial structure that continues to exist in these nations today. For Afro-pessimism, slave relation is the structuring factor of Black life. According to these theorists, ideas about what it means to be human were developed during the transatlantic slave trade.[33] Scholar Sara-Maria Sorentino asserts that slavery produces the consideration of Black being as nonhuman because "humanity excluded the status of being enslaved" and because Black people lacked human markers such as, "ownership of their bodies and the ability to reason".[34] Whiteness became the standard for human, as white people were free and rational. Whiteness developed in antagonism to Blackness, since Black people were non-human due to their enslavement and incapability of reason.[35] After slavery, Africans and African-descended people emerged from the institution and the middle passage as Black, "a racialized group of not quite humans and the permanently subjugated property of whites," a permanent subjugation that Afro-Pessimist scholars labeled social death.[36] For these scholars, slavery is social death due to the following characteristics: First, natal alienation which refers to the way that slavery severed the ties of enslaved Africans

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[33] Victor Erik Ray, et al. "Critical Race Theory, Afro-Pessimism, and Racial Progress Narratives." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, vol. 3, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 147–158, doi:10.1177/2332649217692557.
[34] *Ibid*.
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] *Ibid.*

to their family and to Africa which made Blacks a people without legitimate ties to homeland or origin. Second, gratuitous violence which is the structural violence used by whites to establish and maintain the institution of slavery, which has persisted today in the form of violence against Black people simply because they are Black.[37] Lastly, social dishonor which Is due to the fact that the institution of slavery attempted to turn Black people into objects to be "stockpiled and sold", rather than into human subjects.[38] After the abolition of slavery, "the formal determinations of slavery were subsumed under the racial category of blackness (synonymous with the construction of 'race')" which naturalized slave relation as the quintessential principle of Black existence.[39] Black people's distinct history with slavery and thus, the experience of social death, makes Black existence different than other racial groups. This chapter provides a brief history of slavery in both the US and Brazil to provide context into the roles enslaved people played in these societies, the conditions they were subjected to, and the limited amount of rights they were given to investigate the importance of the institution of slavery for Black existence and anti-Blackness in contemporary society.

Historical Background

In order to understand the persistent anti-Blackness, incessant violence against Black people, and constant disregard for Black life that currently exists in Brazil and the United States, it is important to think about the historical background of both of these countries. Brazil is located in the eastern region of South America. Brazil is the largest country in both South and

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[37] *Ibid.*

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.

Latin America with a population density of 24.66 people per square kilometers.[40] As of 2019, the current population of Brazil is estimated to be 212.39 million people.[41] The largest and most populous city in Brazil is São Paulo, followed by Rio de Janeiro with populations of 11.9 million people and 6.35 million people respectively.[42] On the other hand, as of 2018, the United States had a population of 328.2 people making it the third largest country in the world.[43] California, home to over 39.5 million people, is the most populous state in the US and São Paulo state is the largest state in Brazil, with 45.5 million people.[44] Brazil expands across almost half of the South American continent with an area of 3,286,488 sq mi, while the United States is 3,797,000 sq mi.[45] In addition to being comparable in geographic size, these countries historical roots have very stark similarities.

In the early 1500's and 1600's, what we now know as Brazil and the United States of America were settled by European colonists, Brazil by the Portuguese and US by the Spanish, French, Dutch, and British. As these settler colonies established themselves on these continents, the colonizers began to look for groups to fuel their labor force in hopes of growing their economies. Indigenous people had long existed in both Brazil and America and were initially forced into slavery, but due to several factors within both countries, colonial authorities

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[40] Brazil Population. (2018-09-24). Retrieved 2019-02-11, from http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/brazil/

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] United States Population. (2018-11-21). Retrieved 2019-02-12, from http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/united-states/

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] "Brazil - Location, Size, and Extent." *Encyclopedia of the Nations*, www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Americas/Brazil-LOCATION-SIZE-AND-EXTENT.html.

instead decided to rely heavily and eventually solely on African slaves.[46] This transition from

reliance on indigenous peoples for free labor to reliance on African peoples can partly be

credited to Bartolemé de las Casas. Throughout the sixteenth century, slavery was widely

accepted by European nations, specifically Spain, which is why Spanish conquerors enslaved

many indigenous peoples when they settled in the New World.[47] In 1502, las Casas arrived in

what is now Haiti and the Dominican Republic, joining military expeditions against indigenous

peoples and eventually becoming a priest.[48] He was also a land and slave owner.[49] After

participating in the Spanish invasion of Cuba, las Casas began to view "European interference in

native affairs as illegal and amoral," which led him to shame, beg, and petition the "Spanish

crown to end its practices of violent invasion and enslavement". Instead of the enslavement of

indigenous peoples, las Casas advocated for the use of African slaves, as they were considered

"to be hardier than natives". In arguing for the enslavement of Africans over indigenous people,

Bartolemé de las Casas devalued Black existence and posited Black people outside the lines of

humanity. His argument justified the usage of one race of human being for racial slavery as

acceptable, as opposed to another race. This connects to Afro-pessimist theory because it

demonstrates that even before racial slavery began, individuals who immigrated from the "Old

World" already possessed a cognitive dissonance between Blackness and humanity. As argued

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[46] Paulina L. Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil*. University of North Carolina Press, 2011, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9780807877715_alberto.

[47] Dani Anthony. "July 2015: Bartolomé De Las Casas and 500 Years of Racial Injustice | Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective." *Origins*, July 2015, origins.osu.edu/milestones/july-2015-bartolom-de-las-casas-and-500-years-racial-injustice.

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] *Ibid.*

by Sylvia Wynter, Bartolemé de las Casas was the direct cause of Charles V allowing the first

transport of 4000 African slaves to Jamaica in 1518.[50] Before African slaves were brought to

Brazil in the early 1500's, Indigenous people were held captive and responsible for plantation

labor.[51] Due to their involvement in the Atlantic slave trade, both the United States and Brazil

were legally able to own African peoples as slaves, exploiting them for a variety of tasks,

including labor, over hundreds of years. In the Old World, anti-Blackness was prevalent in the

ways in which Black people were viewed. A cognitive dissonance between Black people and

humanity existed, as demonstrated by Bartolemé de las Casas, which is why it was acceptable

to enslave Black people over other racial groups, like indigenous people. In the "New World,"

this cognitive dissonance has expanded from the slave relation to inform the thought process

behind the formation of institutions that have placed and continue to keep Black people at the

bottom of civil society. The defining characteristics of "New World" anti-Blackness are

"structural vulnerability to appropriation, perpetual and involuntary openness, including all the

wanton uses of the body".[52] These are the defining conditions of Black (in)existence in the

"New World".[53] In the Americas, the Black individual, whether enslaved or free, lives under the

commandment of whites.[54]

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[50] Sylvia Wynter. (1984a). "New Seville and the Conversion Experience of Bartolomé de Las Casas: Part One". Jamaica Journal. **17** (2): 25–32.

[51] Natalie Arsenault, and Christopher Rose, "Africa Enslaved: A Curriculum Unit on Comparative Slave Systems for Grades 9 -12." *Slavery In Brazil*, UTexas.edu, Mar. 2006, liberalarts.utexas.edu/hemispheres/_files/pdf/slavery/Slavery_in_Brazil.pdf.

[52] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] Jared Sexton, 'Racial Profiling and the Societies of Control' in Joy James (Ed.), *Warfare in the Homeland: Policing and Prison in a Penal Democracy*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007.

Slavery in Brazil

The Portuguese arrived in Brazil in the year 1500.[55] Similar to many European empires at

the time, the Portuguese traveled around the world looking for lands to conquer in their quest

to expand the Portuguese empire.[56] Upon their first arrival to Brazil, the Portuguese were

marginally interested in the land they sailed upon.[57] At the time, there wasn't a demand for the

tropical products that the region produced which created little demand from the expanding

empire to immediately develop the land. [58] It wasn't until other European rivals arrived to the

land and contested Portuguese's control that they realized the profitability of the land and

decided to fight to maintain control and completely colonize the land.[59] At the time, the land

was already populated by between approximately 1 and 7 million indigenous people.[60] While

indigenous people of Brazil were readily available, it was difficult for the Portuguese to contain

central control of them to exploit them. The difficulty in gaining control was largely due to the

fact that native Brazilians were scattered across the continent and the Atlantic coastline.[61]

Additionally, they had the "ability to escape from coastal plantations," spoke "more than one

hundred different languages," their exposure to European disease caused a sharp demographic

[55] Paulina L. Alberto. *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil*. University of North Carolina Press, 2011, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9780807877715_alberto.
[56] Herbert S. Klein, and Francisco Vidal. Luna. *Slavery in Brazil*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] *Ibid.*
[59] *Ibid.*
[60] Paulina L. Alberto. *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil*. University of North Carolina Press, 2011, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9780807877715_alberto.
[61] *Ibid.*

decline, and the Crown opposed their enslavement.[62] Due to the plethora of impediments

involved in using native Brazilians to fuel the economy, the Portuguese colonists decided to use

enslaved African people which they already had experience with in their other lands.[63] During

this time, the Indigenous population in Brazil was granted a level of protection that did not

extend to African people. The Portuguese Crown instituted a series of reforms that brought

Indigenous people under the protection of the state, abolished legal differences between

natives and whites, encouraged the marriage between these groups, and declared natives

free.[64] On the other hand, these Crown mandated reforms did not extend to Africans.[65]

During this time the Portuguese were one of the powers dominating the Atlantic Slave

Trade, which meant they could import slaves into Brazil with ease and low economic cost.[66]

Enslaved Africans in Brazil became the driving force of Brazil's economy. Through the

exploitation of enslaved African people, Brazil became a dominant force in the global sugar

market in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[67] The production of sugar in Brazil,

produced by enslaved Africans, brought immense wealth to Brazil, allowing its economy to

expand.[68] In the eighteenth century, slaves were called to work in southwest Salvador due to

the "rapid growth of gold and diamond mining in the inland mountains".[69] As time went on, the

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[62] *Ibid.*

[63] *Ibid.*

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] *Ibid.*

[66] Herbert S. Klein, and Francisco Vidal. Luna. *Slavery in Brazil*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] Paulina L. Alberto. *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil*. University of North Carolina Press, 2011, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9780807877715_alberto.

[69] *Ibid.*

Portuguese were able emerge into other industries such as the coffee industry which led to the cultivation of coffee plantations fueled by the labor of enslaved people.[70] The colonizers in Brazil became leaders in many different industries, ensuring the stability of their economy built on the exploitation of enslaved Africans. In 1822, Brazil gained independence from Portugal. Brazil's independence did not have a major affect on enslaved people, as the institution of slavery continued. Enslaved Africans became essential to the economy, as they were utilized in an increasing number of diverse areas throughout Brazil over the course of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. In 1819, three years before independence, the numbers of enslaved Africans had significantly increased with enslaved Blacks and mulattoes making up 66 percent of the population of Goias, 42.5 percent in Alagoas, 38.3 percent in São Paulo, 30.8 percent in Bahia, and 30.6 percent in Rio Grande do Sul.[71] African slavery had grown into a nationwide phenomenon, and thus, was essential to the success of the economy and the nation, which allowed slavery to persist.

In Brazil, enslaved people had very few rights. Enslaved people could be bought and sold through both the Atlantic Slave Trade and the internal slave trade which operated within the nation of Brazil. Enslaved people were personally held responsible for crimes they committed, but were not granted the same protections when crimes were enacted upon them. [72] Marriage between enslaved Africans were valid in the eyes of the church, but were often not

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[70] *Ibid.*

[71] Leslie B. Rout. "Race and Slavery in Brazil." *The Wilson Quarterly (1976-)*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1976, pp. 73–89. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40255136.

[72] Carl N. Degler; Slavery in Brazil and the United States: An Essay in Comparative History, *The American Historical Review*, Volume 75, Issue 4, 1 April 1970, Pages 1004–1028, https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/75.4.1004

acknowledged nor honored by their masters.[73] Brazil had no legal protection for enslaved

families. While not certain, "there is little doubt that the disruption of the slave family was

common".[74] It was not until 1869 that a law was passed and eventually enacted nine years later

to prevent the disruption of enslaved families.[75] Further, the quality of life on plantations for

enslaved people was very poor in Brazil. There was a high rate of child mortality amongst

enslaved Africans.[76] Simple hygienic measures were often neglected which led to these rates of

mortality, but also decreased the ability for enslaved Africans to reproduce.[77] While these are

only a small amount of the practices and treatments of enslaved people in Brazil, these

examples demonstrate the struggles and inhumane conditions placed upon enslaved Africans,

and the inhumanity inherently associated with the institution of slavery. In 1888, with the

passing of Lei Aurea, also known as the "Golden Rule" signed by Princess Isabel, slavery was

officially abolished in Brazil making it the "last society in the Americas" to end involuntary

servitude.[78][79] Slavery was not unique to Brazil during this time, across the seas in Northern

America, the United States also had an economy that thrived from the free labor provided by

enslaved African people.

Slavery in the US

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[73] *Ibid.*

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.*

[76] *Ibid.*

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] Michelle Park. "History of Slavery and Abolition in Brazil." *Exodus Cry*, Exodus Cry , 30 Aug. 2013, exoduscry.com/blog/general/history-of-slavery-and-abolition-in-brazil/.

[79] Paulina L. Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil*. University of North Carolina Press, 2011, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9780807877715_alberto.

In the early 1600's, the British arrived to the New World, establishing their first

permanent settlement in Jamestown in 1607.[80] In 1619, slavery began in America when a Dutch

ship brought 20 enslaved Africans among the shores in this new British colony.[81] While

indentured servants, who were often poor Europeans, already existed in Jamestown, European

settlers used African slaves as a "cheaper, more plentiful" alternative source of labor. In the

eighteenth century alone, It is estimated that between 6 to 7 million enslaved Africans were

imported into the "New World" from the African continent.[82] In the early years of settlement,

specifically the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, African slaves primarily worked on

tobacco, rice, and indigo plantations in what is currently known as Maryland, extending through

Virginia to Georgia.[83] Work on these crops continued until the American Revolution (1775-

1783) In which the American colonies separated from British control.[84] After the American

Revolution, many Northern colonists began to view slavery as an oppressive institution, and

begin to call for its abolition.[85] However, the same could not be said of the Southerners who

began to face an economic crisis due to the exhaustion of the lands they used to grow

tobacco.[86] By the late eighteenth century, the South would switch from its economic

dependence on tobacco to a dependence on cotton whose large-scale production reinforced

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[80] "Britain in the New World." *Ushistory.org*, Independence Hall Association, www.ushistory.org/us/2.asp.
[81] *Ibid.*
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] *Ibid.*
[84] History.com Editors. "The American Revolution Begins." *HISTORY*, A&E Television Networks, 13 Nov. 2009, www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-american-revolution-begins.
[85] History.com Editors. "Slavery in America." *HISTORY*, A&E Television Networks, 12 Nov. 2009, www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery.
[86] *Ibid.*

their dependence on the free labor from enslaved African people.[87] Between the late

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Northern states abolished slavery.[88] Meanwhile,

despite the abolishment of the Atlantic slave trade in 1808, "the slave population nearly tripled

over the next 50 years", as a result of the reproduction of enslaved women already in the US.[89]

The institution of slavery would live on within the US for several more decades, fueling the US

economy through the exploitation of African-descended people.

Slave owners controlled most aspects of enslaved people's lives through a system of

restrictive rules and codes. Enslaved Africans were usually barred from learning how to read

and write.[90] Enslaved people were not allowed to own property, or to assemble in large groups

without the presence of a white person.[91] Further, they were restricted by laws that limited

their movements and gave them a set curfew.[92] Another aspect of their life that was governed

by their masters and the law was marriage. According to law, "slave marriages had no legal

basis," but slaves continued to marry and raise families.[93] However, this did not stop slave

owners from dividing up families by selling spouses and children to different locations, or

removing family members from their property.[94] Enslaved people's limited amount of rights,

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[87] *Ibid.*

[88] *Ibid.*

[89] *Ibid.*

[90] Joyce Tang. "Enslaved African Rebellions in Virginia." *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 27, no. 5, 1997, pp. 598–614. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2784871.

[91] "Britain in the New World." *Ushistory.org*, Independence Hall Association, www.ushistory.org/us/2.asp.

[92] Ibid; Joyce Tang. "Enslaved African Rebellions in Virginia." *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 27, no. 5, 1997, pp. 598–614. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2784871.;

[93] History.com Editors. "Slavery in America." *HISTORY*, A&E Television Networks, 12 Nov. 2009, www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery.

[94] Ibid.

both according to law and to social standards, ensured they would remain inferior to their

owners. Throughout the nineteenth century, a number of rebellions, raids, and laws were

passed that led to the Civil War in the US. The events that led up to the Civil War included, the

election of Abraham Lincoln as president who had established his anti-slavery views and the

secession of seven Southern states from the US to form the "Confederate States of America". [95]

The original main aim of the war was to preserve the US as a nation. The goals of the war were

later extended to include the abolition of slavery "due to military necessity, growing anti-

slavery sentiment in the North and the self-emancipation of many African Americans who fled

enslavement" in the South.[96] In 1862, during the war, Lincoln issued a preliminary Emancipation

Proclamation that was officially signed in January of 1863 which declared slaves free.[97] After

the war, slavery was officially abolished with the enactment of the 13th amendment.[98]

Slavery as a structuring institution in the United States and Brazil

Slavery in both Brazil and the United States was used to racialize Blackness, classify

Black people as inferior, and to justify the subjugation and mistreatment of an entire

population of people. In Racial Formation in the United States, Omi and Winant define the term

racialization as a means "to signify the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially

unclassified relationship, social practice, or group."[99] Race has been socially constructed to

create a racial hierarchy in which white people have defined who they are based on the

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[95] *Ibid.*
[96] *Ibid.*
[97] *Ibid.*
[98] *Ibid.*
[99] Michael Omi., and Howard Winant. "Racial Formations." *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 1994.

establishment of the "other", or who they are not. The idea of race in America and Brazil was developed in the discovery of the "New World" by Europeans. It was created to justify the mistreatment of racially distinct groups of people in the process of "discovering" America. This mistreatment includes, but is not limited to the colonization of Native Americans, conversion of these groups into western Christianity, stealing of their land and freedom, and the commodification of humans into chattel, processes apparent in both the US and Brazil. Europeans ability to distinguish themselves from racially distinct others as superior human beings, rationalized why some people "should be "free" and others enslaved, why some had rights to land and property while others did not."[100] Blackness was one of those characteristics that would be marginalized and racialized as the antithesis of the "norm". As Afro-pessimist scholars argue, Black people were stripped of "human markers," such as, ownership of their bodies and access to agency or the ability to reason..[101] Following this logic, it is clear how the association between people of African descent with inhumanity was formed, codified into law, and ingrained into American society today. The idea of racial formation introduced by Omi and Winant, plays a large role into the institution of slavery and the philosophy behind it which lead to its global presence in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries.

Slavery is most commonly analyzed, discussed, and taught as a labor-based institution. Slavery allowed Europeans to legally create a market and labor force out of human beings, most often Black human beings. Europeans bought and sold slaves both locally and

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Victor Erik Ray, et al. "Critical Race Theory, Afro-Pessimism, and Racial Progress Narratives." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, vol. 3, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 147–158, doi:10.1177/2332649217692557.

internationally, fueling both their internal economy and external economy though international trade, building upon this income to develop the countries in which they colonized.[102] Slaves were a source of free labor. They not only tended to their masters and their masters' homes, but they also tended to the fields and crops that their owners produced and sold. Enslaved women were exploited and used as a means of reproduction to produce more slaves for their masters, that would age and mature to either be used as a means of more free labor on the plantation, or as a means of increase in money through the slave auction block. Despite the emotional, physical, and mental trauma slaves experienced, to the masters and beneficiaries of this institution, slavery brought a wide range of benefits that could not be replaced. In addition to the monetary benefits slavery provided to both the nations and the individuals within them, slaves were also used to reinforce a hierarchy which placed white people, allegedly inherently, at the top. In both the US and Brazil, enslaved people were subjected to sets of strict laws that stripped them of access to free movement, legal marriage, literacy, and a number of other rights as a way to enforce whites' ownership of their bodies and solidify their subjugation under white people which worked to establish and reinforce their non-human status, an argument of Afro-pessimist theory.

Throughout this time, a number of arguments were circulated to justify the institution of slavery. Southern Protestants and Christians argued that enslaved people were apart of the natural order of the universe – slaves' involuntary servitude was claimed to be God's master

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[102] "SLAVERY." *Principles of Islamic International Criminal Law: A Comparative Search*, by Farhad Malekian, Brill, LEIDEN; BOSTON, 2011, pp. 225–236. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h3dt.19.

plan.[103] Thomas Jefferson and other Southern proponents of slavery argued that enslaved

people were inferior and not fully human, therefore their suffering was not important because

they were inferior beings.[104] Several scientific theories supporting the belief that people of

African descent were naturally inferior due to their inherent "racial biology" were

disseminated. These theories, known as scientific racism, alleged that Black people were

naturally inferior due to their low IQ, smaller brains, darker skin complexion, incompetence,

and inability to learn.[105] Scientific racism was used as the basis for many arguments that

justified slavery, one being that slavery was good for enslaved African people because it

allowed them to be in a system which others controlled their lives since they lacked the ability

to control and lead their lives for themselves.[106] These justifications for slavery as an institution,

more specifically the enslavement of people of African descent, demonstrates that slavery was

more than a means of free labor, but that there is also a moral, philosophical, and ideological

component to the institution. What does it mean to turn a human being into chattel?

      Contemporary scholarship in Black studies argues that racial slavery is ideologically and

materially driven by two concurrent forces in both the United States and Brazil— the political

economy and the libidinal economy. The study of the political and libidinal economy of slavery

is often credited to Afro-Pessimist scholars such as, Frank B. Wilderson, Christina Sharpe, Jared

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[103] Elizabeth L. Jemison. "Proslavery Christianity After the Emancipation." *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, vol. 72, no. 4, 2013, pp. 255–268. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/43825502.
[104] *Ibid.*
[105] Rutledge M. Dennis. "Social Darwinism, Scientific Racism, and the Metaphysics of Race." *The Journal of Negro Education*, vol. 64, no. 3, 1995, pp. 243–252. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2967206.
[106] "Ethics - Slavery: Attempts to Justify Slavery." *BBC*, BBC, www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/slavery/ethics/justifications.shtml.

Sexton and Saidiya Hartman. The political economy of slavery refers to slavery as a source of

labor extraction and a free labor force that socially situates enslaved people within the category

of the unassimilable other and justifies their exploitation. Libidinal economy is "the economy or

distribution and arrangement of desire and identification of energies, concerns, points of

attention, anxieties, pleasures, appetites, revulsions, and phobias…".[107] The libidinal economy

of slavery refers to the pleasure and enjoyment that is received from situating Black people as

the unassimilable other. Further, the libidinal economy refers to the spectacle of Blackness that

has become profitable through the desensitization of Black pain. Afro-Pessimism decenters "the

analysis of the political economy by discerning the libidinal economy that underwrites and

sutures its dynamics".[108] The political economy of slavery is what brought money into these

nations. It allowed them to capitalize on different industries to not only grow their nations, but

to expand their empires and become a dominant force in the global market. The libidinal

economy is the pleasure white or white descendant peoples received from subordinating a

group of people and exerting their dominance over their lives. The political economy and the

libidinal economy of slavery are interconnected and work together to rationalize and

substantiate both the mistreatment and abuse of Black people, as well as, as their social status

within both the United States and Brazil. The institution of slavery established a racial hierarchy

that placed Black people at the bottom, which has formed the basis for how Black people are

continuously viewed within these nations and the limited access Black people have to the full

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[107] Frank B. Wilderson. *AFROPESSIMISM AN INTRODUCTION*. Racked & Dispatched, 2017.
[108] Jared Sexton. "Afro-Pessimism: The Unclear Word. 2016 ." *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge*, 2016, www.rhizomes.net/issue29/sexton.html.

rights and privileges extended to non-Black citizens within these societies today. This argument

has important implications as we think through why anti-Blackness continues to be a persistent,

violent force in the lives of Black people in Brazil and the US.

Chapter 2

The persistence of involuntary servitude in the United States and Brazil can partly be credited to the racialization of Blackness in both of these nations. As defined by Joshua Inwood in *Racialized Places, Racialized Bodies: The Impact of Racialization on Individual and Place Identities*, "processes of racialization involve the use of biological criteria (ie. Phenotype etc.) to separate people into distinct groups for the purpose of domination and exploitation". The process of racialization of Blackness in Brazil and the US labeled Black people as inherently inferior which was used to justify their enslavement. This labeling took place through the linking of phenotype and supposed biological characteristics, which for white people demonstrated that Black people were biologically inept and incapable of governing their own lives, explaining why Black people should assume the role of slaves within these societies. Thus, the social construction of race arose out of paternalistic efforts to structure the everyday lives of Black people in a way that would also benefit their oppressors. As Afro-pessimists argue, I also contend that the dehumanizing condition of chattel slavery informs Black existence in both of these nations and the racial and social structure embedded within contemporary civil society.

In these two multiracial countries, race is socially constructed in different ways. Race in Brazil often refers to skin color and physical appearance, whereas in the United States, race refers mostly to ancestry.[109] According to the US Census Bureau, in 2017, out of a population estimate of 325,719,178 people, Black or African-Americans alone make up 13.4% of the population.[110] On the other hand, according to the World Bank, as of 2017, the sum of Brazil's

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[109] *Ibid.*

[110] "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: UNITED STATES." *Census Bureau QuickFacts*, United States Census Bureau, www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217.

total population was 209,288,278. [111] However, in a country in which its citizens, even those

that descend from African ancestry refuse to identify as Black and/or brown, census groups

have struggled with collecting data for exact numbers of racial demographics in Brazil. Since

census data is based on self-reported information, and a large number of Brazilians have only

recently begun to acknowledge their African ancestry, gathering racial demographics in Brazil

has been extremely difficult and sometimes misleading. Nonetheless, by using the existing data,

scholars and organizations have been able to determine that Brazil has the highest Black

population outside of Africa. This makes Brazil the second largest Black nation in the world,

after Nigeria.[112] According to the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia (the Brazilian Census), "48%

of the population (about 92 million) described themselves as White (branco); 43.80% (about 83

million) as Brown (pardo), 6.84% (about 13 million) as Black (preto); 0.58% (about 1.1 million)

as Asian (amerelo); and 0.28% (about 536 thousand) as Amerindian (officially called *indígena*,

Indigenous), while 0.07% (about 130 thousand) did not declare their race". [113]

  I have chosen Brazil and the United States for a comparative analysis because both of

these countries have particular histories with slavery and racialization in the past, which inform

the ways that Black individuals exist within these nations in the present. I argue that these

systems are anchored by anti-Blackness which places Black people at the bottom of the societal

ladder which structures the status of all racial groups, making it hard for these individuals to

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[111] Population, Total." *Population, Brazil | Data*, The World Bank: Data ,
data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=US.
[112] Tom Phillips. "Brazil Census Shows African-Brazilians in the Majority for the First Time." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 17 Nov. 2011,
www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/17/brazil-census-african-brazilians-majority.
[113] 2008 PNAD, IBGE. "População residente por cor ou raça, situação e sexo.

receive the rights and protections extended to white and non-Black citizens within these societies. Anti-Blackness displays itself in different forms in these nations, but still produces similar tactics against and outcomes for Black people. In this thesis, I am comparing and contrasting Brazil and the United States, using an approach that analyzes anti-Blackness transnationally. I probe the historical background of slavery within these countries, the segregation, murder, and demobilization of Black people through strategic structures and systems created by these nations, and the rhetoric and ideology advanced in both nations surrounding progress. Using this and an Afro-Pessimist framework, I aim to counter the notions of racial progress pushed forward within these nations to create a more critical view of the nature of and necessity for anti-Blackness in the western world.

History of Racial Democracy in Brazil

In Brazil, notions of progress display itself in the form of a widely believed and widely circulated ideology titled racial democracy. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, the nation of Brazil struggled as it tried to emerge itself as a world power, attempting to join the ranks of already existing white nations. In an attempt to join this community, Brazil attempted to "whiten" the country. These efforts to whiten society were attempted through specific actions that affected who could immigrate into Brazil and who had access to certain economic and social institutions. For example, using legal means, Brazil prohibited the immigration of African and Asian people into the country in an attempt to exclude non-whites from Brazil's genetic pool.[114] Further, employers throughout the nation would display open preferences for

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[114] George Reid Andrews. "Brazilian Racial Democracy, 1900-90: An American Counterpoint." *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1996, pp. 483–507. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/261017.

European immigrants, rather than the native-born workers, limiting the income of natives

which affected their ability to obtain a substantial salary and, thus, their socioeconomic

class.[115] During the 1930's, it became apparent that efforts to "whiten" and Europeanize were

unsuccessful.[116] It was at this time that the ideas behind racial democracy came into fruition.

Racial Democracy is a term coined by Black Brazilian scholar Abdias do Nascimento to

describe the "unique" racial relations within Brazil.[117] While this term was not widely used until

the 1950's, the ideas and literature surrounding race within Brazil, that laid the foundation for

this term, were introduced around 1930 by white sociologist Gilberto Freyre.[118] Freyre

accepted that Brazil was not and never would be a white or European nation, but rather that

"Brazil was destined to be a 'new world in the tropics': a uniquely American experiment in

which Europeans, Indians, and Africans had come together to create a genuinely multi-racial

and multi-cultural society".[119] Freyre's studies focused on the intermixing and interbreeding

between white people with indigenous and Black people to create a "unique combination of

peoples and cultures".[120] He, along with several other scholars, argued that "racial differences

are fluid and conditioned by class, and racial discrimination is mild and largely irrelevant".[121]

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[115] *Ibid.*

[116] *Ibid.*

[117] Paulina L. Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil*.
University of North Carolina Press, 2011,
www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9780807877715_alberto.

[118] *Ibid.*

[119] George Reid Andrews. "Brazilian Racial Democracy, 1900-90: An American
Counterpoint." *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1996, pp. 483–507. *JSTOR*,
www.jstor.org/stable/261017.

[120] *Ibid.*

[121] Edward Eric Telles. *Race in Another America: the Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*.
Princeton University Press, 2006.

These scholars argued that the racial disparities that existed at the time were only transitory, or a result of the years prior as the nation only recently abolished the enslavement of Blacks. Freyre's works were used by Brazilian politicians to promote Brazilian national identity and unite the nation based on a singular unique ethnic multi-racial identity. Trying to distinguish Brazil as a nation, "proponents of racial democracy were strongly motivated by their distaste for the United States' system of race relations, on which they relied heavily to demonstrate the distinctiveness and superiority of the Brazilian system".[122] The first half of the 1900's was fraught with descriptions of race relations in Brazil as "a 'racial democracy', in which blacks, mulattoes, and whites lived under conditions of juridical and, to a large degree, social equality," despite the disparities between races documented by the national census in earnings, life expectancy, and education, to name a few.[123] The term racial democracy in Brazil is a result of many different beliefs, one of which being Brazil's inability to realize that intermixing of people between races and with different cultures within a nation does not mean that inequality cannot exist based upon racial parameters. I argue that these scholars and individuals are not completely wrong because class is a determining factor in how Brazil's society is structured. However, these scholars often either ignore or diminish the impact that anti-Blackness has on the complexity of racial relations, placing anti-Blackness in the past in order to push forth a class-based narrative of inequality in order to make Brazil appear as a racially progressive nation.

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[122] George Reid Andrews. "Brazilian Racial Democracy, 1900-90: An American Counterpoint." *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1996, pp. 483–507. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/261017.
[123] *Ibid.*

Color-Blindness in America

Similar to racial democracy in Brazil, racial color-blindness in America is a tool used to embellish the façade of racial progression, while actually detracting from the racial bias that persists due to the lack of acknowledgement of discrimination, racism, and stigmatization created by the false impression of progress pushed forth through the ideology. Despite these issues, the color-blind ideology continues to be one key way that progress, in terms of race and race relations, is measured in America. During the late 1970's, America entered a time period that is often labeled "post-Civil Rights America". This label partly stemmed from the end of the Jim Crow era, a time filled with laws that enforced racial segregation. With the end of legally enforced racial segregation, society had to redefine the ways that social control reinforced the racial structure. The end of Jim Crow did not mean that racism and racist practices in America stopped or that the significance of race declined.[124] Rather, during this period, a new racial system emerged comprised of the following elements: "the increasingly covert nature of racial discourse and practice, the avoidance of direct racial terminology, the elaboration of a racial political agenda that eschews direct racial references, and the rearticulation of some racial practices of the past".[125] Scholars argue that this new system emerged for several reasons including the following: international forums began to challenge the US as a beacon of democracy because of the way minorities were treated, the civil rights movement and race riots frightened capitalists which led them to support changing the way racial business was conducted, and protests by Blacks, American Indians, and other minority groups that

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[124] *Ibid.*

[125] *Ibid.*

demanded change.[126] As a result of all of these events, America had to at least appear to address the demand for change, and, thus, a new system was formed.

The new racial system allowed for racially inequality to continue to be produced in a systemic way. In contrast to the old system, the dominant practices in the new system that produced racial inequality were no longer overt, to the extent that they seemed almost invisible and nonracial, which led to a form of "new racism". For example, during this time, the emergence of the Black middle class and the ability for Black people to advance their socioeconomic status was often used as evidence of the lack of discriminatory practices after the Civil Rights era. However, despite this advancement, Blacks still continued to earn less than whites at every educational level and were still "overrepresented among unskilled workers" and "underrepresented among managerial positions," which is evidence that systemically, discrimination still persisted .[127] The development of this new system and "new racism" which was characterized by covert forms of prejudice and discrimination, sparked the emergence of a new racial ideology. The new ideology, "racial color-blindness" was characterized by "raceless" explanations for obvious race-related affairs.[128] Since this time, an ideology of color-blindness has been promoted and widely circulated by American politicians, civilians, and scholars alike. Racial colorblindness is "the belief that racial group membership should not be taken into account, or even noticed".[129] People who subscribe to this approach often make statements

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[126] *Ibid.*

[127] *Ibid.*

[128] *Ibid.*

[129] Evan P. Apfelbaum, et al. "Racial Color Blindness: Emergence, Practice, and Implications." *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2012, pp. 205–209., www.jstor.org/stable/23213135.

such as, "I don't see color" or "I only see one race – the human race". This approach has become prevalent in discussions surrounding diversity in higher education and the workplace, school curricula, the law, college-admissions criteria, and public policy. [130] Further, the basis of this approach is prevalent in everyday interactions between white people and members of minority groups. The color-blind approach, often described as "not seeing race", is often used as a justification for different actions of people that subscribe to this approach to avoid being labeled as a racist. This ideology has allowed white people to use justifications, such as 'self-segregation in regards to housing is a choice because people should be allowed to live where they want', to avoid having to intervene to ameliorate the extent of persistent racial inequality in America.[131] Racial color-blindness is a post-racial ideology, as the approach attempts to remove the focus placed on race within everyday interactions and intergroup relations.

"Post-Racial" is the term used to label an era in which society is no longer functioning through discriminating on the basis of race. Scholars cite several problems with post-racial ideologies, including the color-blind approach. In *Confounding Anti-Racism: Mixture, Racial Democracy, and post-Racial Politics in Brazil*, scholar Alexandre Da Costa argues that the problem with post-racial ideologies is that these ideologies claim the non-significance of race while simultaneously operating through racialized forms of power.[132] Further Da Costa argues that when post-racial ideologies are employed as a strategy of power, then these ideologies

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[130] *Ibid.*

[131] Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. "The Structure of Racism in Color-Blind, 'Post-Racial' America." American Behavioral Scientist, vol. 59, no. 11, Oct. 2015, pp. 1358–1376, doi:10.1177/0002764215586826.

[132] Alexandre Emboaba Da Costa, "Confounding Anti-Racism: Mixture, Racial Democracy, and Post-Racial Politics in Brazil." *Critical Sociology*, vol. 42, no. 4–5, July 2016, pp. 495–513, doi:10.1177/0896920513508663.

"seek to depoliticize race, racism and difference in ways that demobilize anti-racist politics, substantive cultural recognition, and material redistribution".[133] All in all, the crux of Alexandre Da Costa's argument against post-racial ideologies is as follows"

"*Post-racial ideology exists today in the Americas in diverse, yet analogous forms. These forms share a rhetoric of racial progress amidst systemic racial hierarchy (Hernández, 2012), while exhibiting a range of discourses and practices that include race/color-blindness, the denial or minimization of racism as an issue, persistent forms of antiblackness, and assertions that racial mixture and/or multiracialism can ameliorate the unequal effects of racial difference.*"[134]

In America and Brazil, post-racial ideologies such as racial color-blindness and racial democracy, push forth the narrative that race is an insignificant factor. The narrative that forms the basis of these ideologies conceals the effects of racial difference that people of color, specifically Black people, experience due to their race. Rather than actually remedying the societies and institutions through which the racial hierarchy and racial difference within these nations is reproduced, it conceals and ignores the genocide, discrimination, racism, and oppression that Black people experience every single day, which allows these processes to continue. In my thesis, I argue that this is the paradox of anti-Blackness, which is that both the American and Brazilian nations are structured around anti-Blackness (institutions, society, citizenship, state violence), while also pushing forward ideologies that deny its existence.

The fundamental problems with the color-blind approach, the post-racial ideology widely-circulated in the United States, is that it is conceptually and morally confused, and empirically misguided. It is argued that the approach conflates several distinct meanings of race. Further, the approach does not demonstrate that there is something inherently morally

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[133] *Ibid.*
[134] *Ibid.*

objectionable in race-conscious policies, and therefore, does not demonstrate a need for color-blindness.[135] Discrimination does not simply end by ending color-conscious policies, for "even perfect race color-blind enforcement of antidiscrimination laws is inadequate to the task of ending racial segregation, stigmatization, and discrimination".[136] This approach does not extinguish race-based injustice, but it masks the real problem instead of remedying the root of the issue.

Studies prove that rather than promoting an actual decline in racial bias, colorblind ideologies create a false impression that bias has declined by allowing discrimination to go "undetected and unaddressed".[137] Further, the color-blind approach does not reduce inequity, but rather it "adjusts the lens through which inequity is perceived and publicly evaluated".[138] For example, in a study conducted on educational color-blindness, children were taught about color-blindness through stories about teachers who endorsed color-blind ideology and teachers who did not.[139] The children were then presented a series of schoolyard conflicts. Compared to the children who were not, the students who were exposed to the color-blind story were "less likely to identify bias when it had clearly occurred and tended to describe instances of discrimination in a manner that seemed less serious to certified teachers".[140] Essentially, color-

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[135] Elizabeth Anderson, "THE FOLLY AND INCOHERENCE OF COLOR BLINDNESS." *The Imperative of Integration*, Princeton University Press, PRINCETON; OXFORD, 2010, pp. 155–179. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7t225.11.

[136] *Ibid.*

[137] Evan P. Apfelbaum, et al. "In Blind Pursuit of Racial Equality?" *Psychological Science*, vol. 21, no. 11, 2010, pp. 1587–1592. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41062417.

[138] *Ibid.*

[139] Evan P. Apfelbaum, et al. "Racial Color Blindness: Emergence, Practice, and Implications." *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2012, pp. 205–209., www.jstor.org/stable/23213135.

[140] *Ibid.*

blindness made the children less likely to identify overt instances in which bias had occurred -- effectively adjusting the lens through which inequity is perceived.[141] As stated in "Racial Color Blindness: Emergence, Practice, and Implications", one of the biggest critiques of the color-blind approach is that we do in fact live in a racialized society, and individuals inherently do notice race when perceiving and interacting with others, therefore, there is really not a way to not see race.[142] Ideologies such as racial democracy and color-blindness are approaches to race advanced within Brazil and the United States respectively, to cast these countries and their policies in a "progressive" light. This ideal of racial progressiveness conceals the segregation, discrimination, racism and violence that Black people face.

Afro-pessimism, racial democracy, and racial color-blindness

I posit that, if Afro-pessimism is used as a lens to critically evaluate and explore racial democracy in Brazil and color-blindness in America, then it becomes abundantly clear that these ideologies that suggest society is in a state of racial progress within these nations is false. Using the Afro-pessimist lens to explore the social position of Black people in contemporary society, explains why Black people make up the bottom tier of society and the standard for inhumanness that all other racial groups use to define their existence. In my next two chapters, my thesis explores the structural institutions housing, specifically, residential segregation and state violence through an Afro-pessimistic lens to demonstrate and provide real-world examples for how Black people remain at the bottom of racial hierarchy throughout civil society. Using these examples and the Afro-pessimism framework, I argue that Black people's

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[141] *Ibid.*
[142] *Ibid.*

social standing is not a coincidence, but rather a result of their unique experiences with a

history of chattel slavery and a product of the fact that the reproduction and subjection of Black

people and Black existence is necessary for the function and political, economic, and spatial

coherence of civil society. I use these cases to deconstruct and destroy these narratives of racial

progress within Brazil and the United States. I argue, throughout my chapters, that until we

acknowledge and actively work to extinguish the inaccuracies embedded within these

ideologies and the real-life effects these fallacies have for Black life, then racial progress cannot

be truly achieved in the United States and Brazil.

Chapter 3

Introduction: Afro-pessimism and spatial coherence

Afro-pessimism is rooted in the idea that Black people have a distinct ontology, due to their experience of slavery and social death, that has consequences for contemporary civil society.[143] After the abolition of slavery, "the status of the slave devolved into the phenotypic appearance of 'Blackness'".[144] Over the centuries of involuntary servitude, the association between Blackness and inhumanity solidified through practices that continually stripped Black people of their human markers – ownership of their bodies and agency – which ensured the association persisted whether they were enslaved or free. Afro-pessimists argue that slavery produced a racial distinction that was reproduced, after the abolition of slavery, through institutional arrangements aimed at upholding the "social ostracisation of an outcast group deemed unassimilable".[145] Ghettos and favelas became sites that concentrated Black people, effectively isolating them from civil society and defining Blackness in space. According to Afro-pessimists, through the contemporary phenomena of the ghetto and favela, "Black existence is excluded and stockpiled" as objects within a spatial boundary that are malleable and disposable. [146] This fits into the conversation because Afro-pessimist theory argues that in order for these civil societies to function, Black exclusion must happen. Residential segregation did not occur solely because of a races hatred for Black people and views that Black people did not

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[143] Victor Erik Ray, et al. "Critical Race Theory, Afro-Pessimism, and Racial Progress Narratives." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, vol. 3, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 147–158, doi:10.1177/2332649217692557.
[144] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.
[145] *Ibid.*
[146] *Ibid.*

belong in certain spatial areas, but also because, Black exclusion and spatial coherence is necessary for civil society to function. As Afro-pessimist scholars argue, the association between Black and inhumanity that is reinforced through the subjection of Black people is necessary to structure the status of all other racial groups in society, and thus, crucial to civil society itself.[147] Black people must remain spatially isolated and excluded to reinforce their status as other, which is also a way to demonstrate to other non-Black and non-white racial groups that distancing oneself from Black people is the way to gain access into civil society and rights from the state.[148]

Case Study: Gamboa de Baixo

Gamboa de Baixo, a neighborhood in a prominent Brazilian city, provides an example of what Afro-pessimists argue are the ways that Black people within spatial boundaries, like ghettos and favelas, are treated as objects that are malleable and disposable, and continuously strip them of the markers of humanity.[149] The city Salvador, Bahia in Brazil is a predominantly Black city where "Afro-descendant cultural forms define Bahian identity".[150] Despite Salvador's racial composition, "it is difficult to find Blacks in positions of political and economic power, such as public office, executive positions in banks, or even store clerks in shopping malls".[151] In residential neighborhoods within Salvador, residents endure extremely unsanitary conditions

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[147] Victor Erik Ray, et al. "Critical Race Theory, Afro-Pessimism, and Racial Progress Narratives." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, vol. 3, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 147–158, doi:10.1177/2332649217692557.

[148] *Ibid.*

[149] *Ibid.*

[150] Keisha-Khan Y. Perry. Black Women against the Land Grab : The Fight for Racial Justice in Brazil, University of Minnesota Press, 2013. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/emory/detail.action?docID=1538760.

[151] *Ibid.*

that the local government refuses to address. For example, in Keisha-Khan Y. Perry's

ethnography *Black Women Against the Land Grab: The Fight for Racial Justice in Brazil,* Perry

describes Gamboa de Baixo, a predominantly Black neighborhood in Salvador, Bahia with about

350 families or 2000 people.[152] The neighborhood is "located between the upper-class

neighborhood of Vitória and the Solar do Unhão mansion that houses the Museum of Modern

art".[153] In 1992, the Gamboa de Baixo neighborhood experienced a cholera outbreak.[154] The

residents received access to two forms of water, the neighborhood's natural water fountains

and contaminated tap water provided by the city.[155] The contaminated tap water provided by

the city produced the wide spread outbreak of cholera throughout Gamboa de Baixo, which

caused several deaths. The media blamed these deaths on the neighborhood's natural water

fountains, portraying an image of this predominantly Black community "as unhealthy and

dangerous to the public".[156] This is one example of the dire conditions that exist and persist

within one of the predominantly Black neighborhoods of Salvador, Bahia, and also within

residentially segregated neighborhoods across Brazil. These are forces of residential

segregation to keep Black people socially isolated and segregated, that have over the years

transformed into genocidal forces that target a specific section of the population and produce

dire outcomes for Black people and Black populations. Since Brazil and America's conception,

Black people have occupied different geographical locations whether it be the plantation site,

the black ghetto/ favela, or the racially segregated community, while simultaneously being

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[152] *Ibid.*
[153] *Ibid.*
[154] *Ibid.*
[155] *Ibid.*
[156] Ibid.

forced to occupy the identity of a subhuman being, rendering both their literal and figurative

geographies invisible.

The "ghetto"

Similar to the Predominantly-Black neighborhoods like Gamboa de Baixo within

Salvador, Bahia in Brazil, in America these neighborhoods are labeled ghettos. The word

"ghetto" has a wide variety of connotations and an extensive range of different meanings. The

technical definition of the term "ghetto" is "a neighborhood which is homogeneous and from

which there are serious barriers to exit".[157] A "ghetto" can also be defined as "an area that is

not only black but very poor and plagued by a host of social and economic problems".[158] In this

chapter, I use the term "ghetto" to not only refer to the racial make-up of these specific

neighborhoods within America, but also to refer to their class composition.

In the Post-Emancipation period (late nineteenth-early twentieth century) within the

United States, people and governments utilized de facto and de jure policies and laws to

segregate residential areas by race. De facto refers to state of affairs that are true, but not

officially sanctioned by the law, whereas, de jure refers to state of affairs that are officially

sanctioned and in accordance with the law.[159] I argue that the history of residential segregation

within the United States, involving both official laws instituted by the government and actions

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[157] "Historian Says Don't 'Sanitize' How Our Government Created Ghettos." *NPR*, NPR, 14 May 2015, www.npr.org/2015/05/14/406699264/historian-says-dont-sanitize-how-our-government-created-the-ghettos.

[158] Douglas S. Massey. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.

[159] WashuLaw. "Legal English: 'De Facto/De Jure.'" *Legal English: "De Facto/De Jure" - Blog | @WashULaw*, Washington University in St. Louis: School of Law, 28 Dec. 2012, onlinelaw.wustl.edu/blog/legal-english-de-factode-jure/.

taken by local businesses and people reveals that the emergence of ghettos within the US was a purposeful act to physically and socially isolate and exclude Black people from the accessibility, and mobility that living in certain areas and around diverse groups of people provides. Further, similar to Nancy Denton and Douglass Massey in *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass,* I argue that residential segregation was not only a means to physically separate Black and white people, but that it was also a way to reinforce Black subordination, which as Afro-pessimist theory contends is key to the existence and coherence of civil society.[160]

After the abolition of slavery, many free Black people lived throughout a wide range of Southern cities. However, during the beginning of the 1900's, World War I commenced, partly fueled by industrialization in America which helped lead to a changing force in the economy that eventually transformed the US population from being primarily rural to urban.[161] The war and industrialization increased the demand for labor, which led to recruitment of Blacks from the South.[162] This increased demand along with other factors, such as the devastation of cotton crops in Louisiana, led to the influx of Black migrants from the South to other areas of the US, primarily Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, New York, and Detroit.[163] The migration of Black people into these cities heightened racial tensions, as white Northerners viewed the Black southern migrants as uncouth, unclean, poorly educated, and poverty-stricken, and increased

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[160] Douglas S. Massey. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.
[161] *Ibid.*
[162] *Ibid.*
[163] *Ibid.*

the amount of violence enacted on Black people.[164] These views led to increased discrimination

and segregation within housing, employment and social services.[165] As a result of the large

growth of the Black population In these areas, more isolation of Black people ensued than had

existed before, and areas deemed acceptable for Black residence narrowed.[166]

White people used several tactics to keep Blacks isolated from their neighborhoods.

Racial violence increased in Northern cities between 1900 and 1920.[167] Black people were often

singled out based on skin color. Of those singled out were often the Black people who held

residence in "integrated and predominantly white areas".[168] Whites would begin with

"threatening letters, personal harassment, and warnings of the dire consequences to follow" if

the Black residents did not relocate. If these tactics were not successful, then they would offer

to buy their Black neighbor out.[169] Failure to convince the Black homeowner to move often

resulted in mobs of angry white people storming the house with rocks, insults and sometimes

gunshots.[170] The consistent racial violence that ensued led Black people to move into

predominantly Black neighborhoods. However, white people within these neighborhoods were

not solely responsible for the displacement of Black people and the emergence of the ghetto,

realtors also played a significant role in these efforts. A method often used by realtors during

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[164] *Ibid*

[165] Teron McGrew. "THE HISTORY OF RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND TITLE VIII." *The Black Scholar*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1997, pp. 22–30. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41068728.

[166] Douglas S. Massey. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.

[167] *Ibid.*

[168] *ibid.*

[169] *Ibid.*

[170] *Ibid.*

this time to further segregate Black people was "blockbusting". According to Denton and

Massey, "blockbusting agents would select a promising area for racial turnover, most often an

area adjacent to the ghetto that contained older housing, poorer families, aging households

and some apartment buildings," and they would acquire homes in this area and sell them to

Black people.[171] They would then approach the white residents, exploiting their fear of Black

people, and warn them that Black people were invading and taking over the area, ultimately

convincing them to move out of the neighborhood.[172] Blockbusting agents turned these

neighborhoods Black, isolating Black people by removing the other diverse populations, and

profiting off of the income that new Black residents would bring into the area in buying the

homes located there. These are all examples of de facto efforts taken to displace Black people.

These examples of de facto efforts taken up by people are noteworthy because they

demonstrate the extent to which the exclusion, containment, and control of Black existence

was crucial to solidifying Black people's existence as fungible objects. All of the examples stated

were, as Afro-pessimist scholars would posit, tactics used to reinforce social and physical

control over the Black population, ensuring the coherence of civil society. After the 1930's

residential segregation was very apparent, and "the level of Black-white residential dissimilarity

had reached a stable and very high level".[173] Further, the neighborhoods that contained a slight

mixture of Black and whites were eliminated by the Great Depression which diminished

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[171] *Ibid.*

[172] *Ibid.*

[173] Douglas S. Massey. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.

economic conditions and brought about mass unemployment and "made northern ghettos homogeneously black…".[174]

The expansion of "the ghetto" was furthered and maintained by policies put into place by the government. In the 1930's, in accordance with Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, the Public Works Administration was implemented with the goal of reducing unemployment and increasing purchasing power through new construction projects, and also "built 47 housing projects, all rigidly segregated, 17 for Blacks, the rest for whites".[175] Other policies that expanded residential segregation in the US were policies instituted by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in the mid-1900's. The FHA financed mortgages at lower interest rates than banks, which dropped the cost of purchasing a home for many people.[176] However, the FHA required the potential properties to be professionally appraised, which including a rating of the neighborhood which eliminated many inner-city dwellings (often predominantly Black) from gaining approval.[177] Further, in the FHA's "*Underwriting Manual*" it stated, "if a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes".[178] Defining stability as racial homogeneity explicitly excluded Black people from "the spatial arrangements of white civil society"— according to Afro-pessimism,

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[174] *Ibid.*

[175] David Oshinsky. "A Powerful, Disturbing History of Residential Segregation in America." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 20 June 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/06/20/books/review/richard-rothstein-color-of-law-forgotten-history.html.; Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Public Works Administration." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 22 July 2016, www.britannica.com/topic/Public-Works-Administration.

[176] Douglas S. Massey. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.

[177] *Ibid.*

[178] *Ibid.*

this is an explicit social practice of Black exclusion, necessary for the reinforcement of Blacks as

other which is necessary for the function of society.[179] The FHA's choice to not approve homes

in the inner-city, which at this time were predominantly Black, and to require the racial and

social homogeneity of neighborhoods in which the properties they would finance were located,

ensured that Blacks could not benefit from these low priced loans, as well as, reinforced the

racial segregation of residential neighborhoods. Further, isolating Black people within the inner-

city. These are two examples of federal de jure policies that solidified Black ghettos across the

nation.

These policies and systems laid the foundation for the residential separation that exists

today. As of the late 1990's, Blacks lived more segregated than any other U.S. group.[180] The

segregation index for Hispanics was 38 percent, compared to Asians 19 percent, and Blacks 60

percent.[181] While de jure and de facto policies initially made it nearly impossible for Black

people to move out of their homogenous neighborhoods, over the years, more subtle and

economic factors have kept Black people residentially segregated.[182] For example, white people

often pay more to live in neighborhoods without Black people.[183] Further, Black middle class

individuals can move out of the ghetto, but due to the high concentration of low-income

individuals within many of these neighborhoods, low-income Black people often don't have the

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[179] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.
[180] Ed Glaeser. "Ghettos: The Changing Consequences of Ethnic Isolation." *Federal Reserve Bank of Boston*, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, 3 Mar. 1997, www.bostonfed.org/publications/regional-review/1997/spring/ghettos-the-changing-consequences-of-ethnic-isolation.aspx.
[181] *Ibid.*
[182] *Ibid.*
[183] *Ibid.*

means to relocate.[184] The ability for middle class and upper-middle class Black families to leave

these neighborhoods over the years have left these neighborhoods not only racially

homogenous, but socioeconomically homogenous as well. In comparison to low-income white

neighborhoods that are often more heterogeneous, "ghettos lack the variety of incomes and

skills found in other urban neighborhoods, so opportunities for trade and the exchange of ideas

– again, the key economic advantages of living in cities – are again unavailable" to these

residents.[185] This is significant because not only were Black people being socially and spatially

excluded, isolated, and othered, but their spatial insularity also disadvantaged other aspects of

their lives, which is crucial to reinforce Blacks social standing as the bottom of society.

These predominantly Black neighborhoods affect economic, educational and health

outcomes for the residents within them. Children from inner-city neighborhoods are more likely

than their more affluent counterparts to have lower levels in school performance and higher

rates of dropout, which affects their employment opportunities and life outcomes in the

future.[186] The geographic locations of ghettos also limit residents' access to resources like

grocery stores, shopping centers, hospitals etc., which has dire consequences for health

outcomes. All in all, ghettos in America disenfranchise Black people. The government uses

segregation to forcefully concentrate the effects of marginalization, making "preventable

disease, unemployment, clinical depression, violence meted by the police or other Blacks, low-

quality education and healthcare, and chronic poverty" well-known characteristics of Black

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[184] *Ibid.*

[185] *Ibid.*

[186] Seijeoung Kim, et al. "School and Behavioral Outcomes Among Inner City Children: Five-Year Follow-Up" *Urban education* vol. 49,7 (2013): 835-856.

ghettos in the United States.[187] This is important because if these characteristics are well-known as qualities of ghettos and ghettos are known to be predominantly Black spatial areas, then by association, these characteristics also become well-known qualities of Black people. Despite the fact that these characteristics are an effect of Black exclusion and spatial isolation, they are promoted as the cause for Black exclusion and spatial isolation which provides another reason why Blacks need to be controlled.

Favelas

Throughout this thesis, I argue that favelas are analogous to the racially segregated ghettos in America. In Brazil, the term "favela" refers to Brazilian slums that are mostly comprised of low-income, Black people. The first favela was formed in the late 1800's after the Canudos war in Bahia, Brazil. Brazilian soldiers from the war marched to Rio de Janeiro to receive their payment for the war.[188] They waited for the government to hand over their well deserved money, but the government did not take action, so the soldiers stayed.[189] They settled into the area and made "makeshift accommodation in a neighborhood that came to be known as *Morro de Favela*".[190] During this time, academics, architects, social workers, etc., would enter into these favelas and leave with "descriptions of uneducated people, dirty living conditions and highly-sexualized environments" – stereotypes that continue to persist today.

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[187] João H. C. Vargas. Never Meant to Survive: Genocide and Utopias in Black Diaspora Communities. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Pub. Group, 2008. Print.
[188] Sarah Brown. "A Brief History of Rio De Janeiro's Favelas." *Culture Trip*, The Culture Trip Ltd., 8 Feb. 2017, theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/a-brief-history-of-rio-de-janeiros-favelas/.
[189] *Ibid.*
[190] *Ibid.*

Moving into the mid-1900's (1940s-1970s), favelas became to gain significant attention from the Brazilian government.[191] In the 1940's, Mayor Henrique Dodsworth set a precedent for favela removal with the goal of poverty alleviation and national modernization.[192] In the 1960's the federal eradication policy took place which displaced thousands of people and placed them into public housing projects.[193] Besides the eradication of poverty, another major reason for the relocation of favela residents into public housing was the increasingly popular real estate interests of the land the favelas occupied.[194] Many of the favelas in Brazil were located in inner-city Rio near affluent neighborhoods that could be used for commercial and residential construction ventures.[195] The public housing projects failed due to low investment from the government and inadequate planning, causing them to become favelas with a new location.[196] The government's project did not eradicate the housing problem in Brazil, but rather made it worse. Seeing that these projects were not a viable solution the problem, in the late 1970's, the government abandoned the projects, further marginalizing the low-income

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[191] "Favelas in Rio De Janeiro, Past and Present." *Brazil Five Centuries of Change*, Brown University , library.brown.edu/create/fivecenturiesofchange/chapters/chapter-9/favelas-in-rio-de-janeiro-past-and-present/.

[192] *Ibid.*

[193] Sarah Brown. "A Brief History of Rio De Janeiro's Favelas." *Culture Trip*, The Culture Trip Ltd., 8 Feb. 2017, theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/a-brief-history-of-rio-de-janeiros-favelas/.

[194] "Favelas in Rio De Janeiro, Past and Present." *Brazil Five Centuries of Change*, Brown University , library.brown.edu/create/fivecenturiesofchange/chapters/chapter-9/favelas-in-rio-de-janeiro-past-and-present/.

[195] *Ibid.*

[196] Sarah Brown. "A Brief History of Rio De Janeiro's Favelas." *Culture Trip*, The Culture Trip Ltd., 8 Feb. 2017, theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/a-brief-history-of-rio-de-janeiros-favelas/.

residents both geographically and socio-economically.[197] Due to the "inadequate conditions

and feeble governmental support", the favelas were left exposed to gang violence and drug

trafficking within the neighborhoods. Three decades later, in 2008, the Brazilian government

enacted a pacification policy which sent Police Pacification Units into violent favelas to reclaim

the land from the local gangs.[198] Despite the government's late efforts, favelas in Brazil still

persist fraught with poverty, crime and inadequate living conditions. As of 2016, "an estimated

1000 favelas" existed in Rio, with about 1.5 million people residing within them.[199] Racial

residential segregation in Brazil has translated into "inequalities in access to labor and

consumer markets that tend to be located in or near white and middle class neighborhoods,"

and inequalities in "access to schools, hospitals, police, and fire protections".[200] Further, the

1980 census found that "nonwhites, and especially Blacks, are more spatially distant from the

middle class in Brazil" and that Blacks are more likely than their white counterparts of the same

income level to live in concentrated poverty.[201] Similar to ghettos within the United States, the

environment within favelas in Brazil limits the quality of life and access to particular life

outcomes of its residents. Ghettos in America and favelas in Brazil have become physical sites

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[197] "Favelas in Rio De Janeiro, Past and Present." *Brazil Five Centuries of Change*, Brown University , library.brown.edu/create/fivecenturiesofchange/chapters/chapter-9/favelas-in-rio-de-janeiro-past-and-present/.

[198] Brown, Sarah. "A Brief History of Rio De Janeiro's Favelas." *Culture Trip*, The Culture Trip Ltd., 8 Feb. 2017, theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/a-brief-history-of-rio-de-janeiros-favelas/.

[199] Erik Ortiz. "What Is a Favela? 5 Things to Know About Rio's 'Slums'." *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 4 Aug. 2016, www.nbcnews.com/storyline/2016-rio-summer-olympics/what-favela-five-things-know-about-rio-s-so-called-n622836.

[200] Edward Eric Telles. *Race in Another America: the Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*. Princeton University Press, 2006.

[201] *Ibid.*

of displacement and isolation for Black people. Ghettos and favelas have been used as physical

spaces to define where Black people belong within these nations. However, despite this, Black

people have used these spaces to make meaning for themselves and foster a community.

Space and Place

Anthropologist Maarja Saar and geographer Hannes Palang define and differentiate

between space and place, and further explain how the two intersect in their article, "The

Dimension of Place Meanings". Space is defined as "physical and social landscape imbued with

meaning in everyday place-bound social practices". Whereas, place is defined as being "socially

constructed and operating", it is the relationship between humans, environment, and

landscape.[202] The construction of place-meaning can happen on personal, local, national, and

supranational levels. Furthermore, space as a literal physical location, becomes a place when

meaning, established by many factors (interactions, politics, land uses, history etc.), is attached

to the landscape and gives it significance, making it more than just a physical location. Omi and

Winant's discussion on racial formation and the creation of the "other" has manifested itself in

the operations of place and space in America. Specifically, race has become a general qualifier

when it comes to defining who belongs in certain spaces, which affects the ways in which place-

meaning is constructed within these spaces over time. We see this in aspects of everyday life,

like the unofficial racial lines that have been drawn separating neighborhoods from city to city

in every state. For example, in Georgia, in an effort to keep affluent predominantly white

neighborhoods separate from minority infiltration, the primary public transportation system in

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[202] Maarja Saar and Hannes Palang, "The Dimensions of Place Meanings", *Living Rev. Landscape Res.* 3, (2009), 3. URL (cited on 16 February, 2018): http://dx.doi.org/10.12942/lrlr-2009-3.

Atlanta, MARTA, does not extend into neighborhoods like John's Creek, restricting access to this

space from certain groups of people, specifically minorities who frequent this mode of

transportation. The restriction of this area affects how place-meaning is constructed within this

location. As this place-meaning is developed, the relationship between human and landscape is

formed, and those who occupy the space (white people) are classified into the category of

individuals who belong.

Since the beginning of time, white people, as posited by Afro-pessimists, use space as a

form of subjugation to keep themselves at the top of the racial hierarchy. By not allowing the

groups they colonized and enslaved to own any land, both pre and post emancipation, white

people were enforcing the politics of belonging – who belongs to the place and who doesn't.

Controlling how much access Black people have to spaces is a form of exclusion and othering,

as "some people's sense of rootedness and belonging is obtained by excluding others."[203] In its

essence, it is a way to emphasize Black people's inhumanity. This emphasis on Black's

inhumanity also emphasizes that Black people don't really have a place in neither America nor

Brazil, and also that, Black people's existence functions to establish the basis upon which all

other groups place their social standing. Afro-pessimist theorists argue that Blackness and anti-

Blackness are the necessary grounds for the definition and proliferation of life.[204] The previous

sections provided the history of the emergence of both favelas in Brazil and ghettos in the

United States. While ghettos in America are more racially homogenous than favelas in Brazil, de

jure and de facto policies used by both nations to displace and situate Black people into these

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[203] *Ibid.*
[204] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013,
www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.

racially and often socioeconomically homogenous residential areas have socially constructed

these spaces into places that distinguish Black people as inherently connected to the

environment and landscape of these neighborhoods. White people have systematically

funneled people of color into low income neighborhoods through housing discrimination,

redlining, etc. These same neighborhoods that are disproportionately comprised of Black and

Brown people are intentionally deprived of resources. The squalor that these individuals live in

is overrepresented in the media and used to reinforce the notion that Black and Brown

individuals are living in such poor conditions because their innate inferiority dictates that they

belong there. Further, the ideologies of racial democracy and color-blindness are used to

eliminate race as an explaining factor for the demographic compositions of favelas and ghettos.

In *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* by Edward Telles,

Telles recalls a previous conversation with a Brazilian sociologist about residential segregation

in Brazil in which the sociologist argues that there is no racial segregation, but only class

segregation.[205] He states,

> *"one's ability to pay for housing in often highly stratified real-estate markets is the only limit to where one could live. If poor neighborhoods are mostly Black and brown while middle-class neighborhoods are almost entirely white, it is because nonwhites predominate in the lower class, while whites comprise most of the middle classes."[206]*

Arguments such as this one ignore the systemic and structural racism used by the government

to shape and compromise these specific neighborhoods of Black people. To eliminate race as a

limiting factor in residential location is to blatantly and purposefully ignore the history of the

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[205] Edward Eric Telles. *Race in Another America: the Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*. Princeton University Press, 2006.
[206] *Ibid.*

emergence of both favelas and ghettos alike. To accept this argument is to also accept the inferiority of Black people, because if race is not a factor, then Black people are only in these neighborhoods because they either choose to be or because they do not have the financial means to mobilize. This is a function of, as Afro-pessimists would argue, anti-Blackness. As evidenced throughout the chapter, several policies and actions over several decades were taken to spatially isolate and consolidate Black people into racially homogenous neighborhoods that effectively segregated Black people from white civil society. Residential segregation contained Black people and controlled them. These ideologies obscure the fact that residential segregation and spatial insularity is purposeful and perpetuates the "otherness" of Black people. Arguing that residential segregation is based on class rather than racial parameters, obfuscates these facts. Rhetoric such as this, obscures the genocidal acts against Black people that are consistently happening everyday through institutions like housing. American and Brazilian societies are structured by anti-Black and ideologies, such as this one, while simultaneously structured around the denial of anti-Blackness even existing. Residential segregation was a force to keep Black people socially isolated and segregated that has over the years transformed into genocidal forces that target a specific section of the population and produce dire outcomes for Black people and Black and their existence. This rhetoric conceals this fact and allows these forces to continue.

In a society that continuously attempts to regulate, restrict, define, and dominate Blackness and its existence, Black people must create their own sense of belonging that is not dependent on acceptance by the larger society. As a group whose history is largely defined by the constant oppression and exclusion of its members, especially in regards to spaces, Black

people have been forced to create their own sense of place within the spaces that they have

been forced to adopt as their own. Gender and Cultural Studies Professor Katherine McKittrick

defines a Black sense of place as "the process of materially and imaginatively situating historical

and contemporary struggles against practices of domination and the difficult entanglements of

racial encounter."[207] McKittrick explains that this concept is neither steady nor homogenous,

but that it has changing and differential perspectives. A Black sense of place rejects the notions

of othering and social exclusion presented by Omi and Winant and Saar and Palang, instead, it

unites people under a shared common struggle. It acknowledges how Black people's lives are

shaped by anti-Blackness, but also not totally consumed by it being that there is always a

resistance to the domination. Afro-pessimism would call a Black sense of place "a social refuge

from white violence".[208] Ghettos and favelas while operating as sites of refuge, self-reliance,

and freedom from the oppressors, also completely embody this idea of how Blacks can create

their own sense of belonging. In the United States, Black people have formed "black churches,

banks, and universities" out of segregation.[209] According to Telles, "residential segregation

restricted the network of Blacks to other Blacks, which facilitated heightened group identity

and racial consciousness".[210] Ghettos, known for their lack of access to resources, allowed and

in some ways forced, Black people to build up their communities themselves and find ways to

mobilize the race. In residentially segregated neighborhoods, Black churches became more than

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[207] Katherine McKittrick. (2011). "On plantations, prisons, and a Black sense of place". Social & Cultural Geography - SOC CULT GEOGR. 12. 1-17. 10.1080/14649365.2011.624280.

[208] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.

[209] Edward Eric Telles. *Race in Another America: the Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*. Princeton University Press, 2006.

[210] *Ibid.*

sites of worship, but also "provided a space exclusively for Blacks to discuss issues facing their

communities and to develop strategies for combating racism and discrimination".[211] These

groups of people took it upon themselves to establish their own identity/ selfhood rather than

allowing their locations to define them.

Similarly in Brazil, spatial insularity has contributed to the development and emergence

of a" strong Afro-Brazilian culture and identity" in different spaces, such as Salvador in Bahia.[212]

Within favelas, Afro-Brazilians have created a "unique favela culture" that has become

fundamental to the culture within Brazilian society through contributions, specifically within art

and music.[213] An example of this is funk music within Brazil. The funk genre has firm

foundations within the favelas of Rio de Janiero and has grown to become a "cultural

phenomenon" within all of Brazil, and has gone on to be adapted by Western artists.[214] For the

residents of the favelas, "funk signifies not only a music genre, but also a dance, a beat, and a

way of talking about hardship".[215] Funk is distinct in its "aggressive assertion of sexuality,

masculinity, oppression, poverty and law-defying uprising" which is counterbalanced by lyrics

"focusing on black pride, dignity in the face of injustice and feminism".[216] In favelas and

ghettos, Black people established a sense of belonging for themselves through instituting a

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[211] *Ibid.*

[212] *Ibid.*

[213] Sarah Brown. "A Brief History of Rio De Janeiro's Favelas." *Culture Trip*, The Culture Trip Ltd., 8 Feb. 2017, theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/a-brief-history-of-rio-de-janeiros-favelas/.

[214] Claire Baker. "The Rhythm of Favelas: Brazil's Booming Funk Music Scene." *Culture Trip*, The Culture Trip Ltd., 30 Sept. 2016, theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/favela-funk-brazil-s-booming-street-music-scene/.

[215] *Ibid.*

[216] *Ibid.*

culture from communal spaces to art to music. Per the definition of Black sense of place

provided by McKittrick, these people "materially and imaginatively" situated their historical

struggles against practices of domination forming unity and culture out of what was once

strife.[217] Black people make geographies humanly workable through taking an intermediate

space that may not traditionally be livable, and working through it to make meaning and make

do. Black sense of place is a way for Black people to redefine these spaces for themselves and

to push back against the systemic and institutional oppression enacted upon their communities

by the government to disenfranchise Black people as a group, and to establish their position

within these nations – individuals legally defined as citizens, but without the full protection that

citizenship extends to citizens of other non-Black racial groups.

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[217] Faye V. Harrison. "Remapping Routes, Unearthing Routes: Rethinking Caribbean Connections with the U.S. South", *Outsider Within: Reworking Anthropology in the Global Age.* University of Illinois, 2008.

Chapter 4

Afro-pessimism and state sanctioned violence

Similar to housing and residential segregation, police power in the Americas has historically performed a distinct function, which is to "control while containing and separating Blacks apart from whites".[218] State violence, sanctioned by the police, is an institution that allows Black subjection to continue. The history of policing is rooted in slave patrols. Slave patrols were informal groups of white people that worked together to enforce the restrictive slave codes, discipline disobedient slaves, and regulate the movement and mobility of Black people.[219] Afro-pessimist scholars argue that after the abolition of slavery, slave patrols and other forms of patrol devolved into the institution of the police, which is a professional body that regulates the movement of people, specifically Black people, to the spatial configurations set forth by society.[220] Violence against Black people is a necessity as it demonstrates that Black people are fungible objects, a distinction necessary to delineate the lines between human and non-human. This delineation solidifies Black people's status as non-human which is essential to the coherence of civil society. It is important to note that all state violence is not the same, but rather there is a spectrum of state violence that expands from excessive force in a routine police stop to extra-judicial killings at the hands of law enforcement officials. State violence encompasses a wide variety of violent acts against Black people. Afro-pessimism contends that

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[218] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.
[219] *Ibid.*
[220] *Ibid.*

anti-Blackness is always operating its own specific logic of dehumanizing Black people.[221] Afro-

pessimist scholar Jared Sexton argues that "other racial groups achieve their subjectivity and

citizenship through "othering" Blacks, because humanity is measured through distance from

blackness".[222] This type of othering is rooted in Black peoples' dehumanizing condition as

chattel slaves within these nations which has informed contemporary civil society, in both the

ways it is understood and lived.[223]

All of this is significant because it demonstrates how anti-Blackness is a specific type of

racism, different from other forms of racism, prejudice, and discrimination that other races

experience. Anti-Blackness is unique because it is rooted in Black people's specific history as

chattel slaves, which has informed Black existence as the quintessential standard for

inhumanity. This allows all other racial groups to position themselves in relation to Blackness,

while never forced to succumb to the same social standing as Black people. I posit that this is

what makes anti-Blackness different. Societies would still function without racism against Asian

people or LatinX people, to name a few, which is where I agree with Afro-pessimists in the

argument that social standing of Black people is a necessity for the coherence of civil society

and its racial hierarchy. Without Blackness, the whole notion of identity within civil society

would deconstruct and society would cease to function. State violence is an institutional

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[221] Victor Erik Ray, et al. "Critical Race Theory, Afro-Pessimism, and Racial Progress Narratives." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, vol. 3, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 147–158, doi:10.1177/2332649217692557.
[222] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.
[223] Adam Bledsoe, and Willie Jamaal Wright. "The Anti-Blackness of Global Capital." Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, vol. 37, no. 1, Feb. 2019, pp. 8–26, doi:10.1177/0263775818805102.

arrangement necessary for the coherence and effective operation of civil society in Brazil and the United States.

State Violence: America

On February 9, 2019, Willie McCoy took a trip to Taco Bell in his hometown of Vallejo, California, where he fell asleep in the driver seat of his vehicle outside the establishment. A Taco Bell employee called 911 reporting that "a man was "slumped over" behind the wheel of his car".[224] Upon arriving to the scene, police approached the vehicle and reported that "McCoy was unresponsive and had a handgun on his lap" with the doors locked and the car running.[225] After seemingly being awoken by the police telling him to "keep his hands visible," McCoy suddenly moved. Despite the fact that in California it is legal to carry licensed guns and the victim was visibly sleeping, police later reported that he had appeared to move his hands downward to reach for the handgun.[226] Reportedly, six police officers fired shots within roughly four seconds, for an estimated total of 25 shots.[227] Willie McCoy died on the spot.[228] Willie's loved ones have filed a wrongful death claim labeling the homicide "execution by firing squad".[229] McCoy was twenty years old. Willie McCoy is one instance of police brutality against Black people in America, but there are thousands of other women, men, boys, girls, mothers,

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[224] Sam Levin. "Six California Officers Fire Shots at Rapper Who Had Been Asleep in Car, Killing Him." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 13 Feb. 2019, www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/feb/12/california-police-shooting-willie-mccoy.
[225] *Ibid.*
[226] Sam Levin. "The Life and Death of Rapper Willie McCoy, 'Executed' by Police." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 1 Mar. 2019, www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/mar/01/the-life-and-death-of-rapper-willie-mccoy-executed-by-police.
[227] *Ibid.*
[228] *Ibid*.
[229] *Ibid.*

fathers, and children just like him who were involved in encounters with the police that

resulted in the brutal taking of their lives.

In 2017, police killed 1,147 people, 25 percent of which were Black people, a group that

makes up 13 percent of the population.[230] Black people in America are 3 times more likely than

white people to be killed by the police.[231] Thirteen of the largest U.S. city police departments

kill Black men at higher rates than the U.S. murder rate, including Reno, NY, Scottsdale, AZ, St.

Louis, MO, Spokane, WA and Fremont state.[232] In 2015, African-Americans in the United States

died at the hands of police at a rate of 7.2 per million, compared to whites rate of 2.9 per

million.[233] In an analysis of 2015 police killings, researchers found that while racial minorities

made up "46.6 percent of armed and unarmed victims," they also "made up 62.7 percent of

unarmed people killed by police," meaning "unarmed victims of police killings are more likely to

be minorities".[234] Despite this statistic, according to studies, "whenever almost any kind of

crime is committed in the U.S, it is far more likely that the person responsible is white".[235]

Notwithstanding the previous statistics, there are approximately 1,000 police shootings in the

US each year, but between 2005 and April 2017, only "80 officers had been arrested on murder

or manslaughter charges for on-duty shootings," and only 35 percent of those arrested were

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[230]"Mapping Police Violence." *Mapping Police Violence*, mappingpoliceviolence.org/.
[231] *Ibid.*
[232] *Ibid.*
[233] Maggie Fox. "Police Killings Hit People of Color the Hardest, Study Finds." *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 7 May 2018, www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/police-killings-hit-people-color-hardest-study-finds-n872086.
[234] German Lopez. "There Are Huge Racial Disparities in How US Police Use Force." *Vox*, Vox Media, 14 Nov. 2018, www.vox.com/identities/2016/8/13/17938186/police-shootings-killings-racism-racial-disparities.
[235] *Ibid.*

convicted.[236] According to police databases, there is no correlation between crime rates by race

and the disproportionate number of police shootings.[237] All of these statistics go to show that

there are several inequities in the ways in which the law is enforced for Black people in

America.[238] The criminal justice system is filled with officers who hold inherent biases against

Black people, resulting in Blacks being more likely to be searched, seized and arrested.[239] This

system objectifies Blackness and solidifies Black people's susceptibility "to all aspects of

material and social containment" and control. [240]Despite the statistics that demonstrate that

Black people are more likely to be unarmed and less likely to commit almost any kind of crime

in the U.S. in comparison to their white counterparts, Black people are disproportionately killed

by the police. Objectifying the Black population to such extreme and consistent forms of

harassment and violence persists to reinforce Black people's lack of ownership over their

bodies. Black people's non-human status is evidenced by the state's ability to enact a a wide

range of violence, from restraint and holding to beating and killing, without repercussions.

State-sanctioned violence is therefore a structural feature of Black existence. State-sanctioned

violence and the police, over time, devolved into significant devices used to cultivate and

reinforce social standing, and thus, social structure in civil society. Afro-pessimist theory holds

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[236] Madison Park. "Police Shootings: Trials, Convictions Are Rare for Officers." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 3 Oct. 2018, www.cnn.com/2017/05/18/us/police-involved-shooting-cases/index.html.

[237] Michael Harriot. "Unprotected, Underserved: The (False) Criminalization of Black America." *The Root*, The Root, 25 June 2018.

[238] *Ibid.*

[239] *Ibid.*

[240] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.

true, in that, Black existence through these institutions has become a caveat for the functioning of civil society for all other racial groups.

State Violence: Brazil

The persistent brutality and murder of Black people by police is not solely an American issue, these types of disproportionate lethal violence on Black people also occur in Brazil. As mentioned in the Introduction, Pedro Gonzaga was a 19-year old Afro-Brazilian, killed in Brazil by a security officer— a form of privatized police. In *Blackness, Citizenship, and the Transnational Vertigo Violence in the Americas*, Christen Smith cites statistics of police brutality within Brazil. According to Brazilian official counts, "Brazilian police kill approximately six people per day, totaling 11,197 over the past five years," and approximately 70 percent of those individuals killed are Black.[241] Similar to the US, "Black people (negros) in Brazil are three times more likely to be killed by the police than their white counterparts".[242] Favelas, which are mostly comprised of Black people, fall victim to high amounts of lethal violence by the police due to abuses of power within the pacification efforts by the government. According to the Human Rights brief, "during 2017, the police killed 182 people in favelas in Rios, which is a seventy-eight percent increase compared to the same period in 2016."[243] The state allows these killings within favelas to continue by passing bills and implementing policies that allow militarized police to effortlessly get away with crime.[244] For example, in 2017, "Brazil's Congress

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[241] Christen A. Smith. (2015), Blackness, Citizenship, and the Transnational Vertigo of Violence in the Americas. AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST, 117: 384-387. doi:10.1111/aman.12242
[242] *Ibid.*
[243] Catherine Perrone. "Police Brutality Persists in Brazil." *Human Rights Brief*, American University Washington College of Law, 2 Apr. 2018, hrbrief.org/2018/04/police-brutality-persists-brazil/.
[244] *Ibid.*

approved a bill that protects military police officers when they unlawfully kill civilians," by allowing these officers to be tried in military courts, which are not "independent and impartial," instead of trial courts, which are public.[245] The use of military courts for the killing of Black civilian citizens essentially treats favelas as foreign occupied territories, equating favela's primarily Black residents to foreign civilians rather than citizens of the country. This is important because it demonstrates the Brazilian government's views of these Brazilian residents as individuals outside the fringes of citizenship, and thus, society. As of an article published in 2017, Brazil had the highest number of homicides in the world, with young Black men making up the majority of these victims.[246] In two of the largest cities, Rio and São Paulo, police were responsible for one in every five and one in every four killings, respectively.[247] While all the statistics cited have been taken by reputable organizations, the numbers do not wholly reflect the "gravity of the phenomenon" in Brazil.[248] Unfortunately, "records on police homicide are voluntarily kept, produced internally, and not reported by most urban cities".[249] Most deaths caused by Brazil's police are not registered as homicides, but instead as "death caused by resisting arrest" or "autos de resistência", a category that allows "police killings to be classified as suicides".[250] Statistics of police killings in Brazil also often do not include police death squads

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[245] *Ibid.*

[246] Kate Lyons. "Killings by Brazilian Police Branded a Human Rights Crisis as Body Count Rises." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 4 May 2017, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/may/04/killings-brazilian-police-human-rights-crisis-un-review.

[247] *Ibid.*

[248] Christen A. Smith.(2015), Blackness, Citizenship, and the Transnational Vertigo of Violence in the Americas. AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST, 117: 384-387. doi:10.1111/aman.12242

[249] *Ibid.*

[250] *Ibid.*

or "off-duty police officers who engage in vigilante style killings".[251] Despite these inaccuracies,

the statistics available display the high amount of violence and death enacted on Black people

by police, and the high volume of purposeful attacks in residential areas (favelas) where Black

people are highly concentrated in Brazil.

The high numbers of killings of Black people in both the United States and Brazil can be

classified as genocidal acts – "the term genocide suggests deliberate intent, with a specific

section of the population targeted".[252] Genocide is defined as "any of the following acts

committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious

group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to

members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring

about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births

within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group".[253] It is no

coincidence that Black people are searched, seized, and arrested more than their white

counter-parts in America despite the fact that they are less likely to commit crimes and less

likely to be armed when arrested. Similarly, it is no coincidence that Black people in Brazil make

up more than 50 percent of the people killed within the nation. I argue that these acts are

deliberate and a result of the deeply ingrained anti-Blackness within these nations. These

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[251] *Ibid.*

[252] Diego Viana, and Cristina Fróes de Borja Reis. "The 'Genocide' of Brazil's Black Youth Gives Day of the Dead Extra Resonance | Cristina Fróes De Borja Reis." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 2 Nov. 2017, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/nov/02/genocide-brazil-black-youth-day-of-the-dead-extra-resonance.

[253] *OFFICE OF THE UN SPECIAL ADVISER ON THE PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE (OSAPG).* ttps://www.un.org/ar/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/osapg_analysis_framework.pdf.

practices of mistreatment, abuse, and killing of Black people can be explained by Afro-pessimist

theory, as they are entwined into history, reaching as far back as slavery, to inform the ways

that Black existence is viewed in contemporary society in both America and Brazil. They have

become embodied practices by the state which is what makes these genocidal acts knowable

and readable as anti-Black racism.

In both of these nations, Blackness is reproduced through anti-Black violence, most

often violence conducted by the state. It is during these violent encounters with the state, that

Black people's place within society is reinforced. According to Afro-pessimism, Black people are

constantly subjected to gratuitous violence which can be understood as violence that is

"unprovoked," or "violence that clearly exceeded the degree of force that would have been

necessary to merely control the victim".[254] Gratuitous violence is violence that happens for little

to no reason, especially to Black people. Black people are often subject to this type of violence

for simply being present which requires Black people to constantly justify their existence.[255]

State violence demonstrates another reason why Afro-pessimism is a key lens to use in thinking

through the racial relations between the United States and Brazil. Afro-pessimist theory

critically analyzes the function of state violence in Brazilian and US' societies, and the meaning

this violence has for Black existence. This specific type of state violence is significant because it

positions the Black individual as an object made available to "indeterminately horrifying and

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[254] David Bruce. (2010, Anger, Hatred, or Just Heartlessness? Defining Gratuitous Violence. South African Crime Quarterly. https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3108/2010/v0i34a871
[255] P.R. Lockhart. "Living While Black and the Criminalization of Blackness." *Vox*, Vox Media, 1 Aug. 2018, www.vox.com/explainers/2018/8/1/17616528/racial-profiling-police-911-living-while-black.

open vulnerability" and for containment, control, and destruction.[256] The positional effects of

state violence reinforce Black's social standing which perpetuates anti-Blackness, which is "the

notion that the construction of Blacks as nonhuman structures the status of all other racial

groups".[257] Additionally, these effects establish Black people's political identities as individuals

with access to citizenship in name, but without the full rights and protections afforded to

citizens within these nations. Christen Smith states,

> "*Black people in Brazil and the United States are legal citizens only in sensu stricto. This is a controversial claim to make, but I come to this conclusion through a qualitative analysis of national experience. While legal citizenship affords all citizens equal protection under the law in both nations, this protection does not practically extend to black people in either. There is a breakdown between legal, written inclusion and state practice of national inclusion. The evidence for this is the indiscriminate manner by which black people are killed, beaten, tortured, and violated by the state with impunity.*"[258]

The lethal, unchecked violence imposed on Black people in the United States and Brazil by the

state exposes Black people's lack of accessibility to inclusion under the laws that grant

citizenship to its people. Anti-Blackness continuously undermines citizenship for Black people

and exposes them to heightened states of violence and marginality which leads to genocidal

conditions for the entire population of people.

I argue that ideologies, such as racial democracy and color-blindness, produce and

justify these genocidal acts.[259] Racial democracy and racial color-blindness ideologies promote

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[256] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.
[257] Victor Erik Ray, et al. "Critical Race Theory, Afro-Pessimism, and Racial Progress Narratives." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, vol. 3, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 147–158, doi:10.1177/2332649217692557.
[258] Christen A. Smith (2015), Blackness, Citizenship, and the Transnational Vertigo of Violence in the Americas. AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST, 117: 384-387. doi:10.1111/aman.12242
[259] João H. Vargas. "Genocide in the African Diaspora: United States, Brazil, and the Need for a Holistic Research and Political Method." *Cultural Dynamics*, vol. 17, no. 3, Nov. 2005, pp. 267–290, doi:10.1177/0921374005061991.

the mystification of race and race relations through the erasure of Black existence. Racial

democracy in Brazil suggests that everyone, regardless of racial identity, is one through the

classification of everyone under the nation's unique multi-racial and multi-cultural ethnic

identity. On the other hand, racial color-blindness in America suggests that racial group

membership should not be taken into account or a consideration, often described as not seeing

race. Both of these ideologies explicitly and fundamentally expunge Black people's identities,

and blatantly ignore the high volume of spectacular violence that Black people face in both of

these nations due to race. In *Genocide in the African Diaspora: United States, Brazil, and the*

Need for a Holistic Research and Political Method, João Vargas states,

> *White supremacy and anti-Black racism are genocidal. Complementing their most obvious, final manifestations, white supremacy and anti-Black racism also work through silence, inaction, and ignorance. White supremacy and anti-Black racism happen both because of what we and others do as well as what we and others don't do. Consequently, silence, inaction, and ignorance are as genocidal as the most racist acts and thoughts.[260]*

The ideologies of racial democracy and racial color-blindness are ways to disregard and ignore

the actual lived experiences of Black people which is what makes these ideologies genocidal—

"ideology indeed constitutes the worldview within which racism and genocide are made

possible".[261]

The spectacular, lethal, and genocidal violence that Black people are subjected to in

present-day Brazil and the United States stems from the lethal violence and objectification

Black people were forced to experience in times of slavery which then, and continues to now,

fuel the political and libidinal economies within these nations. For Afro-pessimism, these

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[260] *Ibid*.
[261] *Ibid.*

specific slave experiences inform Black people's existence in contemporary Brazilian and

American society. As defined in Chapter 1, the libidinal economy within the US and Brazil refers

to the pleasure and enjoyment that is received from situating Black people as the unassimilable

other and the spectacle of Blackness that has become profitable through the desensitization of

Black pain. The libidinal economy has evolved from being rooted into slavery to being rooted

within everyday Black life. This economy that thrives upon the spectacle of Blackness presents

itself in many forms, one of which being the circulation through the media of Black people

being brutally mistreated, beaten, and murdered by the police. NBC news presented the

following question, "in a media landscape that already circulates countless portrayals that

devalue Black existence, what kind of impact do these images of brutality have on Black

people?"[262] There are several reasons why dead Black individuals are circulated through the

media more than dead white individuals. One reason being that Black individuals are killed at a

disproportionate and alarming rate, compared to their white counterparts, within these

countries. Another reason pushed forth by activists and the media alike is that the display of

these violent acts and killings by the police of Black people evokes empathy, reveals the reality

of Black people's everyday encounters with the police, and moves people to protest and seek

justice.[263] While all of these reasons for the reproduction of these images/videos in the media

are in some ways valid, the constant replication and reposting of these clips says something

about Black people and Black life. The reproduction of these images violates the privacy of the

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[262] Sherri Williams. "Editorial: Images of Black Death Are Affecting Us." *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 11 July 2016, www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/editorial-how-does-steady-stream-images-black-death-affect-us-n607221.
[263] *Ibid.*

families and loved ones closest to the victims in their state of mourning. The constant display of

this content normalizes the spectacle of viewing lifeless Black people and devalues Black

existence by implying that the reproduction of these images is acceptable. The media makes

dead Black individuals hypervisible which signals objectification and strips them of dignity.[264]

These images are also resemblant of twentieth century lynching images which "were intended

to code Black bodies as criminal, beatable, and killable".[265]

Ultimately, Black individuals, both in life and death, are not shown the same dignity or

respect as their white counterparts which reinforces their place in both America and Brazil at

the bottom of the racial hierarchy with limited access to these nation's rights and privileges

granted through citizenship. These moments of violence and the disproportionate amount of

state-conducted Black homicides serve a particular function for civil society. State-produced

violence against Black people and the viral nature of it within all forms of media reinforces not

only the black/ white binary between human and non-human, but also the Black/ non-Black

binary. Afro-Pessimists argue that "violence which turns a body into flesh, ripped apart literally

and imaginatively, destroys the possibility of ontology because it positions the Black (individual)

in an infinite and indeterminately horrifying" vulnerability.[266] During these violent encounters,

the Black individual is positioned as an object made available to any subject.[267] State violence

against non-Black people does not lead to the same effects as when the same violence is

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[264] Sarah Sentilles. "When We See Photographs of Some Dead Bodies and Not Others." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 14 Aug. 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/08/14/magazine/media-bodies-censorship.html.
[265] *Ibid.*
[266] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.
[267] *Ibid.*

against Black people, in regards to the spectacle that is made or the general condition of Black

death that is solidified, which makes state violence beneficial to non-Black racial groups. During

these instances of state- sanctioned violence on Black people, it becomes clear that Blacks

endure a certain degree of violence, due to their race, when encountering the police. Non-Black

racial groups ability to recognize this and realize that this is not the same degree of violence

imposed on them during similar encounters allows these groups to measure their humanity

through distance from Blackness and "achieve their subjectivity and citizenship through

"othering" Blacks".[268] State violence against Black people is a form of anti-Blackness that is

necessary for the political, ontological, and epistemological coherence of civil society.

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[268] Victor Erik Ray, et al. "Critical Race Theory, Afro-Pessimism, and Racial Progress Narratives." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, vol. 3, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 147–158, doi:10.1177/2332649217692557.

Conclusion

In both the context of the United States and Brazil, Blackness has historically been structured as the antithesis of citizenship and humanity. Throughout my thesis, I have discussed the systems societies within both of these nations created surrounding and rooted in anti-Blackness. These systems range from slavery, to racio-spatial boundaries set by the government in American and Brazilian cities like Rio de Janeiro and Los Angeles, to large scale Black homicide in both nations. The dehumanization and subjugation of Black people has allowed the classes of people that identify as "non-black" to have access to a wide range of social, political, and economical rights and privileges, including the most basic right of access into civil society which emphasizes the necessity for the world to categorize a group of people as inhuman. Blackness was intricately constructed in both America and Brazil to establish the concept of ontology, meaning that Blackness has become the quintessential requirement of inhumanness. This has allowed the world to construct systems based on ensuring that Black existence is characterized by social death. Anti-blackness is so deeply ingrained into how we view humanity and identity, both nationally and internationally, that in order to restructure the system, we'd have to completely dismantle and reconstruct the concepts of humanity and human relation.

In the first chapter of my thesis, I focused on racial formation in the United States. Specifically, I outlined the ways that Black people in the United States and Brazil have been racialized, and how the root of that racialization emerging during the period of trans-Atlantic racial slavery.[269] These forms of anti-Black racialization have been used in both the United

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[269] Michael Omi, and Howard Winant. "Racial Formations." *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 1994.

States and Brazil as a way to justify the marginalization of Black people. The formation of race

distinguished whites as "human" and Blacks as "non-human", providing the justification for

racial slavery. After the abolition of slavery, whites had to reshape and redefine the ways in

which Blacks could be characterized as subordinate and inferior now that they had been

granted access to a small portion of freedom. Whites ontologized the "slave relation as the

essential principle of black existence", extending this status to include the "phenotypic

appearance of 'blackness'".[270] Black (non) existence became characterized as the absence of

humanity (void of subjecthood, social recognition) and the inability to access the full rights and

privileges granted by citizenship. R.L states, "Black existence forms the bottom line, the

condition of possibility, of general social and material integration. It is not necessarily one's

'whiteness' that matters inasmuch as one is not black enabling entrance and participation in

civil society."[271] When it comes to race, to be accepted and viewed as human it is not

necessary to fit into the category of white, but it is necessary to escape any type of association

with the category of Black. This concept of escaping and distinguishing one's self from

Blackness has shaped social relation in both Brazil and the United States, solidifying the lines

between Blackness, citizenship, and the human, thereby excluding Black people from the equal

protections that are afforded by the state. Anti-black rhetoric and the association between

Blackness and non-human, has made it okay for Black people to constantly be subjected to

manipulation and violence. Whether it be in regards to routine police shootings of Black

individuals, limitation of access to means of income, or simply occupation of space; all of these

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[270] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013,
www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.
[271] *Ibid.*

things work together and individually to form a system that reproduces Black (in)existence,

placing it outside the lines of humanity and outside of the state practice of national inclusion of

citizenship in the United States and Brazil.

The ontology of Blackness as social death is maintained through anti-Blackness. It is

"essentially a structural position that positions itself as demandless" within a system built on

the principle that Blackness is the antithesis of the Western "Man", separating it into its own

category defined and perpetuated by political, social, and violent encounters.[272] These

encounters vary in many ways. Anti-Blackness is perpetuated geographically in America and

Brazil, via the drawing of spatial boundaries that marginalize and segregate Black residents.

João Vargas argues that racial separation is a strategy of conditional genocide. In Los Angeles

specifically, racial separation was achieved through suburbanization of spaces, which was

accomplished through "grouping families of similar incomes" by setting fixed minimum costs

for homes, keeping commercial and industrial jobs/ activities away from theses suburban areas,

and allowing only single-families to occupy the homes. Most Black people's economic and social

statuses restricted them from meeting most of these criteria, which forced them into areas that

they could afford. The LA example given by Vargas lays out a common tactic used within states

in America to isolate Black families into residentially segregated neighborhoods. In Rio de

Janeiro, when the government transitioned to a republic, individuals located in some of Rio's

slums were displaced and relocated into poorly managed, crime and disease filled public

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[272] R.L. "Wanderings of the Slave: Black Life and Social Death." *Mute*, 5 June 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wanderings-slave-black-life-and-social-death.

housing units by the government.[273] The relocation of these residents was a mechanism to retrieve the inner city lands on which these individuals resided. The individuals located within these housing units were predominantly Black. The poorly maintained housing compounds were eventually abandoned by the government, further marginalizing the residents within these units both geographically and socioeconomically— laying the foundations for residential segregation that would continue to isolate, segregate, and disadvantage the predominantly Black residents of favelas to this day .[274]

Through these physical locations, the relationship between humans, environment, and landscape began to form, attaching place-meaning to these spaces, and labeling them "Black ghettos" and "favelas". Both ghettos in the United States and favelas in Brazil are characterized by poverty, unemployment, violence and unequal access to resources. Restricting Black people into these areas fraught with abysmal living conditions is conditional genocide and maintains the ontology of Blackness – social death. Moving past spatial boundaries and the formation of the Black ghetto, anti-Blackness is also perpetuated through the systems of both political and libidinal economy. The political economy is rooted in the acceptance of Black people as the unassimilable other, justifying using a group of people for labor extraction, placing them in segregated communities, and stripping them of access to a multitude of basic human rights. Libidinal economy refers to the economy that is fueled by the spectacle of viewing lifeless Black people. This includes the desensitization of Black pain through the constant showing of Black

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[273] Favelas in Rio De Janeiro, Past and Present." *Brazil Five Centuries of Change*, Brown University , library.brown.edu/create/fivecenturiesofchange/chapters/chapter-9/favelas-in-rio-de-janeiro-past-and-present/.

[274] *Ibid.*

dead individuals, as well as the obsession with Black features and culture, but not the people; upholding the insignificance of Black life.

Lastly, I argue that Black existence is defined and produced through violence in both Brazil and the United States. In the moment of racial encounter, regardless of what a Black American or Afro-Brazilian may see themselves as, their most salient identity to the police officer or state official will be their Blackness. In the letter to her colleagues, Black studies scholar Sylvia Wynter states that public officials in Los Angeles "routinely used the acronym N.H.I to refer to any case involving a breach of the right of young Black males who belong to the jobless category of the inner city ghettoes. N.H.I means "no humans involved."[275] Residential segregation, political economy, libidinal economy, and violence are all pieces of a system built around the understanding of Blackness as the antithesis of humanity which validates the constant efforts to keep Blacks on the outside of civil society and outside of the full protection of the rights and privileges extended through citizenship.

While anti-Blackness is very prevalent in both America and Brazil, and is apparent in similar institutions, it also can and does manifest in different ways that are not synonymous between both countries. For example, in places like Salvador, Bahia, tourism has established a political-economic system that thrives off of Black culture, while simultaneously abusing and killing Black people. Based on studies, Bahia is categorized as one of the most violent places to live in Brazil. Salvador, the capital of Bahia is, as Christen Smith argues, the "Afro-Paradise". Afro-Paradise is

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[275] Sylvia Wynter. "No Humans Involve: An Open Letter to My Colleagues." *Forum N.H.I: Knowledge for the 21st Century, Vol.1, No.1 Fall 1994: Knowledge on Trial.* Institute N.H.I., 1994.

"a paradox that hides the economies of black suffering that sustain it. In order to disclose these hidden economies, we must peel back layers of secrecy. An important step in this process is understanding that Afro-paradise is a performance that is staged and scripted, choreographed and performed over and over again against the backdrop of the black body in pain."[276]

It is the duality between the love of Black culture and anti-Black oppression that operate together and reinforce each other. Brazil must engage in the killing of Black people for performance to be able to declare itself a white, hetero-patriarchal society and assert itself as an emerging world power. On the other hand, Brazil needs Black culture to maintain its perception as an exotic space worthy of tourism. One cannot exist without the other. The state enacts violence on Black bodies because they can. They have been empowered by the world to commit these acts based on the non-existence of Black social standing. Black people, globally, are "located as non-human and non-citizen. Consequently, there is no possibility of stripping legal and moral protection –by definition, to be Black means that you exist without these coverings."[277] The state can get away with violence solely directed at Blacks due their ontology. Blacks as the bottom tier of society makes these embodied genocidal anti-Black practices acceptable across the world.

Anti-Blackness is at the root of and lays the foundations for the structures of housing and police violence that exist within Brazil and America. Throughout my thesis, I have argued that American and Brazilian societies are structured by anti-Blackness and anti-Black ideologies, while simultaneously structured around the denial of anti-Blackness even existing. This unavoidable paradox controls Black life and Black people by creating a mindset and ideology

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[276] Christen A. Smith. "Introduction." *Afro-Paradise: Blackness, Violence, and Performance in Brazil.* University of Illinois press, 2016.
[277] *Ibid.*

that embellishes the façade of racial progress, obscuring the ways in which Black people are marginalized, segregated, oppressed, abused, and targeted for extrajudicial killings by the state. These ideologies, specifically racial democracy in Brazil and color-blindness in America, create a view of racial progress that is widely circulated and internalized by non-Black people who have never experienced the oppression and violence that Black people face for being Black everyday– an oppression that can never be completely escaped through any means, including relocation of residence, socioeconomic status, or isolation from other Black people. This paradox (more specifically the denial of anti-Blackness) reinforces Black social death through the disregard and willing ignorance of the experiences Black people face every single day. As cited in Chapter 3, "…white supremacy and anti-Black racism also work through silence, inaction, and ignorance. … Consequently, silence, inaction, and ignorance are as genocidal as the most racist acts and thoughts".[278] Using slavery, residential segregation, and state violence, I have demonstrated that anti-Blackness is foundational to many key state institutions in Brazil and the United States and function. I have analyzed these institutions to critique the deeply embedded within the post-racial ideologies of racial democracy and color-blindness that structure them. I worked to demonstrate that as long as these systems and systems like these structure racial relations within these nations, Brazil and the United States can never achieve true racial equality.

In` conclusion, it is seemingly impossible to escape the blatant disrespect and disregard for Black life rooted in the ontological foundation of Black existence that has been so essential

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[278]João H. Vargas. "Genocide in the African Diaspora: United States, Brazil, and the Need for a Holistic Research and Political Method." *Cultural Dynamics*, vol. 17, no. 3, Nov. 2005, pp. 267–290, doi:10.1177/0921374005061991.

to the ways societies around the world operate and function. The right to human recognition and access to integration in civil society and both legal and national inclusion of citizenship is predicated on one major thing, not being Black. Take it away and the criteria non-Black people base their existence on is gone as well. Western ontology would be destroyed. ``Despite this ontology, it is most important to note that Black people have not just laid down and accepted their societal designations as "non-human" and "non-citizen". In the face of these ultimately genocidal logics, there are still ways in which we, as Black people, fight back. For example, the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States that focuses on the "re-humanization" of Black existence. Similarly, in Brazil, the 'React or Die!/ React or be killed!' movement has emerged, in which activists politicize Black death through protest and public performance as a means to end anti-Black state terror. On a smaller scale, Black people fight back everyday through the creation of a Black sense of place within the spaces they occupy, and not allowing the anti-Blackness and white supremacy that shapes their lives to totally consume them. While these movements give Black people a voice, draw attention to their positions on the mistreatment of Black people by the state, and push back against civil society's subjugation of Black people and Black life, is this the solution to deconstruct the association between Black existence in contemporary society and the slave relation that continues to consume and structure Black people's lives?

Afro-pessimists argue that riots and calls for social justice, civil rights, and police accountability and transparency are not the solution, as they only hold meaning on the surface

because "they are fundamentally demand-less and intentionally destructive".[279] These theorists

conclude that the only solution for Black people to deconstruct anti-Blackness is the "utter

dissolution of the current state of affairs," which is obtained through a "cathartic purge of

violence".[280] They call for an absolute obtainment of freedom, rather than relative freedom

which is achieved through riots and calls for action. Afro-pessimists demand a complete over

turn of Western ontology because they contend that asserting an "emphatic statement of 'I

exist' to the world, will not resolve the problem.[281] Rather they posit that the only way to gain

full freedom from the subjugation and objectification that has consumed Black existence is to

"destroy every apparatus that prohibits the "I" of Black existence from coming into fully being.

To drown out the daily sorrows of violence that subjectivises Black existence. And to unmake

the world that posits Black existence as socially dead…"[282] These scholars theorize that until the

destruction of the current state of affairs occurs, Black people will remain at the bottom of

society, outside of the fringes of humanity and social life, and effectively socially dead.

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