1. Brazil's "Comfortable Racial Contradiction"

In 2013, Brazilian journalist Paulo Henrique Amorim was sentenced to one year and eight months in prison, a sentence later upheld by Brazil's Superior Tribunal de Justiça (Superior Court of Justice).[1] His crime? He had publicly criticized the powerful Brazilian media network Rede Globo for denying that racism exists in Brazil, and he had called out one particular journalist, Heraldo Pereira, for going along with this denial, describing him as a "*negro de alma branca*" (black with a white soul). Amorim was later accused of *racismo* (racism) and *injúria racial* (racial insult, or an "injury to one's honor"; see Racusen 2004:789) by both the network and Heraldo Pereira, and was found guilty of the latter. Amorim, who is politically liberal and often at the center of controversy, used as part of his defense the fact that he has long publicly supported antiracist efforts. He argued that he was merely exercising his freedom of speech in order to disagree with Pereira's implicit suggestion that any black person could work hard and become rich and famous in Brazil. Despite Amorim's desire to make Brazil's structural racism more visible, the expression that he chose to describe Pereira allowed the powerful (and conservative) media network and the courts to find him personally guilty of racism toward another individual. As the prosecutor explained, his use of this "highly racist" expression:

> sugere que as pessoas de cor branca possuem atributos positivos e bons, ao passo que os negros são associados a valores negativos, ruins, inferiores. É o mesmo que afirmar que os brancos são superiores aos negros e, nesse contexto, um negro de alma branca seria aquele que, embora seja preto, tem a dignidade ou a distinção que seriam próprias das pessoas de cor clara.[2]

> suggests that white people possess positive and good attributes, while black people are associated with negative, bad, and inferior values. It is

the same as saying that white people are superior to black people, and, in this context, a black person with a white soul would be a person who, despite being black, has the dignity or the distinction that belongs to light-skinned people.

Only a few decades ago, this widely used expression could have been considered a compliment by some in Brazil (Turra and Venturi 1995),[3] a saying that noted with approval Pereira's acquisition of "white" traits, including his higher level of education (he is trained as a lawyer), his use of standard Portuguese, and his behavioral refinement, all of which would help override the negative characteristics thought to accompany his dark skin and phenotypically black features. Another Brazilian expression, more commonly used in Bahia than Rio, describes those who demonstrate refinement and the right class status but aren't fair-skinned as *socialmente branco* or "socially white" (Azevedo 1975; Figueiredo 2002). These types of racial descriptions have long suggested a mismatch between phenotype and behavior. And yet this radically new reading of the expression *negro de alma branca*, as an example of a racial insult now subject to legal prosecution (Guimarães 2003; Racusen 2004), serves as an excellent introduction to current debates about Brazilian racism. If you criticize a dark-skinned person for not being antiracist, does that make you a racist? Is noticing race always racist? Does racism explain Brazilian inequality? Do the recent affirmative action policies (such as racial quotas for university admissions) create racism in Brazil? These questions, and controversies like the Paulo Henrique Amorim case, can be dizzying, and they illustrate how public discourse in Brazil over race and racism has changed considerably over the past few decades.

It's not just the public debate that feels new. Brazil has had laws against racial discrimination on the books since the Afonso Arinos Law of 1951, passed after an African American dancer, Katherine Dunham, was denied a room at a posh hotel in São Paulo. Brazil's 1988 constitution went even further, defining racial discrimination as a crime without bail or statute of limitations and punishable by imprisonment. Despite this "enlightened jurisprudence" (J. Dávila 2012:2), when I moved to Brazil to conduct dissertation research in 1997, no one had ever been convicted of either crime (Rosa-Ribeiro 2000:226; see also Racusen 2004). After I returned to Brazil in 2014 to begin a new research project, I met several people who had personally filed charges of racism against others. This included one woman who filed a legal complaint against the owner of the nail salon where she worked and another woman who filed charges against the principal at the public school that her daughter attended.[4] Very public racial incidents had garnered not just media attention but also legal, financial, and social reper-

cussions. When a dark-skinned girl from the racially mixed state of Minas Gerais posted a picture of herself wrapped in the arms of her light-skinned boyfriend on Facebook, she was flooded with racist comments. The Brazilian Civil Police began to investigate those who had posted offensive comments, including those who alluded to plantation life and asked where the boy had purchased his "slave."[5] When losing soccer fans screamed "*macaco*" (monkey) at the dark-skinned goalkeeper of a rival team, one twenty-two-year old female fan from the southern state of Porto Alegre was caught on camera. She was banned from the stadium, and the team she was rooting for was given a R$50,000 fine (equivalent to over US$20,000 at the time).[6]

In a similar incident involving fan racism (this time while playing in Europe), Brazilian soccer player Daniel Alves spurred an online antiracist social media movement back in Brazil when he peeled and ate the banana that had been thrown onto the field by a (presumably European) fan. Brazilian celebrities, politicians, and supporters all posted selfies with peeled bananas, and his teammate, Brazilian fan favorite Neymar, used the opportunity to launch a hashtag campaign, #somostodosmacacos (we are all monkeys). Barely twenty years ago, academics described what felt like a "cultural censorship" around the topics of race and racism (Sheriff 2001; see also Twine 1998; Vargas 2004), yet public discussion of racism seems commonplace in twenty-first-century Brazil.

In one of my very first job interviews, a professor from Princeton University who had not worked in Brazil asked me a question I have not forgotten: "A few decades ago, anthropologists were studying Brazil because of its excellent race relations. Now all people seem to study is Brazilian racism. Did we just get it wrong back then, or have things changed?" The safest answer, of course, is both. Things have changed in Brazil, by a lot, not only since I began researching there in the mid-1990s but also since the United Nations commissioned scholars to study the country as a "racial democracy" that could serve as a role model to a world reeling from the horrors of state-sanctioned anti-Semitism after World War II. But even as the current sociopolitical context allowed for the complicated racial positionings that occurred as a "white," left-leaning journalist accused a "black," right-leaning colleague of being a "black with a white soul," and then was convicted for his racist insult, there are some strong currents of continuity.[7] While a conviction and a jail sentence for the crime of racial injury are definitely new, Amorim was ultimately punished for violating a very old Brazilian preference for "*racismo cordial*" (cordial racism), according to which individuals downplay racial differences that might lead to conflict or disagreement (Fry 1995–96; Sansone 2003; Turra and Venturi 1995).[8] His

comment, which the general public has only recently understood as a racial insult, also willfully mocks the long-held belief that racism is not just personally abhorrent, but an insult to the nation. The better answer to the senior scholar's question, then, would have been this: Brazil, as a nation, has long lived with what I call a *comfortable racial contradiction.*

Historian Micol Seigel offers examples of how the Brazilian elite simultaneously "clung to racial hierarchies even as they loudly repudiated racism" (2009:210). In his book *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change* (1999), Thomas Skidmore, another Brazilianist historian, has declared that Brazil's "ultimate contradiction is between [its] justifiable reputation for personal generosity ('cordiality') and the fact of having to live in one of the world's most unequal societies" (xiii). Perhaps nothing sums up this contradiction better than the assertions of Brazil's own abolitionists who in the late 1800s widely proclaimed that Brazil had been fortunate to escape the racial hatred and division that characterized their neighbor to the north—at the same time that Brazilian slavery continued. Brazil retains the notorious reputation of being the last country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery, which it did, at least in part, because of concerns over its international racial reputation. One abolitionist, Perdigão Malheiro described in 1871 a Brazilian context that increasingly included free people of African descent (such as manumitted slaves): "Since Negroes came to Brazil from the African coast there has never been that contempt for the African race to be found in other countries, especially the United States. . . . Gentlemen, I know many individuals of dark skin who are worth more than many of white skin. That is the truth. In the schools, higher faculties, and churches do we not see good colored students alongside our distinguished men?" (quoted in Skidmore 1974:23).

The idea that an individual of African descent could succeed in Brazil because of the country's lack of prejudice, while more than a million black people continued to be forcibly enslaved, was echoed by the more widely known Joaquim Nabuco: "Color in Brazil is not, as in the United States, a social prejudice against whose persistence no character, talent, or merit can prevail" (quoted in Skidmore 1974:24). Both abolitionists, their own century's equivalent of the antiracist, seem to lay the foundations for the *negro de alma branca.* They would have seen no contradiction in the belief in white superiority that this term implies existing alongside the pride they took in Brazil affording free people of African descent the opportunity of social mobility despite the unfortunate and obvious circumstance of their blackness (E. Costa 1985). Their focus on the possibilities of individual accomplishment as "exceptions to the rule" brings into sharp relief their

dismissal of the significance of the widespread and structurally embedded racism amid which they lived. Drawing on what is now considered sensational and offensive language, this is essentially the same situation that Paulo Henrique Amorim felt compelled to critique nearly 150 years later.

I will describe this as Brazil's comfortable racial contradiction, but my choice of this term requires a few disclaimers. I do not mean to imply that this racial situation is "comfortable" for all of Brazil's residents, as it certainly is not (A. Costa 2016; Sheriff 2001), nor do I wish to ignore the contributions of activists or academics, past and present, who have long sought to expose and ameliorate this contradiction (see, for example, Carneiro 2011; Dzidzienyo 1971; A. Nascimento 1978). More important, however, I do not intend to examine Brazil or Brazilians as somehow unusual, or even extreme, in their ability to juggle competing racial ideologies. Instead, my choice of the term highlights the fact that Brazil handles these larger contradictions quite well, making them seem "comfortable" and commonsensical to many people, who adapt them to new situations and political climates. North Americans, in particular, have been drawn to Brazilian race relations because a lack of overt racial conflict, an absence of clear racial identities, and a situation of ambiguous racial boundaries seem so unusual and even (to some) "unnatural." Rather than asking how Brazil developed an "exceptional" set of racial beliefs (cf. Hanchard 1998), I examine day-to-day life as completely normal. I describe how Rio residents, in particular, live among these comfortable racial contradictions and how these contradictions structure what they see, what they say, and how they interact with others across race and class lines. I seek to explain what it means to live in a city of sharp racial disparities and obvious racial hierarchy, but in a country where one is not supposed to be influenced by or believe in racial difference.

This contradiction has been studied by both Brazilian and Brazilianist scholars across a range of academic disciplines including history, sociology, political science, and anthropology. Florestan Fernandes famously claimed that Brazilians have "the prejudice of having no prejudice" (1969:xv). Anthropologist Robin Sheriff described Brazil's racial democracy as simultaneously "a nationalist ideology, a cultural myth, and . . . a dream of how things ought to be" (2001:4). Michael Hanchard examines "the simultaneous production and denial of racial inequality" in Brazil (1998:155). For my part, I am less concerned with making sense of this contradiction than with understanding its effects. After all, Brazilians are not the only ones to smoothly juggle opposing ideals and realities. The United States remains a nation deeply wed to the notion of the American Dream and the seeming opportunity for any individual to succeed, even as income inequality has

reached its highest levels since before the Great Depression. Shamus Khan refers to this as "democratic inequality" (2011:196). Nor does Brazil hold a monopoly on racial ironies. U.S. historian David R. Roediger reminds us of the question posed in the late 1980s by novelist Ralph Ellison: "What, by the way, is one to make of a white youngster who, with a transistor radio, screaming a Stevie Wonder tune, glued to his ear, shouts racial epithets at black youngsters trying to swim at a public beach?" (1998:359). At the end of the day, I am also not interested in assessing whether Brazil is more racist, less racist, or as racist as the United States, and, aside from offering a brief history of how the two nations have long been in dialogue and competed on racial matters (Seigel 2009), I attempt to avoid making what are often far more complicated comparisons. My goal instead is to understand how ubiquitous racial inequality, notions of white superiority, and a national disdain for racial prejudice play out in the mundane experiences of everyday life.

This book is based on twenty years of research in Rio de Janeiro, a city where 52 percent of the population identifies as *preto* (black) or *pardo* (brown), numbers that closely resemble the racial makeup of Brazil.[9] I draw on my training as a linguistic and cultural anthropologist to analyze what may be described as everyday racial strategizing that Rio residents employ as they present themselves to others and as they interpret the people they meet. I focus on daily interactions to shed light on how racial inequality, and the racial hierarchy on which it is based, is not just something people live in but also something that people actively negotiate and produce. As I present snapshots of everyday life across race and class lines, I argue that Rio residents "read" bodies for racial cues, examining not only phenotypical attributes—including skin color, hair texture, and facial features such as the shape of the nose or lips—but also paying careful attention to cultural and linguistic practices such as how one is dressed and how one speaks. My attention to daily practice is inspired by the work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1994), and, as in his work, differences of socioeconomic class pervade the encounters that I describe. When I analyze the attention paid to levels of education, "proper" ways of speaking, and displays of cultural refinement (or the lack thereof), both North American and Brazilian readers may be drawn to read these as obvious signs of class status. The explicit intent of this book is to show how these embodied practices also convey racial meaning.

In what follows, I introduce the three main premises of Brazil's comfortable racial contradiction. They include the following racial "facts," which I will set up in further detail: (1) structural racism has always existed in Brazil; (2) Brazil continues to draw on and perpetuate notions of the superiority of whiteness and the inferiority of blackness, ideas that are globally

shared; and (3) Brazil has long been proud of its racial mixture and its racial tolerance, ideas that have been both promoted—and enforced—by the Brazilian nation-state. Given this cultural contradiction, I do not restrict my analysis to situations in which people explicitly talk about race, because those are clearly not the only times that Brazilians are influenced by racial ideas, nor are racial terms (including *negro de alma branca*) the only way that race impacts ideas about language and actual linguistic practice.[10] In short, I invite the reader to dive into a study of the ways Rio residents make sense of ubiquitous signs of blackness and whiteness within a context that discourages them from describing what they see in racial terms.

POBREZA TEM COR (POVERTY HAS A COLOR)

In 1808, the Portuguese regent prince deceived Napoleon and fled Lisbon just as the French army invaded the city, sailing away with more than 15,000 members of the Portuguese court and arriving in their colony of Brazil as the first royals to ever step foot in the Americas. This tale is widely recognized as a defining moment in Brazilian history, when Europe literally came to Brazil, setting off a chain of events that would turn Brazil into the independent nation that it is today. As described in vivid detail in a best-selling book by Brazilian journalist Laurentino Gomes (2007), it was a serious adjustment for members of the Portuguese nobility to learn to live in the tropics. In the process, they remade Brazil and the city of Rio de Janeiro as they attempted to bring it up to European standards that included sidewalks, botanical gardens, a national library, a school of medicine, and the country's first bank. The contrast between the newcomers and the majority of the uneducated and "uncivilized" residents was extreme. At the time of the Portuguese court's arrival, only one in one hundred people was literate. One in three inhabitants of Brazil was a slave. Slaves were relatively affordable, and "anyone with a whiff of nobility could reap income from more humble labor without degrading themselves or callusing their hands" (Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, quoted in Gomes 2007:176). For those coming from Portugal, racial differences in Brazil were equally extreme: "For every white there were ten blacks, three *mulattos* [individuals of black and white ancestry], and three *caboclos* [individuals of mixed white and indigenous ancestry]" (D. Davis 1999:14).

Scholars of Brazilian race relations do not necessarily focus on this particular moment of Brazilian history, yet the image of the Portuguese royal court descending upon Rio de Janeiro, a city of only 60,000 inhabitants at the time, and the race, class, and cultural contrasts that ensued strike me as

incredibly important for understanding the current situation of race and class inequality in Brazil. The gap between relatively small middle and upper classes and the "masses," who continue to lack access to decent education, health care, housing, and employment, is not just a statistical fact. It exists as a psychological reality of how the making of Brazil began and of how Brazil (unfortunately) continues to be. One of this book's central goals is to explain how beliefs in the superiority of whiteness and the inferiority of blackness allow Rio residents to justify or make sense of this continued divide. Indeed, according to basic definitions of structural racism, it does not matter whether people of color are intentionally placed at the bottom rungs of the social hierarchy, whether they occupy the bottom strata due to racial conflict, segregationist laws, or a legacy of slavery, or even if they find themselves among equally poor but lighter-skinned people while there. When people who are understood to be "black" are disproportionately concentrated at the bottom of society, and people who are viewed as "white" disproportionately enjoy the privileges and resources offered to those at the top, we may safely and productively describe the situation as one of structural racism.

One illustration helps demonstrate the continuities of patterns of structural racism found in colonial Brazil. In a brilliant political cartoon "Feriado: Dia da Consciência Negra" (Holiday: Black Consciousness Day), published in the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* in 2006 and reposted several years in a row by fans on at least one blog,[11] cartoonist Angeli juxtaposes Brazil's current sociopolitical context with a legacy of racial inequality. He draws one of Rio's iconic South Zone beaches with their long stretches of sand packed with row upon row of pale, white sunbathers. Their dramatically consistent peachy skin is intentional, if not accurate: A long history of miscegenation and the fact that Brazilians, and Rio residents in particular, strongly prefer a good *bronzeado* (or "tan"; see Barickman 2009; Farias 2006) mean that many more Brazilians identify as *moreno* (brown) than white (Norvell 2002). In the foreground of the image, at the shoreline, four dark-skinned beach vendors carrying heavy loads hawk the drinks and other amenities that they sell for a living. Black Consciousness Day became an official national holiday in 2011, passed along with several other laws intended to increase awareness of the national contributions of Brazilians of African descent and to offer limited reparations to black Brazilians for previous racial "injuries" (including slavery). A law passed in 2003, for example, requires the teaching of Afro-Brazilian history and culture in all schools (see A. Costa 2014).

Black Awareness Day had long been celebrated on May 13, the day that Princesa Isabel signed the law that officially ended slavery in Brazil.

However, black activists did not want to continue to honor the princess for "freeing" the slaves. Many current-day black NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) emphasize this point: black people should not be referred to as *escravos,* or slaves, as the term would suggest that this was somehow their natural condition. Instead, they should always be described as *os escravizados* (the enslaved), a term that foregrounds unequal race and power relations and oppression by European colonizers (see Roth-Gordon and da Silva 2013). Along similar lines, black activists rediscovered and re-created Zumbi as a modern-day symbol of black resistance and freedom. Zumbi is now well known as the last leader of Brazil's largest escaped slave colony, the Quilombo dos Palmares, which was located in the Northeast of Brazil in the modern-day state of Alagoas. Zumbi led the maroon colony for many years, evading capture by the Portuguese. When Zumbi was killed on November 20, 1695 (the date chosen in accordance with recent estimates), his head was put on display to dispute the rumors of his immortality and to prevent further slave rebellion.

Although black NGOs and some *favelas* (shantytowns, where many people of African descent live) organize activities to celebrate black awareness and black pride on this day, temperatures in Rio can reach their summer highs, making it a crowded beach holiday. Angeli's tongue-in-cheek illustration thus makes the uncomfortable observation that whiter and wealthier Brazilians, including descendants of the Portuguese court and subsequent generations of European immigrants, can "honor" black history and the contributions Afro-Brazilians have made to Brazil by sitting on historically "white" beaches and being served by subsistence-wage workers who are the descendants of slaves.

Some who are familiar with Brazil could argue that Angeli's image, while originally printed in color, is too black and white. Not all of the beachgoers on Rio's most famous beaches are white; many would not racially describe themselves as such (Norvell 2002), and a good number of the low-income beach vendors are light-skinned. These observations form the basis of a critique that admits to widespread disparity in Brazil, and in Rio, but suggests that the phenotypical variation found within the middle class and especially among the poor points to socioeconomic class as the source of inequality. Race is not commonly thought to be the primary source of stigma, nor is it considered the "real" barrier to social mobility. Like Angeli, I have made the choice in this book to highlight the important role that race plays in upholding Brazilian inequality. Indeed, it is not because of, but rather in spite of, the intentional exaggeration that Angeli's point becomes readily understandable, even to those who prefer to emphasize class over race.

FIGURE 1. "Feriado: Dia da Consciência Negra" (Holiday: Black Consciousness Day). Political cartoon originally published in *Folha de São Paulo,* November 20, 2006. Used with permission granted by Angeli.


FIGURE 2. Worker taking chairs away from the beach at the end of the day. Photo by Marcelo Santos Braga.

As I detail in chapter 4, which takes up the topic of racial contact on the beach, not just some, but the vast majority of Copacabana, Ipanema, and Leblon residents and primary beachgoers are light-skinned. And not just some, but most, of the beach vendors are dark-skinned. More important, the nature of structural racism is at its clearest in this example. If one were to look for the darkest-skinned people on the beach, they would almost all, with rare exception, be on the move as workers, setting up beach chairs or carrying drinks, ice cream, and other beach amenities to well-heeled but currently barefoot patrons, so the latter may shop and refresh themselves without leaving their chosen place to lounge on the sand. The connections to colonial Brazil, where some lived in comfort off the toil of others, are most palpable when one watches the darkest-skinned bodies sweat and strain under heavy loads in the hot sun. Even if one wanted to criticize Angeli for simplifying matters, few who live in or have visited Brazil could fail to recognize the phenomenon he describes.

This fact of racial disparity is at the heart of the common expression *pobreza tem cor* (poverty has a color; see Carneiro 2011:57). While not all people who live in the shantytowns and suburbs of Rio are black, the vast majority of black people live in these impoverished areas. A fellow anthropologist once took a long walk through various neighborhoods. As he headed south through the city, he watched the overall mix of people turn from a medium shade of brown to lighter brown to nearly all white (Sean Mitchell, personal communication), a reminder of the racial geography of Rio or what anthropologist Keisha-Khan Perry has called the "racial politics of spatial exclusion" (2013:51). For this book, I draw on research that I conducted in 1997–98 in Cruzada, a South Zone *comunidade* (or "community," a new euphemism for a shantytown) where the majority of residents identified as *preto* (black) and my whiteness made me an obvious outsider. As I explain in chapter 2, Cruzada is technically a *conjunto habitacional* (akin to a housing project), a series of ten buildings built to house displaced residents after an unexplained fire destroyed a sprawling shantytown, Praia do Pinto, that took up some of Rio's most expensive real estate.[12] The contrast between the one long city block of Cruzada and the neighboring blocks and streets is visually startling, not only because of the juxtaposition of poorly maintained housing project buildings and luxurious and modern condominiums, but also because the racial makeup of the population is so clearly divergent from the surrounding area.[13]

I visited Brazil nearly every year after I left in 1998, and in 2014 I moved back to Rio de Janeiro to live in the wealthy neighborhood of Ipanema with my family, which by then included my white husband, one white biological
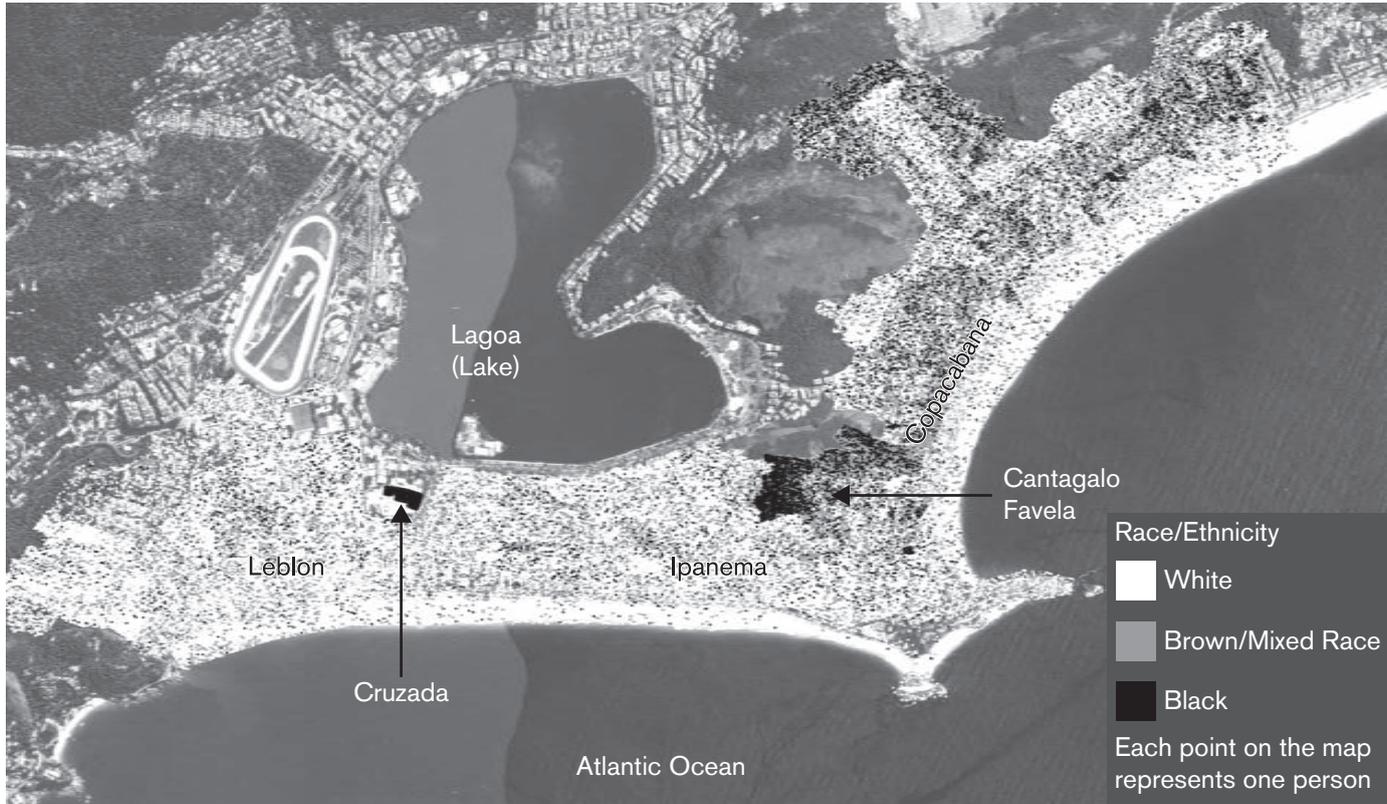
MAP 1. Racial map of the South Zone of Rio de Janeiro based on 2010 census data from Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE). Adapted from maps created by Hugo Nicolau Barbosa de Gusmão.

son, and two other children, one son and one daughter, both African American and adopted. We spent one year in Rio while I researched the daily lives of middle- and upper-middle-class families, and it was only then that the difference between brownness and blackness became crystal clear to me. (Both of my African American children are dark enough to be considered *negro/a* in Brazil.) The physical and social spaces that we frequented in Copacabana, Ipanema, and Leblon included expensive apartment buildings, members-only social clubs, private schools and extracurricular activities, shopping malls, vacation spots, and *casas de festas* (spaces rented to host children's birthday parties). These spaces almost always had dark-skinned workers who occupied service positions as cleaners, maids, nannies, waiters, doormen, and security guards. Visibly "black" Brazilians who actively participated as members and invited guests were few and far between (see Cicalo 2012a, 2012b; McCallum 2005).

During this research in middle-class spaces, I was never in a place where there were too many black people to count (generally on one hand), and my children got used to being the only dark-skinned people who were not minimum-wage workers. The experience of bringing a black and white (and thus highly visible) family to live in Rio offered me an unusual vantage point. Unlike most Brazilian families, ours had no smooth range from light brown to dark brown, nor did we "match" as an entirely dark-skinned or entirely light-skinned family. Brazilians seemed to quickly understand our situation, especially since my dark-skinned children were still young. One physically disabled man without legs who gets around on a skateboard and has lived for years on the streets around the public square near our apartment once called out to us, "Me adota também!" (Adopt me too!).

Throughout our many visits to Rio, my family and I experienced few instances of direct racism—I can also count these on one hand. One time when we stopped to speak to the waiter on the outside patio of a fancy Leblon restaurant (where we went for my husband's birthday), a security guard came over to ask if my two younger children were "with us." When we stayed to dine at the restaurant, and I spoke with the waiter and the manager to discuss what had happened and how my son (who was eight at the time) had noticed his symbolic exclusion from our family because of his skin color, both were very apologetic and sincere in their disapproval of the situation. Middle-class friends to whom I told of this incident afterward all readily agreed that it was a clear, and disturbing, example of Brazilian racism. Their willingness to discuss individual and more obvious situations of racism in which insult or exclusion was directed toward dark-skinned individuals, as in the Paulo Henrique Amorim case, did not mean that they

shared my interest in discussing the structural racism that we were all living in.[14]

When I asked friends why our shared private school, with more than fifteen hundred students ages two to eighteen, did not seem to have more than a few dozen students of color, despite the fact that plenty of dark-skinned youth lived in the poorer neighboring communities, they did not recognize this as racism. My ever-aware son had also noticed the glaring absence of dark-skinned students. But, illustrating the preference to think in terms of class rather than race, my middle-class friends chalked this up to both class discrimination and the financial inability of poorer people to enroll their children in a private school. "Don't you think it would cause an uproar if three hundred black kids entered the school tomorrow?" I would ask. "Not if they were middle-class kids," I routinely heard. "The uproar would only occur if three hundred kids from the shantytowns or three hundred children of doormen came into the school." Our short-lived debate was hyper-hypothetical: there were not three hundred middle-class or wealthy dark-skinned children to be found, even if we had combed multiple South Zone neighborhoods.

Along similar lines, when I asked why there were no black teachers at the school, friends said that they doubted that the school was turning away qualified black candidates because of their race. One well-liked dark-skinned library assistant named Rose whom I interviewed (and talked to parents about) was considered poorly suited for classroom teaching because of her "ungrammatical" speech. This meant that she acted as the full-time teaching librarian for the lower school, working twice as many hours as regular teachers for half the pay. This, too, was seen as class discrimination, unrelated to her race. She may have reached the best position that she could obtain, I was told, due to her class background. Rose had previously worked as a nanny. My friends were likely right that there were few qualified black teaching candidates prior to the recent implementation of college quotas. Qualified applicants might also have been more likely to seek positions through *concursos* (literally "contests") that offered jobs based on test scores on publicly offered exams, reducing the chances that racism would affect the outcome. They could therefore "earn" these positions and not subject themselves to interviews and positions in primarily white spaces that they may have found intimidating. By comparison, though Rose had begun seeking out *concursos* that she could sit for, she was reluctant to leave her position in such a prestigious space, one she had never dreamed that she could occupy. Middle-class interpretations of the lack of racial mixture in these spaces were telling. The absence of black students and black teachers was unfortunate but not surprising to them given the fact that

most black people in the area were poor and had access only to public (and thus substandard) schools. It was not understood to be related to racism.

Throughout this book, I emphasize how racial ideas shape the construction of social inequality, not because I wish to deny the importance of class (which is always relevant), but because the divide between rich and poor is so readily acknowledged in Brazil. One could also describe the arrival of the Portuguese court in 1808 as introducing a clash of dramatically different socioeconomic levels and lifestyles, from noble to slave. Slaves were also mostly uneducated (deliberately so) and thus "justifiably" ineligible for social mobility. And yet such a reading would obviously ignore the structural racism that was fed not only by differences in wealth, opportunity, and the situation of one's birth, but also by notions of the superiority of whiteness and the inferiority of blackness. Black people were not seen as equals; they were not generally understood to have the same intellectual capacities as people of European descent; and in this way their location at the bottom of the social hierarchy was made understandable. The historical continuation of these ideas from the nineteenth century to the present day offers the second guiding premise of this book.

"CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM"

Brazil began to contemplate the end of slavery decades before it fully emancipated all slaves in 1888, and scholars and politicians at the time worried aloud about the country's lack of whiteness. It was the dawn of the era of scientific racism, during which whiteness was scientifically "proven" to be superior and miscegenation was widely understood to lead to degeneration and demise. Across Latin America, leading thinkers constantly monitored their global standing and strategized on how to racially improve their national population (Stepan 1991). Argentina's Domingo Sarmiento, in one of his nineteenth-century essays, "Civilization and Barbarism," described the difficulty a mixed-race Latin America would have promoting European values as the whiter United States successfully had done. As historian Darien Davis explains, "Barbarism was all that was South American; its indigenous roots, its African slavery, its miscegenation, and its cultural mixing" (1999:20). Blackness, in particular, was associated with slavery and held up as the opposite of modern civilization. Compared to the United States (as it perpetually was), Brazil suffered from a racially inferior climate (the tropics) as well as a severe racial imbalance. Because its black population had been over 50 percent for so long, racial separation was thought to be a near impossibility (Skidmore 1974:29).

The proposed solution of *embranquecimento,* or whitening, through facilitating and financially subsidizing European immigration, seemed to offer "an ingenious compromise between racist theory and the facts of Brazilian social life" (Skidmore 1974:136).[15] European immigrants would bring to the tropics "a flow of lively, energetic, and healthy Caucasian blood" (Joaquim Nabuco, quoted in Skidmore 1974:24) and would allow Brazilians to "cleanse themselves of the backward population" (D. Davis 1999:19). They could then be encouraged to *melhorar a raça* (improve, or "save," the race; see D. Davis 1999:18) through marriage and miscegenation with whiter stock. Even as they embraced whitening to solve their "problems" with blackness, Brazilian racial thinkers remained proud of their racial tolerance. As one proponent of whitening noted with relief: "We have been able to fuse all races into a single native population, because Portuguese colonization assimilated the savage races instead of trying to destroy them, thus preparing us to resist the devastating invasion of race prejudice" (quoted in Skidmore 1974:24). Both "savage races" and racial prejudice were to be carefully avoided in order to ensure the overall health, well-being, and future of the nation.

It is thus a source of continued pride that Brazil avoided explicitly segregationist laws, in sharp contrast to the United States—a country that spent nearly one hundred years after emancipation legally enforcing separation of the black and white races and legalizing explicit racial discrimination. And yet this comparison ignores the sometimes extralegal Brazilian policies that accomplished race-based restrictions and successfully limited the presence of undesirable blackness. For example, Brazil never passed a bill, proposed in the 1920s, that was intended to prohibit the immigration of people of African descent. Fears of tarnishing Brazil's reputation as a country with no racism, an image helpful to the nation both abroad and at home, ensured that the law did not pass. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told representatives to put the law into effect anyway, as intercepted telegrams to U.S. consuls made clear, and African Americans were repeatedly denied even tourist visas (Seigel 2003:70). As Seigel notes, "Brazil may never have legislated racism, as comparers are so avid to note, but it often worked no less hard to enforce it" (2003:68).

Eugenic principles were written into Brazilian law in the 1934 Constitution, and beliefs in the racial superiority of whiteness explain immigration laws passed in 1945, as Brazil emphasized "the need to preserve and develop in the ethnic composition of the population the more desirable characteristics of its European ancestry" (E. Nascimento 2001:514). Concern over its international racial reputation had led Brazil to abolish

slavery in the late nineteenth century and would later lead it to enact state-based affirmative action policies in the early twenty-first century (Telles 2004:237–38). Brazilian racial insecurities were voiced aloud in at least one public speech made by representatives of Hitler's Germany at an international conference: "It is unbelievable that I, a representative of Germany, only has [*sic*] the same vote that competes with those semi-savage countries of blacks from America like Brazil" (quoted in D. Davis 1999:182). Even as Brazil began to embrace the idea of its "mulatto" reputation, especially in soccer, there were still concerns, as late as 1958, about sending a predominantly nonwhite selection to represent Brazil in the World Cup (Owensby 2005:334).

The takeaway message from this era of Brazilian history, as Thomas Skidmore describes it in *Black into White* (1974), his detailed account of racial thought from 1870 to 1930, is that Brazil, along with Latin America in general, spent many a sleepless night worrying about its lack of whiteness and its extensive blackness.[16] To illustrate this perceived racial dilemma and Brazilians' beliefs in the possibilities and promise of whitening, I recount a Brazilian fairy tale, written in the early 1900s and later translated into an English version for a British audience (Young 1916). In the tale "A Princesa Negrina" (The Black Princess), which Brazilian anthropologist Lilia Moritz Schwarcz (1998) notes is a blend of Snow White, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, and (I would add) Rapunzel, a king and queen are granted a wish by a fairy godmother. As they have no children, the queen exclaims, "Como eu gostaria de ter uma filha, mesmo que fosse escura como a noite que reina lá fora!" (How I would love to have a daughter, even if she were as dark as the night that reigns outside!) The fairy godmother interprets this wish literally, and a daughter "preta como o carvão" (black as coal) is born, causing much commotion. Witnessing the despair of the royal couple, the fairy godmother offers to eventually turn the child white, if she is kept in the castle until her sixteenth birthday. At the age of fifteen, the princess (named Rosa Negra, or Black Rose) loses both of her parents and is tempted out of the castle by a snake. After she learns of the disobedience of the princess, the fairy godmother gives Black Rose one last chance and commands her to marry a monster that is half man and half beast. The princess agrees, but that night she cries desperately to the beast, explaining that she is sad not because of him, but because she has now lost her only chance to become white. They embrace, and at that moment, the beast turns into o Príncipe Diamante (the Diamond Prince), a handsome white nobleman, and she turns into a lovely white princess. And the couple lives happily ever after.[17]

My Brazilian friends were horrified when I told them the story of *A Princesa Negrina*, an outdated fairy tale that they had never heard of, and they were just as horrified that I would include such a story in my book on Brazilian race relations. I share this old-fashioned and obviously racist tale because it helpfully demonstrates how racial thought is both historically and culturally specific, at the same time that it retains a central coherence. This is a distinctly Brazilian fairy tale that makes little sense to North Americans who consider race fixed and largely determined by one's ancestry.[18] And yet more than one hundred years after it was written, the tale of "The Black Princess" confuses neither Brazilians nor North Americans with the main idea that whiteness is considered more valuable and more beautiful than blackness (even as we may vehemently disagree with this racial hierarchy). It is thus important to recognize that racial ideas seamlessly combine both the old and the new, as they span both time and space. As anthropologist Kristina Wirtz notes: "Blackness is neither a straightforward natural category nor a straightforward historical category. It is, rather, a complex series of cultural constructions whose various, overlapping histories encompass several continents and oceans over half a millennium" (2014:5).

Figuring out what to hold constant in these "overlapping" racial ideas is an obvious challenge. It is here that I must begin to explain why I do not limit my understanding of race to the actual visual marker of skin color. As I discuss further in what follows, it is quite common for Brazilians to believe that discrimination against people with lighter skin cannot possibly be related to race. In the absence of recognizable phenotypical markers associated with blackness (the trio of skin color, hair texture, and specific facial features), how could people come to be interpreted as black? And if they are treated poorly, isn't this a sign of discrimination due to socioeconomic class or place of residence (the stigma of living in a *favela* or a distant suburb)? One of the central arguments of this book is that racial ideas must be separated from the phenotypical cues we have learned to look for on bodies. As in the fairy tale, whiteness is granted to the princess (and, allegorically, to Brazil) because of her character; it is not guaranteed by or directly related to her skin color (or her ancestry). Indeed, in Portuguese, there are two possible words for whiteness (within academic studies): *brancura* and *branquitude.* Social psychologist Lia Vainer Schucman clarifies that *brancura* refers to a "white" phenotype, which includes light skin, narrow facial features, and straight hair, while *branquitude* refers to a position of privilege that one occupies in a racially hierarchical society (2014:169; see also Sovik 2009:50). Despite the happy ending in the fairy tale, in which everyone finally matches, these types of whiteness do not always overlap in "real" life.

There is no better example of this than the case of *nordestinos* who have migrated from the Northeast of Brazil and who live, along with their descendants, in poverty side-by-side with descendants of African slaves in the stigmatized *favelas* of the large cities of Brazil's South. Because the majority of *nordestinos* are lighter-skinned, and because they suffer from discrimination, poverty, and restricted social mobility, they are the clearest example of how social inequality is boiled down to class in Brazil. In *The Color of Modernity*, historian Barbara Weinstein (2015) makes the argument I have long wanted to make, though this is not the topic of my research: *nordestinos* aren't considered (racially) white.[19] Weinstein's careful and convincing study traces the development of regional identity in Brazil, describing the different trajectories of Brazil's "booming" industrial South versus the poverty-stricken and rural Northeast. As São Paulo became whiter with the importation of European immigrants, primarily from Italy, Spain, and Portugal, and as the region's economy grew, "tangible material differences between locales such as São Paulo and the Nordeste could be mobilized to legitimate narratives of modernity and backwardness" (Weinstein 2015:6). Here the nation appealed to ideas of innate and natural characteristics to explain how a white, hardworking, and prosperous South contrasted with the lazy, backward, and blacker Northeast. Weinstein explains: "Given that these 'racial' categories were themselves unstable, the labeling of a region as 'black' or 'white' has to be understood as a process that is not reducible to local inhabitants' skin color or origins. Central to my own work is the contention that *paulistas* [residents of São Paulo] have routinely represented themselves as 'white' and *nordestinos* as 'nonwhite' regardless of genetics or physical appearance" (2015:10).

Thus while many northeasterners can be described as lighter-skinned, though not generally as light as those of direct European ancestry, they are not understood to be racially white. They are commonly assumed to lack refinement, intellectual capacity, and civility. Indeed, Weinstein finds that people from São Paulo often call *nordestinos* "*baianos*" (people from Bahia), even though most northeasterners do not come from the state of Bahia. Bahia is, however, the most African of all Brazilian states, and thus this inaccurate generalization attempts to racialize northeasterners through symbolic connections made to blackness (Weinstein 2015:226; see also O'Dougherty 2002). Although I focus in this book on the more overbearing racial contrast made between blackness and whiteness, particularly in Rio, the process of racially reading bodies that I describe here also impacts Brazilians of indigenous ancestry (see, for example, Conklin 1997) and immigrants (mostly in São Paulo) from Asia and the Middle East (Lesser

2013). Brazil's "comfortable racial contradiction" thus employs ideas of racial superiority versus inferiority and presumed differential capacities for *"Ordem e Progresso"* (Order and Progress; the national motto emblazoned on the Brazilian flag) to explain and justify the reality of structural racism. The contradictory part of Brazilian race relations is introduced when we factor in equally commonsensical and deeply held beliefs in the nation's capacity for racial tolerance.

"WE ARE NOT RACIST"

Consider the following explanation of Brazilian race relations:

> Brazilians who are aware of social realities in their country [will not] deny that race prejudice is entirely lacking, or that a mild form of racial discrimination exists and is growing in certain areas. There are well-known stereotypes and attitudes, traditional in Brazil, which indicate dispraisal of the Negro and of the mulatto. There are also well-known barriers to the social ascension of "people of colour" who are the descendants of slaves. Increasing discrimination in such centres as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro caused the National Congress to pass a law making racial discrimination a criminal offence. Yet most Brazilians are proud of their tradition of racial equality and of the racial heterogeneity of their people. They feel that Brazil has a great advantage over most Western nations in the essentially peaceful relations which exist between the people of various racial groups in their country. Industrial, technological and even educational backwardness may be overcome more easily than in areas of the world where racial cleavages divide the population. Brazilians have an important tradition to cherish in their patterns of interracial relations. . . . The world has much to learn from a study of race relations in Brazil. (Wagley 1952:8)

While anthropologist Charles Wagley made these observations in the 1950s in the midst of the UNESCO studies funded by the United Nations to help the world understand how Brazil had successfully achieved the status of a "racial democracy," I would argue that his comments hold true for Brazil today. In this section of the chapter, I seek to explain the historical foundation of how Brazil came to think about itself as an example of racial tolerance and cordiality. I prefer both of these descriptors to the term "racial democracy," as both of them allow for the "comfortable racial contradiction" that I have been describing. Historian Darien Davis describes racial tolerance, in Brazil and throughout Latin America, as relying on the definition of *to tolerate,* along the lines of "the acceptance of a necessary evil" (1999:17). The idea of cordiality similarly implies politeness and possibly

even camaraderie, but it does not invoke notions of equality as the word *democracy* does. The description of Brazil as a "racial democracy" has led to a series of academic studies refuting the veracity of this claim (see, for example, Bailey 2009; Hasenbalg and Silva 1988; Telles 2004). Few would argue, however, with the fact that Brazil has long thought of itself as a racially tolerant nation, despite its structural racism. In what follows, I seek to provide the reader with a quick summary of how these ideas were first propagated, both at home and abroad, and how they were later enforced by a repressive and occasionally brutal military regime. These state policies, ranging from propaganda to censorship, continue to influence how Brazilians, foreigners, and academics think about race in Brazil.

It is perhaps interesting to note that both of Brazil's twentieth-century dictatorships were heavily invested in promoting the idea of Brazil's racial tolerance. It was President Getúlio Vargas (dictator from 1930 to 1945, democratically elected from 1951 to 1954) who sought to consolidate Brazil's federal system and actively promoted feelings of Brazilian nationalism. For Vargas, unity rested on notions of the "racially harmonious Brazilian national family" (D. Davis 1999:2). The idea of a Brazilian family that included African, European, and indigenous peoples was broadcast to the world even as recently as 2014 as three children (one white, one black, and one indigenous) were chosen to release white doves during the World Cup opening ceremonies.[20] Brazilian anthropologist Roberto DaMatta (1981) has famously described this national origin story as the "fábula das três raças" (the fable of the three races), which is supposed to represent the heritage of all Brazilians. Vargas's banner of *brasilidade* (Brazilianness) forced Brazilians to subsume ethnic, racial, and regional identities and profess a shared nationalism (Ferraz 2013; Lesser 2013).

Under the Vargas dictatorship, any attention to racial conflict or racial discrimination was considered an affront to national pride and an impediment to national progress (Daniel 2006:68). The trope of *mestiçagem* (racial mixture), made popular during the same era through the well-known work of Gilberto Freyre (1978 [1933]), also downplayed discussion of racial difference. According to Freyre, racial mixture and racial tolerance would lead to the creation of a Brazilian "meta-race." This pride in a racially mixed Brazilian identity and in a country that had achieved racial harmony and even "fraternity" was constantly evoked (and only made sense) in relation to North America's reputation as a land of racial hatred and violent conflict (Seigel 2009:217), a characterization supported by widely publicized incidents of racial lynching. Indeed, the propaganda around Brazil's racial tolerance was not intended merely for a Brazilian audience.[21] In 1951, Brazil's

Ministry of Foreign Relations distributed a pamphlet printed in English extolling the benefits of Brazil's race relations in comparison to those of the United States (Daniel 2006:177).

Despite the internationally publicized results of the UNESCO studies that found both subtle and statistical evidence of racial inequality throughout the country (as in the previous quote from Charles Wagley; see also Harris 1952), the idea that Brazil was a racially tolerant nation gained an even stronger foothold when it was legally enforced during Brazil's military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985. Racial inequality had not improved; racial hierarchy continued; and beliefs that connected blackness to inferiority were still widespread. But racism was not to be discussed and critiques of racial democracy (considered "acts of subversion") would not be tolerated (Nobles 2000:111). To make sure that quantitative studies that could measure racial inequality were not conducted, questions about race and racial identification were omitted from the 1970 census. Leading scholars who had participated in the earlier UNESCO studies and were active in what would later be called the São Paulo School of Race Relations were forced out of their university positions. These included sociologists Florestan Fernandes, Octávio Ianni, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who went into exile but later returned to become president of Brazil from 1995 to 2003. Black activist Abdias do Nascimento also went into "voluntary" exile in the United States, and black organizations, such as Nascimento's TEN, Teatro Experimental do Negro (Black Experimental Theater), were disbanded. The Commission of Military Inquiry confiscated books from Brazilian universities that addressed the theme of racial inequality (J. Dávila 2013:34).

Political scientist David Covin points to the deep racial contradictions that Brazil supported at the time: "Brazil [was] a racial democracy—under a *dictatorship*—one composed entirely of white men, in a mostly black country" (2006:36; see also J. Dávila 2012). The dictatorship fiercely protected national ideals of *mestiçagem* (race mixture) and racial tolerance through acts of censorship: "At the level of propaganda and communication, a disseminated image of national unity was paramount, and any mention of racial discord, either within or outside of Brazil, was prohibited. Film censors were instructed to assess whether a film depicted racial problems in Brazil, dealt with the Black Power movement in the United States, or referred to racial problems in any way that could impact upon Brazil" (Hanchard 1998:113). Historian Paulina Alberto (2009) documents a case in which a senior military official altered a report to explain that individuals were barred from entering private social clubs based on their social class and

not, as the junior officer had written, because of their race (see also Azevedo 1975). Political scientist Michael Hanchard offers another example that indicates the severity and, at times, absurdity of racial censorship: the line "The whites have great material advantage while the blacks have almost no legal opening" was removed from a reprinted article from Britain's *Manchester Guardian*, even though it described a game of chess (1998:113).

Brazil began its political *abertura* (opening) in the early 1980s, and the country spent decades in a process of "redemocratization" (Holston 2008; Holston and Caldeira 1998; see also chapter 2). But during the second half of the twentieth century another important (and fairly recent) layer had been added to the story of Brazilian race relations. Extreme racial inequality, deep anxiety over a lack of whiteness and a strong fear of blackness were now entwined with a national pride in racial mixture and a rejection of racism that had been strictly enforced by the military government. The social imperative to ignore racial difference, despite the stigma of blackness/nonwhiteness and the existence of structural racism, has impacted decades of policy making and reactions to the country's *favelas*. Historian Brodwyn Fischer notes that discussions about race and racism in *favelas* were increasingly "muffled" or silenced even before the military dictatorship, and in the mid-1950s, Brazil's national congress managed to spend a full year debating a national law about *favelas* without once mentioning that the majority of residents were of African descent (2014:24). This despite the fact that an influential *favela* study produced around the same time "lament[ed] the supposed inability of 'Neolithic' rural migrants and ex-slaves to overcome their backwardness and join a productive proletariat" (quoted in Fischer 2008:77).

The ability to juggle the *favela*'s negative associations of blackness with a silence on racism is fully developed in the internationally acclaimed film *Cidade de Deus* (City of God), which portrays "daily life" in the *favela* to millions of non-Brazilian viewers. The film vividly depicts scenes of crime, violence, and social marginalization, but never mentions race or racism, despite its largely black cast and the fact that the most dangerous and "evil" of characters has the darkest skin (Vargas 2004:443–44). Along similar lines, at least a half-dozen book-length treatments published in the past five years focus on the drug trade, violence, and disenfranchisement in Rio's *favelas,* but they rarely mention race as a significant factor of the residents' exclusion or daily experiences.

Despite these frequent omissions, it has been well documented that *favelas* in Rio are commonly thought of as *o lugar dos negros* (the place of black people; see Sheriff 2001:18), meaning that all who live there, regardless of skin color, bear the stigma of racial association through their contact

with darker-skinned people (the descendants of slaves) and their inescapable contact with black spaces. "Even those who were not physically black were black in the minds of the social elites because they lived like black people among black people" (Covin 2006:39). As anthropologist João Costa Vargas notes, the *favela* became readily associated with "the very concepts that have been usually associated with black people, not only in Brazil, but throughout the Americas/Africa/Europe complex: dirt, promiscuity, aversion to work, violence, irrationality, lawlessness, danger, and subhumanity. . . . Urban space became a metaphor, a code concept for blackness, in the same way that the *favela* was rendered a code word for blacks" (2004:455). Thus even though racism is clearly not the only explanation for the growth and continued exclusion of *favelas* and their residents, it should be stated often and with no small amount of fanfare that the perceived nonwhiteness of *favela* and suburban residents (including northeastern migrants) is one of the reasons that middle-class city residents allow their neighbors to live in situations of such precariousness and insecurity (Penglase 2014). Continuing the long legacy of slavery to which the *favelas* are directly linked, *favela* residents are not understood to be the same as people from *o asfalto* (the asphalt, or the developed part of the city), which makes their suffering unfortunate but more tolerable. Deeply ingrained notions that accord only white people full humanity help structure a widespread societal resignation and denial of full citizenship rights (Alves 2014; Alves and Vargas 2015; C. Smith 2015, 2016; Vargas 2011; Vargas and Alves 2010).

Noticing racial difference in Brazil is thus invested with a host of meanings. It is personally damning, taken as a sign of one's lack of civility and refinement; it is unpatriotic and an insult to the nation; and it is politically risky, monitored by the state and now subject to legal action. Even asking about one's own personal racial identification can be taken as offensive and unnecessarily divisive (as in the Vargas era), as I found when I conducted surveys on slang in the late 1990s. One public high school student refused to respond to my request for racial classification in the section asking for personal information (including age, gender, socioeconomic class, and residential neighborhood). The light-skinned female youth bypassed the printed options that offered official racial census categories and wrote that she was, "Brasileira (o que importa a cor)" (Brazilian [what does color matter]).

Here this teenager articulates the still-widespread idea that to be Brazilian is to take pride in racial mixture and to demonstrate a lack of interest in racial difference. "*Democracia racial* [racial democracy] is as much a system of etiquette as it is an ideology, and as such it stipulates that Brazilians of all colors and classes eschew discourses that figure their nation

as divided along a rigid color line" (Sheriff 2001:46). During her research on understandings of race in a Rio *favela* in the mid-1990s, Robin Sheriff encountered a strong preference to ignore or dismiss situations of racism and obvious racial disparity (as Twine [1998] also found). Sheriff described this as a "cultural censorship," a racial silence maintained even as coercion by the state had eased. Anthropologist João Costa Vargas has described the attention paid to race along with the audible silence as "the hyperconsciousness/negation of race dialectic . . . [which] allows us to understand how a system that is on the surface devoid of racial awareness is in reality deeply immersed in racialized understandings of the social world" (2004:443).

I have updated these terms in order to describe Brazil in terms of its "comfortable racial contradiction," because there is now loud discussion of acts of individual racism, as well as debates over public policy, even as the avoidance of noticing racial difference and a denial of structural racism persist. This new sociopolitical context has aggravated many Brazilians who argue, often passionately, that Brazil continues to be a land of racial tolerance and unity. Here again, we find continuities. In 2006 Ali Kamel, a journalist for the powerful and politically conservative newspaper *O Globo,* published the book *Não Somos Racistas: Uma Reação aos que Querem nos Transformar numa Nação Bicolor* (We Are Not Racist: A Reaction to Those Who Want to Turn Us into a Black-White Nation). This book, voted one of the ten most important of the year by the Brazilian news magazine *Veja,* sharply criticized the affirmative action quotas based on race that were being implemented in various prestigious public universities. An observation made by Emílio Willems in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1949 puts an old spin on Kamel's "new" provocative title: "Assiduous readers of Brazilian newspapers may have noted that the question of whether or not race prejudice exists in Brazil is put with an insistence that certainly would be unnecessary if there were actually no doubt about it. Usually the answer is given by those who raise the question: They reaffirm that race prejudice does not exist in Brazil" (1949:403).

A deeply felt identification with racial tolerance clearly persists in Brazil, alongside the mounting evidence of racial disparity. But how to address this disparity and how to even talk about it remain highly controversial. In early 2016, the journalist Paulo Henrique Amorim was given another jail sentence, this time for five months and ten days (pending appeal), for the crimes of *injúria* (insult) and *difamação* (defamation) for accusing Ali Kamel of being a racist because of the publication of his 2006 book. Amorim described Kamel as "*trevoso*" (evil) and claimed that he "engrossa as fileiras racistas dos que bloqueiam a integração e a ascensão dos negros" (joins the

already-large ranks of racists who block the integration and ascension of black people).[22] The court decided that Amorim is free to critique Kamel, but not to choose words "with the special intent to offend." Brazil's military dictatorship, with its active censoring of the mention of racial inequality, ended more than thirty years ago, but the Brazilian courts have just decided that accusing someone of racism can land you in jail. This latest Amorim conviction suggests that the bold assertion that someone else has paid attention to racial difference is the gravest of insults and dangerously defames their character (see French 2015). At the same time, despite strong disapproval from much of the Brazilian middle class, the state now legally recognizes racial difference through affirmative action quotas that have withstood various legal challenges (Tavolaro 2008).

Brazil remains deeply ambivalent about how to deal with the idea of racial difference. It is not that some Brazilians were "duped" by oppressive dictators, nor that Brazilian racial inequality has ever really been a secret. Brazilians are paying constant attention to the racial hierarchy that they live within, which concentrates people of lighter skin at the top, in positions of power and in jobs requiring education and intellectual capacity, and rewards them with easier access to resources. At the same time, blackness continues to be seen as linked to manual and service labor, poverty, crime, and violence. Racial ideas help explain these connections between people and resources and their positions in society, even as one is asked to take pride in Brazil's racial mixture and spirit of racial tolerance. I turn next to explain how we can watch Rio residents work through this contradiction, which encourages them to "see" race even as they seek to ignore racial difference and avoid racism.[23]

RACE, LANGUAGE, AND THE BODY

Within the confines of the familiar Brazilian–North American comparison, race is determined either by *marca* or *origem* (Nogueira 1985), by the whiteness or blackness phenotypically displayed on the Brazilian body (D. Silva 1998) or by "blood," biology, and known racial ancestry in the context of the United States (F. Davis 1991). Yet the reading of racialized bodies has never been this self-evident or clear-cut. Looking at the U.S. antebellum South, Mark Smith insightfully points out that southerners inadvertently "acknowledged the visual instability of race by increasing their reliance on the one-drop rule, which, if anything, confirmed the argument that race could not, in fact, be seen" (2006:7). Researchers working in a range of national contexts and across different time periods have similarly argued

that racial whiteness, in particular, is not reducible to or guaranteed by skin color or parentage (Bashkow 2006; Heneghan 2003; Stoler 2002; Weismantel 2001). In what follows, I take my inspiration from the work of Ann Stoler (1995, 2002), to show how race draws its coherence and stability not from biology or ancestry, but rather from the "interpretive space" between "the 'seen' and the 'unseen'" (Stoler 1997:187). In this book, I argue that visible phenotypical features, knowledge of ancestry, and embodied practices thought to "display" one's inner racial capacities are read together, forcing Rio residents to interpret themselves and others in terms of racial difference.

As is obvious to everyone, scholars and laypeople, Brazilians and North Americans alike, phenotype is critical to racial meaning, as physical attributes such as shade of skin color, hair color and texture, and facial features are heavily scrutinized (Pinho 2009), and they are readily assumed to provide insight into a person's character and racial capacity. And yet I illustrate how blackness and whiteness are both visibly significant and also powerfully imagined, ascertained from cultural and linguistic practices that do not always neatly "match" the bodies who engage in or embody them. Political scientist Michael Hanchard suggests that Brazilian(ist) researchers should pay attention to the "importance of the interpretive, as opposed to the phenotypical, criterion of racial differentiation" (1994:178). And historian Matthew Pratt Guterl argues that "discrimination is a shared practice of racial sight, of finding evidence of race on the body" (2013:209). I am therefore not the first to note that bodies need to be racially interpreted, but few have attempted to systematically analyze how people read bodies for signs of race in day-to-day interactions that occur both within and across race and class lines.

My approach, and my focus on reading "the body," is discursive on two levels. To begin with, I analyze how racial ideas (or racial "discourses") link observable qualities of bodies, including cultural and linguistic practices, to essentialized capacities that cannot be observed. To uphold the opposing racial poles of whiteness and nonwhiteness, racial discourses contrast bodies as clean or dirty, civilized or barbaric, controlled or undisciplined, restrained or violent, among other shifting criteria (Hall 1997; Inda 2000). The central idea here is not that these categories are predetermined or essentialized characteristics of individuals, but rather that through daily and repetitive performances, bodies come to be understood in these racialized terms. This performative approach to race, which is well articulated and illustrated by linguistic anthropologist Kristina Wirtz in her book *Performing Afro-Cuba* (2014), allows me to separate ideas of blackness and whiteness from the physical features that seem to ground them. Understandings of racial difference that

hinge on assumptions of white superiority and black inferiority are connected to bodies based not only on the way they appear but also on their obligatory display of embodied practices. As I show in the following chapters, medium brown–skinned bodies can be read as "black" in Rio when they take up the racial stance of aggressiveness associated with politically conscious hip-hop. These same bodies can be read as "white" when they occupy exclusive private spaces such as social clubs and demonstrate "proper" restraint and decorum. Drawing on everyday interactions, I describe how Rio residents unavoidably draw on these racial discourses to make themselves interpretable, and to interpret others, as they interact in both comfortable private spaces among "equals" and as they move through more hotly contested public spaces.

On a second level, I focus on what linguistic anthropologists think of as "actual" discourse. This includes the things that people say to each other, the stories they tell, what they read in newspaper articles, and even the song lyrics fans memorize and recirculate among one another. Here my focus on daily linguistic practice relies on the concept of language ideologies (or the power-laden connections made between speakers and their speech) to show how language gets pressed into the service of racial discourse and how it helps uphold racial hierarchies (Bucholtz 2011; Hill 2008). For example, in my research I have paid careful attention to how speakers of what is commonly called *a norma culta*, or "standard" Portuguese, who more consistently display grammatical agreement, are said to sound more "proper." Their sense of linguistic discipline projects not only their level of education and their class standing but also their claims to racial whiteness.

By contrast, the "nonstandard" linguistic features associated with *gíria*, or "slang," come to suggest a racialized lack of discipline and control. The frequent use of slang (and certain types of slang in particular) is commonly understood to be a less "civilized" way of speaking, and it is readily linked to blackness and criminality. Here I treat language as a bodily practice, that is, as something that bodies "do" as an ongoing and performative display that shapes the body that is there to be "seen." My focus on how language helps racialize the body connects both levels of discourse: what is said—discourse in the sense of linguistic practice—helps construct how bodies, through appeals to racial discourse, come to be recognized as inherently different.[24] This approach helps us locate and better understand the ideas that back up racism and racial hierarchy. As linguistic anthropologist Susan Philips notes: "Ideas do not float in the air, and they do not exist only in the heads of individuals. Ideas live in discourse. They are configured by the

social organization of face-to-face interaction and by the sequential structure of discourse. Analysis of the ecology of ideas in discourse practices contributes to an understanding of why and how cultural constructs not only change but also endure" (2004:248).

Throughout this book, I also explore how racial ideas move and how they compel movement. This movement includes the ways that racial meaning circulates, in the sense of traveling between spaces and different contexts, as when Brazilians imported North American hip-hop (as I discuss in chapter 6), or across generations, as when teachers and parents explain to children what blackness looks like and how to talk about it (as I discuss in the conclusion). I will also explore the way that race settles in and on bodies (Weismantel and Eisenman 1998) and the ways that people are forced to move toward or away from the racial poles of whiteness and non-whiteness. Here a comparison with gender and the performative construction of gender may prove instructive. We have long understood that gender does not reside in the physical body and that bodies must engage in repeated gender practices to be "readable" as male or female (Butler 1990, 1993). While gender must be understood as embodied rather than as a simple biological "fact," its frequent and obligatory performances allow for slippage: men can be perceived (or self-identify) as feminine (and vice versa), and expressions of sexuality often hinge on conformity or play with gendered bodily practices, including language. This type of flexibility, which includes movement toward and away from idealized notions of masculinity and femininity, has not typically been embraced in discussions of people's daily experiences of race. One notable example of the racial flexibility made possible through embodied linguistic practices (what I have elsewhere described as *racial malleability*; see Roth-Gordon 2013) can be found in the work of Frantz Fanon. As he noted:

> The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately Whiter—that is, he will come closer to being a real human being—in direct ratio to his mastery of the French Language. . . . What we are getting at becomes plain: Mastery of language affords remarkable power. . . . The Black man who has lived in France for a length of time returns radically changed. To express it in genetic terms, his phenotype undergoes a definitive, an absolute mutation. (Fanon 1967:18–19)

I have long been fascinated by the ways that speakers use language to manipulate racial readings of their bodies and the fact that they do not ultimately control the interpretations of others. Based on ethnographic research and recordings of everyday interactions, in this book I explore how Rio residents take up language and other cultural practices to orient toward

or away from whiteness and blackness, linking themselves to racialized attributes (such as civility and upstanding citizenship, discussed in chapters 2 and 3), positioning themselves vis-à-vis racialized city spaces (chapters 4 and 5), and responding to their nation's pride in its racial mixture and its racial "cordiality" (chapter 6 and the conclusion). I will, at times, talk about how their linguistic choices relate to ideas about their racial identity, when speakers seek to make this explicit. But given the sociopolitical context that I have just outlined, in which racial difference is not supposed to be embraced or even noticed, I analyze how speakers and listeners are employing and listening for racial cues that do not always map neatly onto phenotype or identity. In line with my argument that bodies are "read" for racial meaning, which includes attention to phenotype and embodied practices, I attempt to refrain from pre-labeling the people in this book.[25] I offer phenotypical cues as they would normally be available for the seeing, but I do not label my participants as "black" or "white." The amount of blackness or whiteness that a body displays is exactly what is constantly assessed and reassessed in the interactions I analyze (D. Silva 1998).

Although I was intrigued by Brazilian race relations from the minute I stepped foot in the country, I was quickly cautioned by Brazilian sociolinguists, as soon as I expressed interest in this topic, that there were no racial "dialects" in Brazil akin to the African American English well documented in the United States (see, for example, Rickford and Rickford 2000). There were regional differences in speech, I was told, and definitely class differences that reflected levels of education, but these could not be related to race. Poor people were said to sound the same regardless of whether they were white, brown, or black—an idea with which many nonsociolinguist Brazilians would also agree (see Burdick 2013:87–88). In addition, sociolinguistic work at the time often suggested that racial mixture in Brazil made finding clear groups of "black" or "white" speakers an impossible task, and thus race was dismissed as a salient social factor of linguistic differentiation. My hastily thrown-together "matched guise" tests, in which the same speaker read scripts on the same topic but varied his or her language over separate recordings, in this case by adding lots of slang to one version, proved that things were more complicated than this quick dismissal suggested. Listeners, who could not see the speaker of the recording, were perfectly comfortable making guesses about their race, especially if the speaker sounded like a poor person from the geographically marginalized parts of the city. These speakers, and their use of slang in particular, were readily associated with blackness.

This book is based on "real" conversations (rather than the made-up ones I have just described), but I also relied on a related linguistic technique

as I played for middle-class listeners some of the conversations that I had recorded in the housing project of Cruzada. These listeners' recorded reactions are equally "real," though they are no doubt influenced by the set-up of recording their commentary in the comfort of their living rooms. The point I wish to make here is a useful one for the framing of this book: Rio residents don't just see bodies. They hear them speak; they sometimes imagine how they speak; and sometimes they hear them speak without seeing them at all. All of these linguistic practices, from the speaking to the overhearing to the imagining of speech (Inoue 2003), are informed by racial ideas that oppose blackness and whiteness in a highly racially mixed but also sharply divided city. In short, we do not need to have clearly defined groups of "black" and "white" speakers who speak in radically different ways in order to talk about the connections between race and language in Rio. What I have found is that these imagined connections, in particular linking what is called "standard" speech to whiteness and associating slang use with blackness, are critical to the process of making sense of and participating in everyday linguistic interactions, both within and across race and class lines. In Rio de Janeiro over the past few decades, the need to see, hear, and perform racial differences as one traveled through and occupied public spaces has taken on a level of urgency, as I now turn to describe.

COMPULSORY CLOSENESS

I would be remiss to begin describing the urban politics of Rio without stating the obvious: Rio de Janeiro is a stunningly beautiful city. In terms of its natural bounty, of which *cariocas* (Rio residents) are justifiably proud, it boasts jagged mountains, lush tropical rainforest, and miles of sandy beaches all within an urban environment. Its hot and humid climate, which in the minds of nineteenth-century European colonizers threatened racial degeneration, continues to earn the city the scorn of its larger (and more temperate) city rival São Paulo, which believes that industriousness cannot be found within a city whose residents spend so much time at the beach. Within Brazil, Rio is thought of as the cultural capital and the place where fashion is born, a notion that draws on the fact that it was the actual capital of the country for nearly two centuries (from 1763 to 1960). Rio has long boasted an established international reputation, a fact that undoubtedly aided in its bid to be the first city in Latin America to host the Summer Olympics in 2016. Yet for all its glory, Rio is also a city of shocking contrasts. While Rio is best known for its beaches, it has also attracted global attention for its hillside *favelas,* where red brick shacks constructed by their

residents seem impossibly stacked one upon the other as far up as the eye can see.[26]

As the price of having nature in its backyard, Rio's usable city space is severely restricted, especially near the beaches and near the city center, leading to high population density and vertical growth. Shantytowns in Rio are often euphemistically called *morros* (hills) because many of the city's most famous *favelas* climb the lush mountains that connect the wealthier areas of the city. Within the South Zone of Rio, a sharp distinction is made between those who live in shantytowns and those who live down on *o asfalto* (the asphalt, or the city's paved and well-maintained parts). Indeed, it is impossible to conceive of and discuss social relationships and social hierarchy in Rio without understanding these constant references to space. The majority of Rio's poor and working-class residents live in sprawling, flat, and equally infrastructurally challenged neighborhoods in the city's North Zone and suburbs. Here the meaning of "suburban" is literally "sub-urban." As anthropologist Roberto DaMatta notes, "In sharp contrast to the American urban experience, suburban dwellers are not the well-off in search of bucolic contact with nature but rather the poor who still lack basic municipal services" (1995:19). Residents of these communities often travel up to three hours or more *one way* to get to their minimum-wage jobs in the more central areas of Rio.

This book does not focus on daily life within Rio's hillside *favelas* or its suburbs, yet it is important to stress the role that these spaces play in urban struggles and in *cariocas'* understandings of their city. Despite the impressive views it offers in many spots, elevation in Rio can be a stigma, as most of the city's lush green hills and mountains were not developed by city planners but instead "occupied," initially by former slaves as early as the late 1800s. As in most of Latin America and the Global South (including cities in Africa and India), informal settlements, where approximately 20 percent of Rio's population lives, have long been an urban "fact of life." Within Brazil, these areas are often referred to as *a periferia* (the periphery), alluding to their social (if not physical) distance from the city's more cosmopolitan sections. These areas were once thought of as illegal and a blight on the city's reputation because of the squatting practices through which they were settled and the primitive living conditions of their inhabitants. Today, the main source of these neighborhoods' continued marginalization is their occupation by notoriously well-armed and violent drug gangs; recent efforts by the state to "pacify" these areas and remove the ruling drug gangs have had only mixed success (Arias 2006; Doriam Borges, Ribeiro, and Cano 2012; Larkins 2015; McCann 2014; Penglase 2014; Perlman 2010; L. Silva 2015).

Because of the international press that Brazil and Rio have received, the term *favela* now appears in many English dictionaries, defined as a Brazilian shantytown. However, I have chosen to italicize the term in this book, marking it as Brazilian Portuguese, because I want readers to keep in mind what this term means in Rio and to *cariocas*. A *favela* is not just a place where people live, and it doesn't simply mark specific geographic spaces as physically or socially distant. Living in a *favela* has long been a source of profound stigma (even if it is also sometimes a source of personal pride). Because the term carries such weight, and because it was used to marginalize and exclude the large population of city residents that lived there, it has now become more politically correct to refer to a *favela* as a *comunidade* or "community." This term is meant to offer dignity and respect to the *pessoas humildes* (poor, humble people) who live in these impoverished neighborhoods. Despite the euphemism (which I also occasionally use), there remains the pervasive belief that where you are from speaks volumes about the kind of person you are. Whether or not you live in one, all *cariocas* define themselves in relation to the *favela.*

Despite recent efforts to gentrify some of the more centrally located South Zone *favelas,* members of the middle class still rarely enter these spaces, except to attend the occasional baby shower or birthday party at the home of their *empregada* (domestic worker or maid). And yet *favelas* are all around them, climbing the hills behind their apartment buildings. It is impossible to live in the wealthy South Zone of Rio, where all of the middle-class families that I knew owned and rented apartments, without living in close proximity to a *favela.* Rio residents do not have to imagine urban poverty; they either live in it and make their way to wealthy neighborhoods to go to school, get to work, or access other basic city services, or they walk past it every day–without directly experiencing it but utterly unable to ignore its presence. I can think of no better way to describe daily life in Rio than Brazilian anthropologist Leticia Veloso's (2010) term *compulsory closeness.*

It was by happy coincidence that I met my research assistant CW when he was seventeen and attending his last year of high school at the public school where I began conducting research on slang. It was the introduction he gave me to the *comunidade* of Cruzada São Sebastião that allowed me to live (and write about) compulsory closeness from both sides. Although it did not look or feel like a hillside shantytown, residents and outsiders commonly referred to Cruzada as a *favela.* Its inhabitants shared many of the same experiences of poverty, employment in manual labor or service economy jobs for subsistence wages, discrimination, and cramped and

FIGURE 3.   A *cobertura* (penthouse apartment) with a pool
and barbecue space overlooks a nearby *favela*. Photo by
Marcelo Santos Braga.

unsanitary living conditions, all of which provided a sharp contrast to the
lives of Rio's middle class. As may be inferred from the term compulsory
closeness, Cruzada residents lived under the constant scrutiny of both the
police and their extremely wealthy neighbors. In what follows, I attempt to
address what Brazilian anthropologist Cecilia McCallum describes as "the
problem of how to study class ethnographically . . . in this kind of highly
divided setting" (2005:101). "Ideally," she explains, "an ethnographer must
find a way to appreciate the subtleties of all sides of these encounters"
(2005:101). As I describe life across Rio's social divide, I draw on my experi-

ence living in the middle-class and affluent neighborhoods of Copacabana and Ipanema and my time conducting research in Cruzada. To force some of the cross-race and cross-class interactions that were often difficult to catch in "real time," I played conversations that I had recorded in Cruzada for middle-class residents in metalinguistic interviews in which I asked them to react to the speech and the stories that they had just heard. Poor youth from the city's most stigmatized areas, including rappers and rap fans, needed less prompting to discuss their views of the middle class.

Although I offer a glimpse into the lives of predominantly dark-skinned poor youth, as well as snippets of conversations that occurred in the more comfortable homes of the whiter middle class, I had little contact with those living at the extreme ends of Brazilian society. None of the youth whom I met in Cruzada lived in absolute poverty, and none of the wealthier families that I knew would be considered by others or consider themselves part of the Brazilian elite, which, like the global elite, has access to incredible power and privilege, as well as international connections, and does not worry daily about money. Although there were, of course, differences among the families and among the youth that I studied, the largest gap was between the two groups. When I contrast "whiter and wealthier" families with poor dark-skinned community youth, as I often do, I am calling attention to the surprisingly clean lines between their everyday lives.

While they did share some city spaces—a fact that became a source of tension and occasionally provided an opportunity for friendships to develop (as I discuss in chapter 5)—all of the middle-class families that I knew lived in well-appointed condominium buildings with doormen and two sets of elevators. Elevators are socially significant in Brazil, as they enforce a separation between residents and "social" guests, as distinguished from "service" workers and residents who arrive dirty from the beach or encumbered by large packages (and are thus engaging in forms of manual labor). Being asked to use the service elevator instead of the social one was a common experience in middle-class apartment buildings for people of color, who were not assumed to be residents or guests (Hanchard 1994). Physical separation from poor nonwhite people was a common experience for members of the middle class, who often opted out of public spaces assumed to offer services of poor quality. They therefore sent their children to private schools (without exception) and visited private doctors, and they were often members of private social and athletic clubs (as I discuss further in chapter 4). They moved through the city mostly in private cars, though they also walked on city streets in the South Zone neighborhoods of Leblon, Ipanema, and Copacabana. As its service expanded, they occasionally rode the metro,
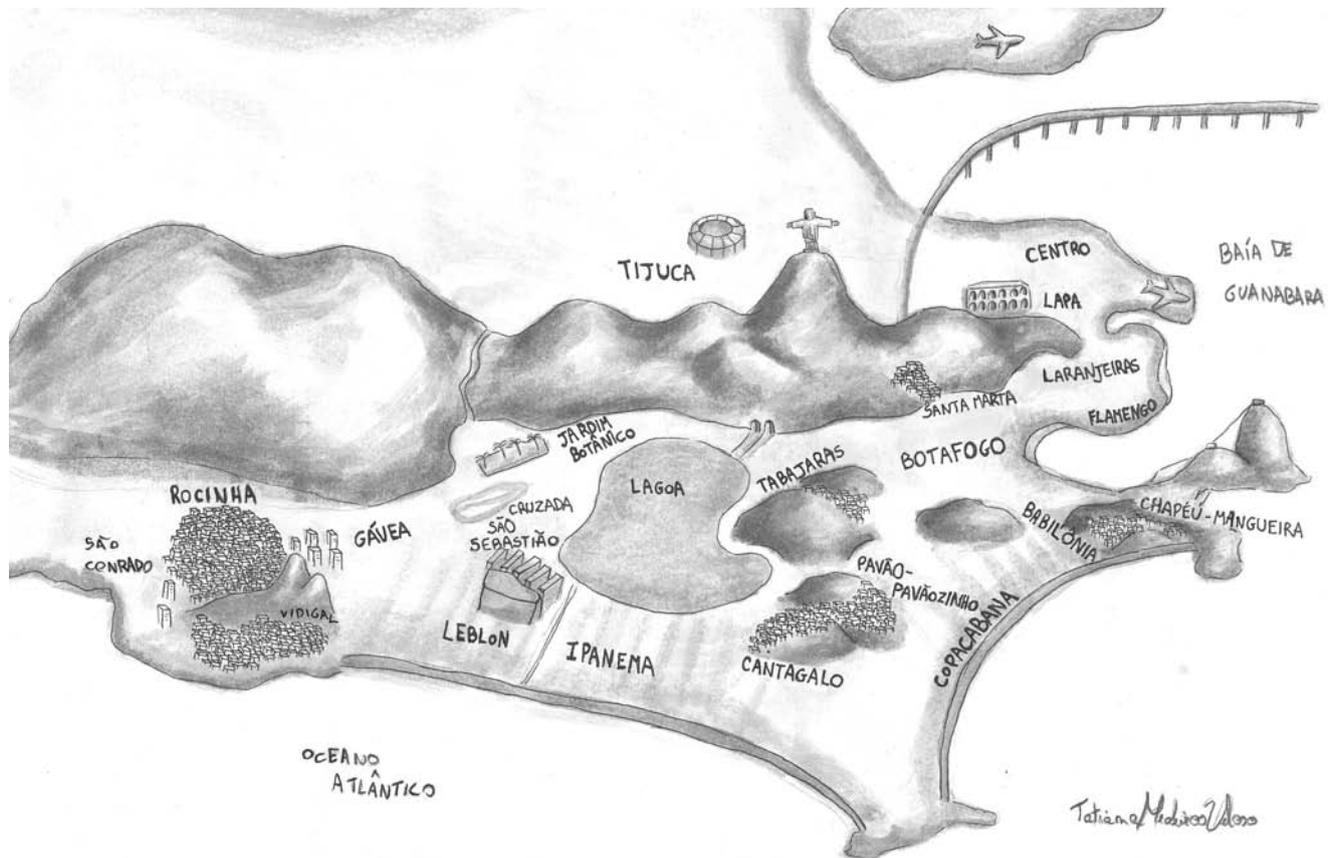
MAP 2.   Map illustrating the "compulsory closeness" found in the South Zone of Rio de Janeiro, where *favelas* climb the hills that separate wealthier neighborhoods. Cruzada São Sebastião is a housing project located in Leblon just blocks from one of Rio's most famous beaches. Artwork by Tatiana Medeiros Veloso.

but they very rarely took public buses, which were considered more dangerous. They all employed at least some domestic help, sometimes more than just one person per household, including a nanny or driver in addition to a full-time maid. While they did worry about money, their concerns centered on what kinds of leisure activities (such as travel) or imported goods they could afford and never about basic necessities.

By contrast, the Cruzada youth with whom I spent time all attended public schools, if they had not dropped out of school already, and they were not college-bound. They often slept on cushions on the floor of the living room of their small, cramped apartments and climbed as many as seven flights of stairs to get home. They mostly hung out on the street in front of their buildings, and they had far fewer opportunities to enjoy city spaces, except for the beach. They rarely were able to travel outside Rio. Although they lived in a busy neighborhood full of shops and restaurants, they felt comfortable visiting only a small number of these establishments. While my research with middle-class families included multiple generations and both males and females, most of my time in Cruzada was spent with male youth, and thus my ability to discuss or make comparisons by gender is constrained by the data that I collected.

Given all that I have said so far about my chosen field sites, it should not surprise the reader to learn that Rio has been nicknamed both A Cidade Maravilhosa (the Marvelous City) and A Cidade Partida (the Divided City; see Ventura 1994). As I am about to describe in detail, developing everyday strategies for dealing with this highly diverse social mixture has taken on a palpable sense of urgency in the wealthy South Zone of Rio de Janeiro over the past few decades. Middle-class residents felt themselves to be "at war," "under siege," and "trapped" (*encurralada*) given unprecedented levels of (mostly drug-induced) crime and violence. Their fears, combined with the city's close quarters and the failings of a disorganized and corrupt Brazilian state, meant that they assumed responsibility for their own personal safety and the safety of their families. By contrast, the audible demands of whiter and wealthier city residents for their own protection subjected poor dark-skinned male youth (including CW and his friends) to additional state scrutiny and violence and compromised their status as legitimate Brazilian citizens (as I discuss in chapter 2).

During my first full year living in Rio de Janeiro, it became painfully clear to me that no one, neither the middle class nor the poor, felt safe. This situation has continually improved and regressed ever since, but one lives in Rio always on some level of alert, aware that experiences of crime and violence are possible and even probable. They are never understood as a

distant reality. I do not believe that *cariocas* are the only ones engaged in the racial strategies that I am about to describe in this book, and I expect readers to make connections to other regional, national, cultural, and historical contexts with which they are personally familiar. And yet the obligatory situations of social contact across race and class borders and this shared level of insecurity help explain the constant vigilance on the part of Rio residents in reading race and racial capacity off of bodies, and in carefully manipulating those readings, as part of daily life in what is, by all accounts, a dense and dangerous city.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

As I attempt to write ethnography "out of the bounds of particular communities or social groups and across race and class lines" (McCallum 2005:102), I weave back and forth between middle-class and *comunidade* experiences and perspectives. I have organized the chapters thematically, moving from examples in which *cariocas* attempt to embody or acquire whiteness, to situations that induce fears of racial contact and confirm the need to avoid blackness, and ending with the case of politically conscious rappers and rap fans who make visible the social imperative to be racially "cordial" through their defiant racial stances. The cultural and linguistic practices that I describe—taken from interviews, observations, recordings of daily conversations, and descriptions in magazine articles and popular songs—allow us to see how racial ideas are immanent and critical to daily interactions.

   I begin, in chapter 2, by describing how poor dark-skinned male youth in the community of Cruzada turn to language to talk their way out of potentially dangerous and always uncomfortable encounters with the police. Here I argue that youth know that they must counteract the negative associations that accompany their "black" phenotypical features and place of residence by attempting to "improve" their racial appearance to look more like (white) upstanding citizens instead of (black) criminals. They must work to present *boa aparência* (literally a "good appearance"), a term that once was used euphemistically in job ads to suggest that only "white" applicants need apply, but that I pick up here to describe the continued social imperative to "whiten."[27] While *boa aparência* often entails careful grooming and "good" personal hygiene, it also includes cultural and linguistic practices associated with white, wealthy Brazilians, including polite and civilized speech, familiarity with standard Portuguese, and the avoidance of slang. Rappers also encourage youth to take up these linguistic strategies in critical situations such as job interviews in order to achieve

what I refer to as "situational whiteness." This temporary racial status does not entail "feeling" or identifying as white, and it does not mean that poor dark-skinned youth are ultimately viewed as white. However, gaining situational whiteness improves their chances of acquiring citizenship rights and future employment in a society where blackness continues to be stigmatized and where black people continue to suffer from structural racism—earning less pay, completing fewer years of education, being sent to jail, and finding themselves targeted (and threatened) by police officers far more often than their lighter-skinned peers.

If Cruzada youth turn to language to gain access to basic civil and human rights (to work and to avoid being harassed by the police), the middle-class families that are the subject of chapter 3 embrace language to gain and secure privilege. Here I look at how experiences that often require access to financial resources (such as obtaining a private-school education, mastering standard Portuguese, and exposing oneself to "culture") are taken up by members of Rio's small middle class not only to mark their class status but also to resolve situations of deep racial anxiety. This chapter begins with a summary of global research on the instability of whiteness and on the failure of ancestry and skin color to guarantee whiteness, especially in Brazil. I argue that these families seek to cultivate a sense of "personal whiteness" for themselves and for their children that helps justify and make possible their sense of belonging and inclusion in private facilities, exclusive urban spaces, and global travel. I draw also on linguistic anthropology for the concept of language ideologies to examine not only how these families' beliefs about their own linguistic refinement and intellectual capacity are tied to the superiority of whiteness, but also how a lack of "proper" grammar and the extensive use of slang are linked to blackness and embraced in order to naturalize social inequality and racial difference. The ease and confidence that accompany whiteness can be achieved only through cultivation, training, and daily effort. Chapters 2 and 3 thus offer ethnographic examples of how Brazilian racial ideologies encourage Rio residents (across race and class borders) to embrace linguistic strategies in order to secure the privileges of whiteness.

In the following two chapters, I explore the experience of living within Rio's compulsory closeness, where city residents struggle over who belongs in prime urban spaces, including the beach and privatized shopping malls. In chapter 4, I draw on interview data, daily conversations, songs from popular culture, and media reports to interrogate experiences of and reactions to heightened crime and violence in Rio. Whereas a century ago, members of the whiter middle class used to avoid contact with the darker masses out of

fear of contagious disease, today "dangerous social mixture" in urban public spaces entails the possibility of crime and violence. While these fears are not always explicitly articulated in terms of race or blackness, I show how Rio residents engage in the endless process of reading bodies for racialized signs of civility or disorder in an attempt to keep themselves safe and make sense of the violence. Here one's capacity for crime and lawlessness can be linked to the simple (but "uncultured") act of eating a bologna sandwich at the beach, a site where privileged lighter-skinned South Zone residents now worry they will be swept up in an *arrastão,* or beach theft or riot, amid the thousands of new darker-skinned beachgoers who arrive by bus and metro from the geographically distant and socially marginalized suburbs. The lack of confidence in the security offered by the Brazilian state, combined with the vast openness and lack of barriers restricting access to Rio's kilometers of postcard-worthy coastline, produces a rich and complicated system of symbolic segregation, one that relies on the opposition between cultural and linguistic practices associated with whiteness versus blackness.

In chapter 5, I build on these fears of racial contact to examine what I call the flip side of *boa aparência:* the avoidance of blackness. I show how middle-class youth and parents seek to secure the investment that they have made in their family's whiteness by avoiding contact with black people and black spaces. Stronger than the fear of physically "black" bodies, however, is the fear of embodied practices associated with blackness, practices that circulate independent of dark-skinned people while threatening to steal the whiteness of middle-class youth. Here I explore these fears, and the implicit rule that one should avoid contact with blackness, through the case of Bola, a *moreno* (brown-skinned) middle-class youth who boldly disregards established social and racial borders. He begins to hang out in the community of Cruzada, makes friends, and picks up their facility with *gíria* (slang), convincing outside listeners that he is from a *favela.* While his laid-back mother accepts his new companions and remains relatively unconcerned about his presence in the city's "peripheral" spaces, her reactions to recordings of his speech show that she also believes that too much blackness is dangerous. It is not black *people* that she fears so much as her son's acquisition of the embodied signs of blackness, which seem instantly to undo the years she has invested in training him in white middle-class sensibilities to help ensure his future success.

Chapter 6 focuses on the intentional and defiant displays of blackness by politically conscious Brazilian rappers and rap fans (including Bola) and the challenges they pose to Brazil's belief in racial tolerance. Mainstream Brazilian society previously mocked, scorned, and policed the importation of

other North American black cultural movements, including the "black is beautiful" soul movement of the 1970s. By the time politically conscious hip-hop reached the peak of its popularity in the late 1990s, the nation was on the brink of engaging in a national debate concerning sweeping legislative changes that would work toward addressing some of the country's problems with structural racism, particularly through affirmative action quotas in higher education. But these changes would mark a dramatic shift in state policy and for the nation's reputation. Rather than celebrating race mixture and racial tolerance, the Brazilian state would publicly and officially admit to the visibility of blackness and to its racism. As reactions to politically conscious hip-hop make apparent, this public recognition of racial difference and the challenges to ideas of racial tolerance provoked strong racial anxiety. This chapter explores rappers' and rap fans' embrace of "imported" cultural and linguistic practices that allowed them to wear blackness visibly, and defiantly, on their bodies in order to challenge their assigned place in Brazil's racial hierarchy. Together, these chapters offer different snapshots of everyday life to show how Brazilians engage with three critical social and racial imperatives: (1) the need to display whiteness, (2) the desire to avoid blackness, and (3) the obligation to remain racially "cordial."

In the conclusion, I share a story of how five- and six-year-old children (including my daughter) learned about racial difference and appropriately "polite" racial terminology in the wealthy private school that my children attended in Rio in 2014. More embedded forms of racial hierarchy and the racialized belief system that still posits the superiority of whiteness never surfaced in these discussions of how and when to notice racial difference. I argue that we must look deeper, into the cultural and linguistic practices that are the "stuff" of everyday life, to find the connections that Brazilians have been trained to make between race, bodies, and the ongoing inequitable distribution of resources in their society.