ANOTHER URBAN GRAMMAR:
BLACK PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL MOBILITY IN TWENTIETH CENTURY SÃO PAULO

BY

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DISSERTATION

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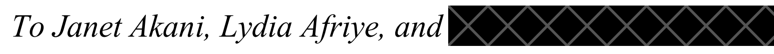
ABSTRACT

"Another Urban Grammar: Black Perspectives on Social Mobility in Twentieth Century São Paulo," is a social history primarily situated in the years of Brazil's Second Republic (1946 – 1964). This dissertation rethinks Black paulistanos' pursuit of upward mobility across class and gender in addition to race. It makes three claims. First, Black paulistanos, I argue, actively made new and recast existing prevalent symbols of economic, social, and cultural capital to fit their needs for upward mobility. Second, because Black paulistanos were not a homogenous group, I assert that many of these efforts created counter-knowledges and discourses rejecting or transforming practices and symbols of upward mobility common to São Paulo's middle-classes. And third, I believe Black paulistanos, and especially women, innovated critiques and interventions in the domestic family sphere, labor market, education, and consumption, demonstrating that they routinely participated in the debates surrounding social cohesion under the Second Republic's crises of urban development, migration, and inflation.

I analyze photo essays and advertisements from national and local magazines, newspapers, and tabloids; educational debates in Black newspapers; pre-existing intergenerational family oral histories; and two interviews I conducted with Black women of divergent education, neighborhood, and class markers. Using these visual and textual sources while adapting Pierre Bourdieu's forms of capital, my work conceives of social mobility as an opportunity to reconceive race, class, and gender hierarchies during periods of political and economic turmoil. Thus, the study of Black social mobility in São Paulo during the Second Republic offers insight into the construction of social mobility as both a dynamic, active practice of historical subjects and archives alike.

To Janet Akani, Lydia Afriye, and 

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Now, I open my own gate.

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INTRODUCTION

"You're going to come back, right? You'll go [to the United States] but you'll come right back?" Dona Luzia asked me, but her tone did not sound like she needed much of my assurance. Indeed, Dona Luzia, or "Vóviz" as she insists I call her, has been a fixture in my life for the past two years. Almost daily, I receive her WhatsApp messages. These are forwarded graphics, digital stickers, or personalized audio messages wishing me well, reminding me that "Deus em comando" ("God [is] in control"). Vóviz's affection is as direct, vivid, and dynamic as the details of her 75-year life. Two years ago, in March 2020, I sat at her kitchen table, in Vila Nova, São Paulo, listening to her life story.

Vóviz has described herself as simple, ordinary, and having lived a life without distinction, but for me, her story was a tour-de-force where she repeatedly reinvented life on her own terms. Vóviz walked me through how a sewing machine was pivotal in her attempt to reclaim agency over her body, children, and money.

> "When I married my husband, he wouldn't let me work. '*My woman* isn't going to work,' but my daughters needed shoes, my daughters needed clothes. How [was I] supposed to take care of my family's needs?
>
> I was speaking to my mother-in-law when she said to me, 'Why don't you learn how to sew?' So I told her, 'What am I going to sew with then?' She told me that she would give me a machine; she did. I didn't know how to sew, I learned little by little. But I learned by myself. I could make clothes for my children. Eventually, my neighbors started coming and they began to ask me [to make them clothes]. But I hid it all because he wouldn't let me work...

My husband wanted his girls to become doctors and lawyers, but to *work, no*. 'My girls will study.'

I said, "*Your* daughters can study, but *mine* will go to work."[1] (italics mine)

This short excerpt has stayed with me for two years. Vóviz sought refuge from her husband, who emphasized his control over her in the language he used towards her ("my woman," "my girls"). Vóviz told me that her husband spent the money he earned on alcohol and gambling, rather than support his family. Once her mother-in-law permitted her to borrow a sewing machine, however, the dynamics of her life changed. In addition to securing her daughters' wellbeing, Vóviz's neighbors soon recognized her talent. Becoming the community's in-demand seamstress, she was able to secure some of the autonomy she craved by earning income not controlled by her husband. She converted the sewing machine into tangible, immediate forms of security that generated goods (clothing for her children), cash (when she made extra clothing in exchange for money), recognition and a social network (her community identified her as a resource).

When Vóviz tells her husband that their children, "*his* girls," could study but *she* would empower them to work, I did not interpret what I heard as a woman merely standing up to her partner. In that moment, I recognized a woman of limited resources who rejected an upper-class status as her definition of economic security. She invoked herself as a source of embodied cultural

[1] "A minha vida quando eu casei o meu marido não me deixava trabalhar. 'Mulher minha não trabalha,' mas as minhas filhas precisavam de sapato, minhas filhas precisavam de roupa. Porque no âmbito da família o que ele entendia como marido era só comida e roupa? Como é que você vai suprir necessidade de uma família de roupas? Aí eu conversando com a minha sogra ela falou assim pra mim, 'por que você não aprende a costurar?' Eu falei assim, 'eu vou costurar com o que?' Ela falou assim, 'eu te dou uma máquina.' Aí ela me deu uma máquina. Eu não sabia costurar, aprendi no soco mesmo, aprendi sozinha. Então o que que eu fazia eu fazia roupa pras minhas filhas, as outras vizinhas viram e já começaram a pedir, mas tudo isso escondido porque ele não deixava, ele não deixava. Aí eu comecei a lavar roupa escondido pra time de futebol, a minha vizinha do fundo um dia ficou doente ela falou, 'você não lavaria essas roupas pra mim.' Comecei lavar, comecei costurar escondido, montei uma oficina de costura escondido aí o sempre querendo crescer porque que a gente vai ficar por baixo. O meu marido queria que as filhas dele fossem advogadas e médicas, trabalhar não. 'Minhas filhas vai estudar.' Eu falei, 'as suas filhas podem estudar, mas as minhas vão trabalhar.'" Interview conceded to the author, March 7, 2020.

and social capital, a skill she wanted her daughters to develop and claim, too. Social mobility, in this snapshot of a young Black Brazilian mother of a working-class household, was about challenging and protecting oneself from patriarchal power and claiming agency on one's own terms. This dissertation examines the many visions and everyday enactments of social mobility by Black women and men in São Paulo in the twentieth century.

Arguments, Terms, & Problems

Underscoring the quest for agency and self-determination is a critical feature to the history of Black lives in twentieth-century São Paulo.[2] The historiography has yet to grapple with the narrow criteria it uses to categorize social mobility, nor has it questioned its hand in rendering illegible voices and experiences like that of Vóviz. Considering the nuanced approaches to São Paulo's Black social movements and intellectual history, it is incomplete to presume all Black people conceived money, property, and capital the same way without regard to their class, gender, family structure, neighborhood, or other critical elements of their lived experience. Recognizing the myriad ways Black paulistanos (term to refer to residents of the city of São Paulo) thought and strategized to forge economic autonomy for themselves requires a closer analysis of Black narratives centering intergenerational and intragenerational histories of navigating labor, education, housing, and popular culture, revealing the men and women who reimagined their environment beyond its constant racial barriers and resource scarcity.[3] I argue that Black paulistanos actively made and recast existing prevalent symbols of economic, social, and cultural capital to fit their needs for upward mobility. In this dissertation I offer a detailed analysis of everyday Black perspectives that framed pluralized, multipolar visions of money and assets, social

[2] When I say "Black," I am referring to people of African descent who either self-identified through the skin color terms "preto/a (black)," "pardo/a," and "negro/a" or had that category imposed on them.
[3] Some proper nouns that would be capitalized in English are not capitalized in Brazilian Portuguese. I have chosen not to capitalize "paulistanos."

influence, and cultural capital between 1946 and 1978, a period in which constant demographic growth, inflation, and politicians vying for power unfolded in every square unit of the city.

I shed light to the many ways Black paulistanos cultivated, defined, and acted upon their conceptions of social mobility. I define social mobility as the upward or downward movement of individuals, families, or groups within a socially stratified society. In the case of this study, I identify and differentiate between multiple and sometimes overlapping categories among Black paulistanos: impoverished domestic servants, working-class housewives, streetworkers and shoe-shiners, educational reformers, gynecologists, theatre and radio performers, and beauty pageant contestants. These were not passive or uninformed individuals. They were active agents who strategically retooled racist tropes into celebrity and cultural capital, wielded journalists and tabloids to cultivate extensive social networks, adapted resource scarcity to their goals, and formed cross-racial organizations to fight back against legislative traditions and improve the conditions of their professions. Their values, habits, and articulation of upward mobility, I believe, encourages us to further complicate social mobility as both an economic imperative and a construction of Blacks and non-Blacks alike. I use social mobility as a starting ground to demonstrate a wider range of visions for themselves and their communities at large. Black men and women articulated social mobility in terms *beyond* simple parity with whites. The history of Black communities and social mobility is more expansive than data sets of the racial wealth gap. The true measure of Black social mobility is to make vivid a comprehensive accounting of the lives they desired, articulated, and strategized for themselves.

I task myself with this project in part by stressing the presence, voices, and lived experience of Black women of this period, who continue to be individually exceptionalized or silenced due to their underrepresentation in the historiography. I examine not only their accounts of money and

property in São Paulo, but also underscore how they questioned, rejected, or expanded the meaning and shape of what opportunity could be in a modern, capitalist society. Collectively, they render what I call a different "urban grammar:" a unique and comprehensive articulation of the local urban environment (in housing, education, labor, and popular culture) that naturalizes the Black community presence in São Paulo. By engaging the widest scope of Black community members, my thesis challenges scholars to conceptualize Black social mobility as ground-zero for the complete restructuring of Brazilian capitalism and white supremacy. In this dissertation, I begin to theorize this dual presence and absence through digital and physical archives holdings of oral histories and interviews, newspapers, and Black associativism materials.

I interpret Black ideas and strategies for social mobility through their use of capital, material and symbolic. I am attentive to the ways that Black paulistanos defined capital through schools, white and blue-collar labor, or property and material possessions. I also, however, build upon those examples and think through recurring tropes in intergenerational narrations of mobility, such as Black mothers. I employ Pierre Bourdieu's conceptualization of capital, particularly economic, social, and cultural capital. Capital, according to Bourdieu, is material or embodied accumulated labor enabling agents, as individuals or organized groups, to reproduce or improve their position within the social world.[4] Agents seek economic capital, material assets that are immediately and directly convertible to money or private property. In the absence of money and property, agents may use or simultaneously combine social and cultural capital to bolster their position and generate economic capital. Social capital refers to the collection of resources towards possessing access to social relations or networks, while cultural capital refers to the accumulation of knowledge, behaviors, and skills during agents' socialization that can materialize as values and

[4] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J.G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241.

tastes (embodied capital), educational attainment and credentials (institutional capital), or through the possession and consumption of cultural goods (objectified capital).

I follow Black paulistanos' intergenerational and intragenerational experience to identify their definitions, descriptions, and uses of economic, social, and cultural capital. I apply the concept of habitus to narratives by and about Black paulistanos. Habitus, also termed by Bourdieu, refers collectively to the various forms of cultural capital; it emphasizes, however, agents' ability to deploy a certain set of habits, skills, body language, and education together when navigating encounters within or outside their own social class. Because habitus is both subjective and continually formed in relationship to others, it necessarily engages "schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all" agents.[5] In relation to other social classes, one's habitus becomes most visible and identifiable because acceptance, rejection, or ambivalence of differences are readily communicated through these encounters and impressed in an agent's memory or characterization of the self. My chapters are organized thematically around spheres where habitus is developed and transformed in spheres of family structure and the home, labor, education, politics, and mass media.

While these cases may not be immediately legible to scholars of modern paulistano labor, education, gender, or urban history, my dissertation conceives social mobility as a site of organizing for better labor conditions, educational access for all, and the right of everyone to access the city without the threat of harassment or violence. I believe Black social mobility in São Paulo between 1946 and 1978 was a daily set of practices that offered Black men and women the conceptual space to assert their claim not only to the city, but the nation itself. Self-fashioning social mobility, I contend, was a viable and accessible way for Black paulistanos across multiple

[5] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 86.

backgrounds to publicize their values, inform public opinion, and become the center of public attention to accentuate their needs. Indeed, the vanguard of São Paulo and Brazil's social revolutions in the mid-twentieth century included both the pedagogue striving to keep the doors of his Black-centered school open *and* the woman with an incomplete elementary school education who declared independence against her husband with a sewing machine. All of them defined the moment of a society surfing the waves of social changes while being under siege.

Historical Context & Periodization

The years between 1946 and 1978 capture the pivotal years of Brazil's Second Republic (1946 – 1964) and its immediate aftermath, captured in the first decade of the nation's military dictatorship (1964 – 1985). The Second Republic is characterized by the complex expansion of democratic participation: greater access to the ballot, the proliferation of political parties, a new constitution, and spread of print media and radio and television.[6] Coming on the heels of the New State (Estado Novo, 1937 – 1945), Brazilians sought to forge a new era where authoritarian rule at home was inconsistent with the newly established global order Brazilian troops in World War II helped enact abroad. But if Brazilians of many backgrounds sought to reinvent the nation through democracy and popular participation, so did the politicians seeking to lead them. The same President Getúlio Vargas who had outlawed all political parties, set up a secret police force, increased media censorship, and relied on a corporatist governing model of strategic alliances with industrialists and technocrats, between 1943 and 1954 became a transformed political force. He campaigned on nationalizing natural resources and expanding the rights of industrial workers, simultaneously vying to increase their support through his Brazilian Labor Party (PTB). The

[6] Lúcio Kowarick and Nabil G. Bonduki, "Urban Space and Political Space: Populism to Redemocratization," in *Social Struggles and the City: the Case of São Paulo*, ed. Lúcio Kowarick (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1994), 121.

Vargas of the Second Republic was part of the wave of populist politics vying for votes in the new sensibility of a significant portion of the public's desire to resolve address vast social inequalities and the divide between urban and rural, oligarch and landless, and lettered and unlettered Brazils.

Before hitting the national stage, populism took a life of its own in the state of São Paulo, the nation's economic and regional powerhouse.[7] Though the PTB and Social Democratic Party (PSD) were competitive nationally, Vargas was weaker in São Paulo.[8] Adhemar de Barros, a key Vargas ally and technocrat during the New State, innovated the political machine of strategic coalition building, public works investments, and charismatic personalistic outreach to voters that would soon define national politics. In 1947, Barros was elected governor of São Paulo state, relying on a large coalition which included the support of rural oligarchs, business interests, and even the Brazilian Communist Party.[9] He built up his party, the Social Progressive Party (Partido Social Progressista, or PSP), to be a political force in the state and necessary of consideration on the national stage. But soon, Barros would have to compete against new political contenders vying for the same voters. Jânio Quadros, who in the late 1940s was an up-and-coming councilman in the state capital, caused a major political upset in 1953 when he won the mayoral race of the city of São Paulo without the backing (including the PSP) of any major political party.[10] São Paulo state was the laboratory for what would be become political norms at the national level.

The city of São Paulo also distinguished itself, becoming Brazil's economic center and a strong axis of its social, political, and media culture. As the industrial capital of the nation, São

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[7] Unless I state otherwise, when I indicate "São Paulo," I am referring to the city. When referring to the state, I will say "state of São Paulo" or "São Paulo state."

[8] The Social Democratic Party, also established by Vargas, was a political party founded in 1945 and represented the conservative and rural factions of his base.

[9] I am referring to the Partido Comunista Brasileiro, not to be confused with the Partido Comunista do Brasil, a separate entity.

[10] Marcos Virgílio da Silva, "Riots, social movements and the 'making of the working class:'" Forms of popular organization and urban protest in São Paulo (1945-1964)," *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Urbanos e Regionais* 17, no. 3 (2015): 39.

Paulo benefitted from the arrival of foreign multinational companies and partnerships with the international economy. Its population doubled every 15 years, with hundreds of thousands of newly arriving inhabitants joining the millions of people already there. The city's ethnic, regional, and class diverse 2 million inhabitants of 1946 totaled, by 1978, 8.1 million people.[11] While its politicians, technocrats, architects, and socialites boasted the quickness with which they erected skyscrapers and modern art museums, São Paulo's poor, working-class, and middle classes anxiously navigated and debated the increasing limits of modern life. Despite electoral promises to increase output, public demand quickly exceeded the capacity of city services to deliver transportation, electricity, and schools to its residents. High rents and land speculation in the city's central zone forced many paulistanos to migrate within the city to distant reaches, where they were even less likely to obtain the infrastructure needed to navigate urban life.[12]

In the challenges of unequal access to resources, neighborhood groups, industrial unions, and student movements asserted themselves to define the issues. These tensions played out at both the local and national level, mirrored in the daily dramas played out in the newspapers. Social divides and voting were simultaneously heterodox, contradictory, evolving, and stretched limits thin. Populist solutions to social problems – public works, nationalized energy, accelerated industrial development, and a highly engaged populace – could not outrun unpredictable global markets, competing ideologies, or the pain of inflation.[13] The military, land-owning oligarchs and technocrats, and sectors of the nation's middle class increasingly signaled their fatigue and alarm at the speed of economic instability and social reforms. In 1964, the armed forces overthrew President João Goulart and instituted a dictatorship that would last twenty-one years. But even in

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[11] Paulo Fontes, *Migration & the Making of the Industrial São Paulo* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 20.
[12] Kowarick and Bonduki, "Urban Space and Political Space: Populism to Redemocratization," 128 – 129.
[13] Barbara Weinstein, *the Color of Modernity: the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 229.

the years of violent repression and press censorship, the military government still had to answer for the landscape everyday people and the movements made legible in the Second Republic. By 1968, the military's direct intervention in the economy began to produce high rates of national economic growth; but by 1973, the had yet to resolves the problems of their predecessors: high rates of illiteracy, lack of hospitals and schools, and widening income, wealth, and social divides.[14]

But, the reader asks, "where are Black people in this again?"

Historiography

I conceptualize Black paulistano social mobility from 1946 to 1978 as a series of several interrelated movements and moments. I draw my framing of Black social mobility in this period from historians of Black São Paulo, who maintain that what cohered the seemingly disparate range of activities and ventures was the reach, flexibility, and pragmatism of the Black associative tradition ("associativismo negro"). Black associativism refers to the intentional undertaking of community organizing and formation, inclusive of mutual aid societies, confraternities, religious brotherhoods, literary guilds, Carnival groups, and Black newspapers. The practice of associativism was common across Brazil in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, irrespective of race, ethnicity, class, region, religion, or age, though social identity was one means of formulating it. In the case of Second Republic era São Paulo, neighborhood associations ("Sociedades de Amigos de Bairro") were the most common iteration of associativism. Individuals, families, and friends in working class and poor neighborhoods (disproportionately, but not exclusively, in São Paulo's peripheral zone) formed these groups through their relation as being part of the same neighborhood or district.[15] These could also take on a specific political movement character, such

[14] Michael Mitchell, "Blacks and the Abertura Democrática," in *Race, Class, and Power in Brazil*, ed. Pierre-Michel Fontaine (Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Afro-American Studies, 1985), 100.
[15] Marcos Virgílio da Silva, "'Riots, social movements and the 'making of the working class,'" 40.

as the Brazilian Communist Party's Popular Democratic Committees ("Comitês Populares Democráticos") or, during the 1970s of the military dictatorship, the Basic Ecclesial Communities ("Comunidades Eclesiais de Base") of the Young Christian Workers ("Juventude Operária Católica").[16]

My conceptualization is indebted to Petrônio Domingues, who stresses the wide range of associativist behavior in São Paulo and São Paulo state - comedy and theatre troops, dancehalls and bars, sports teams, and study groups. He asserts that the myriad forms of associativism permitted a wide cross-section of Black paulistanos to participate across class, gender, and other identity markers and were interconnected.[17] Speaking of the context of the 1970s, Clóvis Moura notes that entities of the Black associations created "meeting points" for Black people across multiple class, gender, or regional markers to participate.[18] Thus, the history of Black organizing in São Paulo cannot be reduced to an easy separation of "political" and "cultural." It does not make sense to not clarify the gendered or class profile of the participants when a variety of Black community members participated in various forms of associativism, regardless of whether they themselves articulated it that way. I agree with Domingues and Moura that Black associativism under the Second Republic should be understood within the larger framework of social organizing and popular political participation between 1946 and 1964. Associativism, I contend, represents a space to identify, locate, and engage the histories of Black paulistanos while attentive to their

[16] The Popular Democratic Committees were more common in the early years of the Second Republic, before the Superior Electoral Court, during the administration of President Eurico Gaspra Dutra, outlawed the Brazilian Communist Party in 1947. Almost 88% of neighborhood associations formed after 1955, along the lines of peripherialization and the populist exchange networks between residents and politicians. Ibid.

[17] Petrônio Domingues, *Estilo avatar: Nestor Macedo e o populismo no meio afro-brasileiro* (São Paulo: Alameda Casa Editorial, 2018), 37 – 38. In contrast to Rio de Janeiro or Salvador, the Black paulistano and paulista popopulations were in the numerical minority. However, they grow significantly in the wake migration from Brazil's Northeastern states and neighboring Minas Gerais. I have a specific note on this point in the "Future Directions" section of the Conclusion.

[18] Clóvis Moura, "Organizações negras," in *São Paulo: O povo em movimento*, eds. Paul Singer and Vinícius Caldeira Brant (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1980), 159 – 161.

social differences. I privilege associativism as a pillar in the kinds of primary sources I sought and prioritized in this study, by extending my attention to domestic workers unionizing, educational and literary groups, beauty pageants, radio performers, and white-collar professional organizations.

I build my analysis on the scholarship of racial inequality, Black Brazilian intellectual thought, and racial ideology formation through the works of George Reid Andrews, Kim Butler, Paulina Alberto, and Barbara Weinstein. In his foundational study on race relations in São Paulo, George Reid Andrews shows the extensive culture of anti-Black discrimination in the white-collar labor market.[19] Andrews reveals that the status of middle-class men and women was undercut by their low numbers in the professional sectors, excluded from social networks designed for advancement, and reduced purchasing power related to lack of intergenerational wealth.[20] Of this group of middle-class men and women, he characterizes their status as a small of elite of high school or university-educated people inclusive of office workers, teachers, and those in the armed forces. In comparison to their blue-collar counterparts, the Black middle-class could not overcome discriminatory barriers or obtain additional credentials to obtain promotion. Andrews focuses his understanding of social mobility towards the racial wage, earnings, and wealth gaps between Blacks and whites, which centers both advancement to the middle class through education and job promotion, and relative mobility, social mobility ranked against peers. However, the testimony he uses from Black men and women for the Second Republic heavily relies on anecdotes from the

[19] The Black press refers to the production of newspapers, newsletters, pamphlets, or literary booklets circulated by literate writers. This tradition originated in the nineteenth century, primarily as a space to debate racial stigma, slavery and abolition, the imperial monarchy, Catholic or ecclesial news, and local or world affairs, or publish fiction and poetry inspired by these themes. After abolition in 1888 and the dawn of the twentieth century, writers turned to chronicle racial discrimination, associativism related gatherings, and correspondence with other Black newspapers elsewhere.

[20] George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, 1888 – 1988* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 161 – 162.

late 1980s about the 1980s. He does engage the Black press as a source, but only to argue that the middle-class aspirants (which he does not readily differentiate from the writers of the newspapers) shunned participation in electoral politics because of white working-class hostility and fear of stigma associated with Black militancy.[21] He concludes that the middle-class instead took refuge in "non-political" social clubs to reinforce the social and cultural capital they sought in white professional spaces.[22] In contrast, white manual workers in unions and political parties embraced their Black counterparts so long as the overall discourse was "color-blind." Blue-collar work is reduced to employment in factories producing hard materials and does not delve into other forms of manual labor, such as tailoring or remunerated domestic labor; when he does, it is evidence from his informative quantitative and qualitative research of Black labor experience under the First Republic (1888 – 1930) and the first Vargas presidency (1930 – 1945, inclusive of the New State). Although Andrews's work is instructive for the barriers on the Black middle-class of the time and provides of glimpse of some perspectives on the makings and uses of cultural and social capital, my work diverges from his use of social mobility to naturalize middle-class advancement. This dissertation provides a variety of perspectives and examples of upward mobility, downward mobility, and the effects of horizontal mobility on working-class people.

While not strictly studies on social mobility, Paulina Alberto, Edilza Sotero, and Petrônio Domingues have since shed new light on the meanings of electoral politics and populism among Black paulistanos during the Second Republic. Alberto reveals that in the immediate years following the New State, there was considerable debate among Black writers about what elections could represent. Rates for Black Brazilian voters overall hovered around 20%, most barred from voting because they did not satisfy the literacy requirement. Electoral politics, for Black press

[21] *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo*, Ibid, 186 – 187.
[22] Ibid, 187-88.

writers, was part of the broader discourse on democracy itself, and their ability to perform as "full and politically responsible citizens."[23] Their investment in literacy, Alberto notes, was predicated on being a marker of cultural capital contingent to being "responsible citizens," as they never explicitly challenged literacy requirements as an exclusionary means of keeping Blacks out.[24] Sotero's analysis of Black socialist and communist writers, in addition to campaign pamphlets, articulated platforms that situated education and the question of literacy within a larger framework of class struggle.[25] Additionally, disagreements regarding Black participation in political parties was often, Sotero contends, a matter of generational differences between older and younger writers.[26]

The "Black milieu," however, was also fluid. Domingues, as well as Alberto and Sotero, reveals that the José do Patrocínio Association (Associação José do Patrocínio) originally formed as an advocacy and leisure space for domestic workers. They were instrumental in their complaints against newspaper classified advertisments explicitly requesting "só mulheres brancas" ("only white women") or European immigrant women. In his study on political organizer Nestor Macedo, Domingues contends that literacy did not preclude participation among large swaths of Black paulistanos. Macedo organized his Ala Negra Progressista group in favor of Adhemar de Barros and the PSP, hosting sewing workshops for young women, picnics and dancehall parties, commemorative dates related to slavery and abolition and recruited Black men and women to

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[23] Paulina Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century São Paulo* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 167 – 69.
[24] Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, 167.
[25] Edilza Correia Sotero, "Representação política negra no Brasil pós-Estado Novo," (PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 2015), 92 – 97.
[26] These generational differences, which Alberto acknowledges, stemmed from disillusionment during the Estado Novo, particularly with the forced shutdown of the Black Brazilian Front (Frente Negra Brasileira), the first major Black political rights organization, which aimed to register as a political party in 1937. Others, like José Correia Leite, already disagreed with electoral politics, because of the unlikelihood that any viable political platform could be race-based and deliver specific victories to change Black socioeconomic conditions.

support Barros irrespective if they could vote. To paraphrase Domingues, Nestor's politics was part of a larger pattern of "pragmatism" within Black associativism.[27] Both Alberto and Barbara Weinstein stress this in the conflict surrounding Frederico Penteado Júnior, founder of the social and leisure group Clube 220, who is the subject of Chapter 5.[28] There, I separately engage with Alberto and Weinstein's conceptualization of Penteado Júnior's strategies not only in the context of the 1955 Black Mother (Mãe Preta) statue in downtown São Paulo, but also to expound upon Penteado Júnior's use of the Black Mother symbolism in his Black beauty pageant franchises.

This approach to organizing is substantiated as a long tradition by Kim Butler, who tracks the same patterns in the overlapping of Carnival groups and Black civics groups, whose members also wrote in the earlier newspapers.[29] As Butler argues, the unifying purpose in these organizations was to "consolidate a unifying racial identification."[30] Rejecting Andrews, Domingues extends this pattern outside Brazil to comparable cases in Colombia, Venezuela, and Argentina.[31] In Alberto, Sotero, and Domingues, I recognize bases of Black associativsm (the Black press, political parties) within populist politics as a vehicle for developing modified or alternative social and cultural capital, in the absence of or to accompany limited resources to money. In my work, I spotlight dynamics embodied in the José do Patrocínio Association and figures like Nestor Macedo. However, I do this by documenting Black women's participation and activism in organizing domestic workers, as well as the influence of populist politicking in the spheres of education.

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[27] Domingues, *Estilo avatar*, 223 – 224.
[28] See Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, 209 – 211 and Barbara Weinstein, *the Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 293 -95.
[29] Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998),79 – 81.
[30] Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won,* 127 – 128.
[31] Ibid, 216 – 219.

This project benefits from the social and cultural interdisciplinary scholarship of popular movements in Second Republic São Paulo. It is most aligned with the turn to narrative, through analyses of Black cultural production in song and literature, to explore Black experiences of urbanization, industrialization, and economic instability. It benefits most from Mário Augusto Medeiros da Silva's work on peripheral and marginalized literature in relation to Carolina Maria de Jesus's diaries and her reception from and impact on writers involved in Black associativism.[32] Marcos Virgílio da Silva, in his study of urbanization and peripherialization, accounts for Black and non-Black samba artists and their perceptions of urban change through their songs. Framing the Second Republic through everyday perception, both scholars undertake Black knowledge production through the working-class and working poor.[33] In addition to this approach, oral history and interviews also provide vivid constructions of everyday life, particularly socioeconomic status at the intergenerational and intragenerational contexts, of Black paulistanos. The "Memory of Slavery in Black Families of São Paulo" oral history collection and the Florestan Fernandes interviews, which I engage in chapters 1 and 2, are instrumental in broadening the representation of everyday Black women and working against the exceptionalization of their voices in the historiography. These oral histories and interviews not only provide the context of Black family and labor histories during the Second Republic, but through their narratives provide a rich interplay between their depictions of intergenerational and intragenerational socioeconomic status, varying forms and ideas of social mobility and capital, and their expressions of habitus. I join these primary sources with two original interviews I conducted in March 2020, inclusive of Vóviz. By focusing

[32] Mário Augusto Medeiros da Silva, "A Descoberta do Insólito: Literatura Negra e Literatura Periférica no Brasil (1960 – 2000)," (PhD diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2011), 15 – 16.
Carolina Maria de Jesus was a semi-literate poor Black woman famous for her diary *Quarto de despejo* (1960). I discuss her at length in this dIssertation's conclusion.
[33] Marcos Virgílio da Silva, "Debaixo do 'Pogréssio:' Urbanização, cultura e experiência popular em João Rubinato e outros sambistas paulistanos (1951 – 1969)," (PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 2011), 54 – 55.

on this body of primary sources, my dissertation shifts attention to Black women's domestic lives as a dynamic space to historicize social mobility and articulate Black perceptions of urban change, politics, and economic instability.

Contributions and Significance

My study makes several contributions and innovations. By linking key aspects of Black São Paulo that are usually examined separately – the Black and non-Black press, oral histories and interviews, and materials documenting broader forms of Black associativism – this dissertation makes legible and visible everyday Black perspectives across gender and class. Class does not reflect solely the economic mode of production or division between workers and owners; it is also reproduced through ideology, politics, art and culture, and religion in spheres across society. Each area is where class struggle takes places. The rendering of specific classed and gendered experiences through housing, the labor market, education, and popular collection reconceptualizes the fields of urban history and labor history of Brazil. Social mobility, I argue, was a site to reconceptualize and intervene in areas of life restricted or marginalized to Black people during the Second Republic. By reconceptualizing the symbolic violence of workplace racial disputes, the regularization of shoe-shinning and domestic work, or forms of survival entrepreneurism, labor histories are broadened to capture the distinct experiences of working class, working poor, and professionalized Black workers and their efforts to inform labor struggle beyond the site of industrial labor.

This dissertation contributes to the field of Brazilian gender studies through through its methodology, unpacking archival problems in Black women's social history across the wider twentieth century. In writing the history of everyday Black paulistano perspectives of social mobility, I root gendered Black experiences outside of slavery and post-abolition, distinguish

Black men and women's experiences from another, and discuss how these differences informed different perceptions of social mobility. I examine not only their accounts of money and property in São Paulo, but also underscore how they questioned, rejected, or expanded the meaning and shape of what opportunity could be in a modern, capitalist society. I choose, as in my other primary source materials, to repurpose the Black oral histories and interviews originally intended to analyze the legacies of slavery and post-abolition to the social, political, and economic issues of the Second Republic. By stressing the presence, voices, and lived experiences of working-class and poor women through oral history and upper class professionalized women through newspapers, I work beyond the tendency to exceptionalize Black women or reduce them to brief sentences or footnotes. This is my attempt to overcome the tendency of an "all the women are white, and all the Blacks are men" approach.

My work contributes to the fields of Afro-Brazilian history, more broadly, and the study of racial inequality. This dissertation innovates in its choice to move the periodization of Black social mobility outside of the final years of slavery and post-abolition by centering resignified understandings of economic, social, and cultural capital are grounded in the Second Republic and the first decade of military dictatorship. In treating Black social mobility primarily within the Second Republic and its aftermath, I am emphasizing that the perceptions Black paulistanos held during this period were informed by the new cultural goods, tastes, and habits introduced through emergent and reforming institutions (and their instability) during the period. I also am challenging the framing of slavery and post-abolition with causation to all Black experiences extending far into the twentieth century. While the framing of "a slavery afterlife" or "long post-abolition" may serve the goals of works focused primarily on racial inequality and its production, a fixed period serves

the argument that I make in my study on social mobility: that Black conceptions of social mobility change over time across generations and social identities.

Methodology

I do count my methodological approach, which makes a bridge across physical and digital archives, as an original innovation. My primary sources are divided between three source bases: digitized periodicals and interviews, archived oral history transcript collections, and Black associativism or adjacent collections. In addition to the microfilmed and digitized collections of the Black press, the scholarship on Black associativism relies on visual and textual sources documenting holidays, festivals, historic figures, and commemorative events such as May 13th and September 28th, marking the abolition of slavery in 1888 and the Free Womb law of 1871. I build on Maria Aparecida de Oliveira Lopes' practice of utilizing press coverage of commemorative events and local cultural symbols particular to Black paulistano associativism to engage representations of Black upward and downward mobility in São Paulo.[34] Prioritizing these dates or holidays permitted me helped me develop my central strategy to identify, access, and interpret a range of Black clubs, personalities, and events particular to Black São Paulo under the Second Republic. Through the Brazilian National Library's Digital Newspaper database (Hemeroteca Digital, Biblioteca Nacional), I was able to track and follow coverage of diverse individuals such as Frederico Penteado Junior, Clube 220 president and beauty pageant organizer); Iracema de Almeida, São Paulo's sole Black female gynecologist and upper-class professional organizer; or Ovídio Pereira dos Santos, educational and Black press editor. In addition, I picked up on local labor legislation (such as laws regulating shoe-shining and other manual labor), national and local debates on domestic workers' labor status and potential reform, and Black paulistano radio

[34] Maria Aparecida de Oliveira Lopes, "História e memória do negro em São Paulo: efemérides, símbolos e identidade (1945-1978)," (PhD diss., Universidade Estadual de São Paulo, 2007), 24 – 25.

performers. I duplicated this strategy for other digital databases, including the digital newspaper archives for the Folha group (which covers *Folha da Manhã*, *Folha da Noite*, and *Folha de S. Paulo*), the *Estado de S. Paulo*, or the state government newspaper *Diário Oficial do Estado de São Paulo*. Cultural events, which were mentioned or covered in newspapers and magazines, provide a vehicle for me to engage depictions of upward and downward mobility in their local contexts.

This is important in the context of locating primary sources addressing or attentive to Black people, which can be complicated given the nature of changing terminology or historic social practices making racial identification evasive or taboo to explicitly name. The coverage of racial discrimination in the Brazilian press facilitates the ability for researchers to navigate these archival obstacles. However, that many sources on Black São Paulo revolve around racial discrimination as a symbolic violence can make it somewhat difficult to conceptually maneuver towards other readings of Black life. In certain cases, I did need to rely on press reporting of racial discrimination, particularly that of Black performers from the United States being barred from paulistano hotels (discussed in chapter 4). However, this facilitated my ability to establish context to local responses to such incidences that were relevant to my topic, such as the Black radio ensemble and program the Black Experimental Radio-Theatre (Radiotro Experimental do Negro, REN). Locating the REN exposed me to national periodicals such as *Radiolândia* and *Revista do Rádio*, that not only covered the ensemble but also the careers of Black paulistano acts beyond the purview of racial discrimination. Searching for the REN in the National Library's Digital Newspaper archive also generated results depicting advertisements promoting the REN in the local sports newspapers *Revista do Esporte* and tabloid *Diário da Noite*, both sources that extensively covered Frederico Penteado Junior's Clube 220 and beauty pageants (which I discuss in depth in chapter 5). I argue

that incidences of racial discrimination, which had the potential of becoming public and visible, can also be understood as conflict surrounding habitus, which make them occasionally helpful for engaging questions of social mobility through connecting to material or symbolic elements important to the ways myriad groups both defined and contested it.

My attention to commemorative events and racist incidences as archival keyword terms for Black paulistano primary sources permitted me to locate oral history and interviews. Oral histories and interviews are a vehicle to understand the habitus of these family units or individuals. In addition to the Florestan Fernandes interviews (discussed in the next section), I utilize the "Memory of Slavery in Black Families in São Paulo" oral histories, individual interviews from the Museu da Pessoa, and those I conducted myself. The "Memory of Slavery" collection, directed and organized by Maria de Lourdes Monaco Janotti of the University of São Paulo is incredibly rich. In addition to transcripts, the researchers included audio tape cassettes, fieldwork journals and reflections, and detailed documentation on how to recruit participants. The grouping of the mostly working-class or working poor participants within multi-generational families is also unique. Here, the interview questions are organized around a socioeconomic history of Black families from 1890 to 1987. These questions ranged from migration patterns, labor trajectories, and which generation, if or when applicable, became the first to have sustained educational access and opportunities. Additionally, the structure permits historians to understand Black subjects not as individuals alone, but also considers them as part of a family unit, which can be more difficult to piece together in the absence of medical, police, or housing records. In the fieldwork notebooks, researchers conducting the interviews highlighted their perceptions of their participants, including the organization of the home, participants' body posture and language, and material objects surrounding them. The participants themselves, however, also discussed their own perceptions of

their habits, material possessions, and relationships to others. I seek to contrast these views against each other to clarify Black identifications of capital, rather than those imposed upon them. Like the "Memory of Slavery" oral histories, the select Museu da Pessoa interviews I surveyed and the two interviews I conducted, I read each interview towards an understanding of habitus and symbolism behind recurring forms of capital that they spoke to.

Lastly, I engaged Black associativism archival collections or those adjacent to them. I interpreted these sources to further distinguish between classes and genders. I identified these collections in part through the commemorative keyword strategy I employed with the digitized newspapers. These include the archival holdings through the Black Cultural Association (Associação Cultural do Negro, ACN) at the Federal University of São Carlos, the secret police files on Black clubs and social movements at the São Paulo State Public Archives, as well as published documents such as Black press writer José Correia Leite's memoir *...E disse o velho militante* and Florestan Fernandes' *A integração do negro na sociedade de classes*. In a previous iteration of this dissertation, I also worked through the "Memory of Black Paulistanos" interview collection at the Museu da Cidade de São Paulo and the Virgínia Leone Bicudo materials from the Sociedade de Psicanálise de São Paulo, which both addressed the memory of those involved in Black associativism before the Second Republic.

A Note on Slavery

Slavery and post-abolition are looming features in the literature on race and social mobility in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Salvador. This is not unique to Brazil but common across the Americas. The framing of slavery is seductive, especially in studies of modernity, industrialization, and race relations. It provides a decisive chronological break between the nineteenth century agrarian slave economy and the twentieth century, where incipient and progressing stages of

industrial free labor capitalism are observable. This frame has been foundational to earlier texts, including that of Florestan Fernandes, whose landmark studies, *Brancos e negros em São Paulo* (with French anthropologist Roger Bastide) and *A integração do negro na sociedade de classes*, have been influential to studies of Black Brazilian social mobility since the early 1950s. I treat his methodological approach in more detail in chapter 3.

Florestan Fernandes was a Brazilian sociologist, not only influential for his analysis of race and social mobility in São Paulo, but also for his contributions to the study of social relations, particularly assimilation. After the Second World War, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) funded studies across Brazil to identify and describe the relationship between race and social structure to establish possible models for egalitarian race relations. Florestan Fernandes and Roger Bastide directed UNESCO's investigations in São Paulo. Fernandes and Bastide situated Black class mobility through the context of São Paulo's economic history, from dependence on agrarian slavery in the nineteenth century to an emerging industrial free labor society in the early twentieth century.[35] The Chicago School approach informed their research methodologies; new racial demographic data collected by the census, as well as quantitative surveys and interviews they took among employers and employees provided strong evidence of white discrimination against Black communities in the labor market. Fernandes and Bastide concluded that discrimination and prejudice negatively impacted Black social mobility but were ultimately archaic relics of the slave past and incompatible in a class society. They explained low levels of class mobility with freed people's overwhelming lack of preparation to adapt to free labor and the preference for European immigrant communities in factories and agriculture. Black

[35] Roger Bastide and Florestan Fernandes, *Brancos e negros em São Paulo* (São Paulo: UNESCO/Anhembi, 1995).

social mobility rates would become higher once Brazil fully transitioned to capitalist society, where they imagined Black people would finally be equipped to enter white-collar labor.[36]

Fernandes and Bastide's conclusions, or what would be informally called the "São Paulo School of Race Relations" and the "São Paulo thesis," became a dominant position among Brazilian researchers alongside Gilberto Freyre's contributions to the mestiçagem and racial democracy frameworks. Fernandes and Bastide, sociology and anthropology professors at the University of São Paulo, respectively, compounded their influence through their students and research associates.[37]

I do not use slavery to chronologically ground my study of social mobility. First, I reject the premise that slavery remained a static, biological intergenerational inheritance among descendants of enslaved people. Second, slavery and racism serve different functions in time and space. By examining the dynamics of Black social mobility during the Second Republic within and beyond formal institutions through narrative, I shift our perspective from racism as a static feature of Brazilian society to show its pervasive evolution across multiple layers of society. This dislodges the idea that racism is the natural extension of slavery. Slavery is its own beast, but it is a form of racism. Third, it is not helpful to the periodization of my work. For reasons I further explain in the conclusion, extending beyond the Second Republic takes away from the center of gravity where it is supposed to stay in, by explaining back context of other eras.

I do, however, recognize its resonance as a rhetorical device and trope, especially across my sources. I got a taste for this first in my engagement of the "Memory of Slavery" archival holdings. A fortuitous meeting with a colleague in the field helped transform my approach to my

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[36] I discuss Fernandes and Bastide's conclusions at length in Chapter 3.

[37] In this group of researchers and works, I include Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Octávio Ianni, *Côr e mobilidade social em Florianópolis* (1960), Luiz de Aguiar Costa Pinto, *O negro no Rio de Janeiro* (1953); and Thales Azedo, *As elite de cor* (1955).

work. Kat Cosby (all pronouns), then a fellow graduate student and in my Fulbright-Hays cohort, notified me about "the Memory of Slavery" collection, as they were surveying at the University of São Paulo and the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo. Kat, who researched Black women's geographies in post-abolition São Paulo, noted that it might be helpful in my project. No, I was not a slavery scholar, but for Kat, this was beyond the point. The family participants included members whose lives were two or three generations removed from slavery and the post-abolition period, perfect for the periodization I wanted to center.

I personally found the title of the project a misnomer. The researchers aimed to recover first-hand accounts of the social history of slavery, through Black families. The project was meant to conclude in 1988, which marked Brazil's 100th anniversary abolishing slavery. The researchers' attention ran parallel to larger conversations Black anti-racist organizers introduced debating the legacy of abolition on Black life and Brazilian race relations overall. Unlike the Federal Writers' Project slave narrative interviews in the United States, where researchers and writers interviewed formerly enslaved men and women still alive to recount their stories, the São Paulo oral history project, which interviewed 144 participants, had only 10 individuals who were enslaved. Most first-generation participants were the children or grandchildren of enslaved people manumitted through the 1871 Free Womb law. Although the Free Womb law technically tied the children of enslaved women to slaveholders until they reached 21, their conditional manumission predated final abolition by 17 years. Participants, even the researchers noted, had more to say family life, working, migrating from rural to urban areas, and leisure than slavery itself.

So why, then, the insistence on slavery? For the researchers, the absence or marginalized discussion of slavery on the part of the participants demonstrated the power of slavery to cast Black families out of Brazil's historical trajectory. "The history of Black families due to their own

survival [after slavery] is so violent and marginalized that the declarants do not refer to political events of the country's history. The absence is so absolute that one has the impression that dates have no relevance and that referential markers are only birth, childhood, and old age."[38] Speaking in the final report, Janotti and her collaborators argued that slavery so conditioned Black freedpeople that they were ill-equipped to deal with a post-abolition society of free labor, which saw them as tainted by the old order. The project organizers took the examples of frequent migration from town to town, temporary or long-term separation between parents and children, and the presence of informalized, manual labor as evidence that the Black families they surveyed largely suffered from an arrested development that they played little to no role as historical actors.

They cite Florestan Fernandes work in their argument: "In a society like ours [Brazil], defined by Florestan Fernandes as a class society, with estates and castes, there is much difficulty in establishing a comprehensive criterion of citizenship that can serve as a parameter to evaluate the participation of popular layers in public memory and life." As such, the researchers sought value in the oral histories as ways to place their participants as historical actors through their lived experience. In doing, they note, "the actor becomes the subject of his actions" in the absence of methodological resources that inadequately capture the lives of poor "Blacks and whites."[39]

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[38] "A história das famílias negras pela própria sobrevivência é tão violenta e marginalizada que os depoentes não se referem a acontecimentos politicos da história do país. A ausência é tão absoluta que se tem a impressão que as datas não têm importância alguma e que os marcos referencias são apenas: a infância, a mocidade e a velhice." Maria de Lourdes Monaco Janotti and Suely Robles Reis de Queiroz, "Relatório final," Maria de Lourdes Mônaco Janotti Papers – University Archives: Mémoria da Escravidão em Famílias Negras de São Paulo, Box 1: Publications, Centro de Apoio à Pesquisa em História Sérgio Buarque de Holanda – University of São Paulo (CAPH/USP), 10.

[39] "Parece-nos que para o caso dos negros e brancos pobres os recursos metodológicos sugeridos não são ainda totalmente adequados, por se referirem às análises de sociedades de classe dos países ricos. Em uma sociedade como a nossa, definida por Florestan Fernandes, como de classes, estamentos e castas há muitas dificuldades em estabelecer critérios amplos da cidadania que possam servir de parâmetro para avaliar a participação das camadas populares na vida e na memória públicas." Maria de Lourdes Monaco Janotti and Suely Robles Reis de Queiroz, "Relatório final," Maria de Lourdes Mônaco Janotti Papers – University Archives: Mémoria da Escravidão em Famílias Negras de São Paulo, Box 1: Publications, Centro de Apoio à Pesquisa em História Sérgio Buarque de Holanda – University of São Paulo (CAPH/USP), 10 – 11.

I disagree with the organizers' assessment, but I believe the organizing of archival collections itself facilitates the prevalence of such views. For example, the newspaper archivist who told me I would be unable to track news stories on Black women laborers may have operated from the point of view that Black women's work had to mirror occupations then prevalent among middle-class white women in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s: transcription and secretarial services, public administration, health care, or education. However, Black women constituted between a third to half of the country's domestic service workforce in mid-twentieth century. Unlike other occupations, domestic workers did not have the right to unionize until 1988 and were not considered protected under federal labor law until 2013.[40] Domestic workers' fight to unionize and advocate for a legal change in their status drew consistent backlash in newspapers and magazines. I found in my survey of print media that whenever domestic workers attempted to reform local or state statutes to change their status as "nonworkers," newspapers and magazines featured op-eds from or articles about upper-class white housewives or police chiefs decrying the attempts as unacceptable. They contested domestic work associations' assertion that their labor inside private homes required legal jurisdiction. To me, this is clearly a labor struggle between employer and employee disputing the role of the law in disempowering or empowering domestic workers, respectively. But if an archivist takes for granted that domestic workers were "nonworkers," these disputes in then-contemporary media, in addition to the prevalence of domestic workers being portrayed as modern versions of enslaved women's labor, facilitates the notion that Black people were "out of place" of the larger trajectory of Brazilian history, where labor struggle, class hierarchies, and race are intertwined and constant.

[40] Jaira J. Harrington, "Re-Conceptualizing Rights and Labor Union Politics at the Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender Through Domestic Work in Brazil" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2015), 108.

I choose, as in my other primary source materials, to repurpose the Black oral histories and interviews organized to analyze the legacies of slavery and post-abolition beyond slavery and post-abolition. I disagree with the project's conclusions that slavery was the main organizing structure for Black families through the twentieth century. The social, political, and economic environments Black families encountered and navigated were dynamic, not static. Black families and individuals did, in fact, observe commemorative dates and historical events, both relevant to the national and local history of Brazil as well as in their own lives as Black people. What the researchers interpreted as anachronistic outliers or regressive habits best explained as inheritances of social conditioning under slavery, I understand as acts of (re)signifying different forms of material, social, and cultural capital. For these reasons, the life narratives within oral histories and interviews are critical. While the agents whose voices reverberate in across my archival findings make it clear that their experiences *are not explained* by slavery, they sometimes wielded it in discourses to make rejections, negotiations, or express uneven/poor social relations. These aspects are through lines in the cases I examine: sponsoring commemorative holidays marking slavery, invoking the Black Mother in beauty pageants, advertising of kitchen products. Therefore "another urban grammar" is required to make the plural, heterogenous, and multilayered experiences of Black paulistanos visible, legible, and recognizable.

Chapter Outline

In chapter 1, I draw from original interviews to examine housing through family migration stories within the city. Building on histories that challenge heteronormative assumptions of Black families, I argue that female-led multi-generational kin networks that incorporated "chosen family" (no blood relations) were assets in the peripherialization of the city. In chapter 2, I focus on legislative processes and practices to enforce manual labor, including shoe-shining and

domestic service, to remain informal. Chapter 3 focuses on how Black teachers envisioned education as the bedrock for a robust social welfare system. While many studies emphasize racial integration in the fight for educational equity, my analysis reveals that Black teachers envisioned schools as the basis for retirement homes, shelters for houseless families, and food banks in Black communities. Their ideas, I demonstrate, were a rebuttal to São Paulo's public school system, where in 1954, 1/3rd of the city's mostly impoverished school-age children irregularly attended classes. In conversation with histories on race and labor in Brazilian television and radio, chapter 4 explores how Black theatre artists pioneered in 1954 Brazil's first radio program with an all-Black cast, the "Black Experimental Radio-Theater." Cast members believed that by performing roles typically reserved for white actors through the nation's most accessible technology, the radio, public reception would improve the prestige, visibility, and working conditions for Black artists.

The final chapters showcase how Black entrepreneurs, physicians, and politicians wielded forms of social capital through their communities to secure financial resources. Chapter 5 examines the little-explored history of the "Coffee Doll" beauty pageant (1960 – 1977). Fusing Black memory of enslaved wet nurses with romanticization of slavery, the pageant established a point of connection between Frederico Penteado Junior, the Black girls in his pageants, and mayors, governors, and the last president of the Second Republic. In chapter 6, I explore Iracema de Almeida's 1972 foray into São Paulo's fledgling social welfare department, where she navigated government censors on explicit discussion of racism to create health and financial programs targeting Black youth.