"Immigrants With Money Are No Use to Us" Race and Ethnicity in the Zona Portuaria of Rio de Janeiro, 1903-1912

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"IMMIGRANTS WITH MONEY ARE NO USE TO US" RACE AND ETHNICITY IN THE *ZONA PORTUÁRIA* OF RIO DE JANEIRO, 1903-1912

On a steamy mid-summer day in December 1901, a "clearly inebriated" 105-year-old Afro-Brazilian, Rita Lobo, leaned heavily on a walking stick as she made her way up Rua General Pedra. Known to all as "Pereréca" ("frog"*), not for the first time had she been the victim of cruel taunts by a group of Portuguese youths and, in particular, Luís Nascimento, the seven year-old son of a local hardware and pottery shop owner, Luís Antônio Pereira do Nascimento. That afternoon, however, Rita decided that it was time to fight back and began beating the young boy with her cane.

Emerging from his store, the boy's father then attempted to restrain "Pereréca" who, in turn, launched herself at him. In the process of repelling his elderly assailant, Luís caused "Pereréca" to fall heavily to the ground, wounding her seriously in the face and arms. Screaming in pain, "Pereréca" was soon surrounded by a crowd of locals who became increasingly agitated by the ferocity of the shopkeeper's actions. A journalist from the *Correio da Manhã* continued:

> At this stage the Portuguese retired inside his place of business to tend to the bruises inflicted upon him in the earlier scuffle. Minutes later, however, the establishment was invaded by the local Inspector of the 7th Urban division, Thomas Pessoa, and a number of young policemen. Informed of his arrest, Nascimento made for the calm of one of his tenants' lodgings which he rented out from above his shop. It was at this point that the situation began to change dramatically.
>
> Seemingly without cause, the shop became the scene of the most disgraceful destruction. And on the order of our own Snr. Pessoa plates, crockery, cans of oil and all manner of hardware were destroyed. Indeed, nothing of value was spared from the truncheons of the police.[1]

* "Pereréca" can also be used as a reference to a woman's sexual parts.

[1] *Correio da Manha*, 19 December 1901, 2. See also the *Jornal do Brasil* coverage from the same day, p. 3.

Matters would continue to deteriorate for Luís do Nascimento. Soon the officers dragged him down from the upstairs room before kicking and punching him in front of the crowd. His heavily pregnant wife, Dona Joaquina, was not spared several blows, although she later managed to flee clutching her three young children and a bag of valuables. When the shopkeeper was finally taken to the local station for interrogation, the crowd took it upon themselves to loot whatever remained untouched by the police. "Scenes from the jungle," wrote a *Jornal do Brasil* reporter as the crowds "completed the absurd brutality" started by Inspector Pessoa.

Later that afternoon, Rita Lobo died from her injuries—thus it was somewhat fortunate for Luís that the contradictory accounts of the eyewitnesses resulted in his acquittal.

Almost four years later, Luís do Nascimento and his son were involved in a dispute with the same officers who had vandalized their family business in 1901. On 17 September 1905, police heard loud wailing noises outside the store. On arrival they were surprised to find the storekeeper's eldest son, Luís, with bruises on his cheeks and large scratches on both elbows and knees. Luís Sr. and Dona Joaquina, however, were nowhere to be seen and so Luís Jr. was taken to the local station where he remained for most of the day. Arriving in the early evening, Luís Nascimento Sr. was arrested on the testimonies of two officers who alleged that he had been seen inflicting "grave bodily harm" on his son. The officers also produced a signed declaration from the 11-year-old blaming his father for the injuries.

After five days in the Casa de Detenção, Luís was granted an appeal and was quick to recall the hidden agenda of the arresting officers. Not only was it clear that his son's testimony had been forged, he argued, but other witnesses (whose testimonies had been "conveniently misplaced") had sworn that his son had simply hit his head on the pavement while playing with other children (none of whom were interviewed). Further, as a result of owning several rooming houses, he was "wise to the resentment and stigmatization that was felt against the Portuguese."[2] "As a successful migrant," he continued, "these grudges had festered for years," and yet he remained "a Brazilian at heart and was educating his sons to be patriotic and loyal citizens." The appeal court judge concurred: "it is past the time to cease with the discrimination and abuse perpetrated by these and other police officers.

[2] Arquivo Nacional, Rio de Janeiro. *Pretórias Criminais, 8th Freguesia Santana, 1903-12* (OR 4197, 17 August 1905). Henceforth only individual case numbers will be cited.

The testimonies of both witnesses and the boy were clearly fabricated."[3] Shortly after his release, Nascimento and his family abandoned their 20-year-old business and moved to Flamengo.

THE THIRST FOR CIVILIZATION

Luís Nascimento and his family found themselves at the crossroads of two very different worlds that were coming together in Rio de Janeiro in the early years of the twentieth century. The abolition of slavery (1888) and the declaration of the First Republic (1889) had unleashed new forces upon the capital which changed the socio-economic and political climate irrevocably. Not only were the slaves now free, but the republican project was gradually eroding the monopoly that the plantocracy had upon political power. This was coupled with the emergence of a new class of ambitious politicians who were determined to accelerate the modernization of the city muted by various administrations for decades.

The plan to modernise Rio de Janeiro gathered momentum after the turn of the century with the election of the *paulista* Rodrigues Alves in 1902.[4] While Alves was but the latest in a long line of Brazilian political figures to attempt an overhaul of the city's decaying infrastructure, it was under his administration that the mission to modernise the capital reached its apogee. Far more than being simply an attempt at economic modernization, the reform program entrusted to the city's Prefect, Perreira Passos, remained tied to a wider belief in the necessity to liberate the national *mentalité* from its slavocratic and colonial past. Indeed, the thirst for civilization was illustrative of both the economic and, perhaps more importantly, the socio-cultural anxieties felt by those seeking to reform the nation's capital.

Alongside the modernization of the city centre, the refurbishment programme also targeted the parishes of Santa Rita (which includes Saúde) and Santana (in which Gambôa is located), Rio's *zona portuária* and a region of

[3] Ibid.

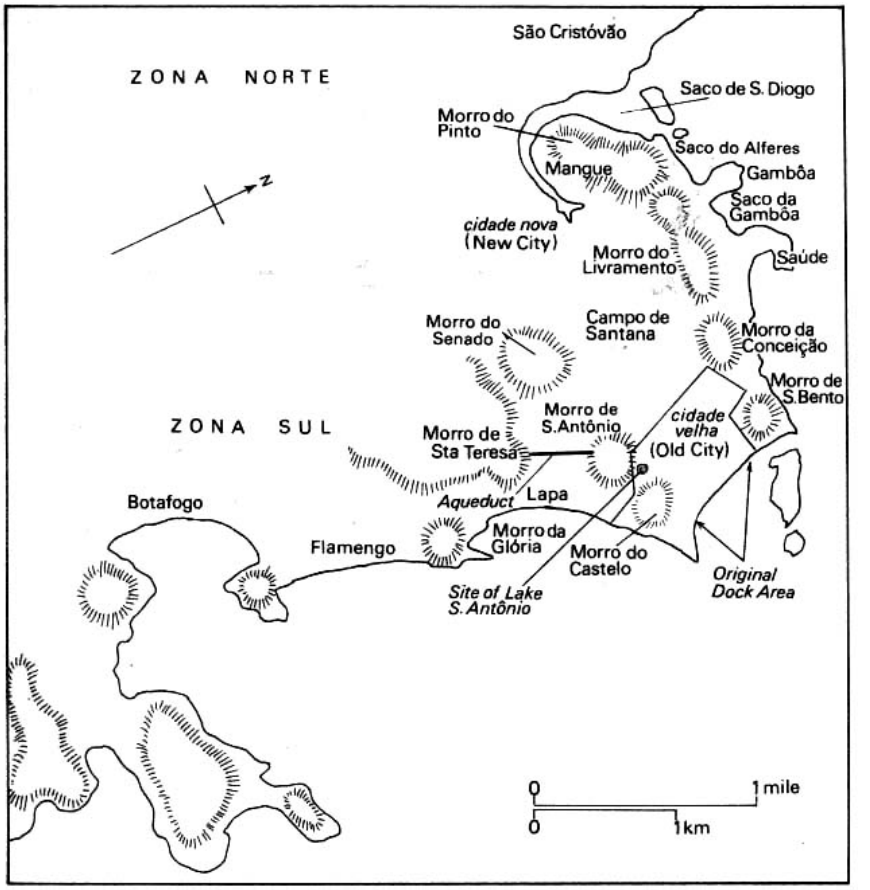
[4] The refurbishment of Rio de Janeiro under the Alves regime has been the subject of a wealth of scholarly research. See, for example, Jeffrey Needle, "Making the Carioca *Belle Époque* Concrete: The Urban Reforms of Rio de Janeiro under Pereira Passos," *Journal of Urban History* 10:4 (August 1984), pp. 383-422; Needell, "Rio de Janeiro at the turn of the Century: Modernization and the Parisian Ideal," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 25:1 (February 1983), pp. 83-104; Jamie L. Benchimol, *Pereira Passos: Um Haussmann Tropical* (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca Carioca, Vol. 11 1990); and Teresa Meade, *Civilizing Rio: Reform and Resistance in a Brazilian City, 1889-1930* (University Park: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1997).

* Small open-air newsstands which also served food and alcohol.

the city long considered both unproductive and a haven of criminality and disrepute (see Map 1).[5] Squeezed between the tranquil coastal waters and the swampy marshlands of the interior, the zona's population had grown rapidly during the preceding half-century as internal migrants and a well-entrenched local population competed over the scraps of available employment in the port industry and the nearby downtown. By the late 1890s it had also become the site of the nation's first *favela* ("slum") on the slopes of the Morro da Providência. The mission to transform the crowded, chaotic, and unhygienic zona portuária into a showpiece of the city's quest for economic and cultural modernization would become an important site in the battle between old and new Rio.

Complementing the thirst for "civilization" and "development" was the introduction into the city of thousands upon thousands of poor European immigrants who had been enthusiastically courted by the authorities since the final quarter of the nineteenth century. The introduction of immigrants had two important rationales. First, they formed part of the solution to the "problem" of Brazil's enormous black and brown population—something which was seen to condemn the nation to a degenerate, second class status. Second, flooding the plantations (and the urban areas which had grown up to supplement them) with cheap, uneducated, white males, was a deliberate attempt to ensure an oversupply of labor, therefore keeping wages low. Central to the immigration program was the belief held among politicians and the *fazendeiros* of the interior that the immigrants themselves needed to fulfil two key criteria. First, in order to ensure the continued productivity of Brazil's export agriculture, the replacement laborers would need to be (and remain) unskilled and impoverished. This pool of immigrants would, therefore, compete directly with the Afro-Brazilian population. "In that way," noted Antônio Prado, a senator from one of São Paulo's most powerful polit-

[5] As an important entrepôt for slaves destined for the great plantations of the interior, the port zone had a long reputation for criminality and immorality. As the Brazilian Vice-Roy (1769-79), Marques do Lavradio complained, the comings and goings of port district "has made people reluctant to come to their windows, and the innocent among us are being educated in things they should not." Cited in Brasil Gerson, *História das Ruas do Rio* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Brasiliana Editôra, 1965), pp. 203-204. For more on the port renovation and health programs undertaken in the area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries see, among others, Maria Cecília Velasco e Cruz, *Virando O Jogo: Estivadores e Carregadores no Rio de Janeiro da Primeira República* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Universidade de São Paulo, 1998); Bernice de Cavalcante, "Beleza, Limpeza, Ordem e Progresso: A Questão da Higiene na Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, Final de Secúlo XIX," *Revista Rio de Janeiro* 1:1 (December 1985), pp. 95-103; Elizabeth Dezouzart Cardoso, *História dos Bairros: Saúde, Gambôa e Santo Cristo* (Rio de Janeiro: João Fontes Engeharia, 1987); and Sérgio Tadeu de Niemeyer, *Dos Trapiches do Porto: Um Estudo Sobre a Área Portuária do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, Turismo e Esportes, 1991).



Map 1. Rio de Janeiro's geography and districts at the beginning of the twentieth century (Reproduced from Jeffery Needell, *A Tropical Belle Époque*, 24.)

ical families, "salaries will be lowered by the means of the law of supply and demand."[6]

Second, the introduction of a mass of impoverished southern Europeans would, it was hoped, hamper any prospect of unified working-class protest against the republican system. Busy scrabbling over the crumbs of economic opportunity in the interior or the shop floors of urban industry which were growing up to supplement them, both the native-born and the newly-arrived immigrants would have little time for notions of class solidarity. Crucially,

[6] Prado is cited in Paulo Beiguelman, *Formação do Povo no compleixo cafeeiro: Aspectos Politicos* (São Paulo: University of São Paulo Press, 1997), p. 65.

this twin-strategy would also allow the state to deflect accusations of racism from the mass of impoverished former slaves. In the tense, uncertain atmosphere of the new republic there would be plenty of poor whites to refute such allegations. After all, as Antônio's brother Martinho cogently observed after returning from a propaganda trip to Genoa, "immigrants with money are no use to us."[7]

"THE MOST DANGEROUS AND DIFFICULT SECTION OF THE CITY"

This article seeks to engage with individuals in the zona portuária during these years of tremendous change. With the clamour of Rio de Janeiro's modernization echoing in the background, two central questions will be examined. First, how did the city's modernization impact upon the lives of the men, women, and children living in the port area? This is particularly the case with regard to relations between Afro-Brazilians and the immigrants who settled in alongside them.

Secondly, to what extent did the economic threat posed by immigrants force the emergence of ethnic and racial strategies within the local Afro-Brazilian population? Did they see the new arrivals as part of a systematic program predicated on their impoverishment and, if so, how did they address it? Was their "blackness" a source of empowerment around which their common history and contemporary poverty could be manifest? Or was an absence of race-based behaviour indicative of a shift in consciousness—a strategic move from "Afro-Brazilian" to citizen—and a faith in the nativist *Brasilidade* ("Brazilian-ness") so central to the emergence of modern Brazilian race relations?

Much of the primary material used here is provided by criminal records from the years 1903-12 in the city's 8th *freguesia* (parish) Santana, which are housed at the Arquivo Nacional in Rio de Janeiro. Newspaper coverage and interviews with residents by reporters at the time have also been used to uncover criminal, police and community activity in the area. While offences included organizing strikes, vagrancy and murder, the cases I have examined usually involved physical assault stopping short of homicide (*luta corporal*), because they constituted the preponderant offence for which people were arrested in Santana during the period. Further, they often involved multiple defendants and hence were more likely to include characters either systematically seeking to punish other members of the community or those coming to the aid of men and women who were involved in violent altercations.

[7] Ibid.

This, of course, could also happen in cases of murder, but because of the severity of the crime and its associated penalty, the involvement of friends, family or colleagues in the actual crime was less frequent. Similarly, unlike homicide, in which the evidence was often irrefutable, the ways in which the inhabitants attempted to defend themselves or their friends, by inventing other reasons for the appearance of cuts, bruises and broken limbs, provides crucial information with regard to micro-level solidarities. In total, 200 cases have been examined, involving 312 defendants and 173 victims. The cases discussed below are a selection from the 200 examined and illustrate the common aspects of port life which have emerged from these documents.

COMMUNITY, POLICE, AND PUBLIC SPACE IN THE ZONA

Conflict with the authorities was a constant source of anger within the community. These tensions were raised as the authorities sought to intervene actively in the public lives of residents to ensure the eradication of Rio's unpalatable cultural mix. The organization of the police force in the Federal District was regulated by three decrees in the early republican years.[8] Determined to apply a more modern, scientific approach to the problem of crime, all but one of the city's first fifteen republican police chiefs were selected by the Ministério da Justiça from graduates of the prestigious law schools in São Paulo and Recife. A rise in state surveillance also occurred with an increasing number of policemen per head of population. Whereas in 1889 there were only 29 officers for every 10,000 inhabitants, this figure had doubled to 58 by 1905—the highest ratio of any Brazilian city. Rio's policing was also reinforced by the creation of the 1,500 strong Guarda Civil in February 1903.[9]

The arrest and detention of those deemed dangerous to public order or simply lacking a "proper" means of income goes directly to the heart of the modernizing project during these years. Paradoxically, however, those Europeans introduced to Rio in order to whiten the population were also adding to the number of "undesirables" who congregated on the city streets.[10] "It is the vital social question of today," wrote the Director do Polícia Adminis-

[8] The organization of the police force in the Federal District was regulated by decrees N.1.034A (1 September 1892), N. 3.640 (14 April 1900) and N. 4.73 (5 February, 1903).

[9] Marco Luiz Bretas, *A Guerra das Ruas: Povo e Polícia na Cidade do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1987), p. 48.

[10] This was particularly the case with the rise in prostitution and illegal gambling during the early years of the republic and their association with the immigrant community. See, for example, two works by Lená Medeiros de Menezes, *Os Estrangeiros e O Comércio do Prazer nas Ruas do Rio, 1889-1930* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1992), and *Os Indesejáveis: Declassificados da Modernidade* (Rio de Janeiro: EdUERJ, 1996).

trativa in 1905. "Nothing seems to have changed in the last twelve months. The sad spectacles that are offered us on the streets and in front of our most famous churches continue."[11]

Simply "sleeping rough" was often sufficient to catch the attention of the law. Antônio da Rosa and Manoel Antônio, two Portuguese door-to-door mattress salesmen, spent 22 days at the Casa da Detenção after being awoken and accused of lacking "the proof by which they gained their subsistence" on Rua Senador Eusébio (although whether or not the pair were "sleeping rough" on their means of subsistence was not mentioned).[12] Often police could use the Lei da Vadiagem (Vagrancy Law)[13] to justify raids on the port area, targeting "known vagabonds, drunks and thieves" who were, according to one report sent to the Police Chief, "a source of constant annoyance to those embarking and disembarking from the docks."[14]

Manoel Cantidiano dos Neves was one of them. A black stevedore from Sergipe, Neves was arrested near the Estação Maritima for being drunk and abusive in September 1904.[15] Officers testified that he "appeared to have neither permanent employment nor a fixed address." His defence lawyer countered by producing his client's membership card from the powerful União dos Estivadores and argued that the arrest was typical of police harassment. Pleading (successfully) to the impartiality and sense of justice of the presiding judge, he pointed to the "violence and tyranny of the police that has unhappily reached extraordinary proportions in the city of Rio de Janeiro."

The "campaign of persecution" was at its most ferocious in the city's public spaces. Parks, for example, once such important meeting places for people of all social classes, had become subject to strict surveillance. The Campo da Santana, originally modelled on Paris' Bois de Boulogne, was decried as an example of the wider social crisis that had befallen the area.

[11] Relatório do Director Geral de Polícia Administrativa, Arquivo e Estatística, 1904-09. Documento Avulso, Arquivo Nacional. See also Sociedade Civil Mantendora da Guarda do Caes do Porto: Estatutes e Instrucções da Chefatura de Polícia (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Alba, 1927), for more on the concern with delinquents and vagabonds in the port area.

[12] OR 7084, 4 February 1905.

[13] Vagrancy was made a criminal offence under Decree 145 (11 July 1893). Vagrants were those of any sex or age who "without the protection of family or tutor, without means of subsistence, profession or legal and honest occupation, wander the city in a state of idleness." Those provoking the public order were also liable to be arrested. For a full copy of the decree see the *Colecção dos Leis do Brasil 1894* (Rio de Janeiro, Imprensa Nacional, 1894), p. 15.

[14] *GIFI—Documentos de Polícia (Deportados 1909)*. Arquivo Nacional. Pacote 307, Caixa 6c 308.

[15] OR 3256, 16 September 1904.

"Today all has changed," lamented the *Correio da Manhã* in 1913, "The scenes are of the most awful degradation, and this in what was once such a grand and magnificent garden."[16]

The rationale behind the impetus to cleanse such areas of "undesirables" was culturally symbolic: it set its sights upon attacking the chaotic "street democracy" which had been characteristic of the city's public spaces for centuries. Abolition and the arrival of thousands of poor immigrants had only added to an already dangerous and unpredictable public sphere in the eyes of the paranoid elite of the republic. It was a heady mix, and for which the city's elite and middle-class had nothing but contempt. "Carters, stevedores and laborers of the worst kind congregate [at a *quiosque** on the Largo da Prainha]," complained the local businessman and father of two José Rodrigues dos Santos in a letter to Prefect Passos in 1904, "speaking always in high voices and, what is worse, on the most vulgar of topics."[17] One group of traders, property owners and residents on the Praça da República based their grievance on the assertion that the *quiosques* were nothing but places "frequented by the unemployed of the lowest type and of both sexes, who promote constant disorder and practice scenes unfitting to a civilized city."[18]

Another key battle in the struggle to "cleanse" the city took place in the *botequims*. Small darkly-lit taverns which, unlike the outdoor *quiosques*, were set back from the street, their role as a rendezvous point for workers, families, lovers and friends provided a vital service for those whose accommodation lacked both adequate facilities and social space.

Those who caught the eye of the police quickly felt the consequences. The cabinet-maker Phillipe da Silva Henriques, who spent an afternoon drinking at a tavern near the Estação Central, was one of them.[19] Having drunk what the proprietor declared was an "inordinate quantity of *paraty*"† in the company of stoker Pauli Rafi, the two (who knew each other only "*a vista*") were knocked over by a young boy who, it was later discovered, had fled with Phillipe's wallet. Minutes later, as the pair demanded the bill, Phillipe accused Rafi of the theft. After a short but heated squabble, the two fell to the floor, but this time were seen by passing policemen who wasted

[16] "Uma Maravilha ao Abandono," *Correio da Manhã*, 27 April 1913, p. 4.

* Small, open-air newsstands which also served food and alcohol.

[17] José Rodrigues dos Santos to Pereira Passos, 11 February 1904. AGCRJ 45-4-23 (Quiosques, 1900-09).

[18] Ibid.

[19] OR 6030, 3 August 1907.

† *Paraty* is a type of Brazilian rum.

little time in dragging them handcuffed to the local station where they were convicted of assault and engaging in a *luta corporal*. After 30 days in the Casa de Detenção, Phillipe managed a successful appeal which, unusually, he conducted on his own behalf:

> Like other members of the oppressed and poor classes who have stood and will stand before you, Your Excellency, I attest to the misfortune that had led us all here today. Yet again do the dark clouds of injustice and persecution hang over me while I wait for the rays of hope to warm my soul. Will it come today?

There were those who were not so "fortunate." Bonifácio da Conceição was shot in the leg by an officer after "acting suspiciously" near the Estação Marítima,[20] while Laurindo da Silva, who worked on the port developments, was arrested for being drunk and "creating a disturbance of the public order" near the docks while taking a break at a nearby tavern.[21] Similarly, Paulo Quase and Thomas Bennetti, both foreign-born mechanics on the port development project, were taken into custody after, they claimed, a police officer had taken offence at their refusal to give him a cigarette at a *botequim* on the Praça da República.[22] All of these men were imprisoned in the Casa de Detenção.

Community responses to police intimidation on the streets and in the taverns of Gambôa and Saúde were many and varied. This points to the situational nature of alliances between groups and individuals which, in turn, makes mapping "racial behaviour" problematic. It also suggests that the impact of the "civilizing" mission was complex. Local residents often seemed caught between self-protection and a desire to form a common defence in the face of state violence.

For example, it was not uncommon for sections of the local community to employ the language of civic propriety to their own advantage. By engaging with the rhetoric of "civilization," those fortunate enough to find employment or to run their own small businesses ensured that vagabonds, drunks, and other "undesirables" could be dealt with in the language of the day. It was also a way to avoid using potentially explosive racial epithets. As merchants, the unemployed, and casual laborers contested a limited public space, mutual suspicion of ethnic "others" and potential troublemakers hovered over the streets.

[20] OR 3192, 15 April 1904.
[21] OR 7340, 26 February 1908.
[22] OR 8086, 24 December 1909.

This was particularly the case when local blacks and immigrants came into conflict. For example, the Afro-Brazilian brothers Manoel and Angelino da Silva, both middle-aged blacksmiths, wandered into a *botequim* on Rua Marechal Floriano Peixoto one afternoon in May 1908 and asked for a *paraty* and a plate of *ovos estrelados* (fried eggs).[23] The owner, Spaniard Luís Pires, refused to serve the two because, he later testified, "they were known vagabonds and troublemakers." After summoning the police, a heated discussion ensued, resulting in Luís smashing a glass over Manoel and threatening to beat him with a steel cane that he produced from behind the counter. Other customers, two Spaniards and a Portuguese, later justified his actions and confirmed to police the bad character of the brothers. Luís, they argued, "was simply protecting his custom and did what anyone in a similar situation would do." Similarly, the Afro-Brazilian cobbler, Antônio Dionísio da Costa, 25, was arrested for stabbing the Portuguese migrant, Abílio Guandado, on the pavement outside his barber shop after he was refused service. Abílio had earlier called the police in order to remove Antônio from "loitering outside his business" and "using morally offensive language" which, he claimed, was costing him trade.[24]

Importantly, however, a common resentment of police behaviour could unite the community. While testimonies taken by the police illustrate a pervasive climate of ethnic suspicion, local men and women often recognized a mutual persecution which built an important sense of community solidarity in the public domain. As mutual victims of police violence, often what influenced the behavior of individuals was a sense that a common victimization demanded an orchestrated defence. This points to an interesting paradox: while police records certainly point to the existence of inter-ethnic tension, moments of community resistance on the streets of the port district during these years illustrate that a subtle process of transculturation was taking place.

This was evident in the stabbing of Raul Oliveira by Manoel Galvão outside a tavern on the Morro da Favela.[25] In the original testimonies taken on 2 July 1910, the owner of the *botequim* "Faustino" and several laborers from the nearby coal depot testified that Galvão, a Portuguese immigrant, had begun to insult Raul near the door when he tried to enter. According to the proprietor, Galvão "had been drinking heavily for most of the afternoon" in the company of his brother. Raul, a black stevedore, added that "as was his custom" he had finished his shift on the docks and had arrived to drink

[23] OR 6699, 5 May 1908.
[24] OR 4547, 20 October 1905.
[25] OR 7951, 2 July 1910.

paraty when Galvão blocked the doorway and refused to let him pass. The arresting officer, who presumably had arrived after the incident, was informed by several customers that an inebriated Galvão then repeatedly stabbed the stevedore in the chest before disappearing into the maze of small and darkly-lit alleyways of the surrounds, throwing the murder weapon away in the process. It was at this point that he was chased, unsuccessfully, by a crowd of men and women who emerged from the tavern.

At the trial three weeks later the testimonies had changed dramatically. This time the defence attorney brought forward countless witnesses who testified to the fact that the men were "old friends," "honest and peaceful workers" who had been drinking together for most of the afternoon. Far from being a premeditated attack, the stabbing was the result of excessive alcohol. Further, witnesses now declared that both men had in fact drawn knives. Nor did the crowd chase either man. Both had realized they were hurt (although Galvão, remarkably, displayed no physical injuries) and had gone to their rooms to treat cuts. Similarly, the weapons were not thrown away during a chase but were, according to the statement from Galvão's brother, "dropped absentmindedly" during the confusion. Both men were released.

"And Here, Agglomerated, Are the Mass"

In tandem with an increase in the policing and surveillance of the zona portuária, demographic pressures, and in particular the rapidly deteriorating living conditions, impacted negatively upon the lives of the residents of the port area during these years. They were also a common source of tension among and between immigrants and the native-born. Further, the cramped and overcrowded housing conditions highlight an important facet of port life: the breakdown of the division between the public and the private world. If a fear of police harassment dominated street life, the overcrowding and filth of the *casas de cômodos*, *cortiços* and *estalagens* provided little respite.

From 1821 until 1890, the harborside parishes of Santa Rita, Gambôa and Santana had experienced a population growth comparable to other areas of the rapidly expanding capital. Santa Rita's population had grown from 13,774 to 46,161 while Santana's had risen to 67,533 from 10,835. This trend continued well into the republican years, with both areas continuing to feel the impact of both internal and international immigration (see Table 1).[26]

[26] Recenseamento do Rio de Janeiro (Districto Federal) realisado em 20 de Setembro de 1906 (Rio de Janeiro: Officina da Estatistica, 1907), and the Recenseamento do Brazil (Districto Federal) realisado em 1 de Setembro de 1920 (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1923).

TABLE 1
POPULATION FIGURES FOR SANTA RITA AND SANTANA, 1872-1920

	1872	1890	1906	1920
Santa Rita	30,865	43,805	45,929	38,164
Santana	38,446	67,533	79,315	91,331

Source: *Recenseamento do Rio de Janeiro (Districto Federal) realisado em 20 de Setembro do*, and the *Recenseamento do Brazil (Districto Federal) realisado em 1 de Setembro de 1920.*

It was during the immediate post-emancipation years that the most dramatic increase in population occurred as the area swelled with impoverished immigrants from southern Europe. In the census years of 1890 and 1906 all three areas had nearly one-third of their populations either born outside Brazil or second-generation immigrants who were yet to take up the offer of Brazilian citizenship. This only began to slow as people moved away from the inner city to the expanding working-class areas to the north and north-west as a result of the renovations that made life in the port area increasingly precarious.[27] The 1906 census also breaks down the foreign population by nationality, which indicates that, like Rio in general, a high percentage of immigrants who settled in the area after abolition were Portuguese (see Table 2).

Crucially, however, the large number of foreign arrivals in Gambôa and Saúde during these years were also complemented by large numbers of Brazilian migrants who began to flood into the city looking for employment opportunities. In 1890 only 44.2 per cent of the population was born in the city. This number had risen to 52.3 percent by 1920, illustrating that both European and Brazilian-born immigrants began to place increasing demands upon employment and social structures.[28]

Many of the new arrivals in the *zona portuária* were Afro-Brazilian.[29] In the census of 1890, figures reveal that, in Santa Rita and Santana, *pardos* and *pretos* comprised 35.2 per cent of the total population, the highest figure

[27] As Teresa Meade has shown, for example, in the period from 1890-1906 the population of the *Zona Norte* and the *súburbios* grew by 118 and 106 per cent respectively, while that of the city centre increased by only 12 per cent. See Meade, "Living Worse and Costing More: Resistance and Riot in Rio de Janeiro, 1890-1917," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 21:9 (1989), p. 253.

[28] June E. Hahner, *Poverty and Politics: The Urban Poor in Brazil, 1870-1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), p. 47.

[29] For more on the nature and ethnicity of internal migrants into the city of Rio de Janeiro during these years see Sam C. Adamo, *The Broken Promise: Race, Health and Justice in Rio de Janeiro, 1890-1940* (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of New Mexico, 1983), pp. 23-25.

TABLE 2
POPULATION OF FOREIGN IMMIGRANTS BY NATIONALITY IN 1906

	Portuguese	Spanish	Italian	Other*
Santa Rita	11,327	2,323	547	322
Santana	8,657	709	3,902	236
Gambôa	10,045	1,695	2,499	176

*Includes mainly Germans, British, French, Poles and Russians.
Source: *Recenseamento do Rio de Janeiro (Districto Federal) 1906*, 126-27.

for any of the urban census districts in the city and almost certainly an underestimation.[30]

Many black and mulatto migrants were ex-slaves and *libertos* who saw in the port area both (relatively) attractive employment opportunities and a coherent and welcoming Afro-Brazilian community. This was particularly the case for those from the north-east and Bahia. Whether as a result of the internal slave trade in the years after 1850, or as a result of the drought which affected the Bahian *sertão* in the late nineteenth century, the imperial and, later, republican capital witnessed an influx of Afro-Bahian migrants. Many also returned to a city where they or their descendants had arrived as slaves and, in these times of transition, they would play a marked role in the reorganization of Rio's popular and subaltern world—especially in the port areas of the city. "Come to Rio!" one Afro-Bahiana enthused, "because here the people can earn money and the living is good."[31]

Despite this initial optimism, the new arrivals soon discovered that the city had little space for them. Overcrowding was felt keenly in the zona portuária, whose population density in 1906 was amongst the highest in the city. In terms of population per square kilometer, the rates for Santa Rita (41,118), Santana (29,114) and Gamboa (27,718) were surpassed only by Sacramento and São José.[32] Similarly, while census figures reveal that between 1890 and 1906 the number of people per building in Santa Rita had risen only from 17.05 to 17.96 (in Santana it had even declined from 13.9 to 12.8), increases in the number of people per individual dwelling attest to the

[30] In a racist society it is highly probable that in questions of self-identification respondents whitened themselves. Population by color distribution was absent from the censuses taken in 1906 and 1920.
For more of Afro-Bahian immigration to Rio during the period see Roberto Moura, *Tia Ciata e a Pequena África no Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Coleção Biblioteca Carioca, 1995), pp. 19-44.

[31] Ibid., p. 37.

[32] Recenseamento do Rio de Janeiro, 1906, p. 35.

growing pressure on housing. In Santa Rita and Santana, the numbers between 1890 and 1906 had almost doubled (from 9.7 to 18.2 and from 6.5 to 12.1 people per dwelling respectively).[33]

Foreign observers were shocked by the overcrowding. The American missionary H.C. Tucker, who in 1904 established an education and healthcare clinic in Gambôa, the Instituto Central do Povo, reflected in his autobiography on the thousands of workmen and women who flocked in from all parts of Brazil to the port district. "Here along the hillsides," he noted, "the fine homes formerly occupied by prosperous people became crowded tenements, and there developed a slum section in which the living conditions were sometimes indescribable." Tucker's sentiment's were echoed in a dossier compiled by Evaristo Backheuser, a public works inspector and member of the seven-man commission nominated by Ministro da Justiça, J.J. Seabra, to investigate the "urgent problem" of public housing in the city a year later:

> And here, agglomerated, are the mass—workers, carters, casual laborers, boatmen, bar clerks, washerwomen, seamstresses of the lower order, wretched women, flung together in "Casa de Cômodos," old and decrepit mansions of many floors, divided and subdivided by an endless number of wooden screens. . . . On occasion, these divisions are not even of wood but only rotten sack-cloth leaving a situation where all is left open, giving rein to a life of promiscuity. Existence here, as you can only imagine, is nothing short of detestable.[34]

The day-to-day struggle of residents to cope with the appalling living conditions took many forms and the run-down "mansions" were important locales in which ethnic tensions and the formation of racial solidarities were played out. This is particularly the case given that Portuguese immigrants were accused of monopolizing urban real estate.

Long a source of tension in the city, unscrupulous behaviour, lack of responsibility for maintenance and high rents were associated with the immigrant Portuguese.[35] It was often the source of violent disagreements

[33] Ibid., p. 37.

[34] Evaristo Backheuser, *Habitações Populares* (Relatório apresentado ao Ex. Snr. Dr. J.J. Seabra, Ministro da Justiça e Negócios Interiores, Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1906), p. 108.

[35] For more on the resentment felt towards the Portuguese and their control of real estate in the city, see June E. Hahner, "*Jacobinos* versus *Galegos*: Urban Radicals versus Portuguese Immigrants in Rio de Janeiro in the 1890s," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 18:2 (1976), pp. 125-51; Maria Manuela de Sousa Silva, "Portugueses no Brasil: Imaginário Social e Tacticas Cotidianas, 1880-95," *Acervo* 10:2 (1997), pp. 109-19; and Sidney Chalhoub, *Trabalho, Lar e Botequim* (Campinas: Editora da Unicamp, 2001), pp. 131-48.

which subsequently made their way into the courts. Such was the background to the trial of the Portuguese Antônio de Andrade who was sent to the Casa de Detenção for "spanking and kicking" the 68 year-old Afro-Brazilian Rosa Fernandes dos Passos for "flooding the apartment with water"[36] and the imprisonment of Antônio Luís da Costa and Antônio Bento Gomes for attacking their landlord with a plank of wood when he demanded overdue rent in an *estalagem* (hostel) on Rua Santana.[37] Manoel dos Santos left his landlord, Portuguese Alipío Perreira, "covered in blood" after he had paid a visit to the rooming house to demand rent in February 1905.[38]

The frequent complaints published in the press and in private correspondence to the city's leading civil servants also testify to the tension between landlords and tenants as those who could not meet an increase in rent became vulnerable to homelessness and, as we have seen, police intimidation. In a letter to the Prefect Perreira Passos in May 1905, a group of "humble and devoted Brazilian workers" on Rua da Prainha complained of an increase in rent which will "leave many of us in ruins,"[39] while a letter to the editor of the *Correio da Manhã* from a resident on Rua Senador Pompeu in early 1906, bemoaned the "vulgarities" and "fantastic excuses" invented by the Portuguese landlord Antônio José Pereira which resulted in the expulsion of his tenants at any hour of the day or night.[40]

This tension was central to the experience of Maria Dolores. A domestic servant from Minas Gerais who had recently moved to the capital in search of work, Dolores, 25, was arrested on Rua Camerino in the afternoon of 6 April 1903 for "being in a state of complete inebriation"[41] (see Illustration 1).

The arresting officers also noted in their reports that this was not the first time that she had been arrested for the same offence. The conviction, moreover, was backed by the testimonies of two local Portuguese businessmen, brothers Alonso and Manoel Rodrigues da Silva, who declared that she "constantly offended public order by mouthing obscenities and sleeping in the street." After spending 24 hours locked in a cell at the local police station, she then appeared before a sentencing judge. Through her defense lawyer, however, she was quick to point out that she was married and lived with her husband in another parish. The attorney also added that Maria,

[36] OR 4263, 23 December 1905.
[37] OR 6946, 16 May 1908.
[38] OR 4239, 12 February 1905.
[39] AGCRJ 42-2-80 (Estalagens e Cortiços, 1901-05).
[40] *Correio da Manhã*, 21 February 1906, p. 6.
[41] OR 2706, 6 April 1903.

Illustration 1. Police identification of *mineira* domestic servant Maria Dolores, 1903. Photograph forming part of criminal record OR 2706, 6 April 1903. Reproduction courtesy of the Arquivo Nacional, Rio de Janeiro.

while certainly drunk at the time of her arrest, "was nothing but a victim of police persecution." "The previous day," he continued, "Maria had been absolved of the very same offence, thereby illustrating that the police behaviour was nothing but an act of retribution." Despite showing the judge evidence of her previous acquittal, Maria was sentenced to two weeks in the Casa de Detenção.

Matters did not improve. Later the following year in the rooming house where she shared a room with her partner, the manual laborer Antônio de Sampaio, her landlords, the Portuguese couple João and Clotilde Martins, pounded on their door to collect rent which, they alleged, was two months in arrears. When Antônio declared he could only pay at the month's end, the police were called to evict the couple. Before their arrival, however, two wit-

nesses, Brazilians from the same floor of the rooming house, testified that Maria was insulted both verbally (*puta*, *vaca*, and so on) and physically by the landlord and his wife. Despite the fact that the testimonies of the other Brazilians were enough to convict the Martins for inflicting bodily harm, Maria and Antônio were ordered to pay the overdue rent and were expelled from their home.[42]

PERSONAL WORLDS, PUBLIC BOUNDARIES

The divided loyalties and cultural sensitivities of Rio de Janeiro's port population during the early years of the First Republic also had consequences for the ability of local men and women to form successful personal relationships. This provides another clear example of the way in which a suspicion of ethnic "otherness" informed the behaviour of the residents of the port district. Disagreements and jealousies between lovers and friends not only resulted in violence (of which women were overwhelmingly the victims), but illustrate the frequency of both race prejudice and ethnic solidarity in the area.

All three census areas had a preponderance of males over females, which matched the ratio (5.7:4.3) of the city in general, hovering around 6.1:3.9 for Santa Rita and slightly lower for both Gambôa/Santana in 1906. By 1920, these figures remained largely unchanged. In Santa Rita the discrepancy had even grown to 650 men in every 1,000 of the population.[43] The ratio of single to married men was approximately 3:1 in Santa Rita and closer to 2:1 in Gambôa/Santana at the turn of the century. This was far more likely to be the case for Brazilians. Of the three areas combined in the 1920 census, Brazilian men were single by the extraordinary ratio of almost four to one.[44] For the immigrant community, the figure was far more even and often single men remained a minority. Yet these figures disguise the fact that Portuguese men seldom married native-born women—something which reveals much about the problems of assimilation felt by immigrants, and the Portuguese community in particular. Either because of their low regard for native-born partners, or the problems of social integration in a city which despised them as economic parasites, the Portuguese initially intermarried less with Brazilians than any other group of Europeans, and were surpassed in their patterns of marriage endogamy only by the Japanese. This higher endogamy occurred despite the fact that, in relation to the other major foreign groups

[42] OR 4202, 20 December 1904.
[43] Recenseamento do Brazil realisado em 1 de Setembro de 1920 (Vol.2, 1 Parte), p. 18.
[44] Ibid.

resident in the city, Portuguese men had far fewer compatriot women to marry. Even more startling are the figures for Portuguese women, 84% of whom married men of their own nationality, compared to 64% of the Italian and 52% of the Spanish women during the same period.[45]

Nowhere was the anxiety caused by inter-ethnic relationships better expressed than in the city's newspapers. The use of language employed by the press reveals, at the very least, a parodic belittlement of the relationships between different ethnic groups, particularly when one of the parties was Afro-Brazilian. Maria Paulina da Conceição, who was stabbed to death by her husband, the 38 year-old Italian Jacomo Pinharli possessed "all the characteristics of the women of her colour," wrote a journalist from the *Gazeta de Notícias* in January 1909.[46] His piece was quick to highlight the somewhat "unnatural" and doomed nature of the relationship in a cramped rooming house on Rua Riachuelo:

> Perhaps the differences were too great. Jacomo possessed a weak and fragile body with pale skin enveloping a thin frame, a well-groomed black moustache set over thin lips, large and brilliant eyes and a profound nose characteristic of his race. She, a black, possessed all the characteristics of her race. And they survived for two years!

The journalist's allusion to the "great differences" between Maria and Jacomo highlights an important aspect of the personal lives of the men and women of the *zona portuária* during these years: an underlying suspicion of the merits of racial and ethnic mixing.

Even when men were fortunate enough to find partners, the lack of jobs and the threat full-time female employment posed to male status as the principal breadwinner within family groups caused enormous tension. Competition for work, overcrowding and the lack of female partners was undoubtedly a threat to the men of the area. Whether native-born or immigrant, the lost dreams of family security and economic prosperity only added to the misery and violence of life in the port district of the city. Similarly, in an environment characterized by poverty and degradation, the actions of men speak to a vulnerability that could quickly turn into violence. Take, for example, the case of black stevedores Decleciano do Nascimento Portella and Aurelio Tiburcio de Souza.[47] Early one evening in November 1910, the

[45] Herbert S. Klein, "The Social and Economic Integration of Portuguese Immigrants in Brazil in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 23 (1991), p. 324.

[46] "Um Assassinato," *Gazeta de Notícias*, 5 January 1909, p. 3.

[47] OR 7740, 8 November 1910.

two men were involved in a violent altercation over their affections for the same woman, the domestic servant Maria de Carmo, a 22-year-old Portuguese immigrant from Trás-os-Montes. A nearby policeman was alerted after hearing the shots being fired by Tiburcio against Portella. Moments later he saw a great crowd of people chasing the stevedore down the Ladeira da Faria shouting "Stop! Get the murderer!" The officer, however, managed only to apprehend Portella, who was badly wounded in the arm. According to the testimony of local boatman João Nunes, who had been down at the warehouses with Tiburcio earlier that day, the stevedores had spent the morning exchanging threats and had resolved to settle their dispute later that evening. Subsequently quizzed by police, Maria de Carmo—who, according to the *Correio da Manhã*, "demonstrated clearly her affection for the cinnamon-coloured"[48]—shed some light on the nature of the dispute. "For many years I have lived with Deocleanio," she confessed, "but more and more he began to neglect his obligations. Last week I had had enough and so I left him and began to see Aureliano." Maria's allusion to Deocleciano's neglect of his obligations is symbolic of a deep frustration felt by many men in the zona: a frustration born of joblessness, failed relationships and the limited prospects for a stable family life.

Male anger and disillusionment—particularly when fuelled by a few glasses of *cachaça** in the *botequims* and *quiosques*—had terrifying consequences for women in the zona portuária. Time and again men found themselves before the courts answering charges which stemmed from violence towards their partners or from public displays of masculine bravado designed to maintain male honour and status. As *cariocas* celebrated Carnival in early March 1907, Portuguese transport workers Manoel Vieira and Francisco Soares were sentenced to three months in prison for physically assaulting compatriot José Pereira Morgado in a *botequim* on Rua Barão de São Felix.[49] Morgado, it was disclosed in the court depositions, had recently separated from Maria de Jesus—Francisco's mother-in-law. According to the proprietor Antônio da Silva, Morgado was sitting alone in his tavern late one evening, when Manoel and Francisco entered in the company of three women (one of whom was Maria de Jesus). "After drinking several mugs of port wine," he recalled, "they began to insult Morgado, and in particular his masculinity." Making to leave the bar, he was then pursued by the other two, who administered what customer Manoel Martins described as a "severe

[48] *Correio da Manhã*, 9 November 1910, 2. See also the *Jornal do Commercio*, 9 November 1910, p. 5.

* A cheap sugar-cane brandy popular in Brazil.

[49] OR 5368, 3 March 1907.

beating." The two assailants also worked with Morgado at the Light Transport Company, an industry dominated by the Portuguese. "Such actions," concluded a reporter from *A Razão*, were "a typical way in which the honour of men was maintained in the infamous dockside *bairros* of the city."[50]

WORK, RACE, AND THE STREET

One of the common sources of interpersonal violence was, as we have seen, the frustration born of economic insecurity. It was also a constant source of tension among immigrants and the native-born during these years. Despite the aspirations of those who saw in Rio a chance to improve their economic lot, census statistics testify to the increasingly large mass of people for whom hope of a steady income proved elusive. In the 1906 population census, the number of men and women who made up either the unemployed or under-employed was staggering. The percentage of the population involved in either domestic service, day labor or who made up those categories classified as either "badly specified," "unproductive," "unknown" or "no profession declared" was 42.5% for Santa Rita, 45.3% for Santana and 44.1% for Gambôa. By 1920, those figures were 50.7%, 52.3% and 53.4% respectively.[51]

While these figures were not broken down by race, it seems clear that the impact of immigration had caused a serious oversupply of labor in occupations long monopolized by the Afro-Brazilian population—a pointer to both the failure of the government to place immigrants on the *fazendas* and the reluctance of many to try their luck in the *fluminense* countryside.[52] That, for example, a significant number of foreigners (principally women) had found employment as domestic servants is but one indicator of the crippling effects which immigration had on the income-winning potential of the local black community. Further, in the category of day labor and casual employment, long monopolized by the slave and free black population, immigrants were now the majority of employees. Considering the relatively high percentage of blacks and mulattos in Gambôa and Saúde, that Brazilians dominated the categories cited as either "professions unknown," "unproductive classes" and "no profession declared" points to a wider trend of high Afro-Brazilian unemployment.

[50] *A Razão*, 15 January 1911, p. 3.

[51] *Recenseamento do Brazil realisado em 1 de Setembro de 1920* (Vol.2, 1 Parte), p. 18.

[52] A useful indication of the ratio of foreign to native-born labor in specific industries is union membership. For general city-wide figures see Maria Cecília Velasco e Cruz, *Amarelo e Negro: Matizes do Comportamento Operário na República Velha* (Masters Dissertation, IUPERJ, 1981), 154-82, and Eileen Keremitsis, *The Early Industrial Worker in Rio de Janeiro* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University 1982).

Local suspicion and resentment towards the new Brazilian and European arrivals was often targeted at the mass of street hawkers and small businessmen. As the peddlers ventured out from the crowded tenements and into the narrow and congested streets of the *zona*, conflict over the prices and quality of goods and services exacerbated tensions within an increasingly competitive economic space. This was particularly the case in situations where the newcomers were perceived to have either marginalized local competition or discriminated against clients because of their "nature and customs." Evidence of this is provided by a letter sent to the office of the Prefect Perreira Passos from the lawyer of the native-born herbalist and grocer, the Afro-Brazilian Nascimento Barros Sajão, in September 1903:

> The goodwill my client has cultivated among the local population has been quickly eroded by Portuguese traders who, without any specialist knowledge of Brazilian flora and fauna, have sought to undercut his prices. Not only do these men deceive the population with their lack of expertise in the area but, consequently, the local populace has had its health endangered by the ignorance and greed of those who seek to peddle lower-grade medicines.[53]

Sajão's resentment towards the "greed" of the newcomers was a common sentiment. Antônio Candido, an "illiterate Turk"* who sold oranges on Rua General Gomes Carneiro, was thrown to the ground by a group of young Brazilians and later stabbed by Franklin Carlos Alberto, a seventeen-year-old black carioca, over the "exorbitant price of his fruit."[54] Similarly, "the bad nature and price of the produce" was the catalyst for Manoel Lucas to overturn a cart and stab Luís Coelho, a Portuguese door-to-door fruit and vegetable seller on Rua Frei Caneca. According to Manoel, the merchant had previously "insulted his elderly mother."[55]

Yet, the local Afro-Brazilian community had no monopoly on unemployment and poverty. European immigrants were carefully selected by the government on the basis of their potential to compete with the city's blacks for blue-collar jobs. Further, the establishment of ethnic enclaves often meant that when conflict arose over the allocation of work in certain industries, it was men and women of the same nationality who fought for the crumbs of opportunity by making use of familial and fraternal ties in competition with people of their own national group. This was particularly the case for the Portuguese, who had come to dominate certain areas of urban industry. Most

[53] AGCRJ (Queixas e Reclamações, 1900-13).

* During the period "Turk" was a generic name for any immigrant from the Middle East.

[54] OR 8089, 27 October 1910.

[55] OR 4115, 16 June 1905.

of the jobs in the quarries (78%), construction (53%), and land transportation (62%), for example, were held by the Portuguese-born.[56] Similarly, the near monopoly which Afro-Brazilians had on jobs in the maritime transport industry meant that tensions on the docks frequently unfolded between groups of local black workers.[57] This was certainly evident in the infamous tale of "Cardosinho," an "important and protected person" who "reigned like a tyrant" on the waterfront. A front-page editorial in the *Gazeta de Notícias* set the scene:

> Yet another bloody conflict grips the neighbourhood of Saúde. Those who take pleasure from the tragedy of the romantic novel will no doubt find some enjoyment in this story. . . . There can be no doubting the return of capoeira and the gangs who so terrorized our communities in the past are now returning to spread fear among the weak population of our city.[58]

The story of "Cardosinho" (José Gomes Cardoso) emerges from the tensions between Rio's two major stevedore unions: the Sociedade Regeneradora Beneficiente dos Estivadores and the Sociedade União dos Estivadores, both formed by local Afro-Brazilians in 1903. "Cardosinho" belonged to the Sociedade Regeneradora which, unlike its rival, had refused to join a strike demanding an increase in pay, therefore providing his union with a monopoly of the stevedore jobs and raising the ire of the União dos Estivadores. At around 7.15 one evening on the Rua da Gambôa in late-summer 1905, "Cardosinho" was at home speaking with a woman when a loud banging was heard on his door.[59] After calling for the person to identify himself or herself, Cardosinho went to the entrance armed with a revolver. In the murky dusk light he could vaguely make out a group of armed men gathered at the end of the street whom he recognized as members of the União dos Estivadores. Recognizing the inevitability of confrontation, Cardosinho then began shooting into the crowd—in the process killing two Afro-Brazilian members of the rival society. Shortly afterward a local police detachment arrived and after a struggle managed to disarm Cardosinho—wounding him in the process. The police had a terrible time trans-

[56] Keremitsis, *The Early Industrial Worker*, p. 49.

[57] For more on the history of Afro-Brazilians involved in port labor see Cruz, *Amarelo de Negro*; Marli Brito Moreira de Albuquerque, *Trabalho e Conflict no Porto do Rio de Janeiro* (Masters Dissertation, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1983); Olivia Maria Rodrigues Galvão, *Sociedade de Resistência ou Companhia dos Pretos: Um Estudo de Caso entre os Arrumadores do Porto do Rio de Janeiro* (Masters Dissertation, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1994);and Kit McPhee, *Standing at the Altar of the Nation: Afro-Brazilians, Immigrants and Racial Democracy in a Brazilian Port City* (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Melbourne, 2004).

[58] *Gazeta de Notícias*, 18 August 1905, p. 1.

[59] Ibid., p. 2.

porting him as, according to the *Gazeta de Notícias*, a veritable "lynch mob" had surrounded the police vans as they attempted to take him to the nearest hospital. Members of the União dos Estivadores who had originally taunted Cardosinho, however, managed to flee. On being sentenced to eight years in the Casa de Detenção, the journalist wrote, "Cardosinho turned and smiled to those in the gallery who for years had protected his immorality. Needless to say those in the crowd were people of the lowest type who have frequented the city's penitentiaries on numerous occasions."[60]

As the case of Cardosinho illustrates, the day-to-day battle for employment severely tested community solidarity. This was particularly the case when "free" labor saw the opportunity to replace groups of unionized workers who had undertaken industrial action.[61] Indeed, given that Rio's harborside community suffered from an acute oversupply of labor, the threat of strike-breakers was ever-present and as the city's dock and transport workers began to unionize during the early years of the new century, confrontations with the mass of casually employed men and women of all nationalities and ethnicities were frequent.

The coal and mineral workers' strike of August 1906 was one of many occasions when the battle for jobs descended into violence. In this case the Portuguese duo Manoel Antônio and Belisário Pereira da Silva were sentenced to month-long spells in prison. Manoel was condemned for "threatening to kill those without the proper papers" who continued to defy the union directives. Two testimonies (both from Brazilian men) also alleged that he had "a knife hidden in a newspaper" which he drew as workers walked past him.[62] Similarly, Belisário, head of the Associação de Resistência dos Trabalhadores em Carvão e Mineral appeared before the courts for "physically threatening those who refuse to join him." Describing his written testimony as the result of police "interrogation," he argued in court that "it was also important to promote a sense of solidarity among the workers, which, due to splits in the membership between Brazilians and Portuguese, has been difficult."[63]

[60] *Gazeta de Notícias*, 2 October 1905, p. 2.

[61] Strikes were outlawed by republican authorities in the penal code of December 1890—a measure directly related to a growing anxiety that new methods of labor organization introduced by European migrants would spread among native-born workers. This fear was heightened by a series of socialist congresses in the early years of the republic, including the first national gathering of workers in Rio for the Congresso Socialista Brasileira in August 1892.

[62] OR 4660, 7 August 1906.

[63] OR 4121, 5 August 1906

READING RACE IN THE *ZONA PORTUÁRIA*

If we acknowledge that ethnic tension *intersected* with a common poverty in the lives of the men and women living in Rio de Janeiro's port community, the search for a discernible race consciousness "on the street" during these years is problematic. It also undermines any attempts at writing a "history of resistance" in which the dockside population mobilized in a unified and successful struggle against those whose belief in economic progress far outweighed any concern with the day-to-day lives of Maria Dolores, "Cardosinho" or the Nascimento family.

Yet in spite of these complications, evidence from court testimonies, witness interviews and newspaper coverage tells us much about the tensions, frustrations, and rationalities of those who lived in the port area during the period. As devices from which we can hear the voices of those otherwise silent in the city's official history, they are invaluable documents. By employing such documents, several strategic patterns and common grievances can be identified which have important implications for the search for the development of Brazilian race relations during the period.

First, the economic and social conditions prevalent in the area were undoubtedly a cause of friction. Complicating this issue considerably were the heightened tensions that these conditions brought to a social landscape so recently emerged from slavery. That is, both the immigrant community and the resident black, brown, and white Brazilian population confronted each other with ethnocentric baggage and a propensity to racial self-protection. In a community in which the process of transculturation was only recently ignited, such ethnic allegiances proved vital in shaping networks of solidarity in the face of poverty and police repression.

Similarly, what emerges from the streets of Gambôa and Saúde during the period is the relative success of the immigration programme as a tool by which the *povo* remained divided. By flooding the poorer districts of the city with impoverished migrants, organized resistance to the systematic problems of unemployment, police brutality and lack of housing was kept to a minimum.

However, despite the mutual suspicion and frustration which hovered over the zona portuária, there is very little evidence of *endemic* inter-racial violence within the community during these years. This is particularly surprising given the economic threat that immigration posed for the local Afro-Brazilians community. While the criminal cases mentioned above illustrate

an underlying suspicion between racial groups, very rarely was the port community the scene of widespread violence in which local black men and women reacted in an organized fashion against the newcomers. Further, even if this was the case, in none of the testimonies examined in the years 1903-12 did those Afro-Brazilians frame their struggle in racial terms.

This lack of racial performance can perhaps be explained in three ways. First, as a result of the growing importance of the port area economically and the associated surveillance of the local community, the population of Rio's dockside communities increasingly found themselves victims of a common poverty that, in turn, necessitated the development of community networks. In the face of police harassment, overly ambitious landlords and uninterested public officials, popular strategies both within and between ethnic groups muddied attempts to equate poverty with a certain ethnicity. This acted as a mediator between communities whose struggles for the crumbs of economic opportunity could easily have turned into large-scale racial violence.

Secondly, the disdain for both Afro-Brazilians and poor immigrants (as the "dangerous and degenerate classes") among the police and the propertied class suggests the existence of a common persecution that thwarted more overt race-based resistance. If inciting racial violence resulted in imprisonment and the loss of employment, one wonders how attractive a public black activism must have been. In this sense, an overt strategy which utilized race as a category of survival and group defence would seem both ineffectual and (considering the government's public refusal to acknowledge racial discrimination) self-defeating. It also points to the importance of a strategic rationality among the local black members of Rio's port community and their awareness of the dangers of invoking race in an environment in which "blackness" rubbed up against the forces of Brazil's racist intellectual environment in these years.

Finally, the lack of organized black mobilization points to the problems inherent in attempting to understand collective Afro-Brazilian responses to immigration and emancipation in Rio de Janeiro. While criminal cases, newspaper reports and census material demonstrate that the local black community suffered economic hardship and systematic police violence, to seek redress by equating race and poverty would seem fruitless when an increasingly large contingent of the poor in Rio's docklands were European. Put simply, Afro-Brazilians had no monopoly on poverty, exploitation and the experience of police brutality. Importantly also, the influx into the port district of Afro-Brazilians from other regions of Brazil also meant that the pres-

sure for jobs and housing was not solely identified with pale-faced immigrants from across the Atlantic. While it is clear that racial and ethnic tensions certainly informed the behaviour of Rio's port population, the absence of systematic racial violence between individuals or groups suggests that from a very early period in Rio's post-emancipation history, other, more subtle, ways of achieving economic and social mobility were being contemplated which sought to downplay racial difference—a crucial component of modern Brazil's unique solution to the question of race—and to promote *Brasilidade* ("Brazilian-ness') as a measure of national self-definition.

One final thought. Perhaps the emergence of a nativist sentiment in the public arena during these tumultuous years can cast light on the experiences of the unfortunate Nascimento family that began this article. Despite it being another example of the police brutality which was so common for the men and women of Rio's zona portuária, the sight of a bloodied and bruised *galego* landlord was, perhaps, a form of retributive justice for the terrible housing conditions and high rents which they (like many cariocas) blamed on the Portuguese. Given the enormous pressure on housing and the general lack of employment, the scapegoating of the Portuguese among politicians and segments of the middle-class would certainly have found sympathisers among the local Afro-Brazilian community in Gambôa and Saúde. This would also explain the looting.

For even if the lives of the carioca well-to-do and the black working classes of the port district were worlds apart, their mutual resentment of the Portuguese found them sharing a common nativist ground. This also had repercussions for Nascimento's defense before the appeal court judge. As a successful migrant, he must have been well aware of the resentment felt toward those accused of displaying a questionable allegiance to the fragile new republic. Economic parasite or not, Luís decided that his best form of defence was to display the Nascimentos' devotion to their adopted country. By signalling to the courtroom that he was "Brazilian at heart" and was educating his young sons to be "patriotic and loyal citizens," the shopkeeper betrayed a keen awareness of the emerging division in Rio de Janeiro between the committed citizenry and the economic *voyeurs* from the Old World who arrived to "do America" at the expense of the local population.

And what of Pereréca? While we will probably never know whether or not the "cruel taunts" of Luís Jr. had racist overtones, the subsequent inaction of the crowd—in an area with a strong black population—as her tormentors were set upon by Pessoa's men, suggests this cannot be discounted. In this sense the sight of the Nascimentos' packing up and moving to the

considerably whiter beachside suburb of Flamengo would, perhaps, have been silent but sweet justice.

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