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Abstract

Current academic usages of the notion of conviviality often carry a normative connotation in which it is opposed to tension and conflict. Instead, I propose to use conviviality as an analytical term. This everyday living together is characterized by tensions, contradictions, and inconsistencies that complicate abstract theorization and the use of clearly defined concepts whose role is, as Stuart Hall once suggested, to give us a good night's rest by feigning a stability we long for. If conviviality is, as I suggest, understood as a notion that embraces the inconsistencies, multiplicities, and complexities of new urban ways, I inquire into the emerging relationalities between recently-arrived Senegalese and their social context in Rio de Janeiro under the impact of multiple hierarchical orders, including race, origin, education, and class.[1]

Keywords:
conviviality | Rio de Janeiro | difference

About the author:
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Contents

1.   Only One among Many

I was inspired to think about conviviality on the brink by the lives of some Senegalese beach vendors who in the summer of 2016 had just moved to a small studio apartment in Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro. Before, they had lived in a gentrifying *favela* and in the socially heterogeneous Centro neighbourhood of Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro's neighbouring town. In their spare time, they mainly interacted with other Senegalese, the great majority of whom were disciples of the Murid Muslim brotherhood. To make their migration adventure worthwhile, their economic success in Rio de Janeiro mattered most. For that, they worked long shifts at the beaches, only taking a break if it rained. They clearly sensed that they were among many trying to get by. Given the current situation of economic downturn and political turmoil, this was not easy. Independent of the economic priority, my interlocutors' daily commentaries revealed to anybody listening how relating to the current locality and its ways of living with difference was neither simple nor straightforward.

In this paper, I address three points: Firstly, I root my thinking on conviviality in West Africa and Spain. Having worked with Senegalese living and passing through the Metropolitan Region of Rio de Janeiro since 2014, I then ask what is specific about conviviality and race in this context. Finally, I inquire into the dynamic of conviviality as it happens on the brink in Rio de Janeiro and ask what kind of social relations exist in a city that always is under social stress. To answer these questions, I provide some conceptual considerations on conviviality, followed by a juxtaposition to citizenship and interculturalism as two concepts more prominently used for similar analytical purposes across Latin America. I then introduce some of the relevant specificity of the Senegalese migration to Rio de Janeiro and of race and racism in Brazil. Returning to my ethnographic work with Senegalese I delve into how they created relationality through comparison, faced discourses of Africanness and global racism, and handled a sense of marginality within changing hierarchical orders.

2.   Re/Focusing Conviviality Conceptually

Instead of using conviviality descriptively for situations in which people get along, I step back and ask whether the attempt to develop conviviality as an analytical perspective allows us to tell known stories differently or to formulate new questions regarding old phenomena, such as racism or discrimination. Contrary to publications that take conviviality at face value, I have developed conviviality as a concept that directs our focus on the everyday processes of how people live together in mundane encounters, of how they re/translate between their maintained differences and how they re/negotiate

ways of being in the same locale. As an analytical term, it encompasses inconsistencies and multiplicities of getting by despite one's differences (Heil 2015, 2014a).

Three dimensions are particularly prominent, as they emerge from my work in West Africa, Southern Europe, and Brazil: difference, in/equality, and in/stability. Apart from a conversation with key publication on conviviality, the conceptual discussion also happens in juxtaposition to interculturalism and citizenship, concepts that have been discussed widely in relation to diverse and unequal societies in Latin America. Next, I will revise some of the ways in which the different concepts deal with difference and inequality, as well as instability and complexity, to develop and strengthen the analytical potential of conviviality.

2.1   Conviviality and Difference

In a thought-provoking piece on convivialism, Raymond Boisvert (2010) stresses the centrality of the preposition 'con' or 'with' to point out the centrality of interdependency, interweaving, intertwining, and relationality for this notion. Such a thinking about with-ness parallels the discussions of difference and otherness. Self-other relations are ambivalent and interdependent, difference is 'positional, conditional and conjunctural' (Hall 2005: 447). A distinctive concern to conviviality is, however, to concentrate analytical attention on relationality rather than on (fixed) positions of self and other. While relationality remains necessarily linked to the positionalities of self and other, prioritizing the former or the latter marks diametrically opposed starting points for an understanding of sociality. It is a shift to the relationality that I pursue.

To discuss the analytical use of conviviality, I abstain from participating in a more normative discussion on conviviality that also currently takes place in relation to the early work of Ivan Illich and the Manifeste Convivialiste (Illich 1973; Alphandéry et al. 2013; Caillé 2011; Adloff et al. 2016). Instead, I situate my own work alongside two bodies of literature that have used conviviality in very contrastive ways, however, both in relation to difference and inequality in postcolonial contexts.

Firstly, Paul Gilroy uses conviviality rather unsystematically to refer to a somewhat optimistic idea of getting along with difference in postcolonial, increasingly diverse contexts characterized by multiculture. He writes that

> [c]onviviality is a social pattern in which different metropolitan groups dwell in close proximity, but where their racial, linguistic and religious particularities do not – as the logic of ethnic absolutism suggests they must – add up to discontinuities of experience or insuperable problems of communication. In these conditions, a

degree of differentiation can be combined with a large measure of overlapping. (Gilroy 2006: 40).

Gilroy hereby intertwines his suggestion of conviviality with the condition of urban multiculture, which he uses to describe – in his above words – the large measure of overlapping. Throughout his work, he suggests that multiculture results from the condition of the postcolonial state and the process of urban mixing during which ethnic differences have become ordinary and, as a consequence, unremarkable.

While Valentine warns us that recent uses of conviviality appear as a 'worrying romanticisation' (Valentine 2008), I fear that the notion of 'multiculture' suffers from the same ill, as it celebrates mixing and predicts a future in which difference might no longer be recognizable. The legacies and challenges, which Gilroy himself identified as part of the postcolonial melancholia, persist. How do we then shape our analytical tools to capture such situations? I suggest that we need to take the uncomfortable and dark aspects of social relations such as inequality and racism, as well as everyday tension and contained conflict more at face value. They have become part and parcel of current modes of living with difference. A re-focused definition of conviviality can help us to capture exactly this.

Recent analysis of Sarah Neal et al. (2017, 2018) suggest that there are productive commonalities between the concept of community and conviviality. They quote my own work in which I state that conviviality is 'founded on common values and a willing submission to these' (Heil 2014a). However, while they stress the productivity of these links, I would put more emphasis on Iris Young's (1986: 5) critique of community that 'the ideal of community exhibits a totalizing impulse and denies difference'. Neal at al. rightly observe that 'conviviality has empathy with difference […] while community [relies on] affinities with recognized and similar others' (Neal et al. 2017: 34). To me, rather than seeing a communality, this observation sets the two concepts miles apart. It is in the nitty-gritty of ethnography to strike the balance between that which remains shared and that that which defines difference. The willing submission to some common values is an example of the relationality that mediates difference.

Neal et al. (2017)'s argument is one more example of the urgent need to reformulate the difficultly understood relationship of conviviality with difference and with tension due to inequalities. A somewhat inspiring argument not from a migration-related context, but from a postcolonial one – unequal due to the intricate genealogy of exploitative colonialism and the character of the postcolonial state – can be found in the work of Achille Mbembe.

The provocative work of Achille Mbembe (2001), *On the Postcolony*, which ultimately seeks ways to write Africa anew, and the key ideas first introduced in an article on "The

Banality of Power" (1992) characterizes the postcolonial situation as one of conviviality, a fetishized, paradoxical, mutually interdependent questioning and reconfirmation of power. It is not an idealized portrayal of conviviality as an optimal state, as in the convivialist manifesto (Alphandéry et al. 2013), but an attempt to describe the hardship and failure of postcolonial rule in ways that go beyond colonial categories of the dominated and the oppressed. Mbembe is interested in unequal relations, the working of power, hierarchy and inequality, and the ways in which they are constituted, questioned, and reinforced. Despite being heavily critiqued (Weate 2003) and questioned (Butler 1992), Mbembe's work starkly introduces some of the necessary complexities of a convivial relationship or situation, which I hold we will increasingly have to consider in order not to reproduce simplistic arguments about integration, cohesion, or other concepts alluding to stability and continuity.

Conviviality as a highly unequal mode of being characterizes the postcolonial relations of power. In an uncomfortably realist and outspoken style, Mbembe describes the relationship between 'the masters of power' and 'those whom they crush' (Mbembe 1992: 24) in the 'chaotic plurality' of the postcolony. He claims that simple dichotomies such as 'resistance/passivity, subjection/autonomy, hegemony/counter-hegemony, totalization/detotalization' (Mbembe 1992: 3) need to be left behind to understand the postcolonial condition. The commandment understood as the 'images and structures of power and coercion', the 'authoritarian modality *par excellence*' (Mbembe 1992: 3), works as a fetish. By this, he urges the analyst to be attentive to the surplus of non-negotiable meaning that signs, vocabulary, and narratives are invested with. He shows how acts of power are often obscene and grotesque, qualities that Bakhtin reserves for people's actions.

> It is only through such a shift in perspective that we can come to understand that the postcolonial relationship is not primarily a relationship of resistance or of collaboration but is rather best characterized as a promiscuous relationship: a convivial tension between the commandment and its "targets" (Mbembe 1992: 5).

> […]

> Conversely, the official world mimics popular vulgarity, inserting it at the very core of the procedures by which it claims to rise to grandeur. It is unnecessary, then, to do as Bakhtin does and insist on oppositions [dédoublements] or, as conventional analysis has it, on the purported logic of resistance, disengagement, or disjunction. Instead, the emphasis should be upon the logics of conviviality, on the dynamics of domesticity and familiarity, which inscribe the dominant and the dominated in the same epistemological field (Mbembe 1992: 14).

Further detail is worthwhile to inspire our discussion of migration contexts. Regarding the commandment – which is characterized by interplay and conviviality, a regime of constraints and connivance, and which is 'marked by innate caution, constant compromises, small tokens of fealty, and a precipitance to denunciate those who are labelled "subversive" – the analyst must be attentive to the myriad ways in which ordinary people bridle, trick, and actually toy with power instead of confronting it directly.' (Mbembe 1992: 22) Such framings are helpful to also think conviviality in societies with other genealogies that have also produced hierarchical, intersecting inequalities. Such an analysis of relational power geometries can be, but is not necessarily restricted to the state and likely involves multiple, coexisting structuring logics.

In the quest for a troubling concept of conviviality, my final consideration of Mbembe's work concerns his attempt to juxtapose postcolonial commandment and coloniality. While a continuity is undeniable, Mbembe characterizes coloniality as a way of disciplining bodies to make them sexually and spiritually tamed, docile, and productive, submissive and obedient (Mbembe 1992: 18). In the postcolony, however, the economic rationale of coloniality has vanished – its main rationale – and is followed by eccentric, grotesque, and obscene forms of power. Do convivial relations characterize both types of power regimes, or do certain forms of power surpass them?

In order to transfer Mbembe's thought on conviviality and post/colonial power configurations to the contemporary Brazilian context, I suggest understanding his reflections merely as possible dimensions of analysis that are productive to think with. This also holds for the case of contemporary power relations in Rio de Janeiro of which the new presence of West African migrants form part. Therefore, both the characteristics of coloniality and the postcolony discussed above should be kept in mind when thinking about conviviality, migration, difference, and inequality in contemporary Brazil. Since I like to think patterns of inequality as dynamic and malleable, many ways exist of how they can be addressed and understood. The mechanisms that Mbembe's analysis reveals can thus augment our critical engagement with current migration contexts. Ideally, we would then better understand the ways in which differences are evaluated and values attached to them, as well as the resulting inequalities and hierarchies. Before I do this, I want to dwell a bit more on the questions of in/equality and sameness/difference engaging with some of the conceptual thought on interculturalism and citizenship in Latin America and beyond.

2.2 Conviviality, Citizenship, Interculturalism and In/Equality

Rather than in terms of conviviality, academics have addressed the questions of in/equality and difference in contemporary Latin American societies under the headings

of citizenship and interculturalism, sometimes joined by questions of coloniality and, in the Brazilian case, by miscegenation and the myths of racial democracy. Let me address them briefly to explore their contributions to my discussion of conviviality.

In principle, citizenship can be formulated as the right to have rights (Arendt 1998). It is a condition that is essentially constructed based on the exclusion of the non-citizen (Glenn 2000) in form of initiatives that limit the participation, recognition and belonging to a clearly defined group (Hall et al. 1992). Classically, the national state is expected to secure the rights of its citizens (Isin and Turner 2002). However, recent work critiques the very institution of citizenship as an instrument of power used to control and subject a nation state's own population (Genova 2015). While we observe that equality often appears as the ethical aspiration and the normative potential of politically motivated concepts such as citizenship, the relationships among people are rarely equal or unmarked at this neoliberal moment we are in (Redclift 2014). Despite all their differences, this dynamic can be observed in the African postcolony (Mbembe 2001), postcolonial Europe (Gilroy 2006), decolonial Latin America (Mignolo 2011) and their disjunctive democracies (Holston 2007). More often than not, the norm of equality seems to remain the least likely state of relationships. People experience racisms, as well as other forms of exclusion and discrimination as the characteristic manifestations of large inequalities which order them into hierarchies.

The discussion of citizenship thereby reflects a dynamic that I also perceive in my own work regarding in/equality, which I more frequently refer to as valued difference. Valued difference broadens the scope of registers that come into view, taking all socially relevant categorizations like gender, race, legal status and origin seriously, alongside class. Valued difference highlights that difference 'has always been implicitly, or explicitly, hierarchical in thought and oppressive in practice' (Alexander and Alleyne 2002: 543).

In Brazil, the discussion of citizenship has had a particular focus since large parts of the population, especially the black and urban poor, were fully or partially excluded from factual citizenship despite being Brazilian (Fischer 2008). Today, a population which finally organizes collective and civic processes to get to know and exercise their rights and demand recognition and participation confronts this differential citizenship (Holston 2008). These processes happen against the ideological backdrop of persistent myths, such as racial democracy, modernization and development ideologies (Paiva 2012).

In the case of migrants, the discussion of citizenship takes another modulation. A crucial link is forged to universal and human rights, which becomes apparent in the search for refuge and humanitarian protection. Throughout the last years, Brazil has been a country that has had one of the most generous migration policies to this effect, despite administrative challenges (Waldely and Figueira 2018). This is changing rapidly

under the current right-wing regime. On the other hand, several states of migrant origin recognize their citizens abroad and concede rights to them in form of transnational citizenship on the basis of dual citizenship (Faist 2000; Whitaker 2011). However, while this might involve multi-local engagements and a flexibilization of citizenship (Ong 1999), restricting rights and forging structures of inequality are frequent outcomes, certainly in places of arrival (Aneesh and Wolover 2017). People who move across borders stay vulnerable to exploitation, both during migration and at the new places of residence. Still, citizenship and claims to multiculturalism and interculturalism are also constituted as fields of tactical action for those who arrive in new places. The rights and recognition discourses become a resource to be mobilized alongside others.

While as citizens of a liberal and modern nation state individuals imagine equality, difference acts on a categorical and collective level, often involving imagined groups. The terms multiculturalism in Northern Europe and North America, and interculturalism in Latin America and Southern Europe both point out the cultural, racial and even ontological differences within the national populations and increasingly also of the immigrant population. Interculturalism is one of the principal modes in Latin America to think cultural difference and diversity. Various authors state that it is a political and democratic project, rather than an analytical term (Solano-Campos 2016). A central dimension is the focus on dialogue and communication. It frames the current situation including pre-colonial diversity, the colonial violence and miscegenation, and later experiences of mixing and hybridization. Interculturalism appears as a dynamic concept with a focus on the relationality of difference and with an interest in the transforming processes. As part of the conceptualization, culture thus appears flexible rather than reifying. However, critics lament that the persistence of inequalities, primarily related to race and the indigenous question, are negated (Solano-Campos 2016: 189).

Conviviality certainly shares some concerns with interculturalism. However, I use conviviality analytically precisely to understand the relational dynamics of practices such as communication or commentary, remaining aware that differences persist, are superimposed with inequalities, are reformulated and reappear. Furthermore, I do not apply conviviality to political and collective processes, but rather to everyday translations and negotiations, knowing well that they are also political.

The critics of interculturalism, remind us of the continuing and omnipresent impact of the colonial matrix of power, which combines the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality as its two sides according to Mignolo (2011: xviii). Expressed in racism and patriarchy, it is the humanity itself of large parts of the world's population that is challenged. Such a framing puts on centre stage the profound inequalities that characterize the global world order, to which Mignolo proposes decoloniality as a form of radical critique and change. However, the global entanglements identified are

also at work where thinkers of decoloniality dwell, mainly countries in the southern hemisphere. This poses a major challenge to political projects of interculturalism and reveals once popular beliefs such as of racial democracy in Brazil to be myths rather than lived reality.

2.3   Conviviality and In/Stability

With an analytical focus on the everyday of living together in unequal relations, tensions, contradictions and inconsistencies become the focus of analytical attention. It complicates abstract theorizing and categorical clarity. In a radical sense, conviviality embraces Stuart Hall's (2000: 145) call to preclude the use of clearly defined concepts whose only role is, as Hall suggested, to give us a good night's rest by feigning a stability we long for but which does not exist. Instead, conviviality engages with time-spaces that lie outside the Cartesian framework which our common sense still ferociously suggests to us as a given. I take inspiration from Bergson's and Deleuze's theorizing on temporality (Hodges 2008) to address how various reference frameworks co-exist and materialize differently, but contemporaneously. The fact that racism, difference, and everyday sociality are situational and contextually contingent, locally and transnationally, does not lessen the need to advance a critical analysis of it.

To withstand critique and to be analytically helpful, conviviality needs to take these considerations into account in order to mark a new entry point into understanding the problematic relations between the overturned promises of modernity, the colonial matrix, racial terror, new racisms or advanced marginality. The latter investigates the multi-level structural processes that relegate people to marginal positions (Wacquant 2016). Apart from the material positions that people formulate in relation to lived inequality, we also need to take the anxieties into account that go together with essentialized difference (Grillo 2003).

As such, I suggest that conviviality

- offers an alternative approach to concepts of assimilation, integration or social cohesion;

- further develops a relational perspective on new and persistent inequalities at this neoliberal moment;

- dialogues with non-European perspectives in an attempt to step outside hegemonic Eurocentric epistemologies; and

- facilitates exploring situations that are in the first place counterintuitive, contradictory, maybe inefficient and against our own common sense.

3. Recent Migration and Long-Term Inequalities in Rio de Janeiro

3.1 Contextualizing Recent Migration

Some of the above discussed aspects of conviviality appear in various degrees and intensities, depending on the actual reality that is being addressed. Across my different research areas, the challenge of in/equality, for example, comes in very different forms. Among Senegalese migrants in Spain during my fieldwork between 2007 and 2013 a sense of sufficient equality prevailed (Heil 2013). It resulted from a careful assessment of local belonging based on an official recognition of residency via the registration with the local town office and access to local social services. This outweighed my interlocutors' irregular immigration status, a contrast that was accompanied by polyvalent local social relations. Being respected or not appeared to be one of the crucial dimensions of assessment (Heil 2014a, 2014b). In comparison, current accounts of West Africans and Spaniards in Rio de Janeiro leave no doubt that equality among urban dwellers is at best partial. Consequently, my interlocutors during fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro since 2014 are concerned with understanding their relational positioning in the process of evaluating difference. While rarely expressed with such a clarity, their everyday struggles and reflections on inequality and their relative privileges and disadvantages suggest that their hierarchical positioning in the wider Rio de Janeiro matrix of power is what counts.

Recently arrived migrants from Senegal in Rio de Janeiro still form a small, yet heterogeneous group. Among them are street vendors, low-key traders of African art, academics, army officers, and engineers (Heil 2018). The former have come in the past five to ten years by various means either directly to Brazil or via Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru, and gained access to legal documentation mainly via a protocol documenting their asylum application. Furthermore, those arriving before 2009 participated in the general migrant regularization of 2009 and thus obtained, sooner or later, a permanent resident permit. Those arriving later have gained or are still awaiting the positive approval of their cases based on humanitarian protection in consequence of an evaluation by the National Council of Immigration (Cavalcanti et al. 2015: 113). In terms of public perception, Senegalese passed largely unnoticed until three years ago, when 'Senegalese' for the first time became a category in public discourse in Rio de Janeiro, and beyond. They mainly came to be discussed together with Haitian asylum seekers, yet an awareness has grown that there are no grounds for asylum for Senegalese, which at times has led to critical questions regarding the legitimacy of their stay in Brazil. Overall, however, what the category Senegalese refers to continues to be vague. Public discourse, as well as academic analysis have raised awareness

for the apparent racism that they suffer, especially in the rather white south of Brazil, where many Senegalese are employed in agriculture and meat-processing industries. Socioeconomic marginality is also discussed, as well as the Muslim religious practice of the majority (Herédia 2015; Tedesco and Kleidermacher 2017).

Over the last four years, I have accompanied the growing group of Senegalese in the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro (Heil 2018). Apart from around a dozen Senegalese women in the metropolitan area who I all know, my interlocutors were men, covering a wide variety of ages from the early twenties to people in their late fifties. Most have lived or passed through Senegal's capital, Dakar, but many have their family routes in the secondary cities and regions of Thiès, Touba, Diourbel or Kaolack. Based on regular meetings, informal discussions and semi-structured interviews in their homes, their *dahiras* (religious circles), the mosque, as well as in public spaces during their work as vendors and their work places on permanent markets and in institutions, I have learned with my interlocutors about how to get by and live a decent life in line with their overall migrations and life projects. I have been with people of all walks of life, appreciating their heterogeneity having arrived at some point from Senegal and most of the time holding a Senegalese passport. It is from this work that I draw my insights into the comparative discussion of conviviality, originally developed in my work in Senegal and Spain in the preceding years (Heil 2013).

While most Senegalese have been based in Rio de Janeiro's neighbouring city of Niterói, an increasing number of them has moved to Copacabana since I started my research. Mainly working at the beaches of Rio de Janeiro's affluent South Zone (including Copacabana), they eventually calculated that the costs of public transport coming from far away neighbourhoods surpassed the higher rents there. Some also experimented with life in the *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro's southern zone, next to the beaches, as they were being pacified in preparation of the Olympic Games of 2016. However, the majority preferred to settle directly into some of the one or two-room apartments generally rented out to tourists in the less prestigious parts of Copacabana. While the rents of these apartments are high and the quality at times less than desirable, the advantages are a furnished place, absolute flexibility to come, go, and move on a monthly basis, as well as the centrality.

By 2018, my interlocutors assured me that Senegalese can be found in any part of town. The relative increase in numbers has made it gradually more difficult to collectively locate the Senegalese within the metropolitan space. This collective trajectory within the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro should be kept in mind for the reminder of the paper, as a rich source of specificity and contradiction, something on which I can only in part deliver here. It contrasts with the housing situation of those Senegalese who arrived earlier, such as most of the low-key art traders and the highly-qualified

Senegalese. While most art traders maintain their housing in Niterói, the large majority of the highly-qualified Senegalese live in the middle-class neighborhoods of the Southern and Northern Zones of Rio de Janeiro, distant from the realities sketched out above.

While Senegalese has become a category in Brazil and, in Rio de Janeiro, is often linked to their presence in Niterói, in a macroscopic view of the main fault-lines of social differentiation in Rio de Janeiro, they quickly move out of sight. This holds largely true for international migration to Rio de Janeiro in general, despite a growing awareness of the problems related to it, a phenomenon that follows a global trend rather than a locally caused urgency, yet with some local specificities (e.g. Vianna and Facundo 2015). When in March 2018 I discussed conviviality once more with one of my longstanding interlocutors, an older and well-educated art vendor in Rio de Janeiro, it came as no surprise that he explained that differently from Europe, Brazil did not have a problem with immigration (yet), but surely one with race. This was for two reasons: first, he took note of the discrimination of black Brazilians saying that even a black African immigrant was more respected than they were; and, second, he had been treated well by white Brazilians while recurrently sensing tensions with black ones. Since the references to race and racism was frequent, I will start from here to sketch the local scene of valued difference.

3.2   On the Specificity of Race

To explore conviviality on the brink, racist differentiations constitute a crucial starting point due to being central to the Brazilian case and seemingly incommensurate with living together, unless in terms similar to Mbembe's take. Put crudely, racist differentiations produce essentialized, quasi-primordial and therefore stable differences (Grillo 2003). In its extreme form, it maps people's behavior and personality, but also entitlements and relative position within a hierarchy, onto the physical characteristics or their genetic make-up. "Cultural" racism mainly is a rhetorical move (Stolcke 1995), which does not make it any less oppressive. Understanding the internalization of race as it is described in Frantz Fanon's (2008 [1952]) work, Stuart Hall (1996: 16) stresses how it is internalized in the process of its inscription onto the skin, its epidermalization. Race incites an alternative corporeal schema, which calls upon the cultural and discursive historical-racial schema rather than being genetic and physiological.

Fassin (2011) brings us closer to an understanding of the processes of racialization active nowadays. Working on South Africa and France, he observes how race is played out in the body, tracing the double process of how bodies become racialized and race embodied. He traces the interactions between the processes of ascription, recognition,

and objectification of the racialized body. The ascription of race and its recognition reformulates Foucault's and Butler's paradox of subjectivation, the both passive and active process of producing the self. Following Fassin, the third dimension involved, objectification, stabilizes a particular racial order. All three dimensions are crucial to understand how race and racist discrimination work. Consequently, the embodiment of race eventually reveals how 'race relates to the inscription of social structures of racialization on and in bodies, that is, to the physical traces left by centuries of domination, segregation, and stigmatization' (Fassin 2011: 429). Over and again, the centrality of the social reality of race has been recognized and analyzed, not least to push back against some of the more recent mechanisms of racist denial (Lentin 2015; M'Charek 2013). This global discussion connects well with the continued centrality of race as a key category of difference and discrimination in Brazil, in general, and Rio de Janeiro, in particular.

To approach race and racism in Rio de Janeiro today, the history of slavery and its aftermath of now 130 years since abolition needs to be kept in mind – a history that is concerned with structural inequalities on the Brazilian national territory but always references external influences and conceptualizations. Reworking the history of the racial question and of the social sciences, Seyferth (1989) identifies how evolutionist racist conceptions were used in Brazil after they had already been put aside – or seemingly so – in Europe and North America. The Brazilian academy reworked these theories given their engagement with the unique circumstance of a society coming out of slavery, something that caused both pessimistic and positive approaches to it (Schwarcz 1999; Guimarães 2004).

Seyferth (1989: 18) points out how racist thinking remained at the basis of both the whitening ideology and the seemingly more progressive notion of racial democracy. At the end of the 19th century, slavery was criticized for swamping the country with black Africans, a hindrance to more beneficial white European migration, leading both to the abolition of slavery while keeping the black population in servitude and the immigration projects of the 1880s favouring European immigration. Racial democracy, most frequently attributed to Gilberto Freyre and likeminded thinkers (Guimarães 2001), was a myth, since the conviviality it portrayed remained hierarchical, discriminatory and exploitative beyond the abolition of slavery. Despite the acknowledgment that the *mestiços*, originating from miscegenation already during slavery, are at the heart of the Brazilian nation, Seyferth argues that the whitening ideology stays strong and the black contribution to miscegenation is treated not least by the social sciences as one that is destined to die out. This analysis largely remains also valid today (Cao 2011). This genealogy highlights the need for a problematizing conception of conviviality as I am proposing here.

Brazil's discomforting track record of complex race relations leads analysts to speak of, for example, 'cordial racism' (Owensby 2005) and a 'comfortable racial contradiction' (Roth-Gordon 2017: 4), to capture its core problematic. In its complex history of power and exploitation, the myth of racial democracy and a history of whitening politics, exclusiveness and inclusiveness coexist (Telles 2004; Silva and Reis 2012). Mixture and miscegenation under the heading of racial democracy, having been critiqued over and over again, continue to be ascribed positive value despite their problematic history of power and exploitation. In popular discourse it forms part of Brazilian national identity (Telles 2004). At the same time, Brazil's long history of whitening politics has consolidated white privilege, the negation of race (Vargas 2004), and the widespread feeling among non-whites not to be part of the citizenry (Mitchell 2010).

Nevertheless, the blurred and contextual aspects of racial boundaries at the same time lead to something Silva and Reis call 'non-essentialist racialism' (2012). Weak symbolic boundaries between race categories coincide with strong social ones, i.e. socio-economic inequalities are strong (Silva 2016). This analysis contrasts with Seyferth's who showed how a popular reduction of racism to classism or colour is misleading since race in most cases defines class rather than being merely correlated with it (Seyferth 1989: 28). It seems impossible to have it only either way. In my work, commentaries characterizing Brazil as rather classist than racist, or vice versa, or both, all exist alongside each other. Surely, the intersections between the two, and with gender, are in continuous need of being analysed since discriminations and racializations are multidirectional and relational. In the everyday, all kinds of declinations of racism and classism come into play. This is coherent with the past decades of racial analysis, which stress that any clear-cut delineation of the marked and un-marked categories of social hierarchies need to be questioned.

In the following, I want to ask how conviviality as an analytical lens addresses racist differentiation taking the case of Senegalese in Rio de Janeiro forward. To put it differently: What does it provoke if racism is considered through a conviviality lens? Ideally, it will further our understanding of the simultaneous and multidirectional processes of ascription, resistance, and denial of racial categorization and its degrees of intensity. I hold that a convivial lens on urban socialities provides a way to situationally see when each one of the many dimensions of valued differentiation becomes crucial and how.

4.   The Multidirectionality of Valued Difference

In this last part of the paper, I want to look at one set of empirical situations in urban settings in Rio de Janeiro, in which differences and inequalities are at play, on multiple levels and in multidirectional ways. I thereby confront the inherent inconsistencies,

multiplicities, and complexities of new urban ways of getting by despite remaining different. I come back to banal, grotesque, and obscene modes of conviviality Mbembe introduced. I address how racialized difference is constructed, the kinds of tensions that emerge and what we gain from viewing this as conviviality on the brink. I engage with the emerging and re-configuring social and symbolic relational dynamics, always falling short of romantic hopes for both equality and stability.

4.1   Relationality Through Comparison

Despite a primary preoccupation with home, my interlocutors set themselves in various ways into relation to both the Brazilian general social fabric, and to Rio de Janeiro's specificities. This was rooted in their perception and everyday experiences. For the street vendors and art traders, few direct interactions took place outside their vending activities. However, the working days were long and in public spaces. They carefully observed their surroundings and set themselves into relation to it. Those in formal employment referred to experiences at their workplace and in their everyday surroundings. These structural differences did not translate, however, directly into distinctive accounts; rather, the wide range of other personal and social factors more frequently explain different and contradictory stories and inconsistencies.

Relations to the Brazilian population often explicitly featured race as a decisive factor. To start with, relating to black Brazilians was multidimensional, and usually troubled. While Senegalese showed a certain interest in the Afro-Brazilian population, my interlocutors did not take long to comment on the structural factors that complicated the lives of black Brazilians, something they frequently classified as racist discrimination. However, who qualified as black and therefore suffered from racism was not self-evident. More often than not, it was a combination of skin colour, *habitus*, activity, and style that caused such identification. Rather than trying to be nuanced regarding class or race, or both, *habitus* and style were a means to quickly classify those generally not classifiable into the black-white dichotomy. Instead of using this interdependence of class and race in favour of the Afro-descendants, it frequently worked against them. In such instances, Senegalese appropriated only one of the many mechanisms of Brazilian racialization. Furthermore, stressing the binary referenced their own hegemonic, colonial knowledge of racialization. Although not made explicit in these terms, it manifested itself in the hegemonic use of the binary itself, and in how whiteness was constructed, which I discuss below. Nuance did not often matter but black vs. white did.

Most of my interlocutors affirmed that black Brazilians were trouble makers, which some of them claimed to have experienced themselves. They readily drew a strong boundary to not be identified with black Brazilians. At the beginning of fieldwork, this risk of being

subsumed under them was literal, given the lack of general awareness for new African immigration in Brazil. If at all, Angolan and Congolese refugees had become known in some parts of town and among some subsections of the population. The stereotypical Angolan, who had become synonymous for African in Rio de Janeiro and who had gained the unfounded reputation of being involved in drug and arms trafficking (Petrus 2001: 9–13), was for the most part nothing to aspire to. Petrus notes that much of this negative stereotyping of Angolans happened on the part of black Brazilians. However, these categories were similarly disliked and in recent years Senegalese struggled to set themselves apart from them. Wanting to avoid the category of Angolano, Senegalese engaged in an ethical self-fashioning, which also worked against black Brazilians (Heil under review b). Senegalese on their part came to see blackness as the origins of all evil in Brazil, including crime and drug trafficking. Categorically speaking, black Brazilians were those who had the greatest potential to cause them harm. Senegalese kept blackness playfully at bay, reproducing the power hierarchies of racism in Brazil, even though rarely openly.

The most outspoken proponent of blaming black Brazilians for failure among the Senegalese was a politically minded, socially engaged academic. In style often activist, he declared half of the Brazilian population to be lost because they did not speak up for themselves. They did not know their rights and did not claim what was theirs. This assessment was embedded in his overall struggle against racism and strongly resembled the recent upsurge demanding renewed decolonization, however, without making direct reference to it. The concrete ills he detailed were common themes among all of my interlocutors. Apart from arms and drugs, they discussed the lack of education and values, sexual promiscuity, nudity and premature pregnancies, violence and criminality, as well as the lack of direction of mainly black and poor Brazilians. Some also had some startled admiration for the attitude to live by the day and not worry about tomorrow. Any commentary happened covertly. Often housed precariously themselves, living in buildings or on street sections identified as socially problematic, Senegalese had the least interest to contribute to their own vulnerability by meddling with anybody.

Few of my interlocutors sought to link up under the banner of blackness. In moments of strong black identification, my interlocutors quickly changed the scale of analysis and referred to crime as the problem of Brazil as well as the racist violence against blacks. On a rare initiative, members of the Senegalese Murid Sufi brotherhoods went to pray at the slave cemetery in Gamboa, near the port, since it is said that Muslims were buried there as well. On another occasion, the network of black female entrepreneurs that had one Senegalese member organized a reception for the Senegalese as part

of a little fair at their seat in Niteroi. However, only Brazilians went, and the absence of Senegalese street vendors left the organizers disappointed.

In the virtual absence of common projects between recent-arrived Africans and Afro-Brazilians, identifying the origins of Brazil's predicament led in various directions, structural racism being one. To turn around and reproach black Brazilians for their alleged passivity and failure to organize politically was a common twist in the conversation. As Africans, they had fought for their independence from colonial, white commandment, as a simplified narrative went that referenced the peaceful resistance of the religious leader of many of them, Cheikh Akhmadou Bamba, as well as the first Senegalese president Senghor to colonial domination. In contrast, the predicament of black Brazilians indexed that they did not do enough, according to my interlocutors. Their reference to Senghor was insofar significant that his negritude philosophy of *enracinement et ouverture* – rooting oneself in tradition and consequently opening up to the world – lent for a strong explanation of why Black Brazilians were lost. As one of my interlocutors put it: they had never sought their true origins beyond tracing them back to slave boats, thus remaining unable to build on their true roots. They had failed to care for their origins.

I never sensed that my interlocutors were aware of how deeply problematic these allegations were. It possibly had to do with a final reference to their place of origin, which could be added to the tense relationship with black Brazilians that was evolving. The Senegalese legacy of slavery was silenced, while social stigma remained attached to slave descendants. It was a crucial dimension in producing social hierarchies throughout contemporary West Africa (Bellagamba et al. 2017). While addressing this in research directly remains a challenge of its own, it is likely to contribute to the relative superiority that recently-arrived Senegalese constructed in Rio de Janeiro. If not, it would at least make a fascinating parallel case to pursue.

Themselves black – and proudly so – Senegalese in Rio de Janeiro possibly used the readily available racist idiom with mixed motivations: to mark a relatively better social position and to stay out of trouble. In setting themselves into relation to the people they identified as black Brazilians, they produced a power hierarchy that was not even that clear cut in Brazil. Such a move, clear at its outset in positing a racist black-white binary, ultimately resembled a muddling through regarding its actual working and my interlocutors' relation to it, dispersed with silences, intimations and rich in overtones. In confronting their own location in the Brazilian social matrix, they bridled with the existing power geometry to their own benefit, it seemed. At the basis, I hold, was the implicit comparison of a relational perspective. This gained different modulations when categories of origin joined in the play of prejudice and stigma regarding the relationships at stake.

4.2   Africanness and Global Racism

While many Senegalese perceived Brazil as a racist country, they had so far experienced little discrimination on racist grounds, I was repeatedly told. There were, however, two notable exceptions: Firstly, some of the African students and professors said they had experienced racially motivated discrimination in Brazil (cf. Kaly 2011, 2001) and secondly, isolated incidences of Senegalese being killed on the streets in the past years, led various of my interlocutors to denounce racism as its driving force.[2] However, other accounts were more frequent. If at all identified as other, my interlocutors among the street vendors were addressed as Angolan, either coming with the ambivalent connotations discussed above, or standing in for African, which, my interlocutors conveyed, mainly referred to being poor from an underdeveloped continent where people suffered from famine and war. Blackness rarely seemed to be a relevant category applied to them by Brazilians in order to stigmatize or discriminate against them. However, 'Brazilian' here more often than not implicitly referred to 'white' Brazilian. On other occasions, my interlocutors exploited the fact of being perceived as poor African in need of help as a vending strategy on the streets, beaches and in favelas. Counterintuitively, they combined this with a sense of superiority. The argument went as such: If Brazilians (now employed in general) already lacked knowledge regarding places outside their own country -- i.e. were poorly educated and believed that all of Africa lived in huts, knew no condominiums nor tarred streets, but held lions – then let them remain ignorant and let us benefit from their pity and turn it into economic benefit.

My interlocutors also gave their subjectively felt poverty as one of the possible explanations for another set of unsettling circumstances. Collective assaults in busses have been part of Rio's violent social landscape. The bus line many of my interlocutors took to reach the beaches was notorious for it. However, many of them had been on the busses during assaults, but not a single one was robbed. As the only ones on the bus, they were left untouched, despite not rarely having cash, one or two newish smart phones and merchandise worth several thousand *reais* (R$ 1000 equals around EUR 250) with them. My interlocutors' assumption of Africans being perceived as the utmost poor of the world sat alongside their experience that they were feared beyond comparison. Linked to Africa as a place of permanent warfare and the urban myths of Angolans and Congolese training or working for the big drug cartels operative in the city, my interlocutors did not object this reputation to be dangerous for strategic reasons. After all, it was part of their safety net. The figure of the dangerous and powerful African had also saved one street vendor who, threatened to be killed, reminded his aggressor that he was African and thus going to be quicker at killing him, if necessary. It was

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2   http://g1.globo.com/pr/parana/videos/t/todos-os-videos/v/imigrante-senegales-e-assassinado-no-centro-de-cascavel/6895023/ (last accessed: 31/01/2019)

not an easy terrain on which some Senegalese lived toying with relations of real and symbolic power and precariousness in order to co-exist.

At other times, Africanness provided a positive anchor of Brazilian fascination, if not identification. Wearing Senegalese kaftans and speaking utterly unknown languages while walking in groups through town, their environment identified them as African. Low-key vendors of African art frequently were sought in order to provide African objects such as masks or sculptures to serve either as decoration in Brazilian educated middle-class living rooms or as elements in Afro-Brazilian religions. Equally selling modern and traditional sculptures and masques, the latter from all over the African continent but acquired in Dakar, they were happy enough to satisfy this demand without getting involved in the meanings attached to the objects. Regarding Afro-Brazilian religions, my interlocutors remained sceptical, to say the last. Being harmless in comparison, 'African braids' had also become a positive link and a service for which mainly black Brazilians (and tourists) paid well. While playing along or strategically using this fascination with, and quest for Africa often deeply felt by the people approaching my interlocutors with considerable respect, Senegalese quickly contested Brazilian claims to Africanness. What Brazilians termed African or Afro-Brazilian had in fact nothing in common with contemporary Senegal, or the ways in which my interlocutors wanted to see it. Only with time, the same interlocutors who had held such opinion, moved on to a less judgmental observation and acknowledged that their references to Africa were different from each other. While on blackness my interlocutors had little if anything positive to say in the Brazilian context, they claimed and negotiated Africanness. It seemed easier to construct a position outside Brazilian racial dynamics relying on this regional denominator. It remained, however, a highly ambiguous one.

Avoiding blackness and racism failed on the occasion when interactions involved people beyond the Brazilian-African dynamic. Under the impact of global racism, black Africans faired as bad as, or worse than black Brazilians. The fortunately rare occasions in which some of my interlocutors were subjected to it occurred while selling at the beaches and involved notably European and North-American tourists. It ranged from French nationals accusing the African beach vendors of now even polluting Rio's finest beaches, to racist sexual advances which strongly intersected with gender. It is telling that my interlocutors continued to identify the French and, to a lesser extent other Europeans and North Americans to be racist. The colonial experience had resurfaced, in all its shades, not rarely also resonating with European prejudice against Brazil. On one such occasion, a tall, young, and handsome Senegalese beach vendor reported being both outraged and ashamed when white male European or North American tourists openly desired him sexually, suggesting he should play the active role. He knew it had been because he is strong, tall, and black. This colonial

convivial dynamic which Mbembe (2001) also discusses, had become reconfigured in Brazil, including the further intersectional complexity of race and gender regarding the racialized imaginaries of sexualities and desires.[3] Given all kinds of sexual tourism at Rio de Janeiro's beaches, in particular sections visibly dominated by men desiring men and with a strong presence of *garotos de programa*, male sex workers, my interlocutor might well have been mistaken for Brazilian in this racist act. This was a particularly disturbing experience insofar as many Senegalese held strong and negative opinions about Brazilian male and female promiscuity and the omnipresence of homosexuality and sex work (cf. Heil under review a). Senegalese thereby withdrew themselves from a decadence they perceived in the relationship between Brazilians and Europeans. However, when a similar dynamic unfolded at other times with female tourists, some of my interlocutors were receptive to the advances. Heteronormativity seemed to smoothen desires based in global racism. Speaking up against it, or partially playing along, in either case Senegalese vendors were entangled in the stigmatizations, sexualizations, and racializations of global racism, an inequality structure which they were unable to leave behind.

4.3   Marginality and Changing Hierarchical Orders

Clearly, race and racism were not the only dimensions according to which Senegalese negotiate their presence in Rio de Janeiro. Especially, since their profiles varied so widely. Given that race and class are complexly intertwined in Brazil and that questions of power and relationality rely on both factors, this final section engages the socioeconomic dimension of the relationalities that my Senegalese interlocutors were in. Several of the Senegalese professors already in Rio de Janeiro for longer, fared well. Given their academic success, they belonged to the educated middle classes, a condition that caused some intense reflection on the state of racial inequality and discrimination in Brazil. It was not an exception to hear how those among them who had become professors at Brazilian universities interpreted their success as having attended to the universities' attempts to diversify their staff by providing a rare profile: excellent black academics. Given the structural discrimination characterizing the Brazilian higher education, this was not common. Ironically, the Senegalese satisfied a concern that had arisen from the growing affirmative action concerns. No wonder they were highly aware of the structural racism and all forms of discrimination it entailed. For some, it motivated strong critiques of the society but also of the weak Brazilian black movement, while others rather held back only remarking that Brazil was complicated

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3   To get a sense of the complexity of the intersections of race and sexuality, see Simões et al.'s 2010 discussion of São Paulo's youth, Moutinho's 2006 elaborations regarding Rio de Janeiro's northern zone, and Pinho's 2012 parallel insights into gay pornography.

and overburdened with problems. Being economically more at ease, yet raising their children in Brazil, they seemed to know the everyday battle too well. Only, they managed to keep it at a bearable distance, trying not to make it their own.

In contrast, most beach vendors economically felt at the bottom end. Proof came from their living conditions, which they compared to their (limited) insights into the precariousness of the poorer strata of the Brazilian society. My interlocutors frequently lacked money and did not give preference to live according to Brazilian middle classes in apartment blocks but they also felt excluded from something that they referred to as the privilege of free services in the *favelas*. Hereby they referred to the amenities such as water and electricity that in *favelas* were often accessed informally. It left the Senegalese with three options: sharing small apartments among many, as they increasingly did in Copacabana, sticking to the more affordable areas with a complicated reputation; living in more affordable neighbourhoods that they felt were precarious or dangerous, such as the city centre; or living at the edge of *favelas* and keeping quiet about it in order not to suffer stigmatization both in general and by their follow Senegalese. In detail, the housing conditions still varied a lot, given personal preferences and styles. Over the years, the most precarious option in the centre of Niteroi had increasingly fell out of favor, given its continuous lack of basic infrastructure, the immediate proximity to prostitution, a general lack of maintenance and stigmatization, also among Senegalese. Some Senegalese, however, remained in the building because they privileged space and a low rent over cramping together in minuscule studios shared among many.

All of these conditions, precarious to say the least, were buffered by a willingness to stay out of trouble and maintain workable relationships with their surroundings. To understand this willingness, I think, is key to the ongoing dynamics. To claim even greater marginality than the poorest and most precarious sections of the urban fabric in part was a twist in order to benefit from a prejudiced perception of Africans in Rio de Janeiro, rather than to suffer from it. Claiming precariousness also hid potential economic success, which was crucial to advancing their individual projects and satisfy the expectations at home. On the other hand, my interlocutors honestly perceived their circumstances to be the worst, independently of whether this was objectively justifiable or not. It revealed a precariousness characterized by marginality and instability. The marginality arose from the widely acknowledged fact that they were in a foreign country, far from home and lacking the social security net they would have back home and assumed the local population to have. They were classical strangers, never quite as settled as they assumed the local population to be. The overall migration regime and the place of irregular Senegalese migrants in it, contributed its share to this condition. The instability equally resulted from being on the move, on the lookout

for something. More importantly, however, the social matrix of Rio de Janeiro, to which they had to relate, was itself unstable, multi-layered, contradictory and oftentimes disorienting. Power hierarchies and inequalities were not straightforward. To an extent, my Senegalese interlocutors manipulated their social interactions and relative position within this framework in ways to benefit themselves. On the other hand, it left them also little choice than to contribute their share, either conniving or actively re-affirming power hierarchies, when other options were literally or subjectively inexistent.

Trying to understand the relative positionality of West African migrants in contemporary Rio de Janeiro reveals their discomforting, contradictory, and unstable life-worlds that only make sense in contrast to and interdependence with their social surrounding. Instability is characteristic of unequal and reconfiguring social relations with which recently arrived urban dwellers must understand and engage. To live in an uneasy place like the Metropolitan Region of Rio de Janeiro depends on an evaluation in relational terms. Any conception of such living with difference that does not take this instability and fragility seriously is unlikely to shed light on the complex processes of differentiation and racialization that are happening upon the new arrival of Senegalese in Rio de Janeiro.

5. Conclusions

Senegalese in Spain and Senegal initially inspired me to think about conviviality and their capacity to translate and negotiate across differences. When asked, Senegalese in Rio de Janeiro affirmed their capacity to live peacefully with difference. This, I learned, also included unequal power geometries and situations that to a bystander could easily appear to be rather challenging. However, it was not self-evident, especially concerning my interlocutors' involvement with racial and racist inequalities. A first review revealed a rather dystopian picture, despite the absence of open conflict. Many Senegalese seemed to have bought into a racist discourse about black Brazilians as only some showed signs of shared black consciousness. They surely re-appropriated the stereotype that deferred Africans to a place of pity, and they made do with the framing of a global migration regime that produced marginality and demanded the endurance of hardship. All of it was ripe with inequality. Still, my interlocutors in Rio de Janeiro actively maintained a rather calm state of mind and therefore remained at peace, as they had conveyed to me over the past years of ethnographic research.

In framing conviviality analytically rather than sticking to a normative or descriptive use, I was able to tease out how my Senegalese interlocutors' everyday experiences in Rio de Janeiro need to be conceived in relational terms and how, therefore, even concepts like race and racism, together with their intersections with class, go through various re/

formulations. As a processual notion, conviviality incorporates inevitable fluctuations, uncertainty, and change. I addressed situations that seem highly unsustainable – on the brink – and, as Mbembe stresses, often contain violence. It thereby strikes a middle ground between stability and crisis. Maybe one could have shown similar dynamics starting off from an alternative vantage point. However, conviviality with its analytical focus on living *with* difference has been conducive to bring some dynamism into the analysis of social relations in context of migration and inequality in at least three ways.

The perspective of conviviality, which took some inspiration from earlier thinking on difference, and newer perspectives on race as relational fact has broadened awareness, if not an initial understanding, of the multiply overlapping and contradictory relationalities and of the historically specific, contextual, and multidirectional processes leading to them. In the Brazilian context, inequalities related to race and class have received a lot of attention. In trying to understand how newly-arrived dwellers, like West African migrants, relate to these dynamics has revealed a highly specific picture of intersecting and layered processes of hierarchization. They highlighted discomfort and insecurity. Together, they have influenced the ways in which Senegalese street and beach vendors live within their current surrounding, which is in contrast to how Senegalese of the educated middle-classes face the matrix of race-class relations in Rio de Janeiro. Moving within these hierarchies and trying to position oneself within them are crucial aspects of a relational view propagated by conviviality.

Exploring how Senegalese handle racial difference has furthermore provided valuable insights. Those who essentialized race in relation to Brazilians most of the time did not see it applied to themselves. Socio-cultural aspects such as *habitus* and style join in their analysis when they could otherwise not establish a clear racial binary. Global racialized discourse thereby relating to the Senegalese legacies of colonialism moves into focus, which interactions with non-Brazilians confirm. Taken together, differences are clearly maintained, but even race and racism, despite being prone to essentialization, are recurrently reformulated and reconfigured. This does not detract from its destructive force, yet it allows understanding how all people involved inscribe themselves into the same epistemological field and trick and toy with it, to stick to Mbembe's terminology, or translate and negotiate, as I initially had suggested for conviviality.

Put this way, a conviviality perspective shows how differences are unsettled and troubled in the process of living with them. It goes well together with a critique of Stuart Hall (2000: 146) of modernity not as enlightenment and progress, but as trouble and problem due to the various upsets and disturbances caused to the continuity and stability of its central concepts. While I have shown how differences and inequalities are unsettled, they remain and reappear. Any belief that inequalities will eventually disappear must be referred to the domain of political prophecy and ethical aspiration.

People live with and relate to maintained differences that are in multiple and changing hierarchical relationships to one another. All this carries weight, whether there are face-to-face interactions or not, and whether they are peaceful or conflictive.

How, then, do we understand racism differently, if we address it from a conviviality perspective? Maybe I can answer like this: while racism tends to focus on essentialized differences and feigns stability, a conviviality perspective reveals how in unstable and uncertain situations it recurrently changes its shape and intensity. This is due to its various co-existing local and global reference frames and the sometimes unimagined relationalities that emerge from them.

6.   Bibliography

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