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Insisting on Her Rights

and Other Afro-Brazilian Repertoires of Resisting Everyday Grey Racism

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Insisting on Her Rights and Other Afro-Brazilian Repertoires of Resisting Everyday Grey Racism

Seth Racusen

Abstract

This paper, the first sociolegal study of the evolving nature of racial discrimination disputes in Brazil, examines the ongoing exchanges between racial domination and Afro-Brazilian resistance to racism. This paper argues that Brazilian racism as an everyday behavioural racism is fully embedded in convivial relations, that resistance to Brazilian racism is also fully embedded in convivial relations, and that the juxtaposition of the three, domination, resistance, and conviviality, have contributed to the misinterpretation of both racial domination and resistance. The paper explores the structural features of behavioural racism and borrows the notion of a grey structure of oppression that deconstructs and compromises the oppressed. It argues that this structural greyness shapes everyday resistance and constitutes a collective action problem for victims seeking to contest racism. The study presents an illustrative case of racism and resistance in which her repertoires of resistance responded to the ebb and flow of racial domination. This study shows that so-called "milder" Goffmanian repertoires of resistance have been utilized by victims who subsequently engaged in other acts of resistance that challenged racist hierarchy.

Keywords: racial domination | everyday racism | conviviality | resistance

About the author

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Contents

1. Introduction

This paper examines the daily exchanges between Brazilian racial domination and Afro-Brazilian resistance to racism. Although Brazilians enjoy high levels of apparently convivial relations (Sansone 2003; Telles 2004), convivial relations can articulate hierarchy and inequality (Mbembe 1992; Costa 2019; Heil 2020). This paper argues that Brazilian racism as an everyday behavioural racism is fully embedded in convivial relations, that resistance to Brazilian racism is also fully embedded in convivial relations, and that the juxtaposition of the three, domination, resistance, and conviviality, have contributed to the misinterpretation of both racial domination and resistance. These three elements, domination, resistance and conviviality, are mutually constituted phenomena within the Brazilian social structure.

As a behavioural racism conveyed through social norms, the Brazilian racial hierarchy needs to be continually rearticulated and performed (Mbembe 1992). Balibar distinguished this form of racism as a "sociological racism" enacted "within the state" from an institutional racism that constitutes "official state racism" (Balibar 1991: 39). Roberto DaMatta argued that unlike the United States, Brazil did not need to implement a formal Jim Crow apartheid system because its society was sufficiently hierarchical to be able to maintain social distance through daily relations (DaMatta 1981). This "sociological racism" enacts the relationship between "everyday racism" and societal structure (Essed 1991; Almeida 2019). Given the absence of "official state racism", the place of "official state racism" in the social imaginary of what constitutes racism, and the role of conviviality in daily behaviour, "sociological racism" was readily characterized as "non racism". Indeed, the dominant interpretation of Brazil in the 20th century declared convivial daily relations to be a central characteristic of Brazilianness and Brazilian race relations.

In his paradigmatic account, Gilberto Freyre claimed that "Brazilian society is, of all those in the Americas, the one most harmoniously constituted so far as racial relations are concerned" (Freyre 1986 [1933]: 83). Freyre claimed that Brazilians managed to balance antagonisms that emerged and divided the US; however, he asserted his thesis without direct evidence (Skidmore 2002) which cannot be sustained in the face of rampant inequality and violence in the everyday lives of Afro Brazilians.

Conviviality within the racial order has continued to be misinterpreted since Freyre. Edward Eric Telles' rigorous volume, *Race in Another America*, found Brazil to be a country of high levels of racial equality combined with porous social boundaries, evidenced by high rates of inter-marriage and low rates of residential segregation (Telles 2004). When Robin E. Sheriff's meticulous research found racism embedded in daily practices, she still interpreted racism and daily conviviality to be of equal weight (Sheriff

2001). However, convivial relations can mask the reproduction of racial domination through technologies of relationality between neighbours, associates, and intimates.

Indeed, families and neighbours are sites of racist socialization (Hordge-Freeman 2013) as well as racist incidents reported to public authorities, both of which constitute reproductive mechanisms of the Brazilian racial order. Further, many racist social norms have been internalized by Afro Brazilians (Dzidzienyo 1971; Twine 1998; Hasenbalg 1979; Hordge-Freeman 2015; Trammel 2018; Schucman 2022) which can only be understood in the context of Brazilian racial domination (Santos 2018). Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman reported that "racial socialization in phenotypically diverse families" can serve as "the first site for learning about dominant racial hierarchies", sometimes challenging but often reproducing hierarchical norms (Hordge-Freeman 2013: 1508). Thus, measures of Black presence, such as indices of residential segregation and racial intermarriage, are limited indicators of racial dynamics.

Resistance has also been misinterpreted within a racial order marked by convivial relations. In response to an all-encompassing social structure, resistance may be articulated in a way that can appear to comport with dominant convivial relations, as James C. Scott initially proposed (Scott 1990; Johansson and Vinthagen 2016). Michèle Lamont's path-breaking work found Brazilians to be reluctant to confront an aggressor and that when they did, they tended to seek to politely educate the aggressor (Lamont et al. 2016). Others have also found Brazilians to be conciliatory (Monteiro 2003; Figueiredo 2004; Santos 2015). In contrast, this work conceives of resistance as an ongoing negotiation with domination in which an act that appears complicit with domination, such as "educating" an aggressor, may be a tactic within an ongoing dynamic (Johansson and Vinthagen 2016). Conviviality influences the enactment of resistance, providing a repertoire of resistance, and heightening the need of all parties to surveil each other.

How is racism enacted in a society characterized by convivial relations? What kinds of racist practices are viable and functional within a highly convivial society? Finally, how does this racism shape resistance? This paper argues that conviviality provides an opportunity structure for the articulation of behavioural racism and resistance. The dynamics of "becoming Black" in Brazil masterfully treated by Neusa Souza must be mapped to these racist incidents, which suggests a collective action problem for a victim of racism who faces uncertainty about the consciousness, positioning, and responses of co-workers or others present (Souza 1983). This paper asserts that this deconstruction of bystanders resembles the relational ambiguities facing genocidal victims characterized by Primo Levi as a "grey zone" (Levi 1986) and that this racialized "grey" hierarchy constitutes a collective action problem for victims seeking to contest racism. Thus, this paper has three primary objectives: (1) to review selected literature

about Brazilian racism and conviviality and show that racism penetrates conviviality when they do coexist; (2) to map the act of "becoming Black" into a collective dynamic, which suggests a collective action problem and to bring in the grey zone metaphor to characterize that collective action problem; and (3) to draw on the literature of everyday resistance to recognize the apparently muted responses to Brazilian racism.

This paper seeks to illuminate how Brazilian racial domination is especially durable and anticipatory of challenge, that resistance can only be understood in direct relation to domination, and that this resistance is highly uneven and interwoven with domination. To do so, this paper examines the racist aggressions that have given rise to allegations of racism reported to and investigated by the police. Examining police investigations and the ensuing court processes, combined with interviews of victims qua subjects, enables some exploration of the overall social context in which the aggressions occurred, including the dynamics between the multiple actors. This paper treats the multiple iterations of aggressions and responses and their interwoven nature as a series of moves and countermoves (Trammel 2018) and examines the daily experience of conviviality and racism, the structure of Brazilian racial domination, and how domination anticipates and structures resistance. The paper presents an illustrative case drawn from a larger study of police investigations of racism complaints.

2. Conviviality and Everyday Racism in Brazil

What is the relationship of conviviality to the racial hierarchy? Which racist practices are prevalent within a highly convivial society? While it is widely conceded that racism and conviviality can coexist (Mbembe 1992; Sheriff 2001; Back and Sinha 2016; Costa 2019; Heil 2020; Ohnmacht and Yıldız 2021), the relationship between the two is not so clear. Does conviviality modulate racism in some way such as conveying a "kinder" or lighter racism? Alternatively, does conviviality mask racism and make it more perverse (Nascimento 1982)? This section explores the opportunity structure convivial relations provide a behavioural racism.

The concept of conviviality has been described as the "capacity" to live together with difference" (Valentine 2008: 323; Wise 2016: 423) advanced by Paul Gilroy as a contrast to the post-colonial melancholy of Britons encountering former colonials within Great Britain (Gilroy 2005). In that sense, it potentially represents an ethos of "being together". Viewing conviviality as the practices that modulate hierarchy: "based on norms of tolerance, reciprocity, non-hierarchy, and solidarity" (Wade 2018), conviviality and racism represent competing tendencies. In this conception, an ideology of the nation, such as *mestizaje* or *morenidade*, might serve to soften racism. Gilroy acknowledged

that "recognising conviviality should not signify the absence of racism" (Gilroy 2006: 40).

Certainly, conflict can reside within convivial configurations. In his seminal treatment of inequality and conviviality, Costa defines conviviality as "the interactions observed in the realm of common life". Within convivial "interactions observed in the realm of common life", Costa includes those "marked by competition, conflicts, and violence" (Costa 2019: 27). The sense of convivial "rubbing" together includes not just "happy togetherness" (Wise 2016) but negotiation, friction and even conflict (Wise 2016; Costa 2019; Heil 2020). Conviviality might be conceptualized as a form through which hierarchy can be performed as "an emotional surrounding, in which both hierarchy and inequality are felt more intensely" and in which "power circulates through feeling" (Wasser 2018; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010).

Valentine asked what "living together with difference" means – without simply assuming that contact produces social harmony, as suggested by the contact thesis of assimilationist sociology (Valentine 2008; Back and Sinha 2016). Although acknowledging that "mutual acknowledgement" through interactions such as "holding doors, sharing seats, and so on" might produce conviviality, Valentine argued that "many everyday moments of contact between different individuals or groups in the city do not really count as encounters at all". Instead, groups might be conceived as "parallel sharing" spaces with "little actual mixing between different users" (Valentine 2008: 324–326). Thus, sharing a space does not axiomatically produce conviviality but something more compelling and connecting needs to occur such as experiences that generate interdependence. However, even this condition of interdependence seems insufficient. For example, domestic servants are highly interdependent with their employers, which nevertheless constitutes a conviviality greatly marked by hierarchy (Santana Pinho 2009; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010; Wasser 2018). In Mbembe's treatment of conviviality, this interdependence characterizes post-colonial conviviality as the dominant and the dominated are bonded through common rituals: "[T]he emphasis should be on the logic of conviviality, on the dynamics of domesticity and familiarity, inscribing the dominant and the dominated within the same episteme" (Mbembe 2001: 110).

Is it possible to delineate convivial behaviour from other behaviour? Martha Radice suggests that convivial behaviour can become "contravivial", which she defines as living "against" difference. As she notes, racist humour, "the racist *brincadeiras* [jokes] that members of the upper classes of Brazil use to keep Afro-Brazilians in their low-status place are characterized as convivial" (Radice 2022: 4), a characteristic that Brazilians have proudly claimed as inherent to Brazilianness, a convivial behaviour that is "contravivial" in fact. Thus, Radice posits that contraviviality "lurks" in the "shadows" of conviviality, which is part of the slipperiness of conviviality.

The emphasis in conviviality research on practices rather than roles and actors offers "an alternative understanding of culture that focuses on what people do everyday rather than always reducing them to their cultural origins" (Back and Sinha 2016: 522) To analyse the place of racism in those everyday practices, consider the paradigmatic work of Philomena Essed on everyday racism, which she defined as:

> [I]njustices recurring so often that they are almost taken for granted, nagging, annoying, debilitating, seemingly small, injustices one comes to expect. The concept of everyday racism relates day-to-day experiences of racial discrimination to the macrostructural context of group inequalities represented within and between nations as racial and ethnic hierarchies of competence, culture and human progress (Essed 1991: 203).

Thus, everyday racism studies daily experience and places these daily experiences in the context of macro structures. Mbembe has argued that that purpose of daily racism, which he called "nanoracism", is to dominate its targets and its audience:

> What is nanoracism, if not that narcotic brand of prejudice based on skin colour that gets expressed in seemingly anodyne everyday gestures, often apropos of nothing, apparently unconscious remarks, a little banter, some allusion or insinuation, a slip of the tongue, a joke, an innuendo, but also, it must be added, consciously spiteful remarks, like a malicious intention, a deliberate stamping underfoot or tackle, a dark desire to stigmatize and, in particular, to inflict violence, to injure and humiliate, to sully those not considered to be one of us (Mbembe 2019: 58)?

In his view, the target and audience are simultaneously constructed by acts of "nanoracism". To Essed, these experiences are not encapsulated as singular acts but represent "multidimensional experiences" (Essed 1991: 206). She emphasis ongoing practices and relations:

> Everyday racism is a process in which (1) socialized racist notions are integrated in meanings that make practices immediately definable and manageable, (2) practices with racist implications become in themselves familiar and repetitive, and (3) underlying racial and ethnic relations are actualized and reinforced through these routine or familiar practices in everyday situations (Essed 1991: 208).

Everyday racism, like conviviality studies, emphasizes practices and analyses the underlying relations implicated. Its emphasis on micro-macro relations corresponds to Valentine's insistence that "encounters never take place in a space free from history, material conditions, and power" (Valentine 2008: 333). Thus, this paper will seek to

analyse the underlying relations behind practices and the contexts of power, history, and material conditions.

How might everyday racism and conviviality engage in Brazil? Robin Sheriff's highly influential work which reported significant racial tensions in daily relations in a favela in Rio de Janeiro provides an important point of departure. Sheriff reported a vast array of behaviours that can create distance within a social setting, such as being greeted upon entrance and being subsequently ignored or receiving an "evil eye". She showed that racist beliefs and intentions tend to reside below "routinely polite exchanges that characterize social interaction". Nonetheless, Sheriff held that conviviality and racism are both "genuine, meaningful, and context driven" and that neither is primary (Sheriff 2001: 86, 133, 6). This interpretation does not seem persuasive but seems analogous to viewing the moments of abuse and moments of affection between a battered spouse and her batterer as both "genuine, meaningful, and context driven". Certainly, there is a truth in the claims about genuineness and meaningfulness, and yet I argue that the domination is what prevails through both moments. Instead, the shifts between the moments might be more productively analysed through a theory of the cycles of abuse (Walker 2006).

Racist acts reported to the police have tended to occur without expressions of conviviality. In Antonio Sérgio Guimarães's meticulous study of racism complaints brought to the police in São Paulo, he carefully analysed the nature of the exchanges between the aggressor and victim prior to the insult and hypothesized numerous possible iterations of racism and conviviality, in which racism would constitute an escalation by an aggressor in response to a misunderstanding, a disagreeable context, or another possible break with conviviality. He did not find any evidence of such triggers but did find that the racist insult was the event that produced the dispute and served as a disciplining to create social distance (Guimarães 2003: 141–142). This finding may reflect bias in reporting, that the racist incidents outside of conviviality seem more reportable to victims, and/or methodology, that the statements given to police in a complaint (*boletim de ocorrência*) pertain to an incident and not a relationship, which provides less information about an ongoing dynamic.

Whenever possible, racial exclusion occurs in Brazil through behaviours without the explicit insults that Guimães studied. Racist preferences are often communicated through polite refusal (Sheriff 2001), such as telling Black job applicants, but not white applicants whose applications get processed, to come back later (Bento and Castelar 1992). Telles similarly reported that numerous informal institutional mechanisms create barriers: including "slights, aggressions and numerous other informal practices" that "originate from a culture that naturalizes the racial hierarchy" (Telles 2004: 151). DaMatta emphasized the capacity of these cultural practices to produce social

distance without the construction of a formal legal system of segregation (DaMatta 1991). In his seminal contribution, Anani Dzidzienyo discussed a racial etiquette that stipulated appropriate behaviours, mostly deferential by Blacks, and an avoidance of challenging racial discrimination and inequality (Dzidzienyo 1971). While Brazil has changed since Dzidzienyo's article, my research found that Blacks who challenged racial discrimination were often ostracized by aggressors, co-workers, and neighbours in the setting where the racist incident(s) had transpired.

The subjective views of middle-class Afro-Brazilians about their experiences in their social ascension provide important insights about convivial relations and racism. In Graziella Moraes da Silva and Elisa P. Reis's interpretation, their middle-class interviewees had not perceived their class standing to be diminished by racially discriminatory treatment but only had felt uncertainty (Silva and Reis 2012). In Angela Figueiredo's account, her interviewees felt excluded by the discriminatory practices, and she argued that their ability to challenge discriminatory practices had been compromised by the nature of their social ascension (Figueiredo 2004), which Dzidzienyo described as being "captives of the situation" (Dzidzienyo 1971: 10). In his very insightful review of Lélia Gonzalez's contributions to understanding how conviviality hides inequality, Melo argued that racial democracy was not only a belief system but also a set of practices that hinders resistance (Melo 2025). Conviviality and power are mutually constituted in these accounts, with power dominating conviviality with racialized outcomes.

Humour, often asserted as a fundamental characteristic of Brazilianness (Trammel 2018), is a masterful repertoire of apparent conviviality that can convey racism in a subterranean manner (Twine 1998; Sales Jr. 2006; Mbembe 2019; Moreira 2019). Racist humour is the quintessential example of hierarchical conviviality, aptly reframed as "recreational racism" (Moreira 2019), in which the racist hierarchy has been so pervasively articulated that the subordinated submit (Twine 1998; Sheriff 2001; Dahia 2008; Lamont et al. 2016). Racist humour can "contribute to legitimizing, strengthen, and advancing 'common sense' notions of race and racism" (Pérez 2017: 970). To the degree that domination and resistance are co-constituted processes, racist humour can "comprise one of the greatest weapons in the 'repertory of the human mind'" (Hughes 2003: 1437) as a technique of domination (Sue and Golash-Boza 2013) that anticipates and pre-empts resistance. Thus, humour provides an avenue for racism to seem convivial while being "contravivial" (Radice 2022) as well as an avenue to challenge racism while appearing convivial (Sheriff 2001; Santana Pinho 2009; Goldstein 2013; Trammel 2018).

Radice's view that contraviviality can be embedded within conviviality seems closer than Sheriff in their respective interpretations of the relationship of racism and conviviality (Radice 2022). The difficulty with Sheriff's interpretation of racism and conviviality as

co-equal forces is that it denies the significance of each act in the developing of a relationship and the ongoing weight of a racist exchange. Radice's view is supported by Sherriff's data and other studies and contemplates the underlying relations behind practices and the contexts of power, history, and material conditions. In the next section, the paper considers the structures that shape this everyday racism.

3. The Structure of Brazilian Racial Domination

What constellation of societal structures undergird those daily practices? Silvio Almeida's work on structural discrimination argued that racial discrimination is conveyed on multiple societal levels, particularly the individual, the institutional and societal (Almeida 2019). In his view, institutions shape individual behaviour by conveying societal "norms, standards, and control techniques" which are structured through multiple societal realms, including juridical, political, economic, and ideological realms in the struggle for power. Social systems are then dependent upon "the capacity of institutions to absorb the conflicts and antagonisms that are inherent to social life" and "carry within them the conflicts that exist in society". Finally, Almeida argued that "everyday relationships within institutions will reproduce common social practices, including racism, in the form of explicit violence or microaggressions – jokes, silencing, isolation, etc." (Almeida 2019: 26, 32). This section examines the societal structures and institutions that serve to structure daily relations.

The shaping of individual behaviour by institutions tends to rely on multiple technologies of domination as Almeida suggested. While segregatory technology can certainly inscribe domination, domination can be effectively enacted by other hierarchical norms regulating relationality (DaMatta 1991; Dzidzienyo 1971). Even Jim Crow segregation and slavery depended on a racial etiquette that preserved social distance (Thompson-Miller and Feagin 2014). Colonial Rhodesia also utilized a racial etiquette to maintain status boundaries and to contain challenge (Shutt 2010). Moreover, gender domination does not require segregatory technology but thrives on the combination of proximity, violence, both physical and psychological, and affection (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010).

What structures and technologies of relationality does Brazilian racial domination employ? This section examines the sociology of boundaries advanced by Telles and others (Telles 2004; Silva and Leão 2012; Silva and Paixão 2014), the technologies of relationality deployed by Brazilian racial domination, and how those technologies resemble the interpersonal characteristics Primo Levi attributed to the totalitarian "grey zone" enacted by the Third Reich.

3.1 Sociology of Brazilian Boundaries

Based upon their respective understandings of the duality of racism and convivial daily relations, two prominent scholars, Edward Telles and Livio Sansone posited the existence of sites of greater and lesser racism within distinct social settings and argued that the mix of social settings of greater and lesser racism provided durability to the Brazilian racial order (Sansone 2003; Telles 2004). In the most extensive empirical account of Brazilian racism, Telles distinguished sites of "vertical relations" such as work from sites of "horizontal relations" such as marriage and residence, where he found lower indices of separation than for the US. In Telles' account, these sites of "horizontal relations" exhibit more "sociability" and might be viewed as "less racist":

> If racism is so intense as to keep Blacks and mulattos in the lower rungs of the labor market, even more so than in the United States, how is it that sociability across racial lines is so much greater than in the United States? How do these coexist in practice? When persons are racist, can they be selectively racist, that is, more racist in vertical than in horizontal relations? […] While Brazil's fluid horizontal relations may be interpreted as signs of a less racist system, they also facilitate vertical racial domination. This system is efficient largely because it is powered by miscegenation rather than the more primitive motor of segregation. Indeed, the Brazilian system has been able to use miscegenation or fluid horizontal race relations to allow racial injustices and inequalities to persevere without state intervention, for a relatively long period of time. […] Good horizontal relations, in a sense, have been used to cover up bad vertical race relations (Telles 2004: 229, 232).

Here, he acknowledges the complexities in his specification of vertical and horizontal realms by asking first if individuals might behave differently on a micro level in the realms and then arguing that on a macro level, "horizontal" relations can provide useful societal narratives about race. On the micro level, people do behave differently in different contexts, but the trouble is not that individuals are "selectively racist" but that the practices he characterizes as "horizontal" can also convey racism. Telles allows that sexual, marital, and familial relations do not have inherent outcomes and that racism can persist in marriages. Further, he reported that attitudes against intermarriage were strongest in Bahia, where he found higher incidence of inter-marriage, which suggests stronger opposition to intermarriage in the very regions where it prevails and does not support a thesis of milder "horizontal relations" (Telles 2004). On the macro level, Telles' insight that miscegenation provides an "efficient" system of racial domination perceptively analyses the interaction between vertical and horizontal realms but does not acknowledge that conviviality and racism are intertwined in all sites (Wade 2018), including "good horizontal relations".

In his insightful analysis of social settings, Sansone distinguished “hard” sites where race matters such as work, police encounters, marriage, dating, and associated social contexts such as classrooms, social circles, families, as well as the street from “soft” sites where race does not matter. He delineated the “soft” sites into (1) “racially neutral leisure spaces” such as beaches, bars, carnival, and conversations with neighbours; (2) “implicitly Black spaces”, such as spiritual circles and other religious activities, and (3) “explicitly Black spaces”, such as a *bloco* afro (Afro-Brazilian cultural group). However, if racism can be reproduced within the family, as he acknowledges, why would his “racially neutral spaces” be free of racism? Further, Sansone asserted that skin colour did not matter among friends, which he claimed to be confirmed by the “actual composition of friendship networks”:

> None of those interviewed claimed that color mattered in friendship; almost all claimed to have friends of a different color. I heard repeatedly that it was personality that matters, not skin color (Sansone 2003: 52).

This commentary that colour does not matter to me because I have a friend of a different colour was also offered by some of his respondents who admitted to “not like Blacks” (Sansone 2003: 53). Sansone did not interrogate the relationship between racial prejudice and the view that colour doesn’t matter among friends, which is a key tenet of the racial democracy narrative. He simply accepted their framework, which does not represent convincing support.

While both works offer important insights about the Brazilian racial order, their claims about sites of greater and lesser racism are not persuasive. They do not agree about which sites have lesser or greater racism (Wade 2018), especially disagreeing about dating, marriage, social circles, and families – sites that are central to the racial democracy narrative. Moreover, relations with neighbours, a site of lesser racism agreed upon by Telles and Sansone, is a prime site of racist incidents (Sheriff 2001; Guimarães 2003; Santos 2015). Their other sites of lesser racism, “racially neutral leisure spaces” (Sansone), friendship (Telles), and marriage (Telles) are also sites of racist incidents (Sheriff 2001; Santos 2015). Racist treatment by romantic partners and by their respective families, posited by Telles as a site of lesser racism, has been widely acknowledged in studies of Brazilian racism (Goldstein 1999; Sheriff 2001; Hordge-Freeman 2015; Schucman et al. 2017).

3.2 Technologies of Relational Domination

Although Telles interpreted the presence of Blacks in marriage and neighbourhoods as indicative of less racist social settings, he acknowledged that the “contact thesis” of assimilationist sociology does not actually apply to Brazil (Telles 2004). As discussed,

the contact thesis does not acknowledge that a shared social setting can reproduce asymmetrical relations through a myriad of technologies that insert the oppressed into their own oppression and/or the oppression of others.

Indeed, many Afro-Brazilians share and embrace many of the same stereotypes and preferences as whites (Warren and Twine 2002; Devulsky 2021), and practice racism against other Afro-Brazilians (Twine 1998; Sheriff 2001; Warren and Twine 2002; Hordge-Freeman 2015; Santos 2015, 2018). Black police in Brazil use racist insults against other Blacks (Sheriff 2001) which Devon W. Carbado and Leah Song Richardson called “acting blue” (Carbado and Richardson 2021). Robin E. Sheriff found that aggressors in about half of the cases of racism reported to her were Black (Sheriff 2001). Guimarães estimated that about 37% of the aggressors reported to the police in São Paulo were Black or Brown (Guimarães 2003). Indeed, Afro-Brazilian aggressors used the same racist language of white aggressors (Racusen 2004; Santos 2018). Thus, the presence of Afro-Brazilians in a social setting does not axiomatically constitute a site of lesser racism.

Racist practices against other Afro-Brazilians can be used to obtain temporary benefits. Carbado and Richardson discussed the pressures on Black officers within a police unit to “act blue” and gain greater acceptance in their departments. Black police could share “conscious or unconscious racial biases”, which might lead them to aggressively police other African-Americans, and they could also “experience a set of anxieties or vulnerabilities that increase the likelihood that they will mobilize violence against other African Americans” (Carbado and Richardson 2021: 126). They would “wish to be seen by their white coworkers as ‘Black’ and ‘blue’ together”, and “overpolicing other African-Americans would be one way for Black officers to perform that work” (Carbado and Richardson 2021: 125) as well as to alleviate the other pressures.

The performance of racist practices against others can only be understood in the context of the overall racial structure. Alessandra Devulsky characterized the discriminatory practices of lighter Afro-Brazilians as “trying to transfer the treatment they receive from white people to others” and that this “constitutes a form of acceptance of racial hierarchy and therefore of the relations of domination that operate to your detriment” (Devulsky 2021: 21). Gislene Aparecida dos Santos argued that the racist practices of Blacks and Browns, mostly among families or among friends, indicates the “oppression that occurs within groups of vulnerable people” (Santos 2018: 59). She located these dynamics within questions about identity and internalized oppression:

> Different readings can be made of the phenomenon of internal group oppression: an introjection of the values of the oppressors, alienation, a lack of awareness of belonging to the same vulnerable group, among others (Santos 2018: 60).

The Brazilian racial order is reproduced by racist technologies of the self. Black mothers might require their children to wear clothespins to straighten their noses among other racist technologies (Souza 1983; Hordge-Freeman 2013; Schucman et al. 2017). Hordge-Freeman found that racialized socialization within families constituted "the first site for learning about dominant racial hierarchies" (Hordge-Freeman 2013: 1508). She defined this socialization as a series of "discursive strategies, concrete practices and affective displays that stigmatize black racial features" which "simultaneously reproduces and inverts racial hierarchies" (Hordge-Freeman 2013: 1507). Features such as hair and noses are perceived as more malleable and easier to "straighten" toward the white paradigm. Through racist socialization, Brazilian Blacks have been socialized to "beautify" and whiten their facial features (Jarrín 2015), to lighten their wombs and their offspring (Hordge-Freeman 2015), to generally "know their place" (Dzidzienyo 1971; Gonzalez and Hasenbalg 1982) within the Brazilian racial order. Finally, this racist socialization must be read through the work of Frantz Fanon and Neuza Souza in which Brazilian Blacks were taught to profoundly hate and avoid their own Blackness (Souza 1983; Fanon 1986 [1952]; Prestes 2018).

The reproduction of the racial order through racialist socialization within a family can disaggregate the family. "Two cousins, or two brothers, may not recognize each other as belonging to the same racial group" (Devulsky 2021: 19), also reported by Telles (Telles 2004). Darker-skinned children "tend not to be valued as much as lighter Black children" (Devulsky 2021: 36). Such racist, colourist preferences certainly matter in courtship and marriage (Sheriff 2001; Hordge-Freeman 2013), especially within "mixed" families (Silva and Reis 2011; Schucman et al. 2017). For Santana, "not quite white" *mestiços* encounter greater obstacles in sites that value "aesthetics", including dating, marriage, and service occupations (Santana Pinho 2009: 43).

These social phenomena, internalized racism, racialist socialization, and racist practices by Blacks and Browns, are enacted in a societal structure of colourism (Devulsky 2021) and pigmentocracy (Telles 2014; Góes 2022). Colourism can be understood as "a concept, a category, a practice, but above all an ideology which places Black people in a hierarchy according to their phenotype: close or far from Africanicity, close or far from Europeanness" (Souza Lago et al. 2023: 9). Some prefer to call the Brazilian hierarchy a pigmentocracy (Telles 2014; Góes 2022) because the concept of colourism implies greater complicity with the structure (Góes 2022).

Within the structure of the Brazilian racial order, colourism offers benefits (Burton et al. 2010). First, there is the privilege of "not having to name yourself" (Moreno Figueroa 2010: 390). Second, there can be access to certain occupations, social spaces and social relations (Devulsky 2021). Third, enacting racist practices can curry favour with superiors in the structures of hierarchy (Carbado and Richardson 2021), and

even personal pleasure from externalizing racism (Devulsky 2021). Devulsky rightly emphasized the conditionality and contextuality of these benefits:

> Even though the acceptance of mixed-race Black people in these groups is never complete, since they remain under the yoke of rigorous subalternization, light-skinned black people can achieve a status that is generally prohibited for dark-skinned Black people (Devulsky 2021: 54).

Insofar as a lighter Afro-Brazilian can be both a perpetrator and a victim of racism, her position in each social context must be viewed as limited, contingent and conditional. A partially elevated status attained in one social context is not necessarily transferrable to other contexts and so individuals remain both "outside the excluded category and part of it" (Wade 2022: 171–172). Moreover, colourism produces an alienation through the "symbolic violence" of the processes of racialization and deracialization" (Souza Lago et al. 2023: 3), which places individuals into a kind of limbo:

> This identity limbo into which they are placed also produces two important characteristics of the condition of the *pardo* [Brown] man or woman: doubt and silence. These characteristics produce a subject who is scared to take a position and politicize their Blackness. Doubt is promoted in relation to their racial location, forcing them to question if their living experiences and skin tone truly locate them within the spectrum of Blackness. […] As such, *pardo* identity fragments group cohesiveness (Souza Lago et al. 2023: 6).

These societal phenomena, colourism, racialist socialization, internalized oppression, and racist practices by Blacks and Browns, undermine the assumptions behind the notion of contexts of lesser racism. Instead, Wade seems right in arguing that racism and conviviality can be present in all settings: "We should think about the tension between racial conviviality and racial hierarchy as a constitutive dynamic operating across all social domains, in variable ways" (Wade 2018: 9). This paper asserts that domination can be communicated through convivial relations, as Encarnación Gutierrez-Rodriguez demonstrates in her studies of domestic servants (Wasser 2018; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010).

While all systems of oppression seek to insert the oppressed into agents of oppression, what distinguishes Brazil is that the national narrative of racial democracy legitimizes racist practices by Afro-Brazilians who can claim to be behaving on behalf of the nation. This vital symbolic incentive to use racist technologies against other Afro-Brazilians also includes a language of the nation that justifies racist acts: to have some trace of Blackness or mixedness and therefore to inherently not be racist (Racusen 2004). The non-recognition constituted by these phenomena, which Michael George Hanchard

called “faint resemblance” (Hanchard 1991), resembles the characteristics of prisoners within Primo Levi’s “grey zone” (Levi 1986).

3.3 On Grey Oppression

In “The Gray Zone”, his classic chapter in his last book, *The Drowned and the Saved*, Levi (1986) explored the complex and compromising dynamics facing prisoners and even guards in the concentration camps, ghettos, and other totalitarian settings controlled by the Third Reich. He conceived of the *lager* (concentration camp) as a micro version of the totalitarian state:

> Thus the *lager*, on a smaller scale but with amplified characteristics, reproduced the hierarchical structure of the totalitarian state, in which all power is invested from above and control from below is almost impossible (Levi 1986: 47).

Levy also differentiated the *Lager* from the state in the Third Reich or Stalin’s Soviet Union, within which public opinion, the foreign press or other entities could potentially serve as potential restraints on the regime. In the *Lager*, such restraints were more than “almost impossible” (Levi 1986: 47).

The *Lagers* were run with the assistance of the “functionary-prisoner”, a “new and strange enemy” (Levi 1986: 41) who performed a myriad of tasks deemed necessary to run the camps. This included the more perfunctory: “sweepers, kettle washers, night watchmen, bed smoothers […]., checkers of lice and scabies, messengers, interpreters” (Levi 1986: 44) to the most devastating: “to maintain order among the new arrivals […] who were to be sent into the gas chambers, to extract the corpses from the chambers, to pull gold teeth from jaws, to cut women’s hair, to sort and classify clothes, shoes, and the contents of the luggage, to transport the bodies to the crematoria and oversee the operation of the ovens” (Levi 1986: 50). Levy argued that the assignment of victims to those squads was the third Reich’s most essential and devastating act:

> Conceiving and organizing the squads was National Socialism’s most demonic crime. Behind the pragmatic aspect (to economize on able men, to impose on others the most atrocious tasks) other more subtle aspects can be perceived. This institution represented an attempt to shift onto others – specifically, the victims-the burden of guilt […]. In fact, the existence of the squads had a meaning, a message: “We, the master race, are your destroyers, but you are no better than we are; if we so wish, and we do so wish, we can destroy not only your bodies but also your souls, just as we have destroyed ours” (Levi 1986: 53–54).

The greyness emanated from the ghastly compromises for survival offered desperate prisoners, some of whom were disposed to compromise. Levy perceived multiple layers of hierarchy, privilege and compromise:

> It is a gray zone, poorly defined, where the two camps of masters and servants both diverge and converge. This gray zone possesses an incredibly complicated internal structure and contains within itself enough to confuse our need to judge (Levi 1986: 42).

According to Levi, hunger provided prisoners an overwhelming incentive to work and perform "gray" roles at the camp. Upon arrival at the camp, new prisoners encountered various "functionary prisoners" administering "kicks and punches right away, often in the face; an orgy of orders screamed with true or simulated rage" (Levi 1986: 39), a violent initiation process that often produced a moral collapse within the newcomers:

> The world into which one was precipitated was terrible, yes, but also indecipherable: it did not conform to any model; the enemy was all around but also inside, the "we" lost its limits, the contenders were not two, one could not discern a single frontier but rather many confused, perhaps innumerable frontiers, which stretched between each of us. One entered hoping at least for the solidarity of one's companions in misfortune, but the hoped for allies, except in special cases, were not there; there were instead a thousand sealed off monads, and between them a desperate covert and continuous struggle (Levi, 1986, 38).

Thus, one could not recognize "one's companions in misfortune" but the grey zone constituted a context with continuous struggles on "innumerable frontiers". For many, their initial entrance was lethal because "it is difficult to defend oneself against a blow for which one is not prepared". The entire structure of the camp was designed to "shatter the adversaries' capacity to resist" (Levi 1986: 38).

Levi's work has highly influenced scholarship on violence against women (Card 2000; Waterhouse-Watson and Brown 2011), trauma (Card 2000; Rothberg 2014) and resistance (Mrovlje and Kirkpatrick 2020). The moral dilemmas in contesting systemic injustice may derive from the embeddedness of actors of resistance in the very oppression they oppose (Mrovlje and Kirkpatrick 2020). Card understood Du Bois's discussion of African-American "double consciousness" in such terms:

> [I]t is possible to be less aware and to discover eventually, through reflection, that one's true self has been smothered, rendered inoperative through a combination of fear and the hope of being able to deflect dangers by learning to perceive and think as one's oppressor does (Card 2000: 511).

While acknowledging that underlying duality, Claudia Card distinguished racism, and violence against women from the dynamics of a concentration camp or a ghetto:

> I do not wish to trade on the horrors of the camps and ghettos to bring attention to other evils. From respect for the examples motivating his discussion, I am inclined to speak of "gray areas," rather than "gray zones," in less desperate cases that are in important ways morally analogous. "Zone" suggests an enclosure, such as a prison, whereas "area" is more open-ended (Card 2000: 514).

This paper joins Card in drawing on the greyness in the choices and power relations of the *Lager* without equating racism and other "less desperate" contexts to the concentration camp. Card emphasized that less extreme conditions can still produce "gray" consequences for the oppressed:

> Conditions less extreme can still produce the ambiguities and complexities of grayness. The evils of everyday misogyny, racism, homophobia, and anti-Semitism are not always imminent or looming in the form of well-defined events. They take shape gradually, over a lifetime or even centuries, and are less readily noticed or identified. They may inflict social rather than biological death, or permanent deformation, disability, or unremitting pain. They may produce self-hatred (Card 2000: 525).

Thus, Card argues that gradual "less extreme" forms of oppression can also inflict the kind of "social death" produced within "gray zones". In his work on trauma influenced by Levi, Rothberg argues that trauma studies overemphasize the "extraordinary catastrophes at the expense of insidious, structural, everyday, and slow forms of violence" (Rothberg 2014: 3). In discussing the greyness of Brazilian race dynamics, this paper does not like Brazilian racism to a concentration camp but draws on Levi to examine the structure of racialized power relations in Brazil.

Mbembe's post-colony, an insular autocratic institution, shares relational characteristics of Levi's *Lager*. Conviviality "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'". Subjects in the post-colony have to "continuously bargain and improvise", and will seek to mime, parody and insult the commandment of elites (Mbembe 1992: 5). He argues that the "simulacrum", in which people imitate and fawn over leadership on one day, and rebel on another, distinguishes the post-colony from other forms of domination. Thus, he concludes that "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). These phenomena, which resemble Levi's discussion of relations within the "gray zone", are highly relevant for the functioning of Brazilian racial domination.

Spectacles (Mbembe 1992) of racism enable aggressors to surveil and control all by targeting one or several individuals. From the perspective of aggressors, such a spectacle is a brilliant tactic, because it is possible to scrutinize, dominate, and traumatize an entire audience by targeting selected individuals. How does such domination structure the possibilities for resistance, and what kinds of resistance might be able to emerge in the everyday grey racism of Brazil? The paper examines resistance in the next section.

4. Conviviality and Everyday Resistance to Brazilian Racial Domination

Domination seeks to pre-empt and control resistance. The Brazilian racial order has managed to do so by constructing the identities of Afro-Brazilians and providing incentives to behave complicitly. Given the historical taboo to recognize and contest racism in which Blacks who contested racism were accused as being the real racists (Hanchard 1991), who would wish to claim to have experienced racism (Wade 1997)? The dynamics of the Brazilian racial order portrayed by Neuza Santos Souza affect the targets of racial discrimination and also the bystanders. The response of others to a public act of discrimination shapes the possible responses for individuals targeted by an aggressor. The overall uncertainty about the responses of the audience reflects the greyness within convivial racism. How might Afro-Brazilians respond and resist?

Resistance can only be read in the context of domination (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013; Lilja and Vinthagen 2014; Johansson and Vinthagen 2016; Rosales and Langhout 2019), and acts of resistance are layered, uneven, and not necessarily visible (Scott 1990; Mbembe 1992). In their definitive contribution to the field of everyday resistance, Anna Johansson and Stellan Vinthagen emphasize the interwoven nature of domination and resistance. They understand resistance as an oppositional act:

> within ongoing processes of negotiation between different agents of resistance (the resisters), between the agents of resistance and the agents of power (the targets), and between the two former parties and different observers (Johansson and Vinthagen 2016: 418).

This definition specifies multiple parties in a dynamic of resistance to power, including multiple, "different" observers. Further, resistance is not conceived as a single moment, but as "ongoing processes of negotiation", a series of moves and countermoves over time (Trammel 2018). Their emphasis on "acts" rather than "actors" underlines that actors evolve through their acts over time (Isin 2008; Johansson and Vinthagen 2020).

While some hold that acts of resistance must be readily identifiable to all parties to count as resistance (Hollander and Einwohner 2004), this paper joins the view that acts of everyday resistance can be expressed in a submerged fashion as James C. Scott had initially proposed (Scott 1990). For Johansson and Vinthagen**,** acts of withdrawal and/or self-protection that may not challenge power relations may constitute acts of everyday resistance depending on the evolution of the dynamic (Vinthagen and Johansson 2019). Resisters, like aggressors at their spectacles, may seek to surveil audience response and to behave covertly enough to appear to comply with the relevant rules of domination. Although in Scott's account, the sympathies of audiences can always be deduced from their social positions, contemporary analysts hold that audiences need to be constructed (Isin 2008; Vinthagen and Johansson 2019) especially for racial disputes in Brazil (Souza 1983; Twine 1998).

Audiences remain undertheorized in the everyday resistance literature (Vinthagen and Johansson 2019). Third parties can be anticipated to conduct themselves in covert fashion (Scott 1990), to lean toward the aggressor, either because of the trauma of the spectacle, the wish to avoid the wrath of the aggressor (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006), and/or their internalization of dominant values (Twine 1998); or to lean in multiple directions, which makes it still harder for the injured party to know if she would have any support (Lamont et al. 2016). Their leanings, their representation of their leanings, and the perception of their leanings, shape the evolution of the disputes.

The acts of everyday resistance that might be enacted depend upon the nature of forces in a setting, the relations between these forces, and the balance of those forces. To consider those dynamics, this section addresses the relationship of identity to resistance, the construction and role of third parties, and the repertoires of resistance that a target of discrimination might enact.

4.1 Domination, Identity and Everyday Resistance

Identity and resistance are mutually constituted. The perception of discrimination, the understanding of which treatment constitutes discrimination, and the acknowledgement of the basis of discrimination, which contribute to one's understanding of dignity, are all shaped by someone's subjective identity.

Virtually all analysts hold that racial discrimination is under-reported (Silva and Paixão 2014; Lamont et al. 2016; Daflon et al. 2017), as is domestic abuse, sexual harassment in the workplace, rape, and other acts of sexual assault, and other traumatic crimes of a traumatic nature. Victims of racial discrimination encounter tremendous difficulty in bringing complaints to the law in any country (Miller and Sarat 1981; Bumiller 1988). The power dynamics between principals that lead to a discriminatory incident constrain

the potential complainant from filing a complaint. To admit to racial discrimination in Brazil represents an admission of "being the type of person who might be discriminated against – not only Black, but by association, untrustworthy, stupid and so on – as if it might be their fault that they were discriminated against" (Wade 1997: 57).

Brazilians tend to view discrimination narrowly and are more likely to perceive verbal insults rather than differential treatment as discrimination (Bastos et al. 2017). Only half of those who had been racially insulted and a much smaller fraction (1/16) of those who had been "mistaken" as an employee rather than a customer viewed those experiences as discriminatory (Bastos et al. 2017). Thus, Brazilians are more likely to report differential treatment when it is not labelled "discriminatory" (Daflon et al. 2017). Further, when respondents did acknowledge differential treatment, they were more likely to attribute this to social class or status, such as dress and place of residence, rather than race (Bastos et al. 2017). Given the lack of recognition of discriminatory behaviours and the attribution of such behaviours to multiple axes of identity, Bastos proposed analysing the differential behaviours received by Afro-Brazilians on multiple grounds, which represents an intersectional lens for discrimination (Bastos et al. 2017).

Social ascension was hypothesized by Carl N. Degler as an "escape hatch" for lighter Afro Brazilians, which he described as siphoning the potential for black mobilization against race discrimination (Degler 1986). However, middle class rather than working class Afro-Brazilians seem surer about race discrimination (Lamont et al. 2016), perhaps because their mistreatment cannot be read as class discrimination (Figueiredo 2004). Moreover, as Blacks advance, they may indeed face more discrimination (Silva and Reis 2011). Thus, "*moreno* privilege" (Moreno Figueroa 2010) may be especially attractive to those who lack class mobility.

How does identity shape the recognition of racial discrimination (French 2009)? Identity informed by the *morenidade* paradigm, to identify broadly as Brazilian and to not belong to a particular position (Moreno Figueroa 2010; Souza Lago et al. 2023), has been found to correspond to lower rates of the perception of discrimination (Telles 2004; Daflon et al. 2017). That finding supports Abdias Nascimento's contention that the whitening ethic sought to socialize *pardos* to ally with whites (Ramos 2024). *Negritude* has been found to correspond to higher rates of acknowledging discriminatory experiences (Telles 2004; Daflon et al. 2017). Do discriminatory experiences lead to identifying as Black in Brazil (Silva and Paixão 2014)? Conversely, does Black consciousness, which has increased through mobilization by the Black movement and the adoption of affirmative action on the grounds of race (Rios and Milanezi 2023), promote greater recognition of mistreatment as racial discrimination? Does the lower reporting of racial discrimination by Brown Afro-Brazilians reflect the "absence of racial consciousness" (Silva and Leão 2012)? Education is also correlated with the reporting of discriminatory

experiences (Silva and Paixão 2014), possibly because those with higher education are more likely to identify as Black and to perceive discrimination (Daflon et al. 2017). Certainly, the process of "becoming Black" could be stimulated by the recognition of discriminatory experiences by others (Silva 2015). Most likely, experience and identity are mutually constituted, and the development of greater Black consciousness has promoted and coincided with a greater recognition of racial discrimination.

4.2 Domination, Third Parties and Everyday Resistance

Domination seeks to continually prevent resistance, and the subjectivities of members of the audience are continually reconstructed through spectacles. Third parties are highly contested as objects and as subjects in the reproduction and contestation of power and are also traumatized by domination (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006). The horizontal voice of third parties becomes constrained by domination (O'Donnell 1986). Those dynamics within a racialized grey hierarchy mean that a victim of racism cannot know how her audience will respond.

Witnesses are deeply traumatized by workplace bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006). In one study, equivalent percentages of eye-witnesses and targets (called "target-witnesses"), suffered so intensely from bullying that they needed medical attention afterwards (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006). Both groups feared speaking out and feared reprisals:

> Target-witnesses were allegedly treated more brutally than were witnesses, so they understandably described fear at work that was palpable. Then again, witnesses also described being exceedingly fearful of speaking out and coming to the bully's negative attention. Seeing what happened to others apparently communicated in no uncertain terms what would happen if witnesses became targets. There is no question that bullying environments were marked by profound fear within entire workgroups (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006: 420).

Targets and eyewitnesses also worried recurrently at home about conditions at work. Overall, their emotional responses and resistance to the bullying were "remarkably similar" (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006: 421).

For the aggressor, eyewitnesses give glamour to the performance of racism (Mbembe 1992). As such, spectacles of racist and/or of other hierarchies can be deployed to control an entire workplace or other social setting and surveil and shape the entire audience. This paper hypothesizes that such spectacles are especially functional in a hierarchy characterized by convivial relations to ascertain the prospects of resistance.

During spectacle(s), eyewitnesses can enact multiple actions. They might refrain from the humiliation, which can be viewed as resistance (Johansson and Vinthagen 2016;

Donà 2018). They might engage in convivial behaviour, such as laughter, which tends to serve to support the aggressor. They might only express their views through eye contact and other body language. The aggressor's bravado is likely to be reinforced or restrained by the response of eyewitnesses (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006: 427).

After the spectacle, eyewitnesses interact with each other, the target and the aggressor and express sympathies and leanings. In instances of recurrent spectacles against a target, eyewitnesses are increasingly traumatized and fearful after each successive event. Should eyewitnesses withdraw from the target, the spectacle has engendered ostracism, a violent form of workplace harassment.

In his thoughtful exploration of the utility of Albert Hirschman's exit, voice and loyalty metaphor for circumstances of political repression, Guillermo A. O'Donnell differentiated "horizontal voice" from "vertical voice". "Vertical voice" is that directed toward authorities within the constraints of a political regime, and "horizontal voice" is that articulated to others with whom "we share some relevant characteristics" (O'Donnell 1986: 3), a presumption of collective identity. O'Donnell viewed vertical voice as necessary for the exercise of democracy and horizontal voice as necessary to use vertical voice (O'Donnell 1986). As authoritarian regimes seek to control both vertical and horizontal voice, "oblique voice", an especially covert, undetectable form of horizontal voice, may be deployed (O'Donnell 1986: 16). When "oblique voice" also becomes constrained, which O'Donnell argued occurred within Argentina during the Falklands invasion of 1982, the ability to resist an authoritarian regime has been fully thwarted:

> The rather lonely reflections with which I tried to stand fast to my opinions and values were not enough, not even when I recognized in myself a well-known psychological problem: the immense difficulty of holding on to values and even to elementary factual opinions when most social interactions refute them. This had been quite easy to do before the war, while some oblique voice existed. But it became immensely difficult when even oblique voice was practically obliterated during those awful days. Then, faced with the arguments of most relevant others that I was at best misinterpreting everything, I realized I was losing the social support – cognitive and affective – needed in order to stick to basic opinions and values (O'Donnell 1986: 18).

Thus, even an eminent political scientist found his ability to retain his views undermined by the lack of horizontal voice. Patrícia de Santana Pinho has persuasively argued that the unspoken presumptions of Brazilian racist norms about "place" constitute an authoritarian racial regime (Santana Pinho 2009).

In Brazil, horizontal discussions of racism have been historically limited. Families have not routinely prepared their children for racism (Twine 1998; Hordge-Freeman 2013;

Trammel 2018; Silva Pimentel and Hauck Filho 2021), and social support after racist experiences may not be forthcoming (Twine 1998). This dynamic is currently evolving, and a substantial proportion, perhaps half, of Black families now converse about racism (Hordge-Freeman 2015; Trammel 2018).

In response to racist humiliation, someone might draw upon her familial, social, cultural, and political resources to process the trauma and construct paths of response. Some victims acknowledged difficulty talking about race and racism, especially with white friends (Silva and Reis 2011). Alternatively, she might utilize defence mechanisms to negate racism and/or identify with the aggressor, forms of internalized oppression (Silva Pimentel and Hauck Filho 2021). When horizontal voice with family members and/or co-workers are not be available, the support of NGOs assumes strategic, emotional importance. Many NGO lawyers play multiple social and legal roles in supporting a victim to develop her case.

Whereas Brazilians under-report experiences of racism, they are four times more likely to report witnessing than having experienced racial discrimination (Rennó et al. 2011). Why might the reporting of witnessing discrimination be so much higher than the reporting of experiencing discrimination? The underreporting of discriminatory experiences undoubtedly contributes to the phenomena. While the over-reporting of witnessing discrimination seems possible, there seems to be little reason to suspect that. Brazilians citing racial discrimination do report more discriminatory experiences than other Latin Americans (Rennó et al. 2011). Perhaps incidents in Brazil have more witnesses than victims, and recurrent discrimination might be more likely to be witnessed.

The reporting of witnessing discriminatory experiences varies significantly by race and colour. To what degree do these differences reflect social position, experience, and/or ideological perspectives? Nearly half of Black Brazilians (47%) report witnessing race discrimination, nearly double the reporting by whites (29%) and browns (26%) (Silva and Paixão 2014). Why would Blacks witness almost twice as much racial discrimination as others? Do Blacks occupy distinct social locations in which they are more likely to witness racial discrimination? Or does this finding reflect ideological positioning, that those who identify as Black are more willing to acknowledge and recognize racial discrimination? Why did whites witness slightly more discrimination than Browns? That difference would seemingly reflect willingness to recognize racial discrimination more than social location. There is considerable research to be done about eyewitnesses of racial discrimination.

Victims of racial discrimination cannot know what others perceive nor how they will react. Certainly, eyewitness fear of the aggressor and/or their complicity in his conduct will diminish a victim's field of responses, which will be examined next.

5. Domination and Repertoires of Everyday Resistance

Scholars have recurrently found that Afro-Brazilians tend to avoid contesting racism and that when they do contest racism, they tend to do so politely (Twine 1998; Sheriff 2001; Monteiro 2003; Santos 2015; Lamont et al. 2016). Black males may be especially reticent to bring a complaint to law because the police might transform the circumstance and make him the object of another crime (Silva 1998). (DaSilva 1998) Potential complainants may retaliation by a more powerful aggressor or the police and lean into alternative strategies to contest racism.

Drawing on the everyday resistance literature for an account of the relationship of everyday resistance and domination (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013; Lilja and Vinthagen 2014; Johansson and Vinthagen 2016; Langhout and Rosales 2019), this paper refers to repertoires of resistance in Charles Tilly's sense of "arrays of contentious performances that are currently known and available within some set of political actors" (Tilly 2015: 236). He saw these performances as evolving in a "dynamic drama rather than a stale reenactment of old scenarios" (Tilly 2015: 250), highly relevant for this study of how individuals might deploy "contentious performances".

The structures of domination, societal relations and of the state shape the repertoires that a victim might pursue. The scarcity of horizontal voice (Twine 1998) greatly affects a victim in pursuing her options (Trammel 2018; Silva Pimentel and Hauck Filho 2021). (O'Donnell 1986) One of Lamont's interviewees was hesitant to take legal measures because she did not believe witnesses would support her allegation (Lamont et al. 2016), which undoubtedly dampens contestation. Several lawyers reported refusing to take a racism case without at least one solid eyewitness. Moreover, the access to law has been highly constrained. Afro-Brazilians have been discouraged by police (Sheriff 2001), had their cases misclassified (Santos 2018) and subsequently dismissed for lack of evidence (Lima et al. 2016; Santos 2018). Brazilian judges may not comprehend the contexts and positions of Afro-Brazilians (Racusen 2004; Lima et al. 2016). Moreover, law focuses on an incident rather than a context (Lima et al. 2016: 17), which narrows and transforms the nature of these disputes. The overall difficulty of using anti-discrimination law has been amply discussed (Hernández 2013; Moreno 2022).

This paper claims that limited horizontal voice, the lack of support from eyewitnesses, the weakness of the state in receiving complaints and complainants, and the

aggressor's presumptions of impunity and use of spectacles to dominate produce a grey everyday racism designed to impede resistance. This paper proposes five broad heuristic categories of repertoires of responses to the grey zone racism conveyed through Brazilian conviviality: (1) performing convivial behaviours, (2) exits, internal and external, from the aggressions, (3) negotiating directly with the aggressor, (4) invoking third parties, and (5) collective voicing.

The first two repertoires might be viewed as survival tactics in a moment of difficulty and uncertainty until she has a sense of other options (Johansson and Vinthagen 2016; Trammel 2018; Silva Pimentel and Hauck Filho 2021). The first of these, the performing of convivial behaviours, embodies responses that appear to accept the terms of racial domination. This includes going along with racist jokes (Sheriff 2001), and the "management of self", such as a university professor who put on classical music when stopped by police (Lamont et al. 2016). This is not to say that all convivial behaviour in the face of racial domination constitutes resistance but that such behaviour may be a momentary tactic.

The second category, including withdrawal (Merry 1979), avoidance, and other internal and external "exits", overlaps the first by also constituting stigma management (Goffman 1963; Lamont et al. 2016; Trammel 2018). In the most comprehensive comparative study of responses to racial stigmatization and discrimination, Lamont et al. found that Afro-Brazilians were much more likely to use Goffmanian conflict avoidance techniques to respond to racial discrimination rather than directly confront the aggressor or use law (Lamont et al. 2016). Internal exits include ignoring and not responding to racism (Wade 1997; Warren and Twine 2002; Lamont et al. 2016); withdrawal, doing just what is required (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006); and self-isolation, limiting contact with discriminatory neighbours or co-workers. (Twine 1998; Lamont et al. 2016). An external exit is to quit, transfer, leave a job or community (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006). None of these behaviours challenge the terms of racial domination.

A third category of repertoires is direct negotiation with the aggressor, either of a more convivial or confrontive nature. According to numerous scholars, when the marginalized confront the aggressor, they tend to seek to deflate the conflict (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006; Santos 2015; Lamont et al. 2016; Trammel 2018) rather than challenge the terms of the conflict. The challenges of a more convivial nature include "educating the aggressor" (Lamont et al. 2016), declarations of self-affirmation, challenges to the aggressor, and the threat to use the law. Declarations of self-affirmation reflect Luc Boltanski's thesis that the aggrieved might be motivated based upon self-love, honour and "orders of worth" (Susen 2014). The discourse of rights represents another repertoire to challenge racial domination with an aggressor by warning an aggressor that she is aware of her rights (McCann 2006). In some instances, a victim directly confronted her bully

(Lutgen-Sandvik 2006), even using humour to inform the bully about how his actions had harmed her or others. This paper argues that such repertoires, even when done politely, constitute challenges to the aggressor's performance of domination.

A fourth category of repertoires is to call upon third parties, such authorities either within the institution, or beyond, such as a state agency, or a community entity (Merry 1979). This use of vertical voice requires knowledge, such as how to frame a grievance, allies to support the complaint and complainant, and other forms of horizontal voice. About two-thirds of Pamela Lutgen-Sanvik's interviewees spoke with "union representatives, EEOC staff, board members, physicians, mental health counsellors, attorneys, trusted managers, an agency funder, and a state Legislator" and about one-third learned about bullying and others' experiences in newspapers, magazines, and online sources (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006: 417).

The fifth and last category is the use of collective voice, which could be viewed as horizontal and vertical voice jointly articulated. In this instance, third parties or audience members may become activated through ongoing dynamics to join the dispute (Schattschneider 1968). Collective voice can be coordinated or uncoordinated and might take the form of "contagious voice", in which one voice serves to trigger others (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006). This might take multiple forms such as the public or private shaming of aggressors, gossip; violence; and other forms of retaliation (Merry 1979; Lutgen-Sandvik 2006).

How does resistance unfold in response to recurrent racial workplace harassment? How are domination and resistance mutually constituted? Which repertoires of resistance get invoked, and what role do Goffmanian repertoires, such as "educating the aggressor" play in the ongoing exchanges of domination and resistance?

6. Method

To address these questions about the mutual constitution of racial domination and resistance, the case presented in the next section was selected from over 70 telephone and in-person interviews conducted with racial discrimination victims qua complainants between 2010 until 2014 primarily in the Brazilian southeast and northeast. The study began as participatory action research as the initial interviews were arranged by two Black Movement NGOs in São Paulo (Geledés, the Black Woman's Institute) and Florianópolis (N*ú*cleo de Estudos Negros) and three state agencies in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. A second wave of interviewees was drawn from a sample of complainants who filed *inquéritos* (police investigations) conducted by the Delegacia de Crimes Raciais e Delitos de Intolerância (DECRADI, the specialized police department in São Paulo for crimes of racial prejudice) and the Grupo de Atuação Especial de Proteção

dos Direitos Humanos e Combate à Discriminação (GEDHDIS, the specialized unit in the Public Prosecutor's office in Salvador, Bahia for crimes of racial prejudice) between 2009 and 2013. In the second wave of interviews, numerous interviewees had sought out Black movement lawyers, Black movements NGOs such as the Instituto do Negro Padre Batista, Centro de Estudos das Relações de Trabalho e Desigualdades (CEERT, Center for Workplace Inequalities), Comissão de Igualdade Racial da Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil (OAB-CIR, Brazilian Lawyers Association Commission for Racial Equality) in São Paulo, or specialized municipal agencies for Black community affairs, such as the Centro de Referência Negro (CRN) of the city of São Paulo.

The feminist epistemology of transversality offers an approach to consider my relationship to my interviewees and the Black movement ONGs. Transversality, an alternative to universalism and particularism, begins with feminist standpoint epistemology's insistence that our positionalities shape our viewpoints and that knowledge based upon only one positionality is "unfinished". The "finishing" of knowledge may emerge through a dialogue between multiple positionings (Cockburn 2014: 447). Transversality posits processes of "rooting" and "shifting": "being clear about one's own belonging and sense of self, while at the same time being capable of stepping into the shoes of the other and seeing the world from her point of view" (Cockburn 2014: 442).

While transversality is advanced as a dialogic method, the viability of "shifting" may be contingent on shared experiences or values. Nira Yuval-Davis, Cynthia Cockburn and Patricia Hill Collins discuss transversality in the context of transnational feminism (Cockburn 2014; Collins 2017). Cockburn found that the considerable divide between Israeli and Palestinian women was navigable because they shared being women and they shared values of peace and community (Cockburn 2014). Not all differences are equally shiftable as Gutiérrez-Rodriguez found that the difference in colonial positionalities in her interviews with Latin American domestic workers in Germany mattered more than their shared language and gender (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2006).

My case poses the question whether my positionality can "shift" sufficiently that my research can be considered transversal. My "rooting" begins with my positionality and privilege as a white North American (*estadunidense*, a person of the United States) male researcher, and my "shifting" entails finding a connection to the positionality of my interviewees. In pursuing my research, Black movement activists routinely asked me why I was doing this research. I shared that I had been socialized during the civil rights movement in the US, racialized when I entered college, and subsequently became involved in community civil rights activism. In those conversations, my being Jewish was often taken as the key factor. While I would not equate antisemitism in the US with racism in Brazil (or the US), my "rooting" in that collection of experiences and my own experiences of antisemitism contributed to the viability of my "shifting".

I remain humbled by the depth of the accounts shared with me. My interviewees seemed to value the opportunity to share their experiences. Perhaps humiliation can be easier to share with an outsider. For me, the cumulative effect of hearing their racist experiences was that one day I could not bear to hear any additional racist incidents, which signals to the researcher that a qualitative study has been completed. Certainly, my privileged position allowed me to walk away.

The case of Maira reflects this larger set of complaints that became the subject of investigations. Furthermore, it illustrates the dynamics experienced in an instance of ongoing racial harassment also experienced by many of my interviewees. Moreover, this case illustrates the broader range of repertoires and other phenomena discussed in this paper.

7. Maira's Story

After serving three highly successful months on a new job as a clerk at a coffee shop in São Paulo in 2011, during which time she was named employee of the month, the racist harassment of Maira began:

> I
>
> Maira: The first time, I remember he entered the store and spoke… he was just outside the counter. Then my coworkers said something, I laughed and he said: "What is this *mucama* laughing at? Put this *mucama* in the *tronco*. That little Black girl". He was outside talking about me like that. And then, he didn't stop, he continued again and again…
>
> And whenever he entered the store where I worked, he would come in telling his jokes, and my coworkers would laugh. He spoke and my coworkers would laugh. And I was embarrassed, because I am shy, even if I don't seem it. I couldn't react.
>
> Seth: That first day, did you think it was racism?
>
> Maira: Yes. Wow, it landed on me like a bomb. I felt totally humiliated.
>
> (Notes/transcription from interview conducted with and translated by the author, July 5, 2013.)

A *mucama* was a household servant during slavery, a nursemaid who tended children and also "satisfied the needs of the slaveowner" (Gonzalez and Hasenbalg 1982: 229). Thus, her supervisor called her a slave, a highly sexualized slave, and threatened to lock her in a pillory (*tronco*), used to publicly shame a slave. *Mucamba* is also used pejoratively against practitioners of *candomblé*, an African religion that developed in

the northeast in the 19th century. The denigration of Maira as a *mucamba* must be viewed within an intersectional framework (Collins and Bilge 2016; Caldwell 2007) in which a Black woman from the northeast in Brazil was othered on racial, gendered, and possibly religious grounds and also projected into a violent enslaved past.

This racist harassment simultaneously humiliated and silenced Maira in front of her co-workers through a performance laced with enough "humour" to become a repertoire of everyday life in the coffee shop. This "recreational racism" (Moreira 2019) may especially be deployed as a response to social ascension (Souza 1983; Trindade 2020; Melo 2025). The appellate labor judge in her subsequent litigation found evidence that Maira had been targeted after having been named employee of the month.

Maira's initial response was to behave "convivially" and even laugh at her own expense. In their detailed ethnography of the role of racial humour in reproducing the national colour-blind ideologies of Mexico and Peru, Christina A. Sue and Tanya Golash-Boza found that targets of racial jokes often conformed to social norms "to either accept (or perform acceptance) of racial humor" (Sue and Golash-Boza 2013: 1590), as face-saving behaviour by individuals seeking to "belong" to the nation.

The aggressor's "humour" fully penetrated everyday relations at work and co-workers increasingly participated in the recurrent spectacle of racial domination. The spectacle became part of the "conviviality" of the luncheonette, in which the aggressor performs his power with an obscenity, a vulgarity and "loudness" (Mbembe 1992) that conveys domination through with "conviviality" (Costa 2019). A prime exemplar of this racist conviviality was the racist insult communicated by one of Maira's colleagues while he gave her a hug.

The aggression escalated with more than 20 incidents over a six-month period instigated by her supervisor, other senior staff, and even her work colleagues. On at least one occasion, the aggressor explicitly called her colleagues over to hear his aggressions. They called her terms, such as a *galinha d'angola* (guinea fowl) *and* "Xica da Silva*"*, also references to slavery. One day, her supervisor reprimanded her for not wearing a hairnet, and then told her to wear white lipstick in the future so he could see her, a vile insult about her skin tone. Her body became a site of racial discourse and their language of humiliation with these references to slavery and offenses about her appearance (Gomes 2003; Gonzalez and Hasenbalg 1982; Caldwell 2007), clearly intended to wound (Matsuda 1993; Mbembe 2019) and reify the social distance between a Brazilian Black woman and her colleagues (Guimarães 2003).

Maira's supervisor repeated the insults often enough that others repeated and embellished them, including other senior staff as well as her colleagues, giving her workplace a nightmarish quality. Workplace humiliations reproduce the hierarchies of

race, class and gender (Guimarães 2003) by communicating to the target and her audience, who may also suffer trauma (Nelson and Dunn 2011; Rubino and Cortina 2007; Lutgen-Sandvik 2006) and who increasingly participated in and mimicked the language of the shift supervisor (Bhabha 1984; Mbembe 2019).

Within the literature about workplace abuse, mobbing, the collective harassment of an individual worker, is viewed as the most extreme form of abuse. The violence (Cavalcanti 2018) of these repeated incidents, as habitual humiliation that became incorporated into the daily working relations, conveys numerous health risks, including stress. (Valdivieso and Padila 2012; Banks et al. 2006) Indeed, Maira cried incessantly at work and home, dreaded going to work, especially when her shift supervisor arrived, and had great difficulty sleeping. She became depressed and suffered memory loss, an accelerated heartbeat, and other health complications. She was reluctant to tell her psychiatrist and her doctor of this attack on “the intangible (dignity, self-esteem)” (Mbembe 2019: 58), and she did not share this with her family.

The aggressor’s ability to attract her co-workers to join or silently witness his aggressions certainly contributed to his bravado. For Maira, the construction of complicit third parties meant that she had no horizontal voice at work and that she became increasingly isolated. Of her eight colleagues, only two refrained from laughter. At least three actively joined in the harassment: one who Maira had considered a friend, and one who is Black.

> II
>
> Seth: How were you understanding this situation in which your co-workers, who had liked you, were now treating you like this?
>
> Maira: Yes! I did not understand them! They said that they thought it was funny, that they laughed because it was funny. They thought I was enjoying it because I was laughing. But I was not laughing. They thought I was enjoying it and that’s why they kept laughing. Damn! Oh, I asked them, who among them was vulnerable to be offended? No one! Because, they answered, that was it. And they claim to this day, that I liked it when he cursed me out, when he said those things. That I laughed, that I was among them laughing and enjoying it, too.
>
> So much so that it was Isabela and Ana Thaís who testified against me. Isabela, because they say she is very close to me, she said she was my friend, but in fact she was my enemy. And Ana Thaís, because she is Black and that she says she didn’t hear any racism. That if there was racism, she would feel it. But he didn’t speak to her directly, he spoke to me…

> Seth: Does the fact that Blacks participated (in this racism) have any significance for you?
>
> Maira: Ah, wow, it was very… That hurt me the most, because she kept saying: "Ah, I'm Black and I don't care if someone calls me Black".
>
> But I wanted her to understand that they were not calling her Black but me. Because she is Black, but with a lighter skin tone than mine. Much clearer, and her hair is not as curled. Of the group, I was the blackest.
>
> And I thought that even though she was not offended, she would still respect my pain. And she didn't respect it, she criticized me. She was one of those who criticized me the most.

The response of co-workers, that Maira allegedly enjoyed her shift supervisor's joking, is a corollary of the shift supervisor's aggressive use of racist humour. Maira's co-workers, socialized to accept and perform racial humour (Sue and Golash-Boza 2013), only reported signals that she was enjoying the humour. Since that rationale figured prominently within the aggressor's defence in the subsequent litigation, and since the aggressor's lawyer was present during their testimony, this testimony was likely coached and may also have reflected their own fear of retaliation (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006) by the shift supervisor.

Almost all of Maira's co-workers laughed during the harassment: only one white and one Black co-worker refrained. Of the five or six co-workers who laughed at the racist insults, two were Black. Although the majority of co-workers who participated were white, it was the participation of Black co-workers and one close white friend that especially stood out for Maira.

Aggressors have clearly recognized how to deploy race to defuse allegations of racism. In response to a racism allegation, an aggressor emphasizes his *morenidade* and any personal connections to blackness. Further, he cultivates Blacks within the social context to testify to his Brazilianness and anti-racist character. This strategic role of Afro-Brazilians in racial disputes extends to the workplace and other social contexts as well as the legal realm. This dynamic reflects the ideological ambitions of Brazil's whitening project to organize *pardos* to ally with whites (Ramos 2024).

Maira, whose own racial consciousness had not been primarily bounded by this racist socialization project, was especially devastated by the participation of Black co-workers in the harassment and their eventual testimony on behalf of the aggressor, phenomena of a racialized grey hierarchy. The strategy of inserting Blacks into racial domination is not simply to prevail in court but especially to pre-empt resistance. Mbembe warns that nanoracism is exercised "above all to tire out the bodies of those under it, to

'disempower' them not so much in an effort to make them economically productive as to render them docile" (Mbembe 1992: 13). Nonetheless, Maira persevered.

III

After at least three months of this intensifying racist harassment, Maira sought to get her supervisor to stop:

Seth: Did you ask him to stop?

Maira: I asked, but he did not take it seriously, because he thought I didn't have the courage to report him.

Seth: When you asked him, do you remember what you said?

Maira: I told him to stop, otherwise I was going to file a complaint.

Seth: And how did he react?

Maira: He didn't take it seriously when I spoke. In fact, he said: "Ah, go ahead"… he said: "The police chief is also racist!"….

Seth: When you said to him, "stop or I will file a complaint", what led you to do so?

Maira: Because in front of my colleagues, I was ashamed to ask him to stop, because they were laughing, everyone was laughing. When I was alone with him, I told him – stop! Even a co-worker of mine or maybe her co-worker laughed and joined in. Oh, I told her: I'm going to charge you and Joaquim. But she still spoke to him and they didn't take it seriously. Then, Roberto, another co-worker who had heard everything, repeated it all to me again, who along with his friend, Monica, always called me a "cheetah monkey". I think she called me a "cheetah monkey" four times. And I had just warned her and other co-workers had also warned her. And she still didn't stop. Then, she apologized to me. But then, she repeated it, she called me "cheeta monkey" and "horrible Black". I didn't stand for it, I denounced the three of them!

To challenge the racism while being humiliated through racist humour was an act of considerable difficulty and courage. The laughter of colleagues created a hostile environment which impeded her ability to challenge her supervisor.

The retraction of her co-worker's apology triggered Maira's complaint against the long-standing harassment. That she had even contemplated accepting that apology indicates how worn down she had become. Her efforts to negotiate directly with coworkers and her aggressor had been fully thwarted and, as with other interviewees, her subsequent

resistance occurred only after the domination had become fully unbearable (Bumiller 1988).

Ultimately, her supervisor's refusal to respond to her numerous pleas to stop the harassment angered Maira profoundly. In her insightful critique of the methodological and substantive racial limitations of Ervin Goffman's tract on stigma, Imogen Tyler discussed similar phenomena experienced by civil rights activists at luncheonettes and elsewhere in the US South in the 1950s and 1960s (Tyler 2018). Seeing that her initial repertoires of resistance, self-management, withdrawal and especially negotiation, were being summarily and haughtily dismissed, Maira pursued multiple third parties to secure justice. In particular, it was the multiple services at the CRN, the social, psychological, and juridical services, which supported her and enabled her to formally denounce the racism, which led to the police to opening a formal investigation for racism.

The social service unit of the CRN recommended that Maira take a week off for treatment and recovery from the trauma. When she returned to work, a manager sought her out and sympathetically observed that Maira appeared depressed. Maira shared the story of her harassment and her decision to take legal action against Mateus. The manager relayed much of this to Mateus and other employees and told them to cease the harassment.

In response to the manager's communication, Mateus tightened his pressure on her colleagues especially to confirm whether Maira was really filing charges. In so doing, Mateus complained to them that Maira had even spoken to a manager about the situation. He claimed to have only been kidding, that had he known that Maira was going to take it seriously, he would have not behaved that way. Maira's colleagues called her at Mateus's behest to find out if she really was pursuing the complaint against him:

> IV
>
> Maira: He had turned these two, I. and T., against me. He kept playing the victim and they kept saying that I was wrong and that I should not have reported it. That I had been in the thick of the kidding around and that I was enjoying it. That I never asked him to stop.
>
> And then it started. He stopped talking to me. He stopped giving me orders. When he needed to talk to me, he would talk to I., who was his friend. He would talk to her, and she would talk to me. "Ah, João said this and that. I don't know where you were when he told me".
>
> Mateus communicated all working instructions, which especially included criticisms and onerous tasks, through co-workers, especially I. Two other co-

> workers most involved in the harassment also stopped talking to her. Among other demeaning accusations, her co-workers even accused Maira of seeking financial gain. At about this time, her photo on the wall for being designated employee of the month was disfigured. In the appellate labour court decision, the judge found that Mateus:
>
> stopped speaking to Maira, looking toward her in an intimidating manner, with disdain and contempt and systematically criticizing her work, isolating her and punishing the employee with unjustified verbal and written warnings (TRT2, 42ª VT, Proc. N. 0000328-65.2013.5.02.0042).

This treatment illustrates the use of the evil eye (Sheriff 2001) by a superior with power. As a consequence of his demeanour and behaviour, Maira became very fearful of Mateus's potential for violent retaliation.

Mateus's domination of Maira and the workplace had been predicated on his assumption that she would never dare report him. His certainly about that assumption undermined the viability of her threats to call the police (McCann 2006). Roberto DaMatta's argument that positionality in society preceded and prefigured the use of law certainly pertains to Mateus who thought the police would surely "know who they were talking to" (DaMatta 1991).

Ironically Mateus's continued ignoring Maira's threats to use the law triggered her actual use of the law. Once angered, Maira, like other of my interviewees, was relentless in her "shopping" for justice, in which she filed complaints in numerous public agencies hoping that one might satisfactorily process her demand. Once he realized that he was being charged for racist behaviour, he dropped the pretence of "recreational humour" and organized the workplace to fully ostracize Maira and drive her out.

8. Discussion

How might we understand Maira's experiences of racist domination and emerging everyday resistance? As her case shows, domination and resistance can only be understood as competing and interlocking dynamics within the same domain. Her experience cannot be understood without taking account of her co-workers and her supervisor's daily behaviour, which her coworkers mimicked over time. I argue that it was the response of co-workers that produced her ostracization in the workplace and that also closed off the prospects for horizontal voice, necessary to articulate vertical voice (O'Donnell 1986).

The role of humour in the reproduction and escalation of the racist harassment and overall domination of the workplace cannot be overstated (Moreira 2019). Her

supervisor's "humour" served to lure her co-workers to actively participate in the harassment. Their complicity and participation in the harassment lent considerable force to the aggression. For the aggressor, the selective racist harassment of one target is an extremely efficient manner to control an entire workplace.

The title characterizes Brazilian everyday racism as grey because of its resemblances to Primo Levi's "gray zone", which disembodied all who inhabited it. As Levi, Mbembe and others have insisted, domination is not simply manifest between "perpetrators" and "victims" but a "spectacle" in which many perform varying, intermediary roles, and the actions of all reinscribe the spectacle. The intermediaries, Maira's co-workers, operated within a racialized grey hierarchy in which she could not know how they would respond. Even co-workers who Maira had regarded as friends sided against her in daily life and before the law. A target of racial discrimination in a grey racial hierarchy cannot know the racial consciousness and the overall subjectivity of her colleagues.

Maira's initial responses to the domination incorporated the first two repertoires discussed, convivial behaviour and avoidance strategies, both stigma management strategies (Lamont et al. 2016). As her co-workers insisted, she likely smiled in the initial stage(s) of the racist harassment at her own expense, at a moment when her behaviour needed to conform to domination. She subsequently negotiated with her aggressor, including multiple threats to use the law, and similarly warned a co-worker who was also harassing her. Neither her supervisor nor her co-workers relented. She then invoked third parties by reporting the racist harassment to a manager at work and to authorities and thereby enacted four of the five repertoires of resistance I posited.

How did this grey racial domination shape Maira's choice of repertoires of resistance? The absence of horizontal voice greatly impeded her resistance. Only after she had consulted with different lawyers, psychologists, and other professionals in an NGO and a city agency promoting the Black community was she able to reconstruct herself. As suggested by Johannson and Vinthagen, her initial stigma management strategies, which did not challenge the domination, were highly functional until she discovered other options. (Johannson and Vinthagen 2019) I interpret her initial repertoires as temporal strategies of recovery and surveillance of her colleagues and the overall circumstance. Her opening negotiations with her aggressor certainly corresponded to expectations of milder complaining (Lutgen-Sandvik 2006; Lamont et al. 2016; Trammel 2018). Angered by the lack of response to her threats to use the law led to her reporting the aggression to authorities at work and beyond.

Why did she delay complaining to authorities? Maira retrospectively wished that she had complained sooner. Certainly, she had paid a steep personal price for the continued racist onslaught. Perhaps she had hoped that Mateus would relent, or to get support

from some of her co-workers, especially those who she had thought were friends. Undoubtedly, she needed time and support, which she received from the CRN, to regain self-esteem and to recognize that she had options. She knew she did not wish to report Mateus to the local police with whom he was friendly. Thus, I hypothesize that when the domination persists and the aggrieved has no horizontal support at work or the social context, her ability to resist depends upon getting social and other support from an ONG, her family and/or another entity (Morgan 1999).

This study is based upon a single case drawn from a larger set of interviews which were selected from a larger universe of police investigations conducted in São Paulo and Salvador. This case is certainly not representative of all racist experiences nor even of all complainants of racism but only of those sufficiently mobilized to have their complaints investigated. Those who invoked the law pursued other repertoires prior to and concomitant with the legal repertoire. This study cannot suggest how often Goffmanian stigma management strategies might be associated with other acts of resistance but only that Goffmanian practices have been utilized by victims who subsequently engaged in negotiation and other acts of resistance that challenged racist hierarchy.

9. Conclusion

This is the first sociolegal study of the evolving nature of racial discrimination disputes in Brazil. By examining police investigations combined with personal interviews of individuals contesting racial discrimination, the study is able to examine the multiple repertoires utilized in contesting racism and the interaction of domination and resistance as a series of moves and countermoves. Further, the combination of official records and personal interviews illuminates the moves and countermoves that occurred. In Maira's case and others, a victim was socially punished by her colleagues, indeed ostracized, for bringing and sustaining a case, illustrating the interpenetration of law and social norms.

Although all systems of oppression seek to insert the oppressed into their own oppression, Brazilian racial domination offers Afro-Brazilians the privilege of limited contextual deracialization and a national narrative to motivate and legitimate their participation in the oppression of others. By limited contextual deracialization, an Afro-Brazilian may secure deracialization within a specific social setting as a reward for behaviour complicit with the oppression of others. The contextual deracialization is then conditional upon that behaviour and only pertains to the specific social setting. Outside of that setting, the individual would be subject to racial profiling and other forms of racial domination.

This paper does not view racism as a Black-on-Black problem but argues that one of the brilliant features of the Brazilian racial order is that it has managed to make racism palatable for Blacks or Browns to use against each other. The paper argues that the success and durability of the Brazilian racial order lies in its ability to pre-empt and minimize challenge because of its efficacy in inserting the oppressed into the oppression. In this view, the power of racial democracy rests upon its ability to animate the behaviour of some Afro-Brazilians (Twine 1998).

The national narrative contains a built-in rationale for aggressors to proclaim their Brazilianness – such as having a Black ancestor, spouse, curly hair, etc. – to inherently not be racist and therefore be incapable of committing an act of racial prejudice. In the first decade of the anti-discrimination law, judges accepted a defence of "Brazilianness", even though there is no evidence that being Brown or Black inoculates someone from discriminating (Racusen 2004). In the past decade, judges have increasingly ruled that such a defence is immaterial to whether a prejudicial act was committed (Racusen 2019).

The national narrative has historically promoted the lightening of Brazilian Blacks and Browns through disciplinary and biopolitical methods, in which individuals had learned how to manage their selves. Being Brown can offer status for romantic partners and occupational advantages (Telles 2004; Devulsky 2021). That darker Afro-Brazilians report more discrimination supports Telles' argument about Brazil as a colour pigmentocracy (Telles 2014). Identity, whether someone is influenced by *morenidade* or *negritude*, and a sense of belonging to the nation and/or a collectivity, is mutually constituted with one's recognition of discriminatory experiences. The century of lightening of many Brazilians has been reversed since the Black movement's census campaign of 1991 (Nobles 2000), its transnational mobilization for the 2001 UN World Conference on racism in Durban and subsequent global articulations, and the implementation of affirmation action over the past two decades (Rios and Milanezi 2023).

Elmer Eric Schattsneider posited in his classic work on the socializing of a dispute that the more powerful party would seek to avoid a dispute and minimize its sphere of visibility, based upon the assumption that power would prefer to be invisible whenever possible (Schattschneider 1968). In this case, a brazen aggressor repeatedly provoked Maira and elevated the visibility of the dispute. Why did he behave that way rather than dominate Maira privately? This paper hypothesizes that he behaved that way to manage a workplace through daily relations capable of sustaining multiple registers and multiple interpretations. Brazilian "sociological racism" (Balibar 1991), upheld by but not doctrinally established by the state, must be performed socially. Although many view segregatory racism articulated by the state as the most severe mode of racism,

"sociological racism" may be more enduring because of the utility of closer contact between aggressors and dominated. This paper hypothesizes that close contact enhances domination – that the closer aggressors operate relative to their victims and intermediaries, the more knowledge they possess about how to dominate them. Within convivial social relations, the aggressor may not know the real views of the dominated and may require spectacles to surveil the dominated (Mbembe 1992). Thus, this paper argues that the Brazilian racial order employs technologies of proximity and affect (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010).

Second, in responding to authoritarian personal control, Afro-Brazilians have internalized the norms of the racialized hierarchy, which Michel Foucault characterized as a "technology of the self", with devastating consequences for Brazilian Blacks and the country. The notion of "knowing one's place" (Santana Pinho 2009) shapes occupational aspirations (Hasenbalg 1979), the use of public spaces (Nascimento 1982), and daily life at work as suggested by Maira's case. The internationalization of this norm surely reflects Foucault's discussion of internalized racism as an "auto-referential form of racism that is concerned with the composition, the reproduction, and the development of the population by isolating and excluding the abnormal" (Su Rasmussen 2011: 38).

Third, the dynamics of "becoming Black" in Brazil masterfully treated by Neusa Souza must be mapped to these racist incidents. Souza's argument about the Fanonian anti-blackness of the Brazilian racial order makes "becoming Black" a project of self-recognition (Souza 1983). The victim who perceives an experience as racist is dependent upon the "racial fluency" (Hordge-Freeman 2015) and overall subjectivities of her co-workers and others in her audience. Within the Brazilian racial order, the victim seeking to contest racism will not know if anyone will support her allegation (Lamont et al. 2016), which this paper characterizes as a racialized grey hierarchy. This paper views these dynamics as a collective action problem in which a victim faces considerable uncertainty about the consciousness, positioning, and responses of others.

Resistance is fully informed by its relationship to power and domination. Both the fragility of resistance and the persistence of human dignity are both highly evident in the case presented and in other interviews. In a circumstance that induces the complicity of colleagues and other eyewitnesses, victims encounter a vicious hazing dressed as humour. This "recreational racism" is performed via a commanding performance to bind all parties to the relationship (Mbembe 1992).

Resistance under conviviality bides its time as the victim of aggression also needs to surveil her circumstances. Consequently, resistance assumes forms that comport

with the conviviality of a setting or that deploy Goffmanian techniques to avoid the domination. She may adopt other repertoires to negotiate with the aggressor and/or the bystanders, to appeal to their humanity, to recognize her humanity, and to appeal to law and morality. While Lamont and others accurately describe such repertoires as seeking to educate the aggressor, this paper contends that the repertoire of negotiating directly with the aggressor can be highly functional especially when the positionality of others remains unclear. Moreover, that repertoire may lead toward other repertoires such as collective voice against the aggressor and/or the calling-in of authoritative third parties. When domination wears grey, resistance tries on innumerable garbs in response.

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