

Doing Business in the Black:
Afro-Brazilian Entrepreneurship as Resistance
to Anti-Blackness in São Paulo, Brazil

By

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Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Latin American Studies

May 10, 2018

Nashville, Tennessee

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To Ms. Charles for your endless love,
support, and for believing
a little Black boy
from Gary could be a
scientist

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I must express my gratitude to the Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs that shared their stories with me. Their critiques of structural racism and their mounted entrepreneurial responses encourage me to continue the struggle for freedom and social justice particularly in entrepreneurial ways. I am eternally indebted to Adriana Barbosa for connecting me with many of the participants in my study. Without her, this study does not exist. I have to acknowledge Danie Dorvil and Danuza Novaes for facilitating amazing experiences in Brazil, almost every single day was an adventure. Moreover, I am grateful to Danuza for showing me São Paulo through the experiences of Black Brazilians, particularly ones concerned with making Brazil a better place.

I am immensely appreciative of the Center for Latin American Studies and all of the staff, who supported me greatly throughout my time at Vanderbilt. I would like to thank Dr. Jane Landers, who inspired me to consider maroon communities in the Americas across time and space. I would also like to thank Dr. Celso Castilho and Dr. Marshall Eakin for strongly encouraging me to study Brazil. In order to study Brazil, I had to speak Portuguese which without Dr. Benjamin Legg and Dr. Emanuelle Oliveira-Monte wouldn't have been possible. I will always be indebted to them for giving me the gift of Portuguese.

A thesis is never completed without a system of support. The night I thought I was going to give up on writing my thesis you gave me a juice box and helped me reframe my argument. You da real MVP, thank you, Mariann VanDevere. I am grateful to Abraham Liddell, Kevin Lubin, Magana Kabugi, and Webster Heath for enabling me to build community with successful Black male graduate students. I admire you all. To my Peabody crew, Marlina Debreaux, Misha Inniss-Thompson, and Jonathan Williford, I will never forget how much you all celebrated me for big and small wins. I appreciate each of you for openly showing me compassion in the

simplest acts. I am unable to express how grateful I am to Kymberly Byrd for introducing me to the Peabody crew. I haven't met many people by happenstance that have completely changed my life. Kymberly, you have made an indelible mark on my heart. Big shout out to the men's club volleyball team for providing a space and time weekly to not work on my thesis!

To my advisors, Dr. Christy L. Erving and Dr. Gabriel A. Torres Colón Torres, I respect and admire you both. You all have set the example for the type of professor and scholar I want to be. Over the last two years, you all have helped me transform my thesis from an idea into a finished project; and, during the process, I have become a more critical thinker and better writer. For your never-ending patience, encouraging words, and tender support, I am both appreciative and indebted. Although, I am unable to pay it back, I will always pay it forward.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends. To the Benn Torres family, thank you for allowing me to become the newest member of the family. When I couldn't see my own family, you all provide me with love, food, shelter, and many many beers, what more can one require. To my brother and daddy, thanks for moving me four different times, I couldn't have done it without you all! To my mom, granny and sister, thank you for being my inspiration; all that I am, or hope to be, I owe to them.

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Introduction

Diariamente a gente convive com racismo e nos negócios não são diferentes. Abrir uma empresa de moda, negra, é abrir um espaço que vai confrontar esse racismo estrutural, essa estrutura. Sem dúvida, vai ser um espaço de resistência, um tijolinho no meio dessa estrutura.

Daily we coexist with racism and in business it is no different. Open a fashion company, a black one, it is a space that will confront this structural racism, this structure. Without a doubt, it will be a space of resistance, a little brick in the middle of this structure.¹

Anna (pseudonym), Afro-Brazilian entrepreneur

With over 69,000 subscribers, I first encountered Anna, a digital influencer, an activist, and a successful entrepreneur discussing issues of race, beauty, empowerment and feminism on her YouTube channel. Anna is a proud black woman that understands the experience of other black people have an effect on herself. With that understanding of the world, Anna uses her platforms and business to try to make the world a little better for all black people, especially black women.

By juxtaposing business and racism, Anna's commentary theorizes entrepreneurship as resistance. It is clear from the first sentence of the quote that racism manages human and economic livelihood in Brazil. Anna offers that businesses are impacted daily by racism, disabusing any notion of the market being race-neutral. By the second sentence, Anna articulates that a business can confront racism; moreover, she emphasizes that a "black" business confronts structural racism. She highlights that the black business is a site of resistance while simultaneously accounting for the magnitude of said resistance by using the diminutive of the word brick (*tijolinho* vs *tijolo*). She does not romanticize the power of a single black business resisting structural racism. Furthermore, the use of the word "confront" versus "dismantle," for example, sets reasonable expectations of the role of business in undermining structural racism. At the same time, using the metaphor of "a little brick in the middle of this structure" allows one to read the quote as hopeful or even visionary—enough bricks can make a difference.

¹ All translations are mine unless otherwise stated. The quote originated from an interview I conducted with Anna (pseudonym) in São Paulo, Brazil this summer.

Just as Anna places resistance in her analysis of structural racism and business, I argue that Afro-Brazilians resist through their entrepreneurial activity. Using various forms of ethnographic methods including interviews, site visits, and participant observation, I examine how Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs resist anti-blackness through their products, labor, and a process I call *aquilombamento* (the act of creating or meeting in a maroon community).² Building on the work of scholars like Wingfield and Taylor (2016), Mitchell-Walthour (2018), and Vargas (2018), my thesis (1) offers fresh insight into global black entrepreneurial practices and black urbanity; (2) elucidates the role of business in black placemaking; (3) contributes to a divergent theory in ethnic entrepreneurship which sees racial discrimination as cause for entry into business; and, (4) reframes the black entrepreneur from a deficient archetype to a model of resistance. By using a lens of resistance as a method for analyzing black entrepreneurship, my project serves as an intervention to further theorize the innovative ways black entrepreneurs mobilize their businesses to subvert society's devaluation of blackness. Furthermore, my work contributes to ethnic entrepreneurship scholarship by noting the specific ways black entrepreneurs center blackness in their products, labor and *aquilombamento*.

Background: Previous Ethnic Entrepreneurship Research

In traditional sociological ethnic entrepreneurship research, two models explain ethnic economic activity—middleman minorities and collectivism. In the first model, middleman minorities act as brokers or go-betweens for white and ethnic minority clientele (Bonacich 1973). Bonacich (1973) argues that typically, whites prefer not to do the work of middleman entrepreneurs as it is often viewed as low-status work. Thus, middleman minority business-owners take on this “undesirable work” by interacting with minority groups and bridging the status gap between rich

² Roberts (2015) writes the following: “Marronage (*marronage, maroonage, maronage*) conventionally refers to a group of people isolating themselves from a surrounding society in order to create a fully autonomous community” (4). These communities go by various names: maroon societies, *quilombos, palenques, mocambos, cumbes, mambises, rancherias, ladeiras, magote, and manieles*.

and poor. Typically, the archetypal middleman businesses are small convenience stores and their occupations tend to be in trade or commerce of some sort. Current literature situates Black and Latinx entrepreneurs with middleman minorities theories (Butler 2005; Vallejo and Canizales 2016). For example, studies use the concept of middleman minorities to explain the role of high-skilled minorities providing products typically reserved for high-status groups to low-income minorities (e.g. wealth managers, attorneys). On the other hand, the second model, collectivism, places more emphasis on the social structure that creates the growth of ethnic enclaves. It refers to the development of an ethnic community creating multiple businesses that primarily employ and service their specific ethnic group. Occasionally, this is referred to as an ethnic enclave or an ethnic enclave economy (Achidi Ndofor and Priem 2011). In the earlier literature (Bonacich 1973; Portes and Jensen 1989), ethnic entrepreneurs were theorized to fill gaps due to lack of services from whites and created stand-alone ethnic focused communities.

The earlier models *describe* the phenomena of ethnic economies but did not assess *why* some ethnic groups failed at business while others succeeded. Consequently, researchers took on the mantle to explain ethnic group disparities in entrepreneurial success (Light and Gold 2000; Portes and Rumbaut 200; Sanders and Nee 1996). One explanation is developed through resource disadvantage theory. Light and Gold (2000) argue groups with fewer resources are less skilled in using all forms of capital (human, social, economic) required for entrepreneurship, which results in differential entrepreneurial success rates. As such, the authors offer resource disadvantage theory to explain the gap in business ownership between Cubans and Koreans relative to Black Americans and Mexicans. As an alternative, some scholars argue that social networks explain ethnic gaps in entrepreneurial success (Sanders and Nee 1996). Sanders and Nee (1996) assert that social ties are stronger among certain ethnic immigrant groups, which aid in the development of business ownership. For them, strong social networks explain why Korean

immigrants have created more business development than Mexican immigrants. Considering both resources and social networks, Portes and Rumbaut (1996, 2001) assert that individual, group, and structural factors influence entrepreneurship. Portes and Rumbaut (1996, 2001) argue structures (e.g., government public policy) largely curate the likelihood of ethnic business development. For example, Cubans' refugee status enabled government support (e.g., student and business loans). This factor coupled with their high pre-migration levels of economic and social capital created the oft-studied prosperous Cuban community (Portes and Bach 1985). In contrast, the cases of Haitian and Mexican migrants offer examples of how low to nonexistent government support in the immigration process can stifle ethnic business development (Wingfield and Taylor 2016).

The aforementioned research investigates ethnic entrepreneurship to better understand the creation of an ethnic business enclave, ethnic disparities in entrepreneurship, and the connection of structural forces to social networks. However, studies from the earlier literature rarely focus on black entrepreneurship or the experience of black entrepreneurs. In general, ethnic entrepreneurship scholarship often frames black entrepreneurs as unsuccessful without systematically analyzing ethnoracial discrimination or anti-blackness (Butler 2005, Feagin and Imani 1994, Gold 2016, Wingfield and Taylor 2016). To that end, I shift to scholarship specifically focused on black entrepreneurs.

Black Entrepreneurship in The U.S.

In his comprehensive monograph, Butler (2005) chronicles, from the eighteenth century until the present, the history of black entrepreneurship in the US, demonstrating a compelling account of omnipresent racial discrimination. Originally published in 1991, he argues that the ethnic entrepreneurship literature ignores the long tradition of black businesses to instead emphasize the lack of black entrepreneurial history and its "failures." He underscores the unique challenges —

including racism and the “economic detour” (restricting the full participation of a business in the mainstream economy, i.e., economic segregation)—black entrepreneurs have faced, and continue to face, and their attempts to overcome (Butler 2005:1197). Butler (2005) declares the literature fails to fully consider black entrepreneurship as a meaningful sociological subject, asserting that the field suffers from racist paradigms and should take corrective action.

In historically contextualizing the disparity between black Americans and “successful” ethnic entrepreneurs—Koreans, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Hong Kong, Cubans and Iranians—Gold (2016) juxtaposes Light’s assertion that “these refugees entered the United States with human capital, money to invest, and bourgeois cultural values,” with the fact that Black Americans, generally, arrived as slaves and “continue to suffer from a wide array of disadvantages wrought by systemic and structural racial oppression” (1984: 1701). This comparison elucidates that class, capital, and structural racism have to be accounted for before comparing seemingly equivalent ethnoracial groups. Thus ethnoracial “otherness” does not mean all groups are equally situated in society. Gold (2016) underscores ethnoracial-based forms of discrimination account for restricted success of black entrepreneurship. Moreover, Gold (2016) notes the systematic blocking of blacks’ opportunities have led to the lack of capital, education, and previous work experience, which makes black entrepreneurship uniquely disadvantaged.

Gold’s (2016) and Butler’s (2005) reading of black entrepreneurship considers the peculiar disadvantages faced by blacks. Their understanding drives me to contextualize black business experiences in anti-black societies. Although their insights are developed within the U.S., they compel a critical examination of black entrepreneurship in any racially stratified society. With this critical lens, I explore black entrepreneurship in Brazil.

Theoretical Framework

My work is informed by Feagin's (2006) theory of systemic racism which emphasizes the embedded, structural dynamics of racism. For Feagin's "the racist ideology, attitudes, emotions, habits, actions, and institutions of whites" encompass systemic racism, offering not an individualized but structural understanding (2006: 2). The theory maintains that racial inequality is a systemic part of the legal, economic, social, and political systems. In supporting his claim, Feagin (2006) argues anti-black messages, images, and stereotypes remain remarkably pronounced and constant over time. Thus, systematic racism is a structuring factor that guides the likelihood of black entrepreneurs becoming business owners. As observed in Feagin and Imani (1994), ethnic and racial discrimination shapes the black entrepreneur's experience: "the successful businessperson must be acutely aware of the multiple forms of discrimination and develop a repertoire of coping and resistance strategies to counter racial discrimination" (582). While Feagin specifically focuses on the U.S. context, systemic racism has been well documented in Brazil (Alves 2018; Caldwell 2007; Mitchell-Walthour 2018; Paixão 2013; Perry 2013; Smith 2016; Telles 2004).

Wingfield and Taylor (2016) study the entanglement of race and entrepreneurship for black business owners. They note black entrepreneurs use *intersectional framing* to explain how race, gender and class affect their entrepreneurial activities. My research builds upon Wingfield and Taylor's (2016) argument that Black American entrepreneurs understand entrepreneurship as a response to systemic racism. They find that entrepreneurs make sense of their social reality with their businesses. Wingfield and Taylor suggest that the entrepreneurial motivations—"reasons for starting a business, choices about mentorship, and target market"—are influenced by their racialized experiences (2016:1681). Moreover, Wingfield and Taylor (2016) note:

Entrepreneurship then becomes a logical response to racism. This observation diverges from the traditionally held view of ethnic entrepreneurship, which sees ethnicity or ethnic resources as facilitating

entrepreneurship. Instead, racial discrimination and the counterframes that develop from it are central to the decision to enter entrepreneurship. (p. 1687)

As they point out, entrepreneurship is a logical response to racial oppression. While Wingfield and Taylor (2016) briefly mention that their findings diverge from the traditionally held positions in ethnic entrepreneurship, I apply their assertions coupled with my data to argue the importance of reframing the black entrepreneur from a deficient archetype to a model of resistance.

In anti-black or racially hierarchical societies, discrimination functions as the maintenance of the social order. In their study of black construction contractors, Feagin and Imani (1994) note discrimination as a daily obstacle faced by black entrepreneurs. They focus on three dimensions of discrimination: *cumulation*, *interlocking*, and *externally-amplified*. While cumulation was first articulated to explain the cyclical nature of white racism creating worsened conditions for blacks, consequently generating additional white prejudice, Feagin and Imani conceptualize it as the aggregation of discriminatory incidents with prior individual and collective experience with racial subordination (1994:566). Feagin and Imani (1994) write:

Blacks endure damage from an incident in concert with being a part of a group that, because of lesser power, is subject to mistreatment over lifetimes. When blatant acts combine with subtle and covert injuries to individuals (and their primary groups) and these accumulate over months and years, the impact on a black person is far more than the apparent sum of individual incidents. (p. 566)

The interlocking dimensions of discrimination links discrimination in one event to a separate event, allowing the damage to spread and multiply. This dimension manifests as new institutional barriers blocking marginalized groups from obtaining effective reprieve, particularly in “cross-sectoral linking” (Feagin and Imani 1994). For example, the denial of a bank loan subsequently makes it impossible for a business to complete a contract or scale up the enterprise. The final dimension, *externally-amplified*, accounts for racism externally imposed, such as the stereotype that black men are more likely to be criminals thus hindering their opportunity to engage in business. This dimension captures the persistent racist messages that enter work world from the exterior world, best described as “acid rain” (Feagin and Imani 1994:567). Externally-

amplified discrimination creates additional limitations on black entrepreneurs that are almost impossible to combat. These three forms of discrimination further show the pervasive nature of racial inequality that business owners must account for and overcome to maintain a company.

To theorize “gendered racism” and intersectionality in entrepreneurship, Harvey (2005) researches black beauty salons to better elucidate the experiences of black women entrepreneurs. She emphasizes that black women are often understudied in the ethnic entrepreneurship literature. Moreover, she points out that black women are disproportionately represented in the service industry, specifically as cooks, janitors, and cashiers (Harvey 2005). Harvey (2005) cites structural factors (e.g., institutional discrimination, widespread acceptance of stereotypes, glass ceiling, and poverty) to explain the occupational segregation of black women. She notes that often the entrepreneurs in her study express difficulty with accessing start-up capital, remarking this is the most significant barrier to becoming an entrepreneur. In her study, entrepreneurs had to rely on nontraditional funding sources (e.g. mother’s retirement, family loans) to create and sustain their entrepreneurial endeavors. Harvey (2005) finds what she terms as “the ideology of help,” the willingness of owners to help employees in their professional development. In ideal cases, the help ideology suggests owners embolden their employees to pursue entrepreneurship for themselves. While the ideology of help is representative of close social ties, Harvey (2005) underscores the importance of close social ties for black women, but also notes the homogenous social networks of these entrepreneurs likely limit their economic return.

In my work, I do not wish to conflate systems of black oppression in the U.S. and Brazil, but a critical analysis of racism demonstrates systemic patterns between the two countries. Even after accounting for the unique histories of the U.S. and Brazil, each nation’s strategies for the social management of black people are fundamentally overdetermined by “antiblackness in ever-changing configurations” (Vargas 2018:43). In his book *The Denial of Antiblackness*, Vargas

(2018) compares Brazil and the U.S, in their systematic attempts to mask anti-blackness as the structuring force of their societies. Furthermore, anti-blackness not only controls black people but also governs non-black people. Vargas writes:

Because antiblackness is ubiquitous and foundational, it links Black and nonblack experiences; because antiblackness is experienced differently by Blacks and nonblacks it suggests categorically distinctive logics informing these differentiated yet linked experiences. To focus on Black experiences and on antiblackness, therefore is to gauge a social force field that affects everyone. (2018:28)

This reality compels me to consider strategies to resist anti-blackness. The controlling nature of anti-blackness is an imperative to consider the black experience as a generative site of theory creation.

Black Life in Brazil

Afro-Brazilians remained at the bottom of social hierarchies and dark skin complexion remained a signifier of low status, making all blacks suspect of being poor and potentially dangerous. This perception of Afro-Brazilians is so deeply rooted in Brazilians' perception that it has escaped scrutiny. (Reiter 2010:27)

Though Afro-Brazilians comprise both the majority of the country's population and entrepreneurs (SEBRAE 2015), they receive an inadequate distribution of economic, political, and educational resources (Caldwell 2007; Mitchell-Walthour 2018; Nascimento 1989; Paschel 2016; Smith 2016; Telles 2004). This unequal distribution adversely affects Afro-Brazilians' ability to develop small business enterprises compared to white Brazilians. Finding that the anti-blackness creates a sense of group attachment or "*negro* linked fate," Mitchell-Walthour writes "Afro-Brazilian in Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo, feel linked to *negros* because of issues commonly faced by *negros* such as racial discrimination and challenges faced by economically marginalized people" (2018:39). In response to historical and contemporary forms of anti-blackness, black entrepreneurs take significant risk in valorizing blackness in a society that relegates it to the bottom of the racial, social, and economic hierarchy.

In Brazil, anti-blackness forces black people into spaces with lower income, underfunded schools, poor urban infrastructure, meager access to health care, and lower life expectancy,

which includes increased vulnerability to homicide and police lethality (Alves 2018; Mitchell-Walthour 2018; Vargas 2018; Vargas and Amparo Alves 2010). As people are forced into those inferior places, they become difficult to escape. Telles (2004) demonstrated the validity of a popular saying, “we don’t have a racial problem. In Brazil, blacks know their place” (Telles 2004:139). This popular saying coupled with Mitchell-Walthour’s (2018) theory of racial spatiality—which argues space in Brazil is naturalized as white, excluding Afro-Brazilians even when they are middle class and educated—highlights the precarious nature of where black Brazilians can and cannot exist. Business enterprise is located within the white sphere. Black Brazilians are now inserting themselves into those spaces and black entrepreneurs are subverting anti-blackness through their businesses.

Since the inception of the country, the Brazilian elite have managed race relations with an ideology of whitening (Loveman 2009; Bailey, Fialho, and Loveman 2018). Johnson (2008) writes:

According to Nascimento, a small, white elite has ruled the country for five centuries and successfully incorporated white immigrants into the system while relegating black and indigenous people to the margins. “Plantation owners, coffee, cotton, sugar and rubber barons, businessmen, industrialists, bankers, and the ruling military caste—all of Brazil’s aristocracy and capitalists are Aryo-European, either of old colonial Portuguese stock or new immigrant tenor” (Nascimento 1989, 9). From Nascimento’s perspective, Brazil’s white supremacist system is comprehensive. All aspects of society have been contaminated by ideas of white superiority and black inferiority. Consequently, many African descendants have accepted the ideal of whitening and the myth of racial democracy, believing that a lighter complexion and more European facial features or hair textures are superior to dark skin and African features. (p. 212)

With the second largest Afro-descendant population in the world, Brazil’s attempts at fully whitening the population failed. Despite this failed effort, Brazil incorporated whiteness as a valuable form of capital (Reiter 2010). Afro-Brazilians were placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy, while Brazil appropriates their culture for nation-building purposes (Bowen 2017). Notwithstanding, in Brazil, the very word *preto* (black) is disparaged or as Bailey et al. (2018) writes, “being *preto* has meant stigmatization, vilification, and discrimination across centuries of Brazilian history; the descriptor *preto* remains a culturally stigmatized category in Brazil to this

day” (741). Due to the devalued nature of the *preto* label, Brazilians avoid the descriptor to manage stigma, preferring alternative words closer to whiteness (e.g. *pardo*, *moreno*) (Bailey et al. 2018). In combating these sentiments, black activists have popularized the term *negro* (black) “as [a] more desirable, destigmatized, politicized alternative to *preto*” (Bailey et al. 2018:741). In Brazil, as in many parts of Latin America, color stands in for race.³ In this sense, *preto* is the descriptor to describe the black race used on the Brazilian census, while *negro* is used more in everyday speech to note color. It is common to see in Brazil, *raça/cor* (race/color) when describing one’s ethnoracial identity. Bailey et al. (2018) found an increase in the use of *negro* by *pretos* as a lay self-identification from 1995 to 2008. Thus, Afro-Brazilians may report *pardo* or *preto* on the Brazilian census but refer to themselves as “negro” in their daily lives. With law 10.639/2003 requiring schools to teach Afro-Brazilian history and the valorization of blackness by activists, Brazil’s black population is becoming more race conscious.

Black Entrepreneurship in Brazil

In one of the few book length texts dedicated to “*O empresário negro*”⁴ (the black entrepreneur) in Brazil, Monteiro (2001) highlights that most entrepreneurs were white immigrants or children of immigrants. As the country became industrialized, he argues that few black entrepreneurs are considered “protagonists” in the economic development of Brazil (Monteiro 2001). The traditional explanation of black labor goes from blacks as former slaves to manual laborers without including the deliberate role of the state to exclude black people from experiencing economic upward mobility. In line with the whitening ideology, Brazil incentivizes Europeans with jobs, land, and opportunity while essentially leaving blacks with few options (Bowen 2017). Monteiro (2001) argues whitening ideology overdetermines the social and professional trajectory

³ I want to note that color and colorism are often used as way to not theorize race as a social scientific concept.

⁴ *O empresário negro* can also be translated as the black businessperson, not necessarily the owner.

of black Brazilians. This constant restriction from fully participating in society or the market affects black self-esteem (Monteiro 2001). Furthermore, Monteiro (2001) reasons that blacks are constantly placed in precarious economic situations, resulting in some accepting the “natural” role of the black as manual labor. To further elucidate factors that limit Black entrepreneurs in Brazil, I will reproduce a longer passage, which depicts a more robust illustration of the mental and physical landscapes:

Com relação ao racismo, além dos efeitos das práticas discriminatórias, uma organização social racista também limita a motivação e o nível de aspiração do negro. Quando são considerados os mecanismos sociais que obstruem a mobilidade social ascendente do negro, às práticas discriminatórias dos brancos devem ser acrescentados os efeitos derivados da internalização pela maioria da população negra de uma auto-imagem desfavorável. Esta visão negativa do negro começa a ser transmitida nos textos escolares e está presente numa estética racista veiculada permanentemente pelos meios de comunicação de massa, além de estar incorporada num conjunto de estereótipos e representações populares. Desta forma, as práticas discriminatórias, a tendência a evitar situações discriminatórias e a violência simbólica exercida contra o negro reforçam-se mutuamente de maneira a regular aspirações do negro de acordo com o que o grupo racial dominante impõe e define com os “lugares apropriados” para as pessoas de cor”

With regard to racism, in addition to the effects of discriminatory practices, a racist social organization also limits the motivation and level of aspiration of the black. When the social mechanisms that obstruct the upward social mobility of the black are considered, the discriminatory practices of the whites must be added to the effects derived from the internalization by the majority of the black population of an **unfavorable self-image**. This negative view of black begins to be transmitted in school texts and is present in a racist aesthetic permanently conveyed by the mass media, as well as embedded in a set of stereotypes and popular representations. In this way, discriminatory practices, the tendency to avoid discriminatory situations and the symbolic violence exercised against the black reinforce each other in a way to regulate black aspirations according to what the dominant racial group imposes and defines with the "appropriate places" for people of color. (his emphasis) (Monteiro 2001:62)

Anti-blackness affects every aspect of a black entrepreneur’s life: her work, her health, her education, her social interactions and her dreams. In order to manage one’s sanity, one begins to police one’s self and the possibilities of blackness. This individual micro-level psychological response to anti-blackness also scales up to the macro level. I argue that Black entrepreneurship, as a macro-level response to racism, demonstrates the widespread nature of anti-blackness in Brazilian society.

Based on PNAD⁵ data provided by IBGE⁶, SEBRAE⁷ published a report citing a significant increase in black entrepreneurs over a ten-year period (2003 – 2013) in Brazil. The number of entrepreneurs grew from 21.4 million to 23.5 million, a 10 percent increase (SEBRAE 2015). Black entrepreneurs increased from 9.5 million to 11.8 million, a 24 percent change, in the process overtaking white entrepreneurs at 11.4 million.⁸ The numbers of entrepreneurs are slightly misleading as they account for both entrepreneurs with employees and without employees. When separating these two analytic categories, racial disparities emerge. While 22 percent of white entrepreneurs have employees, only nine percent of black entrepreneurs have employees. Although Afro-Brazilians are 50 percent of the entrepreneurs in the Brazil, they only comprise 30 percent of the employers in the country. Among Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs, 26 percent are in the services sector, 24 percent are in commerce, 20 percent are in the agricultural sector, 20 percent are in construction, and 10 percent are in industry (SEBRA 2015). There is a higher numerical representation of black Brazilians in “*atuando no atendimento das necessidades básicas da população*” (serving the basic needs of the population), such as food preparation, street vendors, and construction workers (SEBREA 2015:28). White Brazilian entrepreneurs comprise 35 percent of the services sector, 24 percent of commerce, 15 percent of the agricultural sector, 13 percent of construction, and 12 percent of industry. (SEBREA 2015:28). Whites tend to work in more specialized activities which require a higher level of schooling and professional training (e.g., lawyers, accountants, doctors). Black entrepreneurs experience racialized segregation in sectors with low economic growth. Similarly, there is a

⁵ Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD) (the Brazilian National Household Sample Survey) is conducted by IBGE.

⁶ Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) is the agency responsible for official collection of statistical, geographic, and environmental information in Brazil.

⁷ Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas (Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service) is a former government entity that became a non-profit. Sebrae promotes the development of small businesses in Brazil.

⁸ Part of this change can be accounted for a shift in self-identification—*brancos* deciding to identify as *pardo*, *pardo* identifying as *preto*— or as some Brazilian say “*tornar-se negro*” (to become black).

larger concentration of black people in economically precarious geographical spaces. The northeast state of Bahia has limited economic opportunities and is 76.3 percent Afro-Brazilian (Mitchell-Walthour 2018). The majority of black entrepreneurs are in the states of Bahia (13.5%). Other states such as São Paulo (12.1%), Minas Gerais (10.1%), Pará (7.8%), Rio de Janeiro (7.2%) have significant number of black entrepreneurs as well. More importantly, São Paulo is the economic engine of Brazil and has the second largest number of black entrepreneurs. For these two reasons, I selected São Paulo as my fieldsite.

Black businesses are rapidly growing in Brazil. Some attribute the success to *O Movimento Black Money* (The Black Money Movement)⁹. The key principle of *O movimento Black Money* encourages black consumers to buy from black producers, allowing money to circulate longer within the black community. *O Movimento Black Money* has two mottos: 1) *não me vejo, não compro* (if I do not see myself, I do not buy); and, 2) *compro de afro-empresendedores para fortalecer os seus negócios* (I buy from black entrepreneurs to strengthen their businesses) (Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios 2018). With the increase of the middle class due to Lula's¹⁰ administration and ethnoracial conscious consumerism (or as *Think Etnus* founder calls it *afroconsumo*), there is a burgeoning of race-conscious businesses in Brazil. With the increase in black entrepreneurs, the government, international banks, and strategic partnerships have increased investments to aid black businesses. In an article from *O Globo* discussing the creation of a fund to support black entrepreneurs, the reporter describes this effort as:

⁹ *O movimento black money* is inspired by the U.S., where Black Americans since the great depression have protested unfair economic treatment through spending campaigns. The "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaign, also known as the "Buy Where You Can Work," emerged in major northern U.S. cities during the Great Depression to protest black unemployment rates that often were double or triple the national average. When I asked people to explain *O movimento black money*, they talked about the importance of a dollar circulating like in the Jewish communities.

¹⁰ Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is the former president of Brazil (2003 to 2010) who is arguably best known for drastically lowering abject poverty through *Bolsa Família*, a program that provides financial aid to poor Brazilian families. *Bolsa Família* was a part of a larger program called *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger), which he also initiated.

Um funil invertido. É o retrato da participação de afrodescendentes no quadro pessoal das 500 maiores empresas do Brasil. Nos cargos executivos, em 14 anos, a fatia jamais chegou à tímida marca de 5%. É participação contrastante com os 57,5% de negros e pardos na categoria de entrada nessas companhias, dos aprendizes. Para ajudar a mudar esse quadro, o Banco Interamericano de Desenvolvimento (BID) implementou um programa piloto no Brasil de apoio a afroempreendedores, perseguindo a meta de aumentar a participação deles entre os grandes grupos do país.

An inverted funnel. It is the portrait of the participation of Afro-descendants in the personnel of the 500 largest companies in Brazil. In executive positions, in 14 years, the slice never reached the timid mark of 5%. It contrasts sharply with the 57.5% of blacks and browns in the entry category in these companies, the apprentices. To help change this picture, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) implemented a pilot program in Brazil to support black entrepreneurs, pursuing the goal of increasing their participation among large groups in the country. (Cavalcanti 2017)

Moreover, companies such as Facebook have joined the cause to provide financial assistance and physical office space to black businesses in Brazil. In particular, Facebook has partnered with three Afro-Brazilian companies - *Feria Preta*, *Afrobusiness*, and *Dispora.Black* - to host *Afrohub*, an accelerator program for black entrepreneurs. I discuss this program at length in the *aquilombamento* chapter.

In sum, understanding the particular experience of Black entrepreneurs makes my research query—To what extent do black entrepreneurs use their businesses as sites of resistance to anti-blackness?—critical for the reframing of black entrepreneurship. This particular project is important because it challenges the deficit-laden narrative ubiquitous in the ethnic entrepreneurship literature. I theorize and conduct my research with an asset frame, which Hunter and Robinson describe as focusing on the “agency and cultural contribution of urban black Americans” (2016:385).¹¹ In addition, black entrepreneurs in Brazil remain undertheorized and understudied. Their racialized experiences as entrepreneurs adds to our understanding of resistance, economic life, and racism. To be a black entrepreneur in an anti-black society is an act of resistance. To create a product centering blackness, to employ black people, and to *aquilombamento* is to join the long radical traditions of black resistance in the Americas.

¹¹ While Hunter and Robinson (2016) use the black “American” to mean a black person from the U.S., I am using it to mean the Americas as broadly defined, thus including Black Brazilians.

Fieldsite/Research Design/Methodology

The primary purpose of my data collection was to assess how Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs use their business as sites of resistance against anti-blackness.¹² São Paulo, my main fieldsite, is the largest city in Brazil and has the greatest concentration of wealth. Coupling the large physical size with 20 million inhabitants, arriving at the outer limits from the center of the city can take over two hours. As a general rule, the center of São Paulo has the largest concentration of affluence and, as you travel to the *periferia* (the periphery), the prosperity disperses. Likewise, the center of the city is primarily white, but as you travel to the *periferia*, it becomes black. Because of São Paulo's size and racial dynamics, the location of a business is a political statement but, more importantly, crucial to viability. Out of the 16 businesses with physical stores, eight are located in areas that would be considered the *periferia* and the other eight are in the center of São Paulo.

Participants were sampled in several ways to gain a diverse representation of products and services in the study. I originally found companies online using keyword searches (e.g., *afroempreendedor(es)*, *afroempreendedorismo*, *empreendedorismo (afro, negro, preto)*, *empreendedor afro-brasileiro*).¹³ The Founder of *Feira Preta* was instrumental in connecting me with black entrepreneurs and black business events. I used snowball sampling to recruit more participants. Due to limited time, I sampled entrepreneurs in black business programs, such as *Afrohub*, even though this may have resulted in an overrepresentation of entrepreneurs with elevated racial pride into the sample. I withheld the participants' names but used their company names in hopes of sparking more research interest and potential business opportunities for them. I interviewed 13 men, 12 women, and 1 transwoman. Out of the 26 interviewees, all identified as

¹² This study was approved by the Vanderbilt University Institutional Review Board (IRB #190287).

¹³ The key word searches translate to black entrepreneur(s), black entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship with different combinations of the word black.

negro. In the context of Brazil, there are two options *preto* and *pardo*¹⁴ and 25 out of the 26 identified as *preto*. One woman who identified as *parda* wished she could be *preta*, but her skin tone was too fair to be categorized as such. For her, *preta* was not a political choice but a phenotypical reality. On the other hand, at least two other participants with comparable or lighter skin tone stated that being *preto* was a political choice for them, even as they acknowledged their lighter hue bestowed certain privileges.

I focused on 26 black participants' experiences as entrepreneurs, particularly their products and services, initial financing, and the effects of racism on their business.¹⁵ Participants were recruited mainly from São Paulo, Brazil; I conducted 25 interviews in São Paulo and one in Rio de Janeiro. All interviews were conducted in convenient locations for both the participants and interviewer (e.g., coffee shop, company office). Each interview was audio recorded, with 24 conducted via an in-person interview and two completed via Skype. Interviews lasted for an average of 75 minutes (range: 23 minutes to 2 hours and 46 minutes).

Using an inductive approach to my data, I asked questions to better understand doing business while Black in Brazil. Within the interviews, I included questions regarding the purpose of the business, the most difficult part of opening the business, if the business has policies or preferences to do business with other black people, if the owner believed a black business could be resistance to racism, and what role, if any, Black business owners have in the fight against racism (see Appendix). I did not transcribe every interview; however, using MAXQDA, a qualitative software program, I coded the audio files directly. I later transcribed important quotations.

¹⁴ *Preto* is black and *pardo* is Brown/mixed race. If one combines them, they create the category known in Brazil as negro or Afro-Brazilian. In general, scholars and activists agree with the approach to combine these two categories (Mitchell-Walthour 2018; Smith 2017; Bailey et al. 2018).

¹⁵ There are 26 participants in my study but two were founders of two companies making the number of businesses represented 28.

I coded the interviews for the following themes: black life in Brazil, pathways into entrepreneurship, racism (how it impacts the business, the individual, the community), products/services, labor, *aquilombamento*, financing/ access to capital, networking with black entrepreneurs, and resistance. I developed these themes based on the questions I asked and the responses of the participants. Understanding Black life and racism in Brazil assures a grounded analysis of black entrepreneurship. Contextualizing the pathways to entrepreneurship, products/services selection, and interactions with black people creates a generative space to elucidate entrepreneurial responses to anti-blackness.

Methodologically, I was not concerned with the prestige of the enterprise nor the number of employees. I had two primary concerns: the racial self-identification of the entrepreneur and if they are currently making a living based on their entrepreneurial activities. This aligns with what Bulter calls the “sociology of self-help” or sociology of entrepreneurship, in which he states, “the emphasis is not on the prestige of the enterprise, but rather it is on simply owning an enterprise that will bring about economic stability” (2005:93). Only having the requirement of race and *making a living* allowed me to interview a diverse group of entrepreneurs while accepting the reality that most black businesses in Brazil are micro to small businesses¹⁶ (SEBRAE 2015).

The interviews represented 28 businesses with 255 employees (135 women, 120 men). Businesses had nine employees on average (range: 0 to 55 employees), while three businesses had no employees. Twenty-six businesses were based in São Paulo, one in Rio de Janeiro, and one in Salvador. Out of the 28 businesses, 18 focused their products and services on Afro-Brazilians. Of note, there are two primary types of black-owned businesses in this study: companies that sell products or services focused on blackness and companies that do not. Exemplifying the recent push by the government and strategic partnership to increase support for

¹⁶ According to IBGE, a micro business employs up to 19 employees and a small business employs between 20 to 99 employees.

black entrepreneurship, the businesses in the study are relatively young: 25 percent are two years or younger, 43 percent are between three to seven years, 14 percent are between eight to 12 years, and 18 percent are 13 years or more. The longest operating company is 17 years old with the median company duration of 4 years and the average company duration of 6.5 years. For descriptive characteristics of each business, see Table 1 in the Appendix.

Positionality Statement

As an African American man raised in Gary, Indiana with the ability to speak both Spanish and Portuguese¹⁷ and an undergraduate degree in Business and Africana Studies while currently working on M.A. in Latin American Studies, my positionality allowed me to enter into unique spaces in Brazil without seeming like an outsider. Moreover, as a black man and a U.S. researcher, my experience in Brazil elucidates the complex nature of insider and outsider status. I manage participant observation as an insider (being black within a black space) and an outsider (American in a Brazilian space), in addition to the challenges of working in a third language. At certain times, my identities were more or less salient depending on the situation, but often in Brazil my positionality was somewhat ambiguous. I echo the sentiments of Caldwell (2007) when she writes:

As a researcher who was positioned by a myriad of factors, including my gender, age, national origin, and race, multiple levels of identification caused me to be an insider, or outsider, and to occupy liminal positions, at different points and, at times, simultaneously. My positioning within a web of interlocking social categories also offered a unique perspective from which to view and analyze Brazilian racial, gender, and class dynamics as well as the Afro-Brazilian community's position vis-à-vis other African diaspora communities. (xv)

With that said, there are certain sociocultural sensibilities I lack. For example, there were cultural references and dances that signal my otherness. There were times when my language failed.

While I my phenotype provided certain access, my “American-ness” marked me as foreign at times.

¹⁷ I speak both Spanish and Portuguese due to extensive study and work in Panama, Mexico, and Brazil.

Generalizability

The data presented here is not generalizable to Brazil at large. Nevertheless, the strength of in-depth qualitative research more broadly is to ascertain the meanings and underlying processes attached to social phenomena (Weiss 1994). Here, I uncover the particular meanings and processes undergirding Black entrepreneurship in the Brazilian context. This work serves as a useful companion to pre-existing quantitative data on Black entrepreneurship in Brazil while simultaneously offering fresh and critical insights into how Afro-Brazilians in their own words and business practices are thinking through their businesses' role in confronting racism. Moreover, by emphasizing the realities of Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs in Brazil, this work points out commonalities and differences among diasporic black entrepreneurs, and more generally racialized entrepreneurs, that may otherwise be unobservable.

Starting a Black Business in Brazil

The literature describes different motivational pathways to entrepreneurship, although they tend to split between two camps: necessity or opportunity (William and Youssef 2014).

Entrepreneurship as necessity typically describes entry as a form of survival or as a means to avoid unemployment; in this scenario, for one reason or another, the entrepreneur does not have another form of income. On the other hand, opportunity-driven entrepreneurs see an opening in the market that can be lucrative as a business opportunity. The majority of participants in this sample are opportunity-driven entrepreneurs (57%).

In Afro-diasporic communities, a name holds sociocultural meaning, long understood to have power in both the spiritual and profane realms. Some even argue that ones' name is the sweetest sound of any language (Carnegie 1998). Within marginalized communities, self-definition via naming is invaluable. The ability to name suggests complete ownership. The name of a business is the literal marker of the entity's existence. In Brazil, where the word *preto* is

demonized, companies deciding to use any of the terms—*preto*, black, afro- or *negro*—is a political statement. Out of the 28 business, 14 directly refer to blackness in the name (50%). Moreover, some companies do not directly use words associated with blackness, but they index blackness (i.e. *Vale do Dendê*, *Kilombu*, *Xongani*, *Aprelha Luzia*, *Rap Burguer*), thus bringing the total to 68 percent of companies with implicit or explicit blackness in their titles.

Companies select their names for a variety of reasons; some ascribe meaning in a literal sense, others use a metaphoric approach, and others select names of personal significance. All of the following companies take a literal approach, meaning their company name matches their services or products. *Feira Preta* (Black Expo or Fair), is the largest black culture and entrepreneurship event in Latin America. *EmpregueAfro* (Employee Black) is a human-resources consulting firm focused on expanding ethnoracial diversity in large business. *Diaspora.Black* is an online market place that connects travelers with lodging and tourist experiences. *Ebony English* is an English school. *AfroBusiness* focuses on creating mechanisms to promote integration among black entrepreneurs and professionals in Brazil's mainstream business community. The following four companies employ a metaphoric naming approach. *Aprelha Luzia* is an urban *quilombo*.¹⁸ *Preta Alma* (Black Soul), a digital news platform, focuses on issues that impact afro-diasporic communities. *Vale do Dendê* (Valley of the Palm) is a business accelerator.¹⁹ *Kilombu* (quilombo/marron community) is a digital marketplace. Finally, some companies seem to have selected names with meaning; however, there seems to be no direct linkage to the product or service. For example, *Terra Preta* (Black Earth) is a micro recording

¹⁸ The name *Aprelha Luzia* pays homage to two different concepts. *Aprelho* was a place where people met to form resistance against the military dictatorship in Brazil during the 1970s. *Luzia* is a reference to Lucy (AL 288-1), the fossils found in Ethiopia. The title can be understood as a female space of resistance

¹⁹ *Vale do Dendê* is an acknowledgment to Silicon Valley while subtly acknowledging the importance of palm to black people.

firm. *Xongani* is a fashion company. More importantly, each company, regardless of their reason, boldly proclaims blackness in their title.

Unequivocally claiming blackness in the company's name marks the commitment of the entrepreneurs to black people, but some respondents assert that this conscious decision can limit the economic potential of a company. For example, *Vesttilo Consultoria de Imagem Pessoal* (Vesttilo Personal Image Consulting) changed its name to seem more appealing. The original name was *Vestir Negro* (Dress Black). The founder notes, *Vesttilo Negro. Esse nome percebi que ficou muito... muito limitado. Foi todo mundo falava, "é só para negros" (Vesttilo Negro. That name I realized was very ... very limited. Everyone was saying, "is it just for blacks").* After making this statement, she notes that her typical client is a black woman, but at the same time she does not want to ostracize potential clients from other racial backgrounds. In changing the name from explicitly black to race-neutral, the founder believes she is positioning her business for optimal economic opportunity.

When starting a company, name selection is important, but securing initial funding is crucial to its viability. Almost every business founder mentioned challenges in acquiring funding. Ninety-three percent of businesses did not receive initial funding from banks, consequently requiring them to procure non-traditional funding sources. Several founders echoed that most banks did not believe in their proposed business or the potential of black clients. One founder said the following:

Quando a gente precisava microcrédito, o banco não oferecia nada. Principalmente por uma literatura social, quando chego para pedir um empréstimo do banco, eu não sou lida como uma empresária. O banco não entende, não faz questão nenhuma de entender meu negócio, marginaliza meu negócio. Me marginaliza enquanto mulher e negra. A gente tem dois recortes, gênero e raça. Não lê em mim potencial. Não lê em mim potencial mercadológico.

When we needed microcredit, the bank offered nothing. Especially for social literature, when I arrive to ask for a loan from the bank, I am not read as an entrepreneur. The bank does not understand, makes no effort to understand my business, marginalizes my business. I am marginalized as a woman and a black. We have two strikes, gender and race. [The bank] does not read my potential. [The bank] does not read my market potential.

This quote captures the debilitating effects of banks not valuing black people, black thoughts, or black potential. The founder highlights the inability of banks to consider the potential of black business. Her description is a common theme: banks do not envision a profitable product or service that centers blackness. A clear racialized experience occurs with the banks for black entrepreneurs because a measurable amount of black businesses provide common services such as selling clothes, cooking food, and cutting hair. Banks' refusal to consider black businesses and the potential of black consumers adversely impacts black Brazilians' economic potential more broadly. One founder hypothesized her business would have been significantly larger if the banks simply gave her a fair chance. She continued to assert that the absence of bank backing relegates the majority of black businesses to micro businesses. Furthermore, it is important to note the gendered nature of this interaction which is aligned with Crenshaw's (1991) and Collins' (2015) notions of intersectionality and Harvey's (2005) conceptualization of gendered racism. All three scholars stress the unique disadvantages found at the intersection of gender and race: a black woman faces peculiar configurations of racism and sexism. Many women entrepreneurs pointed out the particular role of the black woman in Brazilian society is not at the head of a business. A surprising number of black women discussed the ways people questioned their veracity when telling others that they are business owners. In the quote above, the founder astutely notes black women have two strikes: gender and race.

Chapter Outline

To ascertain how entrepreneurship functions as resistance, I organize the remainder of the thesis into three chapters—product, labor, *aquilombamento*—and a conclusion. In the product chapter, I explain how cultural worth is imbued into products, problematize notions of product validation, and describe how Afro-Brazilians add blackness as symbolic value to their products. I specifically focus on what I call the *centering blackness strategy*. Each company valorizes blackness according to its unique business model, yet all the companies resist anti-blackness and imbue their products and services with black worth. *Ebony English* utilizes language acquisition via black culture to empower Afro-Brazilians. *Conta Black* democratizes access to financial services to allow for the economic incorporation of black Brazilians. *Aneesa* allows black girls and women to develop positive self-images. *Niggaz Place* creates a safe haven for blacks while simultaneously grooming their bodies. *Think Etnus* creates a more equitable consumer market, providing full access for black people. *Rap Burguer* affirms black culture through its insistence of the importance of black global culture.

In the labor chapter, companies undermine anti-blackness by using two types of labor strategies I call ‘*do negro para o negro*’ and *black women first*. Each company discussed in the chapter has a majority black and women labor force. *Xongani* empowers its employees to develop skills to run their own business. *Free Soul Food* empowers its women employees to use their cultural capital and culinary techniques to play an active role in the creation of new menu items. *Atrium* empowers its women employees to financially maintain their households. *Cooper Glicério* empowers its women employees through self-esteem enhancement and leadership development.

In the *aquilombamento* chapter, I contextualize *aquilombamento* within the black placemaking literature. I argue the creating of secure sites for blackness is urban

quilombamento. Black entrepreneurs not only develop black spaces but engage in *urban quilombamento*. I develop a typology—*physical, traveling, and virtual quilombos*—to elaborate the notion of *urban quilombamento*. I offer that the particular use of social media and the internet by Afro-Brazilian have given rise to what can be considered digital ethnic enclaves. *Aparelha Luzia* and *Terça Afro* challenge anti-blackness through their physical creation of space. *Feira Preta* and *Diaspora.Black* generate traveling sites of resistance. *Alma Preta* and *TNM* develop virtual sites of resistance.

Chapter 1: Product

Companies resist anti-blackness with their products by using what I call the *centering blackness strategy*. The *centering blackness strategy* valorizes, empowers, and centers blackness as a competitive advantage. Competitive advantage, business jargon, refers to a company producing a good or service of equal value at a lower price or in a more desirable fashion. In this case, companies create goods or services in a more desirable fashion by imbuing blackness. The *centering blackness strategy* serves a dual role of confronting structural racism and creating competitive advantages. Said differently, infusing blackness into a product or service allows for blackness to be *valued*—in both senses of the word—in the marketplace and in society. Out of the 28 companies I investigated, 18 sold racialized products (64%). To demonstrate how products are imbued with blackness, below I focus on *Ebony English* (an English school), *Conta Black* (a fintech or credit card start-up), *Aneesa* (a doll company), *Niggaz Place Black Power Cabeleireiros* (a barbershop), *Think Etnus* (a consulting firm), and *Rap Burguer* (an artisanal restaurant).

Ebony English

Ebony English provides a vital skill that all Brazilians can benefit from: the ability to speak English. Yet *Ebony English* teaches English via black culture with a particular focus on African Americans. The founder, a man in his early 40s, jokingly suggested that Toni Morrison is more interesting than William Shakespeare. This subtle shift in English pedagogy empowers, affirms, and builds transnational bridges, providing an additional worldview for the language learners while undermining anti-blackness. Moreover, teaching English via Black American culture reaffirms the worth of black culture to African Americans but more importantly to Afro-Brazilians. In other words, *Ebony English* valorizes global blackness while creating a diasporic community by teaching its clients through the lens of the African American aesthetic.

Using the *centering blackness strategy* *Ebony English* imbues black worth into its services. From a social standpoint, it valorizes diasporic black culture while creating a means for transnational solidarity. From a business standpoint, it creates a competitive advantage for the company. *Ebony English*'s business model directly challenges the anti-black premise of black worthlessness despite knowing that infusing black worth into a product in an anti-black society carries significant risk. In doing this, the owner asserts that a black infused product is viable and can sustain a business. This challenges anti-blackness from a logical standpoint while it fulfills a particular need of black people. In *Ebony English*'s case, the black infused product provides a skill that makes Afro-Brazilians more employable and opens the entire English world to Afro-Brazilians who tend to receive subpar education due to structural and historical racism (Mitchell-Walthour 2018; Telles 2004). The transnational coalition-building of *Ebony English* suggests a political aim, but one can also read the business model as political in its own right.

Conta Black

According to their website, *Conta Black* is an independent fintech that strives to “*incluir social e financeiramente uma camada da população que não possui conta bancaria*” (include socially and financially a layer of the population that does not have a bank account).

Economically, Afro-Brazilians live in a constant state of precariousness, disproportionately unbanked and underbanked²⁰. Afro-Brazilians, living in the margins, struggle to build and maintain credit; accordingly, using the *centering blackness strategy*, *Conta Black* responds by making, rebuilding, and strengthening credit a critical part of their business model. In doing so, *Conta Black* prioritizes the needs of black Brazilians. In its “About” section on their website, *Conta Black* emphasize its commitment to black people:

Estamos focados na construção do EMPODERAMENTO econômico de TODOS, principalmente da população negra no Brasil, fomentando a cultura da educação financeira dentro de nossas comunidades e oferecendo serviços financeiros acessíveis a todos. Nosso principal objetivo é tratar todos os nossos

²⁰ Underbanked refers to insufficient access to mainstream financial services and products offered by banks.

clientes com respeito, dignidade e atenção às suas necessidades bancárias, independentemente dos saldos de suas contas.

We are focused on building the economic EMPOWERMENT of ALL, especially the black population in Brazil, fostering the culture of financial education within our communities and offering financial services accessible to all. Our main goal is to treat all our clients with respect, dignity and attention to their banking needs, regardless of the balances of their accounts. (their emphasis) (*Conta Black's* website "About" Sections)

Conta Black is intentional with its language pointing out that "empowerment of all" includes Afro-Brazilians, undermining commonly held notions where "all" does not include blacks. This can be seen as what Henry Louis Gates (2014) refers to as "signifyin'." Moreover, *Conta Black* doubles down by using language such as "our communities," which places the needs of the black community as a top priority. It is important to note that *Conta Black* asserts, regardless of account balance, they treat all customers with respect, dignity and attention. *Conta Black* humanizes their mostly black clientele by treating blacks with respect, dignity and attention regardless if they are poor or not. Saying "all our clients" subtly signals that this banking experience will be substantially different than the typically demeaning and condescending banking experiences of black Brazilians.

Furthermore, *Conta Black* uses politically charged language in its "About" section, stating the following:

O Nosso Dinheiro Importa

O poder de compra da população negra no Brasil, ultrapassou a casa dos R\$ 1.3 trilhões de reais, sabemos que se nos focarmos no aprimoramento de nossos negócios, projetos e apoiando as empresas de propriedade negra que são mais propensas a contratar pessoas negras, esses reais se tornam uma força poderosa. Assim como no movimento Americano, nós replicamos o conceito acreditando cada vez que uma nova pessoa abre uma conta e retire seu cartão, que pensem que, gastando seu dinheiro, estão gastando o nosso dinheiro, e também ... quando entregamos [o cartão "blk.®"] para alguém, "Estamos mostrando ao mercado que o dinheiro não tem cor e que somos consumidores importantes."

A Conta Black, será o maior banco digital do país. Queremos que você se levante e represente. Queremos que você faça parte do movimento - para demonstrar o nosso poder econômico.

Sim ... o Nosso Dinheiro Importa!

Our Money Matters

The purchasing power of the black population in Brazil has surpassed R \$ 1.3 trillion²¹, we know that if we focus on improving our business, projects and supporting black owned companies that are more likely to hire black people, these become a powerful force. Just as in the American movement, we replicate the concept by believing every time a new person opens an account and withdraws their card, they think that by spending their money, they are spending our money, and also ... when we deliver [the card " **blk.**®"] for someone, "We are showing the market that money is colorless and that we are important consumers."

Conta Black will be the largest digital bank in the country. We want you to stand up and stand for it. We want you to be part of the movement - to demonstrate our economic power.

Yes ... Our Money Matters! (their emphasis) (*Conta Black*'s website "About" Section)

Conta Black aligns itself with the ideologies of the Black Lives Matter and Bank Black Movements in the U.S. "Our money matters" is a play on the campaign call of Black Lives Matter. *Conta Black* aims to create a black ecosystem, which furthers the goal of *O movimento Black Money*. They are calling for a new social and cultural alignment that wields the economic power of Afro-Brazilians. With their goal to strengthen black businesses, they note an important fact that many black businesses hire black people. *Conta Black* is systemically undermining anti-blackness by economically empowering Afro-Brazilians. They provide banking to the underbanked and unbanked, provide credit when others do not, and build a world where black people are included economically.

The physical credit cards of *Conta Black* are called *O cartão blk* or Black Money Card. The card is all black with "blk." across the front of the card. These all black cards subvert the normal notion of "black credit cards" being reserved for the wealthy elite. In standard financial parlance, a black card typically refers to exclusive, high- or no-limit credit cards, usually only available by invitation. However, for this particular business, having a black card provides entry into the mainstream economy for the most marginalized population. *Conta Black* undermines anti-blackness by allowing black people to gain access to the previously inaccessible financial market. Moreover, once inside those markets, *Conta Black* asks its clients to spend its money

²¹ On February 14, 2019, 1.3 trillion reals equal \$346,255,037,818.99 (U.S. dollars).

with black businesses, further undermining anti-blackness by proactively supporting pro-black spaces.

Aneesa

According to the founder, “*Aneesa significa companhia*” (*Aneesa* means companion). She explains *Aneesa* was developed to combat low-esteem and loneliness in young black girls, thus the founder uses the *centering blackness strategy*. In an ideal world, the founder desires for every girl to have a confidant, stating “*eu quero que toda menina negra tenha uma boneca negra*” (I want all of the black girls to have a black doll). She continues on to convey that far too often little black girls are left alone. She clarifies that both black boys and girls need companions, but boys have sports whereas girls have nothing or no one. In addition to having few avenues for safe self-expression, black girls’ bodies and behavior are policed via criticism and humiliation. The founder describes, “*desde quatro anos eu já observou ela é silenciada ou criticada por causa do cabelo ou fala um pequeno mais ela já é faladora. Ela é isso ou aquilo*” (since four years old, I have already noticed she is silenced or criticized because of her hair or when she speaks a little more, she is considered talkative. She is this or that). This type of silencing is often described in Brazil. For example, in her latest book, *Quem tem medo do feminismo negro?*, Djamila Ribeiro—philosopher, social scientist, black feminist—describes her childhood and the silencing that occurred in school because she was a black girl in a white space.

In addition to silencing, black women face policing forces when it comes to hair. To underscore the importance of hair in Brazil, Mitchell-Walthour (2016) adds an aesthetic dimension to her analysis of blackness in Brazil, writing “very curly hair has been stigmatized in Brazilian society, and black women’s hair is commonly described as “hard hair” and “bad hair” (5). Further emphasizing this point, Afro-Brazilian philosopher Sueli Carneiro argues for the recognition of “symbolic violence and oppression that whiteness as hegemonic and privileged

aesthetic standard has over non-white women” (Carneiro 2003: 130). *Aneesa* challenges this hegemonic violence by selling dolls that come in various colors and shades of blackness, which would all be considered *preta*. The founder emphasizes the dolls are black with curly and coarse hair, often styled as afros, braids, and dreads. A few of the dolls had green, red, and purple hair to show the diversity and creativity of black girls. The dolls wear stylish clothes heavily influenced by African and Afro-Brazilian patterns. To that extent, some of the dolls have head scarfs. These subtle additions to the dolls signal an appreciation for the black aesthetic. The dolls reflect black beauty to a group of children often told through an avalanche of anti-black messages that they are not beautiful, special, nor worthy of being reflected in a toy.

Aneesa does corrective work during a critical developmental period of a black girl’s life by encouraging healthy self-esteem. To my surprise, the founder highlights that a significant amount of the dolls are purchased by adults as collector items. I distinctly remember the founder telling me a story of how many women said they had never seen a black doll, (she adds laughingly) especially one with two afro puffs. Although she laughs while telling the story, it masks a deeper more insidious sentiment. I suspect it was a laugh at the absurdity that so many black women have lived without ever seeing their reflection in their most intimate toys. This implies that generations of black women have never played with dolls that reflect their skin tone and hair texture. Undoubtedly, this erasure in representation contributes to damaged self-esteem and self-worth. Moreover, the lack of an intimate toy that bears their likeness further contributes to the erasure of and perceived self-inferiority of black women in Brazilian society. *Aneesa* undermines anti-blackness by imbuing black worth into its product allowing black girls and women to build positive self-images.

Niggaz Place

The first time I saw “*Niggaz Place Black Power Cabeleireiros*” (barbers) sign in the open gallery mall, I froze in astonishment.²² I had never seen that particular arrangement of words. It is important to note that the n-word is rarely used in the title of businesses. Moreover, the use of English to convey a culturally salient Black American message in Brazil, where neither word is a local development, is worth some intellectual treatment. This specific combination of words has a high probability of capturing the attention of Americans, in particular African Americans. Due to the social importance of black barbershops, many black Americans that see the name will probably stop and enter.

When I entered the barbershop, I immediately noticed a poster on the wall of the black baby with an afro from the Notorious B.I.G.’s ‘Ready to Die’ album cover with the words, “*O meu cabelo não é ruim. Ruim é seu racismo*” (My hair is not bad. Bad is your racism) across the top. This instantly marks the barbershop as a safe space from racism, foregrounding anti-black language as unacceptable. Given that barbers service black aesthetics, supporting black hair affirms the client and strengthens the business model, which use the centering blackness strategy. Moreover, it reinforces that one should not feel shame because of his or her hair. After processing the sign, I spotted a Los Angeles Dodgers poster below the famous Ali Frazier “Fight of the Century” photo. Responding to my inquiry about the shop name, the gregarious founder explains:

Esse termo “nigga” de um negro para negro nos Estados Unidos, os rappers nas músicas não têm problema nenhum de um negro por negro. Aqui no Brasil, a palavra “negro” não tem conotação racista. O que tem conotação racista aqui é “criolo”, “preto”. Aqui no Brasil, “negro” não com conotação racista. Agora nos Estados Unidos, “nigga” seria com uma conotação racista por isso muito Americanos vêm aqui e se espantou com a placa, verdade. Mas para nós aqui não tem problema.

²² The use of the words “nigger” and “nigga” has been hotly debated in several intellectual circles. For example, see the debate between Cornel West and Michael Eric Dyson on the use of the n-word, see John McWhorter’s pieces, “Trump and the N Word” and “There Are Two N-words,” and see Randall Kennedy’s *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word*.

That term "nigga" from a black to a black in the United States, rappers in songs do not have any problem from one black person to another. Here in Brazil, the word "negro" has no racist connotation. What has racist connotation here is "*criolo*,²³" "*preto*". Here in Brazil, "negro" [has no] racist connotation. Now in the United States, "nigga" would be with a racist connotation, so a lot of Americans come here and were amazed at the sign, true. But for us, there's no problem here.

Here the owner suggests the title is a marketing strategy. He further explains that the sign makes many black Americans stop, come in, and ask questions. This strategy clearly worked on me. It must be noted the founder emphatically asserts *preto* has a racist connotation in Brazil, echoing findings from the social science literature on race in Brazil. Throughout his explanation, there is a clear understanding of race relations in the United States and Black American culture. After questioning why the founder used English instead of Portuguese words, he rationalizes it is not about English but about the desire to be American, calling it "*a tendência ser americana*" (the trend to be American). He further explains, black Brazilians pine to be black Americans, saying "*a tendência da moda do negro brasileiro, o negro do São Paulo, ele se inspire tudo que o americano faz*" (the fashion trend of the Black Brazilian, the black of São Paulo, he is inspired by everything that the American does). This explained the significant number of American cultural artifacts in the shop.

The importance of the black barbershop as a social space has been studied by several scholars (Harris-Lacewell 2006; Mills 2013; Nunley 2011), but few have examined the importance of black barbershops as social spaces in Brazil (see Emilio Domingos' 2016 documentary, *Fresh Cutz*, for an exception).²⁴ As in the U.S. for Black Americans, the black barbershop in Brazil is a particular social space that affirms blackness.²⁵ Interestingly, *Niggaz Place* has seven employees: four women and three men. However, the barbershop is gender-segregated: the women work upstairs, and the men downstairs. Without a doubt, *Niggaz Place*

²³ Criolo or crioulo can mean a language, a type of horse or a person born in the Americas. It is also understood as a black pejorative.

²⁴ *Fresh Cutz* examines the experiences young men inside of Rio de Janeiro's barbershops from the *favelas* to the suburbs.

²⁵ This is not to say that these spaces cannot be problematic particularly in terms of sexism or misogyny.

creates a deeply intimate space for black bodies while attending to their aesthetic maintenance. For some black men, the shop is the most vulnerable place for several reasons: it is a space where (1) a black man transforms from unkept to well-manicured; (2) deep relations form between the client and the barber (most clients continually go to the same barber over the span of years); (3) black ideas and thoughts are exchanged freely; and (4) self-help and black masculinity is affirmed. Aesthetic maintenance is particularly important in Brazil where the notions of *boa aparência* (good appearance) has been pervasive. Used as a way to discriminate in the labor market, *boa aparência* became code terminology for saying “whites only” (Damasceno 2000; Telles 2004). While *boa aparência* and its ilk (e.g., “good health”, “good teeth” and “presentable”) were officially outlawed in the 1980s, “aesthetic discrimination” is still common practice in Brazil (Damasceno 2000; Telles 2004). For example, Bento (2000) finds in São Paulo large department stores still hire and fire based on ethnoracial and gender stereotypes. Caldwell (2007) argues that *boa aparência* produces a social understanding of black people as social subordinates. While a barbershop lacks the ability to change African features, it provides a service that allows black men to look their best. *Niggaz Place* undermines anti-blackness by creating space particularly for affirming, encouraging, and grooming black people.

Think Etnus

Think Etnus is a consulting firm originally opened with the goal to connect companies with black consumers. The founder explains that in the beginning there was limited data collected on black people outside of the government collections (e.g. mortality, education). Seeing the need, *Think Etnus* filled the gaps in collecting data on black consumer habits, commonly referred to as afroconsumo (black consumption). Using the *centering blackness* strategy, the founder emphasizes this is for black people by black people: “*A gente viu que uma necessidade de um desenvolvimento de pesquisas. E pesquisas pensadas por e para pessoas*”

negras. Trazendo esse olhar de dentro para fora e não olhar daquele do branco sobre o negro” (We saw a need for a research development. And research designed by and for black people. Bringing that look from the inside out and not looking from that of white to black). As the founder stressed, the need for black people to do research on black people offers an opportunity for solving problems specifically faced by black communities. Moreover, the founder specifically points out a black view instead of a white view.

Creating and collecting data about black people fills an important gap in consumption, allowing black people to be fully recognized in the consumer market. The founder of *Think Etnus* verifies that few large companies specifically target black consumers, which he asserts is absurd because 54 percent of the population is black. While *Think Etnus* creates data that grants access to full participation in the consumer market for black people, the majority of their clients are large white multinational corporations. This can become complicated as Marable (2015) argues white corporate interests will capture and control the Black consumer market once they understand their economic potential. He explains, “the impact of corporate America’s massive exploitation of the Black consumer market has created a profoundly negative effect within Black culture and consciousness” (Marable 2015:144). This is not the case currently in Brazil, but creating and selling black consumer data has potentially detrimental effects. As in the case of the U.S., some large multinational companies target black consumers for their unhealthy products (e.g., the tobacco industry). With that said, *Think Etnus* resists anti-blackness by equalizing the consumer market for the full recognition and participation of blacks. While their work could potentially be used against black people, it is vitally important.

Rap Burguer

In addition to infusing their products with black worth, some companies are explicitly political in their businesses marketing. Out of the 28 companies, 20 use politically charged

marketing materials (71%), which use the centering blackness strategy. For example, *Dispora.Black*—a network of hosts and travelers or as the founder jokingly described it, “Airbnb without all of the discrimination”—has a manifesto on their website that starts with the line “*somos negros*” (we are black). These entrepreneurs are boldly asserting a black political identity.

In the same vein, *Rap Burguer*, an artisanal hamburger restaurant also engages in black political marketing. On the back of every menu, there is “o manifesto do marketing” (the marketing manifesto). The first paragraph is below:

Chegamos. E assim como o Mano Brown estamos “contrariando as estatísticas”. Finalmente estamos aqui! Temos orgulho disso e sabemos que você também tem. Afinal todos nós esperávamos. Há muito tempo, por um espaço dedicado a nós mesmos. É isso aí: da rua para a rua, do negro para o negro. Afinal, esse é “o sonho de Clementina, o sonho de Zumbi. Esse é o sonho de Malcolm”, né Emicida?

We arrived. And, like Mano Brown, we are "contradicting statistics." We're finally here! We are proud of this and we know you are too. After all, we have waited a long time for a space dedicated to ourselves. That's to say: from the street for the street, from black people for black people. After all, this is "the dream of Clementina, the dream of Zumbi. This is Malcolm's dream, "isn't Emicida? *Rap Burguer* Menu

The manifesto starts by paying homage to a legendary Brazilian rapper Mano Brown who is known for founding the hip hop group *Racionais MC's*. It uses his words “contradicting statistics” to say we have surpassed the odds and arrived in a place not created for black people. The manifesto then includes two significant phrases: “a space dedicated to ourselves” and “from black people for black people.” “A space dedicated to ourselves” is a clear demarcation of blackness, an unapologetic valorization and celebration. “From black people for black people” tells everyone that this space is built from self-determination, creating for themselves what has not existed before. The paragraph ends with an acknowledgment of the ancestors (Clementina, Zumbi, Malcolm X) with a line from a legendary younger rapper Emicida. Clementina de Jesus was a famous Afro-Brazilian Female singer, Zumbi²⁶ was an iconic African leader of a *quilombo* in northern Brazil, and Malcom X was an American human rights activist. In mentioning

²⁶ Zumbi is still the current symbol of black resistance in Brazil.

Malcolm X, *Rap Burguer* transcends the national territory and creates a diasporic black space which is also emblematic of its overall business model.

At *Rap Burguer*, each burger is named after a legendary rapper and includes a small biography to inform the buyer “who” they are ordering. This serves the dual purpose of affirming and informing. For example, the Missy Elliott (an American Rapper) is a bacon, cheese, and BBQ burger for R\$ 22.90 (\$5.92). The caption reads, “*a gente vai apresentar a única rapper a ter recebido seis álbuns de platina. Missy Elliott e sua elegância representam muito bem a rap de Virginia*” (We are going to present the only rapper to have received six platinum albums. Missy Elliott and her style represent Virginia rap very well). Infused with symbolic value, this hamburger encapsulates the essence of *Rap Burguer* by adding a competitive advantage through black worth. Each burger being named after a rapper without any natural connection to the ingredients suggest that blackness via the rapper is the priority of the company. This signals that the value of the burger is through its blackness instead of it solely being a hamburger. While the hamburger provides nourishment for the physical body, the products’ Blackness nourishes pride in a societally devalued identity.

Conclusion

Each company valorizes blackness according to its unique business model, yet all the companies use the *centering blackness strategy*, which resist anti-blackness and imbue their products and services with black worth. *Ebony English* utilizes language acquisition via black culture to empower Afro-Brazilians. *Conta Black* democratizes access to financial services to allow for the economic incorporation of black Brazilians. *Aneesa* allows black girls and women to develop positive self-images. *Niggaz Place* creates a safe haven for blacks while simultaneously grooming their bodies. *Think Etnus* creates a more equitable consumer market, providing full access for black people. *Rap Burguer* affirms black culture through its insistence

of the importance of black global culture. This chapter underscore how Feagin and Imani's (1994) three forms of discrimination influence products selection; and, the discrimination strength Mitchell-Walthour's (2018) *negro* linked fate. Moreover, in the next chapter, I put forth a labor strategy called '*do negro para o negro*' (from black for blacks), which links labor to production. In the products discussed in the chapter, are created by a majority black labor force. Although not mentioned in this chapter, *Rap Burguer*, *Niggaz Place*, and *Ebony English* engaging in urban *aquilombamento*, creating *physical quilombo* with their spaces.

Chapter 2: Labor

A business' hiring practices not only reflect its brand, but also speaks to its politics and values. Consequently, the number of black people one employs reflects a commitment to resisting anti-blackness. Out of the 28 businesses in my sample, 24 had more than 75 percent of black employees and 26 had more than 50 percent of black employees (see Table 1 in the Appendix for details on each business). The owners are intentional with their selection of black employees. These entrepreneurs are combating the disproportionately high levels of unemployment of Black Brazilians. For context, in 2017 according to IBGE, 63.7% of the unemployed in Brazil were Afro-Brazilians. As one owner argued, "*primeiro o combate ao racismo, é a gente garantir esses corpos negros saudáveis economicamente e emocionalmente*" ("First, we fight against racism by guaranteeing healthy black bodies economically and emotionally"), which she emphasized black owners enact through providing employment opportunities. These entrepreneurs favor black people in hiring to resist the chronic unemployment of blacks.

Hiring black employees challenges anti-blackness openly because it generates stable employment for people who are routinely underemployed, while facilitating an environment where black people are allowed to be themselves. However, this is not the case for all businesses. A study conducted in Rio de Janeiro revealed that black professionals "forced to work in white-dominated spaces in which they are a minority" faced constant racial discrimination (da Silva and Reis 2011:58). In spaces with more black employees, black people experience less racial discrimination. Moreover, when incidences of racism occur with customers, employees of black businesses feel more empowered to respond without fear of job loss. In Brazil, it is commonly known that "business policies do not identify blacks as consumers or equal citizens" (da Silva and Reis 2011:71). This adversely affects the black customer experience; however, a higher proportional representation of black employees shifts this dynamic.

This chapter focuses on the empowerment of black women through labor strategies utilized by Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs. Companies undermine anti-blackness by using two types of labor strategies, I call the following: *'do negro para o negro'* and *black women first*. *'Do negro para o negro'* strategy links the labor of black people to the consumption of black people to create wealth for black people. The *black women first* strategy prioritizes a group often under- and unemployed (Caldwell 2007). Out of the 28 businesses in my sample, 24 had more than 75 percent of black employees and 26 had more than 50 percent of black employees. Together the two strategies combat the disproportionately high level of black unemployment. Out of the 255 employees, 117 are black women (46 %). The companies in the sample average four black women employees with a range of 0 – 16. In my sample, the following companies intentionally select black women as the primary members of their labor force: *Xongani* (fashion company), *Free Soul Food* (catering restaurant), *Atrium* (restaurant), and *Cooper Glicério* (recycling cooperative). The majority of the selected companies have a higher percentage of black women employees than the general sample (56%): *Xongani* (92%), *Free Soul Food* (75%), *Atrium* (100%), and *Cooper Glicério* (55%). Although *Cooper Glicério* is one percentage point below the sample percentage, it is tied with *Vale do Dendê* for the most black women employees at 16. The selected companies' strategic labor approach empowers black women who are often disenfranchised due to racialized and gendered inequality (Harvey 2005). Black women are often qualified yet denied jobs, leaving them excluded from employment or restricted to low-wage/informal work (e.g., housekeeping, street vending) (Caldwell 2007). Moreover, in this chapter, I discuss the unique experiences of black women owners. Their approaches to valorizing blackness allow often ignored and excluded people to fully participate in the market and Brazilian society. The companies discussed imbue black worth into their labor strategies through

specifically hiring black women who are also often poor, challenging anti-blackness' financial oppression.

To contextualize life in Brazil for black women, one founder explains her family's trajectory from slavery to entrepreneurship through her maternal lineage. She describes that her great-great-grandmother (tataravó) was a slave, her great-grandmother (bisavó) was a maid, her grandmother was not a maid but was relegated to housework due to machismo, and her mother was a feminist activist who combated racism and participated in the black movement. She remarks:

A história de minha família é uma forma de entender a história de negro no Brasil principalmente mulheres negras, só 130 anos de muito evolução. A gente evoluiu muito rápido em 130 anos, a gente tem uma tataravó escrava e eu sou uma mulher empresária essa é uma evolução absurda. Mas com pós escravidão recente a gente ainda tem muito reflexões dele no Brasil que a gente chama racismo estrutural. O racismo ainda está em nossas estruturas e por onde a gente passa. Diariamente a gente convive com racismo.

The story of my family is a way to understand the history of the black in Brazil mainly black women, only 130 years of much evolution. We have evolved very fast in 130 years, I have a slave great-great grandmother and I am a businesswoman, this is an absurd evolution. But with post-slavery so recent, we still have a lot of reflections of it in Brazil that we call structural racism. Racism is still in our structures and wherever we go. Every day we live with racism.

Her interpretations of Brazil's history sheds light on the lifeworlds of black people in general and black women in particular. Although her explanation gives one example of a family's tremendous progression, it should not be taken as the standard life course in Brazil, as millions of Afro-Brazilian families experience minimal (if any) generational economic upward mobility. However, she elucidates several important points. First, slavery only ended 130 years ago. Second, slavery's afterlives and its restricting forces on black bodies are still present in Brazilian society. Third, she links slavery's afterlives with structural racism, suggesting a continuation. Fourth, she takes an intersectional approach to explain why her grandmother was unable to work outside of the home. She accredits it to machismo, but it is simultaneously sexism and racism. Finally, she accurately assesses the nature of structural racism's omnipresence, recounting

“every day we live with racism.” Thus, it is important to contextualize that black women face both racism and sexism particularly in the labor market (Caldwell 2007).

Xongani

Intentionally hiring black women into businesses that value them gives dignity to the work and to the employees. Dignity, according to Hitlin and Andersson (2015), “denotes a locally recognized humanity marked by autonomy, lack of humiliation and the realization of social purpose, however constructed” (272). Fostering dignity of work acts as a counter agent to the ubiquitous message of black invalidation in Brazil. For example, after speaking in a *roda* (circle – but in this case a panel)²⁷ organized by *Terça Afro*, an urban quilombo, entitled “Sankofa - Novas perspectivas do future” (Sankofa -New Perspectives of the Future), Anna of *Xongani* sat with me to discuss her business. She stated the following:

Quando você tem seu próprio negócio você pode falar, não tem chefe ali que vai deixar não falar. Quebra nosso silenciamento. Hoje tenho uma segurança de falar o que eu quiser porque não tenho um chefe branco que vai alimentar minha família. Foda-se vou falar. Isso também reflete nos meus funcionários. Por exemplo, uma vez, chegou uma mulher branca lá (riso). E aí, ela perguntasse a trabalha com o que né ... Ele, “eu sou empregada doméstica. Eu sei que não parece”. Minha funcionária falou “parece” (riso). O que é a mulher branca estava dizendo que ela era branca e quando é uma mulher branca não parece uma empregada doméstica, mas que a gente com corpo preto perece. Se meu empregado tivesse um chefe branco ela seria silenciada. Mas com um chefe preta, eu, ela pode falar. E ela falou, “você perece sim. Eu achei que você pode aparecer porque empregada doméstica não tem cara”. Essa quebra da silenciamento é tão profundo porque o racismo mata psicologicamente. A gente está garantindo vidas com nossos negócios.

When you have your own business you can speak, there is no boss stopping you from speaking. We are breaking our silence. Today, I have the confidence to speak whenever I want to because I do not have a white boss who feeds my family. Fuck it, I'm going to speak. This also reflects in my employees. For example, one time, a white woman arrived in the store (speaker laughs). My employee asked, her what she does for work... She, “I am a housekeeper. I know it doesn't seem like it.” My employee said, “it seems like it” (speaker laughs). The white woman was saying that she is white, and as a white woman she cannot appear to be a housekeeper but us with black bodies can. If my employee had a white boss, she would've been silenced; but with a black boss, me, she can speak. And she said, “you seem like it yes. I think you can appear that way because housekeepers don't have a color. This breaking of the silence is so profound because racism kills psychologically. We are ensuring lives with our business. (Anna, owner of *Xongani*)

²⁷ A *roda* (circle) is a circular formation within which participants perform in any of several Afro-Brazilian dance art forms, such as *capoeira*, *maculelê* and *samba de roda*. Moreover, *Terça Afro* conducts all discussions in a *roda* as a form of homage to the ancestors.

Anna is asserting that a black business provides space for a conversation that would be traditionally prohibited within white business spaces. Although she is speaking from her perspective at the beginning, the founder asserts this freedom to speak is granted to her employees as well. Anna demonstrates it in the retelling of an incident that transpired between an employee and a white customer. The incident is a typical microaggression, which may seem harmless, but repeated microaggressions can be psychologically detrimental. In a white space, this microaggression would probably occur without a response. However, in this black business, the employees have been empowered to respond, and encouraged to protect their lives and mental health. There is a level of dignity provided in this space that allows black people to experience the fullness of their humanity. The full humanization of black people is a subversion of anti-blackness which renders black people as nonhuman (Vargas 2018).

Intentionally selecting and training black women undermines anti-black erasure of black women and their unique challenges. Some entrepreneurs combat this directly in their hiring practices. Anna does not mince words when she boldly declares after being asked how she selects her employees, “they have to be black women.” She laughs while making the statement but is deadly serious in her sentiments as she explains the following:

Primeiro critério, têm que ser mulheres negras. Porque a gente sabe que essa é uma parte de responsabilidade social mesmo. A gente sabe que as mulheres negras, elas têm menos oportunidade de negócio, o que vira realmente uma responsabilidade porque a gente tem muitas vezes que treiná-las. Hoje por exemplo, eu tenho uma funcionária e eu percebo que tenho que treinar ela. Eu treino ela para prestar serviços para mim, mas eu principalmente treino ela para mercado de trabalho. Durante todo o processo que elas estão comigo eu inscrevo elas como trainee em grandes empresas. Eu inscrevo porque eu quero que o ateliê seja um lugar de fluxo. Que ele seja um lugar de processo principalmente para quem é estagiário. Então quando eu faço a seleção eu primeiro busco as meninas negras, depois eu faço uma seleção entre as meninas negras.

First criterion, they have to be black women. Because we know that this is a part of social responsibility. We know that black women have less business opportunity, which really becomes a responsibility because we often have to train them. Today for example, I have an employee and I realize that I have to train her. I train her to provide services for me, but I mostly train her for the job market. Throughout the process they are with me I enroll them as trainee in large companies. I enroll because I want the studio to be a flowing place. Let it be a place of trial primarily for anyone who is an intern. So when I make the selection I first look for the black girls, then I make a selection among the black girls.

Here, Anna emphasizes that it is a responsibility to hire and train black women because of their lack of employment due to racism and sexism. Though she declares it is a *social* responsibility to hire black women, she takes the responsibility as a *personal* mandate. With her capital and social power as an owner, she intentionally hires and trains black women. Anna not only trains black women to work for her but prepares them for the mainstream labor market. Although she did not specifically state it here, she suggests in other parts of the interview that she trains black women to have their own businesses. This commitment to the professional development of black women is similar to Harvey's (2005) ideology of help exemplified in the context of Black women salon owners in the U.S.

As Anna trains her employees to become future entrepreneurs, the founder of *Feira Preta*, also a Black woman, mentored Anna. Anna worked at *Feira Preta* prior to opening *Xongani*. Once *Xongani* started, *Feira Preta* was one of the first companies to support with an event to sell their products. Anna exclaimed, “*a Feira Preta foi fundamental, fundamental porque a Feira Preta viu o potencial de Xongani e convidou a gente para fazer uma feira*” (*Feira Preta* was fundamental, fundamental because *Feira Preta* saw the potential of *Xongani* and invited us to participate in their expo). The founder of *Feira Preta* not only trained Anna, but she also supported her once her company opened. It is important to note that the owner of *Feira Preta* notices *Xongani*'s potential even when the banks did not. A successful black business recognizing and supporting another black business in its infancy and development stages resists anti-blackness by providing opportunities and backing when the typical financial establishments (e.g. banks) do not.

Free Soul Food

Free Soul Food is equally interested in the well-being of black women. The founders are a mother-and-daughter duo who created the company as a response to their own ailments: the

mother was diagnosed with diabetes and the daughter has a gluten intolerance. In reacting to their personal needs, they opened a company to combat health issues plaguing the black community in Brazil. Caldwell (2017) argues, Brazil failed, at least until the 21st century, to develop health policies that address issues disproportionately affecting Black Brazilians. While Brazil has improved their policies in some regards (e.g. HIV/AIDS prevention), it still faces an ongoing problem of health inequalities for Afro-Brazilians. Consequently, *Free Soul Food*'s business approach to preventive measures through food is vitally important for prioritizing the health needs of blacks.

In a section called, “*Quem é a Free Soul? (Who is Free Soul?)*”, from promotional material, the founders write the following:

Nosso compromisso é com a qualidade das refeições e o bem-estar que elas proporcionam, tudo isso de maneira muito pratica, sem desrespeitar o meio-ambiente. Possuímos opções para quem quer comer de forma saudável, mas não abre mão do sabor. Para quem é vegano/vegetariano ou mesmo para os intolerantes à glúten/lactose. Pensamos que é possível se sentir livre, mesmo diante de uma restrição. Mostramos que mesmo assim as opções podem ser infinitas.

Our commitment is with the quality of meals and the well-being they provide, all in a very practical way, without disrespecting the environment. We have options for those who want to eat healthily, but do not give up the taste. For those who are vegan / vegetarian or even for gluten / lactose intolerant. We think that it is possible to feel free, even in the face of a restriction. We have shown that even then the options can be endless.

The company is deeply committed to healthy eating, environment sustainability, and freedom from restriction. While they are specifically referring to food and dietary limitations when they write “we think that it is possible to feel free, even in the face of a restriction,” it also speaks to larger concerns of freedom in oppressive spaces. It can also be interpreted as a metaphor for black women doing business in Brazil. To maintain their competitive advantage as a healthy restaurant, *Free Soul Food* prioritizes the taste of the food. Consequently, *Free Soul Food* purposefully hires women immigrants and refugees to bolster their menu options.

As a labor strategy, hiring black women immigrants and refugees undermines anti-blackness as it supports an economically precarious group. Moreover, it provides *Free Soul Food*

with the opportunity to diversify and expand its menu. At the time of the interview, *Free Soul Food* had eight employees—six women and two men. The male employees support the women as deliverymen; thus, the women maintain the decision-making power. Out of the six women, four are immigrants, hailing from Haiti, Angola, and the Dominican Republic. When asked why immigrant women, the founder explains it was her mother’s idea due to her mother’s former work in nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Even though the daughter initially opposed hiring immigrants, she explains her mother’s rationalization:

Ela sempre pensa muito em essa coisa de capacitação porque minha mãe era professora. E ela pensa muito na pessoa, o ser humano, o indivíduo. Ela queria quando fez nossa pergunta da empresa fazer uma coisa que deixa uma oportunidade para mulheres e principalmente para mulheres imigrantes. Ela tinha esse olhar por ver essa situação pessoal dos haitianos que chegaram para Brasil e outras comunidades que chegaram no Brasil. E viu que os homens conseguem organizar um emprego mas a mulher muitas vezes acabou ficando e tem mais dificuldades.

She always thinks a lot about capacity because my mother was a teacher. And she thinks a lot about the person, the human being, the individual. She wanted when she asked our company to do something that makes an opportunity for women and especially for immigrant women. She had this view because of seeing this personal situation of the Haitians who arrived in Brazil and other communities that arrived in Brazil. And she saw that men can organize a job, but the woman often ended staying and have more difficulties.

The mother’s experience in NGOs illuminates the unique societal and market forces hindering black immigrant women. While the company has experienced growing pains with integrating employees from different cultures²⁸, the diversity in food options and tastes have been worth it. Each worker is given the autonomy to add items and recipes to the menu. This empowers the immigrant woman to take control and have a stake in the business; more importantly, it allows the women to celebrate and affirm their own cultural culinary practices. This simultaneously empowers the women while creating a competitive advantage for *Free Soul Food*. Furthermore, this labor strategy embraces and valorizes black culinary techniques throughout the African Diaspora. Women from the following nations have been employed at *Free Soul Food*: Haiti, Angola, the Dominican Republic, Cameroon, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

²⁸ For example, the founder mentioned a disagreement between two women because one was slightly older than the other. In her culture, age determined the social hierarchy. The women felt the kitchen should have been the same way, which led to their quarrels.

While the founder of *Free Soul Food* specifically focuses on black women immigrants, her principal motivator is the ideology of *Black Money*. The founder stresses the importance of “*a questão de Black Money*” (the question of Black Money). The founder assesses that *Black Money* functions better in the U.S. because Black Brazilians want others to participate in *Black Money* while not taking the onus themselves. The founder theorizes:

Todo mundo fala que o outro precisa fazer. Então eu espero que você faça o Black Money. E o demais fala por quê você não faz. Mas eu não penso nunca, por quê eu não faço? Eu sempre fico na dependência, esperando que o outro faça, mas nunca penso o que eu mesma estou fazendo. Então, quando a gente, eu e minha mãe, pensou na criação da empresa, a gente pensou nesse modelo, e pensou se eu quero e acredito nessa questão do Black Money e eu acredito que eu tenho que fortalecer as nossas redes e acredito que a nossa comunidade têm que estar mais forte, eu preciso primeiramente fazer isso. Então meu contador é negro, o designer que faz as minhas coisas é negro, as meninas que cuidam minhas mídias sociais são negras, a maioria das minhas funcionárias são negras. Então eu penso muito nessa questão. E aí, eu penso que apesar de eu não conseguir ainda um investimento, mas nesse meu microuniverso, eu tento fazer isso no meu dia a dia porque aí eu posso ainda não estar fortalecida como empresária, mas eu consigo, de qualquer jeito gerar renda para essas pessoas.

Everyone says the other must do. So I hope you do *Black Money*. And the rest wonders why you do not do it. But I never think, why do not I? I always stay in dependency, waiting for the other to do it, but I never think what I'm doing myself. So when we, my mom and I, thought about setting up the company, we thought about this model, and thought if I want and believe this issue of Black Money and I believe I have to strengthen our networks and believe that our community have to be stronger, I need to do this first. So my accountant is black, the designer who does my things is black, the girls who take care of my social media are black, most of my employees are black women. So I think a lot about it. And then, I think that even though I still cannot make an investment, but in this micro-universe, I try to do that in my daily life, because then I may not yet be strengthened as an entrepreneur, but I can still generate income for these people

The founder recognizes that *Black Money* only works if individuals actually do their parts; that is, if entrepreneurs hire people from the communities and networks they want to strengthen. Note the entrepreneur realizes she cannot change the entire system but within her “micro universe” (the place where she holds power); however, she can enact her economic ideology of black empowerment. In the opening quote (see the Introduction chapter), Anna (founder of *Xongani*) suggests that black businesses confront structural racism; here, the founder of *Free Soul Food* offers a practical approach to confronting structural racism through the individual-level practice of *Black Money*. Both founders give pragmatic and individualistic responses to confront structural issues, which can be summarized as a praxis of *doing what you can with what you have to get what you want*. The founder argues for the unification of theory with praxis.

Uncomfortable with simply paying lip service to Black Money or black economic empowerment, the founder takes action with her business to create stronger black communities and undermine anti-blackness.

Atrium

Like the aforementioned companies, *Atrium*, a mother-daughter ran restaurant, prioritizes black women in its labor strategy. Out of their ten employees, eight are black women (80%). Most of the women live in the *periferia* and are the heads of their households or play an important role in financially maintaining the family. Since their labor strategy resembles the ones previously discussed, in this section I examine the perception of these black women as business owners. I briefly mention some of the experiences of *Xongai* and *Free Soul Food* founders, but I focus primarily on *Atrium*.

Both *Xongani* and *Free Soul Food* founders share incidents in which the veracity of them being business owners is called into question. Anna describes that people still congratulate her husband for the success of *Xongani* because, she surmises, they believe that he owns *Xongani*. The founder of *Free Soul Food* shares that when she goes to contract new employees at the NGOs, the workers assume she is looking for work instead of hiring workers. In both cases you see a societal assumption that all black women occupy subordinate economic positions. This assumption illuminates the broader social perceptions of black women's potential; embedded in that assumption is black women cannot be the owners, the decision makers, nor the controllers of space and place.

One of *Atrium*'s founders offers the most egregious offenses of societal doubt of black women owners. The mother explains that "*branco e loiro é o perfil dos proprietários*" (white and blond is the profile of owners). The mother is a short 75-year-old gray-haired dark-skin

women with a warm spirit and a large smile. She describes various incidents of people questioning the veracity of her being an owner:

Você vê a mulher negra que cozinha, né, a comida é boa, mas ela não pode ser a dona. Hoje as pessoas já nos veem como donas, porque antes ela não ficava aqui comigo. Então as pessoas sempre procuram o dono, aí quando elas ficavam sabendo que era eu, elas ficavam surpresas. Tinha pessoas que diziam “Nossa eu venho aqui há tanto tempo e eu nunca vi o dono” porque elas nunca imaginam que uma pessoa negra fosse dona. Entendeu? Então aí elas ficam surpresas, e as vezes já houve casos de você estar na fila para ir para o caixa e você perguntar assim “quem for pagar com dinheiro” pode pagar aqui comigo, quem for usar essa maquininha pode vir aqui comigo as pessoas te olham como isso pode? mas como, essa cozinheira vai me cobrar também, né, elas olham com espanto. Ou perguntasse, “me dizerem que a senhora é dona, é verdade?” Sim. É uma pergunta que ninguém faria para um homem branco. “Vou levar você para cozinhar para mim. Vou levar você. Eu vou levar a senhora para cozinhar para mim. Eu te levo para minha casa para cozinhar para mim.” Você não vai falar para a dona branca. Se fosse uma loirinha, você não falaria isso. Então, elas falam, porque elas nunca imaginaram que eu sou a dona, que eu seja a dona. Não passa na cabeça delas.

You see the black woman who cooks, right, the food is good, but she cannot be the owner. People see us as owners now, because before [my daughter] was not here with me. So people always look for the owner, then when they [white women] knew it was me, they [white women] were surprised. There were people who said, "Wow, I've been here so long, and I've never seen the owner," because they [white women] never imagine a black person to be the owner. Understood? So there they [white women] are surprised, and sometimes there have been cases of you being in line to go to the cashier and you ask "who can pay with money" can pay here with me, whoever uses this machine can come here with me people they [white women] look at you, "how can this be? but like, this cook will charge me too, right, they [white women] look with amazement. Or ask, "Tell me you're owner, is it true?" Yes. It's a question no one would ask a white man. "I'll take you to cook for me. I'll take you. I'll take the *senhora* (lady/madam) to cook for me. I'll take you to my house to cook for me. "You're not going to tell to "the white lady". If I were a "little blonde woman," you would not say that. So they [white women] speak that way, because they [white women] never imagined that I am the owner, that I am the owner. It does not pass through their heads.

There are certain indignities that black women entrepreneurs face that are both racialized and gendered. In this case, being an elderly black woman and the main cook feeds into old stereotypes harkening from slavery and often reinforced in literature, music, and film—the imagery of the older black woman cooking. The founder even alludes to the stereotype that a black woman cooking means the food will be good. This aligns with the pervasive Brazilian notion of *mãe preta* (the black mother), the black women who cooks the food and cares for the kids, normally depicted as a grandmother figure.²⁹

In this quote, the racial transgressions are extremely insidious because they take place inside of the founders' place of business for 16 years. Questioning the veracity of a black

²⁹ In many ways, *mãe preta* is similar to the black mammie caricatures found in the U.S.

owner's status is a particular racialized experience, and in this case it is both racialized and gendered. This form of symbolic racial violence inflicts repeated psychological trauma on Black women in positions of power. The repeating of “that I am the owner, that I am the owner” and the tone used evidences the psychological trauma. The sentence—*elas nunca imaginaram que eu sou a dona, que eu seja a dona*—is more telling in Portuguese because the second am (*seja*) is in the subjunctive suggesting that her being the boss is completely out of the realm of possibility. Moreover, the founder points out that even well-meaning patrons of her business make racist assumptions as she intimates their statements, “*Wow, I've been here so long, and I've never seen the owner,*” when the owner is literally standing in front of them. This is a complete erasure of a black woman who, against seemingly insurmountable odds, created a successful business. Furthermore, this exemplifies a racist assumption that a business with a majority-black labor force could never be owned by a black woman.

Another point to note is the reactive language patrons used when they discovered that Black women owned the business. The most commonly used words (e.g., surprise, awe, and astonishment) communicated disbelief. The founder explains “they were surprised,” “they never imagined” and “it does not pass in their heads.” These reactions speak to the limited vision whites have of black people. Yet, the founder skillfully juxtaposes her racialized and gendered treatment with both white women and men, in particular with white blond women, accentuating that this treatment is atypical for “normal” entrepreneurs. This is particularly salient when she notes this is “a question no one would ask a white man” or when she follows up by asserting no one would tell “*a little white women*” (*uma loirinha*) that they are going to take her to their house to cook. Although lost in the English translation, the founder uses gendered language to describe most of the situations by specifically using *elas* (*they- white women*) instead of using gendered neutral or all-encompassing language *eles* (*they – just men or both men and women*)

In these scenarios, consciously or unconsciously, patrons of her restaurant verbalize an entitlement to the black woman and her talents. Through their language, they assume ownership. In these three examples—"I'll take you to cook for me. I'll take you. I'll take the *senhora* (lady/madam) to cook for me. I'll take you to my house to cook for me."—no one *asks* for permission nor even uses language to suggest it is a request; instead their statements suggest a forgone conclusion. Although people say, I am going to "take you to my house to cook for me" as a compliment, it is a racist and gendered assumption rooted in a perceived power imbalance in which they assume control, erasing the owner's full humanity and autonomy. This erasure is similar to what Aidoo (2018) calls "strategic racialized humanity," which he notes is the different humanity ascribed to enslaved men and women versus whites. In anti-black societies, Black people live in a constant state of compromised humanity, which always positions them as inferior. Implied in *strategic racialized humanity* is the notion that black people—no matter what they do or achieve—will never receive equal treatment as white men—and, by extension, full humanity. *Strategic racialized humanity* can manifest in various ways, including, but not limited, to whites' assumed ownership of black bodies and their talents, and blacks' self-doubt and lowered self-esteem.

From a business standpoint, these interactions place the founder, and by extension all founders, in an economic conundrum. In the best case, the patrons are being patronizing and problematic, and, in the worst case, they are consciously anti-black; but, in both cases, they are supporting the business. This makes it more difficult to address this form of racialized symbolic violence directly or confrontationally, as it could have negative consequences for the businesses. There is no simple response to this economic conundrum. For example, *Xongani's* founder encourages swift and direct responses, whereas, here, the founder acquiesces, preferring to empower her employees with their incomes generated from her thriving business. Moreover, it is

important to factor in the race of each the company's clientele: Xongani's is majority black while *Atrium's* is majority white.

Cooper Glicério

Though now playing an influential role in the company, *Cooper Glicério's*³⁰ (a recycling co-op) current president, and one of the 80 original founders, discusses her initial lowered self-esteem and shame for working with recyclable trash. She explains that she started the work out of necessity due to unemployment. The president shares: "*Minha família tem orgulho do meu trabalho. Antes eu tinha vergonha do meu trabalho porque eu não entendi muito bem, mas hoje não. Hoje tem orgulho em dizer sou catadora*" (My family takes pride in my work. Before, I was ashamed of my work because I did not understand very well but not today. Today I have pride to say I am sanitation worker). The founder did not believe in the work, which can be attributed to her lack of employment and self-devaluation. The co-op gave her an opportunity to develop pride, self-worth, and autonomy. She had been elected the president twice at the time of the interview.

In describing how hard it is for black people in Brazil, the founder says that one has to be a "*guerreiro*" (warrior) declaring "*você sempre tem que lutar mais que o outro*" (you always have to fight more than the other). She continues on to say the following:

O preconceito as vezes está em nós mesmos. Você chegar em um lugar, não é que as pessoas te deixam inferior, você se sente inferior. Então, eu não eu chego em um lugar e eu sou superior. Eu não vou baixar a cabeça para ninguém. Eu estou no mesmo nível com qualquer pessoa.

Prejudice is sometimes within ourselves. You arrive in a place, it's not that people make you feel inferior, you feel inferior. So, me no, I arrive in a place and I feel superior. I'm not going to bow my head to anyone. I'm on the same level with anyone.

³⁰ The co-op began as a way to unite the *catadores* (sanitation workers) experiencing homelessness and without work to create economic unity for more financial trading power with companies. The co-op originally had 80 members and currently has 29 members. Membership declined because many members returned to their birth cities in the Northeast.

This particular confidence seems to be a byproduct of her work and her role as a leader. Prior to starting the co-op, we observe that *Cooper Glicério*'s president had a defeated outlook on work and life; as the co-op grew and became successful, a clear shift occurred. She notes that black people internalize anti-blackness when she discusses the prejudices “we” carry within ourselves.³¹ She purports other people make you feel inferior, but you, in turn, begin to feel that way about yourself. Her shift in self-worth has to be partially attributed to her work environment, which is majority women and black. Sixteen out of the current 29 members are women and 90 percent of all the employees are black. The founder attributes the co-op being majority black to her creating a racially egalitarian space, declaring “*aqui entre nós, não tem esse “você preta”, “você branco” esse não existe. Porque dentro os negros são a maioria*” (here among us, there is no "you black," "you white" that does not exist. Because inside the blacks are the majority). Elevated pride and self-worth were fostered in this majority black environment. This enhanced racial pride spills over into the founder's general belief about black people. She reflects:

Eu fico orgulhoso quando vejo um negro, um professor, um negro juiz, um negro advogado porque nós estamos mostrando por mundo que a gente não é diferente de ninguém. O mesmo potencial que um branco tem o negro também tem. A única diferença é só na essa cor de pele mais nada.

I am proud when I see a black man, a teacher, a black judge, a black lawyer because we are showing for the world that we are no different from anyone. The same potential that a white has, the black also has. The only difference is only in that skin color, nothing more.

Thus, the founder importantly has developed both self-pride *and* pride in other black people. This pride seems to grow out of her own work experience. However, she misses the mark by saying only skin color separates blacks and whites in Brazil. There are empirically measured structural inequalities between blacks and whites and these disparities are not happenstance; instead, they are an outgrowth of structural anti-blackness in Brazil.

³¹ This form of internalized racism is also observed in research focused on Black Americans in the U.S. (Jones 2000; Molina and James 2016).

Conclusion

Across each company discussed in this chapter—*Xongani*, *Free Soul Food*, *Atrium*, and *Cooper Glicério*—the founders have implemented a labor strategy that valorizes blackness. All the companies use the *black women first* strategy. However, out the examples in this chapter only *Xongani* use the ‘*do negro para negro*’ strategy. With the larger sample, 64 percent of the companies use the ‘*do negro para negro*’ strategy. *Xongani*, *Free Soul Food*, *Atrium*, and *Cooper Glicério* have a majority black and women labor force, and all recognize the importance of training their workers to have the autonomy to potentially create their own businesses. *Xongani* empowers its female employees to express themselves and offer uncensored authentic responses to racist assumptions. *Free Soul Food* empowers its women employees to use their cultural capital and culinary techniques to play an active role in the creation of new menu items. *Atrium* empowers its women employees to financially maintain their households. *Cooper Glicério* empowers its women employees through self-esteem enhancement and leadership development. In sum, through the empowerment of Black people in general and Black women in particular, Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs resist both anti-blackness and anti-feminism. This chapter situates black labor with the production of black products. *Xongani*’s Afro-Brazilian clothes are designed by Afro-Brazilians intended to be consumed by Afro-Brazilians exemplifying ‘*do negro para o negro*,’ while exhibiting *negro* linked fate (Mitchell-Walthour’s 2018). Both *Atrium* and *Cooper Glicério* demonstrate particular ways various form of discrimination attack the psyche (Feagin and Imani’s 1994). Just as labor is important to the creation of products, black labor has important rule in curating and maintaining *quilombos*.

Chapter 3: Aquilombamento

I first saw the word *aquilombar-se* printed on a tee shirt sold by *Terça Afro*, an urban *quilombo*. The founder, a poet/singer/activist, explained the word means ‘to come together in community’. After seeing the definition in Portuguese, *fazer quilombo* (to do / to make *quilombo*)—which captures the deliberate nature of community building—I began to think through it as a theoretical concept I call *aquilombamento* (the act of creating or meeting in a maroon community), similar to the notion of black placemaking.³² At the core of both concepts is the desire for black people to unite in community—under their own agency—across ages, classes, genders, and sexualities. Hunter and colleagues (2016) define black placemaking as “the ways that urban black American create sites of endurance, belonging, and resistance through social interaction” (31). For these scholars, black placemaking has a corrective call to the stereotypical depiction of urban black life as “bounded, plagued by violence, victims and perpetrators, unproductive, and isolated from one another and the city writ large” (Hunter et al. 2016:31). Hunter et al. (2016) acknowledges the external attacks and internal dangers that make black life difficult, but the black placemaking framework emphasizes how black people make place in spite of these realities. Theorizing through *aquilombamento* allows the interaction between theories of black placemaking and *marronage*. Anthropologists, in particular, but scholars in general have argued that maroon communities and maroon-esque spaces can have protective qualities, to the point of positively mediating health outcomes and well-being (Asnani et al. 2008; Benn and Torres 2015; Bourne and Rhule 2009; Schulz et al. 2006; Spiegel and Yassi 2004; Torres Colón 2018)

³² Roberts (2015) writes the following: “Marronage (*marronage*, *maroonage*, *maronage*) conventionally refers to a group of people isolating themselves from a surrounding society in order to create a fully autonomous community” (4). These communities go by various names: maroon societies, *quilombos*, *palenques*, *mocambos*, *cumbes*, *mambises*, *rancherías*, *ladeiras*, *magote*, and *manieles*.

While a *quilombo* is a black space, not all black spaces are *quilombos*. I argue urban *quilombos* are intentionally crafted sites that center, empower, and valorize black humanity. Urban *quilombos*, more than physical locations, are repositories of black knowledge, aesthetic, politics, life, and *being*—a place of refuge from anti-blackness. Hunter et al. describes black placemaking as “the ability of residents to shift otherwise oppressive geographies of a city to provide sites of play, pleasure, celebration and politics” (2016:34). Although embedded in an anti-black society, these quilombos create play, pleasure, praise and politics while asserting black humanity on their own terms.

The founder of *Aparelha Luzia*, describes an *urban quilombo* as the following:

Quilombo é como o Quilombo dos Palmares. É uma comunidade autogestionada, emancipada, de economia criativa sustentável e independente. Isso é um quilombo. Um quilombo, mais do um espaço físico, é uma tecnologia social. Ele é uma forma de entender e de pensar uma sociedade, um organismo social. Então o Aparelha Luzia é isso. É um quilombo por isso, é urbano porque está dentro da cidade, mas está completamente atrelado as nossas construções que não são urbanas, mas que estão ali, em todos os territórios, fora da urbanidade que são os campos, os próprios territórios de quilombo, os territórios indígenas, pensando nessa toda ancestralidade e colocada dentro da cidade.

Quilombo is like the *Quilombo dos Palmares*. It is a self-managed, emancipated community with creative sustainable and independent economy. This is a quilombo. **A quilombo, more than a physical space, is a social technology. It is a way of understanding and thinking of a society, a social organism.** So *Aparelha Luzia* is that. It is a quilombo because of that, it is urban because it is inside the city, but it is completely linked to our constructions that are not urban, but that are there, in all the territories, outside the urbanity that are the fields, the quilombo territories themselves, the indigenous territories, thinking of this whole ancestry and placed within the city. (emphasis added)

The founder immediately links the quilombo to the iconic symbol of resistance and blackness in Brazil, *Quilombo dos Palmares*. When she mentions “self-managed” and “emancipated,” she is referring to a free black space controlled by black people. Yet, attentive to the economic needs of self-determination, the founder contextualizes the political economy of the quilombo as black, creative, sustainable and independent. Although the founder does not mention it here, an independent black economy embedded with an anti-black society creates unique economic challenges. Well aware of the traditional *quilombos* being located in rural spaces occupied by indigenous people, the founder detaches the quilombo from physical land and calls it a “social technology.” The ancestral notion of *quilombo* is being adapted for a 21st-century context, which

allows the urban *quilombo*, a “social technology,” to fulfil the current needs, wants, and desires of Afro-Brazilians.

Throughout this chapter, I argue that the black entrepreneurs not only make black spaces but engage in *aquilombamento*. I accomplish this by examining the sites Afro-Brazilians inscribe with their own interpretations, meanings, and cultural significances. I contend urban *quilombos* are made through *urban aquilombamento*; and, I separate the urban *quilombos* into three categories: *physical*, *traveling*, and *virtual*. *Physical quilombos* have set locations, as demonstrated by the following companies: *Aparelha Luzia* (urban *quilombo*) and *Terça Afro* (urban *quilombo*). *Traveling quilombos* move from location to location, not maintaining a set physical location. They are often event-based, but not always. *Feira Preta* (Black Expo), and *Diaspora.Black* (a global network of hosts and travelers) represent *traveling quilombos*. As both *traveling* and *virtual quilombos* are interdependent on the internet, I briefly discuss the importance of the internet in democratizing entrepreneurship for Afro-Brazilians. *Virtual quilombos* often use social media, but in general, exist online to create secure black sites; *Alma Preta* (journalism agency) and *Todos Negros do Mundo* (TNM) (news and web TV provider) are exemplars of this *quilombo* type. Urban *quilombos* do not magically appear but are meticulously crafted sites of resistance; although the founders are not only concerned with confronting structural racism, their deliberate curations of urban *quilombos* serves as resistance to anti-blackness.

Physical Quilombos

Aparelha Luzia

Aparelha Luzia, a *physical quilombo*, maintains a secure site of refuge for black minds, bodies, and souls; due to its robust social media presence, *Aparelha Luzia* is also a *virtual*

quilombo. I discuss the latter later in the chapter. According to its founder, *Aparelha Luzia*³³ is “*um espaço de arte, cultura, politica preta*” (a space of black art, culture, politics). As *quilombos* were spaces of refuge for enslaved people in the past, *Aparelha Luzia* is recreating an area of refuge for black minds, bodies, and souls today where questions of politics are at the forefront of the space. *Aparelha Luzia* is a black intersectional space where class, gender, and ethnicities are celebrated in their plurality. The founder, a transwoman, has curated a liberated space for black women and the LGBT community. There is a crucial need for this space because Brazil not only kills black people at genocidal levels (Alves 2018; Nascimento 1989; Smith 2016; Vargas 2018), but it is a leading killer of trans people in the world (Trans Murder Monitoring 2018). While Brazil’s black elite frequently visit, *Aparelha Luzia* is a safe space for the marginalized. For example, on the same night I met Lázaro Ramos (a famous Brazilian actor), I also observed a woman experiencing homelessness dance like no one was watching to Cheryl Lynn’s “Got to Be Real.”

As the founder recreates the *quilombo* experience, she subverts anti-blackness through her curation of a black intersectional space, as well as undermining patriarchy, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. In her campaign video, she states: “primeiro é nós, e depois de nós? É nós de novo” (First it is us and after us? It is us again). This assertion of ‘black first’ is emblematic of *urban aquilombamento* and permits *Aparelha Luzia* to create a free and, at times, spiritual space. The founder’s attention to the needs of black people undercuts the anti-blackness notion of ignoring the desires of black people, while simultaneously giving voice to the most marginalized. Moreover, her attentiveness manifests in subtle ways; for example, *Aparelha Luzia* remains open until the subway re-opens the following day, as a substantial proportion of the

³³ *Aparelha Luzia* could be described as a combination of the following: an event space, a club, a restaurant and a bar. None of them fully encapsulate the essence of the space. *Aparelha Luzia* is probably best described as what the community needs the space to be on that particular day.

patrons rely exclusively on public transportation (e.g., bus, subway). *Aparelha Luzia*'s founder methodically destabilizes anti-blackness by giving voice, creating space, securing capital, and providing access for black people. Prioritizing black people in an anti-black society is a subversive act that Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs execute every day.

Terça Afro

Terça Afro's approach to *aquilombamento* varies in one important way from *Aparelha Luzia* by including children in the space. Originally, *Terça Afro* started as a quilombo to teach black children about Brazil's black history. The founder realized that there was a significant desire from adults to learn about the black history of Brazil which shifted the quilombo concentration from children to both adults and children. Focusing more on educational programming, most of *Terça Afro*'s events emphasize education, history, and artistic expression (e.g. English classes and the history of *quilombos*). Like *Aparelha Luzia*, the founder of *Terça Afro* centers blackness as she explains:

O protagonismo sempre foi negro e algo a gente quer preservar porque a gente acredita que a gente não sabe nossa história e precisa aprender. E existe pessoas capacitadas, pessoas negras capacitadas para contar nossa própria história. Não precisa que vem uma pessoa de outra origem explica nossa própria história.

The protagonism has always been black and something we want to preserve because we believe that we do not know our history and need to learn. And there are trained people, trained black people capable of telling our own story. There is no need for a person from another origin to explain our own story.

After clearly explaining the importance of having and maintaining black protagonism, she recounts that white Brazilians claim she is committing reverse racism. The inaccurate label “reverse racism” was mentioned several times throughout my interviews to disparage actions that center blackness.³⁴ The founder refutes the claim and continues to emphasize the importance of black people at the center of telling their own stories, in their own way, on their own terms. But the founder expresses an important point that black people are capable and trained to tell their

³⁴ The idea of reverse racism comes from the U.S. (Chang 1996).

own histories. The emphasis on self-determined storytelling is exemplified by the fact that all conversation-based programming for the company is conducted in *rodas de conversa* (conversation circles).³⁵ The *roda* holds a significant importance in Brazil and to Afro-Brazilians. Specifically for the founder, the *roda* is a way to make everyone in the circle accessible, hearable, and visible which counteracts any notions of hierarchical behavior. Everyone in the *roda* is equal, with the same ability to be seen and heard.

In the same way the founder links the *roda* to ancestral blackness, she links *Terça Afro* to *quilombos*; in fact, the official name of the company is *Quilombo Terça Afro*. The founder explains *Terça Afro*'s process of quilombo designation:

A gente adotou como Quilombo Terça Afro. Então como o quilombo, que é um espaço de resistência, onde os negros fugiam da situação de escravidão e iam para estes territórios. A gente quis manter esse nome porque é um espaço hoje em dia de refúgio para as pessoas que não estão fugindo da escravidão, mas estão fugindo da escravidão das mentes. Então, aqui é um espaço onde elas se sentem livres para falar sobre situações que as pessoas negras passam e também para vivenciar outro tipo de prática de viver em sociedade. E aí sem perceber, e depois com outras pessoas percebendo a importância disso a gente se denomina como um espaço de cura mesmo. De cura, de uma troca de conhecimento, um espaço formativo.

We adopted as *Quilombo Terça Afro*. Then like the quilombo, which is a space of resistance, where blacks escaped from the situation of slavery and went to these territories. We wanted to keep that name because it is a place of refuge today for people who are not fleeing from slavery but are fleeing from the mental bondage. So here is a space where they feel free to talk about situations that black people go through and also to experience alternative ways of living in society. And then without realizing it, but after others realizing the importance of this, we are called a space of healing. Of healing, of an exchange of knowledge, a formative space.

The founder envisions *Terça Afro* as a space of mental freedom, a space of refuge, a space of dialogue, a space to experience an alternative way of living, and a space of healing. The curation site where these notions converge creates refuge from anti-blackness. In suggesting *Terça Afro* is a “space of healing,” the founder’s assertion aligns with what Benn and Torres (2015) find in a maroon community in rural Jamaica, Accompong Town. A shared sense of belonging and identity coupled with practices that embed African ancestral pride generate a balm to the

³⁵ A *roda* (circle) is a circular formation within which participants perform in any of several Afro-Brazilian dance art forms, such as *capoeira*, *maculelê* and *samba de roda*. Moreover, *Terça Afro* conducts all discussions in a *roda* as a form of homage to the ancestors.

detrimental effects of poverty and illness (Benn and Torres 2015). Moreover, Benn and Torres (2015) argue that the social support experienced by maroons are based on a “safe physical and social space that is sensibly experienced as different” from other parts of the nation-state, further explaining that maroon spaces tend to emerge from a history of resistance, attachment to land, and continuity of both African and indigenous traditions (Benn and Torres 2015: 309).

Fundamentally, *quilombo* spaces are embedded within “bodily otherness,” which can lead to “positive embodiment” and thus creating spaces of healing in addition to other generative aspects for black people including, but not limited to, businesses as well as play, pleasure, praise and politics.

Traveling Quilombos

Diaspora.Black

Diaspora.Black is a *traveling quilombo* that describes itself as the following:

Somos uma rede global de anfitriões e viajantes que amam a cultura negra e buscam viver experiências autênticas e inesquecíveis em suas viagens. Somos elos de uma comunidade que tem, agora, uma nova conexão para nos aproximar da nossa história, nossa essência, nossa riqueza.

We are a global network of hosts and travelers who love black culture and seek to live authentic and unforgettable experiences in their travels. We are the links of a community that now has a new connection to bring us closer to our history, our essence, our wealth. (“About” section of website)

Diaspora.Black understands itself as a global community of people that love black culture and seek authentic black cultural experiences. As a business, *Diaspora.Black* operates an online marketplace with hospitality services that generate income for the company but also for hosts and third-party organizers of cultural experiences. Due to the nature of the business, it creates micro-*quilombos* throughout Brazil. The competitive advantage of the company is uniquely crafted black experiences, including staying with black host(s) and promising a black cultural experience. When you google *Diapora.Black*, its tagline reads *viagem sem preconceito* (travel without prejudice), referring to the concerns of black travelers throughout the world. While explaining *Diaspora.Black*, the founder joked it is “AirBNB without discrimination.”

Diaspora.Black allows its guests to experience secure micro-*quilombos* throughout Brazil, allowing people access to black spaces that are rarely imagined as vacation destinations.

Diaspora.Black is unapologetic in its affirmation of black culture and history. The first section of the *Diaspora.Black* manifesto is worth citing at length as it offers insight into how the company positions and understands itself in an anti-black society:

Somos Negros

Nossos passos vêm de longe. *Atravessamos desertos e oceanos, abrimos caminhos, plantamos raízes. Em movimento, resistimos.* *Preservamos um legado de histórias, memórias e culturas da população negra dispersas pelo mundo.*

A diáspora africana está marcada em nossas subjetividades: na sensação de deslocamento, na busca por um lugar de pertencimento, na ânsia de ir além. Onde não haja dores ou barreiras erguidas pelo racismo. Onde possamos viver e manifestar com orgulho os valores semeados pelos nossos ancestrais.

Nossos mais velhos, *contra toda a histórica opressão hegemônica sobre suas vidas, garantiram nossa existência. Transmitiram ensinamentos, filosofias, tecnologias e memórias.* *Construíram fraternidades de acolhimento e solidariedade, permitindo a re-existência da cultura afrodescendente em diferentes cidades do mundo.*

Somos muitos, em muitos lugares. Culminância de diferentes vozes, olhares e saberes. Somos autores da nossa história e agentes da nossa transformação. Inovamos para materializar o sonho daqueles que nos antecederam. Nos encontramos e nos reconhecemos para que nossa voz ecoe e transforme a realidade que nos marginaliza.

Entre uma população alvo de violações e extermínios, estar vivos é sabermos-nos sobreviventes. Isto não basta. Sabermos-nos despertos nos impõe sentir a plena liberdade sem medo. Nossa luta fundamental é fortalecer nossa memória e caminhos ancestrais, afirmar nossas identidades e valorizar nossas vidas.

A Diaspora.Black *nasce com e para população negra. Nosso compromisso é com a construção de uma sociedade mais justa, com a valorização de identidades africanas e com a promoção da igualdade. Assim, compreendemos que todo e qualquer cidadão do mundo que pactue com nosso compromisso, pode fazer parte desta rede.*

We are Blacks

Our footsteps come from afar. We cross deserts and oceans, we open paths, we plant roots. **On the move, we resist.** We preserve a legacy of stories, memories, and cultures of the black population scattered throughout the world.

The African diaspora is marked in our subjectivities: in the sense of displacement, in the search for a place of belonging, in the **eagerness to go beyond. Where there are no pains or barriers erected by racism.** Where can we live and manifest with pride the values sown by our ancestors.

Our elders, against all the historical **hegemonic oppression** over their lives, ensured our existence. **They transmitted teachings, philosophies, technologies and memories.** They built **fraternities of shelter and solidarity,** allowing the **re-existence** of Afro-descendant culture in different cities of the world.

We are many in many places. Culmination of different voices, looks, and knowledge. **We are the authors of our history** and agents of our transformation. We innovate to materialize the dream of those before us. **We find and recognize ourselves** so that our voice echoes and transforms the reality that marginalizes us.

Among a target population for rapes and exterminations, to be alive is to know ourselves as survivors. This is not enough. To know us, awakens us to feel full freedom without fear. Our fundamental struggle is to strengthen our memory and **ancestral paths**, affirming our identities and valuing our lives.

Diaspora. Black is born with and for the black population. Our commitment is to build a more just society with the appreciation of African identities and the promotion of equality. Thus, we understand that every citizen of the world who agrees with our commitment can be part of this network. (*Diaspora.Black* Manifesto)

The manifesto opens with a declaration that *Diaspora.Black* is black; and, because of that assertion, black people are the protagonists of its story. The founder situates “movement” as resistance, saying “on the move, we resist.” The company’s business activity, leisure travel, as a form of resistance creating a continuity of black movement itself. *Diaspora.Black* privileges black cultural understandings and artifacts as sacred items that the world should experience. The founder asserts that *Diaspora.Black* wants to move beyond racism to make a better world, “a more just society;” but the structuring of this new world is based in the values and dreams sown by the ancestors; in other words, based in blackness. *Diaspora.Black* speaks to the diversity of the black experience and uses that diversity as a selling point for its company. Underpinning the business model is a need to recognize and celebrate blackness as a way to alter society, as demonstrated in the declaration “we find and recognize ourselves so that our voice echoes and transforms the reality that marginalizes us.” The company goal is “full freedom,” and it is willing to partner with anyone to achieve the society that affirms black identities and lives. This style of *urban quilombamento* undermines anti-blackness by both empowering black culture and generating income for black people throughout Brazil.

Feira Preta

Feira Preta is another example of a traveling quilombo, yet, it takes a different approach to generating incoming for black people throughout Brazil. According to its website:

O Instituto Feira Preta faz o mapeamento do afro-empendedorismo no Brasil. Atuamos como aceleradores e incubadores de negócios negros em diferentes segmentos. Articulamos o black money e promovemos educação empreendedora. As atividades do Instituto estão distribuídas em todo o território brasileiro.

O expoente de maior visibilidade desta plataforma é a Feira Preta, evento anual realizado desde 2002, que reúne criadores negros de diferentes setores: arte, moda, cosméticos, gastronomia, audiovisual, comunicação, entre outros. Também estamos de olho em mercados como o financeiro, alimentar, games e tecnologia, que hoje representam um novo patamar a ser impulsionado na construção de valor do empreendedorismo negro.

The *Feira Preta Institute* maps out afro-entrepreneurship in Brazil. We act as accelerators and incubators for black business in different segments. We articulate black money and promote entrepreneurial education. The activities of the Institute are distributed throughout Brazil.

The most visible exponent of this platform is the Black Festival, an annual event held since 2002, which brings together black creators from different sectors: art, fashion, cosmetics, gastronomy, audiovisual, communication, among others. We are also looking at markets such as financial, food, games and technology, which today represents a new level to be boosted in building black entrepreneurship value. (Company Website)

Feira Preta is a multipronged institute that mainly serves as accelerator and incubator for black business throughout Brazil. It has hosted programing in major cities throughout the country (e.g., São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasília, São Luís). *Feira Preta's* most well-known event is the largest black festival of culture, innovation, and entrepreneurship in Latin America, which takes place annually in São Paulo. This year's event had over 50,000 attendees with 120 black entrepreneurs circulating more than R\$700,000 (\$181,034 USD) (Borges 2018). This is a 2.5-fold increase from the 2017 count of 20,000 attendees. More importantly, this one black event over three days circulated more than R\$700,000 (\$181,034 USD) in a country where the monthly minimum wage is R\$937 (\$242.33 USD). Throughout my interviews, several other entrepreneurs discussed the importance of *Feira Preta* and its founder. One of the partners from *Alma Preta* discussed how *Feira Preta* was the first high paying client of the company. He said the contract with *Feira Preta* and the event itself gave them so much exposure that it tripled their income. Since *Feira Preta* only has two employees they contract out to create and operate the annual festival. All the contracted companies are black-owned, allowing the founder to create her vision of black money circulation.

The founder explains that though she personally is an activist, *Feira Preta* has a hybrid model of activism and economic gain because, as she emphasizes:

Não tem ativismo sem essa capital, sem dinheiro. Então ela precisa gerar riqueza, tem que fazer dinheiro. Sem fazer dinheiro eu não pago. A feira tem um custo de meio milhão de reais por ano. Se eu não tiver dinheiro, eu não pago feira.

There is no activism without capital, without money. So then it needs to generate wealth, it has to make money. Without making money, I do not pay. The festival has a cost of half a million reais (\$130,000 USD) per year. If I do not have the money, I do not pay fair.

The founder links activism to entrepreneurship. She theorizes that entrepreneurship can fund activism or be activism itself, but in both cases, activism has to be financed. *Feira Preta* creates a space that valorizes black culture while providing opportunities for black entrepreneurs to create, launch, and develop their businesses, establishing an ecosystem where black entrepreneurship can grow. This subverts anti-blackness through developing the next generation of black business owners while empowering others to do the same. The larger *Feira Preta* becomes, the more opportunity it creates for other black businesses. This space is antithetical to anti-blackness because it explicitly articulates the valuing of black products, black labor, and black community. All of three are the key to its business model and success: thus, *Feira Preta* undermines anti-blackness on individual, community and city levels.

While *Feira Preta* is most known for its large festival in São Paulo, it has important initiatives that occur year-round such as: *AfroHub* (an acceleration program for black entrepreneurs created), *Afrolab* (the exclusive technical and creative training program of *Feira Preta*), *Afrolab para Elas* (exclusive training for black women from *Feira Preta*), *Fundo Éditodos* (a social fund that fosters black entrepreneurship), *Pretas Potências* (a black power festival that highlights the creative and innovative power of the black community in the past, present and future), and *A Voz e a Vez* (events in partnership with Google Brazil to discuss diversity in Brazilian advertising). *Feira Preta* offers a variety of programs that center the needs of black entrepreneurs.

I will specifically focus on *Afrohub*, an initiative created by three companies—*Feira Preta*, *Afrobusiness*, and *Diaspora.Black*—and supported by Facebook. The thought of *Afrohub* began as a comment on Facebook. One of the founders of *Diaspora.Black* recalled the conceptualization of *Afrohub* as someone saying that the black entrepreneurship community built on Facebook in closed groups needed to meet in person, thus moving from the digital space to a physical space. With the support of Facebook, the first *Afrohub* occurred inside of its office in São Paulo. This is particularly important because these types of spaces tend to be majority white. One entrepreneur joked that the second *Afrohub* was “the most black people Facebook has ever had within its walls.” While he laughed, this comment highlights the normalization of entrepreneurial space as white, but more importantly underscores that the space was being black-occupied, even if only a temporary occupation. *Afrohub* represent a manifestation of a reoccurring demand of black entrepreneurs, “*a gente precisa tomar, ocupar e criar espaço*” (we need to take, occupy and create space). Several entrepreneurs at the second *Afrohub* echoed that five to ten years ago these spaces and these companies did not exist. There were no groups or events that brought together black entrepreneurs to see each other, to support each other, or to do business with each other. *Afrohub* creates a traveling *quilombo*, a *social technology* for black entrepreneurs literally inside one of the most powerful social technology firms in the world, Facebook. In the process of occupying Facebook, *Afrohub* makes a site for play, pleasure, praise, and politics.

The creation of *Afrohub* on Facebook highlights the importance of social media and the internet, more generally, for the democratization of entrepreneurship and space in Brazil. In my sample, 43 percent of the companies only have a digital presence and sell online without a physical storefront location. Two companies in my sample only have physical locations without a digital marketplace or footprint, a barbershop and a restaurant. In both cases, the owners are

digital immigrants.³⁶ Social media, particularly places such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and WhatsApp, is conducive to the creation of *virtual quilombos*, which are secure digital sites for black humanity often manifesting as play, pleasure, praise, or politics.³⁷

Hill (2018) argues Black Twitter is a digital counterpublic and Hunter et al. (2016) finds that Twitter has the potential for black placemaking; by extension, other social media platforms can also be sites of *virtual quilombos*. The founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, described Instagram and Facebook as the “digital equivalent of a town square” (Zuckerberg 2019). Unlike the physical space of Brazil which is normalized as white (Mitchell-Walthour 2018; Nascimento 1989), digital town squares are not normalized as white and have been critical sites for blackness and the creation of *virtual quilombos*. As a brief example, *Aparelha Luzia* uses Instagram as a way to connect people with its physical space while they are not physically there. This often entails uploading current videos and pictures to its page for anyone to see. The company frequently uploads *Instagram* Stories (10 second videos that remain for 24 hours) and/or Live Videos (which are similar to stories with the ability for longer durations than 10 seconds but remain for 24 hours as well) so its 28,200 followers can view what is happening or has happened. Moreover, *Aparelha Luzia* often uploads marketing material to its page. Out of the 6,100 photo and videos uploaded to *Aparelha Luzia*’s Instagram page, 100 percent are related to blackness in some form, but, more importantly, its page allows one to experience play and pleasure while providing refuge to anti-blackness.

Virtual Quilombos

While *virtual quilombos* often occur on social media, *Alma Preta* and *Todos Negros do Mundo* (TNM) are examples of digitally-based businesses that are also *virtual quilombos*. Due to the

³⁶ A person born or brought up before the widespread use of digital technology (Prensky 2001).

³⁷ For a full discussion of social media in Brazil see Spyer’s (2018) *Social Media in Emergent Brazil: How the Internet Affects Social Mobility (Why We Post)*.

nature of their business models as news websites centering blackness, they are repositories of black knowledge, aesthetic, politics, life, and *being*—places of refuge from anti-blackness. The two businesses arose from a desire to tell the stories of black people, while simultaneously filling the dearth of complex, nuanced, culturally relevant depictions about black people in mainstream media. In describing it aims, *Todos Negros do Mundo*'s (TNM) “about” section accurately exemplifies the objectives of *Alma Preta*, when it writes:

O racismo no Brasil é o pior que existe no mundo e o mais difícil de combater. Difícil porque é velado, não assumido. O brasileiro tem preconceito de assumir que tem preconceito. Nós, afrodescendentes somos mais de 50% da população brasileira e mesmo assim, não nos vemos representados em veículos de mídia. Negros não estão presentes na TV, Cinema ou publicidade. Essa página tem intuito de reunir em um único local, tudo que envolve nosso povo. O estão fazendo por ai, aqueles que estão representando e nos dando orgulho. Nosso principal interesse é fortalecer nosso povo, mantendo nossos seguidores muito bem informados sobre tudo que estão fazendo nossos irmãos. Seja na TV, cinema, publicidade na política, na música, não importa. O que estiverem fazendo para representar e fortalecer, nós mostraremos.

Temos como objetivo também, divulgar as empresas que estão nos representando e nos respeitando como consumidores ao usar modelos e atores negros em suas campanhas de publicidade. Se nos vemos, nós compramos.

O negro consome como qualquer pessoa. Come, bebe, viaja, se diverte, etc. Nosso dinheiro não tem cor e não tem raça. Mesmo assim, somos constantemente ignorados em campanhas publicitárias que não nos mostram, como se o Brasil fosse um país nórdico, o que todos sabem, não é o caso.

O TNM não é apenas mais site. Somos um canal de notícias, uma TV web e uma geradora de conteúdos exclusivos. Em breve estaremos estreando uma série de programas e entrevistas. Nossos apresentadores já estão trabalhando e preparando conteúdos especiais.

Enfim, surgimos para fortalecer. Acredite, nossa missão será cumprida!!

Racism in Brazil is the worst in the world and the most difficult to combat. Difficult because it is veiled, not assumed. The Brazilian has a prejudice against assuming that one has prejudice. We, Afro-descendants, are more than 50% of the Brazilian population and even then, we do not see ourselves represented in media vehicles. Blacks are not present on TV, Cinema or advertising. This page is intended to bring together in one place, everything that involves our people: including what our people are doing, those who are representing and giving us pride. Our main interest is to strengthen our people by keeping our followers very well informed about everything our brothers are doing. Be it on TV, movies, advertising in politics, in music, it does not matter. Whatever you are doing to represent and strengthen, we will show.

We also aim to publicize the companies that are representing us and respecting us as consumers by using black models and actors in their advertising campaigns. If we see us, we'll buy.

Black consumes like anyone else. Eat, drink, travel, have fun, etc. Our money is colorless and has no race. Even so, we are constantly ignored in advertising campaigns that do not show us, as if Brazil were a Nordic country, which everyone knows, is not the case.

The TNM is not just another site. We are a news channel, a web TV and a unique content generator. Soon we will be debuting a series of programs and interviews. Our presenters are already working and preparing special content.

Finally, we came to strengthen. Believe me, our mission will be fulfilled!! (“Who are we” section TNM)

TNM opens with a declarative sentence on racism in Brazil. This approach suggests that TNM, as a business, is a response to racism. By particularly pointing out the unique nature of Brazilian racism, black demographic percentage, and the ignoring of black population in the media, TNM presents its business objectives as challenging racism, strengthening the black community and eradicating the inferior coverage of black people in Brazil. This goal enables TNM to become a repository of black humanity. Moreover, TNM is concerned with black business representations, even evoking one of *O Movimento Black Money*’s (The Black Money Movement) principle, *se nos vemos, nós compramos* (If we see us, we’ll buy). Both TNM and *Alma Preta* are interested in black businesses as well as critiquing racism in Brazil.

Alma Preta, in its “about” section, also critiques Brazil for being racist, but goes further than TNM to add:

A disputa de poder simbólico na superestrutura é mediada cada vez mais pelos meios de comunicação. Diante das igualdades raciais, sobretudo a partir da presença negra na mídia, é vital discutir para desmistificar a democracia racial e expor os conflitos étnico-raciais no Brasil.

(...)

Para denunciar e avançar na desconstrução do racismo institucional brasileiro, iremos dispor de algumas ferramentas textuais e jornalísticas: entrevistas, reportagens, crônicas, poesias, produções audiovisuais, fotos, charges, quadrinhos, resenhas e artigos opinativos. O Alma Preta não está sozinho. Construiremos uma rede de colaboradores em contato com outros veículos de imprensa negra e de mídia independente do século XXI.

The symbolic power struggle in the superstructure is increasingly mediated by the media. Faced with racial equality, especially from the black presence in the media, it is vital to discuss demystifying racial democracy and exposing ethnic-racial conflicts in Brazil.

(...)

To denounce and advance the deconstruction of Brazilian institutional racism, we will have some textual and journalistic tools: interviews, reports, chronicles, poetry, audiovisual productions, photos, cartoons, comics, reviews and opinion articles. *Alma Preta* is not alone. We will build a network of collaborators in contact with other black media and independent media outlets of the 21st century. (*Alma Preta*’s “About” section)

Alma Preta asserts that the media plays a significant role in the negotiation of social power.

Consequently, the identifying of racism in Brazil often falls to the black people in media. Thus,

Alma Preta rightly points out that black people are “vital to discuss demystifying racial

democracy and exposing ethnic-racial conflicts in Brazil.” Moreover, the tools to confront Brazilian institutional racism are multi-pronged and require a collaborative network approach.

Both TNM and *Alma Preta* provide culturally sensitive content, whereas “traditional” media are unable or choose not to do it. For example, one article entitled, “*Falha técnica na Feira Preta termina em polêmica*” (Technical Failure at the *Feira Preta* Ends in Controversy), in *O Estadão*, a large São Paulo newspaper, which circulates nationally, described the 2018 *Feira Preta* event as a “fiasco,” and proceeds to depict the event as the title suggest in a negative light. The equipment failure the article refers to occurred at one of 52 events that took place over the course of a three-day festival. Given that the remaining events were well-executed, most reasonable (and non-prejudicial) festival reporters would consider it a success. Moreover, the article mentioned an alleged disagreement that the founder of *Feira Preta* had with the Secretary of Culture, although the founder denied it occurred. *Alma Preta*, on the other hand, offered a swift critique of the article with its own article explaining what actually occurred at the festival. *Alma Preta*’s cultural sensitivity and nuanced understand of blackness allowed for the event to be accurately depicted. Moreover, *Alma Preta* notes the following:

Após a manifestação, o jornal O Estado de São Paulo publicou uma curta declaração: “A Feira Preta informa: a coordenadora não fez críticas ao secretário André Sturm. E a feira foi um sucesso”.

After the demonstration, the newspaper O Estado de São Paulo published a short statement: “The *Feira Preta* informs: the coordinator did not criticize Secretary André Sturm. And the show was a success.” (Borges 2018)

The change in the mainstream newspaper’s stance highlights the need for companies that center blackness. It is telling that the largest black entrepreneurial festival in Latin America does not warrant unbiased journalistic attention, which further highlights the anti-black nature of media in Brazil.

In addition to being concerned with blackness in Brazil, TNM and *Alma Preta*, highlight diasporic blackness. For example, on its home page, on March 17, 2019, TNM featured a story

about the U.S. celebrity couple Ciara (recording artist) and Russell Wilson (professional football player), an article discussing hair discrimination in New York City, a review of *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (a Netflix original film about an African boy that build a wind turbine) and two pieces on the U.S.-based Academy Awards, in addition to numerous stories of current events in Brazil. Both TNM and *Alma Preta* unite in a digital community—under their own agency—across ages, classes, genders, and sexualities. The centering of positive images of blackness create “sites of endurance, belonging, and resistance through social interaction” (Hunter et al. 2016:31).

Conclusion

Black entrepreneurs not only develop black sites but engage in *urban aquilombamento*. I develop a typology—*physical, traveling, and virtual quilombos*—to elaborate the notion of *urban aquilombamento*. I offer that the particular use of social media and the internet by Afro-Brazilian have given rise to what can be considered digital ethnic enclaves. Each founder curates sites that center, empower, and valorize black humanity. *Aparelha Luzia* and *Terça Afro* challenge anti-blackness through their physical creation of space. As *traveling quilombos*, *Feira Preta* and *Diaspora.Black* generate moving sites of resistance. *Alma Preta* and *TNM*, as *virtual quilombos*, meticulously develop digital sites of resistance. In sum, the *urban quilombos* curated by Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs serve as resistance to anti-blackness. This chapter underscores the ways anti-blackness and discrimination necessitate secure black sites. This is accomplished and maintained by black labor, by black people, exemplifying both ‘*do negro para negro*’ and *negro* linked fate. At times, the *quilombos* are the products (e.g., *Diaspora.Black*, *Alma Preta* and *TNM*) and, other times, the *quilombos* are the spaces where the products are sold (e.g., *Feira Preta*). Product, labor and *aquilombamento* are interconnected; and, all three are particular means used by Black Brazilian entrepreneurs to confront anti-blackness.

Discussion/Conclusion

The overall goal of this research project was to answer the question: To what extent do black entrepreneurs use their businesses as sites of resistance to anti-blackness? I found that entrepreneurs through their product, labor and *aquilombamento* resist anti-blackness in São Paulo, Brazil. For these entrepreneurs, undermining anti-blackness begins with the creation of their business. Resisting racism connects Afro-Brazilians to a long tradition of challenging racial oppression in the Americas (e.g. slave rebellions, civil rights movement, Black Lives Matter, *Movimento Negro Unificado, Frente Negra Brasileira*) (Branch 1990; Butler 1998; Hanchard 1994; Lebron 2017).³⁸ Yet, my research contributes an important part often understudied, the entrepreneurial response to anti-blackness.

In building on the work of Gold (2016) and Butler (2005), this study critically examined black entrepreneurship in Brazil, a racially stratified and anti-black society. Heeding their call to take seriously the question of racism, I also find that the entrepreneurial success of Afro-Brazilians is uniquely disadvantaged due to anti-blackness. Similar to Feagin and Imani's (1994) observations, I find successful entrepreneurs are aware of structural racism and different forms of discrimination (*cumulation, interlocking, and externally-amplified*). Animated by all three forms of discrimination, the incidences discussed in relation to *Atrium* and its founder exemplifies the particular racialized-gendered processes experienced by Afro-Brazilian business owners. Entrepreneurs not only develop strategies to cope with and resist anti-blackness, but they also use their businesses as sites to directly confront it. Akin to Wingfield and Taylor (2016), I observe that Afro-Brazilians make sense of their social reality through their businesses and use their entrepreneurship as a response to systemic racism.

³⁸ Unified Black Movement and Brazilian Black Front

My work built on the Black entrepreneurship research tradition by (1) offering fresh insight into global black entrepreneurial practices demonstrated by the interconnectedness of Afro-Brazilians to the African Diaspora (e.g. exchange of ideas and strategies); (2) elucidating the role of business in black placemaking evidenced in the *urban aquilombamento* practices; and (3) contributing to a divergent theory in ethnic entrepreneurship which sees racial discrimination as cause for entry into business indicated by the entrepreneurs using their businesses as sites of resistance. Centering blackness—and by extension otherness—as a measure of business success contributes to reframing our understanding of black business, but also business at large. I critically engage with the animated age-old sociological debate between structure and agency. While anti-blackness structures and manages black life and entrepreneurship, I find that Afro-Brazilians, through the agentic act of curating their space of racialized liberation through business, circumvent, at least in part, societal devaluation of blackness. To borrow the language of one of my respondents, the entrepreneur has agency to determine their “microuniverse,”

My work confirms Mitchell-Walthour’s notion of *negro* linked fate, which she conceptualizes as “one feels he/she shares common experiences with other negros or that what happens to other negros in some way has an impact on the individual” (2018:145). As she points out, my work also opposes the claims that Black Brazilians do not organize around racial identity. Racism is a significant factor in deciding to start a business. Entrepreneurs use entrepreneurial means to confront anti-blackness. My data revealed that this occurs in terms of selecting a product, developing a labor force, and creating a racially secure space. By studying entrepreneurship at the micro-level, the product, labor, and placemaking, I provide insight on the individual experience with confronting anti-blackness in Brazil. Often, ethnic entrepreneurship scholars study sectors or industries (e.g. health care, beauty, and financial services). However, my focus on a diverse group of businesses across various industries suggests that a shared

experience of discrimination leads to entrepreneurial resistance. This observation confirms what Mitchell-Walthour (2018) argues: racial discrimination and a shared identity causes *negro* linked fate.

Latin American scholarship often understudied and undertheorized black entrepreneurship; my work demonstrates that Afro-Brazilian owners face similar challenges as African Americans. In particular, I reveal that Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs use blackness as a way to resist racism and to create a competitive advantage. I discovered, somewhat unexpectedly, the interconnectedness of Afro-Brazilians and African Americans. Afro-Brazilians look to the strategies of resistance, cultural products and general style of African Americans to inspire their own struggles to overcome anti-blackness. Learning from them, Afro-Brazilian adapt some African American practices to implement in Brazil. For example, the burgeoning of *O Movimento Black Money* is in direct conversation with the political and economic organizing of African Americans. The nature of *O Movimento Black Money* confirms *negro* linked fate. In the future, I would like to study this movement further. By happenstance, I captured the beginning of this movement, but I believe it has potential to drastically change the economic landscape of Brazil.

The results of this study suggest that *centering blackness*, *'do negro para o negro,' black women first*, and *urban aquilombamento* are important strategies in undermining racism and creating competitive advantages for Black entrepreneurs. Despite knowing that black products, black labor and black secure sites in an anti-black society carry significant risk, the companies' business models directly challenge the anti-black premise of black worthlessness. Every company exemplifies unique aspects of entrepreneurial racism. *Ebony English* utilizes language acquisition via black culture to empower Afro-Brazilians. *Conta Black* democratizes access to financial services to allow for the economic incorporation of black Brazilians. *Aneesa* allows

black girls and women to develop positive self-images. *Niggaz Place* creates a safe haven for blacks while simultaneously grooming their bodies. *Think Etnus* creates a more equitable consumer market, providing full access for black people. *Rap Burguer* affirms black culture through its insistence of the importance of black global culture. *Xongani* empowers its employees to develop skills to run their own businesses in the future. *Free Soul Food* empowers its women employees to use their cultural capital and culinary techniques to play an active role in the creation of new menu items. *Atrium* empowers its women employees to financially maintain their households. *Cooper Glicério* empowers its women employees through self-esteem enhancement and leadership development. *Aparelha Luzia* and *Terça Afro* challenge anti-blackness through their physical creation of space. *Feira Preta* and *Diaspora.Black* generate traveling sites of resistance. *Alma Preta* and *TNM* develop virtual sites of resistance. These unique strategies are held together by one common thread: resistance to anti-blackness and the empowerment of Afro-Brazilians.

As demonstrated in the labor chapter, “gendered racism” is a particular problem for Afro-Brazilian women entrepreneurs. By centering the experience of black women, I elucidate a better understanding of their intersectional experiences, while simultaneously uncovering how the black women entrepreneurs enact Harvey’s (2005) “ideology of help.” Moreover, I take seriously Harvey’s (2005) call to study black women. As she notes, black women are often understudied in the ethnic entrepreneurship literature; non-U.S. black women are almost nonexistent in the literature. This thesis centers Afro-Brazilian women by emphasizing their significant contributions to black entrepreneurship. Just as Harvey (2005) finds, banks often did not fund or offer credits to Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs. This forced many business owners to use non-traditional funding practices. Although systemic racism affects every aspect of Brazilian life (Vargas 2018), black women entrepreneurs are at the forefront of curating protective space that

have, as many company founders theorize, the ability to positively mediate both mental and physical health (Benn and Torres 2015).

This thesis provides a counter-narrative to the ethnic entrepreneurship literature that generally characterizes black entrepreneurs as the prototype of an unviable ethnic economy (Butler 2005; Fairlie and Robb 2007; Frazier 1997; Light and Gold 2000; Sanders and Nee 1996; Walker 2009). Many scholars have pointed to the supposed deficiencies of black entrepreneurship. However, my work beckons us to consider entrepreneurship as a form of resistance. In order to do so, we must understand the pervasive nature of anti-blackness in society and its relation to capital and power. Too often, scholarship centers black businesses' failures—to compete in the market, to create a viable ethnic enclave— without contextualizing the full impact of anti-blackness (Frazier 1997; Gold 2016; Light and Gold 2000; Romero and Valdez 2016; Sanders and Nee 1996). I am proposing a generous re-reading of Black entrepreneurship as a site of resistance. Using a resistance lens, this re-reading opens up the possibility to see what black entrepreneurship offers—and, by extension, black people. Theorizing resistance within ethnic entrepreneurship allows us to better understand black experiences, economic activity, and racism. Moreover, I am suggesting we move past critiquing the structure of black entrepreneurship to consider the impact of black business in valorizing blackness, creating dignity, and place-making.

Furthermore, this thesis demonstrated how a) black entrepreneurs provide a way to understand blackness as a value add, b) the ways black employees shift social dynamics within firms, and c) the ways community building via business serves an important role in society. This occurs daily despite racial oppression impacting every stage of life and business. This is not to say that black entrepreneurship is just about resistance. However, a discussion of a black

business without examining resistance is an incomplete analysis, just as a discussion of black business failures without its successes is also incomplete.

The transforming our view of the black entrepreneur as a deficient archetype to a model of resistance allows us to see the ways black businesses subvert society's devaluation of blackness. When we begin our analysis there, we are able to ask important questions such as: How does selling a cultural product to a peer instead of an outsider change the way sellers and buyers value themselves, the product, and their culture? How can a black company confront racism? How do black firms maintain dignity for its employees? How and under what conditions are black businesses curating protective spaces? To what extent are black businesses creating digital ethnic enclaves on the internet? How are black businesses innovatively using social media to undermine anti-blackness? These inquiries are but a few examples. Studying these businesses gives us a model to answer these types of questions and more.

The exploration of "black lifeworld specificity," as Vargas (2018) calls it, is an imperative. It opens possibilities to reimagine society as we know it. As exemplified in Anna's quote in the introduction of this thesis (see page 1), black people are, and have been, theorizing the world based on their experiences at the margins. These Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs—by extension black people—are developing the theories for scholars based on their lived experienced with racial oppression. We, as scholars, must take their interventions seriously. A critical engagement with these ideas can elucidate strategies to contend with the most pressing sociological problems of the day. Before W.E.B. Du Bois declared the problem of the twentieth century is the color line, anti-blackness plagued the Americas. Because of the pervasiveness of anti-blackness, we must consider all who offer solutions. Anna demonstrated through her words and deeds how to confront structural racism— one little brick at a time, one company at a time, one deliberate act after another.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Português

Você pode me falar sobre a vida dos negros no Brasil? Como são as condições econômicas para os negros? Por que você acha que as condições econômicas são assim? Conte-me sobre o seu negócio. Qual é a proposta de seu negócio? Quais produtos ou serviços você vende? Quantos empregados você tem? Quem são seus clientes típicos? Você tem políticas ou preferências de fazer negócios com outros proprietários negros? Qual foi a parte mais difícil de começar / abrir o seu negócio? Como você financiou o negócio? Como você se identifica racialmente? A discriminação é um problema no Brasil? Você acredita que um negócio administrado por um negro pode ser uma resistência contra o racismo (anti-negritude)? Os empresários negros têm um papel na luta contra o racismo (anti-negritude)? Como você vê seu negócio crescendo no futuro? Que é o movimento black money? Segundo o sistema classificatório do IBGE, por qual raça ou cor você se classifica branca, preta, amarela, parda ou indígena?

English

Can you tell me about life for Black people in Brazil? How are the economic conditions for black people? Why do you think the economic conditions are that way? Tell me about your business. What products or services do you sell? Who are your typical clients? What was the hardest part of starting/opening your business? How did you finance the business? How do you racial identify? Is discrimination a problem in Brazil? Do you believe that a Black business can be resistance against racism (anti-blackness)? Do Black business people have a role in the fight against racism (anti-blackness)? How do you see your business growing in the future? What is the Black Money Movement? According to the IBGE classification system, which race or color do you classify yourself as white, black, yellow, brown or indigenous?

Table 1: Descriptive characteristics – on the following page

No	Business Name	Opening Year	Description	Employees	Men	Women	Black Women	Black	% of female employees	Female Employees > 75%	Female Employees > 50%	Black women Employees	% of Black Employees	Black Employees > 75%	Black Employees > 50%	P/S Black Focused
1	Alma Preta	2015	online journalism	6	3	3	3	6	50%	No	Yes	50%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
2	Cooper Glicério	2006	recycled materials black expo - business	29	13	16	16	26	55%	No	Yes	55%	90%	Yes	Yes	
3	Feira Preta	2002	incubator	2	0	2	2	2	100%	Yes	Yes	100%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
4	Vale do Dendê	2016	invest in social businesses a digital marketplace that connects Black entrepreneurs with clients	20	4	16	16	16	80%	Yes	Yes	80%	80%	Yes	Yes	
5	Klombu	2016	barbershop	4	2	2	2	4	50%	No	Yes	50%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
6	Nigzag Place	2003	independent digital music label	7	3	4	4	7	57%	No	Yes	57%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
7	1Kilo	2016	independent digital music label	55	49	6	2	19	11%	No	No	4%	35%	No	No	
8	Think Ethus	2015	consulting firm	8	3	5	2	4	63%	No	Yes	25%	50%	No	Yes	x
9	AfroBusiness	2014	business incubator	6	2	4	4	6	67%	No	Yes	67%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
10	Conla Black	2017	Fintech	7	5	2	2	7	29%	No	No	29%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
11	Aneesa	2017	Black dolls	1	0	1	1	1	100%	Yes	Yes	100%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
12	Iracema Rosa Filme	2007	production firm	8	2	6	4	6	75%	Yes	Yes	50%	75%	Yes	Yes	
13	Todos Negros do Mundo (TNM)	2016	Black media digital platform	4	1	3	3	4	75%	Yes	Yes	75%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
14	EmpregueAfro	2004	job placement agency	5	1	4	4	5	80%	Yes	Yes	80%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
15	Diaspora.Black	2017	Black Airbnb	7	3	4	4	7	57%	No	Yes	57%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
16	Rap Burger	2017	Burger restaurant	14	9	5	5	10	36%	No	No	36%	71%	No	Yes	x
17	Ebony English	2008	English School	7	3	4	4	7	57%	No	Yes	57%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
18	Clube Da Preta	2017	digital black fashion company	2	1	1	1	2	50%	No	Yes	50%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
19	Atrium	2003	restaurant	10	0	10	10	8	100%	Yes	Yes	100%	80%	Yes	Yes	
20	Lenoorb	2010	individual consulting firm	1	1	0	0	1	0%	No	No	0%	100%	Yes	Yes	
21	Light Chief	2014	frozen dinner company	15	5	10	2	3	67%	No	Yes	13%	20%	No	No	
22	Terra Preta	2017	micro recording firm	2	2	0	0	2	0%	No	No	0%	100%	Yes	Yes	
23	Cresparia Soluções	2017	cultural health, well-being agency	2	1	1	1	2	50%	No	Yes	50%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
24	Free Soul Food	2016	health meal delivery/ catering company	8	2	6	6	8	75%	Yes	Yes	75%	100%	Yes	Yes	
25	Xongani	2010	clothing store	12	1	11	11	12	92%	Yes	Yes	92%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
26	Terça Afro	2012	urban quilombo	7	3	4	4	7	57%	No	Yes	57%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
27	Aparelha Luzia	2015	urban quilombo	5	2	3	3	5	60%	No	Yes	60%	100%	Yes	Yes	x
28	Vestiblo	2013	personal stylist	1	0	1	1	1	100%	Yes	Yes	100%	100%	Yes	Yes	