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"Transforming Cross into Crossroads": Afro Carnival *Blocos* and the Production of Black Spaces in Belo Horizonte

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Abstract

In this theoretical essay, we set out to problematize Belo Horizonte from a racial point of view, in terms of processes of domination and resistance, by discussing the production of black spaces through Afro Carnival *blocos*. We begin with the production of Brazilian cities in relation to the issue of race, highlighting the extent to which this component of the enslavement of blacks and subsequent whitening practices makes cities spaces that are averse to the presence of blacks from the moment of their creation. We then turn to the specificities of Belo Horizonte, the planned capital of Minas Gerais, a symbol of the modernity and progress that was sought in the Brazilian Republic. This debate provides an important backdrop for the discussion of black resistance in the city, which produces spaces of encounter, from a crossroads perspective that can contribute to the spatial turn in Organizational Studies. The main conclusions point to black resistance organizations such as the Angola Janga Afro *bloco* and Kandandu as a field of possibilities. This recognizes that on the other side of segregation, there are forms of (re)existence of black people, who struggle to be part of this city, while at the same time seeking to strengthen their Afro-diasporic identity and culture. In addition to highlighting their organizational character, these manifestations use aesthetic elements

and place black people in a place of (re)existence that signals their right to occupy the city for leisure as well as to produce and reinforce black identities.

Keywords: raciality; urban planning; Belo Horizonte; black resistance; Afro *blocos*.

Introduction

Planned cities, which have specific characteristics that make them relevant for thinking about how urban planning, notably marked by Europeanization and hygienism, constitutes a libertarian and developmentalist ideology that promotes the erasure of differences and the subalternization of popular classes, especially the black population. Although this is a relatively common script throughout the world, this text will deal with the specific case of Belo Horizonte in Minas Gerais. We argue that although Belo Horizonte was founded at a time when republicanism and modernity appeared as central values in the constitution of planned cities, it is characterized by the erasure of the black population, which was at odds with the republican ideals and the development planned for the new capital of Minas Gerais. Even though it was founded after the abolition of slavery, the elements of colonization and slavery (coloniality) remain in the separation between those worthy and unworthy of inhabiting the capital of Minas Gerais.

From the moment of its creation as the new capital of Minas Gerais to replace Ouro Preto, a symbol of the decadence of the gold cycle, monarchy, and enslavement, Belo Horizonte was designed to house the civil servants coming from the old capital. There are many documents that allow us to affirm that the creation of the new city was a technical decision, although there is a myth that there was a void in the area that was an attraction for the choice of location (Saraiva & Silva, 2021). Curral Del Rey, the previous address, was actually inhabited by a black population that was erased from historical records (Pereira, 2019). The treatment of the workers who built the city, some of whom were black and from the Northeast – whose presence was not allowed within the planned boundaries and who settled outside Avenida do Contorno, in a "non-city" (Barros, 2000, p. 43) – attests to a pattern of invisibilization from the first moments of the capital of Minas Gerais.

The blacks, "non-subjects" of the new capital, erased from official history, have since had to resist on a daily basis as a veritable epistemicide has taken place in the cities: "knowledge, practices, ways of life, worldviews of cultures that do not fit the canonical pattern" (Simas, 2021, p. 48) are destroyed. The only human experiences and stories worth telling are those produced by the West. Black cultural manifestations are relegated to the realm of barbarism or folklore. Nevertheless, denying the logic that has prevailed in a segregated city since its foundation, black subjects promote actions to value Afro bodies and knowledge in order to re-signify urban spaces based on a logic of atonement and discipline through work for transgressive (black) bodies and partygoers (Simas, 2021).

In black territories (Rolnik, 1989) and black spaces (Sansone, 1996), cultural movements emerge, as in the case of Afro *blocos*, samba schools, and *terreiros*, contemporary expressions of the singularity of a black becoming (Rolnik, 1989). Festivities are some of the main instruments of resistance to the erasure of differences, as in the case of Afro-diasporic cultural manifestations, among which the Afro Carnival *blocos* stand out. The short period of the festival reveals a dream city or utopia, since the carnival festivities are a space for black people to signify a new attitude

towards their origins and cultural identity. Although based on tradition, the carnival of these *blocos* does not point to the past, but to the future of Brazilian race relations (Risério, 1995).

As a contribution to Organizational Studies and inspired by Siqueira (1997), we propose to rescue of the concept of "black resistance organizations" as a field of possibilities and responsible for the production of black spaces (Sansone, 1996), in line with the current discussion of cities in the field of Organizational Studies (Mac-Allister, 2004; Saraiva & Carrieri, 2012; Saraiva & Silva, 2021) and studies dealing with spatial organization and racial issues (Nascimento et al., 2015; Nascimento et al., 2016).

In light of the above, our aim in this essay was to problematize Belo Horizonte from a racial point of view, in terms of the processes of domination and resistance, by discussing the production of black spaces through the Afro Carnival *blocos*, organizations of black resistance. In addition to this introduction, the text includes a discussion of the production of urban space in the Brazilian Republic, highlighting the centrality of the issue of race in this process, followed by a specific reflection on urban planning in Belo Horizonte. It then highlights how the production of black spaces takes place in the capital of Minas Gerais, with a focus on the Afro Carnival *blocos*. Next, we look at the research on cities in Organizational Studies, pointing out the progress made so far and how black resistance organizations operate in the production of black spaces, giving new meaning to historically exclusive sociabilities and possibilities in Brazilian cities, especially in Belo Horizonte, which can promote advances in a spatial turn in Organizational Studies. Finally, we raise some questions for reflection in the concluding remarks.

Racialization of the production of urban space in Brazil

Social space is a producer and product of social relations, such as race relations. In countries like Brazil, race relations are interwoven in society, both in their social manifestation and in their materiality. The first point we highlight is the historical production of an elitist and segregated space based on racism as a structuring element. In order to analyze how the racial dimension is spatialized in urban processes with socio-spatial differentiation, it is necessary to understand how the racial dimension manifests itself historically:

> Atlantic slavery had its privileged place of realization in urban and semi-urban life. Urban slave societies, such as Brazil's, were forged from transatlantic displacements and transits, anchored in the remaking of relationships and social and spatial arrangements, based on their own unique movements, whose identity and ethnic-racial connections are not always obvious or watertight, but which encompass multiple dimensions of city-making (Pereira, 2019).

Campos (2012) develops the argument that during the colonial and imperial periods, the *quilombos*, as spaces of resistance, represented a threat to the prevailing social order (Boyer, 2015). After abolition, the favelas and tenements began to house those who were considered the "dangerous classes," especially the former slaves, as a large contingent of them either remained in the countryside in miserable conditions, since they could not own land according to the legislation in force at the time, or sought a new life in the cities, especially in Rio de Janeiro, which became home to a large number of freed blacks after the Paraguayan War.

In the post-abolition period, as Borges (2019) points out, the positioning of blacks as a working class was problematic because they were previously seen as commodities and not as sellers of their own labor. Seeing them as workers would mean making them subjects of rights. They were human beings whose humanity was denied, as Campos (2012) points out: blacks were freed, but subaltern. When the practice of slavery ended, the intention was to have workers whom it was fair to pay for their services – human workers – in other words, white workers.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Brazilian state implemented a nation-building project based on the ideology of whitening. In the name of progress, thousands of Europeans were encouraged to come to Brazil, not only to serve as a workforce in the post-abolitionist society, but also to physically and culturally whiten the country's population (Panta, 2020), thus ensuring the "regeneration" of the Brazilian people.

Black people, who were largely responsible for building the country's wealth, did not participate and were considered a central element of backwardness in Brazilian society, often forcibly removed from central areas occupied by white citizens who were more "suitable" for the proposed nation (Rolnik, 1989). The removal of blacks to the margins has since translated into their marginalization, making them a problem and a risk, as evidenced by the data on violence and homicides against blacks. However, it is a mistake to consider only the economic aspect as an expression of socio-spatial inequality (Nogueira, 2018), since racial inequalities are reinforced by various social mechanisms. For this reason, it is necessary to have a debate that sees race as a variable in this inequality, considering, as Santos (1987, p. 81) stated, that each individual "is worth the place where they are: their value as a producer, consumer, citizen, depends on their location in the territory."

What happened in all the cities, symbols of modernity, was an adherence to the process of urbanization, which did not mean a break with the past, since the social world remained hierarchical (Arrais, 2009). The new regime, which claimed to be "libertarian, white, fraternal, egalitarian and therefore civilized like Europe" (Costa & Arguelhes, 2008, p. 111), was only fraternal and egalitarian for the ruling classes of the time. The poor population "did not fit" into the new urbanities, thus justifying their elitist, segregationist, and utopian character in all forms of exclusion of the lower classes from the urban space (Costa & Arguelhes, 2008), including the former slaves.

After more than three centuries of enslavement, the black population was relegated to a marginal place in the cities, reflecting their social and economic subalternity. The thesis of Florestan Fernandes' studies in the 1950s, that race was a residual category of slavery that would disappear with the entry of blacks into class society, proved to be wrong, since the advances of capitalist society and Brazil's late industrialization did not abolish race as a criterion of social hierarchization (Panta, 2020). Although the category of race has no biological value, it is socially constructed, meaning that its social construction condemns non-white people to the margins of society, either physically or socially.

The production of urban space in Brazil is racialized, as evidenced by both the eugenicist policies of the 19th and 20th centuries and the racial segregation in cities, with places and non-places defined for blacks (Panta, 2020). Cruz and Santana Filho (2020, p. 11) argue that the reflections of urban organization based on a racist logic are explicit in the "precariousness of public spaces and streets, slums, hillside occupations, as well as the absence of infrastructure and basic

services in the places where black people were forced to live." There is a perceived effort to annihilate the black body (Vellozo & Almeida, 2019), which is reflected in historical problems of the right to the city and the usurpation of all kinds of rights through the racism that structures society and, consequently, the city.

The planned city in the republican imagination: to whom does Belo Horizonte belong?

Almeida (2020, p. 55) states that "the different processes of national formation of contemporary states were not produced by chance alone, but by political projects." The establishment of the Brazilian Republic allowed the country to progress and move away from colonial stereotypes, a process in which the emergence of cities in the image and likeness of European cities, the ultimate symbols of progress, was important, even though progress was uneven depending on who you were. Blacks, for example, while enslaved, were seen only as work units, but when freed, they remained tied to the racial classifications responsible for defining social hierarchies. As for whites, they remained legitimate in the administration of state power and economic development strategies. This discrepancy reveals structural racism as a historical process (Almeida, 2020).

According to Passos (2016), urban planning in republican Brazil was based on sanitary ideas that valued freedom and diverse flows in a highly organized urbanity, in which streets, avenues, and squares had a new function that radically broke with the urban model that had existed until then. Priority was given to urban circulation, with wide, tree-lined boulevards surrounded by hygienic buildings. The constructions and renovations sought to facilitate the transit of people and order through spaces classified according to social functions and needs, since "it was necessary to trace with a ruler and compass a harmonious, unitary social order, where there was no place for the so-called 'urban disorder'" (Passos, 2016, p. 338).

Built through state intervention in a modernizing layout inspired by European urban experiences (especially Haussmann's reform in Paris), Belo Horizonte can be thought of from the perspective of the republican logic and the modern city. In the first perspective, the national context stands out, which included the relocation of the old capital. Modernity, on the other hand, refers to European influences on the urbanization process of large cities in the 19th century (Calvo, 2013; Passos, 2016). The new capital of Minas Gerais was "built to be the symbol of a new era, marked by the wave of modernization that hit the country in that period, the construction of Belo Horizonte and the transfer of the capital is directly associated with the positivist and republican ideological universe" (Arrais, 2009, p. 70).

The city was planned and designed by the civil engineer Aarão Reis together with the New Capital Construction Commission (CCNC), idealized as a rational and fully planned city, created to lead Minas Gerais to political, economic, and social ascent in the new scenario of the nascent Republic. The logic of order and progress prevailed at the end of the 19th century and was translated into an urban configuration marked by straight lines and square corners, different from the baroque, colonial, and slave-owning past materialized in the winding and narrow streets of the old capital, Ouro Preto (Salgueiro, 2001).

Belo Horizonte was therefore conceived as a new intellectual center, a radiating focus of civilization, the first planned city of the recent Brazilian Republic (Calvo, 2013). Officially inaugurated on December 12, 1897, although its construction extended until the mid-1910s, the capital of Minas Gerais broke with colonial traditions and embraced a new regime: "after all, not only was a capital being built, but a Brazilian Republic was also being built, both expressions of a shared common code: a desire to renew society" (Senra, 2011, p. 73).

According to Arrais (2009, p. 64),

> [...] the city [of Belo Horizonte] still sustains in its plan the dream of building a harmonious city, whose tradition goes back to the urban utopias of Plato, Campanella, Morus etc., and enshrines the ideal of controlling nature and men in a single movement.

As a result of modernity, the capital of Minas Gerais reflects the action of government power over the individual, radiating from the center, capable of "creating its citizens" (Arrais, 2009, p. 74). The city was planned for the various levels of the civil service. They were given free plots of land and houses that differed in size and style according to their position in the bureaucratic hierarchy. The largest buildings were intended for the highest ranking officials and the smallest for those with less qualified jobs (Costa & Arguelhes, 2008; Passos, 2016). The very layout of the buildings throughout Belo Horizonte's urban space was an allegory of social hierarchization, with an ordering of the spaces of power that promoted a concrete representation of social places. Even the naming of various streets and squares highlights the idea of order and hierarchy, as in the case of the squares that were given names that drew from the symbolic universe of the Brazilian Republic, such as Praça da Liberdade, Justiça, Progresso, Federação, Tiradentes, Benjamim Constant, and so on (Arrais, 2009).

From Avenida do Contorno, Belo Horizonte was sectored and organized into urban, suburban, and rural areas, thus defining the spaces that belonged to each social group (Calvo, 2013). The rural area, a green belt where the colonial settlements were located that supplied the capital with fruits, vegetables, and raw materials for its construction, functioned as a border separating urban and suburban life, where housing was poor and services precarious, but outside the limits of Avenida do Contorno. The urban area, on the other hand, circled by the avenue, was the modern and ordered space reserved for the ruling classes of Minas Gerais. It had wide, straight, geometric avenues, sanitary and technical infrastructure, an area that was supposed to reflect the most modern cities in the world (Passos, 2009; Senra, 2011; Lott, 2018). In relation to this sectorization, it was said that:

> [...] One [city], built to urban standards with an entire infrastructure, considered modern for the early 20th century, made for civil servants from the former capital of Minas Gerais, Ouro Preto, and the upper classes who could afford to pay the high prices of real estate speculation for urban land; the other, beyond the limits of Avenida do Contorno, formed by the poorest population (construction workers and their families), as well as former residents of Curral Del Rei and immigrants from all over the state in search of new opportunities. (Brandão, Luiz & Souza, 2018, p. 15)

Avenida do Contorno played the role of a social boundary between urban and suburban life, a frame that decorated the sense of segregation brought by the new capital of Minas Gerais (Barros, 2000; Senra, 2011). There was a stratification of society that allowed for social differentiation, at the same time as there was the possibility of harmonious awareness between the higher ranking civil servants and those who performed simpler functions, such as manual and mechanical workers (Costa & Arguelhes, 2008).

The same concessions for civil servants were not given to the poor people who arrived in Belo Horizonte, especially those who came to build the new city or those who already lived in the old Curral Del Rey. Unlike Ouro Preto, which was built exclusively by enslaved blacks, the new capital of Minas Gerais was influenced by the labor of poor immigrants, especially Italians, Spaniards, and Portuguese (Calvo, 2013). Costa and Arguelhes (2008) state that free and paid work was given to European immigrants and not to the population already living in the country, former slaves, which was guided by a progressive discourse that the "civilized" Europeans would bring their culture and help develop the nation, since blacks were condemned to the bestiality of enslavement.

According to Pereira (2019), the erasure of the black population from historical records should also be taken into account, both in the expropriation of 430 houses owned by mostly black landowners in Curral del Rey, and the black workforce in the construction of the planned city. Thus, in an enterprise that aimed to harmonize hygienic conditions in the construction of a large city, its people and customs are treated as obstacles to be eliminated (Barros, 2000).

Botelho (2007) informs us that historiography has established the thesis that Belo Horizonte arose from the destruction of the Curral del Rey *arraial*, and that the population that settled there was entirely accidental. The author disagrees with this statement, considering that "although foreign immigration was fundamental in the city's early years, it was the migration of miners and other Brazilians that sustained the rapid growth of the city [of Belo Horizonte]" (Botelho, 2007, p. 12). Thus, in the initial years of its construction, Belo Horizonte acted as a pole of attraction for European immigrants arriving in Minas Gerais, but the volume of European immigrants declined in the following decades. If we compare the decrease in immigrants with the significant increase in the city's population in its first decades – "from 13,000 inhabitants in 1900, the city grew to more than 17,000 in 1905, around 40,000 in 1912 (1940 census), and 352,000 in 1950 (Botelho, 2007, p. 12) – we realize that other peoples played a decisive role in the constitution of the state capital, which leads us to the internal migration in Minas Gerais, the end of slavery, and the migrations from the Northeast. Therefore, it was a much less European and white city than the narratives of the city's construction record.

Pereira (n.d., p. 5) explains that the records of the Santa Casa de Misericórdia and the police documentation of the Police Chief's Fund indicate "an outline of the racial composition of the population of Belo Horizonte in the period: [...] a constant, growing and predominant presence of 'mestizos' and 'blacks'." Botelho (2007) reinforces this argument with data on marriages obtained from parish registers. Thus, the black migrant population, once small, became increasingly significant with the industrialization of Belo Horizonte from the 1920s.

According to research carried out by Pereira (2020, p. 452), the very existence of the black population in the constitution of Belo Horizonte and in its initial development can be read as a "counter-project to modernity based on exclusionary foundations and informed by the structuring

racism of society, since the origins of the capital," in a confluence of Afro-diasporic ancestral knowledge. In this way, the city was built by black hands and, even if the official historiography tries to erase them, Belo Horizonte is black.

Despite its specificities, Belo Horizonte, like the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, was concerned with controlling the social masses. The street, although it promised leisure (the parks) and different ways of earning a living, was also a place of insecurity, especially for the working classes, since they had to deal with the arbitrariness and violence of the police in the public space (Passos, 2009).

The new capital copied the modern style of the cosmopolitan way of life, but remained conservative in its customs by perpetuating the barriers between the dominant and popular classes. Faced with the valorization of immigrant labor and the erasure of black protagonism (Pereira, 2019), even with the end of slavery, many freedmen submitted to a situation analogous to slavery and, consequently, to subalternity in order to survive the new order (Gomes, 2019), a process that produced dispersion, fragmentation, the breaking of associative ties, and physical and symbolic death in the urban context (Simas & Rufino, 2018).

Despite this exclusion and constant silencing, black bodies stand out as carriers of memories and wisdom that have invented other daily lives, territories, and possibilities for survival in diaspora in the form of the power of life. The body that was objectified and disenchanted by colonialism is the same body that dribbles and strikes the dominant logic through its knowledge embodied in body schemes that recreate worlds (Simas & Rufino, 2018). Such transgression can be seen in cultural manifestations such as the Afro Carnival *blocos*. Specifically, in the case of Belo Horizonte, these *blocos* help us understand how black resistance has taken place in the city.

Afro Carnival *blocos* and the production of black spaces in Belo Horizonte

The planning of Belo Horizonte did not suit the black population (Saraiva & Silva, 2021), having observed "the old colonial struggle over the control of bodies – based on the idea of the transgressive body that can only find redemption in the expiation of sin and the partying body that must be disciplined as a productive tool of labor" (Simas, 2021, p. 99). Blacks were allowed access to the city only as exploited labor. At the end of their working day, they had to leave the city promptly. This partial urban access for black bodies can be thought of through the classification of hard areas, soft areas, and black spaces, whether implicit or explicit:

> The "hard" areas of color relations are: 1) work and in particular the search for work; 2) the marriage and flirtation market; 3) contacts with the police. [...] The "soft" areas of social relations are all those spaces where being black doesn't make things difficult and can sometimes even bring prestige. There is the domain of leisure in general [...]. These spaces can be considered implicit black spaces, places where being black is not an obstacle. Then there are the more defined and explicit black spaces, the places where being black is an advantage: the Afro *bloco*, the *batucada*, the *candomblé terreiro,* and *capoeira*. (Sansone, 1996, p. 183)

In addition to black spaces, we also highlight the existence of black territories. The black territories discussed by Rolnik (1989) are physical spaces in cities that the black population has occupied or has been allowed to occupy. In this context, throughout history, there have been strongly structured Afro-Brazilian communities confined to particular territories. Territories are responsible for preserving history and traditions. In the case of black territories, in addition to the history of exclusion, there is also the construction of uniqueness and the development of a common repertoire. Despite the conceptual distinction between black spaces and black territories, we emphasize that the existence of black spaces is facilitated to the extent that black territories ultimately bring together the black population and provide them with the conditions to organize themselves.

Here we are interested in the explicit black spaces indicated by Sansone (1996). These allow for possibilities in a dream city that transcends the planned and exclusionary city: "[...] if colonialism built the cross as the aegis of its project of domination, here we reinvent the world, transforming the cross into a crossroads and practicing it as a field of possibilities" (Simas & Rufino, 2018, p. 20). For these authors, the intersections emerge as ethical and aesthetic, poetic and political principles for re-signifying life in everyday life forged in the furnace of racism/colonialism. That is, we take the production of black spaces as this field of possibilities capable of re-signifying and resisting the logic of how a segregating city works.

Morales (1991) recalls that since the period of enslavement, black people have used their cultural and ethnic manifestations to negotiate for social spaces with the dominant sectors. If, on the one hand, the production of cities is marked by segregation, the forms of (re)existence of black people continue to resonate in space-time in other struggles for rights, identities, and respect for culture, as in the case of the Afro Carnival *blocos*, which re-signify the marginalization of black bodies only for work. Ipiranga and Lopes (2017, p. 144) had already evoked the organizational and aesthetic character of black spaces in cities when they talked about the Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men in Fortaleza and how they "reorganized the spaces of the Rosário Church as a central meeting place for the group, with a social, religious, and cultural reference to counter those who sought to control the Church, the ecclesiastical and state authorities."

Although the festive practices of this Brotherhood are related to religious celebration, they transcend it by creating spaces of sociability involving people from all classes and which are also spaces of appropriation for those who practice black culture in the city of Fortaleza. In this context, black people assumed a position of relevance and, in parallel, a multiplicity of operations was forged, for example, with the appropriation of new spaces and learning, the construction of new identities, of different sociabilities in the affirmation of black culture (Ipiranga & Lopes, 2017). "In this sense, the '*Festas dos Pretos*' symbolized atavistic and ancestral historical manifestations of African culture, forming hybrid, festive, and religious practices that expressed, through aesthetic elements, transgressions and politics of resistance" (Ipiranga & Lopes, 2017, p. 147). There are some intersections between the "*Festas dos Pretos*" and the Afro *blocos*, as both, in addition to having an organizational character, use of aesthetic elements and place black people in a place of (re)existence.

The type of carnival organization known as the Afro *bloco* emerged in the city of Salvador in the 1970s. Salvador's popular culture can be seen in the streets, avenues, and squares, not coincidentally in the same places where the Afro *blocos* were founded and continue to be founded to this day (Dantas, 2016). They emerged as a mixture of various other organizations that were present not only in the Bahian Carnival, but also in the social life of the place. Using percussion, but now influenced by the drums used in *candomblé*, all the aesthetics, rhythm, and music of these *blocos* were linked to African cultural roots, as the goal was to show the ancestral customs of the black diaspora spread throughout the world, especially across the Atlantic (Vergara, 2017).

Young blacks who were once not accepted in the traditional soteropolitan Carnival *blocos* found in the Afro *blocos* an alternative way of participating in Carnival, based on a discourse of racial valorization, as well as using an ethnic reference that gave these *blocos* great symbolic strength and was responsible for their great power of aggregation (Morales, 1991). The *blocos*, therefore, can be characterized as self-defined groups as carnival entities for the preservation of black culture, which present themselves as a way of life, in other words, blackness is experienced in the daily life of the *bloco*, which exists throughout the year and not just during the Carnival period (Silva, 2007).

Afro *blocos* are politicized organizations positioned in a socially critical way, based on an ideology rooted in ethnicity (Dantas, 1996) and black resistance (Siqueira, 1997). The Ilê Aiyê *bloco*, the first to declare itself an Afro *bloco*, is very representative because it was born at a time in Brazilian history (1974) when the dream of social ascension came up against the concrete impediments of the reality of an income-concentrating economic model designed by a military dictatorship (Dantas, 2016). "The appearance of Ilê coincides, quite rightly, with the moment of affirmation of the industrialization process, the installation of the Petrochemical Complex, which causes very strong socio-economic transformations in the city of Salvador" (Dantas, 2016, p. 254). Moreover, the centuries-old antecedents of racism had not been dispersed in the economic modernity of the hegemonic discourse of the elites: despite economic advances, Brazil continued to be exclusionary towards black people.

Despite the singularities of blacks from Bahia in relation to blacks from Minas Gerais, what is striking is the fact that, despite their ethnic origin, black people have culturally manifested themselves in the negotiation for social spaces since the time of enslavement. Currently, in the city of Belo Horizonte, there are dozens of Afro *blocos* that have been created mainly since the 2000s. Although most of them were created recently, one in particular is over forty years old. Founded in 1980 after a provocation by the singer Gilberto Gil, who asked the *bloco*'s creator why Belo Horizonte still didn't have an *Afoxé*, and inspired by the Afoxé Filhos de Gandhi from Bahia, the pioneering Afro *bloco* in the capital of Minas Gerais, Afoxé Ilê Odara, was born.

A striking characteristic of an Afro *bloco* is its connection with peripheral territories: Ilê Aiyê, for example, was created in Salvador's Curuzu neighborhood; Olodum, in Maciel-Pelourinho. This dynamic is also repeated in Belo Horizonte, except for a single *bloco*, Angola Janga, which, subverting what is expected of peripheral people, decided to occupy the city's hypercenter with the discourse that the black territory is also the black body itself. Founded on November 20, 2015, Angola Janga is an Afro *bloco* that held its first parade in 2016. It was created when the founding couple noticed the absence of black people in Belo Horizonte's street carnival *blocos*. With the pioneering Afro *blocos* in Bahia as a reference, the couple wanted to create a *bloco* so that black people could also enjoy Carnival in Belo Horizonte.

After it was founded, the *bloco* began its rehearsals under the Santa Tereza Viaduct in the center of the city. The choice to rehearse at this location was deliberate, since it is a place of great cultural importance for black and peripheral manifestations in Belo Horizonte, due to the cultural movements that take place there and that implement the right to the city. It is also close to a subway station, the cheapest form of transportation in the city and one that gives access to many peripheries. Finally, the choice of location was also justified by the fact that the founders of Angola Janga believe that black territory can be established wherever there is a black body. Rolnik (1989), for example, states that as an enslaved person, the space of the black person was the slave quarters. And it was in this place that African ancestry created a sense of community between people who had no other kind of bond than their bodies.

> [...] It was through it [the body] that, in the slave quarters, the enslaved affirmed and celebrated their community bond; it was also through it that the collective memory could be transmitted. In this way, the *senzala* courtyard, a symbol of segregation and control, was transformed into a *terreiro*, a place for celebrating forms of community bonding. (Rolnik, 1989, p. 77)

These are the same bodies that managed to Africanize Bahia's Carnival in the 1970s with the pioneering Afro *bloco* Ilê Aiyê. Today, Afro *blocos* like Angola Janga continue to proudly display their blackness and put the black body, the same subalternized and stigmatized body, on the street as the protagonist of its own destiny. When Simas and Rufino (2018, p. 50) propose that we think of black bodies as *terreiros*, we need to consider that this body is a settlement of knowledge that, when "[...] properly activated, reinvents the possibilities of being/practicing/enchanting the world as a *terreiro*." As the *terreiro* body practices its knowledge in everyday life, it reinvents life and the world.

Although Angola Janga is not the first Afro *bloco* in Belo Horizonte, it stands out as the only one that takes place in the center of the city. The *bloco* gathers on Avenida Amazonas, where it meets Rua São Paulo. The fact that the *bloco* remains in the central region was guaranteed only after much conflict with the public authorities responsible for managing Carnival in the capital of Minas Gerais. Although Belo Horizonte's Carnival is spread over the city's nine regional areas, it is concentrated in the south-central region, where most of the parades and *blocos* are non-Afro. Unlike other Afro *blocos* in Belo Horizonte, by occupying and (re)existing in the streets of the city center, which are only receptive to black bodies when they go to work, Anglo Janga ends up reinforcing the maxim that black territory is also the black body itself, which provides the conditions for negotiating new social spaces for the black community.

Another moment of occupation of the city center by the Afro *blocos* of Belo Horizonte takes place during Kandandu, a festival based on the valorization of black culture, which is responsible for opening the city's official Carnival. This event is the result of an achievement of the Association of Afro *Blocos* of Minas Gerais (Abafro), when it was still chaired by the same president of the Angola Janga Afro *bloco*, and it became part of the city's Carnival festivities calendar thanks to Abafro's collaboration with the City Council – after much insistence from the Association – and civil society. Kandandu is the gathering of Afro *blocos* in Belo Horizonte, which takes place on the first two nights of the city's official Carnival (Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte [PBH], 2019). It is the moment when the

various Afro *blocos* come together to inaugurate the festivities. The event has been held since 2017 and in 2018 was recognized by the Ministry of Human Rights as one of the largest and most important actions to promote racial equality in the country (PBH, 2018). The event takes place on the main stage of the Carnival, in Praça da Estação.

Praça da Estação is located in the center of Belo Horizonte, next to a subway station and close to many bus lines, making it one of the city's most easily accessible points, especially for those coming from the outskirts. However, in addition to the ease of access, the fact that Kandandu takes place in Praça da Estação is very significant, as it is the main stage of Belo Horizonte's Carnival. To be on the main stage of Carnival is to put Afro *blocos*, and by extension, black people in a place that is denied them throughout the year, a place of belonging and protagonism in the city. When an Afro *bloco* has its parade in the center of Belo Horizonte, or when Abafro manages to create Kandandu, the black population is invited by other blacks to enjoy the city beyond the traditional urban relations. It is therefore important from a symbolic point of view to have an Afro *bloco* occupying the city, since it reclassifies the black body that frequents that space during the year – as a worker, who goes there to work, protest, and/or strike, who is beaten and dies during the night, who does *capoeira*, who occupies informal jobs, or who is in a situation of social vulnerability – producing other sociabilities.

The fact that Belo Horizonte was planned along the Avenida do Contorno facilitates the type of Carnival that exists in this city, since everything within the boundaries of this avenue is "close by," which is interesting for the local Carnival, since revelers can move around more easily without having to travel long distances. With regard to the characterization of the Belo Horizonte Carnival, it is worth highlighting the fact that the party is completely free, i.e. in the capital of Minas Gerais, there is no need to buy an *abadás* or make any payment to take part. The *blocos* that parade in Carnival are not *blocos de trio* (as in Salvador), but *blocos com trio*. This means that some *blocos* may use electric *trios* in their parades, but they don't hierarchize the occupation of public space by using cordons or booths to separate paying and non-paying revelers. This dynamic allows revelers to experience the parades freely (being able to move between various *blocos*) and free of charge.

In Belo Horizonte, there is no obligation for street parades to be registered with the competent municipal authorities. However, those that choose not to do so cannot count on the infrastructure provided by Belotur[1], such as chemical toilets, road closures, advertising, security, and cleaning. In addition, only registered *blocos* can take part in the Subsidy Notice, which offers financial support for the parades. Few of Belo Horizonte's street parades receive enough private sponsorship to cover all the costs of a Carnival parade, which in practice establishes a relationship of dependency between the parades and Belotur.

The street parades have been the most prominent organizations in the city's Carnival in recent years, although there are also samba schools and caricature parades in the city. However, the recent revival of the Carnival is thanks to popular manifestations (Rezende & Saraiva, 2022). One of the explanations for the reappearance of street carnival festivities in the city is linked to a movement that is independent of any support from the public authorities, a form of resistance to the curtailment and occupation of city space (Dias, 2015). On December 9, 2009, the mayor at the time, Márcio Lacerda, decreed that it was forbidden to hold of any kind of event in the recently revitalized Praça da Estação (Migliano, 2013). The justification for this ban was that the municipal government would have difficulty limiting the number of people attending events held there, as well

as ensuring the preservation of public property that had been damaged as a result of recent events in the square (Oliveira, 2012; Melo, 2014).

With the new legislation and the consequent deprivation of the consolidated right to use the community meeting and leisure area (Migliano, 2013), a movement began that, a month later, became the event called *Praia da Estação* (Oliveira, 2012), a leaderless movement, with horizontal and non-partisan organization, held in a public space, open and free. In the calls for the meeting, the population was invited to come dressed in bathing suits and to bring children, dogs, and objects they would normally use on a sunny day at the beach. The invitation incited a playful-political action in the square, as the idea was to occupy the public space to experience a day at the beach, with meetings and conversations about the decree. This occupation was intense between January and May 2010, resurfacing in December of the same year and continuing until January 2011, when it celebrated its one-year anniversary (Oliveira, 2012). After a while, this movement gave rise to the Praia da Estação Carnival *bloco*, which had the intention of promoting a procession that would start at Praça da Estação and continue for about 1.2 km to the City Hall, where the symbolic washing of the steps would take place in the name of yet another protest against the curtailment of public spaces (Migliano, 2013).

Here we have a scenario of carnivalesque manifestations reappearing in the capital of Minas Gerais (Rezende & Saraiva, 2022), and another phenomenon common to carnivals in many other cities: the festival moves from prohibition/rejection by the public authorities to acceptance/subsidization. Currently, in the same region, it is possible for revelers to come into contact with different cultural manifestations, such as an Afro *bloco*, a *pagode bloco*, a heavy metal *bloco*, or a *forró bloco*, which contributes to making Belo Horizonte's Carnival different from those of other capitals, since this diversity makes it difficult to monetize the party in the sense of creating circuits, as happens in Salvador's street Carnival. Although there has been speculation about the creation of a Carnival circuit in Belo Horizonte, where the *blocos* could hold their parades in a controlled space, no action has yet been taken in this direction.

The producers of Carnival, especially the founders and members of the street *blocos* and cultural producers, have expressed their opposition to the possible privatization of the festival at various times, including during the negotiations between the street *blocos* and Belotur, recalling that in the past the Belo-Horizontinos have already been banned from enjoying their own city, and that privatizing the Carnival, through paid circuits or any other initiative along these lines, would be a new way of depriving the local population (especially the poorest) from enjoying the city during the days of revelry. In addition, some representatives of the city's Afro *blocos* argue that the whole discussion about the "carnival product" and by extension the "street *blocos* product," the "caricature *blocos* product," and the "samba schools product," is very costly, even more so for the people who make up the Afro *blocos*, since blacks were effectively treated as commodities in the not so distant past.

For black bodies in particular, occupying the city center marks the need to be visible in spaces where their place in everyday life is subordinated. Beyond the streets of the periphery, where the racist city expects black bodies to stay, it is necessary to be precisely in these central streets to demarcate a field of possibilities (Simas & Rufino, 2018). The procession of an Afro *bloco* in the central region implies, even for a moment, a break with the way in which the city is expected to be appropriated by black people. By putting a crowd of people on the street, with black people playing

a leading role, the Afro Carnival *bloco* ultimately makes urbanity actually composed of subjects who are denied the city. Carnival thus also presents itself as one of those moments when the population has the right to the city, to urban spaces, the right to simply exist there without any specific productive purpose.

In addition to being a black welcoming space, an Afro *bloco* can be an organization capable of "[...] converting victims of oppression into political actors who lead the resistance and struggle" (Gomes, 2019, p. 11). By forging itself as a social movement that re-signifies and politicizes race, the Afro *bloco* gains an emancipatory and non-inferiorizing treatment (Gomes, 2019), while at the same time attributing to the black body a transgressive character that exchanges with the differences of entering the game of symbolic seduction and festive enchantment, provided that it can, from there, resist and expand (Sodré, 2019).

During Carnival, the Afro *blocos* institute an exception that brings with it a promising possibility of a rule: that black people can produce urban spaces that look like them, that respond to their needs and characteristics, without having to remain in segregated spaces or confined to the peripheries. The parades emphasize racial pride, affirm differences, and present the possibilities of collective gains for the city as a whole, in practice, with the cross becoming a crossroads (Simas & Rufino, 2018), as the power of the world, that is, the possibility of reinventing life, where there is not just one path, but a field of possibilities. The Angola Janga Afro *bloco* and the Kandandu initiative show the power of the crossroads in producing the lives of black bodies as a field of possibilities based on everyday resistance.

Black resistance organizations and their contribution to the spatial turn in Organizational Studies

In various sciences, we can observe a movement known as the spatial turn, with a privileged analysis of the city and the production of social space (Frehse, 2013; Frehse & O'Donell, 2019). Administrative science, especially Organizational Studies, is also concerned with the urban phenomenon. We can initially highlight Fischer's (1997) understanding of the city as a "complex set of organizational webs with diversities and singularities that generate a strong multiplication of projects, cooperative games, exclusions and conflicts, alliances and rejection. The city is order and disorder, actually or virtually produced" (Fischer, 1997, p. 76). In this approach, the city is seen as a mega-organization, full of complex, diverse, singular, plural, and contradictory elements, in which urban culture influences the construction and reinforcement of identities.

Subsequently, Mac-Allister (2004) and Saraiva and Carrieri (2012) conceptualize and problematize the concept of city-organization, which goes beyond the social organization previously discussed by Fischer (1997) and also treats it as the location of this organization, a spatial dimension that goes beyond physical space (Mac-Allister, 2004). This allows for an analysis that includes "social organization" and "spatial organization," in an "organizational view of urban dynamics, which opens up possibilities for observing organized social life" (Mac-Allister, 2004, p. 178). In addition, Saraiva and Carrieri (2012, p. 551), in their study of the city of Itabira, consider that the city-organization includes "a project for the production of urban space in a geographical context permeated by a territorial socio-symbolic dynamic," in which social groups and/or individuals integrate and interact, which ends up building an urban culture marked by common identities.

City dwellers, sometimes citizens or quasi-citizens, depending on their belonging and exclusion, seek to appropriate the city and take part in it. We understand that this is a central element in the work of Organizational Studies dealing with spatiality and raciality. Nascimento et al. (2015) deal with race relations and the socio-spatial segregation that results from them, considering shopping malls as private spaces where certain social groups, characterized by their dark skin color, are symbolically excluded. In another study, Nascimento et al. (2016) highlighted the discourses of the electronic media regarding "*rolezinhos*," understood by the authors as practices of resistance by young people from the periphery who occupy shopping malls, expanding the boundaries of organizational spaces by highlighting a space that is notoriously exclusionary for this social group. These are fruitful possibilities for an organizational analysis of cities as spaces of contradiction and resistance.

The city, as Saraiva (2019, p. 22) shows us, is a "crossroads of elements and possibilities" that is appropriated in different ways depending on the social group considered. In Organizational Studies, as the aforementioned author points out, the city has been treated beyond the material dimension, taking on the dimension of lived space and the experiences of different social actors. Thus, we can speak of "making the city" as a daily action that goes beyond materiality and thought/cognition, in the interaction between these elements and people. We believe that making the city, from the perspective of making it more like us and our belonging as social beings (Sarr, 2019), involves tensions, conflicts, and contradictions. It is the struggle for the heart of the city (Lefebvre, 2001). Fischer (1997) alerted us to the fact that the city is "a place of citizenship and marginality," "home and meeting place, [...] the repository of society's problems, the scene of crises, the locus of impotence and disenchantment." We believe that the "disenchantment" presented by Fischer (1997) is related to the abstraction of space, the erasure of differences, and the superimposition of exchange value to the detriment of the use value of urban space (Lefebvre, 1991).

If we consider a process of disenchantment and erasure of differences and their symbolic exchanges, is there an opposite process of enchantment of the disenchanted space and rewriting of the differences in the city? In the two previous topics, we exposed a disenchanted Belo Horizonte, the result of exclusionary concepts of modernity and the Republic, especially for the black population that built it and is segregated in its daily urban life. The Afro *blocos* and Kandandu, in the production of black spaces, re-signify the presence of the black body in the city beyond symbolic death and all kinds of violence. The black body, in the spaces produced at the Belo Horizonte Carnival, the repository and foundation of memories that rescue Africanity, plays with difference and transgresses the space that reduces it to simple labor or commodity. The protagonism of the "black resistance organizations," in reference to Siqueira (1997), breaks down spatial barriers and reinvents the everyday life of the city: the festive bodies enrich Belo Horizonte as a space lived by black people whose purpose is to party.

However, we cannot ignore the exclusion and violence that is practiced against black people in cities. As Andrade and Rezende (2023) point out, in a geography of black survival, structural racism manifested in mass incarceration and violence dates back to enslavement and the control of black bodies. It is necessary to ask whether black people can actually live in the city. The history of Belo Horizonte, beyond its modern and republican façade, is marked by the exclusion and erasure of black people, from the inhabitants of Curral Del Rey, to the black workers who built the new capital

of Minas Gerais, to the black people who live in and make up the city today, exposed to the daily racism of a municipality founded on the hierarchy of races and, consequently, of their cultures and ways of existing, a point of similarity with other Brazilian city spaces. Since the black population has historically had its citizenship mutilated (Santos, 1997), we believe it is urgent to spatialize the racial issue in Organizational Studies, which can be enriched by the understanding that different social groups, especially minority groups, are systematically denied the right to the city (Lefebvre, 2001).

This process of erasing differences and disenchantment does not happen without black resistance. It is possible to think and act on an oppressive reality, not only by exposing it, but ultimately by promoting ruptures in the urban social space. In this way, it is possible to think of the black person's right to the city (Rezende & Andrade, 2022), the participation and appropriation of city spaces by the black population, as a movement between an oppressive reality and a utopia of more just and racially equitable cities. Lefebvre's (2001) urban utopia and Sarr's (2019) Afrotopia are real and inundate black becoming in cities with power: social transformation and the use of urban space related to other forms of belonging and engagement and other identities promotes black people's right to the city as power and possibility.

We start from the understanding that the different initiatives that contribute to black people's right to the city (Rezende & Andrade, 2022) are important milestones for black culture, sociability, and self-esteem in the city. Siqueira (1997) believes that there is a process of re-elaborated continuities in the forms of belonging through which black people associate themselves with ethnic organizations. This process involves specific temporalities and spatialities/places, from the *quilombo* tradition to contemporary forms of black organization in cultural, religious, and liturgical-existential elements:

> It was in the context of the *quilombos*, from 1830 onwards, that the brotherhoods were born that would give rise to the first *candomblé terreiros* in Bahia recorded by official historiography. These are therefore traditional organizations: *candomblé terreiros*, religious brotherhoods, *capoeira* circles, which in turn give rise to contemporary organizations (Siqueira, 1997, p. 141).

Black resistance includes different organizational nuclei, from the traditional to the contemporary, examples of the latter being the Afro *blocos*, *Afoxés*, community schools, Afro bands, and various workshops that have emerged from the traditional nuclei (Siqueira, 1997). "The contemporary organizations that have emerged from the traditional nuclei of black culture and resistance are nourished by their own original structure" (Siqueira, 1997, p. 140). We can therefore think that the production of territories (Rolnik, 1989) and black spaces (Sansone, 1996) manifests itself from the organization of black resistance, whether its materiality and location is more or less fixed or classified as traditional or contemporary.

Siqueira (1997) also highlights three central axes of black resistance organizations and two central objectives. These axes are knowledge, identity reference, and vital energy. Although the author does not elaborate on the concepts of these axes, we understand that they are Afrocentric knowledge, based on African-Brazilian continuity, which is closely related to identity reference. As Fanon (2018, p. 81) elucidates, when dealing with culture and racism, black people, deprived of their

culture and means of existence, "are destroyed in the depths of their existence," but recovering the knowledge of their black identity promotes ecstasy with each rediscovery, in a process of permanent enchantment. Tradition is rediscovered in contemporaneity, in its own time and space. This is how the continuum between Africa and Brazil works, how "the meaning of the past is rediscovered" (Fanon, 2018, p. 89). Knowledge is acquired through experience, through what is lived, and knowledge occurs at the crossroads, in the field of possibilities (Simas & Rufino, 2018). This process is also related to vital energy: just as *axé* is planted in the *terreiro* so that the soil reverberates with life, black spaces and territories are impregnated with vital energy and power: deconstructing and reconstructing worlds, actions, and everyday life itself.

The central objectives of black resistance organizations are "to make their civilizational heritage more dynamic, while calling themselves Afro-Brazilians, and to seek better living conditions in society, with self-esteem and citizenship, in response to the processes of exclusion" (Siqueira, 1997, p. 138), in a process of resistance to a society founded on racism, which is reflected in the cities. From *quilombos* to brotherhoods, from *terreiros* to Afro *blocos*, from syncretism to the clandestine rites of *Congados*, *Congadas*, and *Reinados*, there is a reaffirmation of black identity and an appreciation of culture and transgressive bodies.

We believe that in addition to the knowledge, identity reference, and vital energy revealed by Siqueira (1997), another central axis can be imagined: the spatiality of black resistance, which, through organizing, produces space, not just a material substrate, but a repository of memories and a place of possibilities and the meeting of differences. Understanding the production of space by black resistance organizations can contribute to the spatial turn in Organizational Studies by reflecting on the myriad ways in which black people give new meaning to their everyday lives and, in doing so, create a city in their likeness (Sarr, 2019). The dimension of lived and everyday experience in the production of territories and spaces by black resistance organizations points to the centrality of the racial question not only as a response to the erasure of differences, but also as an ethical project of human emancipation and citizenship for black people, which can enrich discussions of cities in Organizational Studies.

Conclusions: the crossroads is a point of departure and arrival

In this essay, our aim was to problematize Belo Horizonte from a racial point of view in terms of processes of domination and resistance through the production of black spaces by means of Afro Carnival *blocos*, understood here as spaces of black resistance. After discussing the need to link the issue of race to the production of urban space in Brazil, we move on to deal specifically with the capital of Minas Gerais, a city planned to represent republican modernity and abandon imperial urban representations. The issue of race was also present in the founding of Belo Horizonte, both in terms of the erasure of the black history of Curral Del Rey and in the segregation of the blacks who built the capital, since it was simply not planned for them to inhabit the planned area.

The third part of the text deals with the Afro *blocos* and the production of black spaces in the context of the Belo Horizonte Carnival, a true subversion in which blackness is a condition of power and not of subalternity. In the fourth part, we indicate the contributions of reflections on the production of black spaces to a spatial turn in Organizational Studies already underway in Brazil, including research on raciality and spatiality. Specifically, we look at black resistance organizations

as producers of black spaces capable of making cities rich in diversity, possibilities, and encounters. Taken together, these sections offer a glimpse into the complexity of the urban phenomenon, especially when it is crossed by racial issues that establish paths of existence or disappearance according to skin color. Black resistance organizations have emerged as an important element in reclaiming differences in cities and contributing to the right of black people to the city, in the sense of appropriating urban space and participating in the direction of Belo Horizonte.

Sarr (2019, p. 143), when dealing with African cities, argues that it is not enough to "reproduce faded copies of Paris, Berlin, or New York," but to make cities resemble us, reflecting who we are and who we want to be. We think that this observation is valid for America and its black diaspora, and more specifically for Belo Horizonte and its spaces as elements of a black becoming and how we want to be in the world. Does the capital of Minas Gerais reflect who we are and who we will be? If so, all of us or only some of us? Who doesn't make up the official urban portrait? The urban planning of the capital of Minas Gerais, by separating city and non-city, subjects and non-subjects, leads us to question how much we can talk about modernity or a de facto republic. Saraiva and Silva (2021, p. 13) point out the limits of urban planning, a European invention "conceived within universities, part of a technical and neutral knowledge, insensitive to other possibilities of existence, which leads to overlaps and erasures in the name of spatial order – a process that ends up hierarchizing existences on the basis of skin color".

The historical erasure of black people in Belo Horizonte shows which subjects are excluded from "making a city" in a project that echoes colonialism and segregation. On the one hand, we have no doubt that this city is a successful urban planning project that moves away from the images of backwardness of colonial and imperial Brazil. But at what cost? And above all, at whose expense? A city that, from the beginning, didn't even consider that black people could inhabit it, ended up inaugurating two cities simultaneously – one planned and the other excluded – by segregating spaces and possibilities of existence. This marks a city in which blacks can still circulate in the privileged areas during productive hours, but under the watchful eyes of those who tolerate them. At the end of working hours, they are expected to pile onto public transport to return to the urban areas where they are segregated and abandoned to their fate, where infrastructure and quality of life are lacking and where misery, violence, and death abound.

Of course, no victory or defeat is absolute: although the local historiography does not adequately deal with black people in Curral Del Rey or since the foundation of Belo Horizonte, these subjects have inscribed other experiences, bodies, and knowledge in the city, partially breaking the urban logic that has excluded them. In the context of Carnival, the Afro *blocos* occupy a special place in the capital of Minas Gerais. Alongside other urban manifestations, they are able to break, if only for a moment, with the everyday racism to which black people are subjected, showing that being black is resistance and power on the one hand, and that it is necessary to blacken the city on the other.

The main contributions of this article relate not only to the unveiling of an oppressive reality historically and spatially constructed in Brazilian cities, but also to the power of resistance as black bodies use their cultural and ethnic manifestations as a strategy to negotiate social spaces with the dominant sectors. We need to recognize that, on the other side of segregation, there are forms of (re)existence of black people who struggle to be part of this city while at the same time they seek to strengthen their Afro-diasporic identity and culture. Afro *blocos* or projects like Kandandu give

new meaning to the marginalization of black bodies. In addition to highlighting their organizational nature, these manifestations use aesthetic elements and place black people in a place of (re)existence that signals their right to occupy the city for leisure and not just for the exploitation of their labor.

Black resistance organizations, such as the Afro *blocos*, are fields of possibilities that, by reaffirming themselves in other territories, including those that are not on the periphery, end up proclaiming to the city that the black body is also transgressive, capable of bringing together differences, fighting for rights, and thus evolving from victims of oppression to political actors who lead resistance and struggle in the search for the production of urban spaces beyond the peripheries, increasing the possibilities of collective gain for the city as a whole. We believe that black resistance organizations, as producers of black spaces and territories, can be read from a crossroads perspective. The crossroads is where the enchantment of the world is promoted and where differences intersect. It is a place where ancestral knowledge and contemporary ways of making cities meet, creating myriad possibilities and paths. Black resistance and the production of black spaces are in themselves crossroads, points of departure and arrival.

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Inclusive language

The authors use inclusive language that recognizes diversity, conveys respect for all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities.

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