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“NO PLACE ON EARTH DOES CARNIVAL LIKE RIO!”:

A Feminist Critique of Racial Democracy through the Analysis of

Transnational Tourism

By

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Thesis Approval Page

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Abstract

Embedded with strong nationalist values, the Brazilian State perpetuated the idea of being a racial democracy. Considering the many ethnic groups that had been living in the country before the Portuguese colonization and since then, the racial democracy promoted the idea that they all had been equally important to the foundation of Brazil; therefore, racism would not exist in the Brazilian society. However, this ideology is more a myth than reality. By focusing on queer and heterosexual sex tourism during *Carnaval* in Rio de Janeiro (the world's most famous celebration of carnival), the goal of this research is to show how racial democracy has worked to sexualize and racialize bodies in ways that have turned them into a commodity used to boost the tourism industry.

Keywords: *racial democracy, institutionalized racism, Carnaval, sex tourism, queer tourism, culture, race, gender, class, Rio de Janeiro, transnationalism*

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Introduction

Um lamento triste	A sad sorrow
Sempre ecoou	Has always echoed
Desde que o índio guerreiro	Since the warrior indian
Foi pro cativo	Was taken to captivity
E de lá cantou	From where singing began
Negro entoou	The black sang all over
Um canto de revolta pelos ares	A song of rebellion
E de guerra em paz	And from war to peace
De paz em guerra	Peace to war
Todo o povo dessa terra	All the people from this land
Quando pode cantar	When they can sing
Canta de dor	They sing in pain

Clara Nunes – Canto das Três Raças

Pára e repara	Stop and look at
Olha como ela samba	How she dances samba
Olha como ela brilha	How she glows
Olha que maravilha	How wonderful
Essa crioula tem o olho azul	This black woman has blue eyes
Essa lourinha tem cabelo bombril	This blondie has Brillo Pad hair
Aquela índia tem sotaque do Sul	That indian has a Southern accent
Essa mulata é da cor do Brasil	This <i>mulata</i> is Brazil's color

Paralamas do Sucesso – Lourinha Bombril

The cultural manifestations of a country, such as its music, are usually connected to its society, traditions, norms, and even beliefs. A close reading of the songs above reveal interesting characteristics of the Brazilian society and many of these manifestations that have long persisted. “*Canto das Três Raças*” is a resistance song. Written in 1976, during the military dictatorship (1966-1985), it challenged the ideas of racial harmony in the country by calling attention to both indigenous and black slavery and the power tensions between them and the colonizers. On the other hand, “*Lourinha Bombril*”, from 1996, celebrates the racial diversity of the country by sexualizing the multiracial Brazilian women.

Initially, the Brazilian society was composed of natives who lived there. Due to its colonization by Portugal in 1500, Brazil experienced an influx of many different ethnic groups who came to live in the country: from the Portuguese to the Africans enslaved there. Clara Nunes takes this scenario of colonization and the interaction of native-Brazilians, Africans, and Portuguese in the country as the background story for her song. The singer starts by highlighting not only the enslavement of the Africans, but also of the native groups, and the disgrace and sadness that this condition brought to these peoples, many times intentionally forgotten. Moreover, this *samba* song is a defiant one, since it calls attention to the fact that these peoples, singing in pain and rage, had always resisted the conditions imposed by the colonizers, in a time of censorship by a government that clearly had a very strong nationalist project aimed at unifying the country across racial lines.

While Clara Nunes’ song is about the suffering in the formation of the country, “*Lourinha Bombril*”, by Paralamas do Sucesso, focuses more on the beauty that resulted from the miscegenation of the many peoples of Brazil, from the natives, Portuguese, and Africans to the many other Europeans that migrated in the 1900s.

More specifically, it celebrates the sexualized multiracial Brazilian women and *samba*, highlighting the physical aspects of these women and their attractiveness. When they sing “This *mulata* is Brazil’s color,” it also reinforces the image that has been widely spread of the *mulata*¹ as the representation of the Brazilian people: a hypersexualized person descended from Europeans (white) and Africans (black) and often associated with the “voluptuosity and sensuality characteristic of women who dance the samba onstage” (Pravaz 80). With lighter skin, the *mulata*, who came to occupy an independent racial category that separated her from the black people, became central to the ideology of racial democracy (Domingues 2005) to proclaim the existing harmony between the races and possibilities of racial mobility and equal opportunities for all.

This imagery has been long used to position Brazil globally as a racial paradise, a place where everybody is happy and lives in harmony, regardless of the color of their skin. To establish an image that differentiates the country from South-African *apartheid* and US segregation, the Brazilian government did not spare any effort to sell this image as a means of attracting foreign investors, positioning itself as a global economy that conforms to capitalism. In order to explore and understand this position of the Brazilian government, I am going to look at how the racial democracy ideology was essential to create this image of the country and boost the tourism industry. In order to do so, a feminist standpoint is applied, which, according to Echtner and Prasad (2003), allows “openings for new questions, theories and methods; possibilities of looking anew at tourism’s power structures and networks;

¹ In Portuguese, the male form is used to generalize a group of people; therefore, in this case, it would be *mulato*. However, nowadays, there is a preference to use an X (*mulatx*) instead to incorporate other identifications beside female/male. Throughout this paper though, I chose to use the female form because the marketing images discussed here used mainly cisgender women’s bodies to promote Brazilian tourism.

opportunities to build a reflexive and reflective knowledge catalogue; the capacity to promote transformative research with marginalized and subaltern groups (...).” (97). Curiously enough, in this case, the marginalized and subaltern groups are mostly the same people used to create the image of a racially democratic country.

The thesis is structured in three main chapters in addition to the introduction and the conclusion. Chapters 1 and 2 consist of an extensive and critical literature review to contextualize theoretically and historically the foundations of racial democracy, *Carnaval*², and sex tourism industry focusing on the transnationalism aspects of these elements. Chapter 3 then analyzes current images and text used in websites to sell *Carnaval* packages for foreigner consumers. I decided to name the chapters after slogans from marketing campaigns created by Embratur (*Empresa Brasileira de Turismo*, Brazilian Company of Tourism), the federal tourist agency because, in some ways and metaphorically, they reflect the discussions proposed by each chapter. Chapter 1 is “Brazil: it’s what life was intended to be,” which was a campaign from the late 1980s; it resembles the idea of the formation of the country, in which a country without racism would be the ideal. “The world meets in Brazil. Come celebrate life” is the name of Chapter 2 and it was used in 2013; since the chapter focuses on tourism and *Carnaval*, the idea of many foreign tourists that go to the country to party and celebrate *Carnaval* is part of the discussion. Finally, Chapter 3 is named “Brazil, show up your face,” a campaign from the early 1990s that would highlight the new efforts to value multiculturalism and ecotourism (Embratur 56). It is expected that the analysis of the material will reveal that the relationship between racial democracy and tourism is still part of the marketing used to promote touristic

² Since carnival is not an event exclusively Brazilian, I am using the Portuguese word to establish a direct connection and particularity to the one that happens in Brazil, more specifically, *Carnaval* in Rio.

packages to *Carnaval*, especially by using images and languages associated with desire, beauty, etc., thus, tourism promotion is aimed at showing Brazil's real face behind marketing promotion.

Chapter 1 starts with a historical contextualization of the Portuguese colonization, calling attention to its implications, especially after the establishment of slavery. It explores the many ways of oppression, but also it reminds us that it was not a period of acceptance and passivity: resistance was part of the slaves' lives, just as Clara Nunes tells us. The main point of the chapter is to trace the institutionalization of racism in Brazil from colonial times until today, based on the myth of racial democracy. Instead of serving as a foundation for Brazil to evolve into a country free of racism, racial democracy has worked in ways that allow the Brazilian government to exploit black bodies for profit at the same time that it has been promoting systemic violence towards the black population.

In order to further analyze the exploitation of the *mulata* as central to racial democracy, I chose to look at queer and heterosexual tourism in Brazil. Therefore, Chapter 2 establishes the economic, cultural, and social context of tourism in the country. The focus is especially on the military dictatorship period (1964-1985), when the Brazilian government started to think about tourism as an economic activity that could contribute to the development of the country. Therefore, I argue that the creation of Embratur contributed to efforts to promote Brazil as a racial democracy nationally and internationally through their marketing campaigns, considering that "[d]espite its seemingly apolitical character, tourism promotion has played a fundamental role in the production of everyday notions and experiences" (Ojeda 767) - calling attention one more time to the importance of applying a feminist standpoint to look at tourism from more than just a business perspective. Since the majority of

the promotion was concentrated on Rio de Janeiro, its beaches, *Carnaval*, and women, I discuss the implications of them especially, because Brazil became the number one sex tourism destination in the early 2000s. Considering that *Carnaval* attracts more foreign tourists than other times of the year, I discuss the characteristics of this event that reinforce racial democracy in a way that works to commodify certain groups of people.

Chapter 3 consists of a qualitative analysis of websites that promote *Carnaval* in Rio de Janeiro to foreign tourists. Because most tourists travel to a country after buying packages from agencies (Filho 379), these agencies develop their advertising strategy in order to influence the decision-making process of the customers. Through mechanisms of searching the Internet, I identify the most relevant websites and analyze their promotion of this event, from the types of images they use to a textual analysis. Based on the literature review, I expect to find a certain type of language and image that is accounted for and highlighted to see how many times they appear.

The conclusion critically synthesizes the main points, presenting a detailed discussion of the results in relation to the findings of the literature review from the two previous chapters. In addition, I focus on the resistance movements to racism, classism, sexism, etc. in the Brazilian scenario. To sum up, I discuss the consequences of the findings of this research to propose policy change and indicate fields for future researches.

Chapter 1: “Brazil: it’s what life was intended to be”

“Oppression, this overwhelming control, is necrophilic;
it is nourished by love of death, not life.”
(Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, p. 90, my translation).

As a Portuguese colony for more than three centuries (from its discovery by the colonizers on April 22, 1500 to the Proclamation of Independence on September 7, 1822), the Brazilian society as we know it today is a direct result of the interactions among the different peoples who have been living there. The impacts of this settler colonialism (after all, the Portuguese never left Brazil) are still very vivid in our daily lives. To start, the native population living there by the time of colonization was decimated and the forests destroyed; in addition, as a result of colonization, there was an intense influx of slaves was brought from Africa to work in the sugar cane plantations in the country³.

Sugar, the final product of the processing of sugar cane, rapidly became a highly desired global commodity. The intense consumer demand for it required Portugal to intensify its production; therefore, the need was for more workers at the plantations, especially in a new country like Brazil, where the number of people living there was low and the natives were widespread throughout the country. As a response to the demand for sugar, Portugal, and eventually other European nations, established a trade with African nations, trafficking Africans to many parts of the world, mainly to the Americas, where they would work in the plantations developed by the Portuguese and Spanish crown. The exploitation of the African people turned out to be a very lucrative business to the colonizers, especially to the Portuguese and Spanish, who designed their

³ In the twentieth century, especially because of World War I, Brazil received a new influx of European immigrants (Antunes 19).

colonies to boost the primitive accumulation of capital through the exploitation of imported and native labor (Antunes 17). In addition, many of the elite justified the need of slavery as something inevitable, compared to the problems and misery that the lack of labor in the plantations could cause (Holanda 75).

Since the Portuguese crown invested heavily in the sugar cane plantations in Brazil, the country received more of these enslaved African populations than any other Portuguese colony (in the 1600s, 42 percent of all slaves were taken there). It is estimated that around 5 million Africans were enslaved in Brazil (Guimarães 2001). In addition, Brazil was the last country to end slavery, which contributed to the high number of Africans that were trafficked to the country. Even after Brazilian independence from Portugal on September 7, 1822, slavery was still a legal practice that was only abolished on May 13, 1888⁴.

The relationship between the slaves and their masters (*senhores de engenho*) at the sugar cane plantations was not a passive one. The Africans did not abandon their culture, values, and social traditions, and found many ways to survive, resist slavery and keep these traditions. It is important to note that slave rebellions were constant during this period, as slaves fought for their freedom and refused the kind of work they were forced to perform (Antunes 18). In Brazil, they established *quilombos*, communities for freed slaves and those who escaped the *engenhos* (name of the sugar cane plantations).

Slave masters often reinforced their power by sexually abusing the female slaves, a common practice during colonial times that started the miscegenation process and resulted in the category of the *mulata*, a figure central to understanding the racial

⁴ The 13th Amendment abolished slavery in the United States in 1865, i.e., 23 years before Brazil.

relations in Brazil (Domingues 2005). The mythical *mulata* in racial democracy ideology was seen as the blend of blacks (Africans) and whites (Europeans) and an indication that racial prejudice did not exist. It is critical to affirm that *mulata* is seen as an independent racial category in Brazil, allowing an easier social mobility and acceptance among whites. This perspective is different from the United States, where the *mulata* is not a separate category, being part of the black community. Therefore, the countries differentiate themselves on their perspectives regarding miscegenation: while in Brazil it represents a positive aspect reinforced by racial democracy, in the US it carries the same negativity and stigma of being black (Domingues 2005). However, these sexual encounters between the master and the slave reinforced the superiority of the masters and the inferior position of the slave, since they were marked by abuse and, once again, exploitation of the black body, especially the female black body.

The abolition of slavery followed by the Proclamation of the Brazilian Republic on November 15, 1889 (meaning that Brazil was no longer an Empire headed by descendants of the Portuguese crown) led to the consolidation of the *mulata* and the idea of the country being a racial democracy. With these two measures – the legal end of slavery and the establishment of a Republic – everybody, in theory, at least was equal under the law. No legal nor institutional barrier separated people from different races, so the idea of meritocracy infused public discourse and dominated society for years, creating the idea that the opportunities were the same to everybody regardless of race (Twine 78). However, not only did the black population come from a socially and economically underprivileged situation after centuries of slavery, but also the majority did not acquire political rights because these were restricted to literate men. Women and illiterate men were excluded from the political arena, and the majority of the black population was illiterate (Domingues 2005). Therefore, it is easy to challenge

meritocracy, considering that it was founded on the basis of the legal system, but it did not have the social, political and economic support.

In this mythical rendering of miscegenation of the peoples supported by a false perception of equality and democracy and widely touted by national and international literature, the Brazilian government institutionalized the idea of racial democracy in order to build a national identity (Pravaz 82). The book “*Casa Grande & Senzala*” (The Masters and the Slaves), written by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre and published in 1933, deals with the formation of the Brazilian society. It is among the most influential books to support the idea of racial democracy in Brazil, and it is considered by many as the birth of the myth of racial democracy (Twine 6). In his work, he focused on the influence of the African and indigenous traditions of the country and also questioned scientific racism; the *mulata* is central to his work as a symbol to celebrate the miscegenation of the races (Pravaz 83). However, according to the Brazilian sociologist Florestan Fernandes, Freyre was not responsible for creating this myth, but by not questioning nor deconstructing it, he provided the theoretical basis of the official sociology (of the Brazilian government).

Racial democracy is based on the idea that the many ethnic groups that had been living in the country since the Portuguese colonization and before it, i.e., native-Brazilians, Africans, Portuguese and other migrants, were all equally important to the foundation of Brazil as a nation. Therefore, prejudice would not exist in this new Brazilian society that would live in harmony with all groups. Nevertheless, as posed by the scholar Petrônio Domingues:

Ideologies are inverted images from the real world that the dominant social relationships produce to hide mechanisms of oppression. Therefore, the myth

of racial democracy was a distortion of the pattern of Brazilian racial relations, ideologically developed by an elite considered to be white, with the intention or not to mask the oppressive reality of inequality among blacks and whites.

(118, my own translation)

Regardless of the intentionality or not of this official project, as the author highlights, the racial democracy served to build the imaginary of the Brazilian society as a racial paradise in which all these different cultures would live in harmony. This was important not only to create cohesion internally and have mechanisms to oppress those who challenged racism, but also to differentiate the country in the global market place, exempting it from racial tensions and promoting a more fertile and stable land to do business.

However, as Domingues points out, the ideological construct of racial democracy serves as a tool to hide oppression and maintain the *status quo* of the elite of European ancestry that in many ways tried to bring and sustain the European culture as the dominant one. The Brazilian historian, Sergio Buarque de Holanda, offers this analysis:

The attempt to implement the European culture in an ample territory, which presents natural conditions that are at odds with its millennial traditions – if not opposite –, is the dominant fact and it resulted in consequences for the origin of the Brazilian society. Bringing from distant countries our ways to socially interact, our institutions, our ideas, and trying to maintain them in a hostile and unfavorable environment, until today, makes us an exiled people in our own land. (31, my own translation)

Not only has he pointed out the environmental resistance to the European culture, but also the social consequences of this attempt at imposing traditions and ideas that in many ways did not represent the Brazilian society because they did not consider the peoples who lived there before, nor the ones that arrived with the colonization. Nevertheless, the idea of racial democracy was successfully inculcated (from the government's standpoint) in the people and in the institutions, helping to further marginalize groups that were not part of the white elite of European descent.

Institutionalized racism

The institutionalization of the idea of racial democracy made it harder, in many ways, to have social movements organized against racism and to have racism recognized and understood by the Brazilian society in general as more than a legal condition (Twine 43). The mythical figure of the *mulata* reinforcing the idea of meritocracy in all levels of society and the possibilities of social mobility is one the reasons. In this sense, it was another victory for the elite that was able to disengage the anti-racist movement by putting the *mulata* forward as a different racial category and using examples of exceptions who succeeded economically. Nevertheless, it is essential to highlight here that racism is understood as a cultural, social, economic, political, and legal category, which can be seen in many different aspects of society – from the lack of representation of black people on national television to access to education.

In addition, these “exceptions,” presented as the norm, reinforced the idea of a country without racism; thus, a political movement to fight racism would not make sense. This scenario describes well the kind of racism faced in Brazil, as reaffirmed

by Abdias do Nascimento, who was the first Afro-Brazilian elected to the National Congress:

[T]he concept of racial democracy was established in Brazil. According to it, blacks and whites live in harmony, enjoying the same opportunities in their lives. (...) The existence of this so-called racial equality is the 'biggest national pride' (...). However, we have to understand racial democracy as the perfect metaphor to label the Brazilian racism: not so obvious as the American racism neither legalized as the apartheid in South Africa, but effectively institutionalized in the government as well as diffuse in the social, psychological, economic, political and cultural aspect of the country's society. (qtd in Domingues 2005, 116, my translation)

Since the idea of racial democracy became "the biggest national pride," it resulted in a feeling of moral superiority of the Brazilian people who embraced this pride (Twine 6-7). Then, the recognition of racism would debunk this idea of moral superiority.

This institutionalized racism not only worked to further disarticulate the organization of the black movement, but also reinforced the idea of meritocracy, including spreading the idea that those who were not able to succeed were lazy. As a result, racial democracy has been working in ways that further marginalize the black population. The lack of public policies to provide equal opportunities and integrate former slaves and their descendants to the society was a reality in the years after abolition, thus alienating the black community from society because of their race and class (besides other factors such as gender, religion, etc.).

The post-abolition was marked by intense competition for jobs. Still a mainly agricultural country, Brazil received an intense wave of European immigrants at the

end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century to work at the coffee plantations, etc. Therefore, the former slaves had to fight for the same jobs, but the reality was that there was no competition, since the masters gave preference to the newly arrived immigrants (Moraes 23).

The State did not promote any kind of policy to integrate the former slaves to the workforce; the same is true regarding housing, education, and health, resulting in the relegation of the black community to the suburbs of the cities⁵ and rising levels of unemployment, prostitution, and criminalization. Not surprisingly, until today, the socioeconomic conditions of the black population are considerably worse than those of the white population⁶. Despite some limited laws and previous efforts, such as the Afonso Arinos Law from 1952 that criminalized racial prejudice, the Brazilian government started thinking about public policies that address racism against the black population, indigenous people, women, and other marginalized groups only in the late 1990s.

When referring specifically to people of African ancestry, the word *preto* is used. This happens because “(...) *pardos* are very similar to *pretos* in their socioeconomic indicators, the reason why scholars have increasingly joined *pretos* and *pardos* together as *negros*” (Silva 802). Throughout the thesis, when referring to the black/Afro-Brazilian community, it includes the *mulata/mestiça* as well. In Portuguese, we would use the word *negro* in this case. The Brazilian Census is based on self-identification and it offers five categories of race: *branco* (white), *preto*

⁵ In Brazil, the suburbs are marked by the segregation of those economically, socially, culturally, racially marginalized from society. It is possible to make an analogy with the term “marginalized” because these are the people pushed to the margins of the city, the extremes, so they can be away from its inner city, where the wealthy and mostly white population lives.

⁶ The same is true about the indigenous population. Although they are mentioned here to a certain degree, when thinking about the imaginary of the *mestiço*, the typical Brazilian, the indigenous is not a big part of its miscegenation.

(black), *pardo* (synonym of *mestiço*), *amarelo* (yellow – Asian), and *indígena* (native). Here, unless otherwise indicated, when talking about the black community, black population, etc., the *mulatos/mestiços/pardos*⁷ are included.

The fact that the census is based on self-identification brings a different discussion about identity that is presented throughout this paper when discussing racial democracy. However, for many years, people would not identify themselves as black; therefore, for a long period the population was majority white in terms of data. This idea was problematic and helped to diffuse the myth of racial democracy, justifying the predominance of white people in politics, television, etc., because they were also the numerical majority in the population (Twine 112). Nevertheless, when the results of the 2010 census affirmed that the majority of the population was black, this justification could not be used anymore, thus paving the way to more discussions of racism.

Racism in a majority black country

In a country where most of the population is black (54%)⁸ (IPEA 2015), the inequality is alarming. Blacks are the majority of people living in extreme poverty, which means that 70% live on less than one dollar per day, according to the World Bank definition of that term (Superinteressante 2016). Historically, white men have received the highest wages, followed by white women, black men, and black women. In most cases, black men and women work in sectors, that require a high amount of physical work, considered low-grade and relegated to the poor (Moura 2015). In 2015, a research study revealed that 18% of black women still work as domestic

⁷ As indicated before, I chose the word *mulata* to use it as the general term because of its connection with tourism.

⁸ The breakdown is 45.2% white, 8.9% black, 45.1% *parda*, 0.5% Asian, and 0.4% native (IPEA 2015).

workers (compared to 10% of white women)⁹. Although domestic work has been settled under the Brazilian labor laws (which in theory would mean minimum wage, paid vacation, taxes contribution, etc.), the mean wage of domestic servants is below the national minimum wage (Portal Vermelho 2017). Just as in the times of the masters and slaves, the relationship and the stigma related to domestic work has not presented many changes. During the colonial period, the slave women would work cleaning, cooking, and taking care of the children of their master (who in many cases would sexually assault these women, reinforcing his position as their owner and maintaining the oppression and submission of the slaves). Not much has changed with abolition. The years right after it were characterized by the common practice of white families requesting the legal guardianship of juveniles, usually black, poor orphans, who would work for the families in exchange for food, housing, and clothing (Moura 2015; Twine 35). Once again, racism acquired an institutionalized and legal form, raising the question of whether or not the abolition truly meant the freedom of the black people. More than that, it also supported the myth of racial democracy since blacks and white would live in the same house and be considered part of the family (Twine 35).

One recurrent theme that relates to the condition of the physical labor practiced by the poor and black population is the lack of education. Many do not have the choice to study and, instead, become part of the workforce at a young age to help their families, although they do believe that studying would bring better opportunities for them (Lima and Rocha 2017; Moura 2015). This was the case of those young

⁹ On 07/18/2017, a black woman named Luana was approached in the Brazilian streets by a woman, who asked her if she was a house cleaner. Luana, a historian and professor, answered that she was a Master's student and professor. This story just highlights how the institutionalized racism is still a vivid reality of our daily lives. The assumption that this young black woman is a cleaner just reinforces the patriarchal and white supremacist faces of society.

blacks adopted by white families, who saw their siblings going to school but not themselves. Once again, the statistics reveal the gap between the black and white populations and the institutionalized racism: the probability of a black person being illiterate is five times higher than a white one; by 2015, only 12% of the black population had studied for 12 years or more (equivalent to kindergarten to high school in the educational system of the United States) compared to 25.9% of the white population; and, only 1 in 4 people attending higher education is black (Superinteressante 2016; Portal Vermelho 2017).

In addition, illiteracy was used as a mechanism to exclude the political participation of the marginalized population when Brazil became a Republic in 1891 since illiterate people could not vote nor participate in the politics. At that time, the majority of the population who was not white men was illiterate. Although this has changed, their participation has remained limited. Currently, only 30% of the senate and 20% of the chamber of federal deputies are black; 15.4% of the judges are black (Superinteressante 2016); there is not a black minister in the Supreme Federal Court (STF, *Supremo Tribunal Federal*), the highest judiciary power in Brazil (see figure 1); the same reality exists among the 24 ministers that make up the executive branch (Monteiro 2017). Although there are two women in the STF, they are both white, and there have been only three black ministers in total. In the past elections (2014), five women were elected to the Senate – and joined the other eight who were already part of it - and only one is black; out of the 513 federal deputies elected, only 51 were women, and 12 of them are black; the number of indigenous people elected was zero (Souza 2014; Zigoni 2014). The highest political sectors of the country do not represent the majority of the population, making it harder to address the issues of this

population. The lack of visibility of the marginalized black population is reaffirmed by the lack of representation, which also questions the existence of racial democracy.

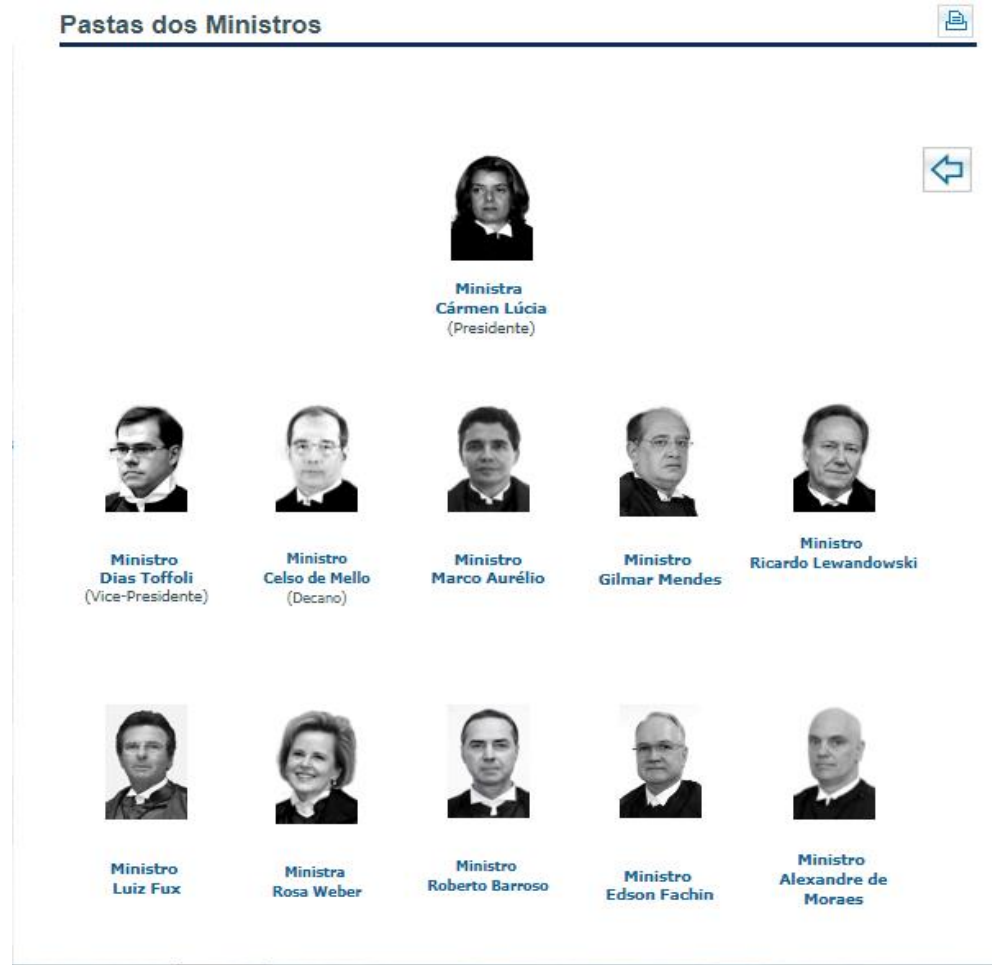


Figure 1: Current ministers from the STF
(<http://www.stf.jus.br/portal/composicaoPlenaria/composicaoPlenaria.asp?id=1581>)

Until today, the government is filled with white men, the elite that has been ruling the country and has clear interests in defending capitalist and more neoliberal policies. Despite the relatively progressive years during the presidency of Lula and Dilma Rousseff (January/2003 – August/2016), the impeachment of the latter represented a clear conservative backlash that is putting the country back to the influence of foreign capital and attending to the demands of the businessperson (Miroff and Lopes 2017) to also reaffirm a patriarchal and white supremacist government (Encarnación 89). Not surprisingly and despite all the data to the

contrary, the idea of racial democracy and lack of racism is perpetuated among many Brazilians, masking “that racism is rooted in the very structure of the Brazilian state and that blackness is very material and real” (Smith 10).

The power of deciding those who live and die

The affirmative actions developed during the presidency of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995 – 2002) and consolidated during the governments of presidents Lula (2003 – 2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011 – 2016) challenged this institutionalized racism and classism as well, facing poverty and how it intersects with race and gender. Lula created the Secretariat for the Political Promotion of Racial Equality (SEPPIR, *Secretaria de Políticas de Promoção da Igualdade Racial*) in 2003, and Dilma implemented the Statute of Racial Equality (*Estatuto de Igualdade Racial*) in 2010. In 2003, teaching Afro-Brazilian history and culture became mandatory in the national educational system. In the same year, the *Dia Nacional da Consciência Negra* (Black Awareness National Day) was established on November 20, day of the death of Zumbi dos Palmares in 1695, a former slave, who became the last leader of the *Quilombo* dos Palmares (*quilombos* were settlements that provided home and shelter to escaped slaves). This celebratory date was a major victory of the Brazilian black movement MNU (*Movimento Negro Unificado*, Unified Black Movement). By choosing a date meaningful to the community in order to remember and celebrate the Afro-Brazilian population instead of the abolition day (May 13), a date related to government (Guimarães 135), the black movement was able to reclaim its memory. Studies show that descendants of slaves were ashamed of talking about this period and their ancestors, denying their origins (Twine 123). As indicated by Twine:

The management of individual and collective memories of Afro-Brazilian ancestors is linked to the management of racism by Afro- and Euro-Brazilians. Memories of African slaves' ancestors have been an important means for African Americans to establish an antiracist identity in the United States. It has also been a way to directly challenge white supremacy and Anglo hegemony. This collective memory is one of the ways that a national U.S. black community has been established and continues to reproduce itself from generation to generation (Gwaltney 1980). (123)

Therefore, we see the importance of reclaiming this date that questions racism and creates spaces for discussion every time it is celebrated.

In addition, these governments focused on welfare programs. The culmination of these efforts was the program *Bolsa Família* implemented by Lula, which reduced poverty by half, impacting directly the lives of the black people who represent the majority of the poor (Smith 6). Discussions about race became more frequent, creating a new space in which the idea of racial democracy was more openly criticized, since for a long period challenging racial democracy had been seen as an anti-nationalist position:

Unlike white Brazilians, black Brazilians of all sexes and genders had to create the collective political identity of “black” in order to build an anti-racist social movement that highlighted the effects of anti-black racism. (...) Claiming an identity as “black” seemed to contradict the national identity of racial democracy, and thus ran the risk of being accused of disloyalty and not being fully Brazilian. (Collins and Bilge 23)

Claiming and discussing these issues challenge the moral superiority of the Brazilian people, thus the risk of being accused of a lack of nationalism.

If the government's actions discussed above developed a new reality for social movements to claim their black identity by creating a space to debate race, class, and gender, it did not overcome the original idea of the *mulata* and their exceptionality as the black people able to overcome their conditions through their own merits.

This accepted and tolerated blackness is what Christen A. Smith called Afro-nationalism, a racial tolerance that allows some individuals to be part of the society, serving as the role model to be followed, the “good black citizen,” usually defined by its economic buying power (which had increased due to the welfare policies). Based on a cultural, social, and economic permission, although Afro-nationalism implicates an idea of inclusion, indeed “afro-nationalism is built on an illusion of inclusion” (Smith 95); therefore, representing an economy of exception. An example of the socially accepted black citizen is the world famous soccer player, Pelé. Considered by many the best player in history, Pelé gained his respectability by conforming to patriarchy and white supremacy due to his economic and social status. His success as a soccer player not only provided economic power, but also cultural acceptance as he became an iconic figure and model for Brazilian society and on the global stage (including serving as a tourist ambassador of the country later on his life). By never mentioning the existence of racism, Pelé pleased the national and global elite, helping to maintain the *status quo*.

The false idea of inclusion created by afro-nationalism, historically incorporated as the figure of the *mulata*, reinforces racial democracy and, therefore, it masks racism again (Melamed 238). This is a common practice in neoliberal societies,

which promote the symbolic incorporation of minorities as part of the economic structure. This structure relies on the maintenance of socioeconomic differences among social groups. By keeping the masses marginalized (mainly formed by the black population in Brazil), the elite can keep exploring and profiting: “Black inclusion into the national fabric follows a logic of permissibility that allows only those black bodies and spaces marked as acceptable to participate in the national project, and leaves the black masses at the margins” (Smith 6).

The most problematic outgrowth of this institutionalized racism and afro-nationalism built into the idea of racial democracy is that the Brazilian government has been systematically killing the black population that is the victim of symbolic and physical violation. Not only do they have their humanity, their culture and traditions neglected in many situations, but also they lack the minimum life conditions, such as housing, education, and health and are the disproportionate victims of police brutality and murders in general (Moraes 46).

The statistics are alarming and reveal a consensual and institutionalized genocide of the black population (Moraes 46; Smith 18) promoted by the Brazilian government that continues “to engage in a routine politics of gendered, racialized terror toward the majority-black working class that manifests in the systematic killing of black people by the police throughout the country” (Smith 6). One black person dies every 12 minutes in Brazil (Superinteressante 2016); 71% of murders are against black people; black women represented 65.3% of all women murdered in 2015 (Cerqueira et al 37); and 75% of the prisoners are black (Superinteressante 2016); in addition, the black population is the one that suffers more from police brutality, being constantly profiled by the police due to its race, gender, age, class, geography, and

even clothing, indicating a high level of subjectivity (Moraes 47). Christen A. Smith highlights this necropolitics carried out by the Brazilian government:

Violence is a pervasive, classed aspect of the habitus of life in the nation; state, structural, and symbolic violence haunt the lives of Brazilians in the everyday. (...) To be sure, violence is a defining aspect of Brazilian citizenship and democracy writ large (Caldeira 2000). Yet most analyses have ignored the ways that this violence is also part of a racialized imaginary. State negligence and abandonment produce bare life, which situates the poor and the destitute on the edges of Brazil's moral economy (Biehl 2001). This negligence and abandonment are not apolitical or unraced, however. They are keenly plugged into the nation-state's legacies of racial democracy and slavery. (19)

The legacies of slavery and racial democracy are very vivid and represent a strong part of the Brazilian imagery. More than we realize, the Brazilian state has the power to decide those who live and those who die - a decision that is raced, classed, and gendered¹⁰.

Nevertheless, in the case of those who live among the black community (the *mulata*, the Afro-nationalist), they are still exploited to build the world's image of the country, serving to reaffirm itself in the global market, especially in transnational tourism. Brazil's image as a racial paradise has been built mainly based on the image of the *mulata*, the hypersexualized mixed race woman that can dance *samba* and lives on the beach. In this sense, racial democracy has worked to sexualize and racialize bodies in a way that has turned those bodies into a commodity used to promote the

¹⁰ Brazil is the country with the highest rates of murders against transgender. This contradicts the fact that transgenders have been acquiring great visibility in the country, especially in the fashion world (Lopes 2017).

tourism industry and, consequently, positioning the country as in accordance with the global political and economic goals of capitalism. Therefore, this process also reinforces the economic stratification by placing the black population in subordinate positions, especially as cultural exemplars for white-upper and middle class tourists.

For many years, the *mulata* has been the image of a racially mixed country and the stereotype of Brazilian woman (just as referenced on the song *Lourinha Bombril* in the introduction). This image has been central to the promotion of the Brazilian tourism in the global scenario. Therefore, with the use of the *mulata*, the Brazilian government based its propaganda in the idea of racial democracy, since she would represent a country of racial harmony.

Tourism, as a business, focuses its attention on its economic and marketing aspect over the cultural aspect embedded in it. By adopting the discourse of racial democracy into the tourism practices, the Brazilian government positioned itself again as a colony because it kept its economic dependence to foreign capital and in accordance to the global capitalist forces. Therefore, a feminist perspective offers the opportunity to challenge tourism's power structures and understand the use of bodies as a marketing tool and to develop transformative research with marginalized groups by deconstructing "how gender overlaps with other vectors of oppression such as race, ethnicity, dis/ability, class, age, etc." (Figueroa-Domecq et al 98).

Chapter 2: “The world meets in Brazil. Come celebrate life”

“Brazil, beautiful and pleasant land, of the beautiful and brown little girl,
With the indifferent gaze. Brazil, a green that makes,
The world to admire. Brazil of my love, Land of our Lord.”
(Aquarela do Brasil, Ary Barroso, my translation)

Brazil is the largest and most populated country in South America; worldwide, it ranks in the 5th and the 6th position respectively. It presents very distinct geographical aspects, from its famous beaches, the Amazon forest and waterfalls to one of the biggest cities in the world, São Paulo. The extensive miscegenation of its population, as discussed in the previous chapter, resulted in a diverse culture expressed, for example, in the worldly famous festival, *Carnaval*. Considering the different attractions that the country offers – natural landscapes, parties, diverse food – tourism is seen as an important economic activity to promote a balanced socioeconomic development (Plano Nacional 2013). It is estimated that the country receives six million international visitors yearly, injecting more than US\$6 billion to the economy (Embratur 2016).

Since the early 1900s, the Brazilian government has worked to organize and promote the country as a touristic destination. Initially, the focus was on Rio de Janeiro, as it went through an urbanization project to modernize the city. In addition, the statue of Christ, the Redeemer was built, which became one of the main attractions, alongside the beaches and *Carnaval*. Rio’s landscape mixed the natural beauty of the beaches with an urban setting in a unique way, becoming globally known as the “marvelous city.” In 1947, Brazil was leader in commercial aviation in Latin America (Embratur 2016). Three years later, the Maracanã stadium was opened in Rio and became another important tourist attraction and national symbol. In the

same year, the country hosted, for the first time, the FIFA World Cup, and Maracanã received the final match, further exposing Rio to the world.

These examples reveal some of the efforts made to organize tourism as an activity that would be able to economically benefit the country. Nevertheless, tourism is defined here, according to the World Tourism Organization, as “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes.” As an activity that entails different dimensions of society, governments play a decisive role in establishing policies to regulate tourism.

It was during the military dictatorship (1964-1985) that the Brazilian government heavily invested in developing infrastructure, such as roads and airports, and marketed the country to the world as a touristic destination. In the midst of the Cold War, the United States became a decisive ally in order to establish the military coup in Brazil and fight against the spread of communism throughout the world. The dictatorship was a period marked by the government’s systemic detention, torture, murder, and disappearance of those against it and by the imposition of “the most radical political and economic projects (...) [the country] had seen.” (Dávila 1)

The coup represented the culmination of U.S.-Brazilian relations that go back to the early twentieth century. At the beginning of the century, the Brazilian government adopted economic policies based on economic liberalism that resulted in the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, maintaining the traditions of colonialism. Nevertheless, the Euro-Brazilian colonial elite managed to keep its privileges, despite their independence. The economy was mainly focused on agricultural products and the exploitation of minerals that were exported in exchange

for manufactured goods. Most of these transactions took place with the United States, which not only supported the Brazilian government's adherence to free-market policies, but also invested in training and equipping the military to keep its business interests intact (Dávila 2013; Smith 129).

Throughout the dictatorship, the Brazilian government justified its actions as a way to defend democracy. For example, presidential elections were still held; however, the population did not vote, and the candidates were chosen by the militaries. This false demagoguery was very important to support harsh political, social, and economic measures and establish an image that would mask the violence perpetuated by the government¹¹.

Following this strategy, Brazilian authorities identified tourism as an activity that could bring economic benefits to the country, since it would attract foreign tourists and money. They implemented national policies that would regulate and support the activity. The rising number of foreign tourists attracted by the beautiful beaches, music, soccer, and a welcoming people (Embratur 2016) would also help to further sell the image of a democratic country internally and externally. Moreover, these ideas were based on the construction of a national identity, which had racial democracy as foundational. Therefore, President Castelo Branco created Embratur in 1966 and also established a national policy and a national council of tourism. With the creation of Embratur, the government went about systematically developing studies and collecting data about tourism, regulating companies of the sector to promote the

¹¹ Particularly, I dare to say that until today, the creation of that image helped the militaries to minimize their acts in a way that there are still people that think who those times were better and believe that a military intervention would be good. This view is based on the rising influence of politicians like Jair Bolsonaro; a military that defend the armed forces, is against abortion and homosexuals, believes in arming the population, etc.; and it is also based on the comments read on social media.

country as an attractive tourist destination and “reshaping the tarnished image of the country, caused by reports of torture and abuse by the dictatorship” (Bandyopadhyay and Nascimento 939). In addition, investments in the country’s infrastructure helped to support these tourist initiatives. It was part of Embratur’s activities to systematically promote the country through its touristic activities. The city of Rio de Janeiro was still considered the main destination and used in different marketing materials (see figure 2).



Figure 2: Brazil’s Touristic Calendar 1971 (Embratur, 1970)

Initial to building the image of an attractive place was the reinforcement of the idea of racial democracy and its premises of a country without racism ultimately expressed in the idea of the *mulata*, and the positive image of miscegenation. Especially when taking into account the international context in which the U.S. and South Africa were fighting against legal segregation, it was a smart strategy not only to think about foreigners, but also to think what it meant nationally, since this idea became part of the Brazilian culture that adapted itself to this idea of a nation free of racism and morally superior (Twine 6-7).

Embratur then embraced this idea as well and framed the country as a culturally rich and diverse destination of exuberant beaches full of beautiful women with few clothes, samba, and party, thus building the dream of a sexually liberated country that was welcoming to all (see figures 3, 4, and 5). Additionally, there was a broader incorporation of elements from Portuguese, indigenous, and African traditions into society. For example, many words of Brazilian Portuguese are from indigenous languages; codfish, a very typical Portuguese food, is largely consumed during Easter; *capoeira* is a martial arts brought by the Africans slaves. And as a result of the encounter of these peoples, many typical elements of the Brazilian culture were born, such as *samba* (dance), *carnival* (typical celebration), *feijoada* (typical food), *barroco* (Colonial architecture), etc. These elements also became national symbols and were part of the marketing material (see figures 3 and 5).



Figure 3: Representation of elements of native-Brazilian and Afro-Brazilian populations, such as food and clothing, besides the images of the women/girls themselves in one of Embratur's marketing campaign from 1973 (Alfonso 87)

Many of Embratur's campaigns featured women with bikinis on a paradisiac beach or partying in events, mainly *Carnaval*, building up the imagination of tourists, an essential practice of tourism marketing, reinforcing "the promotion of Brazil as a

seductive tourism destination” (Bandyopadhyay and Nascimento 941). Because tourism is not a tangible product, it relies on the construction of this image.

Brazil’s idea of seduction relied especially on the image of the *mulata*, the Brazilian women with light dark skin, curvy body, and few clothes. As stated by Bandyopadhyay and Nascimento:

For four decades, Embratur invested large amounts of money in promoting the nudity of the carnival to attract international tourists, and as a result, after years of this erroneous publicity, it was a normal consequence that “many associate Carnival with Rio de Janeiro” and Brazil with “glossy photos of nearly naked women” (930-931).

Brazil became the stereotype of party, beach, and hypersexualized women; an exotic country with exotic beauty, an image disseminated by its own authorities. If, on the one hand, the authorities promoted the country based on the positive aspects of miscegenation, on the other hand, it did not develop public policies that would address the needs of the population as a whole, further marginalizing those who were not Euro-descendants.

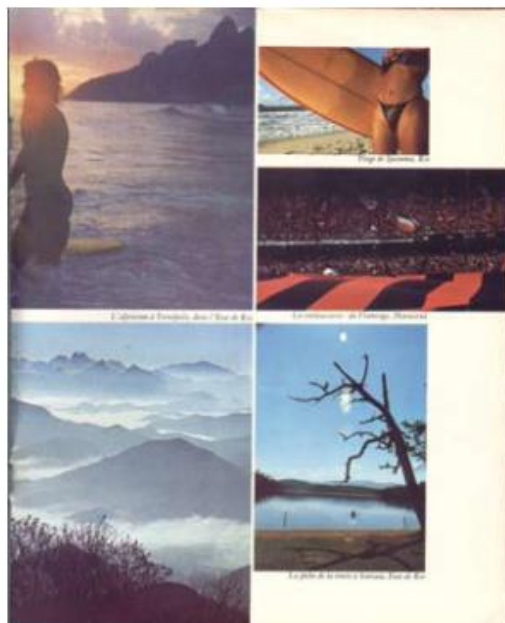


Figure 4: A land of beautiful landscape beautiful, sensualized and darker-skin women, and soccer released by Embratur in 1973 (Alfonso 83).

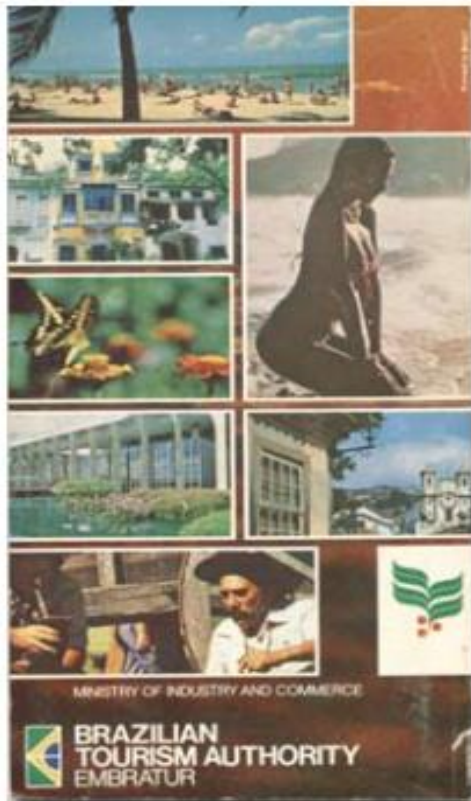


Figure 5: Embratur's marketing campaign from 1984 in English (Alfonso 88).

When the country economically grew at 11.3% per year (Dávila 49) as part of the “economic miracle” promoted by the militaries from 1968 to 1973, many investments in infrastructure were made in order to integrate the vast Brazilian territory, benefiting the tourism industries. From new roads and the opening of three international airports (in Rio de Janeiro, Manaus, and Recife) to the installation of the first international hotel chain in São Paulo (Embratur 2016), the miracle was the regime's trophy and another tool to hide the necrophilous policies that kept marginalizing the poor, black population and persecuting those who were against the regime. According to the historian Dávila, while it was good for the privileged groups, i.e., middle/upper-class whites responsible for the majority of the consumption of goods that benefited from subsidies to buy houses and cars, for example, the same is not true for those historically marginalized in the Brazilian society. These populations had to face displacements due to the new roads, hydroelectric projects, and expansion of agriculture, which also affected the local and small producers who could not compete

with the industrialization of the sector. Dávila also highlights the relationship between the dictatorship and the myth of racial democracy:

Black and racially mixed Brazilians were also sidelined. Racial inequalities produced by informal discrimination meant that black and mixed-race Brazilians earned less than half of what white Brazilians earned. Despite systematic inequality, the dictatorship promoted the idea that Brazil was a “racial democracy” that did not have discrimination. The national security laws defended this idea, and university faculty who conducted research on racial inequalities were purged. Adding substance to its assertion that racial inequality did not exist in Brazil, the regime removed the category of race from the 1970 census. Activists challenging racism in Brazil were exiled or spied upon. Dance parties featuring “black music” from the United States, such as soul and rhythm & blues, were monitored by the DOPS.¹² (51)

The Brazilian government adopted public policies and a public discourse that allowed the myth of being a country without racism to flourish, despite all the efforts to resist it. As presented in the first chapter, claiming to be a post-racial society helped to mask the institutionalization of racism, almost erasing slavery from its history (Twine 116-117).

Therefore, the choice to adopt the *mulata* as the symbol of the country in Embratur’s promotional material of the country cannot be seen as a naïve one. It was conceived to maintain the privileged position of a specific group of people (in its majority, upper-class white men) while exploiting the oppressed population to economically benefit itself, following the basis of liberalism, patriarchy, and white

¹² DOPS (*Departamento de Ordem Política e Social*, Department of Social and Political Order) was the federal agency responsible for controlling and repressing those against the government.

supremacy. In this sense, tourism cannot be seen only as leisure, because it is also an economic, political, and social activity that promotes the interaction among people from different countries, evidencing many relationships of power embedded into that interaction.

When Embratur developed these campaigns, they had in mind target consumers that they wanted to come to the country, and these were white, straight, middle/upper-class men,¹³ mainly from the United States and Europe. By targeting these markets, Embratur and the political leadership of Brazil helped to reinforce the idea of the country still being a colony; therefore, power would reside with these foreign tourists, since the economy would be relying on the influx of foreign capital. As stated earlier, the masters reinforced their power by sexually abusing the black women. The objectification of black women's bodies as one of the main products sold to tourists reiterated Brazil's colonial past and the power dynamic between colonizers and natives and, consequently, patriarchy and white supremacy. The image of Brazil (and other former colonies) as "sensual, luxuriant, pleasure-seeking, and profoundly idle" (Etnhner and Prasad 667) attracts tourists from developed countries to consume a paradise made of beautiful nature, friendly people, and comfort, also positioning these people at the tourist service. As pointed out by Bandyopadhyay and Nascimento, the foundations of tourism, when based on these previous aspects, cannot be separated from world history and context:

¹³ In its earlier years, Embratur did not focus on queer tourism. Only in 2012, when Brazil hosted the annual conference of the International Gay and Lesbian Tourism Association (IGLTA), the potentials of queer tourism were acknowledged, and Embratur became interested in developing attractions to this public (Embratur 2016). It is interesting to note that the vast majority of the literature about sexual and queer tourism reveal that in both cases, the marketing efforts focus on white, middle-upper-class/men, hetero and gay.

[T]he West's portrayals of non-Western people and places as exotic and timeless are embedded within a colonial discourse. Tourism has been identified with "neocolonialism" because it clearly reflects these configurations of power. Although colonialism as a system was abolished many years ago, its fundamentals continue to influence how authorities manipulate people and places through imagery (...). (933-934)

Brazilian authorities have manipulated the country's image based on racial democracy promoting the country as a tourist paradise focusing on the beauty of the beaches and the *mulata*, creating a very sexualized and liberating dream to be sold to tourists, not only by developing its own material, but also by supporting other publications, such as the magazine *Rio, Samba e Carnaval* (Alfonso 2006). This magazine was used as a publicity material in Brazil and in many other countries, being translated to different languages. Throughout the publications, portraits of women were frequent (figure 6).

Therefore, the creation of Embratur and its policies for almost 40 years helped to consolidate the ideal of racial democracy nationally and internationally. By sexualizing and racializing bodies in ways that they became merchandise to be consumed in this tropical paradise, the expansion of transnational tourism was inevitable; and the influx of foreign tourists increased.

The search for fun, beaches, and party culminated in the fascination with Rio de Janeiro's *Carnaval*. Especially known for being a party in which sexual liberation is socially accepted (including cross-dressing, very typical practice for straight men that cross-dress as women during this time), *Carnaval* became an international attraction to both queer and heterosexual tourists. It is during this festival that more foreign tourists visit Brazil. The idea of liberation and the sexualized images linked to *Carnaval*

indicate a connection with sex tourism in the country. By the end of the 1990s, Brazil ranked among the world's top heterosexual sex tourism destinations, becoming the world's main destination in 2014 (Williams 456). In addition, in 2012, after hosting the International Gay and Lesbian Tourism Association (IGLTA)'s annual conference, the construction of the image of a gay-friendly country put Brazil as one of the best queer destinations (Embratur 2016) in the world, also attracting queer tourists interested in engaging in sexual relationships with locals.

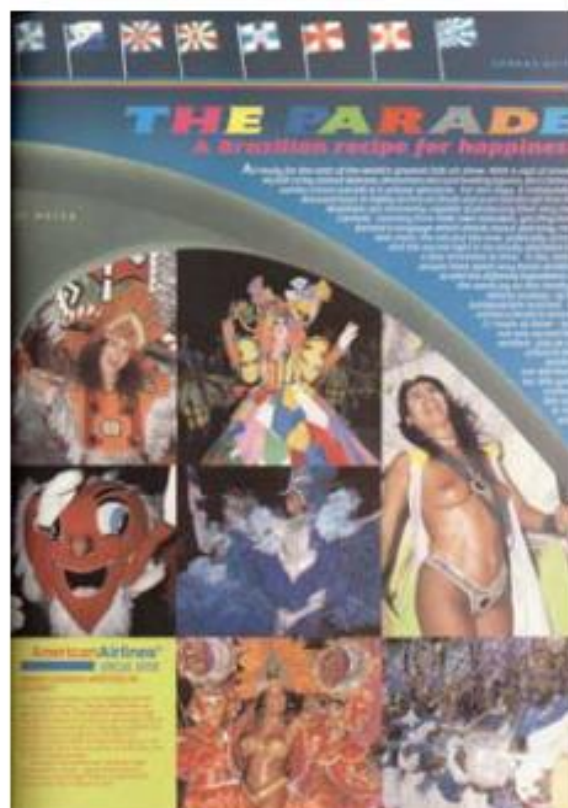


Figure 6: Representation of *Carnaval* in the magazine *Rio, Samba e Carnaval* from 1994 in English. The title reads “The Parade: A Brazilian recipe for happiness” as a reference to the samba school parades (Alfonso 97).

The panorama of sex tourism

Sex tourism¹⁴ is a lucrative business that dates back to the 19th century and that has benefited from the Internet, which greatly facilitated the exchange of information about destinations at a global level (Humboldt 2012). A quick Internet search about sex tourism can reveal many things. From websites in which the users comment about their experiences (Piscitelli, “Viagens e sexo on-line” 284) and others that allow online booking of women, men, and transgender prostitutes to the top destinations to engage in this kind of tourism, the possibilities are endless. Not surprisingly, Brazil constantly figures among the top destinations to sex tourism (*Daily Star* 2017; *The Huffington Post* 2015; *The Richest* 2014; *Euro Weekly News* 2014). The *Daily Star* (2017) mentions specifically the city of Rio de Janeiro and highlights that Brazilian “women are some of the sexiest in the world and this is where they sun themselves in thong bikinis by day and party hard at night”. *The Richest* (2014) portrays the sex tourism industry as a whole in the country, calling attention to the traits that make the country a top destination: “Brazil has always been a popular tourist destination due to its exotic wildlife, beautiful people, pristine beaches and raucous festivals like Carnival.” The descriptions presented by the websites are compatible with the ones developed by Embratur throughout the years, marketing the country as a place where nature is a big part of the landscape but so are the women, their bodies, and parties, such as *Carnaval*. Nevertheless, they reinforce the unequal power in transnational tourism by referring to a colonial past based on the exploitation of native elements. As indicated by Echtner and Prasad:

¹⁴ The focus here is on sex tourism between adults, when there is the idea of consent, because my interest is to think in the ways that the government has worked to build Brazil’s tourist image exploring black bodies and analyze how the marketing initiatives to tourism end up creating a space for sex tourism. Therefore, discussions involving child prostitution and human trafficking are not part of the scope.

(...) the representation of the Third World [which includes Brazil] in any context (whether popular literature, the media, or tourism promotion) cannot be separated from colonial discourse. Seen from this perspective, the current images are simply reiterative, reflecting and reinforcing historically embedded colonial myths. (...) Therefore, tourism representations adopt the myths and also serve as another vehicle that continues to perpetuate them. (671)

These websites, alongside with the campaigns promoted by Embratur, reinforce colonial practices and ideologies discussed in Chapter 1, namely the myth of racial democracy. The image of the *mulata* is a modern way of exploitation of black women's bodies, who constantly were raped by the masters. The exploitation has never stopped and it is manifested in different ways, tourist advertisement being one of them. In this case, the sexual exploitation becomes another way to reinforce this unequal power relationship between First World and Third World alongside with patriarchy and white supremacy when foreign tourists go to Third World countries in search of sex.

The World Tourism Organization (1995) defines sex tourism as "trips organized from within the tourism sector, or from outside this sector but using its structures and networks, with the primary purpose of effecting a commercial sexual relationship by the tourist with residents at the destination." Is it possible then to analyze tourism and sex tourism as independent economic activities? The definition of sex tourism exposes the premises of how both forms of tourism are intertwined and with complex interactions.

Many factors contribute to a country being more susceptible to attracting this kind of tourism. The legal status of prostitution in the destination, including

authorities' tolerance and punishment with the practice; the prices; and the desire related to certain ethnic groups (Humboldt 2012) are some of them. Brazil is among the countries that treat prostitution as partially criminalized, i.e., although the acts of selling and buying sex are legal, including recognized by the Ministry of Labor as a legal occupation, related activities, such as brothels and offering sex in the streets, are illegal (da Silva and Blanchette 205; Mac 2016). The stigmatization related to prostitution reside among the consequences of this type of legislation. While middle-class prostitutes are able to offer their services in safe places, lower class prostitutes work on the street, exposing themselves to constant policing. The spatial division is also marked by gender, besides class: women prostitutes do not share the same space with transvestites neither in private clubs nor on the streets (Blanchette, "Fariseus" 96). The male prostitutes usually work in private places, especially in saunas (Mitchell, "Padrinhos gringos" 34), indicating a more elitist aspect since it concentrates mostly on the private space and it is not subjected to police surveillance. Nevertheless, this legislation, combined with the advertisement campaigns, have contributed to consolidating Brazil's status as one of the main sex tourism destinations, as a country that "[w]hen it comes to sex, (...) is so exotic in Western eyes that anything can be said about it and be believed" (da Silva and Blanchette 203).

The business of tourism and sex tourism in Brazil goes beyond the "traditional" heterosexual market, having also captured the LGBTQ sector as well. According to the Gay Travel Index (2017), published by Spartacus International Gay Guide, the country is the 27th most gay-friendly destination for tourists out of 194 total. This classification as a gay-friendly country highlights the efforts of the government, as mentioned above, to attract this specific population that is part of the so called "pink travel economy" (Waite et al 2008), a billionaire business that relies on

the revenues of gay consumers. Nonetheless, it is essential to think about the marketing campaigns promoted to this “niche market category” (Waitt et al 2008) and if black bodies are also used as a tourist attraction in this sector. The complex relationships between the Brazilian society and the queer community pose interesting questions that need to be considered. *Carnaval*, an event marked by many queer manifestations and socially accepted in society, helps to support Brazil’s gay-friendly status. In addition, the country is also home to one of the world biggest LGBTQ pride parades - located in the city of São Paulo and that attracted 3 million people in 2017 (Gonçalves 2017) -, and it was the first country in Latin America to allow same-sex marriage for immigration purposes in 2003 (Jacobs 2016). However, a recent study developed by the NGO *Grupo Gay da Bahia* (GGB, Gay Group of Bahia) indicated that 277 people were killed all over Brazil in homophobia-related events (Madeiro 2017). This number might be even higher due to the lack of official numbers, revealing also a lack of support by the government to face the problem. The Ministry of Human Rights stated that during the year 2016, it received 1,876 calls reporting violence against LGBTQ people in its hot line. Clearly, the gay paradise image masks a reality that is hidden from queer tourists, uncovering a reality in which many times the queer tourists are kept in a “bubble” (Bandyopadhyay and Nascimento 934). Thus, they do not have to face the reality outside the geographies of tourism, which is true for tourists, queer or not, that engage in relationships with locals in general, since generally they do not have to face the socioeconomic and cultural issues faced by the locals.

As a very lucrative business, the tourism industry is dependent upon safeguarding the tourists’ dreams (built upon the marketing campaigns developed throughout time), because the promotion of tourism also depends on the experiences

themselves that, nowadays, can be easily accessible and sharable on the Internet. As exposed by Seligmann:

Even as national borders have become more permeable, new internal borders have been erected that are intended to provide tourists with particular kinds of experiences. Tourists rarely see the borders that structure the space in which their experiences unfold, and those who do often choose to ignore them. (503)

Even if tourists see and decide to cross these borders, the exoticization of violence and poverty becomes attractive. Nevertheless, some tourists choose to experience these other aspects of the Brazilian culture through the *favela* (slum) tours (Paganotti 63). This idea also implies a problematic view of the other, who do not share the same experiences with the tourist. It also implies that poverty and violence are not part of the lives of tourists; then, who are the tourists that visit Brazil? In the case of sex tourism, which bodies are being consumed and by whom?

The actors of (sex) tourism

Thinking about who the consumers of sex tourism are also helps to clarify the unequal relationships of power that characterize transnational tourism. The act of travelling to a foreign country already implies a certain availability of resources that can be allocated to leisure and not basic needs to survive; in this sense, the:

global forces shape the consumption of sexual services by fostering tourism as an industry aimed at those who have the resources to travel and purchase what they desire, thus, facilitating the commodification of (...) desire and (...) bodies within the global capitalist economy. (qtd in Bandyopadhyay and Nascimento 944)

As highlighted by the World Tourism Organization's definition of sex tourism, the structures and networks of tourism and sex tourism are the same, making it harder to separate one from the other, as pointed out before. The idea of who is a "sex tourist" is very complex and unclear since it can include those tourists that travel specifically with this goal but also any tourist that engages in sexual relationships with locals (Blanchette, "Fariseus" 60). This group could include "regular" tourists, professionals travelling for business purposes, tourists that repeatedly travel to the country, etc.

Despite the complexity of gathering information about these consumers, it is important to remember that sex tourism is gendered, racialized, and stratified; besides, it is based on different power relationships "of, and between, sexual identities [that are] complicated by the cross-cutting of sexual politics with race, ethnicity and gender, (...) also embedded within previous and current forms of economic globalization" (Waitt et al 786). The different intersections that are part of tourists' and locals' lives result in different experiences as part of sex tourism. Nevertheless, data indicate the average sex tourist, whether queer or heterosexual, is white, wealthy, and male (Pruth 9; Waitt et al 781; Puar 943) and from the United States or Europe (da Silva and Blanchette 204). Therefore, their experiences in this industry intersect with ideas of patriarchy, white supremacy, and colonialism.

In this sense, it is possible to trace a parallel here between "the *negro permitido*," discussed in Chapter 1, and the profile of the gay tourist or the "wanted homosexual" (Waitt et al 789), considering that both queer and black community are part of marginalized groups. Just as in the case of black people who conform to the norms dictated by the neoliberal state, especially by having the economic power to become a consumer, these gay tourists as white, middle/upper- class, males despite their sexual preference also reinforce those norms. In addition, the absence of women

in sex tourist discourse, their erasure as hetero and queer consumers, reinforces the patriarchal aspect of tourism and the space of women as a tourist attraction, as a service available for the hetero consumers.

When female travelers, hetero and queer, were portrayed in the literature review, they appeared as white, wealthy and female, reinforcing the class and race inequality of the industry. The Brazilian feminist social anthropologist Adriana Piscitelli (“Erotics, Love and Violence”) conducted a very interesting study in two touristic villages located in the city of Fortaleza, Ceará, in the northeast region of the country, about European women travelers who have sexual relationships and/or long-term relationships with local men. In this case, these women were not only white, middle-class, but also older than their male partners. The majority expressed their attraction to *mulatos*. This indicates that the premises of racial democracy are related not only to women’s bodies, but also to other bodies in general that are a result of miscegenation. In addition, the white women also expressed attraction to the primitive and simple lifestyle of the men in these villages, reinforcing the colonial imaginary attached to racial democracy.¹⁵

The study of the marketing campaigns makes great contribution to the identification of these tourists, since they are developed to target a specific sector of the market, which is the Global North (Echtner and Prasad 661). The efforts Embratur has made to have its material translated, for example, indicate this economic choice of

¹⁵ Some of the women in her study were married to local men and ended up victims of intimate partner violence. The consequences and meanings of this data deserve a complex and detailed analysis about masculinity in Brazil that will not be approached here. However, I wonder to degree the marriage changes these women’s status as foreigners in such ways that they are not part of the “tourist bubble” anymore and face the same realities of local women regarding intimate partner violence. Although in 2015 the former president Dilma Rousseff signed a law typifying the murder of women because of their gender, known as femicide, which defies understandings of patriarchy in society, in 2016 Brazil ranked as the 5th country in the world with the highest rate of this type of crime (Nações Unidas no Brasil 2016).

bringing foreign capital to the country. However, subtle details and the choice of image reveal much more:

[M]arketing brochures of Euro-American gay tourism companies operate within heteronormative discourses built upon certain taken-for-granted binaries of neocolonial impulses for travel: culture/nature, master/slave, human/nature, civilized/primitive, self/other, reason/eroticism, heterosexual/homosexual. (...) Rather than producing counter-hegemonic discourses, the romanticization and eroticization of otherness relies upon a version of colonial nostalgia uncannily familiar to that deployed by heterosexual, colonial, white males to normalize their superiority. (Waitt et al 786)

These binaries play an important role in creating the stories behind the campaigns attracting tourists who travel expecting to find a certain reality, inhabited by specific types of people, where an idealized sexual experience might happen. The women in Piscitelli's study who expressed their preference for black Brazilian men described them as "happy, gentle, noble, and lacking malice, sensitive, shy, and even fragile. Yet (...) linked to a style of virility that is understood to be strong and exotic" (280). Gay tourists seem to have the same preference, perhaps because the gay porn industry has featured the muscular *mulato*, *Carnaval*, and Rio in many movies (Green 2). However, much of literature reviewed here addressed more the sexuality of the male prostitutes rather than race, indicating that many times the male prostitutes identify themselves as heterosexuals or bisexuals (Mitchell 37). In the case of heterosexual tourism, the *mulatas* also rank as the international preference among tourists (Pruth 9).

On top of the physical characteristics, many of these tourists are looking for a particular type of experience. Just like the women above were attracted to the virility and a certain “innocence” of those men besides their happiness, male prostitutes indicate that many of their gay clients are nice and caring (Mitchell 39); and female prostitutes also highlighted that many of their heterosexual male tourists seek them for the “girlfriend experience” (Blanchette, “Fariseus” 40). Thus, these clients’ experience is more complex, since it surpasses the idea of pure sexual desire and it embraces some level of feelings as well, and a desire for something they cannot find “back home.” The women prostitutes especially are seen as submissive and sexualized (Williams 461), women who can care for their men not only during the sex performance, but also by cooking for them, cleaning, etc. (indicating again the complexity of sex tourism that can range from single to multiple dates). At the same time that black women (and black bodies in general) are in the spotlight of sex tourism, to a certain degree this success can be linked to ideas of lack of agency and submission that come along with their class, race, and gender status, socially constructing them as submissive women – or servants, slaves, domestic workers.

Racial democracy ideology played a big role to develop this imagery of the country as a (sex) tourism paradise, very sexualized and liberating; then, the increasing interest in this type of tourism could be expected. In order to support this influx, a structured prostitution network has been developed, which offers the possibility of a tourist book with their travel package and a “companion,” who can be chosen through photo albums at the tourist agencies or Brazilian hotels (Alfonso 123). This reveals again the shared networks and structures between tourism and sex

tourism and how one overlaps the other;¹⁶ therefore, it is difficult to distinguish one from the other and to even separate them. In this sense, even if a tourist does not travel with the main purpose of engaging in sexual activities with local people, by experiencing the same sites, the possibilities become part of the trip itself and may become a reality to the tourist, whether they are engaged in a business trip or leisure. Nonetheless, I argue that the tourist marketing for non-sexual tourism has an impact and influences directly the sexual tourism in the country. If the choices of images and languages would have been different, not focused on portraying Brazil as full of fun, partying, and beautiful women, perhaps the international imaginary of the country would have been built based on different characteristics that would not stimulate the image, at the same level, of a sexually liberated country.

Carnaval in Rio de Janeiro, an event characterized by sexual liberation and cross-dressing that attracts a diverse audience with many foreign tourists among it, might be one of the best examples to think about the shared geographies between tourism and sex tourism. The influx of tourists during this period is also considerably higher, thus increasing sex tourism (Santanna 156).

“Carnaval, enjoy freely and shine”¹⁷ in the “marvelous city”

From Mardi Gras in New Orleans to the carnivals of Venice and Barranquilla, carnival is an event celebrated in many places of the world that were influenced by Catholicism. As a Catholic festivity, carnival takes place during the days before the Lent, which is a 40-day-period when believers commit themselves to discipline and

¹⁶ I remember when I first traveled to the Northeast city of Brazil, Natal-RN, with my family. I was about 12 years old, and I recall going to these beautiful beaches and constantly seeing couples formed by younger, local women and older, foreign men. Our tour guide, a woman, which was rare, told us that it was a “normal thing” around there.

¹⁷ Adapted from the original song “*Paz, carnaval e futebol*” written by Carlinhos Brown and Michael Sullivan and performed by Claudia Leitte, one of the most important *Carnaval*’s singers.

personal sacrifices. The goal is to prepare themselves for the resurrection of Jesus Christ during Easter, and be worthy of it; thus, carnival would represent a time of liberation from social, cultural, and moral norms before this personal commitment (Crichlow *et al* 400), as a time of sin before penitence.

The world's most famous carnival is the one that happens in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Brazil became globally known because of *Carnaval*, attracting many international tourists and promoting domestic travel as well. It is the longest and probably the most important holiday of the country. There is a saying (and feeling) in Brazil that the year only starts for real after *Carnaval*. Besides that,

[i]t should be added that Rio Carnival is also a site of transculturation between the competing discourses of the West, the Brazilian and the Indian, where shades of skin are exoticised and eroticised, drawing on 'orientalist' notions of the native (...). [W]e must caution that the Rio Carnival body is also placed within interanimated discourses of nation, race, class, sexuality and family. (Lewis 39)

The uniqueness of Rio's *Carnaval* is grounded on its many intersections.

Since Embratur's foundation, *Carnaval* in Rio was portrayed as one of the main attractions of the country that was accompanied by beaches, samba, and almost-naked women. As a result, many stereotypes were established regarding Brazil - and particularly Rio de Janeiro in the initial years - and its population. The idea of exoticization is strong in this context: a country of exotic nature, exotic party, and exotic women. The strategic use of the *mulata* helped to reinforce the idea that Brazil was a racial democracy and that miscegenation was celebrated.

The city of Rio de Janeiro itself can also be seen as the translation of racial democracy, diversity, and multiculturalism. Considering the high numbers of African descendants that established themselves in the city throughout history and that the majority of the population is black (G1 2011), the influence of African ancestry, culture, and traditions are visible through many symbols, such as the *mulata* and *samba*. Not only the dance and the rhythm itself, but also the lyrics of many *samba* songs reference Brazilian history (such as *Canto das Três Raças* in the introduction).

These manifestations are also seen through the incorporation of Afro-Brazilian religions, especially *Candomblé* and *Umbanda*, to the daily life of citizens. While *Candomblé* has its roots in Africa, *Umbanda* incorporates elements of different religions practiced in Brazil, including *Candomblé*, as well as Catholicism, Kardecism, and Amerindian beliefs; this combination is considered a symbol of racial democracy as well, a tenet to build a national religion (Jensen 279). The existence of more devotees to these religions also represented a social space for homosexuals (mainly males) to practice their faith and religiosity since the *pais-de-santo*, the leader, was an effeminate being himself (Green 7). In a certain way, these religions have offered space for transgression and for queerness due to their leaders and entities. The idea of receiving the spirit of the entity does not differentiate gender; in addition, one of the main entities, *pomba-gira*, represents luxury, and carnal pleasures, including being portrayed as the spirit of past women prostitutes.

Nevertheless, Rio's *Carnaval* is a mirror of a city full of cultural and symbolic representations of the myth of racial democracy:

Rio de Janeiro (...) is known for its racial mixture and cultural manipulation
 (...) [T]he commodification of black culture in Rio de Janeiro revolved around

samba and Carnival, two phenomena that celebrate mixture, borrowing, and cultural patchwork. (Williams 459)

The acceptance and celebration of black culture and tradition during *Carnaval* is possible due to its commodification, erasing for a couple of days the systemic killing and negligence of the Brazilian state. Therefore, *Carnaval* can be interpreted as a “state of exception,” when not only blackness and women are celebrated and accepted, but also queerness.

Traditional gender roles are suspended during *Carnaval*, and heterosexual men use this time to cross-dress, becoming an attraction of the party as well and widely embraced by participants (Green 200). Drag queens also became synonymous with one of the most notable parties of *Carnaval* – the famous balls held in private clubs. They started as a way to keep homosexuality to the private arena (it is necessary to have a ticket to attend the balls) and avoid confrontations with the authorities back in the 1940s, (Green 201) and they became a huge success, attracting international artists and promoting costume competitions (Green 225). These moments are restricted to the event; during the rest of the year, cross-dressing manifestations remain part of drag queens’ lives and are repressed or expected to resemble traditional feminine characteristics. In a certain way, these balls also conform to the commodification of *Carnaval*, since attendance and participation demand an amount of capital to be part of it.

Carnaval as a transnational tourist destination depends on its commodification and elitism in order to fulfill the expectations of the travelers. Therefore, the *Sambódromo*, space where the parade of the famous *samba* schools happens, is clearly marked by the intersections of race and class. Since the 1930s, the parade

became an official event that the government subsidizes, being considered a “multimillion-dollar international tourist extravaganza” (Green 201). Even if blackness plays a big part in different manifestations of the schools, from *samba* to the *mulata*, when observing the audience, the best seats and VIP zones are occupied by foreigners and whites (Lemos 101).

Rio de Janeiro became the number one destination for sex tourism of the Americas in the beginning of the century (da Silva and Blanchette 204). As an international city due to its ports and its transient populations (largely made of males) from colonial relationships of trade, sex tourism has long existed in the “marvelous city.” Nowadays, Rio

boasts a booming homosexual prostitution scene (serving both genders) that is equally diversified in terms of status, costs, and work conditions. Both gay and straight commercial sex scenes are diversified in terms of race and class, though the most commonly encountered biotype is the *carioca* (Rio de Janeiro resident) of indeterminate ethnicity whose skin color ranges from light to medium brown (da Silva and Blanchette 204).

The *mulatas* attract middle-upper class tourists from the US and Europe especially because of their visible miscegenation. Considering the marketing plan developed by the Brazilian state early on to promote tourism in the country, evidence shows that the transnational image was established as planned, and tourists visit the country looking for diversity, miscegenation, etc. All the aspects presented here make Rio’s *Carnaval* a unique space to conduct the qualitative analysis of the marketing material used by tourist agencies in order to promote it to foreign tourists.

Chapter 3: “Brazil, show up your face”

“Today is a day of revelry, Today I sing to forget
That the school district has no teacher, Tomorrow after the party
The city that protests, Will enter by the hall door gap”
(*Lamento de Carnaval*, Gilberto Gil, my translation)

The marketing campaigns developed by Embratur were based on elements associated with many countries from the Third World, especially the ones related to the idea of “tropicalization,” mainly from Latin America and the Caribbean, that present a temperate climate due to their proximity to the tropical zones. In general, tropicalization “constitutes tropical cultures as sensual, luxuriant, pleasure-seeking, and profoundly idle” (Echtner and Prasad 667). These elements, combined with the idea of racial democracy (nationalist ideas reinforced during the military dictatorship), also motivated the incorporation of women, especially black women, as a tourist attraction. As one of the consequences of these campaigns, sex tourism increased in the country throughout the years, since the combination of sex, sun, and beaches was a powerful one to emphasize ideas of pleasure and party.

It is hard to determine whether or not the Brazilian government acted intentionally in promoting the country as a destination for sex tourism (Filho 375). However, the material they developed contributed to promote this kind of business. Therefore, taking into account that tourism is made out of business choices, the authors of the material must be accountable for their preferred images. Thus, according to the World Tourism Organization, the government of a country plays a key role in the choice of the tourist imagery of a country (Alfonso 78). Particularly, although I do not believe that the Brazilian State’s goal was to become the main sex destination, I believe that the exploitation of the *mulata* was carefully crafted, especially because it reinforced colonial practices – the exploitation and disciplining

of black bodies, in sexual and labor terms, to generate profit to the masters. Besides, it sustained principles of patriarchy by objectifying women's bodies and putting them at their service; thus, keeping the system of privileges unchanged.

The exploitation of bodies to favor sex tourism acquired more attention from international organizations with the increase of human trafficking to work in the sex industry of other countries and of child prostitution. In 1995, the general assembly of the World Tourism Organization highlighted that each country must be accountable and responsible for fighting against the exploitation of their peoples to boost sex tourism, especially child prostitution. Therefore, Embratur developed campaigns to stop child prostitution (Embratur 66) and, in 1997, stopped using the *mulata*, the image of the sensualized woman, in its marketing material (Alfonso 109). Twenty-years after, the National Plan 2013-2017 for tourism indicates that

the promotion of Brazilian tourism should focus on the consolidation of the country's image, prioritizing positive experiences regarding the knowledge, the integration and the appreciation of the Brazilian natural resources to boost a qualified, diverse, and sustainable tourism. (68, my translation)

Despite the most recent efforts of changing the imaginary built throughout the years, the literature review from the previous chapters indicated that it is still vivid and that many tourists still associate the country with beach, party, and the *mulata*. *Carnaval* still attracts a huge number of foreign tourists to the country, which remains as a main queer and heterosexual sex tourism destination. Therefore, in order to identify how vivid this imagery of Brazil still is, I am going to analyze websites that target foreign tourists to *Carnaval* in Rio de Janeiro.

Methods

In order to try to understand the relationships between racial democracy and tourism, this study explores visual and textual content from websites that sell touristic packages to *Carnaval* in Rio de Janeiro and that offer tips, options, guidelines, even daily activities, but that do not sell packages. Both types of websites turned out to be relevant to the research. I used feminist qualitative-content analysis to analyze the data.

The collection of data took place at Towson University's Cook Library, using the computers available for students there. This choice was made to eliminate any kind of traceability to the topic of the research. Since I have been reading and researching about Rio de Janeiro, *Carnaval*, queer and heterosexual tourism, and this is all in my Internet search history, the results might differ from those of a person using the Internet to research about touristic options for the first time.

Initially, the plan was to select the websites from Google, TripAdvisor, and Yelp. However, after a first approach, the results from TripAdvisor and Yelp did not contain travel agencies, being mostly about restaurants and hotels; thus not fulfilling the requirements for the research. Therefore, Google was used as the main and only mechanism. Different word-combinations were used to help identify the most relevant websites to tourists travelling to *Carnaval* in Rio. By relevant, I mean websites that appeared on the first pages of the results and that sell touristic packages and/or provided great information, daily suggestions of activities, places to stay, etc. (see table 1).

Since the first search, websites from travel agencies serving both queer and heterosexual tourists appeared among the results. In addition, a couple of websites offered news about the event appeared. The second search presented a considerable

number of websites discussing cultural perception and tips about *Carnaval*, its meanings, Brazilian society, etc. Once again, the results presented websites dedicated to queer and heterosexual travelers. Since most of the queer results focused on gay men (Gay Carnival is a common term used in many websites), I tried some more specific language to see if I would find different websites that included lesbian travelers; however, I did not find websites specific to lesbian travelers. Not even by adding the word “lesbian” did I get any results that presented a website dedicated to this audience. Most of the results were repetitive; at this point, saturation was reached since the main results were the same throughout the searches.

Table 1
Searches conducted to collect data and their results

Search	Keywords	Number of results	Results selected
1st	carnival in rio 2018	470,000	33
2nd	carnival in rio de janeiro	8,610,000	28
3rd	tour packages carnival in rio de janeiro	8,100,000	36
4th	LGBT carnival in rio 2018	325,000	32
5th	queer carnival in rio 2018	775,000	21
6th	lesbian carnival in rio 2018	345,000	14

In order to obtain the representative sample, the selected websites were organized according to their names. This way, it was possible to identify how many times they repeated; those with at least three repetitions were selected to be part of the final sample (see table 2). Among the repeated results, not only did the same websites appear a couple of times, but also different web pages within the same websites (see table 3). According to the Oxford Dictionary, a website is a “set of related web pages located under a single domain name,” while a web page is a “hypertext document connected to the World Wide Web.” Therefore, this variation of web pages were

included in the sample. The final sample consisted of 24 different websites and 46 web pages.

Out of the 24 websites, six of them were accredited by Embratur and the Brazilian Ministry of Tourism, which means that they comply with any requirements established in the country regarding tourism and that their business' documentation was reviewed, validating their information. Some of the other websites were accredited by other associations, such as the ABTOT (Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust); others were affiliated with the NTA (National Tour Association), for example.

In addition, the majority of the websites (being 10 with only queer content and five with queer and heterosexual) focused on the queer audience as their main target to offer information and sell packages to *Carnaval*. Everything that was not explicitly queer I referred to as “general,” aiming more to the heterosexual audience (as the norm) in order to differentiate them in terms of the analysis.

Table 2
Sample characteristics

Website	Repetitions	Accredited by Embratur?	Type	Queer/Hetero Carnaval
http://www.rio-carnival.net/	10	Yes	Create your own package	General
http://www.rio.com	9	No	Create your own package	General
http://toursgonewild.com	7	Yes	Request a quote	General
http://www.riocarnaval.org	6	Yes	Tickets	Both
https://www.carnivalbookers.com/	6	Yes	Create your own package	Both
https://www.iglta.org	5	No	Packages	Queer
www.riocarnival.net	4	No	Create your own package	Queer
http://vamosgay.com	4	No	Info with tips about gay-friendly hotels, parties, etc.	Queer
http://www.kensingtontours.com	4	No	Request a quote	General
http://www.truebraziltravel.com	4	Yes	Packages	General
https://www.dragoman.com	4	No	Packages	General
https://www.nighttours.com	4	No	Info, indicates the website www.rio-carnival.net to book	Queer
http://www.gayrio4u.com	3	No	General info, some tips to book hotels, buy tickets	Queer
http://www.gaytravel4u.com	3	No	General info	Queer
http://www.happygaytravel.com	3	No	Packages	Queer*
http://www.ipanema.com	3	No	General info	Both**
www.riogayguide.com	3	No	General info	Queer
http://www.worldincolorontours.com	3	No	Packages	Queer
http://www.zoomvacations.com	3	No	Packages	Queer
https://carnivalservice.com	3	No	Info and sambodrome tickets	General
https://theculturetrip.com	3	No	General info, not an agency	General
https://www.brazilbookers.com/	3	Yes	Packages	Both
https://www.mybucketlistevents.com	3	No	Request a quote	General
https://www.outofoffice.com	3	No	Request a quote	Both***

*lesbian cruises/hotels, not Carnaval-related

**reference to LGBT events, indicates other website

***Carnaval offered only as a gay group package

Table 3
Websites and web pages from the sample

Website's code	Link to webpage	Website's code	Link to webpage
Rio-carnival	http://www.rio-carnival.net/rio_carnival/rio_carnival_programs.php	VAMOSGAY	http://vamosgay.com/latin-america/brazil/rio-de-janeiro/gay-guide-carnival-rio/
Rio-carnival_2	http://www.rio-carnival.net/Store/BallsDetails.aspx?cod=6	VAMOSGAY_2	http://vamosgay.com/latin-america/brazil/rio-de-janeiro/gay-carnival-blocos/
Rio-carnival_3	http://www.rio-carnival.net/tour-rio-de-janeiro.php	Kensingtontours	https://www.kensingtontours.com/tours/south-america/brazil/argentina-and-brazil-for-carnival
Rio-carnival_4	http://www.rio-carnival.net/rio_carnival/rio_carnival_tickets.php	Truebraziltravel	http://www.truebraziltravel.com/package-detail.aspx?cod=41&gclid=EAIaIqobChMI_KPwp5j21gIVGAaGCh0GQwL6EAAAYAAAEgIzWvD_BwE
Rio.com	http://www.rio.com/rio-carnival	Dragoman	https://www.dragoman.com/holidays/details/brazil-rio-carnival-tour-independent-package#
Rio.com_2	http://www.rio.com/rio-carnival/about-carnival-balls	Dragoman_2	https://www.dragoman.com/holidays/details/brazil-rio-carnival-tour-standard-package
Rio.com_3	http://www.rio.com/rio-carnival/gay-costume-ball	NightTours	https://www.nighttours.com/rio/gayguide/carnival-rio.html
Rio.com_4	http://www.rio.com/rio-carnival/history-carnival	Gay4u	http://www.gayrio4u.com/events/rio-carnival/
Rio.com_5	http://www.rio.com/tours-attractions/gay-private-tours	GayTravel4u	http://www.gaytravel4u.com/event/rio-carnival/
Toursgonewild	http://toursgonewild.com/travel/travel-package/special-events-packages/rio-de-janeiro-carnival-travel-package/	HappyGayTravel	http://www.happygaytravel.com/tours/ZoomVacations/Gay_Rio_Carnival_18.html
RioCarnival	http://www.riocarnaval.org/index.html	Ipanema	http://www.ipanema.com/carnival/
RioCarnival_2	http://www.riocarnaval.org/carnival-date/rio-carnival-2018.html	Ipanema_2	http://www.ipanema.com/carnival/planner.htm
RioCarnival_3	http://www.riocarnaval.org/gay-carnival/gay-carnival.html	RioGayGuide	http://www.riogayguide.com/carnival.htm
RioCarnival_4	http://www.riocarnaval.org/gay-carnival/gay-carnival-events.html	WorldinColors	http://www.worldincolorstours.com/gay-brazil-carnival-tour.html
CarnivalBookers	https://www.carnivalbookers.com/rio-de-janeiro/balls/balls/gay-costume-ball	Zoom	http://www.zoomvacations.com/riocarnaval/
CarnivalBookers_2	https://www.carnivalbookers.com/rio-de-janeiro/for-gays/for-gays	CarnivalService	https://carnivalservice.com/rio-carnival/articles
CarnivalBookers_3	https://www.carnivalbookers.com/rio-de-janeiro/for-gays/for-gays/agenda	CarnivalService_2	https://carnivalservice.com/rio-carnival/articles/the-lgbt-carnival-route-in-rio
CarnivalBookers_4	https://www.carnivalbookers.com/rio-de-janeiro/program/all-about-rio-carnival	CultureTrip	https://theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/an-lgbt-guide-to-carnival-in-rio-de-janeiro/
IGLTA	https://www.iglta.org/carnaval-rio-de-janeiro-february-2018/	CultureTrip_2	https://theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/how-rios-carnival-became-the-biggest-party-on-earth/
IGLTA_2	https://www.iglta.org/rio-de-janeiro-carnival-2018-champions-parade/	BrazilBookers	https://www.brazilbookers.com/brazil-carnival/gay-carnival/gay-carnival.asp
IGLTA_3	https://www.iglta.org/rio-de-janeiro-carnival-package-2018/	BrazilBookers_2	https://www.brazilbookers.com/brazil-carnival/rio-carnival-program/rio-carnival-program.asp
RioCarnival.net	http://www.riocarnival.net/rio-carnival/gay-rio-carnival	MyBucketList	https://www.mybucketlistevents.com/event/rio-carnival/
RioCarnival.net_2	http://www.riocarnival.net/rio-carnival	OutofOffice	https://www.outofoffice.com/Brazil/gay-group-trip-rio-carnival

Results

The qualitative analysis of the data resulted in four major themes: (a) choice of language and images, (b) experiencing *Carnaval*, (c) the gayness of *Carnaval*, and (d) cultural aspects.

Choice of language and images

Adjectives, abstract nouns, and the superlative form (see table 4) were used constantly throughout the web pages in order to provide a descriptive scenario and create an image in the reader's mind. In some of the cases, the web pages' textual content was supported by the visual content (pictures of Rio and *Carnaval*, see table 5). Other web pages focused more on images than textual content; the opposite is also true.

Carnaval in Rio was described several times as “the best event of the world/planet/Earth,” “the most famous carnival,” “the biggest party,” etc. The website GayTravel4u described it as follows:

NO PLACE ON EARTH DOES CARNIVAL LIKE RIO! – 7 DAYS
OF NON STOP PARTYING.

Rio de Janeiro is world famous for its carnival, and a must see at least once in a life time (*sic*), a skeptical (*sic*) that will leave you breathless. For five days all of Rio parties towards the climax the Samba Parade with some of the world's most spectacular costumes and floats.

The use of the expressions/words, such as “on Earth,” “non-stop partying,” “world famous,” “once in a life-time,” “breathless,” “world's most spectacular,” describe the magnitude of the event, providing hints to the tourist of what they can expect there. Despite the misspelling of words and even the bad writing (things that happen in other web pages as well), the message is still attractive to the tourist. Images of big crowds

in the streets or in the *Sambódromo*, as well as the floats, and Rio's aerial landscapes helped to reinforce this idea of *Carnaval* being the world's biggest party.



Figure 7: Aerial view of the *Sambódromo* (IGLTA - <https://www.iglta.org/rio-de-janeiro-carnival-package-2018/>)

In some cases, the same image was used in different websites. Interestingly, the same happened with some texts as well, in which two websites had exactly the same sentences. The website Happy Gay Travel offers the package sold by the website Zoom. Nevertheless, the majority of images and language used appeal to the dream of the world's most amazing party in a scenario of "beautiful beaches and happy people".

Table 4

Words used in different web pages and their repetitions

Word	Repetitions
Amazing	24
Beautiful; Beauty	11; 5
Colorful	15
Exciting; Excitement	3; 4
Extravagant; Extravagance; Extravaganza	8; 1; 3
Fabulous	5
Flamboyant	7
Fun	40
Luxury; Luxurious	11; 8
Magnificent	3
Marvelous	6
Outrageous	4
Spectacular; Spectacle	10; 3
Wild; Wildness; Wildest	9; 3; 1

Table 5

Images used in different web pages and their repetitions

Image	Repetitions
Balls	11
Beaches	40
Cross-dressing	15
Crowd	11
Drag-queens	5
<i>Mulata</i>	27
<i>Mulato</i>	47
Rio's landscape	17
Rio's tourist attraction	16
Nightclubs	16
<i>Sambódromo</i>	88
Street parties	52

Experiencing Carnaval

Carnaval's idea of transnationalism relies not only on being considered the biggest carnival of all, but also on the fact that it attracts many international tourists and even celebrities to party during these days. In addition, some websites remind tourists that Rio's beaches are among the most famous around the world and that many of the events are televised, which increases the range of people who are part of it. According to the website Rio.com:

The World Is Watching

While preparations continue for the Carnival all year round, technical rehearsals by the samba schools are held at the Sambadrome for a few weeks before the big weekend of competition. This is the prelude to the most **extravagant, beautiful, and sexy spectacle**, which the **whole world** waits for with baited (*sic*) breath. (...)The **energy and spirit** of the celebration transcend the one-dimensional view from the TV to captivate each viewer and draw him or her into the **excitement and ecstasy** of the festival. (my highlights)

Websites seem to use this idea of transnationality also to make the international tourist feel that they are part of the spectacle and that Brazilians are awaiting their presence.

Only 10 websites provided tour packages to *Carnaval 2018* with starting prices (five general and five gay-specific). The packages vary a lot in their composition; however, they do not include air tickets and give space for you to customize your days in Rio (ranging from three days to 10-days packages) according to your budget and preference. In general, they provided hotel, airport shuttle with

English-speaking guide, and ticket to one night at the *Sambódromo*. The prices ranged from \$1,305.00/person (3 nights only in a 3-star hotel) to \$7,188.00/person (5 nights in a 5-star hotel) (see table 6).

Table 6

Tour packages with prices and details

Website	Price	Included
Dragoman	\$1,425.00	5 nights' accommodation with breakfast included/English-speaking staff/One ticket to the <i>Sambódromo</i>
Dragoman_2	\$2,275.00	5 nights' accommodation with breakfast included/English-speaking staff/One ticket to the <i>Sambódromo</i> /One guided tour to Sugarloaf Mountain and one to Christ the Redeemer.
HappyGayTravel	\$6,999.00	5 nights' accommodations at a 5-star hotel with daily breakfast/Welcome cocktail reception with dinner/Helicopter tour of Sugarloaf and Corcovado with lunch/Private sunrise breakfast on Corcovado before opening to public/Ticket to <i>Sambódromo</i> /Arrival transfer/Transfers to Zoom Vacations events/Services of a Zoom Vacations Concierge throughout the trip/Rio de Janeiro gay survival guide
IGLTA_3	\$1,305.00	3 nights' accommodations at a 3-star hotel with breakfast included/Ticket to <i>Sambódromo</i> /Guided tour to Corcovado & Tijuca Forest/Round-trip transfer from hotel to <i>Sambódromo</i> /Round-trip transfer from airport to hotel with English-speaking driver
Kensingtontours	\$6,265.00	9 nights' accommodation (three different cities - Buenos Aires, Foz do Iguaçu, and Rio de Janeiro), some meals, private city tours, and ticket to <i>Sambódromo</i>
MyBucketList	\$4,350.00	5 nights' accommodation at a 4-star hotel/Ticket to <i>Sambódromo</i> /Round-trip transfer from hotel to <i>Sambódromo</i> /Round-trip transfer from airport to hotel/Full day tour of Rio/Taxes and fees
OutofOffice	\$7,188.00	5 nights' accommodation at a 5-star hotel with 4 breakfasts included/Other meals and drinks included in the itinerary/Activities and excursions included in the itinerary/Arrival transfer
Toursgonewild	\$1,369.00	5 nights' accommodation with breakfast included/Opening party/2 exclusive private parties/VIP sections at all parties (where applicable) Drinks nightly at venues/Bilingual guides present at all venues/Transportation to events/Half-day tour to Christ the Redeemer/On-location staff available 24 hours/Round-trip transfer from airport to hotel/Taxes and fees
Truebraziltravel	\$1,990.00	4 nights' accommodation with breakfast included/Round-trip transfer from airport to hotel/Walking Introductory and <i>Blocos</i> tour/Half-day tour to Sugarloaf Mountain/Half-day tour to Corcovado/Ticket to <i>Sambódromo</i> with guide/Metro tickets for the <i>Sambódromo</i> and <i>Blocos</i> tour/English-speaking guides
WorldinColors	\$2,499.00	5 nights' accommodation with 5 breakfasts and welcome dinner/Ticket and transportation to <i>Sambódromo</i> /Guided tours listed in itinerary/Admissions fees to Sugarloaf cable car, Christ the Redeemer, and Tijuca Forrest/Ipanema Gay Beach Fiesta Day
Zoom	\$6,999.00	5 nights' accommodations at a 5-star hotel with daily breakfast/Welcome cocktail reception with dinner/Helicopter tour of Sugarloaf and Corcovado with lunch/Private sunrise breakfast on Corcovado before opening to public/Ticket to <i>Sambódromo</i> /Arrival transfer/Transfers to Zoom Vacations events/Services of a Zoom Vacations Concierge throughout the trip/Rio de Janeiro gay survival guide

Having an exclusive and personalized experience was frequently offered to the customers. From private breakfasts on Corcovado (where Christ the Redeemer is located) to watch the sunrise to VIP tickets to the *Sambódromo*, there are many options available so tourists can engage in activities exclusively for them (figure 8).



Figure 8: Exclusive event offered to the tourists by Zoom
(<http://www.zoomvacations.com/riocarnaval/>)

This class aspect of *Carnaval* can also be seen through the events happening around Rio. It is possible to find many different entertainment options during these days: not only typical *Carnaval*-related activities, such as the *samba* school parades, but also many nightclubs offer special parties; there are parties on the beaches, etc. Thus, the word “party/ies” appeared 175 times during the analysis (behind only of the word “gay/s” repeated 203 times). The analysis of the websites revealed three main events that were portrayed in detail: the *samba* schools parade at the *Sambódromo*, the balls, and the street parties. Although the idea of partying is common to all three, they vary in style and prices, as described by the website Ipanema: “Luxury costume balls and tickets to the Sambodromo are expensivish. Yet street carnaval is free (...)”.

Sambódromo. The *samba* schools parade is the “must-see show which has made Rio de Janeiro the Carnival capital of the world” (Rio-carnival); the importance of this event is constantly conveyed to the tourist. It was possible to find web pages fully dedicated to the parade, telling about its history and providing info about tickets. The high values that result in an environment class-divided were evidenced by both images and textual content. According to the website MyBucketList:

Being such a large venue, the Sambodromo is divided into different sectors.

The sectors in the middle are the most coveted and most difficult tickets to get for the parade. This is where you will be with your Bucket List Events group!

We want you to experience Carnaval at its best, and the views that are offered in this sector are unmatchedable.

Best place is a synonym for more expensive tickets, which can cost from \$91.00 to \$1,239.00 during the main parade day.

In the majority of the occurrences, the image of the *mulata* was used to illustrate the *samba* schools, or they appeared dancing *samba* at nightclubs. Every school has among its components the *rainha da bateria*, a woman, who is a good dancer, she wears a beautiful costume that also exposes her body in a sensualized way. She is also in a highlighted position, having the responsibility of symbolically conducting the band (*bateria*, drumming wing) and animating the audience. Many Brazilian celebrities are invited to be *rainhas*. The website ToursGoneWild was the one with more pictures of the mulata, with four images representing the parade (see figure 9).



Figure 9: Brazilian model and actor, Viviane Araújo, a *rainha da bateria* of the samba school *Salgueiro* (<http://toursgonewild.com/travel/travel-package/special-events-packages/rio-de-janeiro-carnival-travel-package/>)

Some websites, especially the ones that approached the historical side of the parades, discussed the importance and the meaning of the samba schools to each community that they represent. In addition, some of them suggested a visit to a rehearsal in a samba school (if the tourist happens to arrive before *Carnaval* official dates) as a way to see a different side of Brazil and get to know the community, which is usually located in the suburbs, where mainly the poor population lives. The website Rio-carnival described:

Other rehearsal halls are in the distant suburbs and are not a place to wander alone unguided. (...) We recommend going to Mangueira which is the biggest, safest and most famous school with many tourists and lots of security (...). A note of warning - they are in very poor areas, often on the borders of the slums so don't go flashy or have anything valuable with you. However do go!

Four websites - Zoom, True Brazil Travel, Tours Gone Wild, and Happy Gay Travel - also offered *favelas* tours as optional to their packages.

The Balls. Another widely offered option to enjoy *Carnaval* in Rio and widely offered is the balls, which are private – and usually with a specific theme, they are parties inspired by European masquerades parties. There are many options around the city ranging from US\$40.00 to US\$1,800.00, according to the website CarnivalService. The two most famous are the Gala Ball at Copacabana Palace Hotel (a 5-star hotel, internationally known) on Saturday night and the Gay Ball at Rio Scala on Tuesday Night. These balls are described as luxurious and stunning, where the tourist can party with international celebrities. The Gay Ball is historically known to attract drag queens from all over the world as well, forming a “colorful, exotic, and flamboyant crowd,” common adjectives used by different websites to describe the balls. These events are highly praised and awaited, especially because of their costumes (see figure 10). It is the time for “queens to be there at their queenly best and demand the attention of everyone around” (Rio-carnival) (see figure 11).



Figure 10: Drag queen's costume (<http://www.rio.com/rio-carnival/gay-costume-ball>)



Figure 11: First gay king, a foreign tourist (maybe), and the drag queen, queen of Carnival (<https://www.carnivalbookers.com/rio-de-janeiro/balls/balls/gay-costume-ball>)

Street Parties. The street parties are also known as “*blocos de rua*,” in which groups of people get together on a specific street of the city, and from there, parade throughout the other streets, following a car blasting music. Usually, they have a theme, such as *Bloco do Sargento Pimenta*, inspired by the Beatles. *Banda de Ipanema* and *Cordão da Bola Preta* are described as two of the most traditional and biggest. People also wear costumes during these parties; however, two other practices associated with the *blocos* are the use of group T-shirts and cross-dressing (see figure 12). Tourism promotion literature often associates these parties with the idea of liberation, describing them as “infused with a small amount of playful sexuality and gender fluidity” (Gay4u).



Figure 12: Cross-dressing in an exaggerated way (“Queen of silicone”) in one of the many *blocos* (<https://theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/an-lgbt-guide-to-carnival-in-rio-de-janeiro/>)

The images in some of the websites showed children, animals, groups of people, etc. interacting with each other (see figure 12). According to CarnivalBookers:

Some of the wildest parties are those organized by the Blocos. (...) These street parties are quite rowdy and some can attract as many as 1 million people.

Since they are free, they attract a more diverse audience and huge crowds, from families and elderly to drag queens, gays, lesbians, and people interested in “partying hard.”

The Gayness of Carnaval

Throughout the analysis of the data, the word “gay/s” appeared 203 times, which was significantly higher than “queer,” “lesbian,” etc. (see table 7). The gayness

of *Carnaval* was a major theme. The website VamosGay was the only one that briefly indicated an event specific to the lesbian audience, for example:

By the girls, and for the girls ... Bloco Toco Xona is famous for its female bateristas (Carnival drummers.) Gay boys are welcome too! For 2017, catch their pre-Carnival show will start at Praça Joia Valansi in the Botofogo district.

The vast majority of the events associated to the LGBTQ community were actually promoted to and focused on gay men. Text and image supported the idea that *Carnaval* is associated with the middle/upper-class, white gay tourist (see figure 8). The cross-dressing, the characterized extravaganza, and the liberation theme contributed to the fact that “people joke that everyone seems a little gay during carnival!” (Zoom).

Table 7

Words related to queerness and their repetition

Word	Repetitions
Barbie boy (muscular gay men)	20
Bear	2
Bisexual	4
Drag king	1
Drag queen	34
Gay	203
GLS (Portuguese acronym for gays, lesbians, and sympathizers)	3
Lesbian	17
LGBT/LGBTQ	27
Transgender	4
Transvestite	5

“Gay *Carnaval*” was portrayed as an official event that has its own circuit of parties. On the one hand, they share many of the same places, especially the *Sambódromo*; on the other hand, there are many specific places focused on attending

to the demands of this audience. Not only do the balls and the *blocos de rua* have their own gay-specific events, but also many nightclubs have special parties, and they are widely spread and famous. Electronic music parties are portrayed as a way to stop listening to *samba* for a while, attracting many locals and tourists and national and international DJs to play. One of the most famous is B.I.T.C.H, which stands for “Barbies in Total Control Here.” Additionally, there are gay-friendly beaches, which were highly recommended to the tourist (images and text). The most famous are *Posto 9* at Ipanema Beach and Copacabana Beach, in front of the Copacabana Palace Hotel. However, they tend to receive different audiences:

If the barbies of Ipanema’s Farme Gay beach are not your type, or if you’re in the mood for something different, you can take a short walk down the beach to Copacabana. (...) This beach attracts drag queens, bears and trannies looking to bathe under the beautiful Brazilian sun. (...) [W]hile you’re more likely to meet new friends or get picked up at Ipanema, Copacabana is a great place to relax and enjoy yourself. (Rio Carnival.net)

The websites focused on the gay audience had more references to the possibilities of engaging in sexual activity during *Carnaval*. Both from the textual standpoint and the images (47 images of the *mulato* x 27 of the *mulata*), the idea of sensualized, brown-skinned, muscular men accessible in many places around Rio – the beaches, street parties, the balls, *Sambódromo*, parties, etc. is used to draw the gay male tourist (see figure 13).

The references to sex tourism appear when tourism companies suggest strip shows/go-go dancers and, especially, gay bath and gay saunas to the tourists. However, only eight websites (CarnivalBookers, CarnivalService, CultureTrip,

GayTravel4u, Rio Carnival.net, NightTours, Rio.com, and VamosGay) mentioned one or more of these. The website VamosGay suggested:

Be careful who you bring back to your hotel – At some hotels, you can walk directly to your elevator, some may ask for ID from your guest(s). When in doubt, you can always go to one of Rio's many gay saunas.

The possibility of engaging in sexual relations with locals was not verified in other websites nor in a situation approaching a general audience (as per my classification of the websites).



Figure 13: The *mulato* parading for a *samba* school (<https://carnivalservice.com/rio-carnival/articles>)

The gayness of *Carnaval* was very evident during the analysis; therefore, reinforcing the idea that Rio de Janeiro is a gay-friendly city, where tolerance and harmony exist between heterosexuals and homosexuals, was observed several times:

Rio is considered one of the most gay friendly destinations in the world. The locals respect sexual diversity and they set an excellent example for cities around the globe. (Rio.com)

The Gay Carnival in Rio is a testament to how tolerant the annual festivity has become. It just means that regardless of sexual preference, everything takes a backseat to partying and having fun. (RioCarnival)

It seems like *Carnaval* is the time of the year that celebration is more important and issues, questions, and problems can wait. Interestingly, the website Rio.com mentioned that outside *Carnaval*, the city might not be so gay-friendly as expected: “Rio’s gay community which is relatively subdued for the rest of the year are out in full bloom at the [Gay Ball at] Scala,” revealing some contradictions of the Brazilian society and culture.

Cultural Aspects

Aspects of the Brazilian culture and society were part of many web pages. Some of the religious aspects of it, its Catholic origin, influence of the Portuguese, the elements incorporated by the African and even native Brazilian were acknowledged on them. The Afro-Brazilian culture is specially celebrated because it originated *samba*; and the miscegenation of Brazil is highlighted as the element that brings uniqueness to Rio’s *Carnaval*:

It is the ethnic melting pot of Rio that makes this festival unlike any in the world. The combination of the cultural diversity and Brazilian swing rhythm is what makes the Carnival in Rio so unique. (Rio.com)

For Brazilians, Carnival is a celebration to let loose and release their inhibitions before Ash Wednesday. (ToursGoneWild)

Carnaval is all about celebration. Some of the websites want to make sure that the tourist experiences this event like a Brazilian, as a *carioca* would. The *carioca* lifestyle was mentioned a couple of times, being described as in search of partying all the time and enjoying the beach every chance; also, as a people that is happy, lives life in a more relaxed way and is known by their beauty:

The carioca nature has always been to take a break whenever an opportunity arises, but they just need any excuse to party harder. (RioCarnival)

Cariocas feel that the year only starts after Carnival. (RioGayGuide)

“The Cariocas” (People from Rio) are some of the friendliest people in the world. They live life to the fullest and always have a smile on their face. Not only are they friendly, but Cariocas are beautiful, sexy people. You will definitely fall in love with the people in this city. (ToursGoneWild)

This way of life also recalled the fact that public display of affection is something common (see figure 14); thus, the tourist should not be afraid of flirting nor of showing intimacy with one’s partner.



Figure 14: A gay couple kissing (<https://theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/an-lgbt-guide-to-carnival-in-rio-de-janeiro/>)

In addition, a few websites also mentioned the political aspect of *Carnaval* as a site of creative resistance, explaining that the tourist might encounter political elements both during the *samba* school parade (the choice of the theme, the lyrics, etc.) and the *blocos de rua* (in their thematic or sometimes people use costumes to mock politicians, issues faced by the people, such as the Zika virus, etc.):

Towards the end of the century, the carnival became a working class festivity where people wore costumes and joined the parade accompanied by musicians playing string instruments and flutes. Carnival was also used during the years of military censorship to express political dissatisfaction. The Samba Schools would use irony and sarcasm to express their displeasure with the government and the people's desire for freedom. (Rio.com)

Until today, through the music, the costumes, etc., this dissatisfaction is expressed in *Carnaval*, many times in satiric and comic ways. However, these points are not supported by the images. Perhaps the only one that shows a bit of this idea would be the one with a giant rainbow flag, symbol of the queer community (see figure 15). The data analysis was very rich and revealed interesting results (see table 8 for more information).



Figure 15: Giant rainbow flag in one of the *blocos de rua*
(<https://www.carnivalbookers.com/rio-de-janeiro/for-gays/for-gays>)

Table 8

General comment about each web page

Website	Overview
BrazilBookers	3 pictures, 2 of them from women, one with lighter skin and the other with darker. The other picture is of a group of 4 people you cannot really tell their gender/sexuality, because they are wearing costumes. Language used provides more information and talks more about the <i>carioca</i> lifestyle, Barbie-boys, and gay-friendly locations.
BrazilBookers_2	Just one picture from a samba school group with costume. The text presents different activities to do, such as the parade and street parties, simple and more direct.
CarnivalBookers	One picture: gay king of <i>Carnaval</i> , someone that looks like a foreigner and a drag queen, queen of <i>Carnaval</i> . The page is about the Gay Ball, how it supports the idea that Rio is a gay-friendly city, and the ball is welcoming to straight people as well.
CarnivalBookers_2	Despite the picture being very neutral, not portraying bodies and focusing on the gay-friendly aspect, the text mention the muscular bodies that are good to be stared at. Other than that, it has mild language.
CarnivalBookers_3	Le Boy is a nightclub that also offers strip and drag shows -an indication of sex tourism. This nightclub is mentioned several times in other pages. More sensualized images, both of muscular men and drag queens, who represent the majority of the pictures. In addition, they are portrayed as main attraction of the events held during gay carnival. The language supports the images.
CarnivalBookers_4	The costumes are a big part of carnival according to the page. Lots of mention and reference to them. No sensualized picture nor explicit language. Despite using party a lot, the rest was neutral. The word "gay" is mentioned only to indicate the existence of Gay Ball, which was very different from their Gay Carnival page.
CarnivalService	Out of the photos, muscular men were portrayed more than the <i>mulata</i> in a sexy way (although there is more women in the pictures here). African culture mainly associated to samba. The website seems to care about the cultural aspect of <i>Carnaval</i> in Brazil; it provides a series of article, including soccer, to talk more about those aspects. This was a general page that appeared on the search.
CarnivalService_2	Gay Carnival as an official and organized event inside <i>Carnaval</i> . Gay events (specially the ball) are welcoming to everybody despite their sexual orientation. Just one picture, but the language opens space for a little bit of imagination specially when referring to the Barbie-boys.
CultureTrip	The text is very explicit in the liberation idea. It mentions public display of affection as part of the culture. The figure of the <i>mulato</i> is described in words, but not in the images, which focus on cross-dressing and gay public display of affection.
CultureTrip_2	Brief history of Carnival, mentioning many cultural aspects, and description of the events. The idea of liberation and party was part of it again, which includes drinking and socializing with locals. Photo of king Momo and Queen and Princess (all <i>mulatas</i>) of <i>Carnaval</i> is very interesting, representing an idea of traditional gender norms of society.
Dragoman	No sensualized language nor picture, focusing more on cultural and social tourist attractions (<i>favela</i> tour and museums) and traditional ones, like Christ the Redeemer, sugarloaf mountain. The basic package is about the <i>Sambódromo</i> experience (expensive) and relaxing on the beaches. Gay Ball is also listed as optional, but no distinction between Gay Carnival as a separate circuit. It does not reference Carnival as a liberating party, more about the costumes and the parades. In addition, they highlight several times that the tourists will be accompanied by English-speaking guides and will have the possibility to upgrade their tickets to enjoy attraction in a VIP way. This exclusivity idea is also highlighted by providing air conditioning in the bus, private and early tram to the Christ - comfortable and security, class aspect.
Dragoman_2	Same comments from the other file. In addition (valid for both as well), the idea of exploring the city by yourself, no guide, adventure. The tourist agency supports the NGO Morrinho, where they take the tourists to visit and know their social program.

Table 8 – cont.

General comment about each web page

Website	Overview
Gay4u	Exact same sentence from the page (Carnival service). Many pictures of the <i>mulato</i> in different events (they are available everywhere) and of the parade. The language supports the images ("In fact, many attendees—LGBTQ or otherwise—hit up this parade with the singular intention of kissing as many people as possible." -> talking about the street parties).
GayTravel4u	Pictures of the parade and costumes, no sensualized men. The text is informative, despite some sex insinuation when it talks about the Barbie-boys' party.
HappyGayTravel	Pictures are much more suggestive than the language used itself and they are the great focus here. Many pictures of attractive and sensualized men in different places (explicit), public display of affection, group of tourists, and even the <i>mulata</i> . Expensive package and the language supports this idea of high-class event. Their package is from the website Zoom, but this website is more explicit to sex.
IGLTA	Direct and simple language, few photos, more of the crowds.
IGLTA_2	Despite offering "the best time of your life", the pictures are in the majority of tourist attractions and the events, no <i>mulato x mulata</i> . Although it is from the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association, there is no specific mention to any of these groups nor to "Gay Carnival".
IGLTA_3	The images reveal a more classy aspect of <i>Carnaval</i> with pictures of VIP areas of <i>Sambódromo</i> , for example. Lots of street carnival, they not only seem more democratic but lots of fun, people are more laid-back. Clear and more professional language.
Ipanema	Mild language, focusing more on the traditional and generational aspect of carnival, especially because it sounds like written by Brazilians. The images range from the <i>mulata</i> to families, dogs, and gay scene.
Ipanema_2	Language is mild, nothing about partying hard. Pictures are more sensualized with many shirtless men, and majority from street carnival. Very detailed description of the <i>blocos</i> , their schedule and daily options, which makes sense considering there are more pictures of these events.
Kensingtontours	One picture from the <i>mulata</i> at the <i>Sambódromo</i> . Few information about the event. It looks like <i>Carnaval</i> is restricted to samba schools parades. It also offers sightseeing of some tourist attractions. More professional language.
MyBucketList	Party, samba, almost-naked people, love, beach, partying hard, drinking, costumes, the parades - top 10 reasons to attend <i>Carnaval</i> . It also mentions the traditional tourist attractions. The text talks a lot about <i>Carioca</i> lifestyle as an attractive way of living. Although there is no image, the text is suggestive for partying hard.
NightTours	Simple and basic information, magnifying <i>Carnaval</i> as one of the biggest parties in the world. It talks about security. Images refer to availability of muscular men around the events, some of the crowds.
OutofOffice	The language goes hand in hand with the price and pictures, i.e., they all show a more upper-class <i>Carnaval</i> and how this experience relies on exclusive meals with privileged views in the main tourist attractions, for example.
Rio Carnival.net	Very descriptive, the language used allows you to assume some sex. However, the pictures are not so explicit. It focuses on the gay scene: off-parties, a little about the balls, street carnival, <i>Sambódromo</i> , and lots of nightclubs, beaches, etc. Again the idea of Barbie-boys all around to be admired, at least.
Rio Carnival.net_2	Same website, very different approach from the gay scene. Besides this page focuses mainly on the <i>Sambódromo</i> and on the meaning of samba schools, their relationship with their communities.

Table 8 – cont.

General comment about each web page

Website	Overview
Rio.com	It talks about many elements of <i>Carnaval</i> , such as, King Momo and Queen of <i>Carnaval</i> , <i>Mestre Sala</i> and <i>Porta-Bandeira</i> , focusing on the parade and its meaning. Talks more about the women and her positioning as central to <i>Carnaval</i> ("Then come the floats with beautiful women sensually dancing the samba in the tiniest of costumes"/"All else comes to a halt on the four days of the Carnival, with the exception of samba, women, beer, and partying all night long."). The pictures are not very sensualized, more the language itself.
Rio.com_2	Balls are the representation of luxury in Rio, more upper-class audience, reinforced by the image of the decorated club. The idea that you will be truly enjoying carnival as a local is present.
Rio.com_3	Extravagance of the balls, clearly expensive, but a big party and celebration of diversity in a welcoming environment. It implies that in the rest of the year, Rio is not so gay-friendly.
Rio.com_4	Pictures of the <i>Sambódromo</i> , showing diversity of age especially. It focuses more on the history, incorporation of Afro-Brazilian traditions and unity of all people despite their class through <i>samba</i> .
Rio.com_5	The language implies standard notions of beauty ("young beautiful bodies"). One discrete photo, but of the <i>mulata</i> . It reaffirms Rio as a gay-friendly city, including to lesbians, but no more reference to this audience.
RioCarnival	Not a lot, talking mainly about the <i>Sambódromo</i> and the beaches. Very simple and clean language, highlighting how <i>Carnaval</i> is famous around the world and how Rio offers more attractions than just carnival. Picture of the <i>mulata</i> . However, they do not capture her whole body, thus not sensualized.
Rio-carnival	It does not distinguish gay carnival. It presented lots of general information, especially about the <i>samba</i> schools and their rehearsals, highlighting issues of safety because they are in the <i>favelas</i> . Pictures are very generic, cross-dressing and <i>Sambódromo</i> , mainly.
RioCarnival_2	The text highlights the importance of celebrating as locals, as cariocas, Brazilians ("Be aware that is wild and you will be partying hard"). A bit of history including Afro-Brazilian themes, mainly <i>samba</i> . Two pictures, they both have women, but one in a more sensualized way.
Rio-carnival_2	It reinforces the idea that carnival is very gay-friendly due to the costumes, for example. In addition, it mentions how it is a time to liberate yourself in front of society; therefore, it is acceptable.
RioCarnival_3	Pictures are very neutral, especially, cross-dressing, which is not supported by the text (in general, cross-dressing is not mentioned, but portrayed). It mentions the main events of gay carnival without giving many details (for example, B.I.T.C.H is not explained, no explicit reference to Barbie-boys). It talks about public display of affection, acceptance during this time, partying hard, but not with the same intensity of other websites.
Rio-carnival_3	It presents more about what Rio has to offer beyond <i>Carnaval</i> that will make your trip even better, " <i>carioca</i> lifestyle".
RioCarnival_4	The text is about "Gay Carnival", but the pictures do not specifically represent this aspect. It provides some details and the language is mild.
Rio-carnival_4	History of <i>Carnaval</i> , focusing on <i>samba</i> , the Afro-Brazilian presence, and the <i>samba</i> schools. Pictures from the parade, showing diversity of people and different generations participating in it.
RioGayGuide	The text is generic and provides basic information. Some pictures can be more suggestive and insinuate sex (go-go dancer).

Table 8 – cont.

General comment about each web page

Website	Overview
Toursgonewild	The one that has more pictures of the <i>mulata</i> . Lots of pictures to show the different parties, and pictures of the landscape. Barely mentions gay options, it is mainly focused on offering a VIP experience to <i>Carnaval</i> .
Truebraziltravel	It also offers a tour to the <i>favelas</i> . It mixes <i>Carnaval</i> with the main tourist attractions. Pictures of the <i>Sambódromo</i> , mainly. It suggests that it should be enjoyed as a <i>carioca</i> would.
VAMOSGAY	It is resourceful because it gives tips to booking hotels that are gay-friendly, etc. Idea of sex tourism implicit in the sauna part. Picture of gay men, darker skin and muscular, having fun, not too serious, supportive of the text.
VAMOSGAY_2	Very generic pictures. However, it provides detailed descriptions of street parties that are part of the gay circuit, including a lesbian <i>bloco</i> (only one that mentions this option).
WorldinColors	Some repeated pictures and text. In general, they go together, no picture of muscular gay men nor the <i>mulata</i> . The tour package has the main events, especially the samba school parade, and offers more of the "traditional" tourist attractions than options related to carnival. It is aimed to upper/middle-class people.
Zoom	Text rich in the idea of being an international party and very gay-friendly. The pictures and the captions used support these ideas.

Conclusion

“They try to play with our minds, Warp everything I know,
It is the 21st century and they still want to limit us with new laws
The lack of information weakens the mind
I’m in a sea of growth because I do it differently.”
(100% Feminista, MC Carol, my translation)

This research focused on studying Brazil’s image and characterization built in websites offering tour packages to *Carnaval* in Rio de Janeiro and/or promoting this event and providing tips, selling tickets, etc. to the foreign tourist, queer and heterosexual. By applying a feminist standpoint to the concept of racial democracy, my starting point, the goal was to analyze how this idea has worked to sexualize and racialize bodies in ways that have turned them into a commodity used to boost this industry, particularly increasing the market for sex tourism. The analysis revealed that the *mulata* and the *mulato* have had their bodies sexualized and racialized. Not only do they represent the miscegenation of races in Brazil, embodied in the brown skin, but also they are young and able-bodied, presenting traditional traits of femininity and masculinity; i.e., the women have voluptuous traits and the men are muscular and their sexuality is depicted within heteronormativity. Their class position in society is unclear; however, their bodies must be available to be consumed by the tourist not only in sexual encounters but also as an entertainment piece, indicating a degree of subordination (master v. slaves).

The foundations of racial democracy rely mainly on the image of some of the most marginalized groups of society, in particular the Afro-Brazilian population. While they constantly face physical and/or symbolic violence by the State - either by the constant surveillance of the police or by the negligence of basic needs, and lack of representation in the political arena and public sphere - the *mulata* acquired the status

of national pride, becoming one more tourist attraction expected to be available and tangible all around. Thus, Rio became a major sex tourism destination, where most of the customers go expecting to find this woman/man, who is a symbolic representation of a country free of racism that celebrates the miscegenation of the races. In this sense, many of the websites reiterate Brazil's colonial position in the global market that conforms to the capitalists' forces through the language they use and/or pictures.

Discussion of the results

The language used by the websites match the idea of "tropicalization" presented by Echtner and Prasad (667), which is used to describe countries in tropical climates, such as Brazil. As it is possible to observe in table 4, the repetition of words such as "amazing," "luxury," "fun," "beautiful," etc. supports the description of these countries as a place where the tourist goes expecting to relax and find pleasure and beauty in terms of nature but also of the native people. The images also reinforce the "tropicalization" aspect since most occurrence of images are of Rio's beaches, the *mulata*, the *mulato*,¹⁸ and of *Carnaval*'s festivities (not exactly in this order). They represent the availability of pleasure and beauty in a place where the tourist can expect to have people trying to please and serve them all the time. In addition, they offer a relaxed pace of life, tied to the idea that people there are more lazy and lacking discipline (Pruth 10). Once again, evidence shows that the colonial past has not been overcome yet – indicating that governments' efforts have not really been able to position Brazil as a global force instead of one that relies on its colonial past and foreign capital.

¹⁸ In this context and throughout the conclusion, these two concepts are specified by their gender because they represent different groups being portrayed and targeted in the web pages.

Even though six of the websites were accredited by Embratur, the results still followed the patterns and presented images of the *mulata*, for example, leading one to question Embratur's decision not to use the image of the mulata in their campaigns since the late 1990s. This decision was made in a moment when child prostitution and human trafficking had become problems related to the sex tourism industry, as declared by the World Tourism Organization (1995). Thus, the main reason to stop using the image of the *mulata* was to fight these two issues and not necessarily to address the commodification of the sexualized *mulata*. Nevertheless, these websites still use images and language that, in theory, Embratur should not accept, since the countries must account for the image they are selling of themselves according to the WTO (Alfonso 78). By accrediting the websites but not enforcing their content, the Brazilian government's symbolic violence is still vivid and used to boost transnational tourism.

In order to ground its position in the global market, *Carnaval* itself must be marketed as a transnational event – an idea that is recurrent among the websites. Taking into consideration that traveling abroad implies having resources, this aspect increases the possibilities of the tourist to fulfill their expectations and dreams. The elitism of the tour packages plays a big role in this context. The offers for VIP experience, whether by having better tickets to the parades or private tours to the main tourists' destinations, maintain the separation between foreign and local people recalling a traditional colonial past and the unequal power relationships between First and Third World countries, and also between the Brazilian elite and the “rest of the population.” Although the idea of experiencing *Carnaval* as locals do is strong among the websites' textual content, it does not translate to experiencing it with the locals. Even though the street parties were highly recommended for their more liberal aspect,

they are almost a way to embrace the adventurer and explorer characteristics of the colonizers.

Nevertheless, the high prices of both gay and heterosexual packages support the findings from the literature review, which indicate the target audience to be middle/upper-class white men, regardless of their sexuality. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the median weekly earning for white men with full-time jobs is US\$965.00 compared to US\$744.00 for black men, US\$658.00 for black women, and US\$791.00 for white women (data from the third quarter of 2017). Despite the existing variations, and according to other factors, such as gender, age, education, ethnicity, etc., this data reveals a considerable discrepancy between the earnings based on gender and race; thus, the interests in focusing on marketing initiatives to middle/upper-class white men. In addition, when sexuality becomes part of the scenario, white gay couples present higher income to spend with tourism (UNWTO 8).

The research findings then help to explain the complexities originating from the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. during *Carnaval* and its events. Although *Carnaval* in Rio offers a range of attractions and parties to the tourists, the three main events promoted by the websites are (a) the samba schools parade at the *Sambódromo*, (b) the balls, especially the Gay Ball at Rio Scala, and (c) the street parties (*blocos de rua*). In each one of them, these intersections perform in different ways. While the parade and the balls have clear geographical limits separating the audience, the *blocos* do not.

The samba schools parades are full of allegories resembling Brazil's colonial past. The parade is developed by the schools that are often located in poor

communities, where the majority of the population is black and cannot afford to attend it. As per indicated on the results, the cheapest ticket costs US\$91.00; compared to the Brazilian minimum wage of around US\$282.00 per month, one ticket represents more than a third of it. This finding supports the classist, sexist, and racist aspect of the *Sambódromo* and the parade, which became a millionaire business to foreigners and white people (Green 201; Lemos 101), one marked by class and race segregation.

These allegories are represented by the communities entertaining middle/ upper-class spectators and by the image of the *mulata*. Women, and especially the *rainha da bateria*, receive great attention by the media. Here, the *mulata* still is one of the main figures of the event, drawing attention from all over the world because of her almost-naked attire and excellent dance skills. Just like the colonial times that were marked by the sexual abuse of the masters towards female slaves that started the miscegenation process, these women are expected to be there, smiling and at service of this audience. This situation evidences the double standard in the lives of such women: at the same time they are central to the spectacle, they face racism and sexism in their daily lives, especially once the parade is over. *Carnaval* works in a way that makes their experiences invisible to the larger population by supporting this dichotomy (Lemos 100).

If the *mulata* is central to the parade, the drag queens are the main attraction of the famous balls, especially the Gay Ball at Rio Scala. Since the 1940s, when authorities would harshly prohibit any kind of cross-dressing, transvestism, or homosexual interaction, these balls became a space where queerness was allowed and celebrated by confining these manifestations into private spaces (Green 201). The historical presence of international celebrities and tourists gave huge proportions to

these balls, which people attend to explore the “exotic” and “extravagant” costumes used by the drag queens (descriptions often used in the websites).

The results do not shed light on more detailed information about the drag queens themselves (their race, class, etc.); thus, it is hard to establish a direct link to the idea of racial democracy (and, especially the frenzy of miscegenation). However, considering the larger picture in which Brazil resides, with a society “that is more socially conservative than its international reputation for freewheeling sexuality would lead one to believe” (Encarnación 83), the embrace and celebration of drag queens reinforce the analysis of *Carnaval* as a “state of exception,” in which marginalized populations (blackness, womanhood, queerness) are celebrated and accepted during a determined period of time. Nevertheless, racial democracy represents a conservative political project, and these exceptions are worth taking into account. Moreover, the drag queens are also commodified to boost this transnational industry (Figure 11); and their exoticness and extravagance recall the ideas of tropicalization, becoming part of the attractions offered by these Third World countries.

Exploring the exotic is also part of the *blocos de rua*. These street parties were described as wild and a place of liberation, in which public display of affection is usual. They can be seen as a more democratic event in *Carnaval*, since they are free; thus, attracting a more diverse audience, not only in terms of class, but also age, gender, sexuality, and race. However, it was not possible to identify how these categories intersect in the many *blocos* through the analysis of the websites only, opening up space for future ethnographic research to understand the power relationships in more depth at this space. Considering the results obtained here, the street parties are the event in *Carnaval* that offers the tourist more chances of

interacting with locals and engage in their adventurous and pioneer side, i.e., new exploratory ways of the country. Here, again, the specific idea of miscegenation embedded in racial democracy does not play a direct role in the sexualization and racialization of a specific body/group, but it contributes to a generalized and stereotypical view of the Brazilian society as “exotic,” “liberating,” “diverse,” and “wild.”

If racial democracy does not affect explicitly the street parties, the same is not true in the case of gay *Carnaval*. Data revealed the centrality of *mulato* to attract gay tourists to Brazil. Both data and text showed the commodification of the young, muscular, abled, brown-skin man, whose figure can be symbolized the same way as the *mulata*, this icon of racial democracy that, seeing as “national objects, they are a territorial extension of the national landscape” (Smith 82). Once again, they reinforce the master v. slaves/colonizer v. colonized dynamics, because they should be available for the tourist consumption.

Interestingly, direct references to sex tourism were only made in the context of queer tourism – and mostly through the text – by mentioning strip tease and go-go dancers’ events, and the existence of saunas. The saunas were indicated during the literature review as a place to find male prostitutes (Mitchell, “Padrinhos gringos” 34). This opens spaces for further investigation and ethnographic research regarding gay sex tourism in order to analyze whether *Carnaval* increases the incidence of sexual encounters with male prostitutes, the situations and conditions under which they happen. Who are the tourists and the male prostitutes?

The high incidence of the images of the *mulato* is also explained by the fact that the majority of the websites focused on “Gay *Carnaval*” or both hetero and gay

options. Additionally, the findings support the lack of material about lesbian sex tourism and evidence the invisibility of this population in the field and the need to include women's voices, regardless of their sexuality in tourism literature, indicating an urgency for further research focusing on the experiences of this population.

Therefore, it may only appear, at this time, that *Carnaval* is an event appealing to middle/upper-class, white gay men, not lesbians, not transgender, and not women.

Additionally, the data informed the needs of constantly reaffirming Rio de Janeiro as a gay-friendly city in a country that is a major queer destination (Gay Travel Index 2017; Embratur 2016). However, as per the findings of the literature review (Madeiro 2017), being gay-friendly is part of one more contradiction of *Carnaval*, since the country has a high incidence of violence against queer population the rest of the year and is still a conservative society based on traditional and religious values. Thus, the existence of a “gay circuit” in *Carnaval* helps to keep the tourist inside their own bubble (Bandyopadhyay and Nascimento 934), preserving this gay-friendly image. The website VamosGay highlights the following about one of the *blocos de rua*: “This is the best reason to break out of the gay tourist bubble of Ipanema/Copacabana! This well-established group has a massive presence in Centro (downtown) which is mostly straight, but gays are always welcomed.” Once again, considering that tourism promotion relies on building a dream and on the experiences of the tourists (which nowadays are available immediately and more accessible because of social media), maintaining and reinforcing this image is important, even if during the rest of the year, it might not be so true.

***Carnaval* – a state of exception**

The days on which *Carnaval* happen are marked by a celebration of diversity, race, and sexuality, when people get together despite their origins to have fun and express themselves without restrictions and prejudice just like the Brazilian society during the rest of the year – at least that is the representational aspect of it. A closer look at this period unfolds a reality quite different. Despite the central roles of the *mulata*, drag queens, and the black population, etc. to perform the world's biggest carnival, once *Carnaval* is over, these marginalized groups are in the midst of the necropolitics executed by the Brazilian state. Drawing on the work developed by Christen A. Smith (49) regarding Bahia's carnival, I would say that *Carnaval* should be looked at as a “state of exception,” when deviations and even political manifestations are allowed without repression. Some *samba* schools and some *blocos de rua* (and audience in general) use this public space to show political dissatisfaction and criticism in comic and satirical ways. The public acceptance and celebration of drag queens, cross-dressing, and black culture could also be evidences of political manifestations. Therefore, to a certain degree, resistance is also part of *Carnaval*. However, in the same way that society allows spaces for the *negro permitido* and the “wanted homosexual,” the resistance and deviations are controlled, part of this “state of exception” that allows society to have its liberating days before committing itself to a period of sacrifices in the name of a State that was supposed to look after its population.

The State necropolitics unravel a harsh reality in the daily lives of these marginalized populations. The symbolic violence exists in different levels as discussed through this paper, in terms of culture erasure and appropriation, to political

underrepresentation, and poor health care, transportation, education, etc. Additionally, this violence is also physical, marked by the war against drugs. As Smith points out:

The presence of drug traffickers in peripheries has been used as an excuse to militaristically occupy and criminalize entire neighborhoods across Brazil. These strategies stigmatize the periphery and their residents as internal enemies to be eliminated by the state, and therefore justify the use of deadly force in the minds of the government and many citizens (Caldeira 2000; Lemgruber et al. 2003; Ramos and Musumeci 2005). (136)

The stigmatization of the periphery further marginalizes these groups, creating space for a conservative political backlash, which Brazil has been facing these past couple of years, after more than a decade of progressive policies to tackle some issues related to poverty and racism.

By still being engaged into the idea of racial democracy, the Brazilian state maintains a political and economic position in the global market that relies on keeping its colonial past central to the tourism industry in order to attract foreign visitors (and capital to the country), conveying the neoliberal logic. As Achille Mbembe points out:

After all, more so than class-thinking (the ideology that defines history as an economic struggle of classes), race has been the ever present shadow in Western political thought and practice, especially when it comes to imagining the inhumanity of, or rule over, foreign peoples. (17)

By erasing the humanity of foreign people and seeing them as the other, the global market forces work to further marginalize certain groups, populations, and countries. If back during the Cold War the United States interfered directly in many countries of South America, including Brazil, supporting military coups to stop communism,

nowadays the interferences are invisible and hidden in the idea of a global economy. In this sense, tourism reinforces colonial ideas, maintaining Brazil in a subordinated position to Western countries, including the U.S. Nevertheless, these colonial ideas also preserve the privileges of the Brazilian elite to keep the wealth concentrated in the hands of a few and reinforce patriarchal and white supremacist ideals.

Brazil's image as a tourist destination resembles these values of the society. This tourism, based on the exploration (and exploitation) of the exotic in Brazil, is deeply rooted in the myth of racial democracy that praised miscegenation and multiculturalism. Besides working to build the tourist imagination, racial democracy also played an important role to affirm these values to the Brazilian society that believed in its moral superiority, denying the existence of racism for a long time.

However, it is essential to affirm that these ideas have not been passively accepted by society; since slavery, people have been actively fighting and resisting in many different ways. The black, feminist, and LGBTQ movements are just some examples of groups organizing in order to question the ideas of patriarchy, white supremacy, etc. For example, the LGBT movement played a decisive role to demand better health care related to AIDS, resulting in the worldly acclaimed AIDS treatment in Brazil (Seffner 63-64). In Bahia, many communities have organized Afro-blocos during *Carnival* to celebrate the African heritage and challenge the classist and racist aspect of the event (Smith 67). MC Carol, who is cited at the beginning of this chapter, is a female funk singer from Rio de Janeiro. She is part of a wave of female singers in a space traditionally consisting of male singers and sexist lyrics; together, they emerge in a space that becomes a platform for their voices and fight (Costa 2016), politicizing funk music. Even the work of many scholars who questioned the myth of racial democracy helped to challenge many public policies. The political

affirmatives that started with the government of the President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and were expanded by President Lula incorporated and translated many of these social movements' questionings. Welfare programs, such as *Bolsa Família*, drastically reduced material poverty of the most deprived sectors of the population; the quota system for universities increased the enrollment of students that historically did not attend the universities. These measures alone do not resolve the lack of access to resources nor change the culture and the values of racial democracy long rooted in society. Still, these programs changed the configuration of the Brazilian society and helped to challenge the idea of racial democracy and to politicize racism, which became part of the political arena.

Limitations and implications of the research

Tourism and sex tourism are not separable activities and they are connected in many levels, starting with the fact that the marketing material used to promote the country helped to attract tourists searching for sexual encounters. The analysis of the websites also revealed a rich material about "Gay *Carnaval*." Therefore, I believe that the biggest limitation of this research was the approach of both queer and heterosexual (sex) tourism. By narrowing the scope, I believe that I could have focused more on the nuances of each territory and further discussed the symbolic aspects of *Carnaval* in each scenario. For example, I did not account for violence during the event, and this could be a topic for other research. I also did not approach the conditions of sex workers in Rio during *Carnaval* and through the rest of the year, which would have enriched the research. In addition, an ethnographic study would have the potential to provide more details about the experiences of tourists and locals during *Carnaval*.

The use of a feminist standpoint was important to understand tourism by analyzing the cultural, social, political, gendered, and historical aspects of the industry, which is structured with different power relations. It also allowed me to look at racial democracy as more than an ideology embraced and spread by the Brazilian government.

To conclude, the elitism of tourism raised many questions. Is it possible to think about tourism as a responsible and sustainable activity in a capitalist world? Is it possible to promote the country without reinforcing unequal power relationships that marginalize certain populations? The World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as “[t]ourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.” I believe that the research can help to improve public policies in order to promote a more sustainable tourism as per the definition presented above, thinking about marginalized populations outside the scope of tourism, as well. However, I hesitate in believing that sustainable tourism would address the needs of all forces involved, considering that transnational tourism is part of a global market that relies on profiting over some groups.

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Curriculum Vita

Graziele Grilo

EDUCATION

M.S. in Women's and Gender Studies
Towson University, Towson, MD

August 2015 – December 2017
GPA: 3.80

Bachelor's Degree in Political Sciences
Teaching Certificate in Social Sciences

March 2010 – July 2012
March 2007 – December 2010

UNICAMP (State University of Campinas), Campinas, SP, Brazil

EXPERIENCE

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Research Intern, Baltimore, MD January 2017 – present

- Formative research study to identify factors contributing to gender-based violence and sexual risk for female university undergraduate students in Ethiopia. Study will ultimately lead to evidenced-based prevention programs
- Co-author and edit qualitative papers for peer-reviewed publication based on coding and comparison results
- Led the writing of preliminary findings and recommended immediate actions

Towson University, Graduate Assistant, Towson, MD

January 2016 – present

- Primary administrative support for the Arts Integration Institute (AII) and the Master's in Interdisciplinary Arts Integration (MAIAI). Includes grant research, writing, and managing granting documentation
- Responsible for faculty contracts, accounts payable, reimbursements
- Assist with programs assessment, compiling annual reports, accreditation
- Manage social media and digital marketing for student recruitment and community outreach
- Plan and execute outreach programs to Maryland high schools and BCCC Refugee Youth Project
- Deliver service-learning class for refugee youth

Graziele Ribeiro Grilo Translation Services, Proprietor, Itatiba, SP, Brazil

September 2012 – present

- Manage a dynamic, full-service translation business including translations, proofreading, development of glossaries, style guides and support documents across English, Portuguese, and Spanish
- Negotiate contracts and manage cash flow
- Teach English as a foreign language to children and adult learners
- Volunteer translator for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR Translator for ART Global Initiative, UNDP, Equator Initiative, UNDP, 2nd World Forum on Local Economic Development

PUBLICATIONS, CONFERENCES, AND WORKSHOPS

Publications

- Graziele Grilo. "Laos." In *Women's Lives Around the World: A Global Encyclopedia, Vol. 3: Asia and the Pacific*, edited by Susan M. Shaw, Nancy Staton Barbour, Patti Duncan, Kryn Freehling-Burton, and Jane Nichols, eds. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO/Greenwood Press, 2017. Print and digital formats.
- Kaufman, M.R., Williams, A.M., Grilo, G., Fleming, C., Gebretsadik, L.A., Fentaye, F.W., Asfaw, S. "We are responsible for the violence and prevention is up to us": *Perceived risk factors for Gender Based Violence among Ethiopian University Students*. Manuscript under review.

Workshops

Elliot School of International Affairs, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

October 2017

- "Women and Social Inclusion in Brazil: A Research Workshop", speaker

Conference Presentations

Southeastern Women's Studies Association, Rock Hill, SC

April 2016

- "An Ode to Mya Hall: TRANSpassing the Boundaries of Social Media" (co-authored with Aji Bakare), presenter

