

Places without Police

Brazilian Visions

Micol Seigel

A banner hangs from the balcony of the São Paulo bar/dance club/community center/political organizing hub *Aparelha Luzia*, declaring the space a *quilombo urbano*, an urban quilombo. The community organizing center *Casa das Pretas* (House of Black Women) in Rio de Janeiro also calls itself a *quilombo urbano*, as does the Black lesbian-owned Rio de Janeiro bar and event space *Resiliência* (Resilience). The protagonists of these activist spaces are drawing on collective memories of *quilombos*, the communities of escaped slaves and others that formed across sixteenth- to nineteenth-century Brazil. This proactive embrace amplifies a live current of historical memory in pursuit of solidarity and survival. This same current also energizes, though without such explicit attribution, another contemporary political formation, one materializing from Brazil's brutal prison system: the *Primeiro Comando da Capital* (First Command of the Capital), or PCC, an organization comprising people in prison, formerly imprisoned people, family members, and neighbors in the districts their cities most heavily police.

In this speculative reflection, I explore the ways contemporary Brazilian activists' deliberate invocations of quilombos, on the one hand, and the PCC, on the other, might open a window onto what I am calling "places without police." Such places model possibilities for social organization that can escape the vicious disciplinary and labor regimes of racial capitalism operative across the Atlantic since the sixteenth century. In the archipelago of social formations contemplated

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here, a range of people in Brazil seek to carve out refuge within some of the cruelest systems the modern world has devised. The metaphor of the archipelago is useful in helping to group a loose arc of dissimilar objects that nonetheless bends toward justice. What they share involves historical relationships to slavery, strikingly varied. One set mobilizes historical memory (of quilombos' resistance to slavery), while the second illuminates actual historical continuities (between slavery and prison, and resistance to both). The patterns they reveal involve not similarities but iterations of the fact that people beset by state violence seek to evade it, occasionally by struggling to forge what some might come to think of as places without police.

Flight

From the earliest days of European colonialism and slavery in the Americas, people ran away. Some of those who escaped their captors formed clandestine communities based on agriculture, trade, barter, kidnapping, theft, and military might. In Brazil, these maroon communities, called quilombos, were particularly long-lived and numerous. The largest of them all was Palmares, located about sixty kilometers inland from Brazil's north Atlantic coast. Palmares warded off sustained Portuguese and Dutch attacks, springing back to vitality over and over again, its tens of thousands of residents including not only runaways from plantation slavery but also soldiers fleeing conscription, native-born creoles, indigenous people, and the poor. Palmares survived from 1605 until 1694, when a Portuguese military force finally destroyed it.¹

The colonial ventures of the sixteenth century do not mark the origins of this fugitive politics, a political philosophy already operative in West Central Africa that Jessica Krug names "Kisama." Krug explores this nonstate politics oriented around the reconstitution of family and community, reciprocal forms of social justice, and "the constant negotiation between the importance of the practice of violence and the equal necessity of not weaving violence into the fabric of the society."² She reminds us that the most important radical imaginaries in this history are those of the many diverse people who inhabited the heterogeneous collection of towns and villages, settled and nomadic, of greatly varying size and duration, named by the umbrella term *quilombo*.

In the centuries to follow, quilombos would offer their potent fuel to diverse political projects. Close on its demise, Palmares was embraced by elite Europeans as raw material for empire building. In his 1730 *Historia da America Portuguesa*, poet, lawyer, and historian Sebastião da Rocha Pita, born in Brazil when the quilombo still bustled beneath the palms, compared his society to the "nobilíssima República" of Rome, lauding Palmares as "a rustic republic, well-organized in its own way."³ This classicist take echoed transatlantically, emerging 150 years later and an ocean away in Portuguese politician and social scientist Joaquim Pedro de Oliveira Martins's 1880 homage. "Of all of the historical examples of slave protest," he elegized,

“Palmares is the most beautiful, the most heroic. It is a black Troy, and its story is an Iliad.”⁴ These authors sought to base Brazil’s American expansion on a Greco-Roman pedestal.

In the late twentieth century, quilombos stirred Brazilians’ revolutionary imaginary, notably during the dictatorial regime that ruled Brazil after the 1964 coup. From exile in Uruguay in 1968, the journalist and historian Décio Freitas wrote mournfully: “These rustic black republics reveal the dream of a social order founded on fraternal equality, and for this reason are incorporated into the revolutionary tradition of the Brazilian people.”⁵ Freitas reached back to the classical examples with “rustic” and “republic,” to the era of liberal democracy with “fraternal equality,” and to the turbulent 1960s with “revolutionary,” tying together past and present, Black and white into a wishful projection of left-national victory.

Pan-African or Afro-diasporic thinkers also long celebrated quilombos, Palmares in particular. Twentieth-century journals such as *Phylon*, *Présence Africaine*, *The Journal of Negro History*, *The Black Scholar*, and *Negro History Bulletin* carried paeans to these forms. One such piece, African American anthropologist Irene Diggs’s “Zumbi and the Republic of Os Palmares,” admirably presented that quilombo and its longtime leader.⁶ Following the article, *Phylon* offered further veneration in a poem by Lucia Trent:

In the vast desert of our blundering
Where man fights brother man,
Where prejudice and greed
Like birds of prey
Cast evil shadows,
You create an oasis
Of wonder and delight.
In these moments of exquisite isolation,
Of immunity from the harsh tensions of the hour,
You create a haven
Where we may drink deeply
Of the waters of security and peace.⁷

Trent’s homage underlines the sense of the quilombo as inspiration and refuge, surrounded by but insulated and markedly different from the harsh racist social relations of the mainstream.

Cultivated memories of quilombos nurtured the tentative social movements pursuing racial justice as Brazil moved toward democracy in the 1980s. Abdias do Nascimento, the poet, actor, dramaturge, and activist who founded the Teatro Experimental do Negro saw a “Quilombist ideal” stirring and supporting black struggle, “an idea-force, a source of energy inspiring models of dynamic organization, since the fifteenth century.”⁸ Nascimento defined a philosophy of

quilombismo, birthed in the vigor of Black nationalism, Pan-African in origin, but with universal implications: “Quilombismo being an anti-imperialist struggle, it articulates itself with Pan-Africanism and sustains a radical solidarity with all peoples of the world who struggle against exploitation, oppression and poverty, as well as inequalities motivated by race, color, religion or ideology.”⁹ Quilombismo in this mode inspired militants in the formal and informal MNU (Movimento Negro Unificado, Unified Black Movement) and continues to inspire Afro-Brazilian and other activists as history, metaphor, and frame.¹⁰ The three present-day projects mentioned above—Aparelha Luzia, Casa das Pretas, and Resiliência—all belong in this tradition. The first, led by the activist Erica Malunguinho, is a magnet for crowds of fans, and Malunguinho herself is adored. Aparelha Luzia was the unofficial campaign headquarters for Malunguinho’s successful run for the São Paulo legislative assembly. Elected in October 2018, she is now the first trans woman to sit on that body.¹¹ Casa das Pretas is the place Marielle Franco, the now globally famous left-wing Afro-Brazilian, lesbian elected politician, had just left, after leading a workshop, when she was assassinated in March 2018. Edmeire Exaltação, one of the coordinators at Casa das Pretas, explains “that’s what we call spaces of black resistance: contemporary quilombo, urban quilombo, or quilombification [*quilombamento*]. Casa das Pretas is also in the habit of using that expression, which is really powerful, politically.”¹² Mindfully embracing this lineage, Casa das Pretas organizes workshops and short courses, events and discussions, tirelessly bringing mostly Afro-descended women together for consciousness-raising and collective support. Resiliência, the only space in the city that prioritizes a lesbian clientele (though it is open to all), has a similar sense of self. Owner-manager Gisela Carvalho readily calls the space an urban quilombo.¹³ These are but three examples of a widespread phenomenon of Black activism reaching to quilombos for historical resonance and encouragement.

All these quilombos, diverse across space and time, represent attempts to fight and protect their affiliates from racialized state violence. As unlike as a large military-agricultural settlement such as Palmares in the seventeenth century was from a small group of wandering gatherers in the nineteenth, as dissimilar as either of those is from an urban community organizing center in 2019, still these contrasting bodies share the determination to structure human relationships in a way that can shelter and preserve a social world. They belong, I want to argue, in the realm that Joy James and Saidiya Hartman have called “the antidote to violence”: regimes oriented around projects of care.¹⁴ Beset by the ravages of New World slave society or postslavery racial capitalism, people carve out a refuge. They create autonomous interstices away from state control, nurturing the commons that erupts into the world of containment from the ever-seething volcano underneath.¹⁵ These are thus projects or spaces we might begin to think of as *places without police*, rejecting the seemingly obvious meaning of that phrase, as I elaborate below.

Another similar project is a contemporary Brazilian social formation that I think lies even more centrally in the tradition Krug calls “Kisama,” though its participants do not deliberately place themselves in that lineage.¹⁶ This is the PCC, São Paulo’s most noteworthy assemblage of people caught up in carceral systems. I am far from the only observer to note the continuity between quilombismo and the widespread phenomenon of informal prisoner organization. A special issue of the *Prison Service Journal* titled “Informal Dynamics of Survival in Latin American Prisons” portrayed “inmate self-governance as a legacy of the long Latin American post-colonial history of marronage, or attempts by systematically impoverished people of colour to find new political order and delimited kinds of interpersonal flourishing beyond the reach of the state.”¹⁷ The particular form this organization took in São Paulo during a recent, bounded historical moment deserves special notice for its determinedly egalitarian ambitions.

Refuge in Cages

The São Paulo prison system might seem an odd place for “oases of wonder,” but it actually makes sense. People innovate in response to need; the more dire the need, the more frequent and intense will be the attempts to address it. In this case of the need to escape, as in so many other aspects, prisons echo their historical ancestor, African chattel slavery.¹⁸ For in Brazil the legacy of the brutal, economically and socially anchoring system of slavery is the brutal, economically and socially anchoring prison system, just as structured by and productive of racial division, inequality, and misery as is its more notorious cousin in the United States.¹⁹

Brazil’s prison system is the third largest in the world, enjoying ignominious distinction not only quantitatively but also for inhumane conditions and spectacular riots, from the 1992 revolt at São Paulo’s Carandiru prison and the crushing state response (exposed to horrified audiences worldwide via Héctor Babenco’s dramatic 2003 film) to the terrible violence in a prison in the northern state of Pará the month before this journal issue went into production.²⁰ Authorities responded to the Carandiru disaster with a series of “reforms” involving large prison closures and a paroxysm of building smaller prisons, distributing people incarcerated in the hugely overcrowded facilities of São Paulo’s urban centers across new institutions throughout the state’s ninety-five thousand square miles. This dispersal spread the nascent PCC.

Born as “reactions to hard-fisted exercises of state power,” Brazilian prisoner organizations crystalized as a way to contend with prison conditions. Scarcity, overcrowding, and understaffing allowed—even encouraged—people in prison to resolve internal disagreements with bloodshed.²¹ The PCC confronted this problem directly. In 2002, roughly ten years after its emergence, it added “Equality” to its founding motto, “Peace, Justice, and Freedom.” This addition signaled a strengthening of its inward-facing commitment to nonviolence, including developing new

methods of conflict resolution. Instead of resorting to physical fights, people in the PCC and in the prisons it controlled would *argue*. The concept of equality provided people “the right to argue their case in non-aggressive disagreements,” observes Karina Biondi.²² This change was major. “That which, in the time before the PCC, was decided by brute force, today is the object of ‘debates.’”²³ Those who do not accept the decisions taken through this process face expulsion, either short-term or permanent. Occasionally (once in over two hundred cases, in one set of documents), the debates mete out a death sentence.²⁴

With this innovation, the PCC profoundly affected prison and free-world life in São Paulo. Indices of sexual violence, homicide, and theft in prison and on the street fell dramatically. Official statistics show an 86 percent drop in prison violence between 2001 and 2014. Most observers attribute even the “drastic and sustained reduction in statewide homicide rates of about 75 percent” to the PCC.²⁵ “Before the Comando,” explained one formerly incarcerated São Paulo man, “prisoners used to rape visitors, abuse them, they extorted the comrades, after the birth of the PCC these things don’t happen anymore. Nowadays you can’t even slap a guy in prison, so killing is unthinkable, in prison or in [the] ghetto.” Another affirmed, showing a concern shared with North American protesters of antiblack police brutality: “They value life. Nowadays life is valuable in the ghetto. . . . there was a general call saying: ‘It’s equality, life gets paid with life, let’s listen to both sides,’ and the deaths stopped.”²⁶

In conversation with me, a group of women in a São Paulo work release program expressed no doubt.²⁷ Between a PCC prison and a non-PCC prison, they all agreed, anybody would choose the one run by the PCC. A non-PCC prison is “*turbulento*,” they said, dangerous and unpredictable. PCC prisons aren’t 100 percent organized, someone said—they’re 110 percent. Even within PCC prisons, in places where the PCC doesn’t reach, there is more conflict. One person remembered an administrator’s complaint that the ten women in a private cell section gave him more trouble than the twenty-eight hundred in general population because the PCC kept order there. Another turned down a private cell because the PCC’s presence made life more bearable in the multiperson cells, despite serious overcrowding.

Outside prison as well, the PCC was a presence in their neighborhoods. The group confirmed that the prohibition against stealing near drug-sale points is enforced. No crime happens there. If you live near a crack distribution site in a poor neighborhood, you live in one of the safest parts of the city. One woman recounted that when her car had been stolen, she went to the PCC contact in her area and the car reappeared the next morning in the spot in front of her house where the thieves had found it. The police never would have done that, she pointed out. Everybody nodded vigorously. The police treat the car as if it were private property, she explained; its loss is your problem. This striking comment shows a widespread

understanding that the PCC holds a different understanding of the ownership of goods for those who live under its auspices.

PCC financial records confirm that the organization has a heretical take on private property. A trove of PCC bookkeeping documents obtained through police showed drug-trade profits “not paid out to an ‘owner’ or ‘shareholders’ but rather used to provide collective goods. After paying off bulk drug purchases, revenues primarily financed an elaborate transportation network for members’ families to far-flung prisons on visitation days and other member welfare benefits, such as funeral costs.”²⁸ A sense that property isn’t exactly private undergirds the PCC’s informal markets. With that, the PCC works to ensure people never call—and never need to call—the police.

A Place without Police?

That the PCC shrinks the police presence in the neighborhoods it controls is only the smallest part of why it might constitute a social form without police. Yet before we explore the other reasons, let us pause to consider why it might be useful even to think about such forms. What is the point of this thought experiment?

One is that the struggle against the violence inflicted by police is feeble if its agents only understand police as uniformed, civilian, crime-fighting government employees. Such a definition channels protest into minor, ineffective reforms. It hides the nature of the police power, and therefore the forms of response that might actually be effective. Though not always obvious because police and state are animated by real people who differ from each other in interests and investments, the police power is a direct expression of the power of the state. Police, one could say, are the human-scale expression of the state. “Every police agent embodies a minute replica of the state . . . the police are the state’s most condensed governing organ.”²⁹ Police realize—they make real—the core power of the state: the power to monopolize legitimate violence.³⁰

A second reason to look for places without police is to coax our imaginations outside of the state form that dominates so much thinking about power, even among progressives and radicals. Such places can help us wonder how else people have organized societies so as to evade the injustice and misery imposed by the state form aligned with capital. Existing places without police will surely be imperfect, but they might model different ways to conceive political and social life.

Prisoner organization clearly disrupts the state’s monopoly on violence, as did quilombos stealthily trading with and appropriating from their erstwhile captors.³¹ Observers of “carceral self-rule” elsewhere in Latin America see clearly that it “displac[es] the State from functions traditionally considered its monopoly,” namely, violence: “the state’s ceding of the prisons and other areas is toxic to its legitimacy and ability to hold a monopoly on force as a key component of the rule of law.”³² Yet

many scholarly approaches still attempt to fit these bodies into a state paradigm, whether as alternate state forms, counterstates, mirror images of states, partners to states, signs of absent states, or other forms that do not displace the centrality of the state conceptually.³³ It seems difficult to imagine that these formations might simply be something else, something different, something for which we do not (yet) have a name. Krug insists instead, usefully, that quilombos drew on “nonstate fugitive political ideologies” to transcend “the bloody hegemonies of capital and state,” constantly balancing between rejecting statism and capital and the need to “negotiate with such powers for survival.”³⁴ One could say the same for the PCC.

The PCC is fascinating, then, because despite being birthed and bathed in violence, it guides social relations among its members and the much larger group of nonmembers in the surrounding society without operating via a monopoly on violence. The PCC also bucks the state form in that it collectivizes resources, resisting private property and the logics of capital, which—given the inextricable tangle of state and market in the modern world—only a nonstate entity has the opportunity to do.³⁵

Some scholars argue that the PCC absolutely *does* claim “a monopoly . . . on the legitimate use of force, banning killings except those sanctioned by its prison-based tribunals.”³⁶ Biondi counters that while originally the PCC reserved the use of force, after the adoption of equality as a key principle, its practitioners mostly “rejected their monopoly over violence.”³⁷ Perhaps it is rigid state-thinking that makes any infliction of death look like evidence of a monopoly on force. Could death, the ultimate sanction, be anything else? Yes, according to the group’s lived logics, as Biondi translates them: death connotes the operation of the principle of equality. “Life is paid with life.” This may not be equality as thinkers loyal to Enlightenment concepts would define it, but something closer to parity, perhaps, or reciprocity. Actions, they say, have “consequences,” an emic concept for the PCC.³⁸ Further, PCC affiliates understand the death sentence as a decision of the entire social body, not that of a designated set of violence workers we might call police.

This framing will certainly be contentious to the many observers who refuse to admit anything positive about the PCC, citing the group’s involvement in drug distribution, its willingness to kill police officers, the bloody conflicts with members of a rival group in Rio de Janeiro, and the death sentences meted out in debates, even if rare. Such critics argue that people are terrified of the PCC, that its growth and hegemony come as much from fear as from deserved legitimacy, and that it has become more violent and less egalitarian as it has expanded. They object that it is convenient for PCC members to see themselves in rosy colors.³⁹ These points are largely valid.

These arguments are often made, however, as if anyone who disagreed with them were a credulous naïf who saw in the PCC a postmodern Robin Hood, nobly

egalitarian and redistributive. Yet out-of-hand dismissal and naive embrace are not the only two possible positions to take on the PCC. Clearly the PCC is and was no idyll, its “brothers” (the term for its inside members) no angels. It is an often cruel, street-hardened, drug-dealing, evangelical-leaning, sexist patriarchy. But after 2002, when it added “equality” to its motto and began to attempt to work through debate rather than punishment, it experimented with a horizontal and nonstate mode of organization. Its success since then has been astounding: not only did the group grow to become hegemonic in over 90 percent of São Paulo’s prisons, but it also expanded to all other Brazilian states and at least five other countries.⁴⁰ It also has “been able to *extinguish* cases of sexual violence and drastically reduce the number of homicides in the prisons of São Paulo.”⁴¹ The PCC’s flaws, serious as they are, exist alongside its breathtaking success in diminishing violence in a way the “democratic” Brazilian state could not.⁴² This is the clearest evidence that the PCC, at least in some of its many and varied expressions across place and time, has been a project of care, seeking autonomy from the state violence which surrounds it, and an antidote to violence within. This is an effective strike toward what might be conceived as a place without police.

In *The Hawthorn Archive*, Avery Gordon explores a mind-set she calls an “other utopianism.” Gordon means to point to the ways people “in the interstices of organized abandonment by the state” carve out courageous, ambitious polities. “This other utopianism is immanent,” she writes, “often modeled best by those bound in place and time and lacking the capacity to escape, such as prisoners.”⁴³ Note that Gordon contends not simply that people in prison generate the other utopianism *also*, but that they do it *best*. In its most egalitarian moments and places, the PCC did precisely this, taking bold moves to create a nonstate form that might mitigate some of the intense violence confronting Brazil’s urban poor and Afro-descended citizens. In this struggle, PCC members and contemporary activists who invoke the legacy of quilombos to create spaces of autonomy and care, such as Aparelha Luzia, Casa das Pretas, and Resiliência, inhabit neighboring islands. Without a sense of each other as allies or kin, they are all reacting against the inequality that limits their opportunities and constrains their thriving, and they strive to generate its opposite: a place without police. Scattered across a shared social landscape, they produce portraits of better versions of our world. Once again, Abdias do Nascimento models this revisionist longing: “*Quilombo* does not mean escaped slave, as the conventional definitions say. It means fraternal and free reunion, or encounter; solidarity, living together, existential communion. Quilombist society represents an advanced stage in sociopolitical and human progress in terms of economic egalitarianism.”⁴⁴ This gorgeous vision offers an invaluable glimpse into a possibility of thriving. As Biondi trusts, “the analytical repertoire of their minor knowledge can be great sources of inspiration for our struggles.”⁴⁵ That is my hope as well.

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Notes

1. Carneiro, *O quilombo dos Palmares*; Ennes, *As guerras nos Palmares*; Gomes, *Historias de quilombolas*; Gomes, "Peasants, Maroons"; Krug, *Fugitive Modernities*; Miki, "Fleeing into Slavery"; Reis, "Quilombos e revoltas escravas no Brasil."
2. Krug, *Fugitive Modernities*, 147.
3. Rocha Pita, *Historia da America Portuguesa*, Book 8, paragraph 29, p. 325.
4. Martins, *O Brazil e as colonias portuguesas*, 64, cited in Anderson, "The Quilombo of Palmares," 550.
5. Freitas, *Palmares*, 210, cited in Anderson, "The Quilombo of Palmares," 550.
6. Blair, "Mouvements afro-brésiliens de libération"; Chapman, "The Negro Numantia"; Clarke, "African Cultural Continuity"; Diggs, "Zumbi and the Republic of Os Palmares"; Kent, "An African State in Brazil"; Lara, "Traite négrière et résistance africaine"; McHardy, "The Other America"; Porter, "The Negro in the Brazilian Abolition Movement"; Reddick, "Glorious Palmares"; Rout, "Race and Slavery in Brazil"; Trent, "Oasis of Wonder"; Warren, "Palmares."
7. Trent, "Oasis of Wonder."
8. Nascimento, "Quilombismo," 153.
9. Nascimento, "Quilombismo," 155.
10. Farfán, *Black Bodies, Black Rights*; Krug also observes a range of such projects in *Fugitive Modernities*, 147.
11. Sanz, "Aparelha Luzia"; Aparelha Luzia, Facebook page. On Malunguinho, see Machado, "Erica Malunguinho." The information about the banner is from the author's in-person visit, September 2019.
12. "É assim q estamos nomeando os espaços de resistência negra: quilombo contemporâneo, quilombo urbano ou aquilombamento. A Casa das Pretas também costuma usar esta expressão, que politicamente é muito forte." Personal communication with author (via What'sApp), June 6, 2019.
13. Personal communication, Vila da Penha, June 15, 2019.
14. The formal attribution I can find is to Saidiya Hartman, in a talk at "In the Wake: A Salon in Honor of Christina Sharpe, 2017." Following Ruthie Gilmore, I understand violence as "the cause of premature deaths" (Gilmore, "Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference," 16).
15. Harney and Moten, *The Undercommons*.
16. Krug, *Fugitive Modernities*.
17. Darke and Garces, "Surviving in the New Mass Carceral Zone," 8. This is part of the long tradition described in Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.
18. Particularly useful in the elaboration of the continuities between slavery and prison: Dayan, *The Law Is a White Dog*; Haley, *No Mercy Here*; Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*; Murakawa, *The First Civil Right*; Oshinsky, *Worse than Slavery*.
19. Mariner, *O Brasil atrás das grades*; Pimenta, *Por trás das grades*; Adorno and Salla, "Organized Criminality in Prisons." For extensive citation and discussion of the great body of work on mass incarceration in the United States, see Seigel, *Violence Work*.
20. Babenco, *Carandiru*; "Massacre em presídio do Pará."

21. Biondi, "Prison Violence, Prison Justice," 341–43; Buckley, "Riots Point to Overcrowding"; Feltran, "Governo que produz crime"; Harvard Human Rights Program, "Five Years After"; King and Valensia, "Power, Control, and Symbiosis"; Marques, "'Liderança', 'proceder' e 'igualdade'"; Denyer Willis, *Killing Consensus*. On the encouragement of prisoner-on-prisoner violence see White, "The Concept of 'Less Eligibility.'"
22. Biondi, "Prison Violence, Prison Justice," 344.
23. Biondi, "Políticas prisioneiras e gestão penitenciária," 558, my translation. The internal quotation marks designate words that PCC members and affiliates inflect with specific, slightly unusual meaning.
24. Lessing and Denyer Willis, "Legitimacy in Criminal Governance," 598. Feltran notes punishments of "warnings, beatings, expulsions, prohibitions" in "Governo que produz crime," 242, though in the period before 2001–6, he notes greater violence, 237.
25. Lessing and Denyer Willis, "Legitimacy in Criminal Governance," 584; Feltran, "Governo que produz crime," 233; Biondi, "Prison Violence, Prison Justice," 344; Estatísticas Criminais, Secretaria da Segurança Pública de São Paulo, www.ssp.sp.gov.br/estatistica/.
26. Biondi, "Rap, Religion and Crime in the Prison," 46–47; see also Alves, "Blood in Reasoning," 62; Alves, *The Anti-Black City*; Marques, "'Liderança', 'proceder' e 'igualdade'"; Feltran, *Irmãos*; Feltran, "Crime e castigo na cidade."
27. I led three discussion series at a government institution with work release program participants, one including my students from the University of São Paulo. One day in June 2019, following a thought exercise on the social and legal meanings of "crime," the conversation turned to the PCC. I consider these interlocutors not research subjects but experts, like the activists I cite by name, even as I withhold names, the specific date, and place, for their privacy and safety.
28. Lessing and Denyer Willis, "Legitimacy in Criminal Governance," 585; see also Darke, "Inmate Governance in Brazilian Prisons."
29. Seri, "All the People Necessary Will Die to Achieve Security," 250; see also Agamben, "From the State of Control to a Praxis of Destituent Power"; Tomlins, "Necessities of State"; Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis*.
30. Weber is not the only theorist who centers violence as the defining quality of the state; in addition to pre-Weberian, Marxist, and Foucauldian conceptualizations, political theorists since Machiavelli and Hobbes have "recognized that, whatever else they do, governments organize and, wherever possible, monopolize violence"; Tilly, "War Making and State Making," 171; Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*; see also Datta, "Security & the Void," 223; Gilmore, "Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference," 16; Bittner, "The Capacity to Use Force."
31. See also the people discussed in Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.
32. Antillano, "When Prisoners Make the Prison," 26; and Macaulay, "The Policy Challenges of Informal Prisoner Governance," 52–53 (and "carceral self-rule" in both).
33. Alves points this out in "Blood in Reasoning," 65, and *The Anti-Black City*, 177–78, citing H. L. T. Quan's denunciation of "a scholarly 'state addiction'" that pulls all critique of the state into "a script that renders the state as the referent of justice and sociality with no consideration for 'self-organized forms of life' that refuse to be controlled by the state"; Krug adds a thorough, grounded rejection of "the bloody hegemonies of capital and state" (*Fugitive Modernities*, 18). "Parallel state" suffused the mainstream media's

- treatment of the PCC, Marques notes in “‘Liderança,’ ‘proceder’ e ‘igualdade,’” 333n40, trying to resist the trend; Biondi critiques the idea that the PCC “mirrors” a state model in “Prison Violence, Prison Justice,” 341. For state focus, see Lessing and Denyer Willis, “Legitimacy in Criminal Governance”; Denyer Willis, *Killing Consensus*; “parastate” in Godoy and Paes Manso, “20 Anos de PCC,” 29; “absent” in Dias, *PCC*; and an adjacent focus on citizenship in Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship*.
34. Krug, *Fugitive Modernities*, 3, 18, 147.
 35. Abrams, “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State”; Graeber, *Debt*; Hall, “The State in Question,” 23; Kelley, “What Did Cedric Robinson Mean”; Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy*; Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*; Poulantzas, *The Poulantzas Reader*; Trouillot, “The Anthropology of the State”; and for a working-through of this question more thoroughly, Seigel, *Violence Work*.
 36. Lessing and Denyer Willis, “Legitimacy in Criminal Governance,” 589; see also Denyer Willis, *Killing Consensus*, 93; Biderman et al., “Pax Monopolista and Crime”; Feltran, “Governo que produz crime,” 237; Dias, *PCC*, chap. 7; Godoy and Paes Manso, “20 Anos de PCC,” 29.
 37. Biondi, *Sharing This Walk*, 77. Biondi elsewhere comments that PCC is neither at the margins of the state nor the sign of an absent state but is engaged with the state, putting administrative decisions and institutional policies “in movement” and producing changes in prison management and public security (“Movement between and beyond Walls,” 25); see also Darke, “Inmate Governance in Brazilian Prisons.”
 38. Biondi, *Sharing This Walk*, 86.
 39. Adorno and Salla, “Organized Criminality in Prisons”; Dias and Salla, “Formal and Informal Controls and Punishment,” 22; Feltran, *Irmãos*; Godoy and Paes Manso, “20 Anos de PCC”; Paes Manso and Dias, *A guerra*.
 40. “Hegemonic” in Biondi, “Prison Violence, Prison Justice,” 346; Feltran, “Governo que produz crime”; Dias, *PCC*; Alves, “Blood in Reasoning,” 67, 69. On the PCC’s geographic reach, see Lessing and Denyer Willis, “Legitimacy in Criminal Governance,” 584.
 41. Biondi, “Prison Violence, Prison Justice,” 346 (my emphasis).
 42. Here I follow Alves, *The Anti-Black City*, 15.
 43. Gordon, *The Hawthorn Archive*, viii.
 44. Nascimento, “Quilombismo,” 161.
 45. Biondi in Besteman, Biondi, and Burton, “Authority, Confinement, Solidarity, and Dissent,” 4.

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