

**“Nós Vamos Invadir sua Praia:” Race and Class Tensions on Rio’s South Zone Beaches**  
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This paper is part of a larger book project in which I explore how racial ideas permeate the daily lives of Rio’s residents across race and class lines. In my book, entitled “Race and the Brazilian Body: Blackness, Whiteness, and Everyday Language in Rio de Janeiro” (University of California Press, 2017), I argue that *cariocas* carefully “read” the body for racial signs, suggesting that the amount of whiteness or blackness that a body displays is determined not only through observations of phenotype, including skin color, hair texture, and facial features, but also through careful attention paid to cultural and linguistic practices. In particular, I seek to understand how racial meaning is being negotiated, even when Rio residents do not explicitly talk about race. In this paper, I examine the practice of reading bodies but avoiding talk about race as they play out in what we might call a politics of the beach.

In the mid-1980s, then governor of Rio de Janeiro, Leonel Brizola, allowed buses to access the Túnel Rebouças, offering a still long but more direct route from impoverished suburbs to the city’s prime beaches. While South Zone beaches had been accessible to nearby *favela* residents who were also poor and nonwhite, infrastructural improvements brought about a radical change, as millions of Rio’s most physically distant and socially marginalized residents were introduced to the most sophisticated and urbane parts of their own city and allowed to partake in the “*delícias do mar*” (Paixão and Leite 1996:72). Drawing on the controversy and panic that ensued from this decision, a São Paulo cover band, *Ultraje a Rigor*, released a megahit in 1985 entitled, “*Nós Vamos Invadir Sua Praia*” (We are going to invade your beach). The song title was meant as a double-entendre, suggesting first that a São Paulo rock group would take over the Rio airwaves. At the same time, the group offered a social critique of the growing fear of crime and

violence on some of the country’s most prominent beaches—all located in Rio de Janeiro—including Copacabana, Ipanema, and Leblon. As historian Bert Barickman documents, ever since it became fashionable to tan and sun oneself on the sand (starting in the 1920s), these beaches had easily been recognizable as a “white space” (2009:200). Thirty years after buses began shuttling in North Zone residents and poor suburbanites, a sharp contrast remains between what these scenic beaches look like mid-week and off-season, when only nearby residents with leisure time can afford to lounge on stretches of sparsely populated sand, and the frenetic scene of hot summer weekends, when up to hundreds of thousands of scantily-clad bodies turn the beach into a standing-room only affair.

I begin by examining this song as it offers a nice introduction into how manners and “proper” bodily comportment came to stand in for concerns over new experiences of unavoidable racial and social contact, as well as fears of crime and violence. The rock group narrates the song through the perspective of poor shantytown residents who have recently been granted beach access. The full lyrics are presented, in Example 1:

**Example 1: *Nós Vamos Invadir Sua Praia* (We are going to invade your beach)**

<i>Daqui do morro dá pra ver tão legal</i>	From here on the hill we can see so well
<i>O que acontece aí no seu litoral</i>	What’s going on down on your coastline
<i>Nós gostamos de tudo, nós queremos é mais</i>	We like it all, what we want is more
<i>Do alto da cidade até a beira do cais</i>	From the height of the city, to the ports
<i>Mais do que um bom bronzado</i>	But more than a good tan
<i>Nós queremos estar do seu lado</i>	We want to be by your side
<i>Nós ‘tamo’ entrando sem óleo nem creme</i>	We’re coming without oil or lotion
<i>Precisando a gente se espreme</i>	If need be, we’ll squeeze ourselves in
<i>Trazendo a farofa e a galinha</i>	Bringing manioc flour and chicken
<i>Levando também a vitrolinha</i>	Taking also our turntables [for records]
<i>Separa um lugar nessa areia</i>	Make space for us on the sand
<i>Nós vamos chacoalhar a sua aldeia</i>	We are going to shake up your neighborhood
<i>[Refrão] Mistura sua laia</i>	[Chorus] Get mixed up with our breed

<i>Ou foge da raia</i>	Or leave the ring
<i>Sai da tocaia</i>	Get out of your hideaway
<i>Pula na baia</i>	Jump over the fence
<i>Agora nós vamos invadir sua praia</i>	We are going to invade your beach now
<i>[Refrão de novo]</i>	[Chorus repeats]
<i>Agora se você vai se incomodar</i>	Now if this is going to bother you
<i>Então é melhor se mudar</i>	It's better for you to move
<i>Não adianta nem nos desprezar</i>	It won't help to despise us
<i>Se a gente acostumar a gente vai ficar</i>	If we get used to it, we will stay
<i>A gente tá querendo variar</i>	We're looking for a change of pace
<i>E a sua praia vem bem a calhar</i>	And your beach seems to suit us
<i>Não precisa ficar nervoso</i>	You don't need to get nervous
<i>Pode ser que você ache gostoso</i>	It could be that you actually like it
<i>Ficar em companhia tão saudável</i>	Being in such healthy company
<i>Pode até lhe ser bastante recomendável</i>	Could even be recommended for you
<i>A gente pode te cutucar</i>	We might poke you
<i>Não tenha medo, não vai machucar</i>	Don't be afraid, it won't hurt

For the purposes of my discussion today, I am most interested in how ideas about blackness freely circulate in the absence of visibly dark-skinned Brazilians in the video and without overt racial references in the lyrics. Instead, the song includes what Brodwyn Fischer has called “racially tinged social language” (2004:48). In the first line: *O morro*, meaning hill, refers to the fact that several of Rio’s largest *favelas* climb the hills close to the famous South Zone beaches. The group then sings: “*Mais do que um bom bronzeado, nós queremos estar do seu lado,*” which implicitly suggests that even poor people of color should have the right to “tan” on the beach next to the white and the wealthy. Lines in the chorus tell listeners to “*mistura sua laia*” (get mixed up with our breed), and offer the tongue-in-cheek critique that this mixture might even be “*saudável*” (healthy) for the middle class. Of course, the *favelas* and suburbs where dark-skinned people live are still readily associated with disease and a lack of health (and healthcare).

The lyrics and video serve to remind listeners that displaying proper beach behavior requires a level of casual confidence and familiarity (Khan 2011), as well as the right cultural capital. In her study of Rio's beach culture, Patrícia Farias refers to this type of beachgoer as "*o habitué ... aquele sujeito totalmente treinado nas técnicas corporais da praia*" (Farias 2007:272). To humiliate the "new" suburban residents who do not demonstrate the right bodily habitus (Bourdieu 1984), band members include in the lyrics their desire to bring along a record player, which is an anachronism, even in 1985. The band's own intrusion into the physical space of Rio's coveted beaches allude to the "real" intruders that more privileged Rio beachgoers began to encounter in greater numbers in the 1980s. While *Ultraje* seems to mock Rio residents for their fear of social and racial mixture, the connections drawn between race and manners made poor black people the real targets of the humor of their song and helped justify their exclusion from desirable city spaces.

Early fears that increased cross-class and interracial contact on the beach would result in experiences of crime and violence were dramatically realized with the first televised *arrastão*. On a hot summer Sunday in 1992, with reports of 600,000 people packed into the 8 kilometers of sand shared by Ipanema and Copacabana beaches, several fights broke out amongst suburban youth. Panicked, middle-class beach-goers left the sand and ran to the sidewalk and city streets, while a camera-crew filmed, and groups of youth stole bags that were left behind amidst the chaos. As Geert Banck describes, "the metaphor of *arrastão* conveniently condenses the fear for a total clash, for something massive and violent that will sweep everything away" (1994: 53). Regardless of how often they actually occur, *arrastões* have taken on a very clear social reality in Rio, and videos, often filmed by spectators on cell phones, are frequently televised showing panicked beachgoers fleeing the beach while large groups of brown and black male youth take

over the shore, and police (sometimes brutally) drag off dark-skinned suspects.<sup>1</sup> As Patricia Farias (1999) notes, “the rare cases of collective violence (*arrastões*) signal as critical events, the ever present threat of racial conflict.”

The Brazilian press continues to feed the desire to reflect on beach, body, and racial politics, couched within a broader concern over public safety. I turn here to analyze one especially rich feature article on “Brazilian life” published in *Veja*. In a four-page spread filled with photos, maps, and a “slang” sidebar, authors Roberta Paixão and Virginia Leite (1996) rehashed the critical themes of crime, violence, and social/racial conflict, and their connection to bodily comportment, in colorful detail. Entitled “*Guerra Na Areia: O Subúrbio Invade as Praias da Zona Sul do Rio e Expõe o Muro Invisível do Preconceito*,” their very title invokes the expression, “*invadir sua praia*,” made famous by the offbeat São Paulo rock band. Unlike in the music video, however, the “war” images in this article are very real: The very first photo showcases police officers with clubs patting down a line of brown and black-skinned male youth who wait spread eagle against the wall that separates the sand from the sidewalk. Images of invasion accompany the police violence: A photo taken from above shows a section of the beach that is wall-to-wall people, with hardly any space left to forge a path to the water, and a computer-generated map entitled “*Atalhos para o mar*” (Shortcuts to the sea) foregrounds the new highways linking the suburbs to Rio’s coast with colorful directional arrows.

Unavoidable social and racial contact pervades the remaining images in the *Veja* newsread: One large photo zooms in on the black face of an adolescent boy. A wide grin beams out from below mirrored sunglasses that reflect the images of the dark-skinned friends and family who accompany him. This happy image is labeled with the incongruous caption, “José

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example: <http://globotv.globo.com/rede-globo/fantastico/t/edicoes/v/tumulto-assustabanhistas-na-praia-de-ipanema-no-rio-de-janeiro/3629578/>

Marcos, Ipanema, ‘*A polícia só revista pobre*’” (Police only search poor people). On the last page, a light-skinned mother, described as an education specialist who is accompanied by a friend and her children, quips “*É muito tumult.*” A sidebar next to the photo of the family with young children is entitled “*O idioma da galera: Algumas expressões usadas pelos novos frequentadores das praias da Zona Sul.*” Together, the images link implied crime and violence and the necessity of police intervention with images of blackness, invasion, and signs of cultural and linguistic difference.

Like the *Ultraje do Rigor* rock group, the authors take up an ambivalent stance towards these recent changes. On the one hand, they seem to mock the fear of privileged beach goers who are unable to calmly share the beach:

*O contato entre peles de matizes tão diferentes gera um clima de instabilidade e atrito cultural. Um olhar atravessado, um esbarro ou uma simples guerra de areia bastam para detonar a multidão bronzada: bate em fuga, histérica.*

The contact between such different shades of skin creates a climate of instability and cultural conflict. One sideways glance, a jostle or a simple sand fight is all it takes to set off the tanned crowd: They run away, hysterical. (Paixão and Leite 1996:72)

And yet, they also explain this “war in the sand” by pointing to starkly different realities that, they suggest, have created dramatically different types of people.

*Em areias [as praias] democratizadas à força, mauricinhos e patricinhas guardados em edifícios e condomínios cercados de grades por todos os lados convivem lado a lado com funkeiros acostumados ao dia-a-dia violento das favelas. É um choque.*

In areas [the beaches] democratized by force, privileged sons and daughters guarded in buildings and condominiums surrounded on all sides by fences now live side-by-side with funk fans who are used to the violent day-to-day reality of the *favelas*. It’s a shock. (Paixão and Leite 1996:72)

The “*choque*” is not that some Rio residents live amidst such terrible violence, but rather that Rio’s wealthier residents now share the beach with them. Along similar lines, the slippage

between youth raised within a climate of violence and a youthful (more innate) disposition towards violence (suggesting that those brought up in a climate of violence must necessarily be violent themselves) is facilitated by discussion of the stigmatized and racialized youth culture of “funk” music. The authors carefully explain this different “culture” to their readers, emphasizing the relationship between funk dances and the drug gangs who control *favelas*, where territories are demarcated and deadly enemy battle lines are drawn. Funk music, gangs, and *favelas* are all subtle references to or stand-ins for blackness, though, as in the *Ultraje* song, race is not directly mentioned here. They interview both youthful beach goers and hardworking ambulatory beach vendors to prove their point that violence is normalized for these individuals:

*‘Se eu for sozinho para a Barra, saio com o corpo todo dolorido, cheio de hematomas’, conta César Luís Coelho Lopes, 17 anos, frequentador do Recreio dos Bandeirantes. Morador do Morro da Chacrinha, na Zona Oeste, ele só pode ir à praia nos pontos da sua galera. ‘Cada um tem uma parte da praia para ficar. É igual ao pessoal dos condomínios, que não se dá um com o outro’, compara o vendedor Alex Santana Vieira, 19 anos, que mora na longínqua Vila Kennedy, bairro criado nos idos dos anos 60 com a remoção de algumas favelas da Zona Sul.*

‘If I went alone to Barra [beach], I would leave in pain, with a body full of black-and-blues,’ explains César Luís Lopes, 17 years old, who frequents the beach at Recreio dos Bandeirantes. A resident of the “Ranch Hill” [the name of a *favela*], in the West Zone, he can only go to the beach at the bus stops of his gang. ‘Everyone has their own part of the beach to hang out on. It’s the same as the people in the condominiums, who don’t get along with each other,’ compares the vendor Alex Santana Vieira, 19 years old, who lives in the remote Vila Kennedy, a neighborhood created way back in the 1960s with the removal of some of the South Zone *favelas*. (Paixão and Leite 1996:73)

The comparisons offered by their interviewees are intended to speak for themselves, and the gap between two very different realities should be obvious to the reader: Middle-class *cariocas* who live in condominium buildings may not know their neighbors at all; they certainly do not worry about physical violence should they choose to sit down next to the wrong middle-class crowd. There are, of course, many ways that the beach is divided up by social groups (Farias 2007), but “civilized” residents do not resort to physical violence to negotiate their place

in the sand. As the authors also emphasize, *favela* residents have already been removed from these spaces—decades ago—as their neighborhoods were destroyed and their residents dispersed to the far ends of the city to make way for upscale development. That they are back, and bringing daily experiences of violence with them, is set up for readers as clear cause for concern.

As in the *Ultraje* song, fears of crime and violence reveal more entrenched concerns over interracial contact. There is the risk of physical contact of very exposed and vulnerable bodies and the dismay over aesthetics and offending behaviors. Increased access to the beach means that those from the far ends of Rio still travel hours each way to get to the beaches that are mere blocks away for others. But their remoteness has shrunk with the infrastructural improvement of new highways, and the authors remind readers that these man-made wonders cannot improve upon the limitations set by Mother Nature herself: The beaches aren't getting any bigger to accommodate additional visitors, and in some places, such as Leblon, Rio's bounty has shrunk, along with the shore. Less sand and more bodies means increased risk of undesirable contact:

*'Eu só venho à praia com amigos e, mesmo assim, abro bem a canga para os suburbanos não se aproximarem muito', conta a professora Gabriela Raphael Cabral, 24 anos, moradora no condomínio Alfa Barra, a menos de 100 metros das areias da Barra da Tijuca. ... 'Cresci no Arpoador mas nos domingos não vou mais a praia. Não se vê mais gente bonita. Só dá suburbano', queixa-se o professor de educação física Frederico Mello, 33 anos.*

'I only come to the beach with friends and, even then, I open up my blanket wide so that suburbanites don't get too close,' says the teacher Gabriela Raphael Cabral, 24 years old, a resident of the condominium Alfa Barra, less than 100 meters from the sand in Barra da Tijuca. ... 'I grew up in Arpoador but on Sundays I don't go to the beach anymore. You don't see beautiful people anymore. You only find suburbanites,' complains Physical Education teacher Frederico Mello, 33 years old. (Paixão and Leite 1996:74)

This connection between beauty and the beach is not superfluous. Beyond the imagery of war and invasion and amidst the fears of crime and violence, there is much discussion amongst the middle class of cultural "clash," experienced as a violent assaulting of their senses. Local

beach denizens must now listen to the loud sounds of funk music and *favela* slang; they smell the foods brought to the beach to sustain those who cannot return home for a proper meal; and they visually endure the breaching of the latest fashion trends from “*brega*” or “tacky” suburbanites (Paixão and Leite 1996:72). Indeed, the *Veja* article reads, in part, as etiquette or advice column, in the vein of popular socialite and advice columnist Danuza Leão (see, for example, Leão 1992): Offending behaviors include shaved heads, shirtless men, mirrored sunglasses, Rastafari necklaces, big watches, the use of tanning oils, and the bleaching of body hair from head to toe (Paixão and Leite 1996:74). As the authors relay the insult of it all, here on Brazil’s most renowned beaches, in the birthplace of cosmopolitan fashion and style (see also Banck 1994), they simultaneously draw on racial ideas that are centuries-old and well-defined, especially within the colonial era. Then, as now, privileged people believed that behaviors and bodily comportment revealed inner, invisible (in)capacities for cultural refinement (Stoler 2002). Their concern over providing a “civilizing influence” for the nonwhite natives included “moral understanding of how to inhabit a place with propriety” (Anderson 2003:4). The *Veja* article is quite clear on the distinction between those with vs. those without culture (*sem cultura*):

*Demonstração eloqüente da zoeira é o som ensurdecidor de seus megarrádios sintonizados a todo o volume em programas de funk. Doa a quem doer, repetem estribilhos ingênuo: ‘Cabelo, bebelo, bebelo, elo, elo, elo’. Roqueiros, amantes de MPB, jazz ou clássico escondem a careta ou o sorriso de desdém. ‘Incomodados? Que se mudem’, pensa a galera.*

An eloquent demonstration of the commotion is the deafening sound of their megaradios tuned in high volume to funk programs. Hurting whomever it hurts, they repeat the ingenuous choruses: ‘*Cabelo, bebelo, bebelo, elo, elo, elo.*’ Rock fans, lovers of MPB [Popular Brazilian Music], jazz, or classical music hide their grimace or smiles of disdain. ‘Bothered? Then move,’ thinks the gang. (Paixão and Leite 1996:73)

These global ideas linking lack of sophistication, cultural imitation, and racial inferiority, suggesting that nonwhites are “highly impressionable, unable to reflect on their own conditions,

and capable only of mimicking those above them” (McElhinny 2005:184), are also well established within the history of Brazilian race relations:

The pure Negroes will never be able, not even the most advanced representatives of the race, to be assimilated completely into white culture; their capacity for civilization – their ‘civilizability’ so to speak, does not extend beyond merely imitating, more or less imperfectly, the habits and customs of the whites. Between the Negro’s mentality and that of the Causcasian lies a substantial and irreducible difference which no social or cultural pressure no matter how long it may be continued, can possibly overcome. (in Oliveira Vianna’s *Evolução do Povo Brasileiro* (1933), quoted in Degler 1986:121)

Proper bodily comportment and the capacity for cultural refinement continue to be directly contrasted with a lack of discipline and an innate propensity for violence. This racialized chain–lack of culture, lack of discipline, lack of bodily control–explains why *cariocas* feel so comfortable reading bodies for signs of blackness that include, but are not reduceable to, visual signifiers of race. Bodily conduct is seen to directly predict the capacity for crime and violence and the relative safety/vulnerability offered to others, as in this intricate example which predicts acts of crime and violence based solely on the purchase of a particular kind of sandwich:

*Sob o ponto de vista deles [da classe média alta], a compra de um simples pão com mortadela transforma-se num ato quase criminoso: ‘Eles chegam de toda parte, compram, sentam para comer nas escadas da passerela e nos bancos, deixam copos e garrafas de plástico vazios pelo chão, sujam tudo, desrespeitam nossos filhos, que poderão ainda ser assaltados um dia. Depois, vão embora sem que nada lhes aconteça.’*

From their [upper middle-class] point of view, the purchase of a simple bologna sandwich turns into an almost criminal act: ‘They come from all parts of town, buy food, sit to eat on the steps or the benches, leave cups and plastic bottles on the floor, make a mess, disrespect our children, who could even be assaulted one day. Then, they leave as if nothing had happened.’ (Paixão and Leite 1996:75)

In this example, the lack of financial resources and cultural refinement signified by the purchase of a bologna sandwich and the lack of manners associated with littering are directly connected to the violent act of mugging. People who cannot control what or how they eat

disrespect their own bodies, just as they disrespect property, other people, and other people's rights to personal property. Various levels of rule breaking come together—nutritional ignorance and limited resources morph into robbery and assault that these youth commit without a second thought. Back in the beachless city of São Paulo, Caldeira too finds that symbolic distinctions are critical to linking residence in *favelas* with criminal behavior:

The list of prejudices against them is endless... They are said to have broken families, to be the children of single mothers or children who were not properly brought up. Their behavior is condemned: they are said to use bad words, to be immoral, to consume drugs, and so on. In a way, anything that breaks the patterns of propriety can be associated with criminals, crime, and its spaces. (Caldeira 2000:79)

My intention here is to reveal how these “patterns of propriety” are steeped in racial ideology, even when they are not explicitly linked to whiteness or blackness. The authors of the *Veja* article lament that this type of comment is “*preconceito em estado bruto*” (Paixão and Leite 1996:75), but they have also laid the groundwork for their readers to interpret the increased presence of nonwhite male youth as a legitimate risk to their personal safety (and white flight a reasonable response) within the new context of increased racial contact on the beach. Through images, racially-coded language, and the requisite disdain for racism, they suggest that “locals,” those whiter and wealthier residents of South Zone beach neighborhoods, are within their rights to fear not only dark-skinned bodies, but also the embodied cultural and linguistic practices that signify blackness.

On summer weekends, some middle-class families with children chose to leave the city to vacation in beach homes up the coast or retreated to private social clubs that had pools and playgrounds within well-guarded walls that only allowed entrance to paying members. To join these clubs, new members often had to pay a large deposit or *luva*, as well as a monthly fee, and they generally had to be recommended by current members. One printed advertisement for an

expensive social/athletic club located in between São Conrado and Barra, further into the West Zone, played on fears of dangerous social/racial contact in order to appeal to the upscale readers of the newspaper's entertainment guide:

*Imagine-se, agora, num sábado ou domingo de sol, com sua família, a caminho de qualquer praia da zone sul! Imaginou? Possibilidade de arrastões, areias e águas sujas, falta de espaço, de estrutura e muita, mas muita gente sem o mínimo de educação. Verdade ou exagero? Dá vontade de não sair de casa, não é verdade?*

Imagine yourself, now, on a sunny Saturday or Sunday, with your family, walking to whichever beach in the South Zone. Did you picture it? Possibility of *arrastões*, dirty sand or dirty water, lack of space, lack of infrastructure, and lots, but lots, of people without the least bit of education or manners. Truth or exaggeration? It makes you just want to stay home, doesn't it?

The ad goes on to ask the reader to ask themselves, “*O que eu e minha família merecemos?*” The answer is no longer easy access to Rio's most famous beaches, since these beaches are now accessible to all. Privacy, security, and exclusivity are now offered only through private social and athletic clubs, such as the advertised Costa Brava Clube, which boasts that its members are “*uma juventude alegre, festeira, saudável e bonita.*” To satisfy clients' continued desire for “nature around the urban-corner” (Banck 1994:50), this club's main attraction is a salt-water pool filled with ocean water amongst the jagged coastal rocks into which the pool has been built. Rio's coastline remains its crown jewel, yet it is now shared with literally hundreds of thousands of city residents, who (this ad suggests) are not the desirable mix of carefree, healthy, and beautiful. Here again, racial difference and fears of racial contact are described only implicitly, through coded references to *arrastões* and people without manners (the new beach goers) vs. the old guard (and still current beach condominium owners), which includes healthy, beautiful people.

What we might call “*boa aparência na praia*” (good appearance on the beach) requires the cultural capital to know exactly which behaviors are appropriate, even as the rules of proper etiquette are nuanced and ever-changing. South Zone neighborhood associations have long sought to restrict north-to-south movement by any means possible:

*Em Ipanema, o presidente da associação do moradores, David Catran, 47 anos, nascido e criado no bairro [Ipanema], sugere que seja feita uma triagem nos pontos da partida dos ônibus dos subúrbios. ‘A polícia tem de fazer uma separação e só deixar que entrem nos ônibus as pessoas de bons modos.’*

In Ipanema, the president of the local residents’ association, David Catran, 47 years old, born and raised in the neighborhood, suggests a triage at the bus stops back in the suburbs. ‘Police should make a separation and only let people with good manners enter the bus.’ (In Paixão and Leite 1996:75)

The deeply racialized connotations of “good manners,” the implications of surveilling those who must board buses to get to the beach in a geographically segregated city, and the implicit fears of race and class contact in public spaces all come together in this one statement, justifying exclusion and naturalizing belonging in prime (white) city spaces.

While calls for this type of exclusion were not unheard of in the 1990s when the new highways opened (Francisco 2003; Penglase 2007), a nation-wide debate erupted last year when temperatures soared into the 40s, and reports of organized beach thefts and the panicked fleeing of South Zone residents and tourists again became commonplace. In addition to promising the support of 1,000 police officers on patrol, police began stopping and boarding buses to search “incoming” passengers. Minors, anyone without a shirt, shoes, an I.D., or enough money for return bus fare could be pulled off of the buses and taken into custody. While youth activists, and the courts, disagreed with the legality of stopping and detaining youth who had not been caught committing a crime, the practices continued.

These recent conflicts over increased access to Rio's world famous beaches illustrate what anthropologist James Holston calls "an entanglement of democracy," as urban citizens claim rights (and contest their exclusion) and the state struggles to curtail these rights and differentiate amongst its citizens:

The insurgence of urban democratic citizenships in recent decades has indeed disrupted established formulas of rule. ... The result is an entanglement of democracy with its counters, in which new kinds of urban citizens arise to expand democratic citizenships and new forms of urban violence, inequality, impunity, and dispossession erode them. (Holston 2011:337)

With the perceived absence of public safety, and within contexts of unprecedented social mixture, *cariocas* struggle to make sense of democratic ideals that suggest that the beach should be open to all, even as it has long been the playground of the few (Carvalho 2007; Francisco 2003; Freeman 2002, 2008). The resulting discussions and policies rarely mention race explicitly, even as talk about crime, violence, and rights to occupy urban space are replete with racial meaning. Fears of blackness very carefully bind notions of disorderly conduct to both phenotypical features and salient cultural and linguistic practices, such that one highly presupposes the other. Within the conflicts over rights to occupy Rio's world famous beaches, racial discourse circulates and fear of racial contact persists, even as overt talk about racial difference is politely avoided.