Geographies of death: an intersectional analysis of police lethality and the racialized regimes of citizenship in São Paulo

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Abstract

This paper presents an intersectional analysis of police lethality in the city of São Paulo. We deploy the concept of geography of death to investigate the multi-layered aspects of state-sanctioned lethal violence perpetrated by, but not limited to, the police force. This entails a consideration of at least three types of factor: actual violent acts, their symbolic dimensions and the historical and structural conditions within which violence emerges. Based on official data from the Brazilian state we argue that there is a perverse correlation between vulnerability to death and new racial formations, as they intersect with social class, age, gender, and place. Thus, the distinctive social geographies of São Paulo not only provide the context, but also define the very nature, frequency and experience of police violence. Ultimately, we argue, police lethality is a manifestation of the police and the state's complicity in reproducing boundaries of privilege and exclusion.

In the period between 1997 and 2007, the state of São Paulo's Civil and Military Police killed 5,331 people. The data on the identity of those killed and the circumstances under which they met their fate, including location and short narratives describing the facts leading up to the deaths, when made available by non-governmental Brazilian and international watchdog groups, are neither comprehensive nor

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systematized.[1] Given the relatively reduced number of cases catalogued, and the absence of reliable comparative information across time, the patterns that can be extracted from such non-governmental data leave much to be desired.

Such statistical absence should not erase the obvious: state-sanctioned lethal violence feeds from, at the same time as it energizes, social environments marked by frequent death. Still, for the sake of specificity, and taking into account Brazil's long and continuing historical patterns marked by deep social inequalities, we must ask: if vulnerability to violent death, including death perpetrated by the police, is not distributed evenly across society, then is it possible to show correlations between vulnerability to violent death and social class, age, gender and race? In which ways, if any, are such correlations distributed in urban space? We recognize the incisive yet still relatively marginalized scholarship that seeks connections between police action and race (Khan 1998, 2002; Silva 1998; Mitchell and Wood 1999; Reis 2005), while we link this research on race to explorations of the gender and age implications of such connections as they are expressed in and shaped by urban space.

This paper is an intersectional analysis of police lethality in the city of São Paulo. In spite of the absence of deaths perpetrated by the police in official lethal violence data – homicide, for example – we consider the use of lethal force by the police a significant and indissociable aspect of the particular forms and frequency of violence experienced by differently situated populations. Specific collective experiences of state-sanctioned lethal violence are thus derived from a composite of at least three types of factor: first, the actual manifestation of violent acts, which include, but are not restricted to, lethal events and those perpetrated by the police; second, the symbolic, but no less important, acts of violence that, while not necessarily accompanied by factual violence, nevertheless constitute the cultural understandings that, in the realm of social representations, negatively impact on individuals and communities (e.g. Bourdieu 1977); and, third, the perception of violence that is associated, not only with the symbolic and factual manifestations of violence, but also, and more broadly, historical and contemporary social conditions within which violence emerges. Examples of symbolic violence would be stereotypes related to race, gender and social geography – especially at the neighbourhood level – that predispose and justify the use of lethal force by the police (e.g. Butler 1993; James 1996).

'Ninguém é cidadão': Brazilian racialized regime of (non)citizenship

State violence in Brazil is an index of the precariousness of substantive citizenship, and the ways in which citizenship – or, rather, the lack of

it – is inflected by and is reflected in the spatialization of race, gender and class. Disparities in employment, income, education, infant mortality and vulnerability to violent death are deeply influenced by the articulation of such categories as they influence the unequal distribution of privilege and social suffering (e.g. Hasenbalg 1979; Valle Silva 1980; Silva 1998; Mitchell and Wood 1999; Werneck 2000; Henriques 2001; Vargas 2005a, 2005b; PNAD 2005; Reis 2005). Such a system of inequalities shows how Afro-Brazilians experience state-sanctioned violence, not only by its most 'peculiar institution', the police, but also by the social and institutional mechanisms, embodied in schools and hospitals, for example, that perpetuate relative disadvantages for blacks while reproducing white privilege. From the perspective of Afro-Brazilians, citizenship has historically and socio-logically been tied to exclusions – social and spatial confinement, exclusion from education and work spheres – rather than to the guarantee of civil, political and cultural rights. It is within this Brazilian 'relational citizenship' (Da Matta 1991; Mitchell and Wood 1999), which we would rather call non-citizenship, that police assaults on black bodies need to be understood.

While the excessive use of force by police against impoverished communities in Brazil has been documented and is well understood, few scholars have denounced the racial underpinning of policing strategies, from racial profiling to deadly operations in their ordinary *favela* incursions (e.g. Silva 1998; Amar 2003; Batista 2003; Vargas 2005b.) In academic discourse, interpretations of police discretionary procedures against impoverished neighbourhoods, which are frequently majority black areas, reveal a hesitant, if not an overtly resistant approach to the significance of race. Such an approach against the relevance of race makes two contentions. First, the denial of the relevance of race appears in the claim of the impossibility of identifying who is black and who is white in Brazil. Here, the class-oriented approach takes primacy in the analysis of police killing and urban violence (e.g. Zaluar 2000). Second, such analyses tend to isolate the systemic practices of state violence in terms of the individual accountability of police officers, who are quickly identified as black (e.g. Sansone 2002).

In order to demystify this double bind, we argue for the inescapable centrality of race in producing both police strategies and the historical and contemporary social conditions within which violence emerges. The fact that the police have historically employed Afro-Brazilians does not undermine the well-known patterns of racialized violence that disproportionally affect non-white communities. Indeed, the presence of black bodies in the state apparatus obviously complicates, rather than contradicts, the racialized aspects of policing strategies. Patterns of police action that disproportionately negatively impact on

Afro-Brazilians is part of an institutional framework, itself immersed in and reproducing non-citizenship, that cannot be reduced by or separated from individual members of that framework. Instead of accepting the curious association that is frequently made between the presence of black police officers and the absence of racism in the police, we ask: how do military police practices reflect broader racial meanings in Brazilian society? How does Afro-Brazilian police officers' racialized experience inform their practice against other Afro-Brazilians? We propose, then, that, because blacks are victimized as a social group, individualized notions of accountability for their victimization undermine the historical, institutional and everyday meanings of policing predominantly black areas.

The denial of the relevance of race in policing practices is symptomatic of a larger social phenomenon. The 'hyperconscious-ness/negation of race' (Vargas 2004) dialectic suggests that, while hegemonic constructions and practices of race relations in Brazil are based on the very negation of the relevance of race, such denial is often accompanied by thoughts and actions that unmistakably render race a key social fact, and thus the denial of race becomes itself a manifestation of the pervasiveness of race as an organizing principle of social relations. In other words, the systematic anxiety about taking race seriously is, in itself, an immanent expression of how Brazilians' understanding of the social world is deeply embedded in racial logic. It may be the case that the silence or evasiveness concerning racial dominance is part of the Brazilian etiquette of racial relations (e.g. Dzidzienyo 1971; Sheriff 2002), or, in the words of Florestan Fernandes (1972), the hyperconsciousness/negation of race dialectic is a manifestation and an underlying principle of the very Brazilian 'prejudice against having prejudice'.

The relevance of race, however, is not restricted to the realm of mythology/ideology and everyday talk of colour categories. Analyses of the political economy confirm and give a concrete and appalling dimension to the white/non-white binary informing Brazilian social structure: greater differences in life chances and outcomes (employment, education, infant mortality, susceptibility to police abuse, for example) persist between non-whites and whites than among non-whites (e.g. Valle Silva 1980; Mitchell and Wood 1999; Telles 1999; Henriques 2001; Khan 2002a).

The 1996 Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD – National Household Sample Survey) observed that, whereas in the richest south-east region – comprising the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo – infant mortality for whites stood at 25.1 per thousand infants born alive, for blacks the rate was 43.1. For black children under 5, mortality is 52.7 per thousand born alive; it is 30.9 per thousand white children born alive. In the country

as a whole, whereas barely 50 per cent of black households are connected to a sewage system, the rate is 73.6 per cent for white households. When we apply the United Nation's Index of Human Development, utilized as a measure of life quality on a scale 0–1, we see that, whereas it stands at 0.796 for the Brazilian population as a whole, it is 0.573 for Afro-Brazilians.[2]

The 2007 PNAD data confirm the persistence of this pattern of racialized social exclusion. While 14.5 per cent of the white population is poor, poverty affects blacks at more than twice that rate, standing at 33.2 per cent. More specifically, blacks comprise 67.9 per cent of the population among the poorest 10 per cent. Nationally, blacks' monthly income averages R$502.02, about half of whites' income average, R$986.5. In São Paulo's metropolitan region, blacks earn on average R$3.98 per hour, whereas whites make R$7.33 per hour.[3]

Unemployment rates reproduce the same pattern: whereas 12.4 per cent of black women and 6.7 per cent of black men were unemployed, for white men the rate was 9.4 per cent and for white women 5.5 per cent. Also, children are disproportionately impacted upon due to their racialization: among working children between 5 and 6 years of age, 69.6 per cent are black; among working children 10–13 years of age, 65.1 per cent are black. The national household survey reveals an inconvenient truth to those who claim the irrelevance of race: the 8 million people living in *favelas* in Brazilian metropolitan areas are distributed in residences of whose total number 66 per cent are headed by blacks, twice the number of whites (33 per cent).[4]

All social-economic data available reveal that non-whites are subject to a 'process of cumulative disadvantages' (Valle Silva and Hasenbalg 1992) which blocks their social mobility. Whites, on the other hand, are markedly more successful in attaining upward social mobility. This process, by which blacks and whites have distinct life-trajectory paths, is similar to what happens in the US, as evidenced by Oliver and Shapiro (1995).

Police brutality, as it disproportionately affects blacks in Brazil, is another sad parallel that can be made with the US. The reality for Afro-Brazilians, however, is far worse than it is for African Americans: in Bahia, 2189 people were killed by agents of the state in 2008, almost twice the dreadful 1449 deaths registered in 2007.[5] In the state of São Paulo, the official lethality rate is 1.18 persons per day.[6] In the state of Rio de Janeiro, between January and August 2003, the police killed 900 people, almost 75 per cent of them in the *favelas* of Rio's metropolitan areas, in predominantly black communities.[7] Paul Amar reminds us that 'this trend, if continued, would have pushed the tally of police executions above 1,500 in 2003 in Rio state alone, approaching parity with Baghdad, beyond the realm of media metaphors, as the Iraqi capital suffered around 1,700 civilian fatalities during this year's

war' (Amar 2003, p. 38). In a month, Rio police kills more than two and half times more people than the New York Police Department kills in a whole year (Cavallaro and Manuel 1997). The ubiquitous cases of police misconduct are part of an emblematic, persistent pattern of widespread anti-black racism that pervades Brazilian society, even though many scholars who study the police in Brazil, curiously but not surprisingly, refrain from making the argument about the centrality of race in such phenomena (e.g. Paixão 1995; Pinheiro 1995; Cano 1997; Cardia 2000).

Spatializations of police violence: an intersectional approach

The perception of violence merits further elaboration as it grounds our intersectional approach to police lethality. By differentiating the perception of violence from the symbolic and factual modalities of violence, we emphasize an intersectional method by which we approach lethal violence. The perception of violence is closely connected to – indeed derives from socially shared notions produced about – the social environment in which one finds oneself immersed. This social environment, as it produces and is reproduced by violence in factual and symbolic forms, is reflected in, as well as shaped by a particular social geography, or space. Henri Lefebvre's maxim, '[social] space is a [social] product' (Lefebvre 1991, p. 26) is here complexified to include social class, gender, age and race, among other variables, as they define and are marked by urban space. Since social relations are determined by, as well as shaping, power differentials, urban space is deeply implicated in and inflects the ways social hierarchies actualize themselves in a given historical moment. All urban spaces, all human geographies are the product of historical power struggles, and the social relations deriving from such struggles become spatialized according to the hegemonic political order: 'Every mode of production ... produces a space, its own space' (Lefebvre 1991, p. 53). While the resulting spatial relationships expressing degrees of subordination and privilege are normally maintained through consensus, there is often a need for explicit coercion. Police presence in general, but police lethality in particular, is a key element in the coercive apparatus as it enacts, to the limit, shared and normalized understandings about those it affects.

That police lethality, as we will show, is unevenly distributed in S. Paulo's urban geography reveals the contested nature of socially constructed, power-laden and deeply racialized and thus exclusionary social spaces. The unevenness of police lethality, while obviously determined by race, is also calibrated by social class, gender and age. Together – police lethality, race, social class, gender and their spatialized, combined expressions – produce the social climate in

which violence is experienced. The perception of violence is a collective commentary about the ways in which social forces, including police lethality, intersect with, become energized by and define urban geographies. Such commentary guides members of distinct communities in their quotidian activities – drawing from shared historical memories as well as anticipated social outcomes – as it presents an analysis of the physical and symbolic threats associated with one's residential community.

We contend, and will develop this point as the essay unfolds, that the social environment's specificity not only provides the context within which police lethal violence occurs, but, more importantly, defines the very nature, frequency, perception and experience of police lethal violence. That is, while police lethality is certainly a core element in defining one's experience (pragmatic and symbolic) of a given locality, police lethality gains deeper meaning and explanations when juxtaposed to, and therefore contextualized in, the intersecting aspects of particular social environments. Even though police lethality appears difficult to analyse given the paucity of pertinent quantitative and qualitative data, it becomes rather graspable when contextualized and understood as part of – indeed animated by – a historical and contemporary web of multiple and intersecting social forces. In this essay, among such forces we will focus specifically on social class, gender, age and race, all understood in complex feed-back loops of mutual determination, in turn defining and affected by urban space.

This analysis builds from the following: police lethality and its unequal distribution on S. Paulo's social geography are results, as well as energizers, of historical and contemporary social inequalities. On this score, we want to complement case studies of the police *per se*, those that focus on law enforcement policies, employment of tactical technologies, self-understanding and their representation in the media (e.g. Benevides 1983; Kant de Lima 1994; Paixao 1995; Cano 1997; Silva 1998; Mitchell and Wood 1999). We present police lethality and its uneven distribution on S. Paulo's urban geography as a symptom, not a cause, of historical and contemporary inequalities; as an element of a social power constellation whose field of energy produces differentiated levels of violence and exposure to state-sanctioned death as markers of social inequalities: of privilege and citizenship to some and disadvantages and non-citizenship to many. To understand police lethality, then, we need to retrace its historical and contemporary roots. Police lethality, as part of actual, symbolic and perceived violence, acquires meaning as we analyse the various layers of social forces that determine it. What we describe as São Paulo's geography of death, in its social class, age, gender and race variants, explains key aspects of the historical and contemporary roots of police lethality. By emphasizing intersectionality, juxtaposition and multi-directional

determinacy, following strands of critical race and black feminist theories (Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1994; James 1999), we argue that police lethality is a result of, at the same time as it is a manifestation of, São Paulo's multiply constituted geography of death.

The apparent progressive dilution of police lethality in our analysis – this slippage, if you will – is thus intentional: we start with basic data about police lethality; we then juxtapose such data to a series of other available social indicators, plotting the results in maps and charts, suggesting intersections as well as dissimilarities; the process of juxtaposition is repeated with different variables until, in the study's last section, we refocus on police lethality as a product, not a cause of historical, multiply constituted and spatially expressed social forces.

## Cartographies of death in the urban setting

Figure 1, below, shows that, over the last decade, the city of São Paulo, *vis-à-vis* the city's metropolitan region and the interior of the state of São Paulo, staged, on average, over 50 per cent of all registered lethal police violence cases.

Figure 2 specifies and gives a spatial dimension to the above graph. Although there is a clear concentration of police violence in the city of São Paulo's districts *vis-à-vis* the greater metropolitan region, within the municipality of São Paulo there are some discernible patterns. Police violence is more intensely concentrated in the outer north-east, south and west areas of the city. While the city's inner districts register a much higher incidence of police violence than that measured in the greater metropolitan area, they are clearly not as impacted on as the outer eastern, western, northern and southern city districts.

Figure 1. *In absolute numbers, lethally shot by the military and the civil police in the state of São Paulo* Sources*: authors' cross-tabulation; Secretaria da Seguranca Publica Police Ombudsman (SSP-SP, 2008)*

Killed by the Military and Civil Police in Sao Paulo
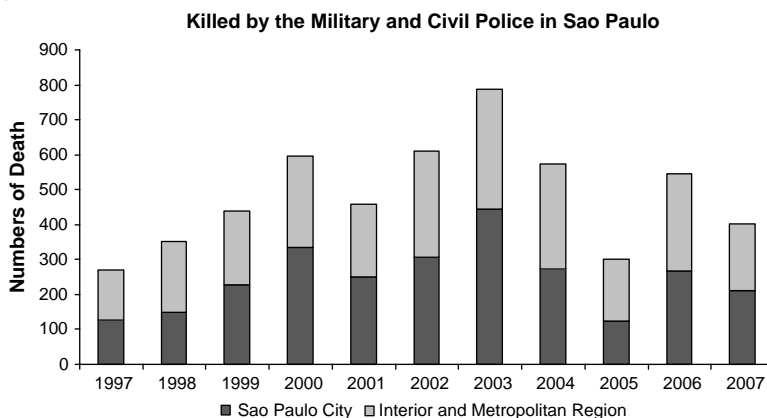
Figure 2. *Human rights violation by São Paulo police between 1980 and 2006*
Source*: NEV: Nucleo de Estudos da Violência/CEPID/University of Sao Paulo*
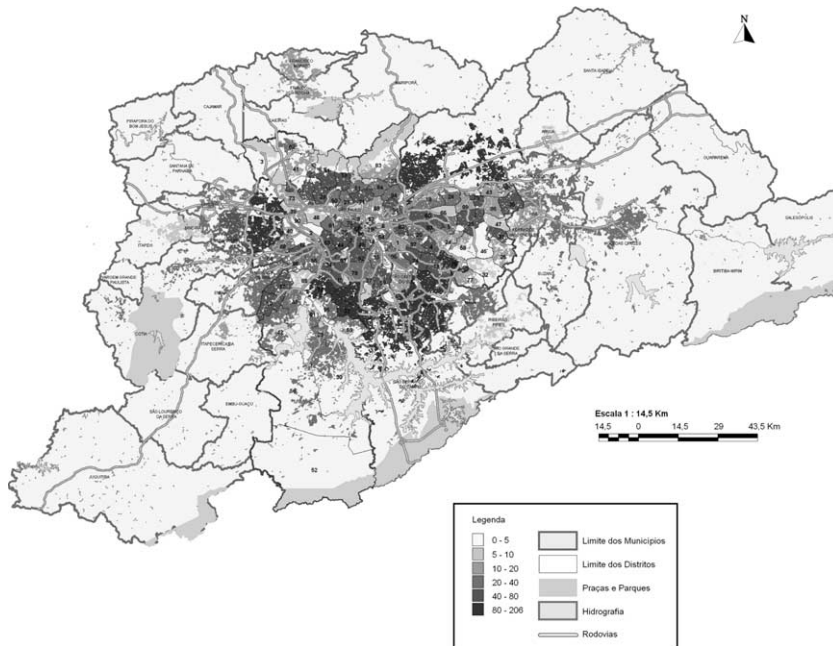
A first question that we may ask, then, is: who lives in those areas most affected by police violence? Answering the question would also allow us to reflect on the type of social profile of those least affected by police violence. To answer the question, let us start with data on income. Income, when considered with other quality-of-life factors (for example, vulnerability to violence, access to quality education and public transportation), serves as a proxy to social class. Figure 3 represents Sao Paulo's districts by income, in 2005 reais, the Brazilian currency.

Juxtaposing the two maps above, we detect meaningful intersections: areas with higher income, the centrally located city districts, correspond roughly to the city of S. Paulo's neighbourhoods less affected by police violence. Similarly, there are area overlaps between districts with the lowest incomes and those most affected by police violence. Of course the intersections pointed out are not sufficient to make a definite case. Rather, they suggest inverse correlations between economic power and likelihood of experiencing lethal police violence that must be further analysed. The urban space patterns that emerge, however, produce an added dimension to such correlations: they point to ways in which economic power and exposure to police violence

Figure 3. *Nominal income of the heads of household in the districts of the city of São Paulo* Source: *Indice de Vulnerabilidade Juvenil 2000, Fundação Seade*
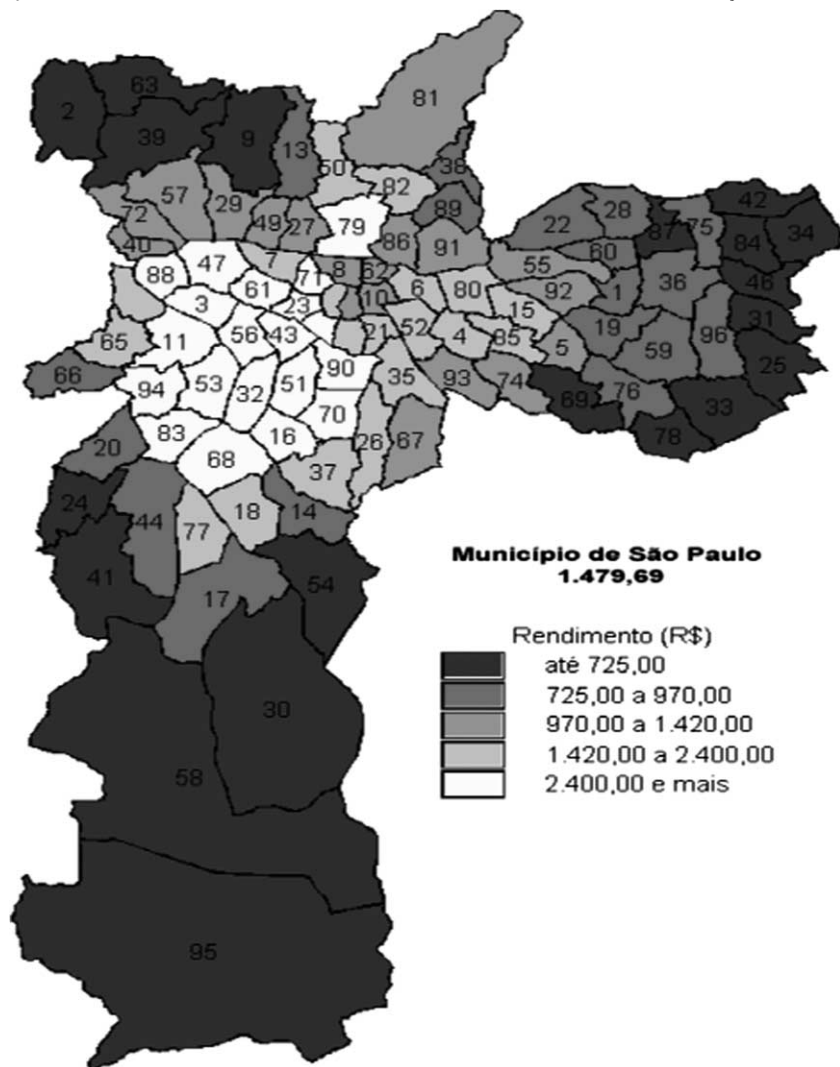
translate into, at the same time as they are influenced by, territorial boundaries.

To contextualize the previous findings, we now turn to a broader indicator of violence, that of distribution of homicide among the city's general population. By comparing and contrasting Figure 4 to our previous findings, we can reflect not only on correlations between police violence and incidence of homicide, but also on the ways in which exposure to police violence, homicide, income and urban space intersect. The juxtaposition of the spatial representations of police

Figure 4. *The map shows the spatial distribution of homicide rate among the districts of the city of São Paulo between 2000 and 2002* Source: *Sistema de Estatísticas Vitais, Fundação Seade*
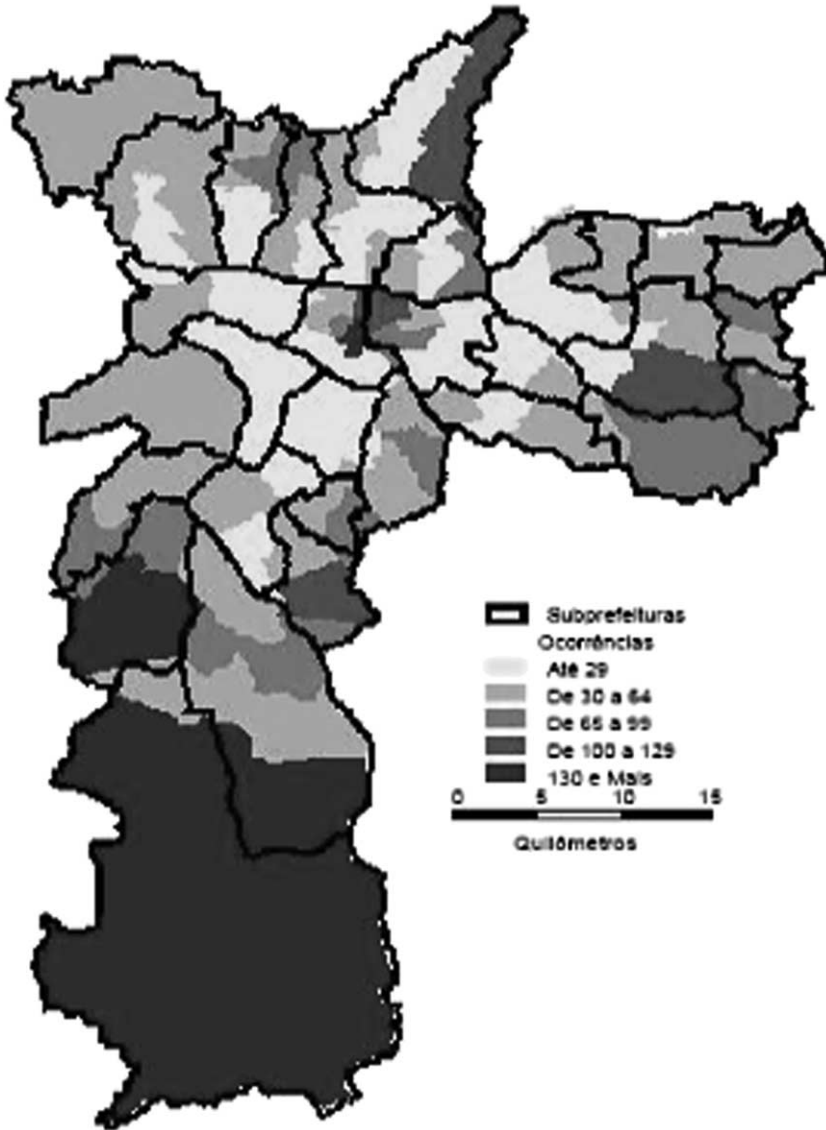
violence and homicide allows us to expand on each of these indicators of exposure to violence. Police violence and frequency of homicide, thus, can be analysed as important elements of a continuum that encompasses all experiences of violence in S. Paulo. Taken together, they produce a more complete spatial and temporal snapshot of violence than they would separately.

The combination of indices of police violence and homicide generates a more reliable approximation of the total of incidents of violence, including deadly violence, occurring in the city and how such deaths are distributed in the urban space. Moreover, when we add to this statement the findings in Figure 1, which locates the municipal boundaries as those where lethal police violence is concentrated relative to the greater metropolitan region and state, we are able to hypothesize that the areas of greater police violence, the ones that are also those with lower income, intersect in significant ways with those where lethal police violence occurs more frequently.

While the dissimilar exposure to civil and institutional lethal violence, the combination of which unfolds in a body count that is unevenly spread in zip code areas, should itself be a source of outrage, it does not prevent us from reflecting on the often silenced broader reality: the disproportionate violence and deaths in economically disadvantaged areas are part of a broader social and institutional context marked by the maintenance and reproduction of deep social inequalities. Maps allow us to examine these inequalities' spatial dimensions, as they occur concomitantly, and as such provide potentially sharp tools to denounce ongoing injustices and inequalities. Such maps suggest a geography of death that is constituted by, not only the actual police and civil society lethal violence, but also a social climate that can be accessed when we analyse various social indicators defining specific locations. This methodology allows us to gain entry into the perception of violence, including lethal police violence, graspable as socially shared and constructed knowledge that draws on the multiple, overlapping historical and contemporary forces affecting a particular geographical area.

Figure 5 below represents the variations in juvenile vulnerability indexes (JVI) in the city of São Paulo. Juvenile vulnerability, as defined by the Seade Foundation (Fundacao Seade 2000), varies on a 0–100 scale, in which 0 represents the district with the lowest vulnerability and 100 the highest. It comprises the following variables: annual rate of population growth between 1991 and 2000; proportion of youth in a district's total population; rates of mortality by aggression (in this case homicide) for male youths between the ages of 15 and 19 per 100,000 inhabitants; fertility rates for young women between the ages of 14 and 17; the proportion of youths between 15 and 17 who do not attend school per total number of people in this age group; and average monthly household income. All data are relative to the year 2000, except the rate of homicide, which was drawn from 1999, 2000 and 2001 indices, and the proportion of youths who do not attend school, which is relative to 1996.

The JVI are important as they provide an approximation of what we earlier defined as the perception of violence. The social commentaries

Figure 5. *Range of social vulnerability for youth among the districts of the city of São Paulo* Source: *Index of Juvenile Vulnerability/2000, Fundacao Seade*
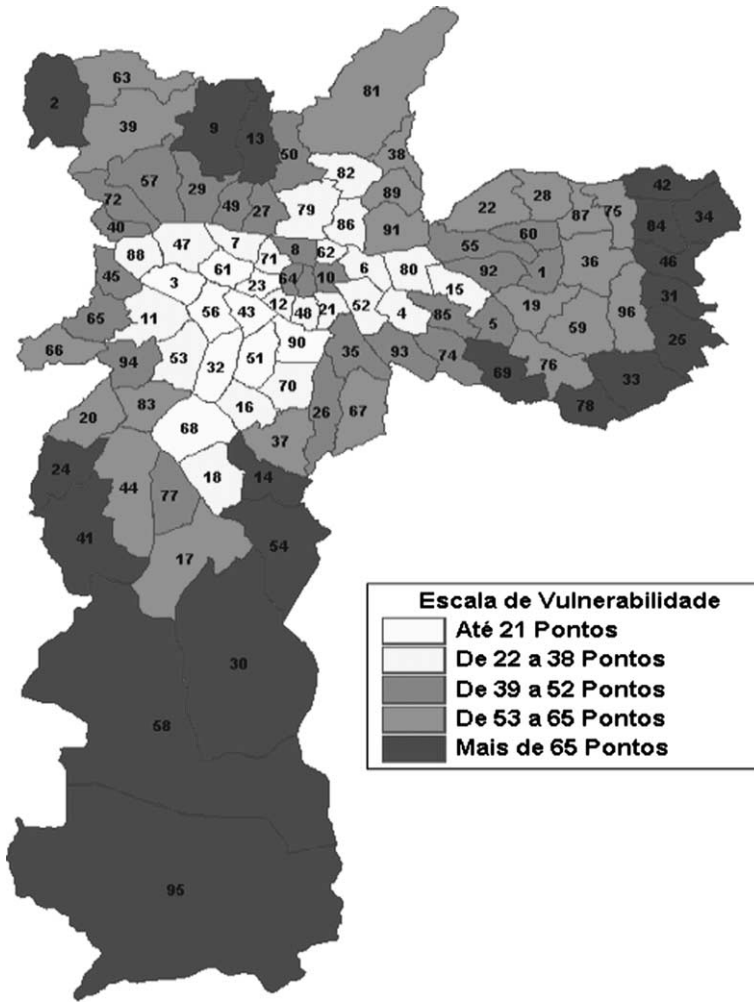
on violence and death that are shared about particular geographical areas – in this case neighbourhoods – take into account not only exposure to physical and symbolic threats, but also key social elements that define the climate within which one finds oneself.

The linear data combination, drawn from the analysis of a correlation matrix of the variables, produces a synthetic indicator that is able to explain 74.2 per cent of all data variability. This synthetic indicator, the vulnerability index, in turn produced five distinct groups of juvenile vulnerability, represented in Figure 5. These groups are the following:

- Group 1, up to 21 points: includes the nine less vulnerable city of S. Paulo districts: Jardim Paulista, Moema, Alto de Pinheiros, Itaim Bibi, Pinheiros, Consolação, Vila Mariana, Perdizes e Santo Amaro;
- Group 2, 22–38 points: Lapa, Campo Belo, Mooca, Tatuapé, Saúde, Santa Cecília, Santana, Butantã, Morumbi, Liberdade, Bela Vista, Cambuci, Belém, Água Rasa, Vila Leopoldina, Tucuruvi, Vila Guilherme, Campo Grande, Pari, Carrão and Barra Funda;
- Group 3, 39–52 points: República, Penha, Mandaqui, Cursino, Socorro, Ipiranga, Casa Verde, Vila Matilde, Vila Formosa, Jaguara, Brás, Vila Prudente, Vila Sônia, Freguesia do Ó, Bom Retiro, São Lucas, Limão, São Domingos, Jaguaré, Rio Pequeno, Pirituba, Aricanduva, Sé, Artur Alvim and Ponte Rasa;
- Group 4, 53–65 points: Sacomã, Jabaquara, Vila Medeiros, Cangaíba, Cidade Líder, Vila Andrade, Vila Maria, Tremembé, Ermelino Matarazzo, São Miguel Paulista, José Bonifácio, Jaçanã, Itaquera, Raposo Tavares, Campo Limpo, São Mateus, Parque do Carmo, Vila Jacuí, Perus, Cidade Dutra, Jardim São Luís and Jaraguá;
- and Group 5, 65 points and above: includes the 19 districts characterized by greater juvenile vulnerability: Cachoeirinha, Vila Curuçá, Guaianases, Sapopemba, Capão Redondo, Lajeado, Anhangüera, São Rafael, Jardim Helena, Cidade Ademar, Brasilândia, Itaim Paulista, Pedreira, Parelheiros, Jardim Ângela, Grajaú, Cidade Tiradentes, Iguatemi and Marsilac.

The relevance of the map in Figure 5 and these findings is that they provide information that, when intersected with our previous analyses, suggest a generational specificity to the geographically situated social groups regarding their likelihood of experiencing social marginalization, including violence and death by the police or otherwise. The spatial representation suggests the idea of a social environment that is geographically specific. As such, the environment is characterized by actual facts, i.e. average household income, and by patterns that are registered in a given time period, i.e. police violence. From the perspective of an individual, therefore, s/he does not have to experience direct acts of violence, including police lethality, to be in an excluded and excluding, violent, death-prone environment. The spatial quality of social facts, which emerges from the maps we are analysing, allows us to grasp both the facts and their collateral consequences – that is, the ways in which these facts produce a climate that is experiential and is probabilistically determined. Furthermore, such maps allow for the visualization of multiple, concomitant social events that both contextualize and shape the character and scope of each discrete social

occurrence. Vulnerability indexes suggest a social configuration of factors – a structure – that influences the likelihood and the perception of violence, including lethal violence.

The areas in the Figure 5 map and those in the previous maps that intersect intimate that higher-income neighbourhoods are less susceptible to civil and institutionalized violence, which at its limit includes death; they also imply that such areas' youths are relatively shielded from exposure to challenging social environments marked by high incidence of school evasion, teenage pregnancy, acts of police misconduct and homicide. Youths in groups 1, 2 and 3, which roughly correspond to the affluent, middle-class and lower-middle-class areas, live in economically advantaged and geographically delimited environments that decrease their relative likelihood of experiencing, directly or indirectly, threats to their physical and psychological well-being. The young men and women in these areas also experience their peers dropping out of school with less frequency. Conversely, youths in groups 4 and 5, which mostly correspond to economically poorer areas of the city in the east, south and north west, live in environments that register the higher values of juvenile vulnerability. Connections between exposure to violence, social class and age suggest themselves in visual intersections. When juxtaposed, our previous maps propose that low-income youths residing in economically disadvantaged areas are the most likely to encounter and live in social geographies characterized by violence, the incidence of homicide being a case in point. Moreover, the areas with the highest indices of juvenile vulnerability correspond, in substantive measure, to those where police violence takes place with greater frequency (see Figure 2). Thus, a reasonable proposition would be that the higher the juvenile vulnerability index, the higher would be the likelihood of inhabiting a social and spatial environment marked by the violent presence of the state.

From the perspective of the youths placed in such conditions, their vulnerability to death by state (the police) and civil means (homicide) stresses accumulated social disadvantages that, themselves, become predictors of further disadvantages. To stress again a point made in the introduction: police violence, including police lethality, would thus be the product of such historically accumulated and socially reproduced disadvantages. Accordingly, in areas defined by low levels of juvenile vulnerability, the accumulated privileges, themselves the result of a constellation of access to financial, educational, political and cultural resources, just to name a few, are such that the likelihood of experiencing violence in general, and police lethal violence in particular, is, relative to the more stigmatized geographies, minimized. Police lethality, then, becomes one of many indicators that reveal – and is arguably produced by – a web of multiply determined social forces.
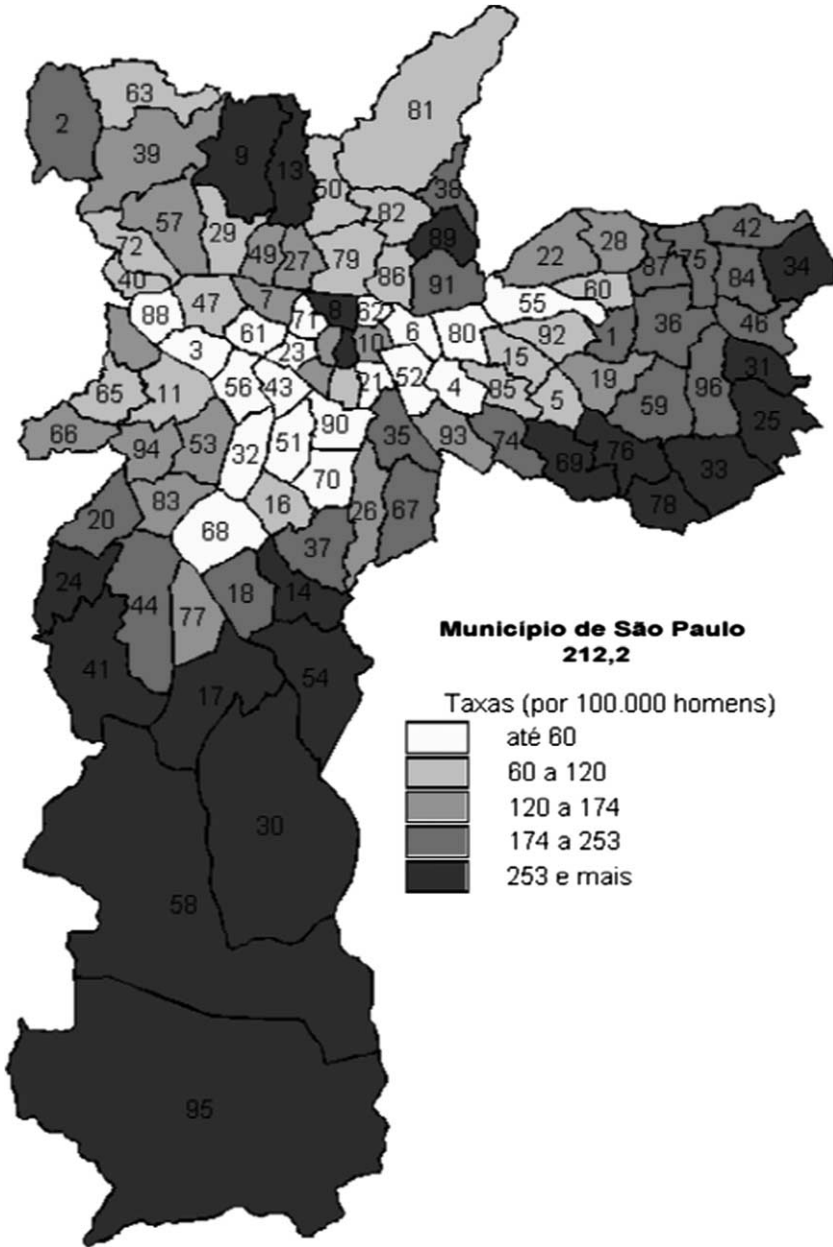
Figure 6, charting the rates of homicide of young men (between 15 and 19 years of age) in S. Paulo, when added into our previous analyses, allows us to further visualize spatial patterns of social belonging. In accordance with our findings relative to police abuse, income, homicide and juvenile vulnerability, the rates of homicide for young men, and their spatial distribution, give further credence to the idea of a geography of death – the highest rates of homicide of young men, like the lowest incomes, the highest homicide in general and the highest indices of juvenile vulnerability, occur in the most eastern, southern and parts of the most northern city areas. At the same time, and obviously connected, the geography relative to lower rates of young male homicide often intersects with the areas marked by the highest incomes, the lowest rates of homicide in general and the lowest indices of juvenile vulnerability.

The intermediate areas, those that were categorized as groups 2, 3 and 4 relative to their indices of juvenile vulnerability, constitute a buffer zone – admittedly not as well defined as the centre, wealthier areas and the outlying, poorer neighbourhoods in the far east, south and north. Yet, such intermediate areas, whose roughly concentric layout mirrors the spatial patterns encountered in our previous maps charting income, homicide, juvenile vulnerability and male homicide, suggest at least three social geography configurations.

One is the peripheral, especially eastern, southern and northern areas, in which indicators of social exclusion by social class (here approximated by income, which provides an incomplete measure), age and gender indicate that socially disadvantaged young men find themselves in urban communities whose layers of accumulated disadvantages produce and reproduce the very dynamics of their exclusion. Homicide rates and levels of police abuse, including lethal police force, at the limit, point to patterns of imposed social marginalization that find, in spatial arrangements, their expression and reproductive engine. The second geographical configuration points to the highest incomes, lower juvenile vulnerability indices, lower homicides and lower homicides of young men (the Shantytown of Paraisopolis, in the middle of the elite neighbourhood of Morumbi is an exception that merits deeper analysis). If these stark differences are manifest in obvious accumulated, overlapping and multiple social advantages, they become even more obvious and, we would say, effectively maintained by the geographical separation that exist between the relatively homogenous central districts and the relatively homogeneous outer, poorer, more vulnerable and violent outer areas. The relative lower indices of homicide in general, young male homicide, police violence and police lethality in such affluent geographies, at the limit, suggest that accumulated social advantages and privileges – i.e. the privilege of not being subjected to early violent

Figure 6. *The distribution of homicide among young males per 100,000 population in the districts of the city of São Paulo* Source: *Sistema de Estatísticas Vitais, Fundação Seade*

Município de São Paulo
212,2

Taxas (por 100.000 homens)
até 60
60 a 120
120 a 174
174 a 253
253 e mais

death, by the police or otherwise – find expression and indeed their energizer in spatial configurations.

The third geographical pattern is perhaps the most complex. Compressed between accumulated affluence and persistent disadvantage, in physical contact with (because bordering) both extremes (Caldeira 1985, 2001; Vargas 1993), such intermediate, buffer-zone areas are marked by their populations' sense of instability and need for resolution. As the specialized literature on electoral politics has shown (e.g. Pierucci 1989), anxieties produced by a sense of cultural deficit *vis-à-vis* the more affluent areas, as well as perceived threats emanating from the proximity of '*nordestinos*' and '*bahianos*' in their own neighbhourhoods (Vargas 1993), are often expressed in allegiance to conservative, law-and-order political platforms and candidates. This intermediate zone is where the right, historically, finds its electoral home. Middling levels of income, homicide in general, homicide of young men and juvenile vulnerability become expressed in and are reproduced by these transitional, in-between geographies. Within their borders, dominant social groups strive to resolve their transitional, intermediary location by distancing themselves from the more disadvantaged areas and by suggesting proximity to the historically privileged neighbourhoods. Such desired proximity is expressed through political choices, cultural understandings of their perceived instability (that becomes linked to the presence of non-whites in or close to their neighbourhoods) and everyday talk and actions relative to crime and violence (Caldeira 2001).

There is perhaps no more meaningful expression of this sensed instability than the ubiquitous presence of high metal and iron gates over doors and windows, isolating residences, as well as a plethora of accompanying security devices – they translate, pragmatically and symbolically, the desires to resolve the social and geographical nature of the experienced instability. While the more obvious aspect of privilege and exclusion is exposure to death (homicide and police lethality) – or, to put it another way, exposure to death frames and gives added meaning to social class, place of residence, access to quality education and health care – in the intermediate zones the threat of death is acknowledged via the ubiquity of security mechanisms. Insofar as such security mechanisms are meant to protect both property and body, they symbolize the need to preserve one's space as an expression of social belonging and therefore an as an index of social and geographical distance from areas and peoples associated with instability and death.

Racialized spaces/multifaceted violence

The social geography patterns of accumulated privilege and exclusion analysed through our various maps provide grounds for insight, not

only about accumulated disadvantages and privileges, but also into the meanings of police lethality. If the intersectional and cumulative patterns of social exclusion find expression in corresponding geographical arrangements; if such patterns intersect with, and thus correspond in considerable measure to, those relative to police abuse; and if patterns of police abuse can be taken as indicators of the probability of police lethality; then we can ascertain, at least as a working proposition, that police lethality follows and indeed is produced by these same multiply constituted and cumulative patterns. These patterns, expressing the mutual determinacy of social class, gender and age as they relate to and are inflected by urban space, become further defined when we take into account race. Thus far, we have indicated that young men residing in less affluent areas are the most likely to continually experience the effects of accumulated social disadvantages. At the limit, such disadvantages lead to exposure to death by the state or via homicide. If we rank S. Paulo's districts by juvenile vulnerability and are able to trace correlations between this rank and race, then we may be able to draw analytical propositions regarding the role of race in the geographical patterns we have discussed so far.

Table 1 ranks ten districts by juvenile vulnerability. It also provides the racial breakdown of such districts by white and black population, as defined by the official Brazilian census. Two obvious correlations between race and juvenile vulnerability can be drawn: first, the higher the proportion of whites *vis-à-vis* blacks inhabiting a district, the lower that district's index of juvenile vulnerability; and, second, conversely, the lower the proportion of whites *vis-à-vis* blacks, the higher juvenile vulnerability becomes. Of course, we could present these same correlations emphasizing the proportions of blacks in given districts. We would thus arrive at the following, second set of correlations: the higher the proportion of blacks *vis-à-vis* whites in a particular district, the higher the indices of juvenile vulnerability; conversely, the lower the proportion of blacks relative to whites, the lower the juvenile vulnerability index. These two sets of correlations seem interchangeable. To emphasize blacks or whites, as we did above, does not seem to alter the results regarding juvenile vulnerability indexes – that is, the *proportion* of whites *vis-à-vis* blacks and vice versa seems to be the obvious determinant of social outcomes, in this case regarding juvenile vulnerability.

Another way of making this case would be to take into account that the city of S. Paulo registers 30.1 per cent of blacks and 68 per cent whites (*pretos* and *pardos*) in its population (IBGE/PNAD 2005). Rankings in social vulnerability for youth, thus, would be correlated with the distribution of black and white populations in specific districts. To wit, where blacks are overrepresented and whites are

Table 1. *Spatial distribution by race in the ten most and the ten least vulnerable districts of the city of São Paulo*

|		Most socially vulnerable neighborhoods			Least socially vulnerable neighborhoods			
Rank	District	Total population	Whites (%)	Blacks (%)	District	Total population	Whites (%)	Blacks (%)
1	Marsilac	8,398	58.6	40.2	Jd. Paulista	83,663	90.9	5.2
2	Iguatemi	101,772	63.3	36.1	Moema	71,269	91.9	4.7
3	C. Tiradentes	190,652	49.4	49.8	Pinheiros	62,991	88.4	7.2
4	Grajaú	334,283	49.6	48.8	Consolacao	54,518	87.9	8.3
5	Jd. Ângela	245,799	47.2	51.4	Itaim Bibi	81,450	90.1	6.5
6	Parelheiros	102,830	49.7	48.5	Perdizes	102,440	90.1	7.0
7	I. Paulista	212,727	50.2	48.5	V. Mariana	123,677	83.5	7.2
8	Brasilandia	247,322	58.4	39.7	S. Amaro	60,533	89.3	6.9
9	Cid. Ademar	243,367	56.1	41.5	Mooca	63,274	89.9	7.1
10	Guaianazes	98,539	51.8	47.3	Morumbi	34,581	81.6	14.7

Sources: IBGE Population Census 2000, Coordenadoria de Assuntos da População Negra (Cone) and Fundação Sistema Estadual de Análise de Dados – SEADE

underrepresented *vis-à-vis* the city's general population, the indices of juvenile vulnerability are the highest, and these areas are the most likely to stage multiple types of social exclusion as well as, at the extreme, death by homicide or the police. In these areas, then, the negative effects of social exclusion, obviously strongly correlated with race, are disproportionately evident. Accordingly, where blacks are underrepresented and whites are overrepresented, the indices of juvenile vulnerability are the lowest.

The privileges associated with whiteness, necessarily linked to the disadvantages emanating from blackness, gain in this multidimensional, intersectional analysis an apparent geographical expression. Is it not the case that the geographical inscription of gendered, sexed and classed dimensions of violence upon black bodies conjures up *Brazilian apartheid* (Vargas 2005a)? We suggest that the geography of death in São Paulo is a product of systematic and multi-layered dimensions of violence in the urban setting. Read in conjunct with the previous illustrations, Figure 7 also allows us further to visualize spatial patterns of social and racial belonging and their correlation with urban violence.

While the persistence of class differences and their impact on the lives of differently situated community members are generally supported by scholarly contributions (e.g. Holston and Caldeira 1999; Zaluar 2000; Caldeira 2001), the same does not hold when it comes to recognizing and analysing the full impact of racial differences. It can be safely argued that debates regarding the relevance

Figure 7. *Spatial distribution of black population in the city of São Paulo* Source: *IBGE Census 2000/Fundação Seade*
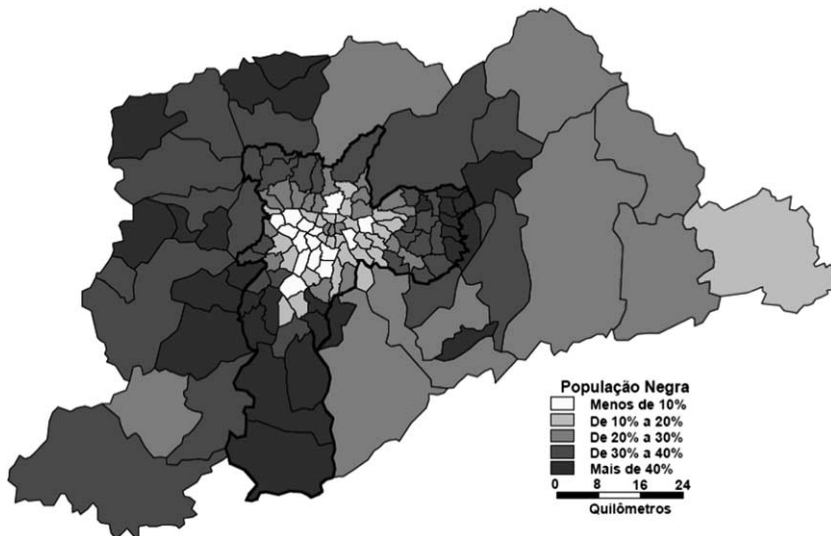
of race in Brazilian social relations and institutions, mass news media support of the dominant views defending the *irrelevance* of race notwithstanding, remain unresolved (e.g. Hanchard 1994; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999). Our findings engage the debates and propose an argument for the centrality of race in geographically situated, multiply constituted, yet deeply unequal social outcomes

Conclusion

In this essay we approached police lethality as emanating from a constellation of multiply and inter-determined sets of social events that result in concrete, geographically located privileges and disadvantages. Such social results need to be understood as deriving from the effects of social class (which we approached via the plausible but evidently insufficient indicators of income) and as being multiply determined by a range of vectors, among which social class features prominently but is not, by any means, unaccompanied or unaffected by multiple social forces such as homicide in general, male homicide, teen pregnancy, school evasion, etcetera. As well, while we recognize the incisive yet still relatively marginalized scholarship that seeks connections between police action and race, we explored the gender and age implications of such connections as they are expressed in and shaped by urban space.

   We proposed an explanation of the deaths perpetrated by the police by contextualizing them within broader social patterns that character-ize the city's urban social geography. The explanation derives from an examination of the ways in which a) the variables of vulnerability to violence, social class, age, gender and race both inflect and are inflected by each other and b) in turn are manifested in spatial patterns. Urban space, therefore, constitutes the stage on which police violence and police lethality become intelligible as part of, and energized by, a constellation of social variables. Through the analyses of multiple social variables and their unequal manifestation in urban spaces, we showed how historical inequalities become expressed by and reproduced in differentiated social geographies. More specifically, we suggested that, to understand police lethality, it is necessary to place it in the web of social forces that define and become reproduced by urban space. In other words, as an expression of deeply ingrained social inequalities that are marked by spatial boundaries of belonging, police lethality is a manifestation of the state's complicity in reproducing such boundaries. At the extreme, the deaths caused by the police work culturally and pragmatically by constantly redrawing the racial lines of privilege and exclusion. As the result of multiply intersecting social vectors that become actualized in urban space, the lines of privilege and exclusion thus become reliable predictors – and, we claim, energizers – of violent death.

Notes

1.   São Paulo's Secretary of Public Safety releases an annual report on police abuse but it is not categorized by race, class or age. See São Paulo Police Ombudsman in http://www.ouvidoria-policia.sp.gov.br/pages/Relatorios.htm
2.   Pesquias Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD), Brazil: Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística IBGE, 1996.
3.   DIEESE (Intersindical Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies) 2006. 'O negro no mercado de trabalho'. *Estudos e Pesquisas*, 26, November, p. 6.
4.   See Retrato das Desigualdades Raciais e de Genero, and PNAD 2007. IPEA/Brasília 2007.
5.   Comissão Justiça e Paz da Arquidiocese de Salvador. See also Revista Carta Capital, 8 February 2008. Available at www.cartacapital.com.br/app/materia.jsp?a=2&a2=6&i=48
6.   Ouvidoria da Polícia do Estado de São Paulo – Relatórios trimestrais e anuais. Available at http://www.ouvidoria-policia.sp.gov.br/pages/Relatorios.htm
7.   Jon Jeter, 'Death squads feed terror in Rio slums', *Seattle Times* 27 October 2003.

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Appendix

Municipality of São Paulo by districts

1	Artur Alvim	25	Cidade Tiradentes	49	Limão	73	Sé
2	Anhanguera	26	Cursino	50	Mandaqui	74	São Lucas
3	Alto de Pinheiros	27	Casa Verde	51	Moema	75	São Miguel
4	Agua Rasa	28	Ermelino Matarazzo	52	Mooca	76	São Mateus
5	Aricanduva	29	Freguesia do Ó	53	Morumbi	77	Socorro
6	Belem	30	Grajaú	54	Pedreira	78	São Rafael
7	Barra Funda	31	Guaianases	55	Penha	79	Santana
8	Bom Retiro	32	Itaim Bibi	56	Pinheiros	80	Tatuapé
9	Brasilândia	33	Guatemi	57	Pirituba	81	Tremembé
10	Brás	34	Itaim Paulista	58	Parelheiros	82	Tucuruvi
11	Butantã	35	Ipiranga	59	Parque do Carmo	83	Vila Andrade
12	Bela Vista	36	Itaquera	60	Ponte Rasa	84	Vila Curuçá
13	Cachoeirinha	37	Jabaquara	61	Perdizes	85	Vila Formosa
14	Cidade Ademar	38	Jaçanã	62	Pari	86	Vila Guilherme
15	Carrão	39	Jaraguá	63	Perus	87	Vila Jacuí
16	Campo Belo	40	Jaguara	64	República	88	Vila Leopoldina
17	Cidade Dutra	41	Jardim Ângela	65	Rio Pequeno	89	Vila Medeiros
18	Campo Grande	42	Jardim Helena	66	Raposo Tavares	90	Vila Mariana
19	Cidade Lider	43	Jardim Paulista	67	Sacomã	91	Vila Maria
20	Campo Limpo	44	Jardim São Luís	68	Santo Amaro	92	Vila Matilde
21	Cambuci	45	Jaguaré	69	Sapopemba	93	Vila Prudente
22	Cangaiba	46	Lajeado	70	Saúde	94	Vila Sônia
23	Consolação	47	Lapa	71	Santa Cecília	95	Marsilac
24	Capão Redondo	48	Liberdade	72	São Domingos	96	Jose Bonifacio

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