1. AN INTRODUCTION TO
RACIALIZED CULTURAL CAPITAL

In certain contexts, blackness – despite its common stigmatized status – is a valuable cultural resource that people accumulate and convert to social and economic rewards. Race is a socially constructed and malleable set of meanings that people attach to bodies and objects, and thus blackness is a complex cultural representation that people manipulate and possibly assign positive value in specific contexts. Given this definition, context influences what types of interactions happen, and in turn, if and how people construct, value, use and benefit from symbols of blackness.

Differences – ethnic, racial, and national – are central to how people make meaning and how they value and devalue others. In advanced capitalist societies, these differences have become central to a broader trend towards cosmopolitan consumption\(^1\) – or the valuing and consumption of cultural objects diverse in genre and linked to socially distant others. This dissertation examines how one symbol deployed in this cosmopolitan consumption – blackness – becomes valued and given meaning. Rather than focusing on consumers or producers alone, I examine the intersection of cosmopolitan consumption and the cultural production of blackness.

\(^1\) Cosmopolitan consumers are one type of omnivorous consumer, or consumers that claim a taste for a variety of genres (Peterson and Kern). Recent work finds that several varieties of omnivores exist (Bennett, Savage et al. 2009).
I examine one context where blackness matters and producers and consumers interact – the tourism of the martial art capoeira in Salvador, Brazil. Introducing the city, the popular *Lonely Planet Guide to Brazil* proclaims that the city is “the African soul of Brazil…[where] the descendants of African slaves have preserved their cultural roots more than anywhere else in the New World, successfully transforming them into thriving culinary, religious, musical, dance and martial art traditions” (Louis, Chandler et al. 2005: 413). This context gives blackness the potential to become valuable to practitioners and consumers. Brazil is an important empirical context through which to extend theory on cultural resources – or cultural capital – to racial symbols and bodies. Brazil’s extreme racial and class inequality combine with a profound ambiguity over cultural heritage in Brazil (Agier 1992; Telles 2004; Santos 2005). This creates a context where Brazilians of diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds can possibly benefit from blackness.

How these producers and consumers construct and deploy blackness as a cultural resource also shapes racial and class inequality. Those that can legitimately claim blackness can convert it into social, economic, and other cultural resources. Because a vast literature on cultural capital finds that class strongly influences who can acquire and convert cultural capital into other resources, class may also influence who benefits from blackness. Thus, *I ask who benefits from blackness, black bodies (skin tone) or existing class-based resources? How does this process of generating and converting racialized cultural capital (RCC) unfold? Into what resources can the producers and consumers convert blackness – social capital, economic capital, or dominant cultural capital?*
I follow the abstract symbols of blackness from tourism marketing materials into capoeira studios, where foreign tourists and Brazilians ignore, rearticulate, and/or value them in interactions. My empirical chapters reveal how blackness emerges in two capoeira studios in Salvador through the interactions of foreign tourists and Brazilian practitioners, who each bring symbols and meanings into interactions. The studios vary the class background of Brazilian capoeira practitioners, and this difference provokes different interactions in each studio and, as a result, different symbols, meanings, and cultural capital emerge. My analysis reveals how consumers construct meaning in interaction with particular contexts (here, with the producers of cultural objects).

I presume no pre-existing racial groups that benefit from this resource. Instead, I show how people across the color spectrum and across cultures co-construct cultural objects of blackness, articulate concrete meanings around the concept, assign those meanings, and cultural capital emerge. My analysis reveals how consumers construct meaning in interaction with particular contexts (here, with the producers of cultural objects).

My goal is not to propose a theory of symbolic struggle among pre-defined racial groups or document differences in cultural capital across these groups. For example, some work documents differences in cultural capital across pre-determined racial groups – primarily blacks and whites in the US (DiMaggio and Ostrower 1990).

Cultural objects are any material or practical aspects of culture, such as artifacts, media, or rituals. They have symbolic properties (meanings) defined by their connections to other symbols. Cultural objects assume meanings in concrete situations through interactions between audience, object, and context (Griswold 1987; McDonnell 2010). They can be adapted and complicated in specific contexts (Sewell 1999; Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003; Brubaker 2006).
meanings to certain human bodies, and use this newly minted racialized cultural resource as a tool to gain other resources. I find that blackness as a cultural resource does not map onto any one racial category. Instead, existing economic, social, and cultural resources allow some Brazilians to muster blackness as a cultural resource over other Brazilians. In other words, class-based resources are necessary to transform blackness into cultural capital.

The process of meaning-making through experiential consumption that I describe should be generalizable to a variety of consumption contexts. In the context of capoeira tourism, blackness becomes attached to a limited set of instrumental meanings allow it to be successfully linked to economic and dominant cultural resources. In addition to contributing to understanding of culture, consumption, and racial construction, this analysis extends understanding of how cultural globalization – in this case international tourism and cosmopolitan consumption – influences cultural production and inequality in Brazil. My analysis reveals how globalization brings together class resources with a limited set of racial resources to allow a new form of cultural resource to emerge in the tourism market.

**Theorizing Racialized Cultural Capital (RCC)**

I integrate cultural capital theory and what I call the racialization perspective to develop my argument that blackness can become a valuable cultural resource. Such a framework is vital for cultural sociology and the sociology of race, as an analytical tool with which to examine how some groups (racial or otherwise) can acquire and benefit
from racial symbols and how this serves to create, reinforce, or undermine racial groups and racial and class inequality.

Cultural capital theory argues that tastes and embodied cultural styles vary meaningfully across status groups in society, indicating symbolic and social boundaries between groups (Bourdieu 1984). By enacting cultural differences gained through a lifetime of familiarity with a lifestyle, dominant groups create a status hierarchy and monopolize cultural capital. Put another way, “to possess cultural capital is to demonstrate competence in some socially valued area of practice” (Sallaz and Zavisca 2007: 23).

People deploy this cultural capital to gain other resources. People demonstrate style and objective knowledge in interactions with others in order to enter elite groups, neighborhoods, and schools. This in turn establishes new social ties and new economic and cultural opportunities. Dominant groups also use cultural capital to make social connections to exclude those unable to enact the subtleties of cultural taste. This exclusion extends to the social and economic arenas. The type and amount of cultural knowledge people hold influence the size of their social networks, success in educational settings, marriage partners, and employment opportunities (DiMaggio and Mohr 1985; Holt 1998; Lizardo 2006).4

Cultural capital takes objective, embodied, and institutionalized forms (Bourdieu 1986). As middle class consumers acquire objective cultural markers, elites and upper

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4 Little research explores cultural capital outside of the US and Europe, though see Zavisca (2005) and Torche (2007).

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middle class consumers must discover more nuanced means of distinguishing their tastes. Thus, the embodied form of cultural capital manifested in lifestyle is especially important to consumers in advanced capitalist societies (Holt 1998; López-Sintas and Katz-Gerro 2005).

Individuals construct and convert cultural capital as they enact cultural preferences and knowledge derived from the deeply embedded interpretive schemas of their class position – their habitus (Bourdieu 1984; Lamont 1994; Bennett, Savage et al. 2009). The habitus gives people a taken-for-granted understanding of their own external class environment, allowing them to act and interact with their class group in a way that appears natural and legitimate (Bourdieu 1972). In effect, those with dominant class resources reinforce their position through their cultural capital.

Much of this scholarship argues that class is the primary source of cultural capital, but a few examine race. Dimaggio and Ostrower (1990) compare cultural participation across black and white categories in the US and find that these groups have different but not isolated tastes. Many blacks in the US claim a taste for cultural objects associated with blackness and those associated with whiteness.

Racial meanings warrant further analysis in work on cultural capital. First, cultural tastes influence racial exclusion. Bryson (1996) finds that whites are significantly more likely to dislike rap, gospel and other music popular among poor racial minorities. Lamont (2000) finds that racial groups construct differing criteria of worth to create

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5 Holt (1998) finds this style includes critical reception of cultural objects, self-actualization, development of individuality, and cosmopolitan taste.
symbolic boundaries between themselves and outsiders. Second, the racial meanings attached to cultural objects influence taste patterns. Johnston and Baumann (2007) and Cheyne and Binder (2010) both find that racial otherness is an important meaning to cosmopolitan omnivores.

People create and accumulate racial symbols and use them to influence racial and socioeconomic inequality. Whiteness has long been such a resource, valuable and unequally distributed within society (Lipsitz 1995; Doane 1997; Lareau and Horvat 1999; Pager 2003; Oliver and Shapiro 2006). Unlike whiteness, people often interpret non-white racial symbols negatively and Blacks in the US must draw on middle class knowledge and styles to confront discrimination (Fordham and Ogbru 1986; Feagin 1991). Skin tone, objectified knowledge, and embodied dispositions associated with race can become cultural capital.

Because racial meanings are contextual and socially constructed, there may be contexts when non-dominant racial symbols become cultural capital (Cornell and Hartmann 2007). Blackness, for example, provides people with enjoyment (Lacy 2007), racial group unity (Banks 2009a; 2009b), and a means to navigate street life (Anderson 1990). Carter (2005: 51) finds that “the resources, codes, and symbols of this particular group of low-income African American youth” form “non-dominant cultural capital,” or an in-group currency, for black high school students. Grazian (2003) examines how blackness can become capital outside of in-group social contexts, showing that black jazz musicians are viewed as authentic and desired by clubs where “white audiences still expected to be entertained by black singers” (2003: 20). Audience perception of the
naturalness and legitimacy of the racialized construction, along with an alternative market (nightclub entertainment in this case) elevate blackness to the status of cultural capital6.

This work defines race as a static status and assumes that pre-existing racial groups benefit from the cultural resources associated with racial groups. Grazian, for example, considers how black skin grants blues musicians’ racial legitimacy. Carter’s analysis uses a broader base of racialized symbols – individuals’ knowledge of music and cultural symbols and their strategic use of language. However, she says little about how routine and taken for granted these skills are (or are not), how they are influenced by underlying schemas of interpretation and unconscious dispositions, or how the link between racialized symbols and cultural practices is established in enactment and interaction.

I instead define race as a socially constructed and malleable set of meanings that people attach to bodies and objects. This approach – which I call racialization – analytically separates racial symbols from the social groups that benefit from those symbols. According to this framework, actors use physical traits, assumed to be primordial and essential (usually phenotype which is itself socially constructed), to create symbolic boundaries between members and nonmembers (Cornell and Hartmann 2007). It also imbues the “gestures, utterances, situations, events, states of affairs, actions, and sequences of actions” associated with these bodies with racial meaning (Brubaker, Loveman et al. 2004: 43). Thus, racialization assigns people to categories, applies racially

6 Though others find that African American jazz musicians fair no better or worse overall than non-blacks in terms of economic or critical rewards (Pinheiro and Dowd 2009).
charged symbols to bodies, and creates a racial interpretation of social experience. This
definition allows me to examine how actors attach racial meanings to cultural objects and
people in interactions, and how macro-level structures of racial meaning move into the
everyday embodied actions of individuals.

Racial symbols take on meaning through their connection to other symbols and
opposition to those outside of a given racial boundary (Barth 1969). They can derive
from pre-existing aspects of the object, or actors can associate new racial symbols with
cultural objects (Cornell and Hartmann 2007). In this view, blackness is a publically
available representation that incorporates many symbolic representations – categories,
artifacts, rituals, and bodies – into a system of relations.

The human body establishes racial meanings. Actors use physical traits, assumed
to be primordial and essential (usually phenotype which is itself socially constructed), to
create symbolic boundaries between members and nonmembers (Cornell and Hartmann
2007). The black body often signifies African ancestry (Davis 1991; Cornell and
Hartmann 2007). In addition to these symbolic properties, the materiality of the body –
muscle tone, condition of hair, skin tone, hair texture and condition, size of facial features
– influences how racial meaning is asserted by and assigned to it (Soar 2001). This aligns
with McDonnell’s (2010) argument that the material qualities of cultural objects
influence if and how they are given meaning by audiences. The physical properties of
bodies are central not only to establishing the racial identity of those bodies, but also to
establishing the meanings of cultural objects related to those bodies.
Blackness is an abstract collective representation that incorporates diverse cultural objects – racial categories, identities, artifacts, rituals, discourses, practices, and bodies – into a system of symbolic relations. The meanings of objects emerge when an object and its set of relations interacts with actors’ interpretations, as actors use objects to make sense of the world and their experiences (Griswold 1987). The set of cultural symbols connected to blackness define objects and human bodies as racially black and attach meanings to them. They enable actors to assert individual and collective black identities.

Blackness connects to many well-established symbols and entrenched meanings across societies, often interpreted as fixed and primordial (Cornell and Hartmann 2007). The strength of these established meanings manifests clearly in the well-established racial categories of black and white. White connotes European origin and superiority. The positive value of whiteness is reinforced through contrast to the category black, which connotes African-ancestry and dark skin tone, a social fact revealed in work on employment and educational discrimination (Wilson 1996).

This makes blackness a cultural tool that actors (individuals, groups, organizations) deploy to reach goals (Swidler 1986; Waters 1999). Cultural tools become capital when people use them to secure other resources. As people enact cultural differences associated with the lifestyle of their socioeconomic background, they create a status hierarchy. Dominant groups monopolize the cultural tastes and objects associated with their lifestyle as cultural capital, and exclude those unable to enact the subtleties of dominant taste (Bourdieu 1984; Lamont 1994). Cultural capital secures social connections, further cultural knowledge, and educational and employment opportunities.
This literature on cultural capital underappreciates racial symbols. Whiteness and the positive meanings it invokes implicitly legitimize arts, tastes, and lifestyles associated with elites. Elites now value a broad omnivorous range of cultural objects, rather than older cultural markers such as theater and classical music. These omnivores value cultural otherness (Peterson and Kern 1996; Garcia-Alvarez, Katz-Gerro et al. 2007), especially when embodied as cosmopolitan knowledge of culturally distant others (Holt 1998; Thompson and Tambyah 1999). This includes esoteric versions of Southern foods and rare ethnic foods and rap music tied to racial ghettos and foreigners (Johnston and Baumann 2007; Cheyne and Binder 2010). Cosmopolitan omnivorism represents a growing opportunity for people to value subordinate racial symbols through frames of exoticness, authenticity, and cultural difference.

Thus, some cultural resources derive their value from associated racial meanings. These meanings come from societal classifications, meso-level narratives, social groups, and micro-level interactions (Anderson 1990). Actors can also associate new racial symbols with cultural objects. Racial symbols take on meaning by connecting to other symbols. Many symbols establish racial meaning, though common referents are the body (skin tone, hair, facial features, and styles), geographic specificity (specific continents, regions, and city neighborhoods), narratives and discourses (of people hood, difference, and politics), socioeconomic status, language, material objects, names, and ancestry (Wilson 1987; Anderson 1990; Nagel 1994; Cornell 2000; Soar 2001; Lewis 2003;
Cornell and Hartmann 2007). Music and art often organize along racial lines in the United States (Peterson 1997; Grazian 2003; Roy 2004; Rodriquez 2006; Roy 2010). People drawn from, complicate, and adapt them in specific contexts of practice (Sewell 1999). Symbols such as socioeconomic status, language, and names do not always signify racial meaning and must be interpreted in specific context; however, racial discourse and the symbols it draws upon are deeply embedded historical narratives that influence everyday life and interaction – even when race is not a consciously salient element of interpretation (Omi and Winant 1994).

Objectified RCC is any material object associated with racialized groups such as an African mask or a samurai sword adorning a wall or knowledge of slavery or racial ideologies. Asserted racial identities, when demonstrated through material objects, are also objectified RCC. Racial meanings take on variable importance; in some situations, an African mask can be valued more because of its aesthetics than on racial meaning.

Institutionalized RCC can be educational credentials from or membership in historically black (or white) institutions, official racial classification schemas, or state-required identity cards.7 Skin tone and phenotype are institutionalized RCC that rest on an elaborate narrative of categories of difference defined as the natural outcome of

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7 Bourdieu defines institutionalized cultural capital as formal credentials. Defining institutions as stable and broadly diffused social interaction sequences subject to rewards and sanctions better situates racial categories and skin tone within the framework (Japperson 1991).
biological mixing. Dominant meanings attached to racial categories are stable and widely known (i.e. the meaning and value of beauty attached to whiteness).

Embodied RCC can be styles, tastes, and cultural performance including hairstyles, language use, style of dress, names, a taste for racialized music, and familiarity with elite cultural etiquette (Lamont 2000; Carter 2005). One can have declarative knowledge of cultural objects associated with a racial category or a symbolic identity (Gans 1979), or one can have unconscious dispositions perceived to be primordial racial identities and styles (Cornell and Hartmann 2007). The latter represents a powerful embodied RCC.

Racial meanings often remain unspoken and unconscious; however, they are strongest as cultural capital in these moments because they flow from the habitus in bodily performance, appearing as a natural and legitimate disposition of a racialized body, such as language (Lewis 2003). People perform language with little conscious thought, but the implicit differences in meaning between dominant and subordinate speech have power because others perceive them as natural and inevitable (Bourdieu 1991). Sometimes, the performance of race is central to establishing the meaning of other cultural objects (Myers 1998; Grazian 2003). I show how the meanings attached to the bodies of capoeira practitioners migrate to the objects of capoeira through interactions between practitioners and tourists.

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8 The constructionist framework negates that race is biologically determined, but many individuals perceive these identities as primordial (Cornell and Hartmann 2007).
Cultural capital must be unequally distributed across social groups, but this does not mean that blacks, whites, or other racial classifications possess divergent quantities of RCC. I investigate which individuals or groups gain legitimacy as holders of RCC and how this maps onto racial classifications and groups.9

Who can legitimately claim and convert RCC depends on the willingness and ability of that audience – a set of actors embedded in a social arena or relations of power – to exchange economic, social, and other cultural resources for the enactment of these cultural nuances (Bourdieu 1993). In the in-group contexts described in past work, cultural resources provide in-group status for subcultures.10 For example, Carter’s (2005) study of Afrikaner cultural entrepreneurs created cultural repertoires to define themselves as an ethnic group and differentiate themselves from the black population of South Africa (Cornell and Hartmann 2007). Chinese immigrants in Mississippi used their ambiguous racial status to align themselves with white interests and culture, which gave them success in the grocery market (Loewen 1988). That outcome was not fond in this empirical case, and is not the focus of the dissertation.

9 RCC can potentially turn racial categories into actual social groups because it is both constituted through a group and serves to make that group real. Afrikaner cultural entrepreneurs created cultural repertoires to define themselves as an ethnic group and differentiate themselves from the black population of South Africa (Cornell and Hartmann 2007). Chinese immigrants in Mississippi used their ambiguous racial status to align themselves with white interests and culture, which gave them success in the grocery market (Loewen 1988). That outcome was not fond in this empirical case, and is not the focus of the dissertation.

10 Several scholars examine the role of cultural capital among non-dominant groups (Hall 1992) and find that non-dominant cultural objects create in-group status hierarchies within subcultures (Thornton 1995; Lamont 2000; Lena 2004; Wacquant 2005). This work rarely considers how in-group capital becomes valuable beyond the in-group.
black cultural capital finds that meanings of blackness attached to knowledge of musical styles provides teens with in-group status, or social capital. These contexts hold little potential to generate capital that people value outside of that context – i.e. in the field of power. In elites contexts, elites monopolize widely recognized cultural capital valuable across a variety of contexts (Bourdieu 1993); however, what they value is highly selective. Elites value the arts associated with racially subordinate groups when they are reframed and connected to traditional high culture, as was the case for jazz and Black Art (Lopes 2002; Fleming and Roses 2007). These contexts generate little cultural capital for producers or practitioners from subordinate groups.

However, in large-scale markets, middle and upper middle class consumers value traditionally subordinate racial symbols. This may translate into benefits for producers and practitioners. In these markets, consumers seek cosmopolitan omnivorous

Carter, for example, does not examine how whites may benefit from knowledge of black music genres.

11 The field of power is an overarching arena of social struggle “that operates as an organizing principle of differentiation and struggle throughout all fields…. [It is structured by] the distribution economic capital… and the distribution of cultural capital” (Swartz 1997: 136-137). In-group contexts produce what Bourdieu describes as field-specific capitals, such as scientific capital, which are valuable primarily in a subfield (such as the scientific field) rather than in the field of power (Swartz 1997).

12 Bourdieu uses the term market and field interchangeably in this work (Bourdieu 1993). I use the term “tourism market”, rather than “tourism field.”
cultural capital. For example, middle class consumers prefer blackness associated with marginalization (Crockett 2008). In Grazian’s (2003) study it is the blackness associated with blues music that grants clubs and musicians economic success. Lamont (1994) argues that the tastes of the upper middle class are especially important in maintaining inequality.

Table 1.1 presents a basic typology of this past work on cultural capital (involving race) across contexts. The first row refers to contexts where cultural capital draws, often implicitly, upon symbols and meanings of whiteness. The second row refers to contexts where cultural capital draws upon racially subordinate meanings such as racial and ethnic minority identities.
### Table 1.1.

Forms of racialized cultural capital

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<tr>
<th>In-Group Contexts</th>
<th>Fields of Restricted Production</th>
<th>Large-Scale Market</th>
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<td><strong>Racially Dominant Symbols</strong></td>
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<td>subcultural capital</td>
<td>European-derived culture</td>
<td>White skin tone and identity</td>
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<td><strong>Racially Subordinate Symbols</strong></td>
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<td>black cultural</td>
<td>Esoteric ethnic foods; Ethnic foods; blues;</td>
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<td>capital; pugilistic</td>
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**An Empirical Case: Capoeira Tourism in Salvador, Brazil**

Cultural tourism is “the production of cultural difference and the valorization of local authenticity to stimulate people to visit a place to consume its distinct characteristics including, for example, history, cuisine, music, culture, identity” (Gotham 2007: 214). It exemplifies the value of racial difference and is an excellent context in which to examine how people create and use blackness as a cultural resource. Cultural
tourism constructs this cultural difference for the middle and upper middle classes of industrialized nations (MacCannell 1989; Grazian 2003; Mowforth and Munt 2009). This interactive context reveals how individuals acquire embodied cultural capital through experience with cultural others (Bruner 2005), knowledge that may be valuable beyond the tourism market itself (Mowforth and Munt 2009). Finally, tourism is an arena in which the practitioners of traditionally subordinate racialized practices can possibly profit.

Brazilian capoeira studios provide a strategic site in which to observe RCC. First, capoeira practice – the materials, rituals, narratives, and the variety of practical enactments of that set of cultural objects – is interactive and embodied (Lewis 1992; Delamont and Stephens 2008), and symbols and meanings emerge from conscious framing and habitual actions during practice. It is a game to practitioners, but outsiders refer to it as a Brazilian martial art. Like sports, capoeira combines adherence to norms and rules of conduct with creative enactment to outplay an opponent. However, “one of capoeira's many ambiguities is to be a game without absolute rules, objectives, or winners and losers … the point of the game is to play the game.” (Downey 1996: 4)

Practitioners form a large ring (the roda) with their bodies and two practitioners play within the roda. This play is a call and response of dance, fight, gymnastics, and martial arts movements, in which practitioners improvise combinations of movements and observe a set of rules and ritual behaviors. Practitioners are also musical performers; a bateria – or musical ensemble – plays Brazilian instruments, practitioners sing and clap a call and response, and the rhythm of the music determines the play in the roda. In
studios, students train for years, doing strength and flexibility training, learning to embody the movements (Downey 2010), and playing innovatively with opponents. Many also learn to play the *berimbau* – a large bowed instrument, the tambourine, the *atabaque* – a tall hand drum, and to sing and improvise songs. For some Brazilian practitioners it is a career, a means of travel, and a source of identity. For others it is a casual hobby.

Figure 1.1

*Capoeira roda*

Second, practitioners have a variety of resources to construct the meanings of capoeira, which they negotiate through a complex racial context in Brazil (Browning
African slaves developed and practiced capoeira in Brazil. The state began promoting it as a national sport in the 1930s, and it later gained popularity in a cultural Reafricanization movement in the 1980s. Put simply, capoeira is an abstract and collectively available set of representations institutionalized in Brazil and in global culture. It takes on a variety of local forms when people use the elements of capoeira – including movements, rituals, meanings, contexts, songs, instruments, clothing, and historical narrative – in concrete situations.

Third, capoeira is an established member of the global culture repertoire (Joseph 2008b). Capoeirista.com lists over 2000 formal capoeira studios in 99 countries as of July 2010. Capoeira moved abroad beginning in the mid-1970s when a capoeira dance troupe traveled to New York City to perform. By 1979, the group’s organizer, a lower class Brazilian master, opened the first studio in the US. Assuncão (2005: 212) asserts that capoeira is a “globalized subculture of protest”, which resonates with marginalized populations. However, empirical work in the UK and Canada finds that practitioners assert the foreignness of the practice (Joseph 2008a; de Campos Rosario, Stephens et al. 2010). Joseph argues that Brazilian practitioners market themselves and their product as authentic Afro-Brazilian culture to appeal to students desire to “escape the everyday, that is, the artificiality of mainstream Euro-Canadian culture” (2008b: 501).

13 Historians claim the capoeira practiced by freed slaves differs greatly from modern capoeira performance, and they continue to debate the actual location where capoeira first appeared (Assuncão 2005; Talmon-Chvaicer 2008).
Many argue that Salvador – the study location – is the birthplace of capoeira.\textsuperscript{14} It is also the second most toured city in Brazil, with international tourists mainly from the US and Western Europe (SCT 2005). In 2008, the Bahian State’s database of cultural organizations lists around 130 studios in Salvador,\textsuperscript{15} though another source estimates there are at least 2000 formal and informal groups in the city (Loez 2005: 15). The number of tourists in Bahia that engage in capoeira is not known, but one instructor estimates that 3000 foreign tourists visit his studio each year (Astor 2007). For many studios, tourism has become a means of economic survival and is forging new definitions of the art and new uses for its practitioners.

Fourth, this context also brings together lower and middle class Brazilians, providing an opportunity to observe RCC in the context of inter-class face-to-face interaction, something lacking in the survey and interview-based work on cultural capital.\textsuperscript{16} Scholars debate how much lower class Afro Brazilians benefit – economically

\textsuperscript{17} Salvador is Brazil’s third largest city, and was the country’s first capital. Over the course of the Atlantic slave trade, more African slaves were brought to the New World through Salvador than anywhere else throughout the Americas. Estimates put Salvador’s population of African descent at eighty to eighty-five percent in 2008.

\textsuperscript{15} Database accessed at: \url{www.censocultural.ba.gov.br}.

\textsuperscript{19} Thirty-three percent of capoeira practitioners in Rio de Janeiro are white, thirty-seven percent brown, and forty-five percent black (Telles 2004). Travassos (1999) provides limited evidence that capoeira masters play up or down the slave history and ethnic legacy of capoeira depending on their own racial identity. In Salvador, there are studios

**Comparative Participant Observation**

Cultural practice and racial construction are both embodied phenomena that demand a methodology sensitive to how people enact and perceive subtle bodily cues and casual comments. Long-term participant observation allows me to focus on the embodiment of experiences and the *how* of cultural valorization (Johnston and Baumann 2007) – “to analyze how specific external traits are translated into social profits” (Lamont 1994: 179) by moving beyond survey and interview methods to process\(^\text{17}\) and interaction.

Because of the depth of information I sought on meaning and interactions, I limited myself to two studios shown in Table 1.3. I chose studios through theoretical sampling (Ragin and Becker 1992). To address the claim that cultural capital reinforces existing power hierarchies, I selected studios with different amounts of economic capital – one in a poor neighborhood run by a working-class man (Capoeira Club) and another in a middle-class neighborhood run by a middle-class man (Capoeira World), populated by of various types throughout the city, from the tourist area to middle class neighborhoods to extremely poor areas.

\(^{17}\) Process refers to a series of actions.
students from their respective areas.\textsuperscript{18} Tourists in both sites were mainly middle and upper middle class young people from the US and Western Europe. They were, I argue, budding members of the growing cosmopolitan omnivorous class of cultural consumers.

Practitioners at both studios had advanced knowledge of capoeira, but they were not equally successful at converting this knowledge into capital. To explain these differences, I examine how each studio constructs capoeira with cultural knowledge and economic resources. I investigate racial constructions rather than use them as predefined variables in this comparison. Comparative ethnography provides insight into how individuals, groups, and organizations put cultural capital to practical use to control resources (Lareau 2003). This allows me to analyze RCC at two levels – one, of interactional meaning making and the other, a cross-group comparison of these micro-level processes.\textsuperscript{19} My analysis shows how the divergent cultural constructions of middle and lower class groups actually play out when they are used to acquire economic, social,

\textsuperscript{18} Because income, occupational status, and education are highly correlated in Brazil (Bills, Godfrey et al. 1985; Bailey 2004; Schwartzman 2007), I use a simple definition of class as determined by economic capital. This aligns with past work (Telles 1995).

\textsuperscript{19} Most qualitative work on cultural capital focuses on one group only. Lamont (1994, 2000) examines both working and upper middle classes in separate books, but my analysis focuses specifically on a cross-class comparison of cultural capital in the same context. Without such a comparison, the meaning, objects, and boundaries revealed in ethnographic work may establish in-group differentiation but not necessarily exclusion of others.
and cultural resources. By focusing in-depth on two groups, my design analyzes interaction and process, rather than static cultural boundaries or stable “objects” that constitute cultural capital.

Data took the form of extensive field notes written after each class (Emerson, Fretz et al. 1995). Observations followed the extended case method (Burawoy 1998) – i.e. my theoretical interests focused observations. In order to examine this culture of practice – where underlying cultural codes and knowledge can be deployed (as resources in this case) rather than a discursive culture\(^\text{20}\) – Lizardo and Strand (2010) suggest analyzing the relationship between embodied dispositions and the external institutional environment. This meant observing how actors’ embodiment of blackness and capoeira related to the interactional environment of tourism at each studio and the cultural knowledge available in the larger tourism market. This fits with the call within racialization work to focus on process, interaction, and context (Brubaker 2006). Still following the extended case method, I linked these observations to social forces (such as omnivorism and cultural capital) that encouraged and were in turn reinforced by these processes. This also aligns well with my focus of racialization as a subtle process that occurs not only through conscious assignment and verbalization, but just as often though the unconscious influence of broad racial ideologies and their symbols on everyday

\(^{20}\text{There are also degrees to which action and cultural knowledge are embodied versus strategic. People use everything from highly conscious pieces of knowledge and skills to fully automatic and unconscious routines, styles, and dispositions to act (Atkinson 2010).}
interaction (Omi and Winant 1994; Lewis 2003). When relevant, I describe individuals in terms of skin tone and asserted racial identities.

In order to maximize data reliability, I gathered data in classes regularly for a period of several months in each studio by participating in classes three to five times per week (classes averaged three hours), social outings with Brazilians and tourists, and informal conversations. I attended demonstrations, trips the groups took to other studios, and testing ceremonies when possible to observe differences in activities when tourists were away. I gathered data in Salvador over the 2008-2009 year.

The studios provided recruitment presentations and regular nightly classes, and I observed conscious presentation and meanings that emerged slowly through interaction. Classes at the sites took place at night, to accommodate the studio and work schedules of the local students. This meant that I arrived home around 10pm each night and wrote my field notes late into the night. I attended classes as often as possible, missing classes only when the studios closed for local holidays or when I came down with the occasional cold. In the studios, I participated in the classes each night, learning to dance and play capoeira with the other students.

My observations in each studio varied over time. In the beginning, gaining rapport took precedence over the actual observations, and I often stayed after class to socialize with the students. After this initial phase, I tried to remember as much as possible from the class, write reminder notes immediately after class while still at the studio, and then write extensive notes for several hours once at home. As trends developed in my notes, I focused on answering questions rather than trying to remember everything that happened
in the site. As a white, female, US citizen, practitioners recruited me to participate in classes and social outings and placed me in the same category as tourists.21

I conducted several strategic interviews near the end of fieldwork. I used these to gain background information on the studio and practitioners and to follow up on specific events, observations, and conversations. How people enact culture can diverge significantly from the justificatory language they use to explain action (Lizardo and Strand 2010). Interviews provided missing data, rather than representing of a population or revealing in-depth culture. Further information on methodology – including pre-dissertation work, site selection, participant observation, interviewing, reflexivity, and a list of research participants – is in the methodological appendix.

Guiding Expectations

Now, I can propose general guiding expectations for how actors will construct and enact capoeira, how they will transform this into RCC, and who will benefit in this process. Cultural capital theory predicts that those of higher social class most successfully accumulate and enact cultural capital. This suggests that dominant groups in general, and thus whites, will best be able to generate and benefit from RCC. However, much past work on omnivorous consumption, race, and tourism finds that black bodies themselves are central to the consumption experience, predicting that those who possess traditionally marginalized human bodies will be best able to create and convert RCC in the tourism market.

21 Reflexivity is a vital concern that I address in the methodological appendix.
Most clearly, turning capoeira into cultural capital will generate economic capital for some (those with middle class resources or those with black bodies). What other forms of capital will this create? Past work suggests that cultural capital most easily converts into social capital. Before I describe specific expectations regarding the studios, I review the context of race in Brazil (Chapter 2) and of tourism in Salvador (Chapter 3).

**Summary of the Dissertation**

In the following chapter, I outline the underlying socio-cultural structures that inform Brazilian racial understanding and the role of capoeira and Afro-Brazilian cultural objects in that racial context. This review reveals a tendency to stress commonality among all Brazilians, a low level of racial groupness, and negative perceptions of blackness and slavery. The Brazilian state adopted capoeira as one symbol of national identity, greatly increasing its popularity among whiter middle and upper classes. However, a black cultural movement deploys symbols of global blackness and consciously presents nationalized cultural objects – including capoeira – as the province of Afro-Brazilians. Brazilians across class and racial categories manipulate racialized symbols in Brazil.

Chapter 3 then provides a parallel review of the underlying cultural knowledge of the tourism market and the racialization of cultural capital in this context. I present findings from a frame analysis of culture in Salvador in three types of tourism sources: state-sponsored tourism materials, private tourism materials, and foreign tour book and travel reviews. I find that an ideology of racial democracy directs the state to construct a
frame of cultural and racial mixture of African, European, and Indigenous peoples. Foreign and Brazilian private-sector materials, by contrast, draw from a discourse of global cultural difference to assert frames of Africanness and blackness respectively. I also find that all sources use overlapping repertoires of cultural objects to establish the authenticity of their claims and attach divergent meanings to the same objects. Capoeira is central to these claims.

The capoeira studios described in the subsequent ethnographic chapters operate within this context and have access to these collective representations. This broader context allows me to situate the ethnographic data to follow. First, it shows that capoeira is salient across all tourism frames. Second, these frames and the cultural objects that legitimate them constitute the cultural knowledge to which the studios have differential access. Access to this knowledge is cultural capital that Brazilian practitioners and tourists use to construct capoeira and thus RCC.

In chapter 4, I introduce ethnographic data on how meanings come into being in actual everyday interactions and how racialization shapes how foreign tourists and Brazilian capoeira practitioners construct cultural capital. In a capoeira studio with high economic capital (Capoeira World), Brazilian practitioners and tourists mutually constructed the meanings of capoeira. These meanings associated capoeira with symbols of blackness recognizable to cosmopolitan consumers within the global market for cultural difference--specifically Africa, slavery, and the black male body. The meanings that emerged resonated with a middle class disposition toward omnivorous consumption - specifically non-commercial, authentic, and experiential consumption. Interactions
ascribed this synthesis of meanings to dark skin toned Brazilian bodies, and tourists then embodied these cultural distinctions by physically interacting with these bodies. This authentic experience satisfied tourists at Capoeira World.

In chapter 5, I trace the meanings foregrounded at Capoeira World to their classes origins. I focus on the Brazilian practitioners and the resources that allow them to establish the meanings and authenticity documented in Chapter 4. At Capoeira World, RCC became simultaneously a product of middle class cultural capital and a generator of cultural capital in the tourism market, allowing the studio to align capoeira with the expectations of a wide consumer base. Black bodies mattered, but existing economic, social, and cultural resources were central to transforming blackness into other resources. RCC did not map onto racial groups, but onto the Brazilian middle class, granting benefits to blacks that had access to middle class resources.

I then compare these findings with cultural capital construction in a studio with low economic capital (Capoeira Club). Varying class position revealed that successfully transforming capoeira into cultural capital relied upon prior economic, cultural, and social resources. Lower class producers, whom tourists perceived as authentic, were less successful at constructing cultural capital because they had limited access to the class-based cultural knowledge of tourists. A lack of economic and social resources limited this group from gaining this cultural knowledge. This group occasionally attached concerns of racism and inequality to capoeira; however, these meanings misaligned with the tourists’ cultural knowledge. I also compare the “feel for the game” of tourism at Capoeira World and Capoeira Club. Capoeira World had a better understanding of the tourist audience
and the cultural frames of the tourism market than did Capoeira Club. This acts as a feedback mechanism that further widens the cultural capital gap between these studios.

The concluding chapter reviews the contributions of my findings to cultural capital theory, globalization, and inequality in Brazil. I also make suggestions for studying racialized cultural capital in contexts outside of Brazil.
Works Cited


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