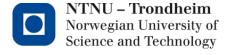Magnus Michaelsen

Praga de Mãe: Risk Engagement, Transitional Dynamics, and Regulation by the Mother's Curse in a Violent Brazilian City

Master's thesis in social anthropology

Trondheim, fall 2014

Supervisor: Stein Erik Johansen

Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology Management
Department of Social Anthropology

NTNU – Trondheim
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

Acknowledgements

First, I will thank my supervisor Stein E. Johansen for letting me pursue my own path and for pushing me in the right directions when I was stumbling.

My greatest gratitude goes to Eloisa, my best friend and emotional support when times looked bleak. Without you this project had not been. Thank you for showing me your world despite how compromising this could have been. I also owe you for all the translations and transcriptions that feature in this dissertation. I dedicate this to you.

I also want to thank my brother, Eivind, who always offers great conversations no matter what country we are in. You are definitely my second best friend. Enough said.

My parents, whom without I would not have been, and their respective spouses will always hold a special position to me. Your support and all the help I have received, from having a place to store my collection of books while staying in Brazil to the general interest in what I have dedicated two-and-a-half years to, is completely invaluable. I would also like to offer a thought to my three stepbrothers; Anders, Magnus and Andreas.

Among my disciplinary cohort, I have had helpful and much-valued discussions with Kristoffer before we ventured out into the world. I am grateful to Henrik whose brilliant questions stimulate the mind to divert from its path. Kamilla offered great support from own experiences when the danger in Fortaleza became too overwhelming. I also found much comfort in Facebook chats with Frode and Linn Silje along the long road that this has been.

A big thank you goes to Siv and Ingrid at the administration of the department of Social Anthropology. You have been great support during all the years I have studied anthropology at NTNU.

Lastly, I would give thanks to the International Section at NTNU for granting me a scholarship for research abroad. I hope this dissertation shows that it was money well spent.

Abstract

This dissertation explores two regulative mechanisms that comes to forth through the conflict between two generations – the parent generation who lived with the dictatorship in Brazil, and their children who were born into and grew up in the democratic Brazil. The two generations have different anticipations to roles in the modern Brazil and this gives itself in phenomena that gains its strength from the insecure and violent public spaces and from a type of magical thinking.

The main argument is how one of the mechanisms vertically differentiates and distributes roles and expectations through demands and unnegotiable offers. It presents a dilemma where the ideal parent-child relation, based on unconditional love, is weakened by the parents' demands and expectations to the child, and is problematized through the impossibility of denying dependency. This somewhat dysfunctional relation introduces two choices to the child where both outcomes confirms the conditionality of the parent-child relation. Hence, the phenomenon reaffirms and strengthens itself.

The other mechanism plays on the latter mechanism beyond the border of the domestic sphere, and as such presents a bilateral differentiation between family ties and self-developing activities in the public sphere.

The two mechanisms propose a system that calibrates itself in the break between tradition and social development. These two paradoxes and seeming contradictions are interpreted within a transitional model where the two mechanisms introduce a delay into the possibility of progress.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction

Eloisa has stopped at my apartment home and I am exiting the car. The clock has just passed ten on a Monday night and I have watched her jazz dance lesson at a dance academy hours earlier. We have had some food after the lesson and I am gathering my grocery bags from the front seat. I suddenly feel a thump towards the back of my leg. Since I am standing bent downwards, I can see four feet in flip-flops behind me. I stand up and turn around to look into two young faces, a third face slightly hidden behind the second. I say "No!" instinctively, thinking they might want money. I am right about the latter, although they are not the beggars I think they are. "Isso é um assalto![1]," they say, and I see that the two boys in front of me each have a revolver down by their waists. They push me aside and look into the car to tell Eloisa not to leave while they check to see if anyone else is inside the car. They are not outnumbered.

This is the last thing that happened to us during my fourteen-month long fieldwork. I had been waiting for a situation like this to occur since I arrived to Brazil. We came unharmed from the armed robbery, but not everyone is as lucky as we were. Assaults and deaths are parts of life in Fortaleza. We were therefore told retrospectively to be happy to still be alive and to thank God that he saved us. Afterwards, we struggled between choosing to stay safely indoors in boredom, or to go out and challenge our fears.

The story above captures the foundational framework to life in Fortaleza. The experience of being robbed brought me back to how I felt when I arrived. Back then, however, I had only briefly read about the city. I had not watched pictures, seen news stories or talked to anyone who had been there before. I thus ventured hesitantly into the streets. As time passed, it became clearer that Fortaleza, the city I would spend almost one and a half year in, is an extremely dangerous city.

I stayed at a backpacker guesthouse in an ambiguous area during the first month of my stay. The guesthouse was conveniently named Backpackers. Initially, the neighborhood seemed harmless enough, but as I hung out in the common area of the guesthouse, I caught up on information from the owners and other travelers about the dangers that lay outside the two digitally coded doors that separated us from the streets.

---

[1] This is a robbery.

The first advice I received was never to go anywhere alone. The chances of being robbed at both day and night decreased with the number of people that stuck together in a group. During the first couple of days, I only snuck out to go to the small convenience store across the street, stuttering some rehearsed Portuguese phrases to make myself understood. The next week, I befriended several of the residents and started going out with them to places, which let me move around to a greater extent. I became dependent on the other residents and had limited independence of my movements, but I thought that this situation was better than just staying indoors.

This first experience with the risk of becoming victimized stuck with me during my whole stay, gradually intensifying a couple of months after arrival due to the increasing focus on the lack of city security, *segurança,* in the articles of the independent newspaper *O Povo*. In addition, following a middle class woman's loss of her son to street violence, a middle class initiative called *Fortaleza Apavorada* appeared in social media. They took to the streets accusing the municipality of making the city worse and demanding the return of safety to the Fortalezan public. They started by engaging themselves in informing the public and sharing stories about the insecurity, *insegurança,* in the city through their Facebook group. Soon, bumper car stickers, posters, and regular stickers could be seen most places around the city. In May 2013, they eventually arranged one of the first demonstrations that would put its mark on the social awareness of the Brazilian society that year.

I, eventually, met my main contact, Eloisa, after about a month staying at Backpackers. She helped a French student with a temporary place to stay and asked me to join them at a nearby bar. That night I got my first Brazilian informant and translator with an in-depth knowledge in the English language. She also became a close friend and I would spend almost all the rest of my stay together with her. Most of the time we travelled by car to and from places. After about six months, she presented me to her family. I then spent at least one day a week together with them from lunchtime to evening, in addition to holidays and special occasions. After our fall-in with the assailants outside of my student housing, her mother insisted that I should stay with them, and I was fortunate to experience the household from morning to night on both good and bad during my last month of stay in Fortaleza.

My experience of first being a *gringo*, a foreigner, "without" speech turned around with time to make me acquainted with many particular local language traits covered in idioms. Many of these are disguised in the double meanings that normally cannot be found listed in any dictionary. Scheper-Hughes (1993) and Linger (1992) have tried to cover some

of these. They offered valuable insight into a deeper mentality in Brazilian culture generally and Northeastern mentality specifically. The language learning curve excelled after about a year of my stay.

The danger of becoming victim of crime did initially and continuously threaten my patterns of movement, and at times reduced my mobility to just a couple of blocks. Walking alone during nighttime was completely out of the question. Even walking alone during daytime could be risky in certain parts of the city. Nevertheless, my friends at the guesthouse, and Eloisa and her friends, went out to party every weekend. I found this odd because of the possibility of encountering dangerous situations. Why was this disregarded?

Although this backdrop of *insegurança* always stuck to the back of the stage, the scenes I partook in, the everyday activities and in particular the weekend steam-offs, set itself in extreme contrast to the discursive environment that it was set in front of. Talk of danger and insecurity was everywhere, but people went to places regarded dangerous anyways. This puzzled me extensively.

O Povo (2013a) reported that the city experienced seven murders by firearms every day during the first four months of 2013. If this had continued, the total deaths by firearm per 100,000 inhabitant would have ended up at 115 that year. At the end of the year, however, the final number ended on 73 per 100,000 inhabitant, which, although lower than the prognosis, is still a very high number.

In 2014, new reports by a Mexican NGO indicated that the increasing number of murders the year before pushed Fortaleza from number 13 in 2012, to number 7 on the list of the world's most violent cities (O Povo 2014e). Nevertheless, my friends did not stop going out to parties. They continued to make the same choices. Why would they engage in activities that could possibly lead to lethal situations? Why go against this sense of "logical reason" that risk reports and news reports so heavily rely on as an effect of their "expert knowledge"?

Since I had to walk together with people if I wanted to get anywhere, I had no choice than to follow where my friends went. I engaged in their "risky activities", while curiously pursuing them with questions about security. Cautiously, I tried to understand how they felt the streets of the city by going on my own adventures during the day. With a sense of fragile invincibility, I would sometimes go on expeditions to areas I did not know with nothing more than a map as guide. I made sure not to bring many valuables and thought I had prepared myself for any situation that could occur. A posteriori, I see that this naïve attitude toward the field could have gotten me robbed, or worse. However, without this curiosity, this somewhat

childlike behavior, I would have been rendered helpless and unable to engage in the field at all. It would have left me lying on that bed in my guesthouse room, staring at the ceiling with sweat on my forehead as the fan in the corner lazily tried to cool me down.

As I *befriended* more and more areas of the city, luckily without any unfortunate occurrences happening to me, I got more daring, but at the same time more wary. I would know how to move around walls and corners, and look for roads I could cross to avoid people that I, from distance, would consider as possible threats. I learned to orientate around masses of people with my backpack on my stomach, holding my hands close to my pockets to protect them from thieves. The more I was to know about this kind of mobility that was necessary for having a sense of control in the streets of Fortaleza, it also occurred to me that I was getting less and less social in my interaction with people in the public spaces of the city. Through my knowledge and movements, I distanced myself to people. I gained confidence, an inner trust in my own abilities to manage and to survive this possible hostile environment, but I also lost sociability and gained a general distrust in other people's honesty.

When I met Eloisa, however, some of this changed. My knowledge from the first month stuck with me although she introduced me to new knowledge about the way that middle class people move around the city and how they interact. Contrary to a village, Fortaleza is too grand to walk anywhere safely. It is too unsafe to engage in conversations in public spaces. Hence, the middle class moves mostly around by car to and from specific places where they interact with people. When I asked Eloisa and her friends about walking, they gave the impression that they rarely walked. Thus I found myself in the passenger seat of a car most of the time during the next thirteen months in Fortaleza.

Driving around also expanded my possibilities of getting to know more of the city, and Eloisa's knowledge of the city introduced me to places I probably would not have found on my own. By taking me with her to beaches, restaurants, bars and clubs, she showed me the leisure activities of young women of the middle class. By taking me with her on car rides between places, she showed me that much time is spent in traffic in between home, the university, and the hospital where she volunteers. By finally introducing me at home, she showed me the grounds from where she began her life. Slowly, a pattern emerged about how the home and the institutions provoke choices of actions, which suspend the risks of the public life, even though the sense of insecurity remains at all time.

The warnings and dangers told to me at Backpackers made me believe that risks are a direct threat and a physical manifestation; an unknown face that could strike anywhere and

anytime, unpredictable, but very real and brutal. However, after a while, the risks I learned as important to these young women are those threatening their own identity and life projects that are directed toward independency. The most important project I found them to value is *the search for autonomy*.

To them, the biggest threat seemed to be the boundaries and limits that they are expected to live by. This seemed to catch them in between the contingencies of family and traditional life and the promises of modern Brazil, which offers female participation in the labor market, economic independence, education, and so on. In addition, their broad knowledge about other countries, their consumption of internet trends, movies, music and the like, seemed to offer them values that they possessed and wanted more of – values that often collide with traditional patterns of role expectations.

In between these two poles, their own autonomous self exists, which, to me, seems to relate itself to the sense of *desire*, or in Brazilian Portuguese called *vontade*. The word can in addition have the meaning *a wish*, *a will* or *a want* (Scheper-Hughes 1993:565), and it comes close to mean *whatever **can** be satisfied*. However, it rather seemed to take on the sense *whatever **should** be satisfied*. The sense of self seemed to express itself through *vontade*, thus being important to a feeling of independence.

The *vontade* also seems to be more generally a cultural trait to which most of the Brazilians I met seemed to act upon. This is opposed to the North-European mind, which in generalized terms can be said to have been shaped by a protestant ethic of scarcity, control and abstinence (Weber 2001, also implied in Freud's cases) – sometimes at the level of asceticism.

There is a certain Dionysian edge to the Brazilian society (Benedict 1960). We might call it a light version to the Dionysian cultural traits. One can see close to naked dancing girls in television shows at almost any time of day. Songs often have double meanings – one kindergarten safe one and one overly sexual one. The motto of the carnival, *anything goes,* describes a bacchanalian[2] gathering in the public spaces (Linger 1992:8) where both sexual and violent behavior toward acquaintances, friends and unknowns are justified[3]. One can also find these sentiments in the weekly occurring *festas*. Benedict reflects on Nietzsche's description of the Dionysian traits as such,

---

[2] Dionysus finds his equivalent in Bacchus, which the Romans adopted from Greek mythology.

[3] Linger (1992) emphasizes that this can only happen within certain limits of play.

> The Dionysian pursues them [the ways of arriving at a value of existence] through 'the annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence'; he seeks to attain in his most valued moments escape from the boundaries imposed upon him by his five senses, to break through into another order of experience. The desire of the Dionysian, in personal experience or in ritual, is to press through it toward a certain psychological state to achieve excess. The closest analogy to the emotions he seeks is drunkenness […] (Benedict 1960:79).

Apart from seeking towards the independency and desire in *festas*, one can find *love motels* where one can pay by the hour if one wants to have a private moment with a lover, spouse, friend, a random stranger or a prostitute. There are many sex shops around the center and periphery of the city. There is also no law that specifically forbids prostitution, so even though it is not legal, it is not directly illegal. Thus, police will not sanction any prostitution unless the prostituted are under the legal age limit for sexual relations. I also found that many Brazilians would stay out all night partying and dancing if they have the possibility, and their *desire* for partying particularly expresses itself during the carnival.

To me, the above-mentioned examples are all part of a deeper mentality that gives itself in language and ways of acting toward *vontade*. For instance, the satisfaction in food is important to many Brazilians in addition to being a prominent metaphor of sexual activities and relations. When giving me an example of a regional stereotype, two *paulistas[4]* told me that people of the northeast are "always hungry", most likely directed both toward the fact that the state is traditionally seen as poor as well as it has a rather openly sexual expression[5]. Eloisa and her friends often talked about food topics. One of her friends was compared to the character *Magali* from the famous Brazilian comic *Túrma da Mônica*, a character that is always hungry. The food they would order usually had to be "really good" and, thus, satisfied a *vontade* at the given moment. Choosing a restaurant to go to at night would take its time of negotiation until everyone could get his or her desire satisfied.

The sexual mentality also gives itself in the way that food is represented in sexual terms. *Desire's* relation to notions of satisfaction, lust and wants, makes it no coincidence then, I think, that the word *to eat* in Brazilian Portuguese, *comer*, can also mean *to fuck* in given circumstances. Other words for animals that are fed upon or certain types of fruits are

---

[4] Paulistas are people from São Paulo.

[5] Fortaleza has an average temperature of 28 degrees Celsius all year around, and the warmth has its effects on the choices of clothes to wear, hence much skin is showed out in public.

also metonyms for genitalia[6] and lustful activities.

This understanding of the differences of *vontade*, which lies at the core of the autonomous life projects, is imperative to bridge the gap between the family belonging in the household and the group belonging in the public. It will eventually help to highlight why the *risk engagement*, which had me puzzled for a long time, is an important action to these young women although they possess all the necessary knowledge, experiences, narratives and general discourses on danger and insecurity that could have contributed to them making other choices of actions.

It became apparent that there is a generational gap in Fortaleza. This might be due to a change in Brazilian society with a new generation who grew up under different material, political and social circumstances than their parents. They thus pose a challenge to tradition and traditional family relations.

I experienced these young women to be extremely individualized in their actions towards the *vontade*. All of them studies at the university. They have all chosen a line of profession, and they have all made choices toward a possible future of independency. At the same time, I witnessed internal conflicts between them and their families, and within themselves. This seemed to be due to how the responsibilities to their parents' wishes clashed with their own. Sometimes this resulted in the need to *let off steam* (Fine 1988) at a *churrascaria*[7], a karaoke bar or a club, thus also contributing to the choice of risk engagement.

Close to Christmas in 2013, Eloisa told me about a phenomenon that she called *praga de mãe*. This literally means *curse of, or by, the mother*. When she explained the curse, she gave me an example of, and the reason to why, one of her friends did not participate in the demonstrations of the Confederation Cup in Brazil in 2013. The curse is a sort of premonition based on a mother's feeling that something bad might happen if the child goes outside into the public domains of the city. Intrigued by the implications of how this could shed light on some of my observations, I found in the *praga* a link between the structural divide of the domestic life and the public life. The *praga* de mãe is, hence, my main argument about how risky situations can be interpreted culturally and give different meanings to certain kinds of risk engagements. It also makes for the argument of a self-regulative mechanism within a society

---

[6] Like *pinto*, which means *small chicken*, but can also mean *little penis*.

[7] A barbecue bar serving grilled meats, beer and liquor.

in transition. Hence, the following dissertation will look at the transitional dynamics of a society in change, where *praga de mãe* illustrates a mechanism that bridges the gap between interactional spheres and balances societal challenges.

This dissertation has the following chapters with the following topics:

Chapter 2 of this dissertation outlines the theoretical framework and the general ideas that will be laid out in further chapters. My main discussion is about the structural division of Brazilian society, general risk theory, and the discursive framework that this fieldwork has been set in. It also includes a framework of how the magical thinking contributes to the self-regulative mechanism of *praga de mãe*.

Chapter 3 has some reflections on methods and difficulties in the field when the field is limited by dangerous circumstances.

Chapter 4 presents Fortaleza, its history and development towards the city that it is today. This chapter also includes some information about the most important transitions of Brazil.

Chapter 5 goes into the domestic life and the observations made in the household. It offers a view on how an ethos of unconditional relations between parent-child is relativized by the mechanism of *illusory altruism*, and suggests that this strengthens the hierarchical structure of the relations in the household and the system of dependence that a household's children want to, but cannot, escape.

Chapter 6 presents the general life in the public through a specific gaze at the institutions that my informants usually found themselves within. In the public, other hierarchies show themselves and contribute to the need to vent off steam in *festas*.

In **chapter 7**, we will look at the meaning of the *festas*, the parties, which includes the carnival celebrations. In this chapter, we will also be introduced further into the activity of *vontade*.

Chapter 8 looks at the phenomenon *praga de mãe*, and how it is a mechanism of control that regulates the possible threats that exist between the domestic and the public sphere in the transition between tradition and modernity.

Finally, **chapter 9** offers a summary of the dissertation.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Reflections

Casa and Rua – Two Complementary Aspects to Brazilian Social Life

This dissertation consists of two main parts, which for all intents and purposes can be called *the domestic life* and *the life in the public*. This distinction is mainly the same as the one proposed by Brazilian social anthropologist Roberto DaMatta (1997a, 1997b).

In this chapter, we are made acquainted with the theoretical framework that this dissertation is based upon. It takes us through our problem and creates the foundation that is necessary for our later discussion about the cultural meaning of risk management and the self-regulative mechanism in the transitional dynamic between domestic and public life.

Historical Outline

In his re-readings of Gilberto Freyre (1986), Roberto DaMatta (1997a, 1997b) stresses Freyre's distinction between the *casa grande*, the big house of the master, and the *senzala*, the outer areas of the master's property where the slaves would reside. Freyre's main work about the slave period in Brazilian history and the *mentalités* (Freyre 1986:155) of the Brazilian people is one that through historic accounts from the Portuguese colonization argues for how the slavery was milder in Brazil than in North America. He argues that this was due to how the Portuguese had had experience with the moors, a North-African Muslim kingdom that once occupied Portugal and parts of Spain. Freyre believed that the slaves were treated so much better in Brazil that they had a higher life quality than many of those in the middle classes of Brazil at the time. He thought so because of how the slaves were given scraps from the master's table, food that was high in protein and, as such, supplied the slaves with a well nutritional diet. Freyre put the *casa grande* against the *mata*, the forest areas full of demons and spirits, and argued for how miscegenation through forced and voluntary sexual relationships with slave women in the *casa grande* and in the *senzalas* created mulattos that were to materialize a bridge between the *casa* and the *mata*.

The main point that DaMatta borrowed and further developed from Freyre, is how the distinction between the home and the outside of the home relates to statuses and roles in Brazil in the latter half of the twentieth century. For DaMatta (1997a, 1997b), Brazilian life

consists of the *casa*, the house where the family unit lives, and the *rua*. *Rua* is directly translated to *the street*, but in DaMatta's works, it means *labor* and *public life*. DaMatta (2004:18) recognizes that the family is essential to the understanding of the Brazilian society. He describes a hierarchy with the man of the household on top. After him follows his sons, *filhos*, his wife, *dona da casa*, then any other in the household. Daughters are not mentioned. Employed people in the household comes last.

In the house, the man can be himself and does not have to care about the burden of work, according to DaMatta (1984, 1997b). The man's responsibility for the household is to be a provider, and when he is home the woman of, or women in, the household has the responsibility to prepare what the man provides (Scheper-Hughes 1993:148). In his house, his wife and servants care for him and he does not need to pretend who he is. He is **himself** in terms of **his** household, that is, what **he**, himself, **has accomplished**. At home, "one is a person, a "somebody," […] where one is embedded in ongoing and inalienable relationships, rights, and duties based on birth and family." (ibid.:86).

Counter to the *casa* is the *rua*, the outside of the home. In DaMatta's (1982/1983, 1986, 1997a) earlier work the *rua* is the public world of conversation, political discussions, street vendors and work. This is where the person becomes "an individual, but really an "anybody," […] where, technically speaking at least, all men are equal before the law and in commercial transactions." (Scheper-Hughes 1993:86). The world of the *rua* is, as Scheper-Hughes argues, a concept of the modernization processes that took hold with capitalism and commercialism. The *rua*, as such, stands historically in contrast to the *casa grande,* which was based on *personalism* and *familiarism*, and a traditional way of life based on

> "the feudal structure and history of slavery, patriarchy, and patronage and the political system of coronelismo, a premodern form of chieftainship or leadership by big men, the heads of large, extended households protected by privately owned police forces." (Scheper Hughes, p. 87).

In the following, we will also see that *casa* and *rua* can be understood as spheres of different activities, social relations, values, control and levels of security. The concept of spheres appeared in anthropological studies of economy in areas experiencing transition and change (see for instance Barth 1996, Bohannan 1959, Bloch and Parry 1989). Initially, the concept tried to explain circulation of objects of different sorts of cultural values. When the monetary economy appeared in these cultures, the barriers were torn down as money equalized objects and reduced their moral value. Anthropological studies of economy show

that there are many forms of interpersonal relations that rely on the exchanges between people. Hence, it opens up for the wider use of sphere theory to other domains of life where exchanges and relations can be found.

Spheres helps to visualize interrelations and overlaps in different domains of a culture. The moral values within one sphere might contradict a majority of those in another, illustrating that societies are not completely congruent, and that they sometimes are contradicting. Sometimes these spheres also reinforce each other.

Hence, the following argument will separate the *casa* and the *rua* into two spheres, which are both separate and conjoined. The *casa* will be referenced to as *the domestic sphere*, while the *rua* will be referenced to as *the public sphere*. However, the concepts of the *casa* and the *rua* have a historical significance that we should not neglect if we want to understand some of the implications in the everyday life of a Brazilian family. The historical expressions will therefore also be used in addition to the concept of the spheres.

Person and Individual –Differentiating the Self in Front of Universals

The notions of *casa* and *rua* have an organizational significance based on blood and solidarity within the family, and on reputation and personal abilities in the public domain. In addition, in the public, knowing **someone** – that is, *someone **who is** someone **to** someone* – can be of significance.

Knowing *someone who is someone to someone* transforms the individual who stands before universal laws into the person who has relations to someone who has an important position within the hierarchy of the system (DaMatta 1997a, 2004). In Brazil, this phenomenon is called *jeitinho*[8]. *Jeitinho* personalizes the law and bends rules if one has the necessary connections to show one's person outside of the *casa*.

A *jeitinho* usually plays out in official places or toward official people who works within and for the government. It can for instance happen if one knows someone in a department of a public service. The *jeitinho* can play out as skipping a line and advance to a free counter, not having to fill out some documents, or getting out of a parking ticket.

---

[8] A small way.

To order certain services for my apartment, I had to get myself a *CPF*[9]. The *CPF* is a number registered by the state for taxation, establishing bank accounts, and it is needed for ordering services like electricity, phone or internet. The usual procedure would take several time-consuming steps. First, one must meet up early in the morning to get a number for the line. Second, one spends hours waiting, sitting on an uncomfortable chair in one of the many rows of chairs that sits in front of a number display showing who are next to be served. Then, if one has been there early enough, the number one has gotten will show on a display and it is your turn. If one arrives too late in the morning and gets a high number, then there might not be any vacant appointments that day.

Eloisa worked in a university project together with someone who had an aunt at this office, and so we could meet at the office at noon, ask for the person at the counter and get help within fifteen minutes. A similar thing happened at the federal police when I had to register some documents. Someone that Eloisa knew from her earlier activities in the church had a relative that worked at the counter and I got help as if I had had the relation. I also observed customers at the national bank skipping line once when we visited. One of my peripheral contacts told me that he once had been let off the hook by police officers when they had stopped him for driving recklessly. He had made one phone call to his father who had contacted someone in the police. The police officer was called up, ended the call and excused himself before leaving.

Considering that the law usually is universal for all, it ideally treats the population as equal individuals. The *jeitinho* illustrates a mechanism that converts the sphere of universality into a sphere of personal relations. Only by **being** *someone who knows someone who is someone* in a social hierarchy can universal laws become personal. This is what has led DaMatta to say that the *jeitinho* makes the Brazilian institutional life more dynamic and flexible (1984:103). Mechanisms like this exists in several spheres of Brazilian life.

The *jeitinhos* are experienced as ambiguous. They are good when one benefits from them, but unfair whenever someone else takes one's place in the line because of an acquaintance. Of course, with such a system, someone will always be more beneficial than others will, and there will be an uneven distribution of whose personhood is of significance within the *rua*. This illustrates the relationship between the conceptions of individual and person that DaMatta (1997a, 2004) suggests as differentiations of the self. The distinction is

---

[9] *Cadastro de Pessoas Físicas*, registry of individual taxpayers.

also important to understand the injustice that I believe that many young people feel within the new democratic Brazil, and why they feel that it should be changed although they sometimes like the benefits of the *jeitinho* when the rules are bent their way. Young people have by default fewer important social relations when it comes to governmental institutions than older people can have. In addition, different social strata also plays in on the possibility of carrying out a *jeitinho* successfully. Being young and poor will probably never get one to cut a line or get quicker and better help with any issue one has with an office. This differentiation can be part of a provocation that results in how young criminals, for instance, occupies and controls the safety of the streets, a domain of the public sphere that does not discriminate statuses.

The personalization of the law can be unfortunate in other ways as well. In a worst-case scenario, it can make people feel like there is no law at all. The *rua*, as such, can feel rather uncontrolled and fluid. At the same time, being uncontrolled and fluid, it can also be felt as free and liberating. The *rua*, thus, can be a space of opportunity and possibilities. When carnival takes to the street, it **takes** to the street. Carnival never happens at home. Hence, it is not strange that the motto is "anything goes" (Linger 1992:74) when the street mentality celebrates itself in the street.

Person and Practice

One way to establish the difference between individual and person is how the individual in a way is just one in a mass – a member of a group. The person, on the other hand, is a sum of social relations that can be played out within the right framework. We can thus say that the person is an actor who plays out actions as strategies in a field (Bourdieu 1977).

In his action-centered theory of practice, Bourdieu (ibid.) proposed that different *fields* exists within societies where the actor strategically plays out habituated and tactical actions to gain certain wants. He proposed that different fields contains within them different ethos' of actions, which are based on class belonging. Bourdieu shows how classes are reproduced by active and passive differentiation although there are interrelations between the classes. The active differentiation would happen when actors who dominate a field plays certain strategies that the actors who are new to or is a minority within the same field cannot interpret as different from their own strategies because of habituated background. The passive differentiation would happen if an actor understands that the response to the strategies that the

13

actor plays are not interpreted as expected. Bourdieu suggested that all fields have a proper frame of conduct where many actions have certain traits and ways with them, which differs the one grown up with the proper conduct from the one who tries to play the same role. He also showed that people of same class segment, but from very different geographical locations could have problems of playing in the same field (see for instance Bourdieu 2004).

Thus far, the distinction between the individual and the person is that the individual is more of a statistical unit, as if the individual is the biological human being and nothing more. The person is the sum of social relations that plays out strategies in fields based on those relations. We should note that habituated practices also is a part of this person. The person thus is a sum of experiences. Contrary to the person who is based in past experiences and present actions that are directed to future desires, the individual becomes more of a timeless object that is only significant insofar as it has a beginning, a birth, and an end, a death. For the sake of distinction, we will follow the argument of Radcliffe-Brown (La Fontaine 1993:125). The individual is what is part of a census. The person is what is part of an anthropological study.

Casa and Rua as Spatially Differed

In the case of Fortaleza, the division between the *casa* and the *rua* is visual and experiential due to the levels of danger in the public sphere. The increasing amount of violence in the city has most likely created very distinct borders between certain daily routines in both a conceptual, experiential and emotional sense. When one goes out for errands, one takes the car, locks all the doors and windows and goes straight to the destination while carefully considering the road choices so to not end up in bad neighborhoods. After nightfall, many think twice about if it is imperative to leave the house at all. Sometimes they choose to stay at home until the next day. The feeling of safety and danger creates emotive differences between the *casa* and the *rua*.

The *casa* thus becomes a place of control because the *casa* needs to maintain what cannot be found in the public spaces of the *rua*. Walls, CCTV[10], barbed wire, broken glass, fences, armed guards and alarms physically separates homes from the rest of the city based on an emotive state of fear. As such, the casa offers security. The outside, the *rua*, then becomes

---

[10] Closed-circuit Television – a type of surveillance camera.

oars of transportation from and to destinations. The *ruas* form the maze that people move through. The *rua* can be experienced as *the street* and not just as a concept of relations or as a emotive domain of insecurity. This differs from DaMatta (1983, 1997a) who emphasizes the social life in the streets and in the *praças*[11].

Fortaleza has few squares and those that exists are anything but full of people. The small nighttime markets we visited were held within cage like buildings where control could be obtained. Many of the parks have been fenced in so that police can guard the exits in case of illegal activities inside the park area. During the fourteen months I spent in Fortaleza, we never went to a park. We did, however, go to some of the squares in the evenings to get a late snack. Although there were people at the squares selling food and conversing around tables, it seemed like many went home early. Many tables and chairs were vacant when we arrived at around eight at night.

Geographers and social anthropologists have covered the spatial attributes to life on the American continent. In the feminist tradition of the geographic discipline, women's lack of independence and their obedience to violence in public spaces has been of focus (Rose 1993, Valentine 1989, 1992). Latin- and South American anthropology, however, has focused more on the distinction between open squares and closed buildings (Richardson 2003, Low 1996). This distinction has been made analogous to the difference between space and place. For instance, in a study of markets Richardson (2003) found different ways of behavior in the vendors when they were at the square than in a building, due to how flows of people and the necessity for attention differed. In Fortaleza, it seemed like there was a relation between the level of danger and the public spaces, creating an aggressive space shaped by male ideals of machismo (Archetti and Stølen 2004:270) – a dominating and aggressive form of acting out[12].

It is probably more beneficial to consider the philosopher Tuan's (1977) contribution to the experience of spaces and places. Although one can, as Ingold (2011b) does, contest the idea of people living in spaces, it is beneficial for our conceptual understanding that there are different emotive patterns attached to how we understand place and space in social life. Tuan suggests that there is a certain freedom to spaces – a flow and fluidity. We can also say that there is a certain weak control to spaces. Places are more stagnant. Places are secured by those who reside there, and thus they are secure. Spaces, with their ambiguity, are, per definition,

---

[11] Public squares.

[12] Although not necessarily towards women.

possibly insecure. Following our argument above, this makes sense in our case. The *casa*, with its walls and family ties, is a secure place, a retreat from the possibly dangerous outside, the *rua*. The person and the family, who is intertwined in blood ties, stands in stark contrast to the statistical individual, the number that moves with the stream of people, and which easily is victimized of external forces. The latter goes well with the precautionary measure of walking in packs; the more, the better.

The theorizing about the domestic sphere and the public sphere is, thus, not something new and very particular to Brazilian society and social life. Nevertheless, it does have very specific expressions in Fortaleza. The *casa* provides a basic need for security. The *rua* provides a *vontade* towards autonomy. Our discussion above can be set up as the following isomorph relation:

(**I**) a) casa **:** rua **::** b) person **:** individual

Casa and Rua as Spheres of Relations

Bloch and Parry (1989) argued that in many cases where there is a family sphere and a sphere dominated by market thinking, the family relations, based on long-term moral relations, needs to be protected from the short term relations of the market (ibid.:26). This goes into the identified versions of reciprocity; generalized, balanced and negative (Sahlins 1972:193-196).

There is a correlation between these and the spheres of the *casa* and the *rua*. The *casa* and the family relations are based on a sort of altruistic way of helping each other out. We are not speaking of a categorical altruism, but rather an expectance of family members to "sacrifice" themselves for other members – like when Eloisa needs to drive her sister around when her parents cannot, although Eloisa has other important priorities. The providing role of the father also illustrates this "altruism". Particularly when it comes to how the father figure is disappointed with anyone of the family members who provides for themselves. We will see this later in chapter five.

These spheres have their equivalent understanding in Tönnies' differentiation between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (Johansen 2007:449). The properties of a *Gemeinschaft* are similar to those found within the family sphere of "multiplex relations to a small number of closely related people, which can be said to constitute a – hard pressured – "Gemeinschaft" in miniature" (ibid., my translation). Opposed we find the *Gesellschaft* where "each single individual in the public sphere (including the market) has uniplex relations to different people

in a multiplicity of different and relatively well-defined situations" (ibid., my translation). Johansen suggests further that the *Gemeinschaft* is characterized by **personal safety** whereas *Gesellschaft* is characterized by **anonymous freedom** (ibid.). In addition, he suggests a third category that consists of traits from both categories. This third category offers paradoxes like "free Gemeinschaft or personal Gesellschaft" (ibid., my translation).

As will become clearer later, the *festas* and the adult friendships exist within this third sphere, which acts as a buffer between the two other spheres. The third sphere is characterized by offering a sense of personal freedom as a blend of the other two spheres. In addition, we will find the mechanism *praga de mãe* within this third sphere that seems to limit the redefinition of "the family life's traditional relations of personal safety to personal freedom" (ibid.:450, my translation).

The *rua*, being a place for services that charges money and where work takes place, fits with the balanced reciprocal model. This model is best illustrated by a pure economic transaction where the price of a commodity is paid for; one is left with the money, the other with the commodity. The relation between the two parts only exists in the moment of the transaction. This way of explaining relations in a balanced reciprocal transaction is also not completely categorical. Both marketing and service provision during the sale has evident value to the relation. Marketing might have people returning to a certain service or product. The same goes for good service. Suffice to say, for our use, the category works to give another notion to our conceptualization of the *rua*.

Considering the level of criminal activity in the public, negative reciprocity is also a big part of the *rua*. In the public sphere, you, thus, find short term relations of two sorts; one which in terms of value is at a zero-level, and one which is at a negative. In such a generalization, it gives us that the only beneficial relations, seen from a certain point of view, exist in the domestic sphere, whereas the public sphere has a zero or a possible loss relational outcome.

The Principle of the Ideal Unconditional Relation

It should also be noted that there is a certain trait to family relations that contains an ideal of being unconditional relations. Of course, many actions and counteractions are expected due to bonds in blood and unity, but most relations within the family are ideally without conditions. We probably all have examples of family bonds that break down and these cases are often looked upon as a travesty. If a family member is disregarded by the family,

17

blame has to follow either side. The blame is most likely interpreted within a moral framework of either part, and as such is relative to the one that we ask. There are too many ways to break family ties than can be accounted for here, but suffice to say that how such a situation is looked upon as a tragedy, there must exist a certain ideal of unconditional relations between family members. This is contrary to those relations that exist between actors in balanced reciprocity where the relation needs to be conditional.

This also illustrates a certain difference between the person and the individual. The person's relations to *someone who is someone to someone* else have to be established on other terms than those one finds in the *rua*. The relations must be of a long-term type and one that is more familiar or intimate than the short-term relations found in barter, trade and crime. As such, long-term and short-term relations are blended within the domestic and public sphere, although they most likely does not overlap completely, as accounted for by Johansen (2007:449). The domestic sphere and the public sphere are overlapping in the same way that relational concepts of the one sphere are playable in the other. The distribution, though, seems to be one-way. One does not play the short-term relations within the domestic sphere, but one can play the long-term relations within the public sphere. This indicates how the domestic sphere is the foundation to life in Fortaleza. The *casa* has security and basic long-term relations between family members. In return, the demand for loyalty and personal sacrifices is strong.

In this way, then, it is no wonder that there exists a regulating principle in between the spheres. Eloisa told me that her mother one time had told her that she should not hang out so much with her friends. Instead, she should spend more time together with her family because her friends, as her mother had said, will disappear with time and her family will not. However, implying a transitional mechanism, her mother stated that her family **could** leave her if she **did not** spend time with them as she **expected** her to. A family leaving a family member behind seems a bit harsh. The mother's warning can thus be read in milder terms. She could have meant that there would be a more limited support from the family. We can then understand that a valued sort of conduct in the family sphere is to limit oneself from chasing one's *vontade*. We can call this *impulse control*.

Our isomorph relations can, hence, be extended. Apart from the spatial division of Brazilian life and the analogous division of the self, we can add certain *mentalités*, which are manifested in language. There are two expressions in particular that goes into the matrix of Brazilian social life. These are *saudade* and *vontade*.

Saudade and Vontade

Whenever the Brazilians I talked to would mention something particular for Brazilian language, *saudade* was given as a concept that "only exists" in Brazil. Their insistence on having a concept that is only theirs is probably due to how they could not find an equivalent in the English language, which is the language that influences most of their foreign cultural consumption. Both Linger (1992) and Scheper-Hughes (1993) have tried to give an account of the expression without coming up with a specific English term. For Linger, *saudade* is a "bittersweet emotion usually glossed as "longing" or "nostalgia", […] a profound, melancholy sense of physical separation, of apartness, of being literally out of touch with a person, a place, a time." (Linger 1992:7).

In her introduction to *Death Without Weeping* (1993), Scheper-Hughes casually explains *saudade* as a "pull of nostalgic longings" (1993:16). Later she calls it an "intense longing" (ibid.:26) before elaborating extensively in a later chapter. She adds the feeling of sorrow to it, and then puts in words the problem of making full sense of the term,

> "Saudade reflects a great deal about the ways in which Northeast Brazilians view themselves and their ways of thinking, being, feeling and acting in the world. So to suggest that saudade can be simply translated as "sad longing," "poignant memory," "yearning," "nostalgia," or "homesickness" is misleading." (ibid.:435-436).

Rather than directly translating the term, she describes it rather well,

> "Brazilians think of their saudade as the purest expression of the Brazilian soul, of their heightened sensibility and awareness of the natural and social environment in which they live, of their acute sensitivity to the human condition and to its tragedies, and of loss, longing, and, in particular, memory itself." (ibid.:436).

She goes on to summarize an unpublished essay by the Portuguese psychiatrist Eurico Figueiredo who had "[…] difficulty of locating the "exact sense" of the concept of saudade, which requires, among other things, a mastery of Portuguese and Brazilian poetry […]." (ibid.). The *saudade* is to be understood in terms of complex associations between " […] pleasure and regret, desire and pain, attachment and loss" (ibid.).

The understanding of *saudade* is complicated because it seems to be used in rather different situations for very different feelings and emotional states. After a while, I simplified my interpretation of *saudade* by thinking of certain varieties along a continuum where one end represents rather trivial occurrences and the other end rather strongly emotional ones. I

did this because I noticed that someone would use *saudade* about friends they had not seen for many years, as well as using *saudade* about a hamburger they had just eaten and wished that it would have been more of. As such, *saudade* has a strong and a light definition that puts itself in relation to temporal and spatial attributes to emotional life. We find a parallel to this in how the term *ritual* is used in anthropology. In a strong sense, ritual follows certain steps that marks transitions in the lives of people. In a weak sense, ritual can be used for rather trivial and profane matters like stretching after getting out of bed each morning. *Saudade* seems to have the same problem with it, although this is probably more a strength to the concept rather than a weakness, as it is for the term *ritual*. It implies that the term contains within it a difference of quantity and quality that shifts and creates an awareness of preferential states of consumption and being.

Many of the terms in Brazilian Portuguese, and *cearense*[13] in particular, seemed to be of such a sort, lying on a meaning continuum where they have more and less emotional value. However, in many instances, *saudade* seemed to reflect a longing for something in terms of the restraints that exist in either temporal, spatial or social spheres. Thus, *saudade* seems in many ways to be a feeling that is **evoked within** and **restrained by** the same forces that exist within the *casa*. The *saudade* can seem to be an effect of the regulative principle that is directed from the *casa* and into the *rua*, which we will see later.

Counter to the term *Saudade* we find the expression *vontade*. Where *saudade* is something one either does not have or is an emotional state that one is missing, *vontade* is the feeling when *one wants something in terms of a **desire***. One might say that *saudade* is as such a negative expression that focuses on something one does not have, while *vontade* is a positive expression for something one wants. Another way of putting this is that *saudade* can be a passive notion while *vontade* is an active one; the *saudade* is felt, the *vontade* is acted out. However, both terms illustrate a longing for something, but contrary to *vontade*, *saudade* is a feeling that can be killed, "to matar their saudades (kill their longing or lovesickness)" (Scheper-Hughes 1993:435) and as such be suppressed. *Vontade*, however, is a desire that needs to be fulfilled. This makes *saudade* a more ambiguous term than *vontade*. *Saudade* contains within it something that can be of the term *vontade*, while *vontade* tries to actively suppress the *saudade*. Through *vontade* we see the strong notion of desire that comes out as an active principle to choices of action. Unfortunately, Scheper-Hughes only mentions

---

[13] The name of the local dialect in the state Ceará that Fortaleza is the state capital of.

vontade in her glossary as a term that means "will, wish, desire" (ibid.:565) and does not reflect more on the term. I will suggest that there is more to *vontade* than this.

Oddly enough, Linger (1992), writing on the São Luisense carnival, does not reflect upon *vontade* either – the lustful term and state of mind that one would suspect to be a central part of the carnivalesque mindset. However, he writes extensively on *desire* in the carnival and might have missed out on the term *vontade*, which I understand to be a very central trait to the Brazilian *mentalité*.

It is also odd that Linger does not write on *vontade* when focusing on meanings of violence in a Brazilian city. When I saw young criminals on television being interviewed about why they committed a crime, why they stole this and this, or killed this and this person, they often responded that they just wanted to; *tinha vontade*. This missing impulse control of *vontade* also exists, as well as the *vontade* to travel to see the world, and the *vontade* to go out, get drunk and have fun. *Vontade* can be a mindset that is both destructive and constructive. In the destructive sense, it can explain many a meaning behind violence. As such, the concept could highlight the total range of the Dionysian elements in Brazilian culture.

Sometimes the *vontade* can have an element of *saudade* within it, but then the notion of *saudade* is more positively laden. The combinatory meaning of *vontade* and *saudade* has a temporal direction toward future choices rather than how *saudade* ususally goes backwards towards memory. *Vontade*, thus, has a sense of *freedom* to it in the same way as *saudade* has a sense of *restraint*. We can now see a pattern of differentiation in the following isomorph relations:

(**II**) a) casa : rua :: b) person : individual :: c) saudade : vontade :: d) restraint : freedom

Further Reflections

Although this approach is rather structuralist, it is not proposed as a definite understanding of the Brazilian society. As mentioned above to some of the terms I use, I visualize the elements and the oppositions as individual continuums with degrees of emotional and conceptual value. There are certain definite limits between certain of these as well since there are interrelations between them. For instance, most *casas* have very definite limits to the *rua*. However, it becomes more fluid when speaking about a *communidade* within a *bairro*. A *communidade* is a social unit that exceeds the *casa*. In the conversations I

21

had with Eloisa's mother, *communidade* meant a gathering of several families for social venues – all of them residents of a nearby *favela*[14]. A *bairro*, on the other hand, is a geographically located area with a name and an identity. Although the above-mentioned *communidade* and Eloisa's family reside within the same *bairro*, I found no particular loyalties or patriotism referring to the *bairro* that the family live in, among the members of the Oliveira family. This does not mean that they do not exist, but the loyalty or local patriotism may be very weak.

The digital world also challenges the division between the *casa* and the *rua*. Social media, Facebook in particular, invite the *rua* into the *casa* with information, which contains with it experiences and values for individual consumption. The same goes for the broad use of television sets that can be found in every bedroom. Cell phones also blend the borders between what happens within the *casa* and what happens in the *rua*. These medias have altered the flow of information, and narrowed space and time between people. It is no wonder, then, that it also distorts the spatial and temporal distinctions between *casa* and *rua*.

As noted above, person and individual is already a problematic distinction. Being two sides to selfhood, as Jenkins (2008:50) goes into, they cannot be completely distinguished. *Saudade* and *vontade*, too, both have individual differences and similarities at the same time as being emotional oppositions.

Temporal differences is easier to visualize. Thinking time as a continuum, past and future cannot overlap because where they conjoin, we experience the *present*. A difference to the other pairs, though, is that past and future can always grow and increase the continuum that they are on. The present, as a third term to the pair, is, however, always in the now – the point in between the past and the future.

In terms of actions, the past is our experience – or with Bourdieu (1977), the habituated – and the future is partly determined by the choices that rely on that experience. The present is the actual action, which we – now, within our age, where *YOLO* (*you only live once*) connotes a sense of autonomy – like to regard as our own without any external influences on our strategies. This, of course, will be directly in relation to the sense of selfhood, the duties of the person and the freedom of the individual. Or put otherwise, as Jenkins himself rejects although cannot escape, the conflict between the external and the internal as it is "inextricably entangled" (ibid.:51).

---

[14] A residential area of shacks where squatters live illegally

My following discussion will imply, more than go into, that this *vontade* to act in the present without any restraints is a leading concept in young, middle class females' choices of actions. This leads to a conflict between two generations, which lies in between the concepts of the person and the individual in the same way as there is a conflict between the *casa* and the *rua*, restraint and freedom. In more politically laden terms than past and future, we can say that there is a conflict between tradition and progression.

Margaret Mead (1971) suggests that generational cliffs rely on different modes of transferring knowledge. Whenever the distance between generations shows itself, it relies on a break between a) the practice of strictly giving traditional knowledge from the older generation to the young, and b) the practice of the young of distributing knowledge about society among themselves. She refers to these two modes as *postfigurative* (ibid.:26) and *cofigurative* (ibid.:60) models of knowledge distribution. The *postfigurative* model is built upon myths and tradition, hence *the past*, while the *cofigurative* is modelled on the young generations' perception of changes in their society and their time, thus *the now*. She adds a third model called the *prefigurative* (ibid.:96), which looks ahead toward how society should become modelled, hence directed to *the future*. In Fortaleza, I experienced a break between the *postfigurative* and *cofigurative* models in relation to which sphere people were in. The domestic sphere clearly relied on *postfigurative* principles, while the public sphere, likewise, demonstrated *cofigurative* principles. I would say that the young generation is affected by all three modes because the *prefigurative* blends in with the *cofigurative* mode. The mix of the latter two modes became clear when the demonstrations during the Confederation Cup broke out in 2013. The ambivalence between the two modes also showed itself by how the demonstrations gradually faded out and did not return with the same strength later that year or the next.

By referring to tradition in the *postfigurative* model and a weak form for progression in the *cofigurative*/*prefigurative* model, the paradoxical relation within the national motto in the Brazilian flag sums up this conflict as follows, "*Ordem e progresso*", order and progress. The motto means that through order, progress will follow, and thus accentuates the *postfigurative* mode of knowledge distribution that lies as a foundation within Brazilian society. Order and control are similar, and I suggest that in Brazil this control is based on the domestic sphere and the traditions of the *casa*, whereas progress now challenges this order by appealing to innovation and market capitalism. The idea of progress materializes itself in the *rua*.

23

This leads to my last suggestion of the isomorph relations where I make a small change and shorten it into the most essential elements that this dissertation will focus on:

(**III**) a) casa **:** rua **::** b) person **:** individual **::** e) tradition **:** progress

The elements found in these isomorph relations are not completely congruent. They should rather be thought of as structural likeness or like metonymical relations. As discussed above, they sometimes interconnect into each other's spheres to make up a complex picture that also reinforces some of the boundaries and differences within them and between them. However, I suggest that these elements are important to the argument of the dynamic relations and the transitional mechanisms in between these spheres of daily life in Fortaleza. They also illustrate the gap that exists in the conceptions of how life should be lived between the parent generation that was brought up during dictatorship and their children who were born and grew up into democratic Brazil.

Risk Engagement

I noted above that Tuan (1977) has suggested that there is a sense of security to places, particularly the home, and a sense of fluidity and danger to spaces. The studies of dangerous circumstances has today become a vast body of research on risk. In the following, I will go into some of the directions of risk research and try to outline why young people would want to go out to parties in areas that can be dangerous.

A couple of days after we had been robbed, Eloisa wanted to get out of the house to "do something", but her mother denied her request. She succinctly told me: "I don't want to be like my parents, being locked inside. That's not life, that's not living". This mode of thought goes directly into a possible engagement with risks. If living is defined as taking risks – that is, if it is defined as living only when one does not lock oneself inside for the sake of security – then *risk engagement* proposes that *a risk* acted upon does not stand alone, but exists within a cultural scheme that guides the actor to act out the preferred choice(s). This implies that a cluster of aspects to life have to be taken into consideration and being given attention or being ignored. Hence, the most destructive possibility of events can be overlooked and ignored by the possibility of satisfying urges and desires in the project of *living life*.

In other words, *risk engagement* is not the same as the sort of risk activities that we find in investments and self-development. *Risk engagement* in this dissertation differs from

the risks found in economy by distancing itself from the pure positivistic calculus of known parameters. It also differs from the risks found in extreme sports due to how the risks themselves are not directly approached, but forms a backdrop to the actions that are played out in the public where dangers lurk. This does not mean that there is a clear distinction between these forms of *risk engagement*, but it means that their modes are different from each other in the pure essence of *gain*.

In investments, calculus can give a probability of gain, thus the available information indicates the possibility of mastering the risk. In extreme sport, on the other hand, the control of a risky situation with one's body gives a feeling of mastery that could not have been predicted beforehand. As will be suggested in the following, *risk engagement* in Fortaleza is a part of life for young people who need to take risks to satisfy their desires. We will see that there is a mechanism called *praga de mãe* that operates on the principle of predicting the uncertainty of mastering a risk, but which tries to control the *risk engagement* of the youth by appealing to the valued *impulse control* of the *casa*.

Risk Perspectives

In risk research, the views, apart from those put forward in psychology and cognitive sciences, can be divided in three categories along a continuum between weak constructionist to strong constructionist arguments (Lupton 2013:50). Common to the views is that risks are mediated through human perception and conceptualization of society. They differ, however, in the understanding of the ontology of dangers. In her introductory book to risk research in social sciences, Deborah Lupton (2013) puts the works of Mary Douglas (1966, 1985, 1986, 1994) at the weak constructionist category, claiming that Douglas argues for the existence of dangers, although acknowledging that certain dangers are historically produced and situated. They are, as such, more prominent at certain times than others. The environmental threat in the 1980s is one example of such an argument that has returned to mainstream media and general conscience in later years.

The strong constructionist notion builds upon the works of Michel Foucault (1991). Although Foucault did not really work on risk specifically, a group of followers of his perspectives on *governmentality* and discourse theory has used his methodology in the analyses of media, expert knowledge, and history. For these researchers, risks are constructed by and of knowledge, and as such do not exist independently from cultural interpretation.

The term risk stems either from the dawn of mercantilism (Ewald 1991) when

25

merchants would start measuring the chances of bringing cargo on ships through weather windows, or from gambling (Douglas 1994) where risk is put in a positive term to mean the possibility of gain. So in essence, the term risk has been viewed purely as economic in nature.

An economic definition of a term can be understood as being related to the individual and the individual's action, but risk, put for instance into insurance, like Ewald (1991) suggests, can also have a collective definition. The way insurance works is that an aggregate of people pay into an insurance company that ensures payouts to those who face damage covered by the insurance. The payout is a compensation for what has been lost of value. The company makes plausibility calculus for the chances of damages to occur. This calculus takes all the available data on a certain risk into consideration. We can call this the positivistic calculus.

The positivistic calculus can be described as follows: a plausible chance by all possible conditions for anyone to have such and such a damage during a given time period. Not all insured parts will suffer damage, but the chances of it happening to anyone is arbitrary although statistically plausible. So if person A, person B […] and person P all pay their insurance costs during a ten-year period, it might be plausible that one of those will suffer damage. Which one of them who does is, however, impossible to tell in advance.

Insurance companies also have models of making predictability calculus for certain individuals that show a higher level of damages than others do. If one person has fifty small damages within a three-year period, it is more likely that that particular person will suffer a bigger damage than someone who has had none, thus leading to an increased insurance cost for that individual. This means that the bottom line for the insurance business lies within a macro level calculus of future plausibility and arbitrariness for the aggregate. In addition, they also add a micro level calculus where history of the individual defines future plausibility and predictability for each individual of the aggregate.

In banking, too, risk is linked to security. If one decides to take a loan, the bank takes a risk to give a person that loan and the application, thus, usually requires some form of security. When evaluated, the loaner is considered by some general demographic facts. The calculus takes into consideration the general risk for certain age groups, area of residency, income, net worth and the more particular information about the person's liquidity at the time when the loan is applied for. If one resides in an area where there is a higher level of defaulted loans, or if one is at a young age, has an economic instability or is not a contracted or skilled worker, the risk can be too high for the bank. Then the security needs to be given in the form

of a guarantee. This guarantee is either given by any assets in possession by that person, or by a person who would risk his or her assets on behalf of the loaner if the loan defaults. In addition, the interest rate, which is the bank's gain on the matter, is added to the plausibility of the loaner's possibility of paying back the loan. This illustrates that security in the positivistic calculus is given by numbers that are derived from all plausible and possible outcomes. It is given ideally from an objective point of view. If the numbers state that there is a risk of loss for the bank or insurance company, security needs to be given in material assets.

When risk is understood economically, it has to do with gain and loss. Risk can then be understood in both positive terms; the higher the risk, the greater the gain, or in negative terms; the greater the risk, the more extreme a loss. To handle risk information like this then means that the actor will be in need of experience of handling large amounts of data and having a great deal of knowledge, which cannot be expected by anyone. This positivistic calculus of risk looks at risks from a distance. The experience of the risk is not taken into consideration. That means that the positivistic calculus can see anything as a risk. Actors who act within risky circumstances and who are subjected to a number of risks on a daily basis, most likely do not. To them, certain risks are likely to have become normalized as everyday events.

In their short introductory book to risk, Fischhoff and Kadvany (2011) state that the new way of using risks can be a cheap way of public campaigning. Governments can easily use media to spread information about risk factors. Talking to media about health issues, for instance, can give incentives to the population to check themselves and consult a doctor if they find themselves within a high-risk group. This is cheaper than paying for a campaign. Since risks can be produced through knowledge, there is no limit to what a risk can be. Risk, Foucault stated, has a centrifugal force (2007:45). In practice, it can be justified on any and every institutional level, and in principal, it can be about anything and everything.

The third category lies somewhere in the middle of the perspective of weak and strong constructionism, and is built upon the works of Anthony Giddens (1990) and Ulrich Beck (1992). For Giddens and Beck, dangers are historically located, like for Douglas. Their theories are located within the transition of Euro-American society from the modernist age to the late modernist age. Beck and Giddens see changes within the media and how expert knowledge is used to create a new form of individuality, which can be found in family formation, the relationships between genders, marriages, and the new labor force. They note that the labor market in the age of globalization challenges stability and makes the labor force

more dynamic. They both acknowledge several changes linked to New Public Management and to the globalization processes that increased rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the weakness of their theories, today, lies within their Eurocentric point of view.

Beck's and Giddens' works describe a transition of Euroamerican societies, which Giddens labels *risk societies*. These societies, according to Giddens, are identified by how risks become more prominent in a discourse where risks are produced, confirmed and maintained by expert knowledge. In other words, expertise and mass media create the risk society in which we live.

Both of their accounts are rather general, taking a macroscopic gaze at certain changes that have happened through a certain amount of time. Some of Beck's observations, however, are somewhat more particular. He points out that women's increasing participation in the ever-increasing unstable labor market makes them independent of men and, as such, risk less in case of a divorce since they now are economically independent.

Considering the transitional state of Brazil, some of the points of Giddens and Beck are reasonable to bring further into the argument. In particular, the point about female independence and changing family constellations grips directly into the domestic sphere. Independence and a different type of relational love life seemed important to many of the young women that I met.

Insegurança

Daniel M. Goldstein (2012) offers a somewhat different take on the experience of risk. His work is situated in Bolivia on the margins of the capital, and revolves around the absence of both citizen rights and human rights among squatters. These squatters have arrived to the capital from the rural areas, and most of them are of native descent. Due to Evo Morales' policy on acknowledging native law as equal to state law, the plurality of laws also create a juridical border between the inner and the outer city. The squatters, then, are regarded as less important by several governmental services. In addition, as squatters they are illegally settled and do not have the same rights as other citizens. Goldstein argues that when citizens are denied their full citizenship, are exploited by the government and public services, and ignored by police and forces of order, the result might lead to self-justifications like carrying out the occasional mob lynching to send signals to criminal elements in the neighborhood. This is a response to the experienced insecurity of everyday life. For Goldstein, *insecurity* is symptomatic for all of South America. This suspicion is not surprising since the lists of the

most violent cities in the world has a concentration of South American cities on it.

In Fortaleza as well, the discourse is somewhat shaped by talk of insecurity. When the newspaper *O Povo*[15] commented on the state of the city, it would use the term *insegurança*. *O Povo* mainly directed itself towards the missing focus on security in government policies and talking about insecurity might have been a rhetorical instrument to criticize the authorities. When people talked about certain parts of the city, however, they would instead use the term *perigoso,* dangerous. The neighborhood *Centro* was *perigoso*. *Dendê* was *perigoso* – both of these neighborhoods are regarded as poorer *bairros*. However, *Meireles*, *Aldeota*, *Varjota* and *Beira Mar*, too, were considered *perigoso,* even though all of them are middle and upper class neighborhoods of good standard. This is probably related to how crime statistics show that murder rates are higher in poorer communities while statistics of crime and violent assaults are higher in other neighborhoods (see chapter three).

I rarely heard any speak of *riscos*, risks. Newspapers wrote on the insecurity in the streets, the politics of security, and on the dangers of the city. During carnival, news programs had charts of how many people had died during the festive weekend. In the first four months of my stay, one of the local newspapers made articles daily about the increasing amount of violence, insecurity, and the state of complete loss of control. Apart from a list published in *O Povo* (2013b) with the most dangerous neighborhoods in Fortaleza, most information in the news appealed to political intervention rather than supplying risk information for individuals that could help them to avoid certain risks. The news stories carried with them a certain notion of resignation. The state of the city was so bad that someone needed to be blamed, and take responsibility for the lack of action on the issues of security. The reports, thus, were more experiential than positivistic. This might be why I rarely heard of *riscos*, a concept closely related to calculus.

Insecurity exists to a very strong extent in Fortaleza. It is shown in the focus on security measures; the outcries for security in health and education, the many armed and unarmed guards, fences, barbed wire, broken class, CCTV, electrical fences, bars in front of doors and windows, and automated doors with holding rooms where one needs to wait until being identified. Phenomena like *jeitinho*, high crime statistics, and police corruption, also add to the impression of public areas as unsafe and insecure, and thus the feeling of being unsafe and insecure in public spaces. Many murders happen because of bar brawls, *rixas*

---

[15] *O Povo* means *the people*.

(feuds), neighborhood rivalries, trafficking[16] rivalries or drug related debts. In addition, gangs control the spatial distribution of violence. Since they do not want police inside their neighborhoods looking into their underground activities, they force criminals to do their robberies outside their own *bairros* and within other ones. This contributes to putting wealthier neighborhoods like *Meireles*, *Aldeota*, *Varjota* and *Beira Mar* at the top of the lists with most reports of crime.

The risk of violence is not the only danger that faces youth in Fortaleza. There are risks that at one end of a scale are more democratic and commonly experienced; physical violence, for instance, is experienced as violence by anyone. Other kinds of risks can, on the other hand, be more subjectively experienced. They give themselves through the break between self-constructed strategic goals, values, perspectives of development and positive gain in the domestic sphere that can go against other demands and expectations in the public sphere. An example can for instance be the risk of disappointing, disrespecting or losing the ties to family members because of chasing one's *vontade*. The way of avoiding this would be expressed in terms of *respect*, *duties* and *loyalty*. Bateson states that trial and error is physically expensive (2000:274). Trial and error, hence, is also socially expensive. Since trial and error is important for development, young women will have to engage in risky activities to gain independence. We now see a build-up towards a regulating principle that balances the spheres of interactions and of social life.

Summary of Risks

One important aspect to the concept of risk is how expert knowledge can produce a need for knowledge that is produced to create a sense of control. Whether we speak of risk in insurance or if we speak of risk in banking, in both cases risk is an attempt to put numbers on the likeliness of something going the risk taker's way.

Tulloch and Lupton found in common language that thinking about risk has penetrated several aspects to daily life experiences. Through interviews, they show how Australians and British have conceptions of risk that fit within the analyses of Bech (1992) and Giddens (1990). The everyday conceptions in common language ranges from the fear of losing one's

---

[16] Traffic is a term used for criminal groups and their activity within neighborhoods. These groups control goods and people in to, within and out of the neighborhoods. This circulation is a type of traffic.

job, fear for sexual relations, love affairs, sexually transmitted diseases, violence and crime in cities, to the risks that some choose to engage in in leisure activities.

Many of the things that people list as risky in their experiences of daily life cannot come under complete control by positivistic calculus. For institutions, the issue of risk is quantifiable. For the individual, risk is qualitatively experienced. We can think of this in terms of distance. For an institution engaging in a risk, the risk is at a distance. It is not personal. For people, risks can evoke feelings that ranges from the uncontrolled to the controlled. Risks are *engaged in* by the experiential knowledge of the risk itself.

Some people live under an increasing feeling that they are in lack of control, as indicated in works about identity crisis (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, Dufour 2008) and liquid modernity (Bauman 2000). Many people seek thrilling experiences to feel the uncontrollable aspects of external conditions that one is subjected to during the activity. For some, gaining control over these situations, which often require creativity and improvisation, can be the aim of the activity itself. This subjective experience of a risky activity is different than the conception of risk as a positivistic calculus. The calculus tells us objectively if something is safe and if it should be avoided. For some people who live within spheres where certain risks are normalized as part to daily life, a pure distanced perception of risk becomes foreign. It can become something that one does not perceive as risk as well as something that one returns to because it is perceived as normalized.

There are different types of risks. For our purposes, however, it is necessary to acknowledge the experiential notion to risky situations that are shaped by a cultural pattern of meaning. In our case, these meanings are shaped by the closeness to the dangerous city. In Fortaleza, dangers can lie around every corner, thus there is always a risk to going out in public. It confirms how the *casa* – the place – is secure, and the *rua* – the space – is possibly risky grounds. Hence, young people take risks by going out. As will become apparent below (see chapter seven), there is a sense of control gained by going out to parties. Risks and control, thus, become two sides of the same coin, the one exerting power over the other.

Talk of Crime

In her book about spatial differentiation in São Paulo, Teresa Caldeira (2000) argues that *talk of crime* among people becomes temporal bookmarks in their life stories and life projects. To talk about experiences of crime produces a past – a time before the experience, often peaceful and innocent, maybe naïve – and a time after – one of good and evil with

antagonists who are shaped by the experience that uproots the former existence and disrupts stability. Talk of crime, thus, becomes a way of reordering the chaotic world. Caldeira's interviews show how people's lives are narratives with a start to an end where experiences may uproot and create experience gaps in the timeline. Talking about the experienced crime, then, is a way to restructure the continuum after an unstructured event.

A similar idea can be found in John Tulloch's (2006) book about his experience as a victim in the 7th of July bombings on the London underground in 2005, "People talk about Ground Zero in New York after 9/11 […] because everything that was material, everything that existed – the twin towers – was reduced to dust and rubble; a move from civilisation via terror to nihil, nothing." (ibid.: 4, 5). He continues to speak about the feeling following the bomb explosion,

> It wasn't just the physical apparatus of London's transport technology that was brought to nothing that day. It was also my own everyday actions, plans and preconceptions. My daily narrative was brought to nothing, my plans to write a research proposal and a paper on risk that day and the next just wasted away, and were replaced by a zero condition – where I had no idea what had happened or what my purpose now was. (ibid.: 5)

This *zero condition* seems similar to Caldeira's account. In Tulloch's case, he experienced something radically different from what he usually experienced in the everyday. Being a part of, and luckily surviving, a terrorist attack, something so unpredictable and unthinkable, is without a doubt overwhelming and psychologically damaging, apart from the pure physical damage that was inflicted on him as well. In Caldeira's case, the narrative becomes a restructuring mechanism that bridges the gap between the past and a present zero condition. This is why she found an extensive use of *talk of crime* in São Paulo in a time of increased violence and spatial segregation between social classes (Caldeira 1996).

I came across many talks of crime and I began by treating them as indications of disrupting events in a broader pattern of life experiences and choices of actions. But it dawned on me that these experiences and narratives were actively opposed in *festas* and other social events. It seemed as if the narratives happened parallel to another process of engaging the experience. Although the narratives were present in discourse, the youth continued to go out into the public sphere where disruptions can happen. Instead of spatially separating themselves synchronically to the restructuring process of a zero condition, the youth revisited the same grounds that Caldeira's informants distanced themselves from. This can have been a reaction to conditioning. Parents and youths in Fortaleza have grown up under different city

32

conditions. The level of danger has increased during the past fifteen years. For the youth, the danger has most likely become a naturalized aspect to daily life. For the parents who grew up under safer conditions, the public sphere probably dictates a more violent city than what is experienced by the youth today. This gap of experiential meaning contributes most likely to conflicts about control between the two generations. Nothing indicated that the youth went out to spite the danger and test the forces of violence. It rather seemed at times that they went out to oppose their parents' perspectives on the public sphere. The narratives, however, seemed to be nothing but a way to reinforce a common consciousness about the possibility of danger, rather than letting the narratives among the youth become regulative for their own choices of actions. In can also have a relation to age cohorts' identity since their experiences with violence linked to the evolution of the city that they live within are parallel processes. Talking about crime, thus, creates a common ground to **when** they grew up and **who** have the **same sentimen**ts towards the city.

If the zero condition and the narrative are reestablishing the everyday pattern of daily life, then we can suppose that narratives on risk and crime come into existence as the environment around the actors changes for the worse. This is a plausible proposition. In Fortaleza, the crime statistic has "gone off the charts" in recent years. On the other hand, there are those who grow up within already existing narratives on risk, and which might have other experiences of the environment as such. For instance, Nora told that when she was a child she would play in the street. When her little sister grew up, she could not do the same due to her parents' fear of something happening to her. It is likely to think that she and her sister has a somewhat different conception of risk. To live with risk is to gain experience from what these risks can be. The narratives, thus, become part of a group identity of an age cohort.

One can choose not to live with risk, as Caldeira (1996, 2000) shows, with those retracting from the public spaces to spend their lives in large, closed condominiums and *Alphavilles[17]*, but everyone cannot afford this lifestyle. All the people I encountered live within enclosed places. Some of these have more hostile security measures than others. However, I always felt the safest being at the Oliveira family[18] who live close to two rivaling

---

[17] An Alphaville is a type of fortified enclave that provides the residents with anything they can possibly have the need for. They have kindergartens, schools, libraries, gyms, pools, tennis courts, golf courses, cinemas and so on (Caldeira 1996, 2000).

[18] The Oliveira's consist of Eloisa, her two sisters (although the oldest has moved out) and their parents.

favelas with only a two-meter tall wall surrounding the property. They do not have electrical fences, broken glass or barbed wires on top. It was as close to free that I could feel while still remaining behind walls.

Nevertheless, no matter how tall walls are, the talk of crime always gets in somehow. Daytime television offers several television shows showing victims of violence, crime, assaults and murder. The video clips are often collected from security cameras or cell phones. Several of the people I spoke with chose not to watch these shows because they only spread fear without really addressing any means of solution to the issues at hand. Since many mothers are housewives, staying at home according to the traditional organization of the domestic sphere, they are more susceptible to watch these daytime television shows. This probably contributes to their perception on the public sphere as more dangerous than their children do.

In a couple of cases, I was told that these television shows create a possibility for poor people in the favela to get on television. They would suspect these poor people of creating occurrences to get attention for showing themselves on TV and not for creating awareness of their social situation. It was implied that this theater where *pirangueiros*, as they call them, show gang signs and mark their loyalty to soccer teams and favela life[19], is nothing but a way by forces in the media to demonstrate the huge gap between social class layers. This create preconceptions and distance between people. Talk of crime, thus, creates a dangerous other, built upon stereotypical images.

The Other

To create *the other* in a society is something that is done anywhere in the world. Caldeira (2000:79, 89, 93-94) notes that in talks of crime, residents immigrating from the northeast are made accountable for the rise in crime and the decreasing qualitative state of the neighborhood. I heard similar constructions a couple of times referred to people arriving from the interior. These people were then described as illiterate opportunists who eventually would have to fall in with the underground economy.

In anthropological theory, *the other* has been put into many different forms. The concept is usually contrasted to Self, but, as can be shown with Mary Douglas' (1966) theory

---

[19] As mentioned above about the identity and loyalty to neighborhoods.

about purity and danger, can also be contrasted to a feeling of *us* through identification and classification. By being a polluting element, *the other* is dangerous and threatens the order of everyday life. Barth (1969) showed that *the other(s)*, just as much as being contrasted to the identity of the group, also is separated through the share likeness among the group members who classify *the other(s)*, not just by being different.

One of modern sociology's founding fathers, Georg Simmel (1950), wrote an essay on *the stranger* late in the nineteenth century – a concept that Michael Agar (1980) used for his book on anthropological methodology in the 1980s about the role of the anthropologist in the field. Simmel's *stranger* is someone "who comes today and stays tomorrow" (Simmel 1950:402). This *stranger* is *an other* who does not originate in the group. In relation to economy, *the stranger* differs from traders because *the stranger* does not propose a trading mechanism – that is a balanced reciprocal relation. To Simmel, *the stranger* is someone who does not take up an economic role because all the available roles have already been fulfilled. *The stranger*, as such, stands outside the group although being among it, "[a]s a group member […] he is near and far at *the same time."* (ibid.:407)*.

Lévi-Strauss (1966) described *the other* somewhat different. The *bricoleur* is someone who is creative and innovative, who uses "whatever is at hand" (ibid.:17) to create indefinite numbers of outcomes based on a finite set of available materials, signs and meanings. In other words, the *bricoleur* uses culture for bridging gaps between what has been and what is, in terms of an opposition between tradition, or myth as Lévi-Strauss concerns himself with, and the current state of a culture. The *bricoleur* is put in opposition to the *engineer* who has specific objects for specific use, where the project's end goes beyond what one works with, but where the tasks are limited by the materials' availability. The *bricoleur* is described as a "Jack of all trades" (ibid.:17, see translator's note). Compared to Simmel's *stranger*, the *bricoleur* is not that different from *the stranger* in terms of being near and far.

Barth (1996), however, put the entrepreneurial *other* back as an egocentric value maximizer, and a threat to traditional life and economic sphere existence. He observed that the *entrepreneur* (mis)used economic spheres in a village in Darfur and as such converted communal labor principles into economic profit. This *entrepreneur* came from the outside and saw opportunities within the system of the village. The response was that the village had to raise barriers between the communal labor sphere and the possibility of profitting from that communal labor. The traditions, hence, changed due to a breach of morality within the spheres.

The other in a Brazilian context may have different references. Brazilians supposedly "love foreigners". The latter statement is one that I actually was told during my first month in Brazil as an explanation to why people would come up to me at beach parties and hang around even though I could not communicate with them due to my lack of Portuguese skills. My translator at the time, seemed to try to establish a bridge, but I suspected that he simplified a lot while trying to acquire the attention I got from girls over to himself. Europeans in particular become centers of attention, especially if they have blond hair and blue eyes. Brazilians, themselves, are a mix of different skin, eye and hair colors and it is hard to find a very typical Brazilian look. Brazilians are, however, good at spotting out who are and who are not Brazilian. The foreign *other* does not pose a physical threat, but as the reaction of my first translator indicates, the foreign *other* can become a competitor in terms of courting. The foreigner, then, can become a threat to *vontade*. On the other hand, the more general conviction seemed to indicate that the foreigner connects the Brazilian to other places and becomes an exotic *other* in their perspective.

Brazil is a country with a population of many different skin colors. Scheper-Hughes (1993) writes that ethnicity does not matter, but that skin color still connotes negative traits to the white population. Skin color is systematically emphasized through census where respondents are asked to identify the color of their skin "[…] including "silvery brown", "pale mulatto", "corn colored", "dirty white", "dappled" and "quasi-Negro"" (ibid.:543). My friends would still say that racism does not exist in Brazil, thus they would use skin color when speaking about each other's looks. Eloisa, for instance, told me that when she went to Texas working as a translator for a church convention, she dressed up in a red dress with white dots one day when one of her American friends told her that she looked like Minnie Mouse. She replied jokingly, "That's funny, cause I'm black, right?". Her American friend, however, felt uneasy with the reference to skin color, whereas, she said, in Brazil no one would take notice.

When I asked about racism, Eloisa denied that it existed on a large scale. She told me about racial slurs, which usually are used as inclusive. Such slurs also exist other places in the world, although always used internally in groups as inclusive terms rather than condescending ones. When I asked, she told me that it could happen that old people had the occasional racist comment – especially from old people living on farms that had historically relied on slave labor. Eloisa emphasized that racism "is not Brazilian", as if racism was an un-Brazilian sentiment. This argument of lack of racism is linked to Brazil's history of slavery, which is

said to have been abolished in 1888 although in fact it was abolished gradually close to four decades after the Abolition Decree had taken action (Da Costa 1985, Fausto 1999, Levine and Crocitti 1999, Roett 2010). If slavery had been abolished in 1888, it would have made no sense talking about today's old people being racist, if they now are 80 or 90 years old. As Scheper-Hughes (1993) have pointed out, a lot of important job positions and political positions, sometimes exclusively, falls to people of white skin color representing an upper middle- and upper class. Inequality and discrimination may not be racism per se, but it undoubtedly does accentuate a certain racial differentiation. Although there is a racial differentiation between social classes and labor preferences, this does not state that the societal structure is consciously differentiating races. We are not talking about an apartheid state. The diversity of skin color and "the Brazilian way of life" – that denies differentiation based on ethnicity, which glorifies Brazilian culture traits, and treats colors as adjectives and not nouns – are the main arguments against an existing racism, although a racial differentiation seems to exist.

The most significant *other* that was described to me during my fieldwork was the *pirangueiro*. When I asked Julia to describe some of her assailants, she became very specific about *pirangueiros*. First, they are teenagers. Second, they distinguish themselves from *ladrões*, which are thieves, by looking up to the lifestyle of the gang member without fully belonging to it. *Pirangueiros* usually travel by bike in gangs. They wear very specific cheap brand t-shirts and Bermuda shorts. They wear caps or have specific haircuts[20]. They look for trouble, and can be known by how they approach with a trivial question before robbing someone. Julia describes the *pirangueiro* like this:

> Usually they are dark skinned, they have died hair, like light. Wearing Pena, which is a brand of clothes. They have these surfers shorts and flip flops of this brand called kenner.

She goes on to explain their tactics:

> I was almost robbed one day coming home. So I ran screaming. I stopped at the bus stop, was walking home, so they asked me what time it was, and I did not have a watch so I said no. They said do you have five reais? And then they announced it is a robbery.

This stigmatic account of a *pirangueiro* made me recognize them anywhere that I

---

[20] At the time I was there, the most popular cut resembled the style of the soccer idol Neymar.

went. The *pirangueiro* seemed to be the most easily recognizable *other* in the cityscape. They also represented a step on the way to become a full-blown gang member, and could be seen daily during TV-shows about crime and violence in Fortaleza.

The most puzzling aspect to the *pirangueiro* identity is that it is not hidden despite all the negative associations with this style. During most of my stay, I lived close to the beach and regularly walked down the promenade that lay in between the sound of the rolling waves and the skyline of tourist hotels. Many times, especially close to the Confederation Cup in June 2013, I saw *pirangueiros* standing up against walls with hands and legs spread out while police pointed their guns at them. Routine checks of *pirangueiros* seemed to be common. I never saw anyone else frisked publicly down by the beach. It was strange to me that *pirangueiros* made a choice to identify in a way that put them at such a public display, while associations of their criminal behavior should have been apparent to them and have made them choose to dress otherwise. It is likely to believe that their group identity is stronger than the rest of the public's condemnation of them. This is for instance parallel to studies of punks in Norway where the condemnation of the group in addition to **and** because of "symbolic inversion" (Johansen 2007:299) reinforces the group identity rather than weaken it.

When Eloisa and I were robbed, we went to the police station to give our statement. The investigator was not interested about any description of the assailants. It did not seem like the police would go out to look for the *pirangueiros* that had robbed us. Taking into consideration the criminal activities of the *pirangueiro*, having many of them dressed up in a likewise fashion might make it harder for the police and for victims to point out who is who. As such, they become individuals in a mass, and they take advantage of this in the public sphere by hiding and not hiding at the same time. They **do not hide** their identity markers so that they **can hide among** the identity markers. Thus, they can play on the negative reciprocity model of negative relations because of the share numbers that they are and the hardship that people will have to differentiate between them. This model seems to be an ingenious, although destructive, entrepreneurial model for those who are marginalized within the urban Fortaleza.

Praga de Mãe

In the backdrop of the situation in Fortaleza with its crime, its structure, and its web of

powers that young people try to vent off[21] in the late night hours at bars and clubs, I found a cultural trait called *praga de mãe*. It translates to *the curse of the mother*, and I found it to bind spheres of the society together, and eventually explain a significant phenomenon in the understanding of the generational conflict that takes place in the modern, democratic Brazil.

In this dissertation, *praga de mãe* is analyzed as a synchronous phenomenon, and its function and effects are explained through how it works today. The reason to why a historic outline of the phenomenon is not given is due to how this phenomenon, as far as I have been able to find, has not been written of before. This is also why its probable transition and significance through generations in Brazilian history is not explained. I have only found *praga de mãe* mentioned in a part of a doctoral thesis from the University in Rio de Janeiro (Cerqueira 2010), but in the thesis, the phenomenon is not defined.

In the thesis, the *praga* is not discussed as the curse in itself. Instead, it is used to describe the linking between the mother and the child during pregnancy. Cerqueira's informants propose a perspective on child development during pregnancy that resembles how James Frazer explained contagious magic (Frazer 1979:347-350). One of them explains that if the mother sees something ugly early during pregnancy, the child will become ugly (Cerqueira 2010:333). The same goes for things that the mother can carry inside the bra, and which is supposed to have a transferal effect to the baby. If the mother puts a bill inside the bra, the effect will be that the child grows up fortunate and rich (ibid.).

Apart from this, I have not found *praga de mãe* attempted to be explained elsewhere. I, thus, try to make sense of it by explaining how it seemed to work on my friends, and I try to analyze it within the picture of society, organization and everyday life in Fortaleza. However, what is of significance is that *praga de mãe* has at its core both a special connection between mother and child, and a kind of magical thinking that can be thought of as a transferal effect between mother and child. In addition, in the cases above and in the following examples, the magic is always distributed in a one-way fashion from the mother to the child. It never goes the other way. In the example of the bill in the bra, there is also a notion of how the mother interacts with a certain aspect of the public sphere since the magical transderence of fortune can only be made in the economy-based relations in the public. The *praga* directs itself, likewise, outwards from the domestic sphere and into the public sphere.

Being a sort of curse, *praga de mãe* can be seen as a kind of magical thinking. The

---

[21] Linger speaks of the venting by the terms *desabafar*, to unsuffocate, and *bota-fora*, to cast out (1992:77).

praga is understood as a feeling a mother has about her child. The *praga*, thus, is a kind of premonition, as if a mother has clairvoyance abilities. If the child chooses to ignore the premonition, bad things will happen. The effects, however, can only be seen as a result of the *praga* after the event has happened. Hence, the phenomenon's effect can only be accounted for retrospectively stating that the child should have known better. Since the *praga* seemed to have more power than this, through how some chose to stay at home when their mothers' gave their warnings, the *praga* obviously must have a greater significance than just becoming a hindsight explanation. There must be a sort of trust in how the *praga* operates, and that it in at least a small way has to have an element of truth to it. It is this trust, or rather belief, in the reality of the *praga* that I think has to be explained as a sort of magical thinking.

The *praga* is prototypically a relation between a mother and her child, but there are examples of relations between mother figures and child figures. The *praga* is still most likely strongest between a mother and her child although it should be kept in mind that the phenomenon is more useful in a social setting than just having a function to one particular type of dyadic relation.

Praga and Magic

In his work about the Trobriands, Malinowski (1948, 1984) suggested that there is a connection between magical thinking and risk. He said that the Trobriands would do certain rituals when going out to fish at sea, especially in those cases where a danger was present to the fishing activities. The magical rituals were carried out for good luck, and if bad things happened, it could be traced back to the magic. Contrary to Evans-Pritchard's (1979) argument, magic would not explain unfortunate events, but ensure fortunate ones. Magic, thus, would reduce the risk that anglers took, and ensure a good catch. In a later essay Malinowski states,

> We find magic wherever the elements of chance and accident, and the emotional play between hope and fear have a wide and extensive range. […] [W]e find magic where the element of danger is conspicuous. […] The integral function of magic […] consists in the bridging-over of gaps and inadequacies in highly important activities not yet completely mastered by man. (Malinowski 1948:116)

Malinowski makes an important observation although he relates this kind of thinking to "the primitive man". Magic can have the function of filling the gap that danger leaves along a continuum of everyday actions. However, as I hope will become apparent, the societies that

incorporate magical thinking does not have to be "primitive". The psychologist Subbotsky (2010) argues that through his studies of children, adolescents and adults in Europe, a pattern of magical thinking appears when explanations of phenomena that one does not understand become futile. Although both science and religion offer explanations within these societies, they do not have to be conflicting modes of thought, and magic can be an addition to both. Thus, we have a link between magical thinking, dangerous circumstances and modernized societies, a link that will become more apparent along the argument of this dissertation.

We should think a little about what type of magic the *praga* is. As accounted for, the *praga* is a curse that predicts the future. The situations that it predicts are possible losses for the person that is subjected to them. That means that the *praga* is a type of magic to ensure that those who are subjected to it make the decisions of staying away from situations that are pictured in the *praga*. As noted, these situations are always related to situations in the public sphere. Since the public sphere is a sphere of insecurity in terms of arbitrary violence, the only possible action is to remove oneself completely from the sphere itself. As such, the *praga's* only motivation is to keep those subjected to it within the family sphere, which is one of security and *impulse control*.

Praga, then, becomes a *magic for safety* (Malinowski 1984:345-349), but unlike the Trobriand's magic, that can be said to be rituals that ensure good luck and faith, the *praga* is a curse. It is not for good luck. The *praga* is something to be listened to because whatever bad it brings, the bad will come around. One of the major differences in the motivational tactics of a magic of good faith and a magic of a curse, is that they are completely opposite in the logic of wanted actions. Magic for good faith encourages actors to act upon it and take their chances in dangerous situations. It is still a magic of safety. Magic as a type of curse, which predicts bad outcomes to the ones subjected to it and presumes that their actions are accordingly to the ethos that precedes it, denies any other choice of action but to remove oneself from danger. This magic is also a magic of safety.

Summary

The young women that I describe know that they are not in strong control most of the time when they are in the public sphere. They know that terrible things can happen. They have grown up within a city that has increasingly become more violent. They are aware of the dangers through narratives. They have friends and family who have suffered violent crimes and deaths due to other people's actions. They know that these *others* can be anywhere at any

time, and that they can become victims whenever. They also know that being in constant fear of this overhanging danger would lead to a "non-life", a secluded mode of "non-being" where their houses become prisons and criminals their jailors. But they also live within this framework that can be conceived of as normalized to them. Therefore, they most likely choose to act and disregard these violent and positivistic facts although they can be controlled and avoided by certain measures. It is within this that the *praga* works as a regulative mechanism between the ethos of impulse control of the domestic sphere, and the *vontade* of the public sphere.

Chapter 3. Methodological reflections

Methodological practices in anthropology are deeply intertwined with the theoretical evolution from the birth of the discipline. Through studying the theories of the twentieth century, we, as students in anthropology, learn that different questions lead to different answers. Historical focus and academic politics, thus, play an important role to the work in the field.

Having certain questions will have an impact on the way anthropology is transformed into a practice in the field. We call this practice *fieldwork*. We *work* within *the field* by producing information. Asking how social organization keeps its stability, for instance, will apparently launch a grander perspective on institutions at which level one will find lesser tension than between people. Asking how societies change, on the other hand, one may start looking at the people within the society rather than the social collaborations themselves. Alternatively, one may keep a gaze on the interaction between people and material circumstances, which in late modernity has changed quite rapidly with the speed of technological innovation. Critiques have been launched to the role of the social scientist herself, and her distance to the field of study. All these issues have a deep impact on anthropological method.

I will not state, however, that there is a superior strength within one certain kind of method that can be practiced unconditionally. I will also not propose that anthropology has no method at all. I will rather claim that one of the major strengths of anthropology is that the information produced in field comes from a genuine interaction between the researcher and the people of the society in which the fieldwork resides. This interaction is far from streamlined, but is subject to changes derived from a pragmatic sense of *whatever works* the best, from what questions one finds interesting to pursuit within the society, and partly from a personal ideological point of view. These three points taken together comprises much of the strength of anthropology as a social science. These points also implies the benefit in how we can acquire new knowledge from research within the same field and within the same location of study if the researchers have different personal motives in any of the three mentioned points above.

In my fieldwork, the principle of *flowing with the wind* was an imperative. The inherent contradictions of people's statements, practices and experiences, led me to believe that it would be impossible to come up with only one certain explanation. It reminded me of

the principle suggested by Werner Heisenberg that it is impossible to both predict an electron's speed and its position at the same time, and that they both would have to be studied separately to be answered. The Heisenberg principle resemble my dilemmas in the field. I was not able to get an answer for the one without leaving the other, and if I tried to find the underlying cause of contradictions, they would usually just lead to the expression of wants: "We do it because we want to do it".

Looking back, my initial problem, to which it is hard to overcome, was the relation between myself and the others in the field. As Agar (1980) puts it, the researcher is a *professional stranger* making efforts to observe and participate, to take notes, to listen and to ask to overcome the status of stranger. Making knowledge out of what was unknown was clearly such a process where the label *stranger* never really disappeared. Taking into account that Brazilians claim to spot the foreigner in an instant, I never really blended in with any crowd.

Nevertheless, my biggest challenge was to start practicing fieldwork. First, I needed to make myself comfortable and known to the areas that I thought I would investigate. Spradley (1977) has written about examples of researchers finding a location, sitting down and taking notes. As one can imagine, it was not as simple as this in Fortaleza. As one of the world's most violent cities, Fortaleza is not the place where one just sits down somewhere expecting everything to go well as long as one listens and asks. Early on, I found out that sitting or standing still anywhere was a bad idea. No one else did either. I also found out that walking anywhere also was a bad idea. People rarely moved on foot. Although walking can be argued to be the best way to practice spatio-temporal knowledge of an area (Ingold 1993, 2011:47), the option excluded itself by the sense of danger in the city. Since I did not have access to a car, which anyways would just increase the distance to people rather than getting to know them, I walked out into the streets anyways despite my fear of doing so. This method changed a month in when I met Eloisa.

Challenging the Causality of Discourse and Narratives

In the field, I always questioned why young people choose to go out to parties in the public sphere and into areas that are regarded as dangerous. The insecurity felt towards these public spaces, is an emotive state. The problem with studying emotive patterns within discourse, in this case specifically *talk of crime*, is a causal one. How can the anthropologist cope with the risk of being the cause to the effect she studies? To me, it first seemed like

going out was an irrational choice of action. I, thus, became interested in the gap between the rational and the emotional individual.

Trying to find out about the underlying sentiments of choice of actions, I became the venture point of dialogue, putting myself in center of my friends' discourse and awareness. To start questioning past experiences of crime, the risks that they encounter, and the awareness of the danger of the city made in media stories, will very likely enhance the very same awareness, producing and reproducing the sentiments that I had come across and was interested in.

Unfortunately, there is no fix to this problem unless one has a lot of time in the field and can *soak in* the talk of crime rather than *provoke it*. Not only can people's behavioral patterns have changed because of this inquiry, but, since I was open about my research agenda, it can also have changed their discourses altogether to help the researcher. This can have led to utter reflection by the actors in field and thus have changed the whole field itself.

There is also a chance that this did not happen, although the suspicion has continued to haunt me. As a counteraction, I have not tried to bracket myself from the ethnographic account, but rather implied myself as an actor too, being a part, a participant and observer, and not an external and fully objective researcher.

After a while, all my walking around gave me my own stories of danger gathered from media sources and experiences when forcing myself to walk around in Fortaleza, three months into my stay. At this point, I knew much about the dangers in the streets and really had to challenge my fears when going for half an hour walks to the nearby bookstore, grocery store and bank. On some of these walks I encountered people whom I regarded suspicious. On others, I tried out hypotheses, like for instance what sound and echo of someone increasing their walking speed can do to a person who hears the sounds from behind when walking down a street. Although I felt rather bad about trying this out on a person who did not know of my intentions, the person confirmed that sounds matter when he suddenly stopped, looked around, and waited until I had passed rather than having his back towards me.

Instead of provoking answers, I ended up becoming a part of an exchange of information. This involvement with talk of crime culminated in the episode that happened a month before my departure from Brazil, when Eloisa and I was robbed outside of my student housing by three armed young men.

Fieldnotes and Presence

I had a book and a pen present for the first month of my stay at Backpackers. I wrote notes in the common area about observations I made among the backpacker tourists that were there. It did not seem strange to anyone and I could write at the same time as I took part in the information exchange in the common area.

When I met Eloisa, however, and met more Brazilians and started to experience their way of life, my noting changed drastically. Whenever I would find my book to make some "jottings" (Emerson et.al. 1995), someone would comment on how stupid it looked. If we had a discussion in English, using the notebook made the others switch to Portuguese and I lost the hold of the conversation and distanced myself to my conversation partners.

I was told that I could not learn from just talking and writing, but from participating. I knew this from before, but I did not know that my presence needed to be there at all times. Brazilians usually make sure that people are staying in the conversation by touching and poking the person they are talking to, even when the person's eyes are fixed on the conversation partner during the conversation.

Going to the bathroom to get privacy to jot down notes, as suggested elsewhere (Emerson et. Al. 1995:19-26), did not work either. At bars or clubs, the bathrooms are not the places to make jottings. When driving around in a car, there are no places to hide, and making notes openly was not an alternative.

Linger describes the demand for presence in social situations in Brazil as a very different aspect of living than what he is used to in the USA (1992:7). I experienced this too, while my field notes suffered under this existential ethos. Scheper-Hughes comments on how Brazilians define themselves as "sensual, vibrant, alive, [...] deeply sentimental, heavy, melancholy, sad," and continues to describe Brazilians as "a people of feeling" (Scheper-Hughes 1993:434). She states that she felt more "at home" because her excess emotions, subject to censorship in the United States, got to be expressed in the Brazilian society. Emotions absolutely seemed to be more central in Fortaleza than what I was used to in Norway.

Most of my notes, thus, were written late at night or the day after the experience. Sometimes even after several days. My notes, hence, contain a certain distance in time, and, thus, also a certain distance to the details of the experience itself. However, *flowing with the wind* created a closer and maybe more genuine relation to those I met in the field, and I got to

know intimate details about their lives that I have at best tried to describe without revealing too much about my informants. The quotes in this dissertation is as close to the original meaning as possible. Some of them are transcriptions from a recorder that I used during interviews. In these quotes, the meaning has been accurately preserved.

Working the Field

Most of the time I have done what the others in the field have done, but to understand fully the whole scope of danger, I have also put myself in situations that many of my friends in the field would not have done themselves. In particular, my initial walking *without purpose* was helpful to learn about the more silent aspects of architectural infrastructure, the arbitrariness of settlement and the strategies of moving on foot where danger lurks. I started experiencing walls as my biggest enemy. Open gaps and doors became my possible friends. Having a possibility of escaping became imperative. Car traffic became ambiguous. Traffic could be used to create a barrier to the sidewalks if I ran across to an island in between the lanes, but the cars could also turn into a flow that never let me cross over in times of need. The underlying danger in the public sphere led me to create strategies that I could fall back on in times of need. Later I became better at improvising when I walked around in the streets of Fortaleza.

I thus needed to go against my instincts to learn other people's instincts. I needed to go against advice and go against the strategies of my middle class friends, to learn what lay underneath what they talked about in their narratives. If I had followed advices and warnings without questioning them, I would not have learned the values of their knowledge about moving in the city.

In this way, participation is just as much *doing wrong* as it is *doing right*, both conscious and unconscious. To have experience is much this: to have learned from wrongdoings – to learn from trial and error. I learned how trial and error could be physically expensive as a fact since the worst-case scenario could at any time remove me from existence. This indicates that *wrongdoings* in such a setting might lead to the most dramatic of outcomes: violence and death. Within my discussion on living through *risk engagement*, the independence to make one's own experiences, that is to have the possibility of making one's own mistakes, is in the midst of the conflicts and paradoxes of modes of thought and the cultural structure.

Caldeira notes that a problem in doing social research about violence is that "violence

47

and crime are difficult, if not impossible, to study through participant observation" (2000:11). I agree that it is difficult, but mainly because it is hard to either get the trust of criminals or to be sure where a criminal act will happen if one wants to possibly victimize oneself as part of a research project. It is, however, not impossible, as no criminal is at all times preoccupied with crime and violence. Bourgois (2003), Linger (1991), Tulloch (2006), and Venkatesh (2009), are some of the researchers of participant observation that have made accounts from criminal and violent settings.

Caldeira's statement might stem from how social researchers also have a sense of feeling secure. Their institutes also rarely want their affiliates to engage in dangerous activities that can lead to injuries and death. When our group of master students at NTNU were sent off to fieldwork, we were made sure to contact the institute in any event of danger and harm. Caldeira's solution to the lack of self-experienced data about crime was to turn to narratives, not questioning her own way of acting within the *paulista* communities that she was doing fieldwork in in the mid-to-late 1980's.

My fieldwork has been questioning the relation between different emotive modalities from different modes of thinking, not taking for granted a rationalist explanation nor the full narrative explanation. I have tried to combine my own experiences, including myself in the field with my friends, so to try to understand them through similar experiences. I have situated myself in situations they would not go to, and been in situations together with them. I have gone from being *innocent*, not knowing what a gunshot sounds like, to knowing it by heart, or rather by (f)ear. I have been in the situation of *almost being robbed*, where I could not know if harm would come to me, and I have been in the situation of being robbed by armed assailants, being pushed around and having become completely pacified by the power that violence has over a subject. I had to watch my best friend being led away with a gun towards the shoulder and being yelled at to open a garage door that would not unlock. I have experienced the dangers of the city on my body, and I cannot relieve this experience from the text that I have written.

A Short Comment on Doing Interviews

I made several interviews that lasted for a couple of hours at most. Most of the narratives I got were about experiences with crime and violence, apart from one particular interview I made with a judge who instead introduced me to the city's history. His insights to the city is contained in the basic material for the chapter on the history of Fortaleza (chapter

four).

Much of the information from the interviews are featured in the subchapter on *crime* in the next chapter. The interviews I made were only in part prepared and had an open-ended structure. My interviewees had the possibility of going into what they wished to talk about themselves. I was concerned, however, with how these interviews could strengthen their fear of the cityscape and thus change their choices of actions in the public sphere. Although I have not experienced the interviews as distorting, they can at least have changed the interviewees' reflexive narratives. This is probably unavoidable, but anyways implies the social scientist's intrusion into the field of social studies.

The Principle of Naivety

By acting *innocently*, very *naïvely* to my friends, due to the very different upbringing that one can get in the rural parts of Norway, I have probably turned a little harder by my experiences. I have tried to convince myself that stereotypes are not real despite how they can show themselves as such. Although I still catch myself looking over my shoulder when moving in Norwegian streets at night, I have also learned that one of the most important things to the Norwegian experience is to not having to think extensively about safety when doing ordinary everyday stuff.

The naïve position in fieldwork is essential for any anthropologist who goes anywhere in the world, but the benefits are probably grander, although riskier and more uncomfortable, in places where the level of basic security is much lower than the security in most European cities. I benefited from this *principle of naivety* during my first three months in Fortaleza. However, at one point, my knowledge of all the present dangers made me withdraw more and more from the public sphere. More often, I would wait for Eloisa and go to places by car rather than walk there. I would still join her and her friends for *festas* at night, but the trials by walking seemed at one point to be too big an expense if errors would occur. I could only have gained this feeling by initially being naïve, and I think that this experience led me closer to the basic feeling that the middle class youth have towards the dangers in the public sphere.

Data and Scope

The empirical data that the arguments of this dissertation is based on have been gathered from an intimate fieldwork with one person in particular as center of information,

but I have also supplied with data from the relations that this person has in the domestic and public sphere. The close relation gave access to more information than what could have been possible if the relations had been less intimate and spread out over more informants. During my first four months in Fortaleza, I experienced the front stage (Goffman 1992) to life in the city. I continued to get the experiences from the front stages of life during the rest of my fieldwork, but gradually entered more and more into the domestic sphere of the everyday life of my informant. Eventually, I lived the last month of my fourteen-month stay within a family. This gave me a necessary experience with the back stage to the life of the people I met.

Although I do not state that I have a complete vision of life in Fortaleza inside a middle class family, I have had contact with both the dramaturgical components to the stages where actions are acted out, thus my argument strives towards a broader reflection over the strategic actions in the domestic and in the public spheres. The model suggested, thus, has a limited scope. However, this does not mean that it does not exist. As I will point out in chapter five, there are differences between the sisters of the Oliveira family that make the categories more flexible. This also lends strength to how such a model seems plausible, particularly when considering relations within dysfunctional families where parent-child relations are conditional. Hence, the limited selection of data still presents a model that seems similar to mechanisms in other households beyond cultural relativity.

This model could, however, not have presented itself if it had not been for the discriminating differentiation between the children and their parents and from the direct opposition that Eloisa takes to certain values, demands and expectations. Information about the dynamics within the domestic sphere and the dynamics between the domestic sphere and the public sphere can probably only be obtained by close and intimate relations to the people in the field. Although this presents itself with challenges of qualification, it also proposes an information pool of qualitative value. As such, the gathered material of this dissertation places itself within the anthropological tradition as a qualitative study of human life and social organization.

Chapter 4. Fortaleza

The following chapter explores Fortaleza's history and development, in addition to the progress of Brazil for the past twenty-five years. Eloisa and her friends grew up during these years, a time when Brazil transformed into a democratic nation, following the constitution of 1988, the first fully democratic election in 1989 and the *Plano Real* in 1994. These years have seen a significant increase in living standards and the levelling up for many people from the poorer social classes to the middle class. The transformation of classes has also created bigger gaps between the classes during the past fifteen years. During this period, an increase in recorded crime has in addition taken place in many Brazilian cities. In Fortaleza, the crime seems to run a parallel course to the immigration patterns from the rural parts of the state. This chapter looks at the wider framework of the city's history and current situation. It further explores how Fortaleza fits within the national transformations, and finally we will looking at some stories about crime.

History

After some failed attempts at colonizing the area now known as Fortaleza in the beginning of the 17th century, the fortress *São Sebastião* was erected in January 1612 (IBGE 2010a). Nine years later, the fort was found in ruins, but was rebuilt to appease the natives, and served as a distributor of seeds to plant sugar canes. This set up the basis for the sugar cane industry that the Northeast Brazil historically is well known for. In 1637, the fort was taken by the Dutch, and later destroyed after an attack by natives in 1644.

The Dutch returned five years later with 298 men to set up the beginning of what was to become Fortaleza, calling it *Fort Schoonenborch*, a name taken after the governor of the state *Pernambuco*. Hostility from the natives led to the enclosure of administration with facilities and accommodation within the fort's walls. After the Dutch was defeated by the Portuguese at Pernambuco in 1656, the fort was seized, the Dutch banished from Brazil, and the fort renamed to *Fortaleza de Nossa Senhora da Assunção*[22] (Heffer 2012). The size of the fort was expanded after the takeover. Fortaleza got its name after it was made the state capital, and was economically dependent on the port located in *Aracaty*, another village found 148

---

[22] Fortress of our Lady of assumption.

kilometers away from Fortaleza on the northeast coast.

Because the fort was made out of wood in a very humid climate, it fell apart at the seams and eroded, and the new *Fortaleza de Nossa Senhora da Assunção* was erected on top of the ruins of the former in 1812. In 1847, the fort was renovated and in 1912 it was turned into a historical monument (IBGE 2010a).

Officially, Fortaleza became a city in 1823 under the name *Fortaleza de Nova Bragança*[23] because the captaincy became located in Fortaleza, but it returned shortly to its old name. It is not until 1846 that the city undergoes a certain urbanization when it starts expanding with new buildings of governmental and trading functions. This urbanization continued up until 1877. Fortaleza got its first lighthouse during these years. In 1861, the hospital *Santa Casa de Misericórdia*[24] was raised and inaugurated. This period also sees the building of the church, *Seminário da Prainha*[25], and the public jail, *Cadeia Pública*[26], that now serves as a center for tourism and handicrafts (Heffer 2012).

Fortaleza was seen as a growing, urban city modelled on scientific-technological advances, and entered a golden age with the exports of cotton in the 1870's. The cotton trade became the main basis of the city economy. Fortaleza looked to Paris for inspiration, expanding the city after the ideas of Paris' urban planner, Baron Haussmann, letting streets form a grid pattern to make it easy for city expansion. During this time, Fortaleza had trams, telephone lines, squares, boulevards and cafés, and even had a promenade with a garden, modelled after the European inspiration. In clothing stores, one could find French fashion.

Entering the twentieth century, trams were the first choice of public transportation. The city population had grown to the seventh largest in Brazil. Fortaleza kept on growing, and took a hold of *Meireles* and *Praia de Iracema*, now known as main beaches for the tourist industry. Mainly rich people settled here in big mansions, most of them now torn down because of property speculation. Rich people continues to settle in the same areas since these two *bairros* are the two best developed, most expensive and regarded the best two neighborhoods to live in in Fortaleza (Heffer 2012, O Povo 2014).

Fortaleza is the state capital of *Ceará*. The interior of the state relies on an agricultural

---

[23] The fortress of new Bragança.

[24] Holy house of mercy.

[25] The sermon of Prainha.

[26] Public jail.

economy. Long periods of draught is a challenge that can lead to catastrophic human disasters. Hence, Fortaleza has been the location of vast immigration from the rural areas. From the beginning to the middle of the twentieth century, its population rose from 48 000 inhabitants to 112 000 inhabitants (Heffer 2012). During the 1950s and 1960s, the economy progressed rapidly, and in 1970 Fortaleza was the leading industrial city of the northeast.

During the *abertura*[27], which started in the early 1980s when leading politicians working with military dictatorship granted the Brazilian population the possibility of voting, democratization set foot in Brazil, and the country held its first openly democratic election in 1989. In Fortaleza, Ceará's first female mayor, Maria Luiza, was elected and she also became the first city hall leader of a leftist political party. During the latter years of the 1990s, the development of the city turned to tourism as the beach line was turned into hotels and *barracas*[28], removing the poorer population that lived off the sea from the seashore. They were resettled in inland areas with less or no resources to subside off.

The population of Fortaleza increased, leading to the estimated city population to be more than 2.55 million people in 2013 (see table 1) (IBGE 2010g).

Year	Fortaleza	Ceará	Brazil
1991	1,768,637	6,366,647	146,825,475
1996	1,954,656 (10.51%)	6,781,621 (6.51%)	156,032,944 (6.27%)
2000	2,141,402 (9.55%)	7,430,661 (9.57%)	169,799,170 (8.82%)
2007	2,431,415 (13.54%)	8,185,286 (10.15%)	183,987,291 (8.35%)
2010	2,452,185 (0.85%)	8,452,381 (3.26%)	190,755,799 (3.67%)

Table 1

The statistics above show that the population of Fortaleza grew rapidly in between 1996 and 2007, a growth that has staggered during the past years. This is not only in Fortaleza, as the table shows, but also in the state of Ceará, although the state experiences a bigger growth than Fortaleza. Compared to national levels, Ceará's low growth up to 2010 is very similar to the national statistic, where the Brazilian population increased with 3.67 % in between the three-year period from the census in 2007. This might show that Fortaleza is

---

[27]The democratic opening of the Brazilian society from the former dictatorship rule that happened during the 1980s.

[28] Beachside bars.

reaching a limit for housing more citizens, and/or that it also cannot supply more residencies with work and means for subsistence. Fortaleza is one of the world's most densely populated cities with a density of 7,786.44 per square kilometer (IBGE 2010g).

The census also shows that there are similarities between the age cohorts on city and national level. The youth and young adults between the ages of 15 to 30 is the largest age group in Fortaleza and in Brazil (IBGE 2010e). Those between 15 and 25 years old have grown up in the democratic Brazil and have never experienced the dictatorship. This is also the age group that in Ceará are most likely to become murder victims (O Povo 2014c).

Economically, the service industry is by far the largest employing Fortalezans, accounting for four fifths of the generated values in the city (IBGE 2010d). The rest is made in industry. The nominal median value of income per household was at 450 *reais*[29] (US$231[30]) a month in 2012, but the average income per household with steady income was at 2,907.21 *reais* (US$1492) a month (IBGE 2010f).

In health politics, Fortaleza distinguishes itself from the rest of the state and the nation in the difference between privately and publicly established health services. Fortaleza has many more established private health facilities than public, having registered 426 private to 105 public[31] hospitals (IBGE 2010b). This means that 8 in 10 health facilities are private, opposed to a bit more than 4 out of 10 nationwide.

Fortaleza was noted as the 13th most violent city in the world of 2012. *Tribuna do Ceará* (2013a) wrote that even if the murder rates were high in 2012, just during the five first days of March the year after showed a murder increase of 72.5 % compared to the same period the year before. The violence and murders by firearms in general have increased extremely (Waiselfisz 2013:23). In 2000, there were registered 346 deaths by weapon in Fortaleza. In 2010 the number was 1159. By percentage, this is an increase at staggering 235 %. The murder rate per 100,000 a year went from 16.2 in 2000 to 47.3 in 2010 (ibid.:25), putting Fortaleza as the 7th most violent city in Brazil in 2010. *Tribuna do Ceará* estimated

---

[29] One *real* is per 01.11.14 at about US$0.40. The plural form of *real* is *reais*.

[30] Currency rates are gathered from Oanda (2014) who provides historical exchange rates with average rates for a 1-year time span. The average value has been taken from a period between 1st of January 2012 and 1st of January 2013 to get the average rate in 2012. This average is at 0,5133 for US$. The conversion lacks some accuracy, but the values are supposed to give an impression of the borders between class segments in the Brazilian society rather than accuracy for differentiation, which is not what is interesting to us.

[31] Municipal, state and federal services.

that Fortaleza would end with a murder rate at 66 per 100,000 in 2013 (Tribuna do Ceará 2013b). In comparison, São Paulo had the same year a population 4 times bigger than Fortaleza, the same types of law enforcements and the same laws for the citizens. Nevertheless, the murder rate was at 13.86 per 100,000 (ibid.), less than a quarter of the numbers in Fortaleza. This illustrates that chances of becoming a victim is much higher in a smaller city, even in a million city like Fortaleza.

Even though the government officials of the state and municipality ensured the citizens through media channels early in 2013 that investments into public security had been made[32], these trials to keep violence from increasing were rather inefficient in 2013. In November the same year, 1100 new police officers graduated from the newly inaugurated police academy and were put out on the streets. During the first months, they were very visible, as it seemed like they were going through training in the public together with more experienced police officers. Usually, they would patrol in packs of five or six and mainly in areas where tourists and wealthier citizens reside. The newspapers were quick to write about how unprepared the police force was for these new recruits, as many of them would have to patrol without firearms. This was also visible to the population, seeing the police officers walk in groups with only two guns shared between them and the rest armed with batons.

Many of the people I met could tell me that there were special police forces that patrolled the more dangerous *favelas* and poorer neighborhoods. Military police or specially trained units would patrol with heavier firearms, like machine guns in addition to pistols, in what was regarded as dangerous neighborhoods. I witnessed this myself outside of Eloisa's house one day when a four-man patrol on two motorcycles stopped a scooter with two men. One of the military police officers aimed at them with his machine gun, while another frisked the two men standing with spread legs and with hands on the back of their heads.

In the beginning of 2014, it turned out that the estimate for murder rate by 100,000 a year was a modest one. The Mexican NGO, *Conselho Cidadão para a Segurança Pública e Justiça Penal*, ranked Fortaleza at number seven on the list for most violent cities in the world for the year 2013, having a murder rate at 79.42 by 100,000 (Tribuna do Ceara 2014). This rate also made Fortaleza the second[33] most violent city in Brazil, proving that the security

---

[32] Many thought this policy was put to action mainly to ensure the safety of tourists coming to the state capital during the World Cup in 2014.

[33] The most violent is Maceió with a murder rate at 79.76 per 100,000.

situation of the city was in complete peril.

The newspaper *O Povo* noted that Fortaleza also struggles with large inequality issues (O Povo 2014). In March 2014, they wrote that in the neighborhood *Conjunto Palmeiras* there is an average income at 239.25 *reais* (US$111[34]) a month, in comparison with the most wealthy neighborhood, Meireles, with an average at 3,659.54 *reais* (US$1699) a month. The difference between the ten richest neighborhoods is relatively larger than between the ten poorest ones, ranging from 3,659.54 *reais* to 1,756.11 *reais* (US$815) among the first, to 239.25 *reais* to 349.75 (US$162) among the last. In the same article they presented that even though the middle class has grown from 2000 to 2010, the gap between classes has increased to the point where one speaks of *the haves* and *the have-nots*.

The criteria to classify the classes is shown below. It relies on the level of income that has been suggested as a classificatory system by the Brazilian government (G1 2014). The upper class has grown from 15.2 % to 20.1 % during the last decade. The middle class has increased the most from 30.4 % to 44.2 %, and the lower class decreased from 54.4 % to 35.7 %. Even though the statistics implied that there is a certain process of levelling out the classes happening in Fortaleza, a report from the UN pointed out that Fortaleza was the fifth most unequal city in the world in 2007, following Buffalo City (1st), Johannesburg (2nd) and Ekurhuleni (3rd) in South Africa, and Goiânia (4th) in Brazil (UN Habitat 2008).

How to measure the difference between classes in Brazil has changed recently (G1 2014). The former system used eight levels of income to group income levels into social classes (see table 2).

---

[34] Currency rates are gathered from Oanda (2014) who provides historical exchange rates with average rates for a 1-year time span. The average value has been taken from a period between 1st of January 2013 and 1st of January 2014 to get the average rate in 2013. This average is at 0,4643 for US$. The conversion lacks some accuracy, but the values are supposed to give an impression of the borders between class segments in the Brazilian society rather than accuracy for differentiation, which is not what is interesting to us.

Group	Income per capita in US$[35]	Family income per month in US$
1) Extremely poor	up to 37	up to 150
2) Poor, but not extremely poor	up to 75	up to 300
3) Vulnerable	up to 135	up to 540
4) Lower middle class	up to 205	up to 819
5) Middle middle class	up to 297	up to 1190
6) Higher middle class	up to 473	up to 1892
7) Lower upper class	up to 1151	up to 4605
8) Higher upper class	above 1151	above 4605

Table 2

The old model was based on current income while the new one, that is going to be used in research from 2014, uses a permanent income model. Since the current income could change with for instance becoming unemployed, people who had just lost their jobs at the moment of a census could become wrongly categorized. The new model operates with one less group and puts weight on the median income of families per month. The permanent income, as they call it, is supposed to take into account the permanence of a family's assets. If a person loses its job, that person or the family that the person belongs to, can have savings that lets the family continue with more or less the same expenditures over a shorter period until a new job is acquired. This period is, however, longer than the one that is accounted for in the old model, and changes the data a little. The group 1 to 7 in the new model equals the former distinctions in the old model (see table 3).

The inequality situation in Brazil has changed since former president Lula da Silva entered office in 2001 and initiated the *bolsa família,* a welfare program for the poorest population. The goal was to introduce support for the poor in return of getting their children into public health and educational programs. *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT), the Brazilian labor party, used the statistics on how the middle class had increased as an argument in favor of this welfare program. Although my friends are supporters of the welfare system, they were skeptical about the *bolsa família* program. When I asked about how Brazilian classes has equalized, Eloisa countered that the *bolsa família* had targeted poor people who were just

---

[35] Currency rates are gathered from Oanda (2014) who provides historical exchange rates with average rates for a 1-year time span. The average value has been taken from a period between 1st of January 2013 and 1st of January 2014 to get the average rate in 2013. This average is at 0,4643 for US$.

below the borderline to being lower middle class. The welfare program, thus, just pushed them above so that the results could easily be shown and taken in favor for the PT.

Group	Median family income per month in US$[36]
1	396
2	516
3	689
4	1241
5	2173
6	4595
7	8094

Table 3

Another worry about such a program was that the program itself was paternalist, and that paternalism had hurt the country more than progressed it. This discussion is familiar to anthropologists working with development projects and globalist policies. In Brazil, paternalism has its link far back to the colonial days of Portuguese rule as we saw in earlier chapters. Scheper-Hughes (1993) notes that the paternalism can be a problem when people need to shape their own lives and make their own futures (ibid.:117-118), much because there is an expectance of people to be a "*dono*, the owner of his own self" (ibid.:64).

To Eloisa and her friends, this dilemma was incorporated into their views on how their country lacked a significant plan for egalitarian progress that could better education and health services to the point where the poorer population felt like shaping their own paths towards grander contribution within the society. Their ideas were of those supporting the view that if the environment and the governmental policies invites to poor people's participation, then they would choose to stay in school, get an education and have the possibility of economic participation and individual development. Now, however, they felt like the level of education was too low for the poorest to know about what would be the best for them. These patterns from older generations, regenerates with their children and their poor situation. The poor situation is reinforced with either a forced introduction for adolescents and children, by their parents, to begging, or by how there sometimes would be no alternative than to getting

---

[36] Currency rates are gathered from Oanda (2014) who provides historical exchange rates with average rates for a 1-year time span. The average value has been taken from a period between 1st of January 2013 and 1st of January 2014 to get the average rate in 2013. This average is at 0,4643 for US$.

into "getting rich quick"-schemes in the end, like joining a gang and doing crime, for basic subsistence. These became big threats to establish communal links. All this adds to the level of insecurity felt in the public spaces of the growing city of Fortaleza.

The Transition of Brazil

Brazil has gone through transitional periods for many decades. The most abrupt was the *abertura*, the democratic opening started by the military government in the early 1980s. Before and after that time, Brazil had huge economic problems that just did not seem to be solved by any of the country's economists. Many a scheme was put to action, some more radical than others; freezing the populations' assets, using peoples' assets to cover budgetary deficits, freezing inflation, and creating huge losses for all but consumers (Roett 2010:73-90).

The disbelief in government practices still showed its mark thirty years later as Eloisa's father, for instance, juggled his fortune between numbers of accounts in the names of different family members. The unpredictability left by hazardous economic plans still echoed in the society.

Then, after the first openly democratic election in 1989, the country went through political changes. Conservative presidents and politicians who earlier had supported the military regime marked the first of its democratic decade (Roett 2010). In a critical documentary in the beginning of the 1990s[37], the privately owned Rede Globo, the biggest media network of South America, was labeled "the Hearstian dream", claiming that its owner, Roberto Marinho, was the real citizen Kane. The documentary's critique has become a fact within analyses of the election processes from that era when Rede Globo controlled air time and screen time for political parties and politicians (Roett 2010:84).

With the introduction of the *real* in 1994, Brazil finally managed to stagger inflation. The average inflation by CPI[38] in 1994 was at about 2941 % (Inflation.eu 2014). The year after it dropped to 147.98 % and in 1997, it was down to 6.97 %. With the exception of 2003 with a spike up to 14.78 %, the inflation rates have been stable. For the past ten years, the inflation rates have not exceeded 6.9 %, but not been below 3.6 %.

---

[37] Beyond Citizen Kane (Muito Além do Cidadão Kane). 1993. BBC, London.
   http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1356393/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1
[38] Consumer Price Index.

Little by little, Brazil's GDP[39] increased and the *real* stabilized towards the end of the millennium. When the *Plano Real* was put into effect in 1994, the GDP per capita[40] was at US$4182 (The World Bank 2014). It increased to its peak at US$4404 in 1997. However, towards the millennium, the GDP dropped towards the level of 1994. At this time, a political shift arrived anew, and the first socialist president was elected, the former labor union leader Lula da Silva. He adjusted his political position from leftist towards the center, becoming more of a social democrat than a Marxist, which he had been in his radical youth, and distanced himself somewhat to the radical Marxist wing of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores*.

Lula da Silva carried on with the economic politics of his predecessor and gained popularity when times again bettered. During his first two years, the GDP per capita stabilized and the economy turned upwards in 2003. The GDP per capita increased from US$4451 in 2003 to US$5721 in 2011 when he left office.

During his time as president, a marked shift in Brazilian structure for the unfortunates' social rights became a fact, and within few years, he introduced the *bolsa família*. After his presidency, his announced follower, Dilma Rousseff, became the first female president. Contrary to Lula, she pursued a much more moderate, technocratic and conservative line, and has been in trouble for a lot of promises related to the application processes and financial solutions to the World Cup of 2014 and the Summer Olympics of 2016 that were said to be mostly privately financed. The government ended up financing all but one stadium for the World Cup, expenses that much of the population rather would have seen used on public, social services and infrastructure.

Although Brazil experienced economic difficulties and possibilities during the 1990s through the 2000s, and eventually grew to become one of the world's greatest economies (ranking in at number seven in 2014 (Knoema 2014)), the country is still highly individualized and stratified. Where some gain enormous amounts of money, others get close to nothing. This is most clear when one goes from a condominium, an urban fortress, to a *favela*.

The gap also becomes apparent when one experiences the differences of the welfare state. Brazil has public health and educational services, but both are considered of such a terrible state that the middle class, who wants to reduce their expenses, still see it necessary to

---

[39] Gross Domestic Product.

[40] The dollar values are given in constant 2005 US$ according to the World Bank's data information.

send their children to private schools and to invest in expensive, private health plans at private hospitals to be ensured the proper healthcare when in need. Eloisa told me that she had visited public health centers that did not have basic materials like gloves, medicine and printer paper. Without paper, the doctors could not even print out prescriptions. Without rubber gloves, they could hardly do anything at all. The much-repeated saying went: "Brazil has the taxes of a European country, but the welfare state of an African one".

Crime

Crime is a crucial and quite continuous concern in Fortaleza. When I arrived, I was told that I should not go outside at night. During the first days, other travelers told me the warnings were exaggerated, but a week into my stay two Argentinian women who stayed at the guesthouse were robbed some hundred meters down the street from our entrance. The Argentinians explained that they had been assaulted from behind and put to the ground. Their purses were stolen while other people stood silently and watched on the opposite sidewalk. The owner of the guesthouse stated that the Argentinian girls should be happy that they had not been raped.

At Backpackers I also met a Brazilian woman from further north who had stayed in Fortaleza twice before. She said that she had been robbed both times and rarely went outside alone. A Greek traveler at the same guesthouse said he had talked to someone in the area that could tell about how an 80-year-old man had been robbed in the middle of the day. When he told the story, many in the common area at the guesthouse commented that these robbers did not have any shame.

A couple of weeks after my arrival, carnival began. During the festivities, daily news reports about the numbers of festival related deaths in the state could be seen in graphically presented statistics on the television screen. To me, it looked like a sort of lottery or bingo activity. The television set in the common area showed news reports all day and people noticed different news stories in the media, contributing with what they knew to a pool of information that all residents took part in in the common area. These narratives established a certain backdrop to the city I had arrived to.

On a morning that I woke up, I was asked if I had heard about the murder that had happened during the night. I had not and a few hours later, I was told that it had nothing to do with Backpackers or its residents. The news story was still disrupting. An Italian man had been found in his room, tied to a chair with his throat slit. Downstairs, the receptionist had

been found shot to death. The following days we all moved rather nervously around, not knowing if we should trust the advice that Brazilians did not kill foreign people because of the violent police retributions, which was one of the few phrases of comfort up until the murder. A couple of days later, we were told by the Greek that the killed Italian had been murdered by another Italian, and that they both had criminal affiliations. The victim had spoken too loud in a restaurant about the exchange of a big amount of Euros, resulting in the murder over money. Still, this experience was the first serious one to me.

After I moved away from the guesthouse and established myself in an apartment in an apartment building, most of my information about crime came through media channels, social media on the internet, through Eloisa's friends, and some through the experience of having to go to the closest department store and bank.

One day, on my way back from the department store, I noticed two boys dressed like *pirangueiros* in the corner of my right eye when I was just about to cross the street two blocks away from my apartment building. I crossed the street between two cars that waited to turn right, and the first of the boys, who I had noticed speeding up when he saw me, approached me on the other side. He said something and pointed to my bags of groceries. The boy behind him laughed coolly, and I turned my cheek while saying "*Não tenho dinheiro*", *I do not have any money*. I then passed by as fast as possible without running. Close by the crossing, lay a restaurant and the boys did not seem to want to follow me that way. Since I had not stopped, they would have had to use force to get anything from me. A man standing on the porch of the restaurant looked at me when I passed. Then he looked towards where the two boys had approached me. Then he looked back at me as if I had walked on water. He had probably expected trouble. My friends told me later, by the recount of my experience, that the boys probably wanted to rob me. This was my first *nearly-robbed* experience.

When I started asking around for experiences about crime, stories were not lacking. Most people had experienced some sort of crime at one time or another. Among Eloisa's friends, I made interviews with Paula, Nora and Julia. I was also told Eloisa's and her mother's stories.

Paula told me that she had been robbed the first time at a bus stop when she was going home from high school. A young man had approached her and asked for her phone. She said that the most startling thing was that other people waiting at the bus stop did not react. Later, she had been robbed together with her brother and others inside a store. A man had entered with a gun and taken all the money he could get from the register and the customers. Paula

gave me the impression of not putting much sentiment into it. She seemed to be of the opinion that one should expect to experience crime when living in Fortaleza.

A couple of weeks after I had returned to Norway from the first part of my stay, Nora was robbed outside the federal university. She parked her car outside of one of the campuses before exiting. Then she walked towards the psychology building. She only walked a few meters when a man approached her with a gun and forced her back to her car. He placed her in the passenger seat while sitting himself down into the driver's seat. He first drove to a bank and forced her to withdraw money from her credit cards. Since Nora's father had put a withdrawal limit on the credit card, the kidnapper did not get much money from this. He then drove around in circles, rather erratically according to Nora, and she suspected he was on drugs. The driving around made her confused about where she was. At one point, the kidnapper stopped by a place where a woman exited. Nora said that she looked uncomfortable when she received objects that the man had stolen from Nora. The woman seemed, to Nora, to understand what the kidnapper was doing, Nora said. After that, the man continued to drive around for some time. Eventually, a couple of hours later, she was left outside of the city in an unknown area without any means of contacting anyone. The kidnapper took all her things, including the car, and left her with the warning that he would kill her if she contacted the police. She managed to find a man who were preparing to go to work from an apartment close by. She borrowed his phone, called her parents and then the police. Since Nora's father is a former police investigator and now a judge, the police, on arrival, took much information and seemed serious about catching the assailant. With some pressure from her father, the man was caught and then identified by Nora, a bit more than a week later. It turned out that he had left prison short time before.

Contrary to Paula, Nora does not think that people should be content with getting robbed. In a Facebook post posted some days after the kidnapping, she clearly expressed her sentiments:

> Today I experienced a situation where feelings of helplessness and violation made more sense in life. I felt it was worth less than the bullet of the gun that was pointing to my head. After all the terror, the embarrassment of sins, life by a thread, people say: at least you are alive, at least you did not get raped at least u do not this and not that. Then I ask myself, what shitty times are these that you have to thank for not being killed or raped every time you leave home?! This city has been overtaken by parasites that live on the sweat of others. Thank you for them not to have me killed? Being grateful to be 'safe'? Gratitude is the least of feelings right now. Gratitude goes with apathy and resignation. No! I do not want to think that! I do not want to trivialize this apathy! Acting normal, this all is pure fucking

63

insanity! By the way, if anyone sees my car around and can shoot the motherfucker who is driving, here is my thanks in advance!

Julia had arrived from Acre, a state in the north of Brazil, five years earlier. She had been encouraged to study at the university, and Fortaleza was the only university nearby where they offered studies to become a librarian. Her grandmother also lived in Fortaleza, so this made it easier for her to move. Just half a year before my interview with her, Julia had been in a robbery where her family was held hostage at their home. They were driving their car out from their garage at about seven at night, when four men jumped out from behind a nearby tree in the middle of their driveway.

> It was the worst experience I have ever had. I had been robbed before, but not when I was at home. I was not just worried with me; I was worried about what was going to happen with my aunt and with my grandma. Because they approached us when we were leaving the house and we did not know what would happen, what they wanted, what they were going to do to us. With the passing of things they wanted money, but my grandma told them she didn't have money in the bank account, but just to fool them so they turned around the block with us and came back home, here at home, they showed the guns. They had two guns, they were 4 thieves. They got in very eagerly, asking where we had jewels, TV, in the rooms. Going up, they made us sit on the sofa and threatened us all the time: Where are the things? Where is the stuff? So our dog started barking and they threatened to kill her, and my grandma was all the time saying: just take anything you want, just leave us alive. Then after stealing what they wanted, which fit in the car, because they took the car also, they locked us into a room and threatened us if we told anyone they would come back to kill us. So they left with the car, I saw through the roof and called the neighbor, so the neighbor called my aunt, when my aunt got here, she let us out of the room.

Julia's grandmother told that after they were let out, she called the police who took an hour before arriving. When they arrived, they stated that the family would have to go to the police department and make a statement, and that was everything that the police could do about it. The car was found the day after, but they never saw anything of what was stolen or the thieves again. Their experience with the police was of the kind that they felt like the police did not help anything at all. Julia's grandmother actually stated that she would not bother to call the police if anything like this ever happened again

The story of Eloisa and me is very similar to this. As I exited the car at ten thirty at night, three young men snuck out of a parked car with tainted windows, standing on the corner of the street I lived in. Unaware of their presence, I got my grocery bags out from the car floor on the passenger side when something bumped towards the back of my leg. I turned around and looked into three faces. One of them said that it was a robbery, and I could see two

revolvers when looking down towards their hands at their waists. They pushed me away from the car, and one of them bent down to tell Eloisa, who sat in the driver's seat, that we were being robbed. One of them opened the backdoor of the car and got into the backseat. The younger men started to ask for things, like wallet and phone. I gave them what I had in my pockets, being completely stunned, and told them that I did not speak much Portuguese. I was worried about Eloisa inside the car, while the young men pushed me around and finally sat me down on the pavement. They took my cap and asked to open the carport door to the student housing I lived in. We did not possess the carport control, and my pocket only contained the entrance keys. They then went around the car and got Eloisa out. They asked for the keys, which she said she did not have. Worried about what they would do if things did not go their way, I gave them mine and they tried to open the carport door. Without the carport control, however, the carport was impossible to open. Eloisa told them that the owner had the control in her possession, but she was not sure if the owner was home. This was a daring move. We both knew that the owner most likely was inside the house. The assailants then asked about how many were staying inside. We both said that four or five people were there. Being outnumbered, they seemed to suddenly reconsider and left the carport with the keys inside. One of them got into the driver's seat of Eloisa's car and the rest got into the other seats. They then left with all of our belongings. After getting inside the student housing and calling the police, we waited while I tried to calm Eloisa down.

The police arrived after about forty minutes. Their response time was the same as the time it took Eloisa's mother to drive across much of the city to get there. The police are, in principle, supposed to be present in each neighborhood. When they finally arrived, they just checked to see if they could contact Eloisa's iPhone with tracking software, and then they told us to go to the police station to make a statement. At the station, the inspector wanted no description of the assailants and only took down formal information about the objects that had been stolen.

The day after, the car was found inside a favela across town, and we had to retrieve it at the neighborhood police station. The car had been stripped for all our things, and the windows had been tainted. The car had also been used for attempted robberies, and had bulks and dents from hitting other cars. The people that they found inside the car were not the same who stole it. One of them was a wanted felon for several murders, but we could not make an identification since he had not been present at our robbery. The police, thus, were worried that he would have to be let go.

Eloisa's mother was of the same conviction that many people are of and that presents a huge challenge to the security state of the city. She told us to refuse if we were asked to identify the assailants in fear of retributions. Our assailants had not threatened us other than being threatening and waving revolvers. The young man in the backseat of the car had repeatedly stated to Eloisa that everything was going to work out fine and no one was going to get hurt. This is unlike Julia's and Nora's case. But it is likely that the sentiment of any non-spoken threat is still experienced as a threat. Like the experience of Nora, we were told about every could-have-happened-scenario, in particular the one where the likeliness of us both being shot and killed was more *definite* than a *hypothetical*.

Stories like these were discussed on Facebook, shared by groups, friends, family and talked about normally. They shape the foundational fear that sores through the everyday life in Fortaleza. Stories like these reinforce the fear of going out into the public, and they are the first thing that one thinks of every time one exits a place, exits a car, or walks somewhere. This foundational fear is the basic sentiment to which everything else is acted on. Next comes all the other forces that might affect choices of action, which goes against this foundational fear. Of course, living with this feeling of fear every day normalizes it. Nevertheless, this feeling does not exist unless one has actually felt it.
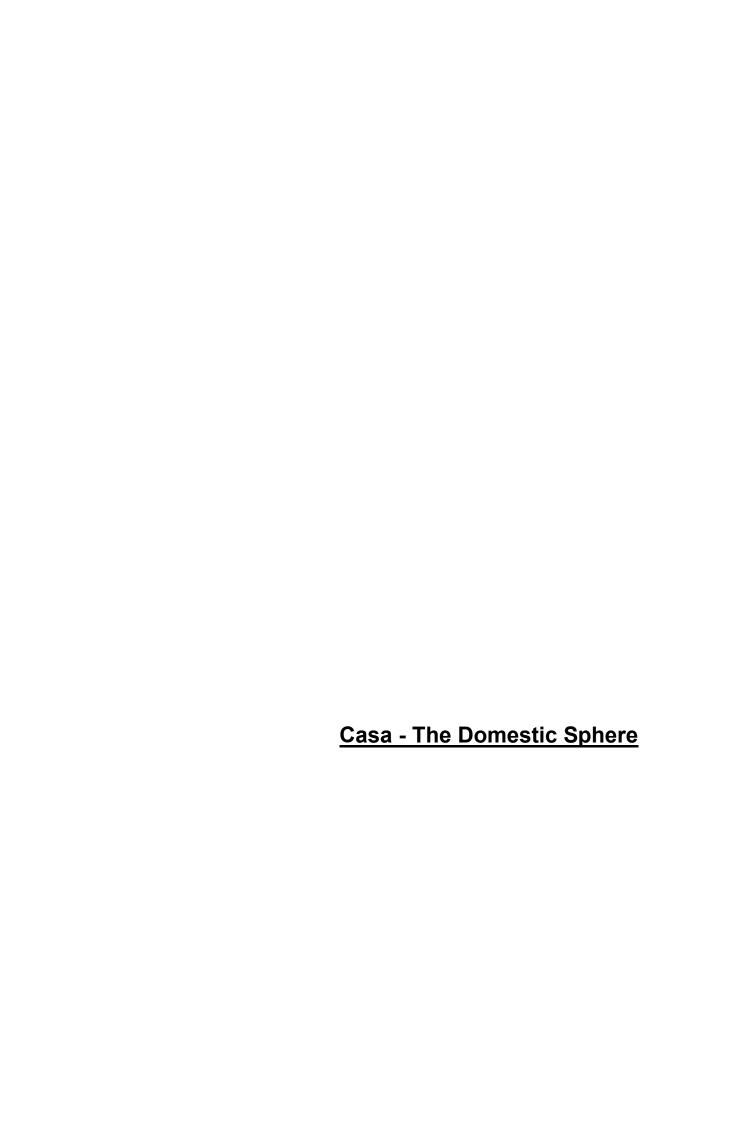
The Introduction of the Praga

When the demonstrations of 2013 broke out during the Confederation Cup, students posted extensively on social media about the situation in Fortaleza. At the time, I was back in Norway and did not get to participate and observe the demonstrations. Nevertheless, I had occasional contact on Skype, followed and discussed their Facebook posts and talked more closely with them when I returned two months later. Contrary to their internet activity and personal convictions, only one actually went to one of the demonstrations. There were different reasons for this.

According to journalists representing other news agencies than *O Globo*, police forces and *O Globo* employees had chased them away from the soccer arenas and the demonstrations. The agents from *O Globo* had stated that they had the exclusive rights to the coverage. *O Globo* had exclusive rights to the Confederation Cup, but they must have understood the demonstrations as directly linked to the soccer event to claim that their rights had anything to do with the demonstrations. Considering *O Globo's* history of modifying and implying their conservative political views into their news stories, the news reports were

regarded as unbalanced. The demonstrators were spoken of as terrorist and scum who wanted to hurt the nation, rather than as a people who had had enough of government policies, the prioritized expenditures, and the neglect of public services. The news stories also portrayed the demonstration to be overly violent and contributed to the already present feeling of fear that soars through Brazil.

Hence, many parents who by tradition watch *O Globo* more than other news channels denied their children the right to protest. This was mainly because of the security issue of participating. It also seemed like some of the parents disagreed with the demonstrators' agenda, as far as there could have been said to be an agenda overarching the demonstrations. I heard of discussions and arguments within families that often ended with these students not going in fear of their parents' condemnation of them. This condemnation might be more of a scare tactic than an actual threat of something that will be carried out, but in the end, it seemed like these students believed that it was not worth the risk. This is similar to Pascal's wager, "[…] Blaise Pascal argued that even if there is a slim chance that heaven and hell really exist, one should lead a Christian life to protect against the risk of damnation" (Vyse 2014:91). In other words, some risks are best to not engage in, for good measure, so to speak.

In another case, I heard of one of Eloisa's friends, Larissa, having her mother tell her that she should not go to the demonstrations because she had a feeling that something bad would happen. Larissa, being a bit superstitious from before followed her mother's warning and did not go outside at all. This was the first time I heard of *praga de mãe,* and its implications will be spoken of in chapter eight.

Casa - The Domestic Sphere

Chapter 5. The household

The Interrelational Demand for Transparency Through Structural Intimacy

I was invited to the Oliveira family for the first time in September 2013. I had just returned to stay for additional ten months and Eloisa thought it was a good idea to meet her family. After my first visit, I was invited back to the household each Sunday to eat lunch together with the Oliveira's. Most of the time that I was there I spent watching television in one of the bedrooms or just lying in a hammock outside on the porch, watching the people and animals that work and live on their big property. As I learned more Portuguese, I started to interact more with the staff of the household and the other members of the Oliveira family.

After Eloisa and I was robbed in May 2014, I was invited to stay at their house for the last month of my fieldwork. During this month, I learned more about the relationships between the family members that I only before had been told about. After I met Eloisa in February 2013 and until I left for Norway again for the first time four months later, she told me many stories about her relations to her mother, father and her siblings – her little sister in particular. Many of these stories were about conflicts within these relations and the recurrent theme happened to be about the expectations of her role as daughter and sister.

One of the first things I noticed was how social rooms like the living room, *sala de estar*, and dining room, *sala de jantar*, rarely were in use. The first time I was there, I was welcomed and asked to sit at the outside table. This table was the same table used for Sunday lunch and, as I later found out, was used for all meals of the day at most occasions. The table in the dining room, however, was mostly used as a place to collect bills, clean clothes when they were ready for collecting, and for different kinds of Bibles that Eloisa's mother used in church and in her own services for the *communidade*.

During the time I spent in the household of the Oliveira family, I never sat in the living room. The room was furnished with two chairs, a table and a sofa, but apart from that, it was sparsely decorated. One of the walls had pictures of the family, many of them from the oldest daughter's marriage, picturing the wedded couple and the parents.

Many other apartments that I visited had objects on display that showed somewhat their interests and passions. For instance, at Nora's apartment, her parents had put out different souvenirs implying that they travel a lot, which they do. Her father had books about

photography in the bookshelves and a camera stood in the corner on a tripod facing the balcony windows. In other apartments where one or both parents studied in addition to working, books would cover sideboards and bookshelves in addition to other tables.

I found much to infer from a gaze into an apartments' living room. However, at the Oliveira family, what seemed to be most central was the family. From what was lying more or less permanent on the dining room table, one could guess that Christianity and economy are central elements to the parents' lives too.

It still occurred to me as odd that what is considered the most used room in the Norwegian house, the living room, is rarely in use at all. In Norway, the living room is a place for social activities between family members. When the family members want privacy, they withdraw into their rooms. As far as my upbringing can be used as reference, the bedroom has in most cases been a rather private area of the house that anyone else should have a real good reason to enter into without consent from the room's owner. At the Oliveira family, however, I encountered the opposite.

Whenever we withdrew from the lunch table to watch television or just converse by ourselves, we went to one of the bedrooms. All of the bedrooms had television sets. However, the little sister's bedroom had a DVD player if one wanted to watch DVD movies. The parents were the only ones to have cable. They also had the only room with air condition, and multiple family members therefore often used this room rather than the other bedrooms when watching cable television. When I stayed at the house for a whole month, I noticed that bedrooms are used almost constantly when people are home. The traffic in and out of rooms, like staff who would clean and tidy up inside the rooms, created a lot of distortion to the bedroom domain. The bedroom did not offer much privacy and if a door was closed then someone would open it shortly after. If it was locked, then someone had a good reason to bother that person about something until the person unlocked it.

The possibility of getting privacy within the domestic sphere seemed to be almost non-existent. The bedrooms are social rooms and the social rooms are hardly in use. But in essence, this means that both private and social rooms are social, and as such none are private. Socializing, thus, is done under very intimate circumstances. The parents would lie in the same bed as their nearly adult children. The intimacy of the domestic sphere, thus, has hardly any discrimination between family members and the family member gets a very direct relation to another family member that is nearly without any barriers. As such, secrets, or things one would think **should** be secret, were visualized as knowledge that should be commonly shared.

An example of this will be presented below. What this illustrates is that within the Oliveira family there is a concept that the family unit should be completely transparent, which asserts itself in the use of architecturally constructed places.

Conditional Love

As noted in the second chapter, a long-term relation is constructed through a general reciprocal model of altruistic behavior, which implies an ideal of an unconditional relation between family members. The altruistic actions that I witnessed in the Oliveira family were usually demands for sacrifices of time. Eloisa was usually very busy with university studies, complementary volunteer projects, and part time work as an English teacher, during most of my time in the field. She juggled all her activities with the weekly *festa* and the occasional hang out with friends at bars or restaurant during weekdays.

In addition, her parents expected of her to help out at home by driving her little sister to and from church and friends. Her teenage sister regularly went out to places, sometimes also demanding to be driven to get takeaway food from restaurants. Eloisa mentioned several times that her little sister was spoiled and too often had her will, and when she did Eloisa was the one who often had to drive her to where she wanted to go. These additional demands of her time sometimes took its toll and shifted focus from activities that were important to her over to activities that she thought were her parents' responsibility.

Her biggest objection was to how her sister rarely thanked for the lift and seemed to take the help for granted. One time that we were going to one of the malls in Fortaleza, her little sister called and wondered if she could get a lift. Eloisa said yes and left for the house of her little sister's friend whom she thought also would go to the mall. When we arrived, five girls exited the house and wanted to take their seats in the car. Eloisa's little sister had not mentioned any extra passengers, so the backseat got full of teenagers who wanted to go late night shopping. Driving with this many people is illegal and put Eloisa in an awkward position. When we arrived at the mall, her little sister and friends did not thank her for the ride, and went straight to their own business after Eloisa had withdrawn some money for her little sister at the bank. This was just one of many similar situations that happened during my fieldwork.

If Eloisa ever objected to one of these favors, an argument would start and Eloisa would become the one to blame. If the argument broke out with her little sister, her little sister would call one of her parents who would call Eloisa and demand her to reconsider and carry

out the favor. If the argument broke out with her parents, the same would occur, but without her little sister as a catalyst. Whenever Eloisa objected, she said, she would become a bad daughter in her parents' eyes. She thought this to be unfair as she stated that her little sister was worse. Her little sister had fewer to none demands, expectations and responsibilities, only demanded things to be done for her, and rarely showed gratitude for this.

Another thing that Eloisa linked to how she thought her parents thought about her was how she had objected to two important expectations that her parents had set for her. The first was that her father wanted all his children to become doctors. He had wanted this for himself, but never gotten the chance to get the necessary education. He now worked as a rather successful travelling salesperson and thought of the doctor profession as the safest profession in the labor market. His eldest daughter had become a doctor, although she disliked the profession, and Eloisa, too, had engaged in studies to go in the same direction. She had, however, changed her mind when studying for the university admission test and chosen to become a psychologist. Her father was not sure if this was as safe and as good a profession as becoming a doctor, which paid well and would be an important asset to the family when in need for medical attention. This was most apparent by how the older sister had brought a notebook for prescriptions to the home that she wrote down prescriptions for family members when in need of prescribed medication.

The other way she had broken with expectations was in how her mother had wanted for all her children to become good protestant Christians. Eloisa had gone to church, had been singing in the choir, had had all her friends in the church society until she started her preparation studies for the university, and had had several duties at church camps and other church venues. However, when she started the admission preparations for the university she met other people with critical questions and gradually left the church and church activities. The disappointment that her mother felt because of her leaving the church was apparent in how she continuously tried to convince the both of us to join her at Sunday services. She even stated that even though she knew that Eloisa did not want to go to church, she also knew that Eloisa was a Christian deep within.

A more general expectation that might already lie with the role of the daughter can be the ideal of *marianism* (Archetti and Stølen 2004:270). This idea is opposed to the machismo of men, and relates to how men are supposed to be aggressive and active while women are supposed to be passive and following the ideals of Virgin Mary. We will see later in this chapter that this ideal seems to be existing within the domestic sphere, although Eloisa's

mother, as a Protestant evangelist, dismissed the powers of Mary when she converted from Catholicism. The existence of certain phrasings, like "Ave Maria", and how they were used, however, were still audible in the Oliveira household. The *marianistic* view of the daughter in terms of chasteness was apparent, but viewing one's children as unsexual beings is not something that has to be explained by *marianism*. Still, it is something to notice in the expectations that are particular to daughters within a household.

In the two former cases of broken expectations, the preparation for university studies became a threat to the parents' expectations to her future life choices. Even though her parents wanted her to go to the university, Eloisa sometimes gave the impression that they did not necessarily understand what the university meant to her and how important it was for her to get an education and to study. Studies became hard with the disturbing elements in the house following the transparent structure of the domestic sphere.

Eloisa also believed that she was blamed for being a bad daughter when she objected to certain demands due to a combination of what her parents had experienced as disappointments because of her choices of profession and religious conviction. She mentioned on one occasion that she thought her parents' love for her was conditional. If she did not meet their demands and expectations, their level of love would oscillate in strength or level. Following certain arguments when Eloisa refused to budge, the argument would escalate to the point where she and her mother were not on talking terms – that is her mother would refuse to talk with her for days, implying that a break in negotiation would take a harder toll on her mother than on her.

An argument like this played out during the month I stayed at the Oliveira family. Following our robbery, Eloisa's mother denied her, thus including me, to go out. During the same time, Eloisa's little sister had been caught going to a World Cup venue that she was not allowed to go to without the accompany of a trusted adult person. The father was out traveling, and the mother shifted the aggression from two separate arguments over to each argument, blending them together and creating larger tension to the arguments. At one point, Eloisa decided to quit discussing and remained distant to her mother's comments. For a three-day period, Eloisa and her mother walked quietly around the house to not step on each other's toes. During the same time, Eloisa's mother and little sister had loud arguments, and eventually no one cared about the closed bedroom door that reduced some of the aggressive arguments outside in the dining room.

Eloisa followed her parents' wishes in most cases, however. Although she continued to

follow her own life project, she also bent towards the expectations that her parents set out for her. This is not strange if she really believes that her parents' love is conditional. It is very likely that many children will go far to get as much out of the parents' approval as possible. If the parents' love is conditional, the child's personal life project will be limited by the parents' demands unless one finds a balance. This balance becomes especially fragile in the dynamic between *impulse control* and the *vontade*. It also becomes fragile in the dynamic between the traditional conception of the housewife and the ideal female participation in the labor market. The fragility exists in the transitional area between the domestic sphere and the public sphere, and its accentuation reveals itself in a mechanism I have chosen to call the *illusory altruism*, which will be portrayed below.

We have thus seen the ideal of the unconditional love as an important element to the domestic sphere. The principle of an ideal of unconditional love is important as far as it offers an ideal relation between the child and the parent, thus it becomes something of a guiding principle in the choice to act on a demand. If the parent-child relation differs in strength based on a levelled conditional love continuum, than children would act differently on different demands and expectations. If what Eloisa felt about her little sister is something that her little sister also feels, the strength of a loving relationship between the little sister and the parents are closer to the ideal unconditional relation. That would explain why there would be no need of gratitude towards favors. Likewise, it explains why Eloisa continues to carry out these favors.

On the Social Hierarchy of the Casa

The hierarchy of the *casa* revealed itself through certain actions and situations around the house. It became especially clear when the young adults left for the public sphere. The household is to a certain extent very traditional when it comes to roles. At first glance, I would agree with DaMatta (1984, 1997b) that the *don* of the house, the father and provider, is at the top of the hierarchy, establishing a patriarchal household structure so to speak. I relate this, then, to the pure economic position of the father role.

My data, however, is somewhat limited. First, the households that I went to had no male children. Thus the relation between father and son are absent from my data. In the relation between father and daughter, only one thing suggested that the relation was not a purely economic one. That was when Eloisa's father, João, stepped in as a mediator to calm down arguments between the mother and their daughters.

76

Most days, João would be traveling to the *interior* where he does his entrepreneurial work, selling hardware commodities to people who have a long way to the cities to get them for themselves. Eloisa told that he has been working hard for the family for years. She stated that her relationship with her dad was not of such a nature that they could actually speak about things, although the relation was not non-existing. I witnessed that most of their conversations while I was there would either be about money, about certain public services that João knew better than Eloisa and her mother, and about help with computer and technology in general, which he had limited knowledge of. Hence, it seemed like the most prominent parent-child relation in this household was the relation between mother and daughter.

The *don*, as provider, certainly fit within a structure of relations. However, to reduce power in a social hierarchy to economy rather than to establish it in terms of who actually makes the impact on the family members, who controls the decisions and is the moral voice within the home, would be to ignore the empirical data.

Eloisa pointed out the power that the mother has in the home to me on several occasions, but I also saw, firsthand, what roles the women and mothers of the household held. First, I had the pleasure to meet a young boy, a son of a young woman who was a part of the staff at the time. They called him Dêde, a nickname for André. Dêde was four years old and learned how to ride a bicycle just before I got there. He adored Spiderman and was completely obsessed with the cobweb and spider tattoo that I have on my elbow. One day he had Eloisa draw him a similar one on his hand so that he could make noises as if he flung out a web, just like his cartoon hero.

Then I was witness to the welcoming of a newborn when another woman of the staff working at the house had her second son. This son, Isaac, was cared for by all the women residing in the home, with the notable exception of the household's teenager who did not seem to care much about anything else than Harry Potter, sleeping, meeting friends in church and hanging out at the mall. Isaac got a lot of attention, being carried around at first, and then taught how to crawl, working up strength in legs and hands, and in general being attended to at every waking second.

Before Isaac was born, Dêde was the obvious favorite around the house. He would run around, watch cartoons, have food, talk, play outside or hang out in Eloisa's bedroom. Learning the language, he had questions about everything. The women would talk to him, and sometimes he would understand. Sometimes he would not. Eloisa tried to teach him the name of the colors, and he tried to replicate sounds, sometimes unsuccessfully. Portuguese seemed

just as hard to him as it was for me. The big difference, though, was that whenever someone tried to talk with me, they wanted to know about my past. Dêde, on the other hand, was taught and conditioned. I noticed, for instance, one time that when he addressed his mother as *mãe*, which is correct, he got corrected by Eloisa's mother, the *dona* of the *casa*, to call his *mãe* for *senhõra* – a more formal way of addressing an authoritative female character.

I also heard this on occasion from Eloisa when she spoke to her mother about certain things. If she wanted her mother's attention, she would use *mãe*. If she addressed her in the way where in the English language we would use *you*, she would use *senhõra*, like for instance, "*A senhora não pode decidir sobre coisas que a senhora não sabe nada sobre*" – The *senhõra* cannot decide over things that the *senhõra* knows nothing about. Very often when I heard the term *senhõra* being used, it seemed like the seriousness of the situation demanded a formal way of addressing the mother. If an argument demanded it, the vocabulary distance was created between the parts through the simple way of substituting *mãe* and *você* with *senhõra*. The same could also go the other way, so that the distribution of distancing terms would be balanced out. In the same situations, I heard Eloisa's mother addressing her daughter as *minha filha, my (young) daughter*.

This passive way of speaking illustrates a vertical gap between the speaker and the one spoken to. From the daughter, it is a speech upwards that illustrates the *senhõra's* place in the social hierarchy. Likewise, emphasizing the position of the daughter as a daughter is a speech downwards. However, *senhõra* and *filha* are not opposite terms. *Filha* is not a formal expression while *senhõra* is. In other words, the vertical gap is not just by being mother and daughter, or in relation to age differences, but must be related to a certain form for respect that the daughter should have towards her mother. This far, DaMatta's (1984, 1997b) model is still valid in the relation between the mother and the daughter. However, the changed way of addressing the parent did not seem to exist in the relation between father and daughter. Then again, as stated above, I only overheard conversations on money issues and when there were questions about official services. The father was rarely addressed about going out unless the mother had made an unpopular decision.

The position of the mother is not only apparent in certain phrasings, but shows itself through discussions and the need for permission. In Eloisa's case, she would need the permission from her mother to go out, which sometimes was granted and sometimes not. Since the house is located in what could be considered an unsafe area, she would be allowed to stay the night with female friends if she was to be out later than eleven at night. The city

78

center and all the clubs would be far from her home, so in most cases she relied on sleepovers. In some cases, agreements were made over the cell phone while being at the university or other happenings late in the day, and she would have to call home to check if whether it would be all right or not to sleep over at a friend's home. If her mother denied it, there was rarely any discussion, although it could lead to an intense argument over the phone or later when she got home. Eloisa told me that in most cases her mother had the last say in things. On some occasions, providing the deviation of the rule, her father would calm her mother down if the argument got too hot. He then settled the argument in a sort of tie.

Eloisa said that when her father had been away for long, her mother could become "kind of crazy". What she meant was that her mother could be really controlling over her children, and small things could be blown up to grand scales resulting in huge fights. One of these occurred during the World Cup when the teenage daughter wanted to go to a Fan Fest. The Fan Fest was a World Cup venue at the beach where games were shown on big screens and with bands playing on the stage in between. During the heated discussion, things were said and misinterpreted, and during a conversation that the mother had with João over the phone, the youngest daughter overheard her giving, from the daughter's point of view, a wrong account of the argument, thus resulting in accusations from the one side to the other when João got home. To make matters worse, the oldest daughter of the household was spending her days at the house after having gone through a surgery. Her meddling in the argument excelled the heat while she took her parents' side rather than showing loyalty to her sister, hence implying the vertical relation in age between the daughters themselves.

The argument got to a phase where both sides demanded an apology, but neither wanted to apologize. Neither side thought they were wrong. Finally, João stepped in and decided that both sides needed to calm down and apologize, although the mother was in her rights to deny her daughter going to the event in the power of being her mother. Eloisa had spoken of these situations before and had made me aware that her father usually ended up being a mediator. This shows that the father has a certain position towards the rest of the family members.

The Illusion of Altruism

The father, thus, has a function in terms of an internal juridical person and a providing person. In other terms, we could say that he represents law and economy within the domestic sphere. His position also becomes higher when regarding his honor, an honor that mostly

reflects on the family and both of the parents. When the oldest daughter, as an eighteen year old, confessed to her mother that she had a sexual relationship with her boyfriend, she was compared to a prostitute by her parents and accused of bringing shame over the family. Eloisa told that her older sister was forced into marriage to straighten out her wrongdoing, which was supposed to settle the score between the married couple and the bride's parents. The groom's parents, however, were in doubt due to the couple's young age. Their economic guarantees fell on João, who seemed to accept his role as provider. He bought them a house, supported them on financial matters, helped them out with phone bills, and continued to be a guarantee in other adventures that they had. When for instance the son in law decided to start a bar that went in shortage each and every month and eventually had to be sold off to cut the losses, João stepped in with his own savings to cover the expenses.

The role of the father as a provider is strengthened when taking into consideration that the eldest daughter is a doctor with a good salary, and that her husband is going through the last period of practice before he too becomes a doctor. One should think that doctors would not need a provisioning father figure with the size of their salaries. On the other hand, refusing financial help might disrespect the father figure. The situation between need and expectations can only be solved by acceptance of the financial aid. This is an illustrative case of a double bind mechanism, "a situation in which no matter what a person does, he can't win" (Bateson 1972:201). The model of disrespect and provision offers a double negative. If one does not take the offer, one disrespects the father in addition to distancing oneself from the ideal of unconditional love; as such, the choice confirms the conditionality of relations. If one takes the offer, one loses one's independency, but one does not gain anything in relation to the conditional love situation either; also confirming the conditional relations because one must resign on one's independency. The choice only reinforces the role of the father and strengthens the hierarchical pattern and the system of conditional relations. The only outcome from this dilemma can be dependency. If one continuously opposes to these two outcomes, one can in a worst-case scenario become victim of a dismissal of all family relations. In that case, one does not have either the ideal of unconditional love or the system of conditional love relations. One is independent, but by the loss of family relations, which would be a terrible state in a culture that puts the family at its core. If, however, a dismissal of relations happens, the system reconstitutes the relations within the domestic sphere since order again has been restored.

We can see the mechanism to one that looks similar, but behaves differently. In a case

of a demand, the child has the possibility of accepting or refusing to carry out the request. If one accepts, one does so to appease the parent and/or to act on the relational ethos of a family where favors are carried out, often without questions asked. The outcome can and can not result in a stronger conditional ground towards the ideal of unconditional love from the parents. This will most likely depend on whether the conditional ground is strong from before and if there has been a reduction in the conditional ground earlier. In the case of accepting provision, this has no effect towards the conditional ground. If one refuses to carry out the demand, it should usually be reasoned for. It does not automatically challenge the parents' authority although it can. If it does, a refusal might lead to reduced conditional relations. In this case, there is a possibility of avoiding a paradoxical situation by complying. Complying, in this case, does not go directly in conflict with a *vontade* and the search for independency.

Complying or refusing to demands does not have any necessary strengthening of the ethos of conditional love relations between parent and child, while in the case of provision it does. This is probably because these two mechanisms are based on a distributional system that goes in opposite directions. The first one is based outwards from the parent to the child where the child should remain passive and accept a provisional offer. The other one is based both ways where the parent demands outwards and expects an active compliance that positively distributes itself back to the parent. In the latter case, the child is expected to be active in complying, but **can** be active in denying. In the former case, the child is expected to be passive and an active resistance will oppose as a stronger resistance than in the latter case because it is not expected and directly attacks the *ideal of unconditionality*. This attack is reconfigured into disrespect and the distance to the ideal of unconditional love increases. The major difference between the mechanisms is that the latter comes forth clearly in terms of demands and expectations, while the former mechanism hides its effects in *the illusion of altruism*. It tries to emphasize the ideally unconditional long-term relations between family members in the domestic sphere, while utilizing a fear for the conditionality of the system. The other mechanism, on the other hand, leaves room for building relations, unconditional or conditional ones.

We can see a parallel here to what Freyre discovered in his historical argument about the Brazilian history. He found that the slaves had good conditions due to how they received food from the master. If we see this from the slaves' point of view, denying food would remove their means of subsistence. We could also hypothesize that the slave owner would deal some kind of punishment because a refusal to eat would jeopardize the labor stock. If the

81

slaves accepted the food, they would confirm and strengthen both the position as slaves and the paternal relation to their master. I am not speaking of the children of today as slaves, and the conditions are most likely very different. The underlying ethos of the master-slave relation had doubtfully anything to do with unconditional parent-child relations in Brazil. Anyhow, there seems to be an isomorphism here, which, as Freyre (1986), DaMatta (1984, 1997b, 2004) and Scheper-Hughes (1993:64, 98) point out, has a paternal idea at its core.

Differentiation Between the Children – Being in the Middle

Eloisa often felt that her father gave more things to her older and younger sister. If she got something, it would usually be inherited and used. Her cell phones were usually given to her from her eldest sister, who got new phones from the father. The younger sister got most of her wishes fulfilled. Eloisa thought that this was unfair since her younger sister had less responsibilities and had failed a year once, resulting in her being expelled from school. Eloisa felt like she was treated differently than her sisters, which from the outside seemed to be true. A big difference between the sisters is that the oldest one has moved out and no longer lives within the domestic sphere. The youngest sister, however, was born in 1997 in a time when Brazil was stabilizing. Eloisa often told of how she and her older sister were subjected to strong demands for getting awards of recognition in the private schools that they went to because it was then a bigger chance for one of them to get reduced fees at the private schools that they studied at. They were told that if at least one of them received such an award, their dad could afford to pay for both of them in school. They thus studied hard to accomplish to get an education. Both sisters were awarded such recognition and they both got reduced fees at the private school that prepared them for university studies. The youngest sister was not under such a pressure, which might signify that the financial burden of having children in private schools was now of a lower concern. She went to the same private school as her sisters until she was eventually expelled for failing. The subsequent birthday she still received an iPhone although she had not lived up to the only expectation to her. This illustrated that times had changed from the other sisters' upbringing. When Eloisa confronted her parents, her mother stated that her daughters were different and needed different ways of being coped with.

The strong relation between being a provider and a man of honor manifested itself in her father when Eloisa decided to get herself a new phone. Because Eloisa's phone was an older one without the possibility of using most applications that other people used, she made a

deal with a family member of a friend to buy herself an older version of an iPhone. She used her savings to buy it and was happy finally to have a smart phone. Her father, however, got upset when he found out because she was not supposed to provide herself with things, which he, as a provider, should provide for her. He gave expressions of being dishonored and later, when a new phone was needed, went through the old pattern of having his eldest daughter handing down her newer iPhone to Eloisa while he bought her a new one.

This relation between the provider role and the honor is in direct conflict with Eloisa's wish to be independent and provide for herself. She likes, of course, to get new things, but she wishes that it would not be wrong for her to get herself things that she would like to have. However, her father pays for many things that she buys. She has a credit card in his name that he pays for, and her debit card is attached to an account that her dad uses for some of his savings. Even if she feels that she buys herself new things with a card to her account, they are in most cases paid for by her father.

Eloisa gave the impression, though, that being provided for makes her feel like a child. Also, being set limits for, at twenty-four years old, strengthens this feeling. In addition, all the duties of driving here and there on behalf of her parents, taking her younger sister to different places and activities, makes her feel like she is completely in their violence. Whenever she challenges these duties, a fight usually occurs, and the respect she has towards her parents is usually put into question. Her sentiments towards the internal hierarchy of the household, and the honor, respect and demands, questions directly the conception of the parents' roles, and particularly the father's role as provider. More than once, she asked me if I thought it was right that she should give her parents respect because of the material wealth that her father had provided for her and her family. She said that the parents' main argument was related to their middle class position, the stability and the safety that the father had provided for the whole family. She said that she was grateful for all that, but that for her, respect is a result one earns from doing certain actions. It is something that one needs to earn and not something that one receives just by buying things. The unconditional respect that her parents demanded from her, she thought, was something that could be asked of from a child, but not from an adult who wishes for independency, equality and responsibility.

While one often experiences oneself as a whole person, having consisting thought patterns, identity traits based on will, and knowing one's personal limits, statements will still be conflicting at times. Eloisa's perspectives on her teenage sister who "gets everything" and "does nothing" without "ever saying thank you", shows that her own views are split. Eloisa

thinks that her little sister should be more grateful to her parents and to herself based on the things she gets and the services that they all provide for her. Of course, there is a big difference between actually receiving blindly and being conscious about what one owes anyone. Eloisa's problem was mainly that her younger sister did not understand what she owes her parents and her family. Hence, she does not show them any respect either. The three sisters have had very different upbringings, and the youngest have had less limits than her older sisters – too few according to Eloisa.

Although it seems as though Eloisa's little sister should show respect based on the providing that Eloisa thinks is insufficient to base respect on, the issue might be related to the individual differences between them. Eloisa puts responsibility as an important attribute that differs child and adult. In the family and, as we will see, in institutions she gives the impression that the lack of faith and responsibility in the young adults keeps them from becoming responsible adult beings who can make their own decisions and partake in societal issues. Eloisa seems somewhat to be of the same conviction as Mead was, "If the child is not shown trust, it will never become a trustful citizen capable of loving and caring for other people" (1971:123, my translation). She believes that her little sister is anything but a responsible person, while she, herself, needs to fight for her responsibility to get to a level where her parents and other adults respect her as an equal. This need to fight accentuates the generational cliff that exists between the parents and the children.

To Eloisa, her sister is a child, but is treated with less limits than she is. Her seventeen year old sister can go to sleepovers at friends for days on end, while Eloisa needs to ask for permission every time, and might be denied one single night because she has "been away" all week, when "been away" means going to the university and partaking in afterschool activities. A big difference, however, is how Eloisa has a car and the "freedom" to move anywhere in the city. She can venture out to activities and hang out with people that the mother does not know. Her younger sister does not have this option. She is driven to the sleepover that always is at a friend's house, and usually has to stay there unless the friend's parents drive them to places that they consider to be safe enough to go to.

Another difference in the mother's pattern of differentiating her decisions between them can be due to how her mother sees how Eloisa denied her church relations. Eloisa's break with the church society is felt very strongly for her mother. It has also been a worry that Eloisa is twenty-four years old and not married.

Other aspects to the problem between independency, respect and provision is how she

wants to partake in the labor market and make her own money, how she is career focused, and studies at a higher educational level.

Denying her to go out can also be because of her rhetorical skills that challenges the vertical relations between parent-child, while also undermining her mother's logic skills, which are based on emotions rather than consistency. Eloisa's obvious opposition to her parents in many issues and her alternative values probably accumulates into the tension between her and her parents.

Eloisa's treatment as a child might be because her mother still wants to condition her to live as a good Christian, while her teenage sister seems to know better how to "play the game" for sympathy and good will by still going to church and participating in church activities.

Religion

Eloisa sees herself as an agnostic. Her mother is an evangelical Protestant. Her father is a Catholic, but Eloisa says that he does not really act or talk as if he is a religious man. When Eloisa was younger, she participated in church activities like going to church camps and singing in the choir. She explains that it all changed in the years leading up to her university studies:

> Before, all my friends were from church. But when I started preparing for the tests to get into the university I met all these other people who had other thoughts, and I met a lot of people there who are still my friends today.

She tells that many of her friends from church became more distant and that the friends she made were different in how they asked questions that are more critical. When she got into the university to study psychology, she got interested in Freud and psychoanalysis, and at that point, she broke clearly with her earlier beliefs.

Considering her belonging to the church earlier, that her mother is still a Christian, and that she knows people who still believe in a Christian God, she does not dismiss certain powers that church society can have on people, although she remains ambiguous to them. She thinks that the church society can do good things. They have activities, a sense of belonging and they help unfortunate people in the *communidade*[41]. But she also says that belonging to

---

[41] *Communidade* is a term that implies a social network of people living in a certain *bairro* – a neighborhood.

the church relies on a blind faith, judgments of people that she cannot support, and a certain authority structure that she does not like. In many of her critical comments on religion, she sounds more like an atheist. Some of the members of *Pravida*[42] are Catholics of a certain saint, and they show it by wearing a wooden cross,

> I do not think that this is a good idea when you are going to do therapy. The people you meet can be of a different religious belief, and they might not talk about certain things because of how the therapist symbolizes their religiosity.

Eloisa questions the distance that religion can create rather than emphasize the belonging between members. She continues to tell about how some religious psychology students do not reflect upon such important issues:

> This friend of a friend of mine at psychology, right, studies to become a therapist. And she is a Christian. She does not like gays and thinks being gay is a sin. So my friend has asked her how she is to cope with it if she becomes a therapist and get gay people as patients, because that very well might happen. And she says "yeah, but, well, I have to do whatever I have to do then". It is like she does not understand that her prejudice will have an impact on her actions.

For Eloisa, religion is something personal that should not be flagged on one's shoulder. For her mother, however, it is the other way around.

Her mother goes regularly to church on Sundays, participates in sermons far away, and holds praying and bible study groups at home for some of the members of the *communidade* where they live. She sometimes prays before meals, insisting that her family joins her. She daily listens to church and religious music around the house and in the car, and thinks that everyone needs to know God although they state reasons for not believing. When Eloisa went into psychology and were going to psychiatric hospitals, her mother thought that Eloisa should spread God's words among the patients, whom she regarded as possessed by demons and thus should be exorcised and salvaged. When talking about it, Eloisa quoted one of her professors who is overseeing the suicide prevention program: "In many cases, religion is what put many of the patients here".

When *communidade* is spoken of, one usually means people in poorer communities, probably at the same time distinguishing rich people as less communitarian.

[42] The suicide prevention program that Eloisa first became a member of, and at the end of my fieldwork had become the president of.

Eloisa's mother lives her life, to a larger extent than the rest of the family, by the words of the preacher at her church. Eloisa told me that her mother had once quit eating shrimp because the preacher had said that the shrimp is an impure creature who cleanses the sea of all its filth. In one service, the preacher had been speaking of the number of the beast and how the "mark of the beast on people's foreheads" is the dollar, and as such meddled the ground between faith and economy. The principles that her mother live by follow the lines of thinking in terms of a purity/pollution model (Douglas 1966). Avoiding shrimp is a very clear example. The principle of avoiding danger in the public sphere and the purity of *impulse control* within the domestic sphere can also be seen as an extension of the logic that Eloisa's mother already carries with her from church.

The day after Eloisa and I were robbed, the car that was stolen was found in a bad neighborhood downtown of Fortaleza. When we had gotten it back, Eloisa's mother looked around the outside of the car to observe the damages inflicted on the hood, roof and bumper. Then she made us stand in front of the car to pray and thank God that God had returned the car to the right owners. Eloisa wanted to return to the bedroom and not having to be reminded of the night before. She told her mother that she had to promise that it would not take long, but, as she later stated, she did not care about listening to how God had saved us from certain doom. Eloisa said that the idea that God saves people from bad stuff that happens is a bizarre way of thought. If God wants to prevent bad stuff to happen to certain people, then God should prevent the event from happening in the first place, not just limit any damage inflicted when the bad event is already happening.

A week and a half later, Eloisa's mother invited her son-in-law's parents to a Sunday night prayer outside on the porch. Her mother said that she had promised God in a prayer on the night we were robbed that if God helped to find the car she would hold a service for him. By this it seems like the mother believes she has a certain personal relation to God, which listens in on her prayers and controls outcomes of what happens in the domestic and the public sphere. If this is so, then religion seems for Eloisa's mother to be a way to control the unordered and arbitrary violent situations that happens in everyday life. She also, then, takes the responsibility and the power, in her own mind that is, over other people's fortunes. These people are the ones that she cares for. It is interesting to note that God is thanked for finding the car while the effort by the police is neglected.

During the service, we sat in chairs and couches while Eloisa's mother gave her account of what had happened when we were robbed. The story was somewhat twisted and

not according to how we experienced it, but that was not the central issue. As she started crying, I looked at her husband whom also had tears in his eyes. The other couple was sitting with bent heads, reciting something that I could not hear, but it was most likely a prayer. Then, as the story ended, Eloisa's mother started reciting a prayer to the group. The other couple continued to mumble, and after about forty minutes, the prayer session came to a halt and an "amen" was said by all.

It started to dawn on me that some of the religious activity that Eloisa's mother was involved with had to do with control. The hindsight explanation of God's intervention in our robbery implies that fortunate people have God's attention. Random violence also becomes somewhat safer. The prayer session, where a narrative of the events was established, first let Eloisa's mother make sense of the occurrences, then thank God and show devotion to "God's plan", which does relieve the dangerous element of everyday life in Fortaleza.

Superstition

One might have expected some kind of superstition to exist within the sphere of a religious family, but I did not find much that diverted from or was an addition to what can be placed within their religious faith. On religious television channels, broadcasts from services in evangelical churches showed healing, speaking in tongues and spirit possessions. There were also shows about Tarot reading. Above I also noted the belief in demon possession and exorcism. These elements are incorporated into Christianity, but have disappeared from the Protestantism that we know from North Europe.

Superstitions often create responsive actions when certain things occur. For instance, when one tips over a cup of salt, one has to throw salt over one's shoulder to prevent bad luck from happening. When stating something that has not yet happened that one does not want to happen, some knocks their hand down on wood so to not put bad fortune over the good fortune that already exists. Since the *praga de mãe* is a sort of curse that suggests a responsive action, I tried to find out if the people I knew were susceptible to a certain logic that one finds in other superstitions.

I thus decided to test out some stereotype superstitions that can be found in children's comic books, in particular in Disney's Donald Duck magazines. When Eloisa's older sister and her husband drove me home from a restaurant one night, a black cat suddenly jumped into the street and crossed in front of the car. I pointed it out and said *mal sorte*, bad luck. They just laughed, as if what I said had no meaning to them. Later, when Eloisa and I went to

another restaurant for lunch, we crossed a corner where a ladder was put up to the wall. A man stood on top cleaning the windows above. Eloisa crossed under the ladder as if it had not been there, while I walked around. I asked her if she did not see the ladder. She said that she noticed. I asked why she went under it. She answered that it was the shortest way. These superstitions might be very culturally laden, and can have broader importance in other countries than in Brazil. I could have tested many more, spilling salt or breaking mirrors, but that would only lead me to a matrix with a confirmed/unconfirmed pattern, which would not be of much significance to my research.

I did, however, come across a certain superstitious way of thinking one day when I walked on cracked concrete on the sidewalk close to a sewage drain. Eloisa pulled me away and told me not to walk on it. She said that there is a Brazilian saying about how water can destroy hard concrete, meaning that what looks broken will once come apart. Every time during heavy rain falls, pictures and stories about mudslides and collapsed roads would hit the news, showing that there are dangers to walk on broken concrete. In addition, Eloisa believed that politicians skimmed money off road building projects, and used worse quality materials than what was budgeted. She pointed that out many times when we hit the many thousands of road holes in the streets of Fortaleza. However, getting from certain stories in the news to a rule of never walking on broken concrete can be another example of *illusory causality* (Johansen 2008:186).

Illusory causality, Johansen explains, is a causality type that is imagined by a subject, hence illusory, but which has anything but illusory effects. Within magic and witchcraft, for instance, the belief in the causal relation between the magic and its effects can create effects that are not imagined. Like for instance in Evans-Pritchard's (1979) case where there had to be a relation between something bad that happened and a curse that had been cast by a witch. The causal relation depends on the imagination of the subject or society, but reactions to the effects of the imagined causal relations are not as imagined as the relation itself is. Hence, the link between cause and effect can become contextual, relative and subjectively experienced.

Some people might be of the more superstitious kind than Eloisa. Thiago, an economy student, used to tell us about our horoscopes. He also practiced Tarot card reading. Larissa, one of Eloisa's best friends, a nutritionist student, begged us to stop talking about spirits on one of our many car rides. She said that speaking about spirits might provoke them and bad fortunes could fall to us.

Other than that, I noticed religious faith more prominent in the subjects that people

89

talked about rather than superstitions. However, asking questions about the *praga* always had people confirming what the *praga* is and how it works. This means that in one way or another, there must be a certain belief in the curses, a magical way of thinking that is linked to the logic of superstitions, which creates rules of acting.

Summary

The architectural structure of the house implies a separation between family members, but the use of the rooms inverts this model. The rooms that would usually be regarded as social rooms, that is the living room and dining room, were rarely in use. Instead, bedrooms were used almost constantly when people were home and they were not limited for use by the person who owns the room. The flow of people in and out of bedrooms removed all forms of privacy. The possibility of getting privacy within the domestic sphere is almost non-existent, and as such illustrates that there is a concept of the family unit as completely transparent. I think the logic behind such a model is that the unit becomes tighter, like a Gemeinschaft, but as data shows these tight relations also create tensions. This is probably why certain mechanisms exist, like the one that alternates between disrespect and provision. The implied double bind that comes to forth is a mechanism that works to sustain the vertical relations between parents and children, and to sustain relational links between family members.

Core family values seem to be important for the ideal of the family unit to subsist. Some of them come naturally through religious thinking. Eloisa's mother seemed to be the moral guardian for this perspective. As shown, Eloisa questions and opposes certain of these values and principles and this leads to conflicts. We will look further into the *praga de mãe* in chapter eight and how this mechanism takes on a form similar to the disrespect and provision model in this chapter.

Rua - The public Sphere

Chapter 6. On the road and in institutions

In this chapter, we take the first look on the public life of Eloisa and her friends. The quotidian practices in the public sphere usually relates to driving and being at the university. Some additional stress factors and annoyances, which contributes to the *vontade* and going out to party to vent out, will be explained in the following pages.

On the Road Again

Whenever Brazilians of the middle class are going somewhere, they usually take their cars and much time is spent in traffic between places that they frequent[43]. When I was not at other people's homes or at the university, I usually found myself in a car and I learned how important timing for going somewhere is.

Eloisa told me that oversleeping half an hour in the morning could increase the time in traffic by about an hour when going to the university. If she left at the best time possible, she would use less than half an hour. Then, in the afternoon, heading out on the streets at between four and six could get us stuck for hours when only going for short distances.

Apart from being a test of patience, driving is also a dangerous activity. Impatient people seems to make erratic decisions while motorcyclists and other two-wheelers takes shortcuts between the cars. Getting out on certain streets is a fight since few will let anyone through. Many times, I saw trucks and buses having crashed with smaller cars while trying to make a turn onto a road, ignoring the driver in the inner lane of the turn. On red lights, I also witnessed people driving in wrong lanes to pass a line of cars when there were no cars coming towards them. It seemed like people's egos emerged in traffic and that *impulse control* was rather limited when driving.

Honking is a signal used for most things. When closing in on a crossroad, the driver honks so that any passing cars will be aware that one is coming. They also use the horn for other drivers who make bad decisions – at least decisions experienced as bad from a subjective point of view. I heard honking whenever someone stopped on a green light, whenever someone tried to back out from a parking spot in the street, whenever there was a line that had not moved for three minutes, and whenever a driver impatiently drove past

---

[43] Restaurants, bars, hospitals, universities and other public services.

another car. In short, honking seemed to be both a signal and an outlet for frustration.

One time when we witnessed a car driving close to the back of an ambulance, using the ambulance as a sort of shield, opening the road like Moses must have opened the Black Sea, I heard Eloisa say, "I hate that", referring to what she later told me was an act of *experto*. I never heard this term before or after, but she explained to me that *experto* is an act by someone that uses the system for his or her own benefits. It is kind of like the *jeitinho* of the traffic in the streets. She said that such acts are the worst because they signal that a person has no respect to a system and to any other person in the society. She continued to state that many people look up to a person who behaves in such a way and thus makes it hard to abolish the phenomenon.

Traffic police seem to be regarded as a risky element in the traffic picture. I was told that the traffic police are paid bonuses if they make certain budgets for ticket collection. Their activities would therefore rely heavily on seasonal times. Close to new budgets, their activity would increase. Most times that I saw them, they were helping out with traffic accidents. However, on one occasion we overheard a traffic police officer reprimand an older man in a car about how he had parked on the sidewalk. The police officer said that the driver should consider all the other people who got in trouble because of his parking. The officer said that the traffic police rely on the population of the city to follow the rules. Hence, he confirmed Eloisa's sentiment about societal loyalty. From my witnessing, this was not a sentiment shared by many of the drivers in the city. Actually, most of the public life seemed to revolve around each individual for him- and herself.

Another danger about driving, or rather a danger about standing still in traffic, is *arrastãos*. *Arrastão* means to drag or to pull. In Brazilian Portuguese, the term is usually referring to something similar to the fisher term trawling. *Arrastãos* begin when a group of people choose to steal and rob people as a group, creating a sudden chaos, but effectively taking everything in sight in the chaos that follows. When I was introduced to the term, *arrastãos* had recently followed a police strike the year before I arrived to Fortaleza. A year and a half later, I could register at least four *arrastãos* that had occurred in streets I had been in, or in areas where it could have been likely for me to be. For instance, in the summer of 2014, a *arrastão* occurred at the Italian embassy when armed people stole everything from phones and jewelries to cars. Because they usually happened during rush hour, it was hard for police to get to the area of the robberies. People shared warnings and information on Facebook to let other people know not to go to these areas. In this way, being connected was

94

of importance. It also shows another dangerous element in the everyday life. The dangers in traffic might have been part of how reluctant Eloisa sometimes was of driving her little sister to places on her parents' behalf.

At the University

Even though much time is spent in traffic, a lot of time in the public is also spent in institutions. DaMatta (1997a, 1997b) emphasizes the economic domain of the *rua* where work is prominent. W*ork* is a rather general term that includes many different **types** of work. In Fortaleza, the service industry is the largest type of work; hence, much activity in the public sphere is related to using services. This includes public services like health care facilities and educational services. As undergraduate psychology students, Eloisa and her friends spent much time at the university and in psychiatric clinics, volunteering in projects for extra credits. These projects are important for contact with the professors, getting practice, and having skills noted on resumes. The projects are also one of the few ways that one can earn a scholarship – a much sought after financial aid, although not of a very high amount per month.

During my fieldwork, Eloisa became part of a suicide prevention program and within a year had advanced to becoming the president, working closely with the responsible psychiatrist and with policy projects towards politicians. She got herself a scholarship that paid 400 *reais* (US$186[44]) a month, and spent many hours preparing material for conferences, for informative activities in the public, for courses and for the therapy practice at the university hospital.

The university requires a 75 % presence for all students in each subject per term, which put pressure on how devoted one can be to the extra volunteer projects. Other in-course projects also take time, for instance doing supervised therapy at the university's psychology laboratory. In several of these projects, students have to cooperate and write reports. Sometimes, different perspectives on the disciplinary directions and the aim towards results led to conflicts.

Conflicts also arose from the authoritarian stand of the professors. When noting

---

[44] Currency rates are gathered from Oanda (2014) who provides historical exchange rates with average rates for a 1-year time span. The average value has been taken from a period between 1st of January 2013 and 1st of January 2014 to get the average rate in 2013. This average is at 0,4643 for US$.

absences, some professors would be stricter than others would. Some seemed to be negligent. Sometimes, students had to argue with professors to get the possibility of doing an extra test to prove that one deserved grading in a particular class. The hierarchy of the classroom also differed from class to class, and professor to professor. Some professors claimed their authority as a closing statement in certain discussions, although most preferred broad participation in classroom debates.

Although participation should equal out some of the differences in status between professor and student, it did not seem to be so. One way that the professor's authority maintains itself is how the professor is addressed in any given conversation as *professor*[45] or *professora*[46]. This is customary in the universities. In this way, authority is established through language and dialogue, and the *professor* or *professora* can easily trump any disagreement with the status of authority. From what I heard, this was a bigger difficulty in the staff's offices where discord about everything from structured days to more administrative questions always triggered debate and rivalries between staff members. Sometimes, the word would get out to students who many times seemed to choose their favorite professors in the ongoing institutional debates.

Conflicts also arose between the students and the university administration. The distanced difference between these two fractions can be seen in how they are spatially and architecturally divided. The federal university is located in the *bairro Benfica*[47], and is organized in different campuses with the administration and headmastership located in the oldest building, stemming from colonial times. The building is painted in pink and white, and looks like the campus building with the least wear. This is probably due to prioritized restoration. To enter the building, one has to wear shoes and jeans or pants, which is accustomed when using any public service[48]. There are, however, no dress codes in the other buildings where students attend lectures.

The administration building has a big open park space with lots of parking spots for the employees behind it. Adjacent to the parking lies an amphitheater for special events. On the other campuses, there are less "green zones" and fewer parking spots. The campus next to

---

[45] Male professor.

[46] Female professor.

[47] One of the most dangerous neighborhoods of the city. See chapter four.

[48] Despite the average 28 degree temperature.

the main building has a square where students can sit, but on constructed concrete benches rather than grass. Students have to apply for parking spots, but it is up to each administration on each campus to decide how to divide the parking spots available. Most of them charge students for parking and restrict access to the students of the faculties on each respectable campus.

At the campus for psychology, however, the administration has decided that parking spots will be for employees only. Since the other campuses reserve parking for their faculties' students exclusively, psychology students do not have options of parking safely within the campus gates. For Eloisa and her friends who are dependent on using a car, this system presents itself as highly unfair since they are all, fundamentally, part of the university's student body. It also seems unfair to them that the level of security for employees is regarded more important to the administration than the security of the university's students. Hence, the hierarchical stratification is also given in terms of levels of security for each level in the university hierarchy.

Safety in and Around the University Area

Since the university is federal, only the federal police has authority to apprehend criminals within the properties of the university. The federal police has a very limited force in Fortaleza, and their police station is far away from the campus areas. They rarely patrol the streets, and do not have the resources to post police officers at the university's entrance gates. Hence, the university has hired a private security firm to keep order. They have one main duty: to check all cars going in and out of the campuses. The cars that get to park have a sticker attached to the windshield, and there are no other requirements of identification. Some entrances do not even have gates.

Since the federal police rarely enter the university campus areas, some students take the liberty of openly smoking marijuana, *maconha*, inside the premises of the university. Marijuana is illegal in Brazil, but since the chance of getting caught is slim, individuals take the risk of smoking joints in between classes. Smoking marijuana openly is not a big threat to order, other things that happened at campuses were worse, but it illustrates two similar points: a) the sentiment that if there is no authority who says no to a certain activity, then some will engage in that illegal activity in the open (as we saw in traffic), and b) that the *vontade* trumps the *impulse control* if authority to put it in question is absent.

I heard of several cases where students had been robbed within and right outside of the

university campuses[49]. This also held true for private universities that have more focus on campus security than the public universities. In the fall of 2013, a student was stabbed at UNIFOR, the biggest and most famous private university in Fortaleza. Another had been kidnapped and held for ransom for a couple of days. Stabbings had also occurred at the federal university. Nevertheless, nothing felt so close to me than the experiences of Eloisa's friend Nora.

After Nora was robbed, Eloisa went to talk to a security guard at the university some days later. He could explain that, "There is nothing that we can do about the situation". The security guards report everything to the police, but the police do not respond most times. O Povo (2014d) uncovered the year after that Ronda, the police force that should react to crime instantly, only answered 33% of all calls. Although the security guards can see crime happening from their booths, they cannot interfere with the situation because of danger to own health and because it is outside of their jurisdiction.

Summary

So far, we can see that these young adults are squeezed in between authority figures in their homes and authority figures in their institution. Many times I was given the impression that they have too many responsibilities to a plurality of people, who all demand time and devotion, and have strict guidelines to how they are to conduct and perform. This led to Eloisa one day saying that: "The only way we can learn responsibility is to be **given** the freedom to do so."

The continual demands for time and energy from these young women, who mainly want to liberate themselves in any way possible, collide, as they are conflicts of interest. They acknowledge that time in the university is necessary for the independence they seek, but they feel very dependent on keeping in with their professors and obeying to the rules of the institutions. This is somewhat the same within the domestic sphere, although it is probably a bit weaker within the public.

A peculiar trait to the Brazilian school system is that students are given more freedom at lower levels. At the university, however, the demand for attention, presence and fulfilling duties are much higher than at the lower levels of the educational system. My friends would

---

[49] Take Nora's story, for instance, in chapter four.

sometimes compare their situation with other countries where freedom goes hand in hand with responsibility for one's own situation. This is why Eloisa uttered the symptomatic statement above, which always resonated in between the borders of the domestic and the public spheres.

The short outline of experiences in traffic and in universities show how dangers and risks introduce themselves at the moment that people leave their houses. Wherever there is a possibility of gaining something, someone will be there to benefit from it. The biggest threat to being in traffic is traffic itself. When it becomes to grand, robberies can begin on every crossroad and light signal. The biggest threat to the federal university is that it is federal, and that federal police do not have the resources to ensure safety within its properties.

Whenever the tensions that is attributed to the life at home and in the public reached a limit, my young informants took to the night life, venting the steam and drowning the stress away to rhythmic Brazilian songs, dancing and drinking cheap lime-and-sugarcane-liquor-containing drinks.

Chapter 7. Festas – the antonym to the everyday life

This chapter goes into the party, the *festa*. It is divided into the stereotypical *festa*, which is the carnival, and my suggestion of relating theories from carnival and play to *festas* in general. With the latter, I will try to make sense of how the *festa* is related to different risks and difficult conflicts in the Fortalezan society.

Carnival – the Prototypical Festa

In literature about Brazilian society, the most covered form for *festa* is the carnival (Bakhtin 1984, DaMatta 1984, 1997a, 2004, Stallybrass & White 1986). I experienced carnival two years in a row, but with different people in different places. The first time, I spent it with other backpackers from the guesthouse I stayed at since I had just arrived to Fortaleza at that time. The second time, I spent carnival with about fifteen other Brazilian young adults in a small house in a poorer area in a mountain village. The experiences were radically different.

If I had spent carnival with the same group of people right after I arrived to Brazil, I would not have experienced carnival in Fortaleza. This is because the youth and young adults, especially of the middle class and higher, leave the city when carnival comes.

The carnival celebration in Fortaleza is a very young festive tradition – barely five years old – and so the youth are used to going to nearby beaches to celebrate. In addition, this leaves the city free for the poorer communities who cannot afford to travel. Thus middle class people regarded carnival season as a highly unsafe time in Fortaleza. The link between poor people and criminals accentuated itself in warnings and statements about carnival.

Experiencing Carnival

Ignoring all warnings, we would walk as a group of at least five people down to the public cultural center where the carnival walk would start at noon. It began with a neighborhood drum band playing beats, while eventually, a singer, standing on the flattop of a car in front, started singing to the beat through a portable loudspeaker set behind him on the flattop. The crowd moved along on the sides of the drum band, and danced to the rhythms while wearing headgear and other giveaways from companies that sponsored the carnival.

At night, we went down to the beach where the municipality had put up a stage. Bands

had been hired to entertain people, and tens of thousands showed up during the night. Before and between the entertainments, a master of the ceremony talked to the crowd about the sponsors of the event, and made sure that people knew that the municipality was the arranger of the carnival. Big banners also stated the same thing, as well with balloons with logos of the commercial interests in the event. There was nothing about the carnival that gave away any hierarchical inversion, according to what Bakhtin (1984) and DaMatta (1983, 1997a) suggest. On the contrary, it seemed to support Linger's (1992:91-95) observation that certain hierarchies, roles and statuses are maintained and at all times create a possible tension in the playfulness of the carnival, which can eventually lead to conflict.

Bakhtin (1984) argues that carnival, through the inversion of the hierarchy, is a cleansing time, when the morals and habits of the common people is worshipped and sexual imagery and connotations are valued for the cause of societal regeneration. "Anything goes!" as Linger (1992:74) puts it[50]. Bakhtin suggests that carnival has a duality by coming from below, and also being accepted by the political elite from above. This has led to the analysis of the carnival as a way to let off steam (Linger 1992:77), as carnival becomes a break from the usual order of things – an escape from the everyday *luta*, the struggle.

DaMatta (1982/1983) has pointed out that this theory, in its generality, lacks the local variants of the carnival celebrations, for instance how it does not fit the pattern of the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. He states that it is obvious that Bakhtin's analysis fits better with the Brazilian carnival. DaMatta relates this "Brazilian carnival" directly to the one in Rio de Janeiro.

In New Orleans, DaMatta (1982/1983) says, rather than becoming egalitarian, the carnival separates and underscores the social distances between classes, emphasizing that Bakhtin's analysis is too simple[51]. However, DaMatta does not reflect upon the actual distance within Brazilian society itself where "everyone" leaves some cities during carnival for other carnivals in other cities and places (Scheper-Hughes 1993:486). In this case, "everyone" is the middle and upper class. In fact, those socializing during carnival, particularly in Fortaleza, are

---

[50] Linger (1992) specifically states that "Anything goes!" does not denote freedom to do whatever, and that there are many forces that regulates acts within carnival. He states that the term itself is consciously false to create a feeling that anything is legal and unregulated, although it is not.

[51] Oddly enough since Bakhtin (1984) states in the introduction to Rabelais and his world that Mardi Gras is different than the standard carnival.

those left behind: residents of favelas and poor *barrios* who are subjected to the constant reminder that they are allowed the party in the name of the municipality.

When I asked or talked about carnival, my friends always pointed out that since I had not partaken in carnival other places than in *Ceará*, the state that Fortaleza is the state capital of, I could not speak broadly about carnival as one certain experience. They said that the carnivals have different local expressions. The one in Rio de Janeiro is what most regard as the "true" carnival. The Rio de Janeiro carnival is a *festa* from bottom down, that inverts the quotidian hierarchy and celebrates from below, not unlike Bakhtin's argument (DaMatta 1982/1983, 1984, 1997a, 2004, Bakhtin 1984). The carnivals in Bahia, the northeastern state with a majority of descendants from former slaves in the northeast sugar plantations (Scheper-Hughes 1993:192), are more traditional and incorporate African folklore, religion and history. When Linger (1992) speaks of carnival, he is very specific about the São Luisense52 carnival, implying that there is no specific Carnival, but many carnivals.

Carnival theories raise themselves above regional differences to make it possible to make comparisons. The carnival becomes the specific *festa*, although *festas* happens on a reoccurring, weekly basis with many of the same traits as one finds within carnival. Theories that could have been made about the *festa* is thus usually essentialized to the carnival. However, in the Fortalezan case, the recreation in *festas* happens on a weekly rather than yearly basis, even though the *festas* during carnival intensifies a lot more than usual during carnival season. For instance, there are pre-carnival parties three weeks before carnival on Fridays and Saturdays. Then, when carnival arrives, there are five days of parties in the streets during the day. At night, people gather down at the beach for the entertainment supplied by the municipality. Moreover, after carnival has ended there are so-called hangover-carnival-parties for three weeks with street parties on both weekdays and weekends.

Play and Violence

Carnival can be described as either a kind of play between people (Linger 1992), or as a game (DaMatta 1982/1983, 1997a). However, "play" and "game" has different connotations. In Wittgenstein's language philosophy, a game can only be a game if the rules for the game are followed (1958:81). He states that a game of chess can only be a game of

---

[52] Carnival in São Luis.

chess as long as the playing out of pieces and moves are within the already set rules for mentioned game. Play, says Bateson (1972:179-180), has different levels of abstraction. On a meta-level, play needs to be interpreted as set of actions that two parts either agrees on or disagrees on, meaning in the first case that the play lasts as long as the interpretations are reciprocal, and in the other that the situation as "play" must be understood as something else if the two parts disagrees on the interpretation. When meta-play breaks down, the situation is reconfigured and the play can become a serious fight.

Linger (1992) uses the latter in his analysis of carnival and the concept of *briga*, a fight that often leads to a deadly outcome. He suggests that the play of carnival and the destruction of *briga* has to be seen in relation to each other. Many *brigas* happen during carnival because carnival has the motto "anything goes"(ibid.:74). The motto means that carnival conduct does not have to fit the everyday proper conduct, and implies that any action is chosen to satisfy the present desire of the involved.

The most interesting element of his analysis, which he owes Bateson, is the focus on improvisation and how the interaction between actors is fragile and dependent on their interpretations. He suggests that alcohol and personal matters can easily distort the interpretations and lead to fights and death. We, thus, see both the *vontade*, as a lack of *impulse control*, and the Dionysian traits in Brazilian culture. This proves another duality within the carnival. If one is to believe that carnival celebrates life and the reproduction of society. It also contains within it death and murder, the definite end of society, and the most anti-societal occurrence that can happen.

This is also true for *festas*. Many bar brawls, shootings and knife fights that lead to wounds and deaths are reported on in social media. However, the newspapers and news reports rarely commented on murders of this type unless it had happened to a foreigner. Becoming a victim to dangerous circumstances is a risk that people seemed to be aware of when going out to *festas*. It also seemed to have normalized within the media.

Festas

Going out to *festas* is the main recreational activity among the youth of Fortaleza. Invites to parties would tick in on Facebook every day, and my calendar would fill up with activities to choose from when the week ended. Eloisa and her friends usually had classes on Friday and Monday mornings, so we mostly went out on Friday and Saturday night.

The first year I stayed in Fortaleza, we would usually go out twice a week, but during

104

the last six months of my stay, the average went down to once a week. It seemed like this was due to how these students were closing in to a finish of their studies, which resulted in more work with internships, voluntary work, and studies. This should lead to the presumption that the partying would increase, but I suppose that there is a balance between studies, work and leisure time that shifts focus in periods.

Nevertheless, almost every week I found myself awkwardly dancing to unfamiliar rhythms, trying to make out loud conversations over louder music, and cheering *saude*[53] with cheap *caipirinhas*[54] in hand. The dancing out on the dance floors seemed synchronized when certain songs were played and drunk and happy young Brazilians danced together, mixing movements and creating new ones. The dance in the *festa* is a central activity. It seemed like the main reason to why the young women went out. The dance on the dance floor lets them be creative. When dancing together, they improvise. I had no possibility to follow the dance movements of other people, but the activity seemed to express joy over standing on the same floor as other people and just lose the body to the rhythms. In this way, the dance became impartial and unprejudiced, and the body accounted for the words that were not there but still expressed.

Holidays and Barflies

It felt like every week had a catholic holiday. Although there were holidays and weekends each week, a night out could be kicked off on ordinary days when the last lecture ended, or when the young students felt themselves in necessity of a break, a clearing up of the mind, or just to have beers with the professors.

Bars lie all around the university area of the federal university, and in between there are the occasional *love motel* for those who want to let off sexual tension. At the bars, beer bottles are sold in *litrãos*[55]. Students buy a bottle and get glasses according to the number of people around the table. Then they continue to refill the plastic container that keeps the beer cold. Sometimes, these lunch time, mid-day or afternoon sessions turns into night sessions, and students and professors participate alike.

We spent some afternoons at some of these bars, but most of the time we went out to

---

[53] To your health.

[54] A blend of sugarcane liquor, grounded sugar and lime.

[55] Big liters.

the area around the public cultural center, *Dragão do Mar*. *Dragão do Mar* contains popular clubs and restaurants where many middle class citizens who can afford to pay cover charge, and rather steep prices for beer and food regularly visit. Some of the bars have live music, and some have specialized in more traditional music styles.

Dragão do Mar was initially built as a public cultural center for use by the whole city population, but its expression is of a sort that appeals to a middle class audience. Parking prices also illustrate how most people staying at *Dragão do Mar* are of the more fortunate. This is not because the municipality has decided to make it expensive to park, but because private security has taken "possession" of the public roads and are claiming money for watching the parked cars while the car owners are using the facilities of the center. Since the parking prices are set by these security people, prices are adjusted to how much people are willing to pay. The tall prices, thus, mirrored the clientele.

Recently, the security around *Dragão do Mar* had formalized and professionalized their businesses. Now they hand out receipts and take pay in advance. Some demand up to 20 *reais* (US$9) for watching a parked car and to prevent it from getting robbed. Eloisa looked upon the security people as occupiers of public land, "The municipality owns these streets. We pay taxes for them. And now we should pay more just because someone says so?". She also expressed doubts about many of the security people, and told about how some of them would scratch the paint off the car or sometimes break into them themselves if the driver did not pay them. However, apart from taking a taxi, which sometimes excludes itself as an option, the alternative to driving to the center is to take one of the public buses that pass by. The issues surrounding security on the bus and the danger of standing at a bus stop at night usually eliminates that option for those who go there. This also suggests that there is a certain amount of drunk driving in Fortaleza. This is probably true. I encountered drunk driving situations five to six times during my stay, even though it seemed to me that I was together with a group of friends who were rather controlling of the impulse to drive in an intoxicated state.

Dangerous Festas

The blocks around *Dragão do Mar* offer both nice places to spend the evening at and a window for people to be seen at bars and restaurants that are significant for showing status. The money flow of the area has most likely been the primary reason to why there are so many in the street economy around the restaurants. There are street bars, food booths and vendors in

the square in front of the restaurants and bars. There is also the occasional prostitute around. I experienced several dangerous situations in the area surrounding *Dragão do Mar*, which correlate with the warnings I got about the area being unsafe. The owners of the *pousada* that I initially stayed at told me that there was a *crack den*[56] close by, and that many beggars hung around the area.

About a month after I had arrived to Brazil, I found myself together with my first translator and a German student at one of the tables at a roadside food stall down at *Dragão do Mar* when a man showed up with a pregnant woman. He was thin and walked around in a dirty t-shirt and a Bermuda short. His eyes had this sting to it as he left from table to table to ask for some coins because the woman was hungry. People denied him change at each table around the food stall and he eventually passed around it. He then started again at the first tables he had begged at before. This time, however, he was more aggressive. When he did not receive coins at our table, he went to the second one where three men in their thirties were sitting. First, they would not give him any change. He then started talking rapidly and loudly. Finally, he pulled up his t-shirt and slapped his thin stomach to show that he was hungry. While he did this, he also flashed a big knife, with a huge blade stuck down into the lining of his shorts. From the reaction of those around the table, it was hard to see if they noticed the knife, but they gave him some coins and he walked away. No one around my table noticed and the event passed by in silence.

At another occasion, we met a friend right after a concert at the cultural center. He had just run away from an assailant who wanted his money. Luckily, harm did not come to him that night, although he was robbed just some months later around the same area.

The prices and the establishments around with dress codes and a certain in-crowd, show that the public cultural center is not so public after all. This is especially visible when it comes to the distinction between those who sit outside at the tables with drinks and food ten meters away from beggars and street vendors who look in towards them. The distinction accentuates itself by consumption possibilities rather than preferences. Those on the inside of the restaurants, nightclubs and bars mingle with their own social group. However, the growth of the street economy with food stalls, street vendors and roadside bars implies that the middle class social group also want the possibility to choose cheaper drinks and food if they want to.

---

[56] An apartment where crack is made and sold.

The public cultural center, thus, visualized a social hierarchy through the attending crowds, prices, alternative services and the beggars and criminals. This hierarchy of mixed, but differentiated social strata was present at most of the places that we frequented. It is a paradox that if the young adults I met seek towards an egalitarian option, distanced from the hierarchy found in the home and in the public, the hierarchy just reinserts itself within the public sphere where the *festas* are, but in terms of group rather than person. Hence, the hierarchies are neither left nor inverted, but give themselves in another way. In this picture, the middle class social group take an upper position and look down, contrary to how many of them as persons look upwards in the domestic sphere and in the work and service related parts of the public sphere.

Summary

The *festa* is the antonym to the everyday life. Intoxicated on the vibe of the crowd, the music, the alcohol, the heat, dancing and movements, the senses taking in the sensual experiences of youth and youthful desires, the *festa* offers an area of complete freedom.

These *festas* also offer possibilities to engage in creative and improvisational activities. Linger (1992) notes that the fragile state of the carnival is due to the reading of the situation. When "anything goes," misinterpretation can easily arise and lead to violent situations. The "anything goes" is a sentiment that comes out from the acting on desire, and it needs to be answered by the same sentiment. To engage in such a communication, in either conversation or body language[57], is an improvisational activity. The response needs to be interpreted, understood, and responded on, in the same terms, and hopefully in a way that the recipient understands equally. Creativity, the way to interpret and reconfigure, the way to play, is very important to the *festa*. It is probably this aspect that is the most important about letting off steam at night. The feeling of improvising distances the individual from the duties of the family and the authorities in institutions.

---

[57] Mainly by looks and dancing.

Chapter 8. Praga de mãe

Some cultural traits can be hard to come across. Not because they are hidden or rarely present, but because they are taken as a given by the people in the field – as an unimportant addition to the actions of everyday life. On a December day when Eloisa was driving in the downtown area of Fortaleza, she started to talk about the demonstrations during the Confederation Cup that had happened six months earlier. She mentioned a friend whose mother had warned her about going out on the day of the demonstrations. "*Praga de mãe*," Eloisa told me. "You have heard of it, right?" she asked. I had not.

The curse of the Mother

She explained that in the northeast of Brazil, *praga de mãe* is something everyone knows about. However, people would rarely use it in everyday speech except if one told a story where something bad had happened according to a premonition of a mother. "*Praga de mãe*", people would reply to underscore the power of the prediction, adding mystique to the story. Eloisa told me that *this curse is a feeling a mother has about her loved ones*. This premonition is a feeling of something bad that might happen and predicts negative situations in the future for specific people.

When I write *a mother* instead of *the mother* above, it is because *praga de mãe* is not just a phenomenon that exist between a mother and her children. Any mother can be the mother with a premonition about something happening. The curse, thus, can be between a mother and any children. It can also be between a mother figure and someone that the mother figure sees as a child figure. Julia had stated to Eloisa and her friends that she had "many mothers". Apart from her birth mother and grandmother, she referred the mother figure to a teacher that had taken her under her wing and convinced her to pursue a university education in Fortaleza. However, as we saw in the case above from the mechanism of keeping the social hierarchy of the domestic sphere based on the balance between conditionally and unconditionally based family relations, the bond between the mother and her child is probably stronger than any other possible relations of the *praga*.

When I heard of the *praga*, many things fell in place about situations I thought were weird. In particular, I thought that it was strange that so many young adults had limits to when to stay out, put there by their parents even though they were long passed twenty years old.

One afternoon when Eloisa's mother called her to tell her not to go out partying that night, Eloisa said that her mother sounded hysterical. Her mother had received a call from one of the household's employees who had had a dream where Eloisa went to a party with a group of unknown men. In the dream, Eloisa had been raped. When the employee woke up, she immediately called the *senhõra* of the *casa*. Eloisa's mother then called Eloisa on the phone, upon which she had to spend several minutes trying to calm her mother down and promise that she would not go out that night.

I thought that maybe the *praga de mãe* was a mechanism to keep young women in the home and condition them to traditional gender roles. It seemed very often that Eloisa's mother used her own experiences to limit her children's movements and choices of action. Eloisa often returned to this, complaining that her mother had grown up under very different circumstances, having less education than her, and becoming pregnant at a very young age. Her mother had also been thrown out by her father following the pregnancy, and had to stay and work for her husband's parents. This might have related to the biggest difference between them in how Eloisa wished to become independent where her mother had willingly gone into dependency. Of course, being a pregnant teenager without education in a post-democratic nation where job opportunities are slim, dependency becomes a safety and, most likely, a value that one later will cherish.

When I returned to this story on one of our car rides, I was told that the *praga de mãe* was more socially founded than only between a mother and her daughter or son:

> **Me**: "Do you remember when your mother called you and told you that you shouldn't go out because Dêde's (the above mentioned employee's son) mother had had a dream that something terrible would happen, and that you would go to a party and get raped by multiple men? And your mother then called you, like she chose to use another's dream to tell you not to go, like her feeling was conditioned by Dêde's mother."
>
> **Eloisa**: "No, it's not like that. Any mother has the ability to have premonitions of what is going to happen."
>
> **Me**: "So, you're saying that being a mother grants you these powers regardless to whom the visions and dreams are of?"
>
> **Eloisa**: "Yes, it is that which is the feeling of the mother."

Eloisa's explanation shows that this links mother figures to the son and daughter rather than one specific mother. She explains that the curse is based on a "feeling of the mother". This feeling is directed towards future situations and situates itself in the public sphere. The dream of the employee also shows that this feeling is linked to dangerous situations that are

possible events within the framework of crime and violence in Fortaleza. In many ways, the *praga* seemed to be a sort of regulative that people interpreted as something different.

Magical Thinking and Modern Societies

Subbotsky (2010) has done research into magical thinking and found out that children and adults alike can show magical beliefs through their actions if the action leads to a benefit or if it explains things that they cannot themselves explain. The incongruence between a pattern of knowledge and understanding, and a test designed to produce deviations from this pattern, results in certain behavior that can multiply if positive input is given. For instance, two conflicting modes of stimuli and response can be bridged by actions that seem to base itself on a different kind of logic. Hence, the individual interpretation of the situation can be justified by the empirical experience of the positive input although this diverges from how the individual would have explained the mechanism objectively. Subbotsky (ibid.:17) states that even in societies where science is the most dominating source for knowledge, magic can have an important position in our ways of thinking.

Although I dwelled on the phenomenon and talked to people about it, some people trivialized the importance of the *praga*. For some it seemed like the phenomenon was nothing more than a description of overly caring mothers. For others it seemed to be annoying and controlling. For others, again, it seemed to be a kind of real magic. In a status post on Facebook, one of Eloisa's friends put science into question due to her perception of the unquestionable reality of the *praga*:

> "When a mother call you up just to say "don't leave the house!" it's better to obey. If you decide to go out anyways, it's a huge probability that lightning hits your head, the bus gets a flat tire, you get robbed, twist the foot, fall into a manhole, lose your documents or come across any similar catastrophe. A mother has a feeling that science can't explain."

One of this girl's followers commented:

> "Like I always say: I would like to know what develops in these women during the nine months of pregnancy that gives them this uncanny ability of ALWAYS BEING RIGHT. ALWAYS. Must be something in the placenta, I don't know."

A mother's intuition, the somewhat magical phenomenon, cannot, but is tried, to be explained in biological terms. At the same time, it is something mystical. These women fall short in the ability to explain the *praga de mãe*, so they blend the boundaries between reason

and magic. The Facebook status support the proposal that the relation between a mother and a child is more than biological and more than just a social power relation of hierarchical structure. It puts the mother and the child in a metaphysical relationship, which, according to the person above, is inexplicable for science.

It was odd, though; that the group of friends that I mostly hung around with, were dismissive of religion, but still put some sort of credibility into the *praga*. When being questioned about *praga de mãe*, they put credence in the phenomenon by saying that they many times, although not always, would follow the mother's wishes to stay at home when they are warned. Despite the fact that they stated that they might feel like they should please the mother, we cannot exclude the possibility that the belief in this mechanism is slightly within a magical domain.

The age that these young students are living in, and the age they have grown up in, is one of transition between an old, traditional world on the one hand, and a world that makes grander promises of liberalism within globalization on the other. The traditional world, in Brazil, is a religious one with its basis in Catholic Christianity. The modern Brazil offers science and progress. The *praga* is something in between that does not directly threat either, although it does have a certain pull towards the traditions of the "old" Brazil. The progressive modern Brazil, which conveniently equals itself in the risky and dangerous spaces of the *rua*, can be a potential threat to the *casa*. However, more than posing as a power struggle between spheres of tradition and modernization, the *praga* illustrates a generational cliff created by the modernization and the democratization of Brazil.

The *praga*, thus, is not just a control mechanism to control children to keep them from harm, but also a control to keep them from the public, which can be seen as polluting and dangerous for the ideas and traditions of the household and the parents' roles. Hence, it means that it is not just an attempt to remove them from a certain part of the reality of big city life and the reality of the social life of young adults and young females, but that it is a mechanism to capture them into one specific reality – the reality of tradition and the hierarchy of the household.

I only heard the *praga* being used when there was a question about going out in public. I never heard it being used about something done within the fences of the home. The domestic sphere did not seem to have the issue where the *praga* could be a usable mechanism. This might be because there already is a mechanism within the domestic sphere that plays on the relations within the household. The *praga's* function is instead directed outwards into

another sphere of everyday activities.

I once heard this somewhat puzzling explanation,

"If your mother says that you shouldn't do something, and you do it anyways, and then something bad happens to you like if your mother knew that it would happen from before, then you'd be asking yourself how she could know, but she would".

The explanation tries to tell that the *praga* has a psychological element that puts doubt in one's own skills over choices of action, while reinserting the mother as an authority over the child's role.

This coincides with what Eloisa told me in the car one day. She thought that the *praga* was conditioned in children from early age. At early stages of infancy, the parents are sources of trust and their guidance matters to what one does and does not do. The mothers, especially, are present at all times around the house, and children spend their days around the household where their mother and female employees care for them and teach them the language and the world of concepts that words belong to.

Later, exploration is necessary although the mothers can give warnings about what might happen. Eloisa said that the mothers of the *casa* would make prohibitions on certain actions due to the certainty in how some things were bound to go wrong. The child's possibility of trial and error would be restricted, and as such give the curse more power in those instances when the premonitions in the child's life would become true. It would become a lesson to be learned and the mother would gain a power over the child's will both in the present and in the future, as child, adolescent and adult. Considering her will towards freedom and independency, it is not strange, then, that Eloisa told me that the worst thing anyone could tell her was, "I told you so".

The *praga* looks like a powerful mechanism to keep young adults from acting out and to prevent them from risking their lives and health. It plays on the ethos of *impulse control*. In addition, it keeps them from risking the stability of the intimate family. It is also a mechanism to keep traditional values in the Brazilian society. Since the family unit is traditionally believed to be the strength of Brazilian society, any excessive contact with the outer world can be damaging for a certain traditional and intimate relational way of life. The *praga* underscores the importance of *impulse control* and the value of the intimate family, while also offering a sort of motherly concern and love, which goes somewhat against the other mechanism where concern and love becomes conditional.

113

The Guilt of the Praga

As noted in chapter five, the changes within Eloisa's family regarding church participation among the children, and their global cultural consumption, challenge the traditional view of the family unit and might be the reason to why the *praga* can be such a powerful reactionary force. In addition to this, Eloisa's mother had a tendency to play on guilt, which also added to the force of the *praga* and to the anxiety of family dissolution. Sometimes, Eloisa's mother would make threats of expulsion from the family and the discontinuing of contact when Eloisa did not do as her mother wanted. These plays on guilt were not as much premonitions as they were last resort threats in an argument. Eloisa and her sisters were well known with the mother's history, about how she had been thrown out by her father when she got pregnant at the age of sixteen. Eloisa gave the impression that her threats were to be taken somewhat seriously, "It is the only reaction she knows", referring to how people recreate patterns of their own experiences. The threats, thus, resulted in guilt-ridden thoughts, which seemed to strengthen the power of the *praga*.

The *praga* seems to have a link to the past through experiences and to the present through choices of actions. It also has a direct impact on future occurrences and effects of the actions chosen, giving it a certain circular form in both strategies for action and psychological thought patterns, evoking emotions and memories. The *praga* gains strength from any of these elements when the elements are triggered, which they have to be if the *praga* is to be acted upon by the mother's children. After a party, which had not gone as Eloisa hoped it should have, she spent the next morning in sadness, asking if she should have stayed at home like her mother had wished. Her guilt seemed related to multiple similar situations in the past where she had felt guilt after going against her mother's *praga*. The response, thus, became an accumulation of feelings provoked by her mother's lack of confidence in her. In addition, on the opposite side of it, all the feelings provoked by her empathic understanding of how her mother must have felt when the trust in her was breached, were unleashed. The guilt went in hand with disappointment. It was at this time I understood the actual effects of the *praga*, and how it relates to the mother's point of view on what is proper conduct. It also visualized the conflict between the traditional points of view of the mother, and the choices of action by the daughter, which ground themselves in her wish for independency.

If the *praga* is supposed to maintain the family unit, to keep young women at home and to teach them traditional values, it means that it does so by trying to remove them from

114

the public. The removal from the public life actually challenges these young women's recreational tactics of going out to socialize either at parties, beaches or at restaurants. Since the home has few private spaces and moments, and offers a certain hierarchy where the young adult and adolescent is regarded more as a child than an adult, no matter the age, these young adults, Eloisa in particular, are caught in between the hierarchy of private institutions and the public institutions. Then, within the domestic sphere, another mechanism introduces itself that reinserts and strengthens the hierarchy, and serves as an addition to the *praga* in the way that traditional aspects of society can be maintained.

Viewed as such, the *festa* offers the idea of a non-hierarchical and improvisational space where people are themselves, and where they act on desires rather than on the demands of the institutions that they normally belong to.

The *festa* is not only, ideally, non-hierarchical in structure, but also offers the possibility of improvisation and the joy of acting out *sem limites*, without limits. *Sem limites* became a mantra for Eloisa and her group of friends during my second carnival. The mantra is a rewrite of "anything goes", and shows the tendency of these young people to move towards the openness and freedom of space, the free orientation of the individual in the *rua*. We can now also understand why it would be important to go out to a *festa* despite the dangers that rests within the urban centers of Fortaleza. In terms of statistics, it is probably a better chance to not suffer damage, emotional or physical, in the public sphere than long stays within the domestic sphere.

Praga de Mãe and Men

I cannot say if *praga de mãe* is as strong a force of control for males as it is for females. My main group of friends and informants are all young women, and I have had little contact with young men. On one occasion, however, I told a male friend who works as a journalist about *praga de mãe*. He looked at me with a look as if I knew something about his world, which he, himself, had no knowledge of. He asked me back, "*Praga de mãe*?" I tried to explain to him about a phenomenon I did not really know much about and had not been able to make full sense of, so when I finished he asked me "What is that? What do you mean?".

I gave him the example about Larissa instead of trying to explain, and then he said, just as Eloisa had told me that people would, "Aaaaaahhh. *Praga de mãe*!" I did not know if he got me correctly and I asked him if he could explain to me what the *praga* is in his own

115

words. He told me that for him it was if his mother told him that he should not bring his expensive phone to a place, and then he did anyways and it got stolen or lost. I remember that he had told me earlier that he had had his phone stolen on a bus used for transportation of spectators to *Estadio Castelão* during the Confederation Cup, so I assumed that he told a story that was more personal than he gave impression of. However, he downplayed the curse as something of a warning more than a premonition of something happening. To him, it seemed that the *praga* is a worry about material objects, the desire that other strangers might have for that object, or an emphasis from his mother about how careless he is with certain possessions of his.

The *praga* did not come off as something that constructed a bond between him and his mother. For the women I interviewed, the *praga* had more of a power aspect to it, to a sense of being controlled by significant women in their everyday lives. Considering this latter point, there might be a chance that men would downplay the importance of the *praga* as to not seem subjected by their mothers, which can pose a threat to their masculine identity.

Power and Control

The *praga* is a mechanism for control. It lets the mother control something that the mother feels that she has limited control over. It is a way to keep the daughters from pursuing other values, keep them from distancing themselves from the family unit, go to *festas*, be out in the dangerous public and posing a real danger to themselves and their family. All these choices of actions are threats to the family intimacy and long-term relations. The *praga* asserts control over the daughters who are pursuing autonomy, independence and freedom from traditional boundaries.

Returning to our second isomorph expression and adding the last segment of our third isomorph expression, then we see illuminated that the *praga de mãe* is a mediator within each pair,

(**II**) a) casa **:** rua **::** b) person **:** individual **::** c) saudade **:** vontade **::** d) restraint **:** freedom **::**
(**III**) e) tradition **:** progress

It stretches out from the *casa* to the *rua* by being delivered from the mother to the child when the child wants to leave home. It represents a past, a tradition, and as such a form for *saudade*, while it immediately tries to restrain the *vontade*, the will to go out, to feel free,

116

to progress. *Praga de mãe*, hence, lies in between the isomorph relations of each pair and accentuates the metonymical relations of these pairs.

We might also say that the *praga* offers a certain conversion between the isomorph relations. Although the *praga* is a way for the mother to assert control over the daughters, the choices of actions to respond to the *praga* are not consequently predefined. As a control mechanism, the *praga* is ambiguous. In a fully individualized society, the *praga* would probably have lost most of its power. In a society that values the core of the family, however, the *praga* will differ in strength according to the importance of family values. Some of these values are inherent in the *praga*, but the *praga* offers more of a guided framework for choices of actions than to assert certain values like what we saw in the example of how the dilemma of *the illusion of altruism* plays on a regeneration and strengthening of a relational model based on conditional relations. *Praga de mãe* makes horizontal overlapping between spheres while the *illusion of altruism*-mechanism makes vertical differentiation within a sphere. Both of them, thus, create feedback loops into the traditional mode of Brazilian life, and poses a barrier to the modernized democratic Brazil.

Praga de mãe seems to connect the dots between the structural frameworks of everyday experiences. The *praga* relates to risk through its structure by using a distorted evaluation of the risk factors to create an *illusory causality*, relate the risks to emotive relations between mother and child, and by provoking a reaction that might go against a preferred choice of action. It plays on guilt when the intention is to let off steam and distance oneself from the possible guilty conscience due to the demands and expectations within the domestic sphere.

Since the *praga* by itself could easily be avoided by being ignored if it just posed itself as an alternative way of calculating risks, it would probably not have had such a strength unless it lies on the border of magical thinking. We could say that *praga de mãe* becomes an explanation of a certain outcome that despite the outcome's arbitrariness is the only possible outcome when the outcome is the same negative as laid down by the *praga*. The only thing the *praga* needs is a negative outcome. The *praga* then acts back on the child's understanding of risk management learned from limited trial and error and can trigger the *impulse control*, which limits the risk engagement in the public sphere. The magical aspect to the *praga* lends it an additional power, a power that can be strong because of deep psychological relations between a mother and a child, but that also can, if we follow Malinowski (1948:116), gain additional strength from the share amount of risks and dangers in a society.

117

The relation between magical thinking and *risk engagement* makes for three possible situations and choices of action in case of a *praga*:

Not going out: In this case, the person does not get to act out and vent the feelings of being caught in traditional hierarchies at home or in the public. Not getting to act towards autonomy and independency gives an additional feeling of being caught, and as such reinforces their original sentiments of being caught. On the other hand, they earn the closer relations to the family and family values, but these also ensure that the person is further caught up in duties, demands and expectations, hence a loss of independency and *vontade*.

Go out and having a good night out: This is the usual situation where the person gets all the benefits of chasing the *vontade*, practice independence and autonomy, venting out and getting to be creative and playful. Most times, nights out are good nights out. It was apparent that having a good night out prepared the youths for another week caught between the hierarchies of the home and the public.

Go out and having a bad night out: When having a bad night out and feeling the guilt towards the mother's wish for the person's impulse control to take effect, the emotive effect is a double negative, which makes it the worst situation and also suggests the power of the *praga*. In this case, the guilt towards the mother, the family values and one's stubbornness, triggers doubts of the person's ability to make one's own choices. The guilt and the doubt of choosing the right actions, to act on the *vontade* and towards one's own autonomy and independence, triggers a disappointment in oneself. The guilt and the disappointment is the double negative that reinforce itself in the individual, and lends power to the *praga*, which also becomes synonymous with the power of the mother.

Going out and having a bad night has to happen on occasion. Whenever this happens, the strength of the *praga* reasserts itself by the feelings of guilt. If this changes the future choices of actions in the same kind of situations, the *praga* is utterly strengthened. It is also likely that the complete *impulse control*, which keeps the person within the domestic sphere, also triggers certain choices of action in the case of *the illusion of altruism*-dilemma. If one acts on the conditional relations that lies behind the mechanism, one confirms the mechanism itself, which most likely simultaneously strengthens the *praga*.

We now see two mechanisms that strengthen themselves by both similarity and difference. The underlying notion of a conditional family relation negates the seemingly unconditional relational sentiment that exists in the expression of care for the child caught in the *praga*. However, acting on the *praga* and assert *impulse control*, takes the person back to

the domestic sphere of demands, expectations and emotionally felt conditional relations between parent-child. It is impossible to avoid bad nights out as well as it becomes impossible to avoid the conditional relations. In the end, they will both occur and reassert the felt conditional relation between parent-child.

Considering how feedback loops creates learning by evolution, we can see from the *praga* that it creates a delay in the processes of progression. The *praga* removes, or at least challenges, the possibility to develop in the public sphere. Instead, it plays on recreation within the domestic sphere, thus delaying the possibility for the individual to engage in risks – which we have seen is self-developing – and thus also creating a barrier to the exhausting aspect to trial and error. This illuminates a transitional dynamic in Fortaleza that exists in between the modern life engaged by the youth, and the traditional life maintained by the parent generation.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

The generation growing up in Brazil today, who was born into the democratic Brazil, and that experienced the good economic age in families that benefited from investments and entrepreneurship, has different consumption patterns, demands and values than their parents. However, many of the old values still stick to the different domains of everyday life.

The generational conflict that manifests itself within the *casa* and the *rua*, adds to the level of danger and the risky, public spaces of the city. Each day, people challenge these risks on the way to work, the store, the library or the school. To live in Fortaleza is in short a risk engagement in itself. To live is to take risks.

However, many activities that people do in their daily lives are necessary actions for the wellbeing and subsistence of themselves and their families. Going out to a *festa* is not a definition of a necessary action. Going to a *festa* is a leisure activity. It is, however, a rather risky leisure activity. One has to go out when it is dark outside, to places that can be dangerous, one might be intoxicated, and one will bring valuables. This makes for easy targets. On the other hand, these risks have been normalized through having lived in the city for years. What seems like risky engagements from the outside may not be felt as such by the city's youth.

As argued, going out to *festas* is a way to vent. The *festas* are the antonyms to the everyday lives where duties, demands and authorities pulls the individual in different directions. It thus becomes an action of restitution. However, as shown, this wanted outcome is fragile. With the curse of the mother, a possible good night out can quickly turn into a bad night out. This results in a double negative effect of guilt and disappointment, which manifests the control that the mother has over the child. In addition, it eventually pulls the child back to the domestic sphere where another mechanism reassert a vertical conditional relation to the father figure, and finally completes a dynamic mechanism that creates delayed trials for independence and progression of values, and which creates more steam that needs to be let out.

The *praga de mãe* also offers an explanation to the generational conflict between two modes of thought: the traditional one that stems from before the democratization of Brazil, and the period after democratization, which transformed Brazil socially and economically. It illustrates how there is a thug of war between the postfigurative mode of thought and the cofigurative mode of thought.

The *praga*, thus, can be interpreted as a phenomenon that alternates between being in and out of style and use. It might become more apparent in a society with certain generations and with certain challenges of the traditional mode of the domestic sphere. As for now, the *praga de mãe* keeps on limiting young women's choices of actions, and implies the powerful position of the mother in a society that has largely been described as patriarchal.

This dissertation also illustrates how risks can be overlooked in terms of other, more beneficial aspects than loss. Nevertheless, the *praga* is a good example of how the society itself supplies a regulating mechanism to cope with such drives that has its members acting on desires, the *vontade*, which is a physically expensive model of trial and error. *The illusion of altruism-mechanism* within the domestic sphere and the *praga*, in addition to the *vontade* and the need to vent, forms a self-regulative system that contributes to keeping changes to excel and dramatic changes to occur. This happens at an individual as well as on a social level.

An old statement goes that any culture's most valuable asset is women. They are thus to be controlled. If this is so, *praga de mãe* is one manifestation of a quite archetypical phenomenon found existing within a modern society.

Bibliography

This list of references also includes background literature that has not been used directly, but that has been part in shaping the argument of this dissertation.

Agar, Michael H. 1980. *The Professional Stranger. An Informal Introduction to Ethnography*. Academic Press, Inc. London.

Archetti, Eduardo P. and Kristi Anne Stølen. 2004. "Latin-Amerika" in Howell, Signe and Marit Melhuus (Eds.) *Fjern og Nær. Sosialantropologiske Perspektiver på Verdens Samfunn og Kulturer*. Gyldendal Akademisk. Oslo.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1984. *Rabelais and his World*. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, Indianapolis.

Barth, Fredrik. 1969. "Introduction" in Barth, Fredrik (Ed.) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Universitetsforlaget. Oslo.

Barth, Fredrik. 1996. "Økonomiske Sfærer i Darfur" in Barth, Fredrik *Manifestasjon Og Prosess*. Universitetsforlaget. Oslo.

Bateson, Gregory. 2000. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago, London.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2000. *Liquid Modernity*. Polity Press. Cambridge, Malden.

Beck, Ulrich. 1992. *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity*. Sage Publications. London, Newbury Park, New Dehli.

Benedict, Ruth. 1960. *Patterns of Culture*. Mentor Books. New York.

Bloch, Maurice and Jonathan Parry. 1989. "Introduction: Money and the Morality of Exchange" in Parry, Jonathan and Maurice Bloch (Eds.) *Money and the Morality of Exchange*. Cambridge University Press. New York, Melbourne.

Bohannan, Paul. 1959. "The Impact of Money on an African Subsistence Economy" in *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 19, p. 491-501.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, New York.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2004. *Ungkarsballet. Krise i Bondesamfunnet*. Pax Forlag A/S. Oslo.

Bourgois, Philippe I. 2003. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, New York.

Briggs, Charles L. 1986. *Learning How to Ask. A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne.

Caldeira, Teresa. 1996. "Fortified Enclaves. The New Urban Segregation" in *Public Culture*, Vol. 8, pp. 303-328.

Caldeira, Teresa P. R. 2000. *City of Walls. Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo.* University of California Press. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

Caldeira, Teresa and James Holston. 1999. "Democracy and Violence in Brazil" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 41, No. 4, Oct., pp. 691-729.

Castel, Robert. 1991. "From Dangerousness to Risk" in Burchell, Graham, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago.

Cerqueira, Ana Carneiro. 2010. *O "Povo" Parente dos Buracos: Mexida de Prosa e Cozinha no Cerrado Mineiro*. Rio de Janeiro. http://teses2.ufrj.br/72/teses/743825.pdf

Clifford, James and George Marcus. 1986. *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. University of California Press. Berkeley, Los Angeles.

Da Costa, Emilia Viotti. 2000. *The Brazilian Empire. Myths & Histories (Revised Edition)*. The University of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill, London.

DaMatta, Roberto and Ray Green. 1982/1983. "An Interpretation of "Carnaval"" in *SubStance: A Special Issue From the Center for Twentieth Century Studies*. Vol. 11/12, Vol. 11, No. 4 – Vol. 12, No. 1, Issue 37-38.

DaMatta, Roberto. 1984. *O Que Faz o Brasil, Brasil?* Rocco. Rio de Janeiro.

DaMatta, Roberto. 1997a. *Carnavais, Malandros e Heróis. Para Uma Sociologia do Dilema Brasileiro*. Rocco. Rio de Janeiro.

DaMatta, Roberto. 1997b. *A Casa e a Rua. Espaço, Cidadania, Mulher e Morte no Brasil*. Rocco. Rio de Janeiro.

DaMatta, Roberto. 2004. *O Que é o Brasil?* Rocco. Rio de Janeiro.

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, London.

Douglas, Mary. 1966 [2001]. *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Routledge. London, New York.

Douglas, Mary. 1985. *Risk Acceptability According to Social Sciences*. Russell Sage Foundation. New York.

Douglas, Mary. 1986. *How Institutions Think*. Syracuse University Press. New York.

Douglas, Mary. 1994. *Risk and Blame. Essays in Cultural Theory*. Routledge. Oxon, New York.

Dufour, Dany-Robert. 2008. *The Art of Shrinking Heads. On the New Servitude of the Liberated in the Age of Total Capitalism*. Polity Press. Cambridge, Malden.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago, London.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1979. "Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events" in Lessa, William A. and Evon Z. Vogt (Eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion. An Anthropological Approach.* Harper Collins Publishers. New York.

Ewald, François. 1991. "Insurance and Risk" in Burchell, Graham, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago.

Fausto, Boris. 1999. *A Concise History of Brazil*. Cambridge University Press. New York.

Fine, Gary Alan. 1988. "Letting Off Steam? Redefining a Restaurant's Work Environment" in Jones, Michael Owen, Michael Dane Moore and Richard Christopher Snyder (Eds.) *Inside Organizations: Understanding the Human Dimension*. Sage Publications. Newbury Park, California.

Fischhoff, Baruch and John Kadvany. 2011. *Risk: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press. Oxford.

Foucault, Michel. 1991. "Governmentality" in Burchell, Graham, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago.

Foucault, Michel. 2007. *Security, Territory, Population. Lectures at the Collége de France 1977-1978*. Picador, Palgrave Macmillan. New York.

Frazer, James G. 1979. "Sympathetic Magic" in Lessa, William A. and Evon Z. Vogt (Eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion. An Anthropological Approach*. Harper Collins Publishers. New York.

Freyre, Gilberto. 1986. *The Masters and the Slaves. A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*. University of California Press. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

G1. 2014. "Veja Diferenças Entre Conceitos Que Definem Classes Sociais no Brasil". http://g1.globo.com/economia/seu-dinheiro/noticia/2013/08/veja-diferencas-entre-conceitos-que-definem-classes-sociais-no-brasil.html. Retrieved 29.10.14.

Gell, Alfred. 1985. "How to Read a Map: Remarks on the Practical Logic of Navigation" in *Man*, New Series, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 271-286.

Giddens, Anthony. 1990. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Polity Press.

Goffman, Erving. 1992. *Vårt Rollespill til Daglig. En Studie i Hverdagslivets Dramatikk*. Pax Forlag A/S. Oslo.

Goldstein, Daniel M. 2012. *Outlawed. Between Security and Rights in a Bolivian City*. Duke University Press. Durham, London.

Heffer, Leonardo. 2012. http://ne10.uol.com.br/canal/cotidiano/nordeste/noticia/2012/04/13/fortaleza-uma-historia-de-286-anos-337451.php

Hier, Sean P. "Risky Spaces and Dangerous Faces: Urban Surveillance, Social Disorder and CCTV" in *Social & Legal Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 541-554.

IBGE. 2010a. "Infográficos: Histórico".
http://cidades.ibge.gov.br/painel/historico.php?lang=&codmun=230440&search=||infogr%E1f
icos:-hist%F3rico. Retrieved 01.05.14.

IBGE. 2010b. "Infográficos: Estabelecimentos de Saúde e Morbidade Hospitalar".
http://cidades.ibge.gov.br/painel/saude.php?lang=&codmun=230440&search=ceara|fortaleza|i
nfogr%E1ficos:-estabelecimentos-de-sa%FAde-e-morbidade-hospitalar. Retrieved 01.05.14.

IBGE. 2010c. "Infográficos: Dados Gerais do Município".
http://cidades.ibge.gov.br/painel/painel.php?lang=&codmun=230440&search=||infogr%E1fic
os:-dados-gerais-do-munic%Edpio. Retrieved 01.05.14.

IBGE. 2010d. "Infográficos: Despesas e Receitas Orçamentárias e Pib".
http://cidades.ibge.gov.br/painel/economia.php?lang=&codmun=230440&search=ceara|fortal
eza|infogr%E1ficos:-despesas-e-receitas-or%E7ament%E1rias-e-pib. Retrieved 01.05.14.

IBGE. 2010e. "Infográficos: Evolução Populacional e Pirâmide Etária".
http://cidades.ibge.gov.br/painel/populacao.php?lang=&codmun=230440&search=ceara|fortal
eza|infogr%E1ficos:-evolu%E7%E3o-populacional-e-pir%E2mide-et%E1ria. Retrieved
01.05.14.

IBGE. 2010f. "Síntese das Informações".
http://cidades.ibge.gov.br/xtras/temas.php?lang=&codmun=230440&idtema=16&search=cear
a|fortaleza|sintese-das-informacoes. Retrieved 01.05.14.

IBGE. 2010g. "Fortaleza".
http://cidades.ibge.gov.br/xtras/perfil.php?lang=&codmun=230440&search=ceara|fortaleza|in
foraficos:-informacoes-completas. Retrieved 01.05.14.

Inflation.eu Worldwide Inflation Data. 2014. http://www.inflation.eu/inflation-
rates/brazil/historic-inflation/cpi-inflation-brazil.aspx Retrieved 28.10.14.

Ingold, Tim. 1993. "The Temporality of the Landscape" in *World Archaeology* , Vol. 25, No. 2, Conceptions of Time and Ancient Society, Oct., pp. 152-174.

Ingold, Tim. 2011a. "Culture on the Ground: The World Perceived Through the Feet" in Ingold, Tim *Being Alive. Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. London, New York.

Ingold, Tim. 2011b. "Against Space: Place, Movement, Knowledge" in Ingold, Tim *Being Alive. Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. London, New York.

Jenkins, Richard. 2008. *Social Identity (Third Edition).* Routledge. London, New York.

Johansen, Stein. E. 2007. *24-Timers Mennesker. Om Livet Hinsides Arbeidet Blant Motkulturell Ungdom i Trondheim. (2. Utgave)*. Tapir Akademiske Forlag, Kompendieforlaget. Trondheim.

Johansen, Stein E. 2008. *Grunnriss av en Differensiell Epistemologi*. Abstrakt Forlag AS.

Knoema. 2014. *World GDP Ranking 2014*. http://knoema.com/nwnfkne/world-gdp-ranking-2014-data-and-charts. Retrieved 28.10.14.

La Fontaine, J. S. 1993. "Person and Individual: Some Anthropological Reflections" in Carrithers, Michael, Steven Collins and Steven Lukes (eds.) *The Category of the Person*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1966. *The Savage Mind (Le Pensée Sauvage).* Weidenfeld and Nicolson. London.

Linger, Daniel Touro. 1992. *Dangerous Encounters. Meanings of Violence in a Brazilian City*. Stanford University Press. Stanford.

Low, Setha M. 1996. "Spatializing Culture. The Social Production and Social Construction of Public Space in Costa Rica" in *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 861-879.

Low, Setha M. and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga. 2003. "Locating Culture" in Low, Setha M and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga *The Anthropology of Space and Place. Locating Culture.* Blackwell Publishing. Malden, Oxford, Victoria.

Lupton, Deborah. 1999. "Dangerous Places and the Unpredictable Stranger: Constructions of Fear and Crime" in *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 1-15.

Lupton, Deborah. 2013. *Risk (Second Edition).* Routledge. London, New York.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1948. *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*. The Free Press. Glencoe, Illinois.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1984. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific. An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. Waveland Press, Inc. Long Grove, Illinois

Mauss, Marcel. 1992. "Techniques of the Body" in Crary, Jonathan and Sanford Kwinter *Incorporations*. Zone Books. New York.

Mead, Margaret. 1971. *Broen Over Generasjonskløften. Et Spørsmål om Kultur og Engasjement*. Universitetsforlaget. Oslo, Bergen, Tromsø.

Merry, Sally Engle. 1993. "Mending Walls and Building Fences" in *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, Vol. 33, pp. 71-90.

Oanda. 2014. http://www.oanda.com/currency/historical-rates/. Retrieved 01.11.14.

O Povo. 2013a. "873 Assasinados a Tiros em 2013".
http://www.opovo.com.br/app/opovo/cotidiano/2013/05/07/noticiasjornalcotidiano,3051769/8
73-assassinados-a-tiros-em-2013.shtml. Retrieved 04.06.14.

O Povo. 2013b. "20 Bairros da Capital Concentram 48 % dos Homicídios".
http://www.opovo.com.br/app/opovo/cotidiano/2013/11/12/noticiasjornalcotidiano,3161950/2
0-bairros-da-capital-concentram-48-dos-homicidios.shtml. Retrieved 06.06.14.

O Povo. 2014a. "O Preocupante Quadro da Desigualdade Social em Fortaleza"
http://www.opovo.com.br/app/opovo/politica/2013/01/19/noticiasjornalpolitica,29915
25/o-preocupante-quadro-da-desigualdade-social-em-fortaleza.shtml. Retrieved 15.10.14.

O Povo. 2014b. "Segurança – "Indisponível no Momento""
http://www.opovo.com.br/app/colunas/politica/2013/10/26/noticiaspoliticacoluna,3152953/se
guranca-indisponivel-no-momento.shtml. Retrieved 15.10.14.

O Povo 2014c. "Homens Jovens São Maioria das Vítimas de Morte Violenta no
Ceará".
http://www.opovo.com.br/app/opovo/cotidiano/2014/03/17/noticiasjornalcotidiano,3221360/h
omens-jovens-sao-maioria-das-vitimas-de-homicidio-no-ceara.shtml. Retrieved 29.10.14

O Povo. 2014d. "Ronda Só Atende 33 % das Chamadas Telefônicas".
http://www.opovo.com.br/app/opovo/cotidiano/2013/10/18/noticiasjornalcotidiano,3148611/r
onda-so-atende-33-das-chamadas-telefonicas.shtml. Retrieved 29.10.14.

O Povo. 2014e. "Pesquisa Reafirma Fortaleza Como 7ª Cidade Mais Violenta do
Mundo".
http://www.opovo.com.br/app/opovo/cotidiano/2014/04/11/noticiasjornalcotidiano,3234699/p
esquisa-reafirma-fortaleza-como-7-cidade-mais-violenta-do-mundo.shtml. Retrieved
31.10.14.

Richardson, Miles. 2003. "Being-in-the-Market Versus Being-in-the-Plaza: Material Culture and the construction of Social Reality in Spanish America" in Low, Setha M and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga *The Anthropology of Space and Place. Locating Culture*. Blackwell Publishing. Malden, Oxford, Victoria.

Roett, Riordan. 2010. *The New Brazil*. Brookings Institution Press. Washington, D.C.
Rose, Gillian. 1993. *Feminism & Geography. The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Polity Press. Cambridge, Malden.

Sahlins, Marshall. 1972. *Stone Age Economics*. Aldine Atherton, Inc. Chicago, New York.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1993. *Death Without Weeping. The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. University of California Press. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

Simmel, Georg. 1950. "The Stranger" in Wolff, Kurt H. (Ed.) *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. The Free Press. Glencoe. Illinois.

Spradley, James P. 1980. *Participant Observation*. Wadsworth. Belmont.

Stallybrass, Peter and Allon White. 1986. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. Cornell University Press. Ithaca, New York.

Subbotsky, Eugene. 2004. "Magical Thinking – Reality or Illusion?" in *The Psychologist*, Vol. 17, No. 6.

Subbotsky, Eugene. 2010. *Magic and the Mind. Mechanisms, Functions, and Development of Magical Thinking and Behavior*. Oxford University Press. New York.

The World Bank. 2014. *World Development Indicators*. http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD/countries/1W-BR?display=default. Retrieved 28.10.14.

Tribuna do Ceará. 2013a. "Fortaleza Que Mata, Fortaleza Que Morre". http://tribunadoceara.uol.com.br/noticias/fortaleza-quer-paz/fortaleza-que-mata-fortaleza-que-morre/. Retrieved 04.05.14.

Tribuna do Ceará. 2013b. "Fortaleza, Cidade em Estado de Epidemia de Homicídios" http://tribunadoceara.uol.com.br/noticias/fortaleza/fortaleza-cidade-em-estado-de-epidemia-de-homicidios/. Retrieved 04.05.14.

Tribuna do Ceará. 2014. "Violência em Fortaleza: 766 Mortos em 2014, Sendo 433 Por Arma de Fogo". http://tribunadoceara.uol.com.br/noticias/policia/violencia-em-fortaleza-766-mortos-em-2014-sendo-433-por-arma-de-fogo/. Retrieved 01.10.14.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1977. *Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, London.

Tulloch, John. 2006. *One Day in July. Experiencing 7/7*. Little, Brown. London.

Tulloch, John. 2008. "Risk and Subjectivity, Experiencing Terror" in *Health, Risk & Society*, Vol. 10, No. 5, pp. 451-465.

Tulloch, John and Deborah Lupton. 2003. *Risk and Everyday Life*. Sage Publications. London, Thousand Oaks, New Dehli.

UN Habitat. 2008. *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011, Bridging the urban divide*. Earthscan. London. Sterling VA. http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/getElectronicVersion.aspx?nr=3387&alt=1. Retrieved 06.06.14.

Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi. 2008. *Gang Leader For a Day. A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*. Penguin Press. New York.

Vyse, Stuart. 2014. *Believing in Magic. The Psychology of Superstition*. Oxford University Press. New York.

Waiselfisz, Julio Jacobo. 2013. *Mapa da Violência 2013. Mortes Matadas Por Armas de Fogo.* http://www.mapadaviolencia.org.br/pdf2013/MapaViolencia2013_armas.pdf. Retrieved 03.05.14.

Weber, Max. 2001. *Den Protestantiske Etikk og Kapitalismens Ånd*. De Norske Bokklubbene.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1958. *Philosophical Investigations*. Basil Blackwell. Oxford.

Movie Reference

Beyond Citizen Kane (Muito Além do Cidadão Kane). 1993. BBC, London.