



Black Women Against the Land Grab: The Fight for Racial Justice in Brazil. By Keisha-Khan Y. Perry.
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2013. 213 pp. \$25.00 paperback. ISBN 9780816683246.

Black Women Against the Land Grab explores grassroots political organizing at the neighborhood level among Black women in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. The book profiles the analytical capabilities and tactics of neighborhood-based political organizations, led largely by Black women, as they struggle to maintain their lived spaces against urban renewal. Perry presents a grounded theory of grassroots political struggle through an ethnographic analysis coupled with an outline of the history of urban renewal and spatial displacement in Salvador.

Perry emphasizes the violent nature of Brazilian society and how Black women are therein disproportionately marginalized. Choosing to focus on spatial exclusion as a practice that exemplifies this violence, she argues that urban 'revitalization,' a practice championed by both state and private urban developers, is informed by race, class, and gender bias. The profit-motivated urban renewal agenda of these developers entails the 'systemic destruction of black settlements and the pervasive negation of black citizenship that marks Brazilian cities' (p. 9). Perry notes several examples of how urban renewal efforts have led to the displacement of largely Black neighborhoods, such as the case of Salvador's historic Pelourinho, where an urban revitalization project in the 1950s led to the expulsion of a large contingent of mostly Black prostitutes in order to make way for tourism. While recognizing the deleterious effects of the spatial exclusion of Black Brazilians, Perry insists that this exclusion is part of what leads to mass Black political organization.

A central argument in Perry's book is her assertion that the everyday violence that Black women experience informs their political consciousness and agendas. Using the example of Black women from the Gamboa de Baixo neighborhood that work as domestic servants for wealthy white families, she claims that the women's close association with their employers informs their political analysis and actions. These women knew they had to fight to maintain their coastal lands because they understood that, were they removed, the wealthy whites that would replace them would never allow them access to the sea – an important cultural and economic resource for Blacks living on the coast. Because Black women occupy a marginalized position in Brazilian society, the violence they experience is at once internalized and contested, greatly influencing their political activities. The neighborhood activism of Black women in Gamboa de Baixo, therefore, both understands and challenges dominant notions of Blackness, femininity, and activism in the context of Brazil.

For a book that profiles activism against a very specific form of marginalization in urban renewal, there is scant attention paid to the political economic conditions under which this urban renewal has taken place. A more detailed explanation of the factors that led to urban revitalization becoming a practice important to the public and private actors of Salvador could contribute to the background of this study. Still, in privileging the grassroots level as a viable political sphere and emphasizing the importance of Black women-led neighborhood organizing, Perry makes an invaluable contribution.

Adam Bledsoe

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA