

THE MYTH OF MARGINALITY REVISITED
THE CASE OF *FAVELAS* IN RIO DE JANEIRO, 1969-2003

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Yes, but the favela was never the refuge of the marginal, I said
There are only humble people, marginalized
And this truth does not appear in the newspaper
The favela is a social problem (refrain)
And what's more, I am the favela
My people are workers
I never had social assistance
But I can live only there
Because for the poor there is no other way
We don't even have the right to a salary of hunger
Or a normal life
The favela is a social problem.¹

- Eu Sou Favela, Noca da Portela and Sergio Mosca, 1994

This popular samba, “I Am *Favela*” reveals a lot about the term “marginal” and its relationship to poverty and to *favelas*. *Favela* is the Brazilian term for squatter settlements, shantytowns, or irregular settlements (known officially by the Brazilian census - IBGE - as “subnormal agglomerations”). There are at least 752 *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro today with approximately 1.65 million inhabitants.² For the urban poor who cannot afford to enter the formal housing market through purchase or rental, these communities solve the problem by providing a place to live. All of the traditional distinctions between *favelas* and the rest of the city have become useless as denoters of how and where to draw the boundaries. This is not to say that the “formal” and “informal” parts of the city are indistinguishable, but that the standard ways of bifurcating the urban space in this manner (the “cidade partido” or divided city³) either never applied or no longer apply. For instance, *favelas* can no longer be defined by their “illegality” (as they were originally when people invaded open land on hillsides, marshes, watersheds, and roadsides), as most now have *de facto* tenure.⁴ They can no longer be defined by lack of urban services, since over time almost all have obtained access to water, sewage, and electricity. They can no longer be defined according to the precarious construction materials of stucco, wood, or scrap materials, as most are now brick and mortar and two stories high or more. They cannot even be defined as “free” places to live as there is now a thriving internal real estate market for rental and purchase, with prices in the most desirable *favelas* of the South Zone, such as the famous Rocinha, rivaling those of regular neighborhoods.⁵ Finally, they cannot be defined as communities of misery or chronic poverty as not all the people in *favelas* are poor and not all the urban poor live in *favelas*. In fact, today, as in the 1960s, there are great differences in wealth and well-being both within and between *favelas*. This is clearly demonstrated in the

research directed by Andre Urani while Municipal Secretary of Labor, and after that as President of IETS, the non-profit Institute for the Study of Work and Society, based in Rio de Janeiro.

The only remaining distinction between *favelas* (often called *morros* or hills) and the rest of the city (commonly referred to as the *asfalto* or pavement) is the deeply-rooted stigma that still adheres to them. Even after 10 years of the *Favela-Bairro* Upgrading Program, which reached hundreds of Rio's *favelas* with the intention of integrating them, at least physically, into the surrounding neighborhoods by such improvements as street paving, plazas opening onto the surrounding streets, individual household connections to water, sewage and electricity, and the dredging of polluted streams, there is still no doubt in anyone's mind where the *morro* ends and the *asfalto* begins.⁶ The 12 lines selected from the samba above get to the very core of this stigma. The composers make three critical distinctions: 1) that between "normal" people with rights to a decent life and the poor, who have no rights and no choice; 2) that between honest workers, who represent the majority of *favela* residents,⁷ and criminals; and 3) that between the derogatory term "marginal," designating criminals, and the term "marginalized," implying that *favelados*—or residents of the *favelas*—are actively excluded by an unjust and corrupt system that is complicit in the reproduction of inequality and the production of violence.⁸

The songwriters embrace the *favelas* as themselves, declaring with pride that they do not accept "handouts" (social assistance), and with bitterness that even when they are working they do not earn a "salary of hunger"—i.e., enough to feed their families. This situation is born out by the statistics.⁹ Their ironic refrain is that "the *favela* is a social problem."¹⁰ Indeed, in every decade since the 1950s, *favela* growth rates have exceeded those of the "formal city."¹¹ Both the number of *favelas* and their physical extension have exacerbated the perception of these communities as a "problem" and not a solution. The very existence of *favelas* was long denied; only since the 1970s have they been allowed to appear on city maps. Before that, they were depicted as empty green areas. Their continued existence and proliferation challenges the legitimacy of the social system that created them and is a source of constant unease and fear.



POPULATION OF FAVELA RESIDENTS AND TOTAL POPULATION OF THE CITY OF RIO DE JANEIRO (1950/2000)

Year	Population of Favelas (a)	Total Population of Rio (b)	a/b (%)	Favela Growth Rate by decade	Rio Growth Rate by decade
1950	169.305	2.337.451	7,24%	-	-
1960	337.412	3.307.163	10,20%	99,3%	41,5%
1970	563.970	4.251.918	13,26%	67,1%	28,6%
1980	628.170	5.093.232	12,33%	11,4%	19,8%
1990	882.483	5.480.778	16,10%	40,5%	7,6%
2000	1.092.958	5.857.879	18,66%	23,9%	6,9%

Source: IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), 2000

This is precisely the way in which the ideology of marginality justified the eradication of *favelas* in the 1970s. Insofar as the *favelas* were considered a “social problem” and a “blight on the city,” the remedy was to remove them, burning or bulldozing down houses built up over generations, destroying all of the painstakingly acquired household goods, and forcing the residents into garbage trucks, which took them to public housing complexes (*conjuntos habitacionais*) in remote areas of the city. One of these, the *Cidade de Deus* (City of God), was recently made famous by the Oscar-nominated movie of the same name. The film is based on a 1997 book by Paulo Lins, who grew up there but no longer lives there. Lins has said publicly that conditions of life there have not improved and, in fact, are worse today than what he described (Lins 1997).

I found the use of the garbage trucks to be particularly symbolic. The prevailing wisdom was that since the *favela* shacks (*barracos*) were made of scraps and discarded material from construction sites and appeared to be precarious piles of garbage perched on the hillsides, the people who lived in them were dirty discards as well, and should be disposed of to “sanitize the city.” The massive removals coincided with the height of the dictatorship’s power and with the new construction technologies that made it possible to build luxury condominiums on the now-valuable slopes rising above the city in Rio’s South Zone. In the period from 1970 to 1973, over 101,000 people were forcibly removed from *favelas* in Rio and relocated into public housing projects, generally several hours and costly bus rides away from the previous sites of life and work.

THE BACK STORY AND THE RE-STUDY

In the early 1960s, as an undergraduate anthropology student, I spent three months doing research in fishing and agricultural villages in the interior of Bahia.¹² I was

looking at the way young people form their values, world view, and aspirations for their future. What I discovered was that the arrival of the transistor radio in these remote areas—which had no roads, no mail service, no electricity, and almost no connection to the outside world, apart from the yearly visit from the priest, the periodic stops by traveling salesmen, and the occasional return of a local who had served in the marines—gave people access to the world beyond their village boundaries for the first time. The sense of open-ended opportunity beyond what they had ever known was compelling.

Young people no longer wanted to die in the arms of Yemenjá, the Goddess of the waters, or to work with the hoe, as had their elders across generations. They wanted something exciting and unknown, namely the “big city,” “where the action (*movimento*) was.” This longing, coupled with the hardships of life in the countryside, led to a sea change—a massive out-migration from the countryside to the city—not only in Brazil but all over Asia, Africa and Latin America.¹³

In 1968-69, following this flow of cityward migration, I conducted research in one of the major destination cities, Rio de Janeiro. I met the trucks, known as *pau de arrara* or “parrot’s perch,” (because of the way people sat on flat wooden boards laid across the back of the open trucks), which brought the migrants into the city. I discovered that the poor ended up in one of three places. After several nights at the city shelters or on the streets, they often managed to contact a relative or someone they know from their hometown and went to a *favela* either 1) in Rio’s upscale residential area (South Zone), 2) the industrial working class area (North Zone), or 3) in the peripheral Fluminense lowlands in the then state of Rio.¹⁴

I therefore selected one *favela* in each of these three areas¹⁵ and lived in each for six months, doing participant observation as well as interviewing a total of 200 randomly selected men and women, between 16-65 years old and 50 leaders in each community. The three communities were Catacumba, a *favela* in the wealthy South Zone, which was removed in 1970, and whose residents were relocated to more distant public housing, including City of God and Guaporé-Quitungo; Nova Brasília, a *favela* in the industrial North Zone, which is now a battleground between police and drug traffic; and Duque de Caxias, a peripheral municipality in the Fluminense Lowlands (Baixada Fluminense) where I selected three *favelas* and the five poorest neighborhoods of unserviced lots.

The survey instrument I used included a life history matrix which recorded yearly changes in residence, occupation, education, and family history. The results of these interviews, along with the stories of the communities themselves and the impact of public policies, became the basis of my book *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro* (UC Press, 1976; in Portuguese: Editora Paz e Terra, São Paulo, 1977). This work provoked a paradigm shift in the conceptualization of the urban poor from “marginal” or outside the system to tightly integrated (and functional) to that system, but in a perversely asymmetrical manner.

Thirty years after the initial research, I embarked on a quest to see whether I could locate the original study participants and explore what had happened to them over that

time period. Due to the strong social networks created and maintained in *favela* communities and to the fact that I hired local residents—often the children of the original study participants—to look for the original interviewees, we were able to find 41 percent of the original study participants, or 307 of the original 750 people.¹⁶ After conducting open-ended interviews to begin to understand the changes and to update the questionnaire with the appropriate framework, mindset, and vocabulary, we revised the survey and re-interviewed all of the original study participants that we were able to locate. We also interviewed a random sample of the children (367) and the grandchildren (208) of the original participants. Finally, we interviewed new random samples and leadership samples from the original communities to explore patterns of change in the composition and living conditions of the communities themselves in relation to individuals in the panel.¹⁷

This chapter explores the transformations in the concept of marginality as a prism for understanding urban poverty in Latin America, the use (and misuse) of the word and its power to define people's lives and justify public policy. The case of the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro is used as a way to ground the discussion in temporal and spatial specificity.

DEBUNKING MARGINALITY'S MYTHS

The concept of marginality has been debunked, deconstructed, dismissed, and then rediscovered and reconstructed over the past decades. I researched and wrote *The Myth of Marginality* during a specific historical moment in the context of widespread fear of “masses” of poor migrants arriving from the countryside and invading the “citadel” of the city. The quotation below, written by the agency officially responsible for the *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro, sums up both official and popular views of the era.

Families arrive from the interior pure and united...in stable unions. The disintegration begins in the *favela* as a consequence...of the promiscuity, the bad examples and the financial difficulties there...young girls are seduced and abandoned; they get pregnant but don't feel any shame...liquor and drugs serve to dull the disappointments, humiliations and food deficiency...The nights belong to the criminals...one can hear the screams for help. But no one dares to interfere for fear they will be next....Policeman rarely penetrate the *favela* and then only in groups (Fundação Leão XIII, *Favelas* of Guanabara, 1968).

My work was part of a profound critique of the prevailing paradigm of the time regarding the urban poor and the irregular settlements they lived in.¹⁸ In the modernization literature migrants from the countryside to the city were seen as maladapted to modern city life and, therefore, responsible for their own poverty and their failure to be absorbed into formal job and housing markets. Squatter settlements were seen as “syphilitic sores on the beautiful body of the city,” dens of crime, violence, prostitution, and social breakdown. It was widely assumed that comparing their condition with the surrounding opulence would turn squatters into angry revolutionaries. Such was the fear of the Right and the hope of the Left.¹⁹ The view of squatters as “other,” not part

of the urban community, was the common sense view of the population at large, legitimized by social scientists, and used to justify public policies of *favela* removal. Marginality was a material force as well as an ideological concept and a description of social reality.

Beginning in the mid-60s, several seminal writers including Alejandro Portes, Jose Nun, Anibal Quijano, Manuel Castells, Florestan Fernandes, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso challenged this conventional “wisdom.” Empirical studies in Latin American cities including Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and São Paulo, Santiago, Buenos Aires, Lima, Bogotá, Mexico City, and Monterrey served to discredit the propositions of marginality and the erroneous stereotypes surrounding the urban poor. Mangin and Morse each wrote excellent review articles on the subject, which appeared in the mid-60s and early 70s. These works, along with my own, showed how the concept of marginality was used to blame the victim in academic and public policy discourse. We demonstrated that there was a logic and rationality to the attitudes and behaviors in slums, and that there were strengths and assets in the squatter settlements of Latin America that belied the stereotypes of deficits, deficiencies, disorganization, and pathologies of all types.

The way I approached this in *The Myth of Marginality* was to create an “ideal type” synthesizing the collected body of literature regarding the social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions of marginality into a series of eight propositions and their component concepts, such that they could be empirically tested in the specific context of Rio de Janeiro. This concept is reproduced in figure 1.

Figure 1. *The Concept of Marginality*

PROPOSITIONS		CONCEPTS
SOCIAL	<p><i>Internal disorganization</i></p> <p>The <i>favela</i> lacks internal social organization or cohesion; its residents are lonely and isolated.</p>	<p>Voluntary associations</p> <p>Friendship and kinship</p> <p>Trust and mutual help</p> <p>Crime and violence</p>
	<p><i>External isolation</i></p> <p>The <i>favelado</i> is not integrated into the city; he does not make wide use of the urban context and he never feels fully at home in it.</p>	<p>Urban adaptation</p> <p>Familiarity with city</p> <p>Heterogeneity of contacts</p> <p>Use of the city</p> <p>Use of urban agencies</p> <p>Mass media exposure</p>
CULTURAL	<p><i>Culture of traditionality</i></p> <p>The <i>favela</i> is an enclave of rural parochialism in the city.</p>	<p>Religious orientation</p> <p>Openness to innovation</p> <p>Family orientation</p> <p>Empathy</p> <p>Fatalism</p> <p>Deference to authority</p>
	<p><i>Culture of poverty</i></p> <p>The <i>favelado</i> as a reaction and adaptation to his deprivation develops and perpetuates a culture of poverty.</p>	<p>Suspicion of others</p> <p>Crime and violence</p> <p>Family breakdown</p> <p>Pessimism</p> <p>Aspirations</p>
ECONOMIC	<p><i>Economic parasitism</i></p> <p><i>Favelados</i> are a drain on the urban economy, taking out more that they give.</p>	<p>Employment and income</p> <p>Consumption</p> <p>Contribution to infrastructure</p>
	<p><i>Economic parochialism</i></p> <p>Both the culture of traditionality and the culture of poverty contribute to an economic parochialism in the <i>favelado</i>.</p>	<p>Work ethic</p> <p>Education and job training</p> <p>Entrepreneurial values</p>
POLITICAL	<p><i>Political apathy</i></p> <p>The <i>favelado</i> is not integrated into city and national political life.</p>	<p>Internal political structures</p> <p>Political interest, saliency, and information</p> <p>Electoral participation</p> <p>Direct political action</p> <p>Use of administrative channels</p>
	<p><i>Political radicalism</i></p> <p>Because of their frustration, social disorganization, and anomie, <i>favelados</i> are prone to leftist radicalism.</p>	<p>Alienation</p> <p>Demand for structural changes</p> <p>Class consciousness</p> <p>Nationalism</p>

Source: Perlman 1976: 131.

I found that despite virtually universal acceptance at all levels of society, these propositions did not correspond to reality. My research showed them to be “empirically false, analytically misleading, and insidious in their policy implications.”²⁰ *Favela* residents were socially well organized and cohesive and made wide use of the urban

milieu and its institutions. Culturally, they contributed their slang, soccer, and samba to the “mainstream,” and aspired to improving their lives, particularly educating their children. Economically, they did the worst jobs (often more than one) for the lowest pay, under the most arduous conditions, with the least security. They consumed their share of the products of others (often paying more since they had to buy where they could get credit), and they built their own houses and the physical infrastructure for their communities. Politically, they were aware of and keenly involved in those aspects of politics that affect their lives, both within and outside the *favela*. They cooperated with the clientelistic politicians, bargaining astutely with candidates for city council member, while being submissive and apolitical under the rules of the authoritarian regime. Radical ideology and the intelligentsia’s hoped-for propensity for revolutionary activism were completely absent. The reference group for *favelados* was not the rich neighborhoods that surrounded them but the impoverished rural families they had left behind.

My conclusion was that the *favelados* are not marginal, but inexorably integrated into society, albeit in a manner detrimental to their own interests. They are not separate from or on the margins of the system, but are tightly bound into it in a severely asymmetrical form. They contribute their hard work, their high hopes, and their loyalties, but do not benefit from the goods and services of the system. They are not economically and politically marginal, but are exploited, manipulated, and repressed; they are not socially and culturally marginal, but stigmatized and excluded from a closed class system (Perlman 1976: 195). This continues to be the case today.

The power of the ideology of marginality was so great in Brazil in the 1970s that it created a self-fulfilling prophecy, justifying *favela* removal and, therefore, perversely creating precisely the disaffection and disconnection that was assumed to be the danger to a stable social order. The characteristic of *favelas* as providers of a cost-free solution to the lack of affordable housing, access to jobs and services, and tightly knit communities within which reciprocal favors mitigated the hardship on migrants and their families, was annulled by these policies.

The ideology of marginality, with its moralistic “blaming the victim” narrative has persisted in the face of blatantly contradictory evidence, in no small part because of its multi-functionality in:

- 1) justifying extreme inequality and obfuscating the inability of the system to provide even minimal living standards for a vast subset of its population;
- 2) preserving the legitimacy and “fairness” of the rules of the game;
- 3) depressing wages and lowering the cost of services, which served to maintain their own subordinate position;
- 4) providing a scapegoat for a wide array of societal problems, and allowing others to feel superior, while legitimating the dominant norms;
- 5) “purifying” the self-image of the rest of society (what I call a “specular relationship”) by considering the “marginals” the source of all forms of deviance, perversity, and criminality;

- 6) shaping the self image of those labeled as marginal such that *favelados* often internalized the negative attributes ascribed to them and faulted their own ignorance, laziness, or worthlessness for their lack of “success”; and
- 7) dividing the popular sector, thereby preventing them from coalescing into a unified political force (Perlman 1976: 250-259).

Those with vested interest in the status quo benefit from the existence of a permanent “marginal mass,”²¹ not only in a reinforced sense of superiority, but also in the economies of reduced costs of production and reproduction. Despite significant changes in Brazil’s political and economic context over the past 30 years, this reality has only deepened.

TRANSFORMATIONS AND CONTEXTUAL CHANGES

Looking at how the meaning and repercussions of the concept of marginality changed over the past 30 years and how the lives of the original interviewees and their children evolved is especially interesting in light of the macro transformations in Brazil’s political economy and in the city of Rio de Janeiro itself. The original study was conducted at the height of the Brazilian dictatorship, brought about by a military coup on April 1, 1964. A gradual political *abertura*, or opening, starting in 1974 led, through a series of incremental steps, to the end of the dictatorship in 1984 and 1985 redemocratization. After a long period of repression of all civil liberties, the “right to have rights” movement finally prevailed and, with the new constitution of 1988, even expanded.

This redemocratization process created space for community groups, federations of community groups, and non-profits working in *favelas* to flourish. Some of these were focused on the rights of citizenship and actions to overcome past social injustices. Others were organized around cultural activities, such as theater, dance, and filmmaking; sports, from *capoeira* to soccer, volleyball, wrestling, and rowing; reclaiming weak or even lost racial or ethnic practices, such as the Afro-reggae movement, African drumming, music, and dance. Still others were organized around gender or religion, including preserving *candomblé* and *umbanda*, rediscovering Catholic liberation theology, and—most important in terms of numbers—the Evangelical movement. Like the Resident’s Associations that had started in the early 60s to represent their communities and press for collective demands, the associations were originally independent, but soon began to create linkages and informal networks with political parties, labor unions, or both. The Federation of the Residents’ Associations of the State of Rio (FAFERJ) became so politically “connected” that its president, Jô Resende, became deputy mayor in the first open election for local government.

In economic terms, the country went from the economic “miracle” of the 60s to the hyperinflation of the 70s, the so-called “lost decade” of the 80s, and the attempted stabilization of the 90s. In 1993, the then-Finance Minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso introduced the Real Plan, which pegged the value of the currency to the U.S. dollar. This controlled inflation and temporarily raised the purchasing power of the poor,²² but did not

solve the problem of economic growth, which remained low during the 90s. The past 15 years have seen financial instability, growing unemployment, and persistent inequality. The political system and the discourse on poverty may have changed, but the country remains one of the most unequal in the world. The top 10 percent of Brazilians earn 50 percent of the national income and the poorest 20 percent have 2.5 percent of the national income (UNDP 2003). 34 percent of the population lives below the poverty line (IPEA 1999). And, among the nine metropolitan areas, Rio de Janeiro has had the lowest rate of social mobility in the past decade (Pero 2002).

The global economic shift from manufacturing to services, from resource-based to knowledge-based production, and from place-based to mobile capital accumulation had negative repercussions particularly for Rio de Janeiro, and for the largely unskilled *favela* population, even more so. De-industrialization, specifically the decline of the steel and shipbuilding industries in Rio, led to the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs.²³

Structural adjustment policies including privatization and reductions in the size of the public sector, social spending, real wages, subsidies for basic staples, and worker protections and job contracts, deepened the regressive effect²⁴ and Rio became increasingly reliant upon its large informal economy (both illicit and illegal) and a relatively small modern service sector.

The erosion of the social contract²⁵ undermined long-standing worker protections and social guarantees that could have helped to mediate the negative effects of economic and institutional restructuring.²⁶ In fact, when we asked which politician had most helped people and families like their own, the answer most often given was Getúlio Vargas. Vargas set up the rudimentary protections of the welfare state during his populist regime during the Estado Novo (1930-1945). Fifty-four percent of the original sample is living on state retirement pensions instituted during that time. The fact that unemployment rates are twice as high for the second generation as for their parents is telling. In the 1969 study, 31% of the sample had been unemployed for more than a month, whereas among their children (who are now of comparable age to that of their parents when we did the original study), it is 65%.

The primary barriers to livelihoods for the urban poor are:

- 1) the dramatic loss of manufacturing in the Rio de Janeiro Metropolitan area, which has left thousands of blue collar workers unemployed;
- 2) the consolidation of the physical space of the city and consequent reduction in construction jobs (which had been a mainstay for unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the boom of the 60s and 70s);
- 3) the belt-tightening of the middle class, which, along with increases in electro-domestic appliances, fast food, and take-out services, has led to a steep reduction in domestic service employment (typically down from live-in maids receiving free room and board plus 5-6 day/week pay to 1-2/days/week), which was the single major female livelihood source in 1968;

- 4) technological advances that have replaced many labor-intensive jobs with a few high-skilled ones;
- 5) higher educational standards for job entry due to structural gains in educational levels;
- 6) the increase in drug-related violence in the *favelas* which has depressed the value of the rental and sales properties there; and
- 7) the pervasive stigma against *favela* residents reflected in the job market even when the applicant meets all other qualifications for employment.

At the community level, there were also major transformations over the three decades. Catacumba, the South Zone *favela*, had been removed in 1970 and most of its residents relocated to two adjacent public housing projects called Guaporé and Quitungo. Some of them were sent to the now (in)famous Cidade de Deus (City of God). Nova Brasília, the North Zone *favela*, had become a thriving commercial center and part of an enormous complex called the Morro de Alemão, which became notorious as one of the most dangerous *favelas* in the city due to its level of drug-related violence. Caxias, as one of the municipalities in the Baixada Fluminense, had experienced rapid population and economic growth. However, the three *favelas* we studied there had not benefited from the economic growth. Instead, they suffered from the massive factory closings. By contrast, the five low income, unserviced areas of small lots had turned into working-class neighborhoods and were doing much better. In fact, there was so much turnover of the original owners or renters of the lots—and so little community cohesion there—that we had the most difficult time relocating the original study participants in those very locations.

THE UN-MAKING AND RE-MAKING OF MARGINALITY²⁷

The term marginality was not widely used in academic or activist circles after the critiques of the 1970s. Those scholars who did write about it after the publication of *The Myth of Marginality* and other key works of the period, focused on de-coupling the theories of marginality from the phenomenon of marginality.

With the democratic opening in the mid-1980s, voices of opposition emerged and the discourse on urban poverty turned towards the less “toxic” (see Sachs 1992) concepts of social exclusion, inequality, injustice, and spatial segregation. Each dimension of marginality seems to have re-appeared in a new, more benign guise, within the new architecture of progressive analytical discourse. Social marginality became a discussion of “social exclusion”; cultural marginality a conversation about “otherness”; economic marginality turned into “capabilities deprivation,” “vulnerabilities,” and a re-thinking of “livelihoods” and “assets”; and political marginality became a dialogue about lack of voice, citizenship claims, and rights. These concepts, developed by activists and intellectuals sympathetic to the urban poor, placed the blame for intergenerational and persistent poverty on the underlying structures of the state and society, rather than on the deficiencies and deficits of the poor. They also exposed how being poor can annul the fundamental dignity of being human. As Dagnino writes:

As part of the authoritarian, hierarchical social ordering of Latin American societies, being poor means not only economic, material deprivation but also being subjected to cultural rules that convey a complete lack of recognition of poor people as bearers of rights. In what Telles (1994) has called the incivility embedded in that tradition, poverty is a sign of inferiority, a way of being in which individuals become unable to exercise their rights. The cultural deprivation imposed by the absolute absence of rights, ultimately expresses itself as a suppression of human dignity, then becomes constitutive of material deprivation and political exclusion (2003: 5).

This eloquently demonstrates the interconnectedness of material, cultural, historical, social-psychological, and political dimensions of the constant process of marginalization. In any case, each facet of this process of making the poor invisible or dehumanized has been developed into a body of literature with a particular lens for viewing the problem. I will touch briefly on just three of these: social exclusion, (pseudo)citizenship, and capabilities deprivation.

Social Exclusion

The *Atlas for Social Exclusion in Brazil Vol. 2* divides social exclusion in Brazil into two periods of time: from 1960-1980, defined as old exclusion; and from 1980-2000 as the new exclusion. The old social exclusion, based on indicators of education, illiteracy, and low income, focused on migrants from the countryside, highlighting the plight of women and blacks. The new social exclusion incorporates those born in a metropolis with higher levels of education and consumption of collective urban services and household goods, but with problematized insertion in the job market. New exclusion includes, for the first time, white Brazilians.

Naila Kabeer describes social exclusion as “the phenomenon of being ‘locked out’ of participation in social life as a result of the active dynamics of social interaction rather than as a condition of dependence stemming from some anonymous processes of impoverishment” (1999). She uses it as a multidimensional concept in which “factors of power relations, agency, culture and social identities come into play, an environment in which individuals do not have access to public resources, as a result they are able to contribute but not able to receive.” This is reminiscent of what I described above as asymmetrical integration.

Attempts to differentiate the 1960s concept of marginality from the current concept of social exclusion often appear arbitrary and confused rather than nuanced and clarifying.²⁸ In our study, we found that among the multiple dimensions of social exclusion faced by the urban poor in Rio, the stigma of living in a *favela* is the most powerful, with 84 percent of respondents claiming it as the most important factor. Other important barriers to making a livelihood were the stigmas based on skin color (80 percent), appearance (74 percent), origin (60 percent), and women (53 percent). In other words, living in a *favela* is perceived as more prejudicial than being dark-skinned, poorly

dressed, a migrant, or female. In the discussion of incomes below, I show the pernicious effects of this stigma on reducing returns to education for *favelados* and non-*favelados* in Rio.

New Citizenship or Pseudo Citizenship?

In the Latin American countries whose dictators have been replaced by democracies over the past 20 years, Brian Roberts claims “citizenship has replaced class as a means of analyzing the political struggles and plight of the poor” (2003: 15). Aside from the traditional civil liberties and voting rights, citizenship now implies a broader set of rights to participate and voice opinions in political contests at all levels, benefit from transparency and accountability in decisionmaking, and enjoy freedom from unjustified abuse by the authorities. The term “new citizenship” has been used to analyze the plight of the urban poor and “citizenship from below” is used to describe social movements and participation in poor local community organizations, who may be more inclined to local level action, having learned to distrust a distant and discredited state (Goirand 2003).^{29, 30}

During Brazil’s military dictatorship, the fight for citizenship and for “the right to have rights” was seen as highly subversive. In a series of Institutional Acts from 1965 to 1974 direct elections of mayors, governors, and presidents were suspended. In addition, regime opponents were routinely arrested, tortured, and disappeared. *Favelados*, however, were not generally in the ranks of protesting students or workers. For the urban poor, lack of citizenship was not a salient issue. When I conducted my original study, I would ask *favela* residents what their duties and rights were and the typical response to both was “to obey the law and the authorities.”

With the gradual “opening” and return to formal democracy, it was assumed that the accountability derived from direct vote for mayor, governor, and president (all of which had been appointed positions during the dictatorship), would give the urban poor greater bargaining power and a stronger voice with which to negotiate for community improvements. This has happened to some extent in that such programs as *Favela-Bairro* would have been unthinkable in the past, but the poor do not feel they have gained a “voice” to be heard in the political arena. My use of the term “(pseudo) citizenship” points to this dashed hope—a *de jure* but not *de facto* citizenship.

The return of party politics provided ample opportunities for a return to clientelistic modes of manipulation of the urban poor. The demons of graft and corruption, kept under wraps during the dictatorship, began to flourish openly. The structure of Brazil’s deeply entrenched system of privilege keeps *favelados* from partaking of the fruits of democracy and they remain marginalized, or asymmetrically integrated, just as they had been during the dictatorship.

When asked what had changed since the end of the dictatorship, our study participants said that despite improvements in housing, transportation, sanitation, and access to—but not quality of—education, health services, personal security, and the economic situation had gotten worse. Most disappointing of all was that they feel *more*

excluded and less empowered to bargain (or negotiate) with authorities than before. The *favela* residents were deeply disillusioned by democracy's unfulfilled promises of increasing justice and equality. They interpret the lack of accountability in part by saying that Brazilian people do not have the capacity to make good choices for their political candidates. The percent saying this increased from 1969 to 2001 and rose further with each generation.

Interviewees were skeptical about government's intention and ability at every level. When asked to rate each level of government as helpful, neutral, or harmful, the interviewees ranked their national government and the international agencies as doing more harm than good. Their most favorable rankings—for state government and municipal government—were still strikingly low. Only 37 percent thought state government was helpful and 25 percent thought municipal government was. In short, only a minority had anything favorable to say about government at all.

Rio's urban poor have seen so much corruption, heard so many empty campaign promises, and felt personally so insecure, that I often heard a note of nostalgia in their narratives for the safety and relative peace they experienced during the military regime. Evidently this disillusionment with democracy is becoming widespread in Latin America, and a new "failure of democracy" industry is sprouting in the press. A recent UN survey of 19,000 Latin Americans in 18 countries reported that "a majority would choose a dictator over an elected leader if that provided economic benefits."³¹ The Latinobarómetro surveys show this to some extent, but less for Brazil than some other Latin American countries.

This is also in line with our finding that the bottom line for Rio's urban poor is the desire for remunerated work. People across the board said that a "good job with a good salary" (or "decent work with decent pay" in the informal sector) is the "single most important factor for a successful life." Other issues such as good health, education, housing, land tenure, good governance, and even personal security were considered secondary.

Thus, the issue of inclusion in citizenship or that of political and civil rights cannot be divorced from that of poverty, or "freedom from want." As Dagnino says:

Without the fundamental rights of a decent income, health, education and security, Rio's urban poor will continue as mere cogs in local and regional political machines being greased by new forms of clientelism. The notions of "lack of citizenship" or "new citizenship" never gained much currency among the *favelados* because their living conditions never permitted them the luxury. Instead, other actors such as NGOs, political parties and academics were the ones that had the leisure to coin new terms for describing what in fact continues to be structural impediments to full participation in the decision-making process for allocating public resources (2003: 5).

In this regard, Brazil's first Labor Party President, Luís Inácio 'Lula' da Silva, who was elected in 2002, has been considerably challenged in confronting urban poverty and unemployment. In the face of international financial institution stipulations—namely debt obligations and maintenance of a 4.25% fiscal surplus—Lula has had little room to maneuver in the social arena, causing people in the *favelas* (and the poor in general) to feel betrayed by one of their own. Instead of more jobs and increased social spending on job-creation and job readiness programs, Lula opted to tow the conservative free-market IMF line, putting him in a tough position to live up to hopes created by his personal history and political campaign. He has ended up cobbling together social programs put in place by his predecessor, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and making matters worse by taking an extremely partisan (rather than professional) approach to his political appointments, and tolerating blatant graft and corruption in his government (Bearak 2004).

Capability Deprivation

This then brings us full circle to the discourse on the forms and consequences of economic marginality. How can a country or a city thrive while rendering irrelevant a quarter or even a third of its population? What does this represent in loss of potential intellectual capital? In terms of lost productive capacity? Of reduced consumer power? Of reduced cultural contribution? Of a fragile democracy needing all the help it can get? Of the values and behaviors being transmitted to the next generation?

This is where Amartya Sen's discussion of poverty as "capability deprivation" and not simply low income becomes helpful.³² Sen deems capacity deprivations as "intrinsically significant," as opposed to low income, which may be a temporary condition, or may be only of instrumental importance for attaining some other goal. The deprivation concept, as it takes into consideration various influences and circumstances (other than low incomes), can *result* in a condition of poverty. This is seen daily in the *favelas* where the very stigma of living in a designated "non-place" confers low status, exclusion, mal-treatment, and derision, independently of a person's assets, livelihood or overall income. Common examples are the termination of job interviews when *favelados* disclose their place of residence, or the furniture purchase that is deemed non-deliverable when a *favela* address is given.³³

Poverty may also be considered independent from income. Crises, illnesses or accidents can prevent continued earnings while using up savings and eventually assets as well. Sen views the relationship between low incomes and low capabilities as varying between different groups, families, and individuals, and often contingent upon personal characteristics. This goes back to the fundamental issue of ascribed versus achieved characteristics. An interesting contrast from our study is that between two brothers from Nova Brasília, Pedro and Gilberto. Pedro always meets me in his brother Gilberto's house, saying his own shack is too precarious and small to receive visitors. His brother's house is one of the nicest in the community. When I ask them why one has done so much better, they laugh and say Gilberto was always the hard worker and the one who applied himself and "planned ahead" while Pedro was more laid back and content to drink beer

with his buddies, rather than focus on his studies and bathroom and kitchen tiling work. When Pedro gets *biscate* (odd jobs) he generally spends the money rapidly, perhaps by paying debts or treating his friends, but never putting any aside for savings.

What we discovered about livelihoods, vulnerabilities, assets, and capabilities deprivation is the subject of a separate piece, but the key points are that:

- 1) The move from an illiterate rural life in agriculture (or fishing) to a literate urban life in manual labor was a great leap in socio-economic mobility for the original interviewees or their parents.
- 2) There have been major improvements in collective consumption of urban services and in individual consumption of household goods over 35 years, but this has not served to reduce the perception of increased inequality between the *favelados* and the rest of society.
- 3) Significant gains were made in education by the children of the original interviewees, but these gains are not fully reflected in better jobs.³⁴
- 4) Unemployment rates for the urban poor are now higher than during the late 1960s.
- 5) Job loss, especially for unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and the rising bar of educational requirements for jobs³⁵ has excluded many *favela* residents from the formal job market, leaving informal economic activities to fill the gap.
- 6) Comparing incomes between *favelados* and other Rio residents shows a strikingly lower rate of return to educational investment for those living in *favelas*. This holds up even when controlling for age, race and gender.

MARGINALITY IN “STREET TALK”

Returning to the theme of marginality, it is obvious that by any other name it depicts an equally condemning reality. Whether re-labeled “social exclusion,” “(pseudo) citizenship” or “capabilities deprivation” in academic discourse, the bottom line is that perhaps a third of Rio’s 12 million people are rendered non-persons.

If the term “marginality” has been discredited and largely disappeared within academic and non-profit circles, it never lost its caché on the streets. It continues to have the dual connotation of indicating either the “poorest of the poor” or “outlaws and criminals.” The conflation of these meanings in itself says a lot about the criminalization of poverty in Brazil.

The following excerpts from focus groups in São Paulo *favelas* conducted in 2000 cover both connotations as well as reinforcing a sense of respectable superiority by distinguishing “us” from “them.” In one session, marginals (*marginais*) are described as:

People who live under bridges or on the street, eat garbage, collect junk and cardboard, beg, depend on charity for food and clothes, and never send their children to school. They may use a piece of cardboard as a mattress and tin cans for cooking, and their shelter may be nothing more

than a plastic bag. They do not want anything more from life. They are the ones most abused by the police (Melo 2002: 379).

In another community “marginais” were portrayed as “having no scruples, being thieves, murderers and drug addicts, trying for the easy life by harming others” (Melo 2002: 379). Still a third group was recorded as saying:

[A few years ago] 50 percent of this community were *marginais*, but nowadays it is zero [because people have either improved their circumstances or have been squeezed out]. Our reality is like this. We must not be passive. We must always strive for a better life. But at least we have our little shacks to sleep in, our TV sets to watch, and our daily meals. *We are neither beggars nor marginais* (Melo 2002: 279, emphasis mine).

Favela and *conjunto* residents in Rio de Janeiro tell another story. Since the mid-1980s, drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and general violence have increased dramatically in Rio. The city became a central node in the subdividing and transshipment of drugs (mainly cocaine), with most of the activity conducted within the territory of the *favelas*, taking advantage of the absence of “full protection of the law” in those communities and of networks of complicity within the police, the judiciary, and the political structure at all levels.

With this, the word “marginality,” which already connoted “*bandidos*,” came to refer to organized criminal gangs and drug traffickers. For example, when in the *favelas* I am often told to avoid certain areas because they are controlled by the “marginality,” or that it is too dangerous to stay after dark because of the “marginals.” Many friends in both *favelas* and *conjuntos* confided to me that they were thinking of moving out after all these years due to the fear that their children would become involved in “marginality.” When used in rap and funk lyrics the term is often turned into a defiant bravado, “we are the marginalized,” sometimes calling for an uprising or revolt.

Since much of the violent drug-related activity takes place within, or at the entrance points to the *favelas*, there has been an un-doing of the fragile acceptance and coexistence of *favelas* and their surrounding neighborhoods that started to appear during the period of *abertura*. The unfortunate conflagration of marginal as poor and as dangerous easily re-asserted itself reinforcing former prejudices that all *favela* residents are criminals, harking back to the earlier quote from the Fundação Leão XIII. While the press points out the many innocent victims of the crossfire between police and gangs, the middle class once again fears proximity to the *favelas*. This is reflected in the job market, the real estate market, and the consumer market.

ADVANCED MARGINALITY

Beginning in the late 1990s, the term marginality itself began to reappear in academic circles, in discussions of persistent poverty in first world cities. Terms such as

“the new underclass,” the “new poverty,” “the new marginality,” or “advanced marginality” started to describe the conditions of the chronic poor in the black ghettos of the United States and in the migrant slums of Europe. The idea is that advanced marginality reflects the current stage of global capitalism, implying conditions for a truly non-integrated, irrelevant mass of population relegated to the territorial spaces of self-perpetuating ghettos.

Loic Wacquant has developed this concept most fully starting with his 1996 article where he describes the “contiguous configuration of color, class, and place” in the Chicago ghetto, the French *banlieue*, and the British and Dutch inner cities. He posits a distinctive post-industrial marginality characterized by new constraints, stigmas, territorial separation, dependency on the welfare state, and institutions within “territories of urban relegation” (Wacquant 1996).

Below, I pick up on the four key “structural dynamics” that Wacquant suggests are reshaping urban poverty in advanced industrial societies, and explore how they apply (or not) to the reality in Rio de Janeiro and Brazil.³⁶

Social Inequality

Social inequality in “advanced marginality” persists and even grows within the context of overall economic prosperity, in part due to the elimination of jobs for unskilled workers, along with multiplication of jobs for university-trained professionals. Brazil is one of the most unequal countries in the world despite some recent improvements; and Rio is a sharply stratified city, yet we cannot say that the social inequality exists in the context of overall prosperity. Rio’s economy cannot be considered “prosperous” and the de-industrialization along with job loss for unskilled workers, has only increased inequality. In open-ended discussions many *favelados* talk bitterly of the increased gap between rich and poor, and cite exclusion and inequality as factors which have gotten worse over the past years, as seen in the comments below by an ex resident of Catacumba who now lives in a self-built family compound abutting the Housing Projects in Guapore:

When I first met you, I thought that if I worked very hard all of my life and took on extra work in the evenings and weekends; and if my wife did so as well, we would manage to become “people.” (*gente*) We have raised our two daughters, sent them to good private schools, retired from our jobs with full benefits and are both still working full-time, yet we are further from the “normal people” now than we were then—we are “light years” away.

Absolute Surplus Population

Wacquant relates absolute surplus population to the mutation of wage labor, implying a degradation and dispersion of the conditions of employment with a high percentage of “redundant” workers—many of whom will never work again—alongside widespread poverty for those who do have jobs (due to low pay and the exploitation of

temporary workers). As discussed above, Brazilian unemployment levels are among the highest in history, with Rio among the metropolitan areas suffering most. There has been a weakening of the labor unions and an erosion of conditions of formal employment. The informal economy masks what might be considered a surplus population. One quarter of the households of our original *favela* sample reported at least one person of working age as unemployed, but the majority of households include at least one person currently active in the labor force (and often several), and the percent of those with formal employment (as measured by a signed labor contract, or *carteira assinada*), has actually risen from 1969 to 2001, and is higher for each generation studied.) In short, we are not seeing an absolute surplus population among Rio's poor, whether in *favelas* or housing projects or low income neighbourhoods."

Retrenchment of the Welfare State

Retrenchment of the welfare state is characterized by social disinvestment, with programs targeted at the poor being cut and turned into instruments of surveillance and control. To apply this to Brazil, it must first be noted that the country never had a highly developed welfare state of the kind seen in Europe or the United States. As in other Latin American countries, Brazil has been undergoing a process of reform, rationalizing its state social expenditures. However, there has been an expansion of social programs focused on the poor -- both under the past and current presidents, and by state and local governments. Brazil is now one of the leading countries in the world in conditional cash transfers, which move towards a negative income tax (or "citizen's wage) through giving each poor person a credit card (*cartão única*) which the Federal government deposits a monthly amount of credit, contingent on such measures as keeping ones children in school, getting them vaccinated, or demonstrating need in a variety of categories (pregnant or nursing mothers, etc.).³⁷

Food vouchers, educational vouchers, *Bolsa Escola* (for each child 7-14 who stays in school), vaccination vouchers and family vouchers, *Bolsa Família*, were the precursors of this integrated plan. These were started under the government of Fernando Cardoso and, after some resistance, are being continued and expanded upon by Lula's government. Meanwhile, the state government opened several "popular" restaurants, serving food for one real (about 30-40 cents) and other targeted populist programs of a similar nature, and the city government has been an active partner in *Favela-Bairro* and is now complementing the infrastructure works with programs for women, young children (1-6) and the elderly in the same communities. President Lula has pledged a campaign of zero hunger and full land regularization for squatters.

In our re-interviews with our original study participants, there is a strong presence of the welfare state in the form of retirement payments. These are a major source of income for a majority of households; some 58 percent of the original interviewees reported that their retirement payments are now their principal source of income, and, for household heads it was even higher (66 percent). Retirees receive about one "minimum salary" per month, which is equivalent to about US\$90.³⁸ In many cases, an entire extended family consisting of several unemployed children and young grandchildren, is

being supported by that retirement check. The pension is sometimes supplemented by the "*cesta basica*" (a basic food basket) as distributed by religious groups.³⁹

In short, the retrenchment of the welfare state seen in the US and Europe is being paralleled by an expansion of the welfare state (although not without problems of corruption and inefficiency) in Brazil.⁴⁰

Spatial Concentration and Stigmatization

Wacquant posits that spatial concentration and stigmatization is “physically expressed in hard-core areas of outcasts, territorial stigma and prejudice, and in a diminishing sense of community life.” Although *favelas* may not be “hard-core areas of outcasts,” they are certainly stigmatized and are losing some of the sense of community trust and unity that had earlier characterized them.

In response to a question of kinds of discrimination, the one most often mentioned was that of “living in a *favela*” (66 percent), with skin color as a close second (65 percent). A diminishing sense of community life was also striking. In the 1969 study, 56 percent regarded the people in their community as being “very tightly united” whereas today only 12 percent feel this way.⁴¹

Our findings on spatial concentration do not coincide with the model, but patterns in other cities from São Paulo to Buenos Aires are much closer to those Wacquant describes. First, not all of Rio’s poor are in *favelas* and not all *favelados* are poor. *Favelas* are spread throughout the city fabric, and their residents are quite heterogeneous — racially, socially, culturally, and economically. In contrast to the total racial segregation characterizing the new marginality, Rio’s *favelas* have always been racially mixed. At the time of my original 1969 study, the random sample showed that 21 percent of *favelados* were black, 30 percent mulatto, and 49 percent white; these percentages are almost identical in the current study. Secondly, *favelas* in Rio are not concentrated in any one area of the city, but are intermixed geographically with more prosperous neighborhoods. Indeed, some are so well located that rental and sales prices are higher than those in certain parts of Copacabana or Botafogo, which are both upper and middle-income areas (Abramo 2001).

Perhaps the most striking finding contesting the premise of advanced marginality is that *favelados* are not “forcibly relegated” to staying in their communities.

As shown in the chart below, only 37% of the original randomly selected study participants we found and re-interviewed, are still living *favelas*, while 25 percent are in public housing projects (*conjuntos*), and 34 percent in neighborhoods---mostly located in the periphery of the city. Among the former community leaders in the sample, only 11 percent are still in *favelas* and 61 percent are in neighborhoods. Their descendants are even more likely to live in a legitimate neighborhood, with a majority (51% and 58% respectively) of the grandchildren of the random and leadership samples now in the formal sector of the housing market

Where are they now?

		Favela	Public Housing Project	Legal Neighborhood
RANDOM SAMPLE	Original Interviewees	37%	25%	34%
	Children	36%	16%	44%
	Grandchildren	32%	13%	51%
LEADERSHIP SAMPLE	Original Interviewees	11%	21%	61%
	Children	24%	17%	56%
	Grandchildren	28%	6%	58%

Socio-economic status is significantly related to the type of community, with those in neighbourhoods doing significantly better. We can conclude then, that despite a significant degree of inter-generational persistence of poverty, we have robust evidence that the poor (even the black poor) are not consigned to “bounded territories of urban relegation” (Wacquant, 1997).⁴²

DRUGS AND VIOLENCE: THE NEW REALITY OF MARGINALITY

The most dramatic and devastating change for Rio’s poor over these decades is not mentioned in the four points above—it is the growth of lethal violence within the *favelas*.⁴³ In 1969, people were afraid of their homes and communities being removed by the government. Today they are afraid of dying in the crossfire between drug dealers and police or between rival gangs—the Red Command and the Third Command, in particular. During the first study, only 16 percent said that violence and crime were the worst things about living in Rio; today 60 percent think so. The fear for personal safety is well justified. In 2001 one fifth of the original interviewees (20%) reported that some member of their family had died in a homicide; and this was not just because they are now elderly--19% of their children and 18% of their grandchildren reported the same experience, showing levels of violent death comparable with those seen during civil wars, and much higher than that of cities in Colombia or Bolivia, which are drug-producing countries (Dowdney 2003).

One of the most perverse results of this new “sphere of fear” is the decrease in social capital, one of the few great assets for getting out of poverty, or at least for attaining relative improvement in one’s life conditions. Nowadays people are simply afraid to leave their homes. As a former Catacumba and current Guaporé resident put it:

To live in a place where you do not have the liberty to act freely, to come and go, to leave your house whenever you want to, to live as any other person who is not in jail. It is imprisoning to think: “can I leave now or is it too dangerous?” Why do I have to call someone and say that they shouldn’t come here today? It is terrible, it is oppressive. Nobody wants to live like this.

This fear diminishes the use of public space, leads to less socializing among friends and relatives, fewer memberships in community organizations, less sense of trust and less networking. Thus, news about informal jobs and casual work of all types that was passed easily along the grapevine is now more difficult to come by and people no longer know who they can trust. Comparing the participation of the original interviewees in 1969 with that of their children in 2001, the one exception to the drastic decrease in participation is the Evangelical church. The percentage of respondents saying they attend religious meetings fell from 49 to 38 percent, while the number participating in a residents’ association fell from 31 to six percent and in sports clubs, 15 to two percent. For many women, religious activities are their one opportunity to get out of the house and the one “leisure” activity they permit themselves. It becomes their only social life.

Another indicator of the changing times, as well as the new isolation is the decline in the sense of community unity. For example, among the people interviewed in 1969, 54 percent said the community was “very united” and another 24 percent said “fairly united”; whereas among their children, almost none said “very united” and the majority (55 percent) said their community “lacks unity.” This may be due to the fact that *favelas* were always at the high extreme of collective help and mutual aid owing to the many battles they fought in common, and that about one third of the children live in *favelas* today. But even in the *favelas*, there is much less unity. People feel trapped between the drug dealers and the police. They feel the police do more harm and provide less help than the drug dealers, but see both as disrespectful of life in the community. When police enter the *favela* on raids, they barge into people’s homes, break down their doors, knock them around, and destroy their possessions, all under the pretext of searching for a hiding gang member. The gang members provoke this by putting a gun to a resident’s head and saying, “hide me here in your home or I will blow your brains out.” The main drugs in the 1960s were beer or cachaça (sugar cane rum) and marijuana, and the instruments of violence fists, knives, or broken beer bottles. Hard drugs and arms are now ubiquitously sold and used and the dealers have more advanced weapons than the police.

CONCLUSION

What we have been observing over these decades is the transformation from “the myth of marginality” to “the reality of marginality.” In 1969, there was widespread hope that the sacrifices made by the cityward migrants would open up wider opportunities and a greater degree of choice for their children, if not for themselves. This is one reason the expected radicalism of the squatters never materialized.⁴⁴ New migrants were not angered or frustrated by the disparities between themselves and the upper classes surrounding

them in Rio because they were comparing their future perspectives with those of their counterparts who remained in the countryside. Although their children have better urban services, more consumer goods and more education, they are suffering from the devaluation of that education in a changed job market, the entrenched stigma associated with living in *favelas* (or *conjuntos*), and a bleak outlook for their future, made more deadly by threats on their lives from the drug and arms traffic. Their communities are the epi-center of ongoing battles between various factions (gangs) and the police.⁴⁵

The author of the song “Soldado do Morro,” MV Bill, is a 30-year-old rap star, a popular militant leader, and a key representative of Cidade de Deus’ citywide *favela* network, CUFA (*Central Unica de Favelas*). The song is a refrain on major themes of marginality that have been discussed in this article. First, marginality is the creation of society, not the fault of the poor. Second, the poor are trapped between dealing drugs (which destroy their community and themselves) and trying to get a job in a situation where even the humiliation of begging is fruitless. Third, even the lucky few who get a job for a minimum salary and work overtime still cannot support their families. Fourth, policemen and politicians who are supposed to be protecting them are also guilty of crime and violence. Lastly, those like the “soldado” are expendable and their deaths are simply statistics for daily news, seen as just one small victory in the fight to rid the city of “bad elements.” The Soldado do Morro chose a path of early and violent death and protests the injustice of the system that fails to produce alternatives for him and others like him. This element of defiance and “disgust,” as he calls it, is heard in many rap songs and is one of the vehicles for exposing reality and calling for collective action.⁴⁶

The lives of the poor have always been cheap, but due to today’s drugs and arms traffic, they have been devalued even more. Death rates in the *favelas* are much greater than in the rest of the city and for youth surpass civil war numbers.⁴⁷ The subtle forms of complicity in manipulating the poor and the well-documented abuses of clientelism reflected in unfulfilled promises of community up-grading have now become obvious between gangsters, police, the judiciary and elected officials at all levels. This new violence may be the ultimate manifestation of the marginalization of the poor, the reality of marginality.

*Many is the time I've felt less than a man
Unemployed, with my child going hungry
It's easy to criticize me
Society created me and now demands my death
Condemning me to die in prison
Transformed into television news*

*I've been a beggar, already humiliated myself
Pleading for a job, "I have a small child, good sir"
Long waiting list, me and 300 others
After an eternity, "no openings at the moment"
The same story every day, all this generates revolt
I am hooked, who is to blame?*

*Those who are making this war, never die in it
I distributed the drugs that destroy the favela
Making money from our reality
I am caught between crime and necessity
Those who should be providing protection
Invade the favela with weapons in hand...
Those who come seeking our votes, they too have killed*

*The life of crime is slow suicide
Bangu, 1, 2, 3, my friends inside there
I am involved, I know the outcome
A negative balance, minus one marginal
For society to count, one fewer on the list
Adding weight to a sad statistic...*

*I don't know which is worse, turning into a bandit
Or killing yourself for the minimum wage...⁴⁸*

MV BILL, "Soldado do Morro" (Soldier of the Hillside)
from the album "Traficando Informação," 1999

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¹ Sim, mas a favela nunca foi reduto de marginal, eu falei / So tem gente humilde, marginalizada / E essa verdade não sai no jornal / A favela é um problema social / É mais eu sou favela / Minha gente é trabalhadeira / E nunca teve assistência social / Sim mas só vive lá / Porque para o pobre não tem outro jeito / Apenas só tem o direito a um salário de fome / E uma vida normal / A favela é uma problema social (Souto de Oliveira and Marcier 1998: 102)

² According to studies done by the Planning Department of the city government, The Instituto Perreira Passos, using aerial photos, quoted in “O Globo,” April 20, 2003. According to the official 2000 census there were only 516 *favelas* with a total population of 1,092,476.

³ Refer to Ventura, Z., for popularization of the idea that the city of Rio is divided between the “legitimate city” and the “illegitimate city.”

⁴ Legal land tenure is still problematic, and will likely be embroiled in legal proceedings for the foreseeable future, efforts by international agencies notwithstanding. However, official ownership documents for the houses –called “Habite-Se” are being prepared by the Municipal Secretary of Urbanism, and will be distributed to all *favela* residents. (Interview with Alfredo Sirkis, Municipal Secretary of Urbanism and Environment, March 31, 2004). According to Lu Peterson, the Municipal Special Affairs Director, the Favela-Bairro participants do not want land tenure to be legalized as they do not want to pay property taxes and they feel secure in their land use as is. When asked why they are not interested in using land title as collateral for loans, they repeatedly say that they do not want to assume any loans without a sure way to repay them, which they do not have. They are adamant that it is too risky to use their homes or land as collateral.

⁵ On the comparisons of rental and purchase prices in favelas and various areas of the city, see Abramo (2001).

⁶ *Favela-Bairro* is the most ambitious and extensive squatter upgrading program implemented in Latin America (and perhaps the world). It is funded by the Inter-American Development Bank, with contributions from the National Caixa Economica and local municipal government. Of the 752 *favelas* existing in Rio to date, it has reached 144, starting with the smallest and then medium-sized. The proposed replenishment would allow for adaptations in order to deal with the largest settlements. This funding has already been approved, but the national government is evidently blocking the transfer of funds to the city of Rio due to an agreement in the last municipal administration not to incur further municipal debt.

⁷ Although they may not always have jobs, being honest and hardworking is the core component of respect in the value system of the *favelas*. Being called a hard worker is the highest form of praise. In fact, one of the reasons I was so fully accepted when I lived in the *favelas* in the 1960s was the fact that I worked on my research days, nights, weekends, which was greatly admired. It became so popular to be interviewed for the study that we had to devise a fake short version of the questionnaire to apply to those people who could not accept that they had not been chosen in the random sample. That in itself shows the high degree of importance of being heard and having one’s experience legitimated.

⁸ For more on the relationship between inequality and violence, see the work of Ignacio Cano (2004).

⁹ In our study, 80 percent of the people have a monthly income of 170 *reais* or less but only 18 percent think this is sufficient for a “decent life,” i.e. the basics of food, clothing, and shelter. Sixty seven percent stated that 300 *reais* per month would be the bare minimum for a “decent life,” but only 19 percent earn that much or more.

¹⁰ This last refrain brings to mind the song “Officer Kropke” from *West Side Story* in which the gang members of East Harlem lament “Hey Officer Kropke we’re down on our knees, no one loves a fellow with a social disease.” For contemporary references to people as dirty or as “social diseases” see Anderson (1995) and Trigo (2000).

¹¹ With the single exception of the decade of the 1980s when over 100,000 people were forcibly evicted by the policy of *favela* removal. See Chart in Appendix. Data from 2000 IBGE Census.

¹² The fishing villages were Jaua and Arembepe (now a famous hippie destination). The agricultural village was Abrantes, all in the municipality of Camacari. It should be noted that the word “interior” in Portuguese does not connote distance from the ocean but distance from the major city in the region.

¹³ Brazil went from 45 to 74 percent urban between the 1960s and 1980s. From 1965-1980 rural-urban migration grew by an average of 4.3 percent per year. According to Werner Baer, in the time period from 1960s to the 1980s, three out of every five rural Brazilians migrated to urban areas.

¹⁴ In 1975, the state of Guanabara, where the city of Rio was located, was merged with the state of Rio de Janeiro, where Caxias was located.

¹⁵ The three communities were Catacumba, a *favela* in the wealthy South Zone, which was removed in 1970, and whose residents were relocated to more distant public housing, including City of God and Guaporé-Quitungo; Nova Brasília, a *favela* in the industrial North Zone, which is now a battleground between police and drug traffic; and Duque de Caxias, a peripheral municipality in the Fluminense Lowlands (Baixada Fluminense) where I selected three favelas and the five poorest neighborhoods of unserviced lots.

¹⁶ The re-study began in 1999 with a Fulbright grant and seed funding from the World Bank to test the feasibility of relocating the original study participants. We went to six states to track them down, and continued until 2001. Those who were the most difficult to find were the people who had lived in the in Caxias. For further information on the study and the findings, see Perlman (2004). Further funding from the Tinker Foundation, DFID (the British aid agency), the World Bank and other contributors made it possible to bring the work to fruition.

¹⁷ In this phase, we interviewed 400 randomly selected men and women 16-65 years old and 25 leaders from each community (total of 1275 interviews), following the same study design as the original work.

¹⁸ As Auyero (1997) puts it, “Almost three decades ago, in what would later become one of Latin America’s most original and controversial contributions to the social sciences, a group of sociologists tackled...the escalation of urban marginality. Working within a structural-historic neo-Marxist perspective, they recovered the notion of ‘marginality’ from the realm of modernization theories (represented by Gino Germani, (1967, 1970, 1972); and the DESAL school, 1969, 1970), which focused on the lack of integration of certain social groups into society due to their (deviant) values, perceptions and behavioral patterns. Marginal groups, according to this approach, lack the psychological and psychosocial attributes that were deemed necessary to participate in ‘modern society.’ Emerging in the transition to modern industrial society marginality was thought to be the product of the coexistence of beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors of a previous, more ‘traditional’ stage.” (1997: 508-12)

¹⁹ Even Franz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, speaks of the “uprooted peasants circling aimlessly around the city” as a natural source of revolutionary activity (1965: 104).

²⁰ See *The Myth of Marginality*, chapters 7 and 8, for a fuller discussion of this.

²¹ In his discussion of “marginal mass,” Auyero states, “This ‘surplus population’ transcended the logic of the Marxist concept of ‘industrial reserve army’ and led authors to coin the term ‘marginal mass.’ The ‘marginal mass’ was neither superfluous nor useless; it was ‘marginal’ because it was rejected by the same system that had created it. Thus the ‘marginal mass’ was a ‘permanent structural feature’ never to be absorbed by the ‘hegemonic capitalist sector’ of the economy, not even during its expansionist cyclical phases (1997: 1).”

²² Many of those we interviewed said they had purchased their expensive household items, such as furniture or even cars, during the period just after the Real Plan when their currency was worth more, and that if they had not bought those items at that time, they would never have been able to afford them.

²³ An excellent source for more detail on this is Queiroz Ribeiro and Telles, 2000:80.

²⁴ Helen Safa (2003:6) confirms this as a trend for Latin America as a whole, “structural adjustment severely limited governmental spending—resulting in the decline of the public sector and privatization of public services on which many of the urban poor depended. It also froze wages and employment; contributing to the expansion of unregulated jobs in the informal sector for the self-employed and subcontractors to the formal sector.” Elizabeth Leeds’ 1966 article “Cocaine and Parallel Politics in the Brazilian Urban Periphery” in *Latin American Research Review*. Vol. 31. No. 3., pp. 47-83 shows in detail how this related to the increasing unemployment in Rio and indirectly to the appeal of drug trafficking.

²⁵ According to Peter Ward (2003:2), a number of countries have undergone changes in state organization since the 1970s that have resulted in “[t]he shift from a largely patrimonialist and undemocratic state towards one that, while more democratic, is also slimmer and downsized, thereby shifting state intervention and the welfare systems ever more to local level governments and to the quasi-private sector of NGOs.”

²⁶ Sueli Ramos Schiffer (2002: 226) states that “[i]n practice, this means losing some basic guarantees and support: health assistance, thirteenth monthly wage bonus, paid holidays, retirement, and compensation at

dismissal; these have been in effect since the 1940s for formal jobs and have always been argued to be necessary benefits to compensate [for] poor wages.”

²⁷ I refer here to the title of Arturo Escobar’s book, “Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World” (1995).

²⁸ For example, Bessis contends that poverty is studied by economists and exclusion by sociologists; Paugam asserts that social exclusion is the paradigm allowing our society to become aware of its own dysfunction; Fassin argues that the concept of social exclusion has taken over the two concepts, the underclass and the marginal; Townsend claims that social exclusion has “strengthened approaches to poverty by involving the lack of fundamental resources and the inability to fully participate in one’s own society,” and Jackson distinguishes between “structural and individual exclusion.”

²⁹ In Brazil there are some counter-examples of this ‘discredited state,’ at least at the local level. In a select number of Brazilian cities with several consecutive terms of Labor Party local government (such as Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, Belem and Vitoria), we have seen innovations such as “participatory budgeting” where residents of different neighborhoods negotiate capital improvements, service delivery priorities, and the locating of negative externalities in an open process across the city.

³⁰ In particular, the literature on citizenship and social movements (Dagnino 1998; Alvarez 1993) sought to go beyond the older focus upon “formal rights and privileges” (Marshall 1972), to address other issues such as rights. In the 1980s and 1990s, these new literatures further evolved in response to a theoretical and practical need to explain the lack of correspondence between “the form and substance of citizenship” (Holston and Appadurai 1999:5) and the emergence of new forms of citizenship that are created by social movements from the “ground up” (Holston 1999; Castells 1997).

³¹ Forero (2004)

³² See Sen (1999) and other works including those by Dreze, Desai, Chat, Gonzalez de la Rocha, Narayan and Petesch.

³³ A case in point is Dona Rita (65 years old) from Nova Brasília, who owns two stores there, a truck, a car, a beach house, and her apartment in a highrise condominium outside the *favela*. When Rita was shopping for new eyeglasses in an upscale store in downtown Rio, she asked the price of a pair she liked, whereupon the salesgirl turned rude and , told her she could never afford them. When I asked Rita why this happened, she said it was because she was dressed as someone from the “North Zone.”

³⁴ Whereas 70 percent of the original sample had more education than their parents, only 62 percent ended up with better jobs. Likewise, whereas 75 percent of the children of the original sample had more education than their parents, only 66 percent had better jobs.

³⁵ A structural change occurred in the value of years of schooling as they relate to prestige in the job market. When I lived in Rio in the late 1960s, parents in the *favela* would often tell their children that if they did not stay in school they would end up as garbage collectors. In July of 2003, the city opened a competition for 400 jobs for garbage collectors, and 12,000 people applied. A high school diploma was a pre-requisite for application.

³⁶ This section of the paper expands upon what I wrote in Latin American Research Review (2004).

³⁷ See Valeria Pero, “Conditional Cash Transfers in Brazil,” forthcoming, 2005.

³⁸ This figure was calculated at the exchange rate of 1 dollar = 2.90 *reais*, but this rate has oscillated a great deal during the past years.

³⁹ This is sometimes problematic as is the distribution of the food vouchers, also done by Evangelical groups in some favelas, as we discovered that only people attending church were getting them. Under the government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a number of innovative poverty programs were established. For example, small cash transfers were given to poor families in exchange for each child from 7 to 14 who is kept in school and for parents who insured a set of inoculations and provided proof of regular medical check-ups. The Lula administration consolidated an array of such programs (“*Bolsa Escola*” and others) into the Family Grant Program, and expanded it via the introduction of a type of debit card that provides eligible families with an average monthly benefit of about \$24 (for more detail on this see Dugger 2004).

⁴⁰ To give one small example, a recent cover article from O Globo of March 2005, found hundreds of men receiving payments for being pregnant or nursing.

⁴¹ Interestingly enough, among all three types of communities (favelas, housing projects and legal neighborhoods), the favelas still have the highest sense of community unity, across all generations.

⁴² 33 percent of the original interviewees who left the *favela* for a "neighborhood" achieved relative upward mobility compared to 18 percent of those who stayed in the *favela*.

⁴³ Cano (2004)

⁴⁴ See Nelson, Joan. 1969. "Migrants, Urban Poverty and Instability in Developing Nations,." Center for International Affairs, Occasional Papers in International Affairs, no.22. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University.

⁴⁵ According to the New York Times of January 21, 2004, among 60 countries studied by the UN, Brazil has the highest rate of homicide in the world, with 90 percent by firearms. ("Brazil Adopts Strict Gun Controls to Try to Curb Murders," p. A3). According to recent studies, Rio follows Sao Paulo as the city with the highest murder rate, and rates are much higher in *favelas* than in the population at large.

⁴⁶ See Jane Souto (1998)

⁴⁷ See Dowdney (2003)

⁴⁸ Várias vezes me senti menos homem / Desempregado meu moleque com fome / É muito fácil vir aqui me criticar / A sociedade me criou agora manda me matar / Me condenar e morrer na prisão / Virar notícia de televisão / Já pedi esmola já me humilhei / Fui pisoteado só eu sei que eu passei / Tô ligado não vai justificar / Meu tempo é pequeno não sei o quanto vai durar / É prior do que pedir favor / Arruma um emprego tenho um filho pequeno seu doutor / Fila grande eu e mais trezentos / Depois de muito tempo sem vaga no momento / A mesma história todo dia é foda / Isso que gerou a minha revolta / Me deixou desnortado mais um maluco armado / Tô ligado bolado quem é o culpado? / Que fabrica a guerra e nunca morre por ela / Distribui a droga que destrói a favela / Fazendo dinheiro com a nossa realidade / Me deixaram entre o crime e a necessidade / Feio e esperto com uma cara de mal / A sociedade me criou mas um marginal / Eu tenho uma nove e uma HK / Com ódio na veia pronto para atirar / Violência da favela começou a descer pro asfalto / Homicídio seqüestro assalto / Quem deveria dar a proteção / Invade a favela de fuzil na mão / Eu sei que o mundo que eu vivo é errado / Mas quando eu precisei ninguém tava do meu lado / Errado por errado quem nunca errou? / Aquele que pede voto também já matou / Vida do crime é suicídio lento / Na cadeia Bangú 1 2 3 meus amigos tenho lá dentro / Eu tô ligado qual é sei qual é o final Um soldado negativo menos um marginal / Pra sociedade uma baixa na lista / E engordar uma triste estatística / Não sei se é pior virar bandido / Ou se matar por um salário mínimo (Bill 1999).