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**Longitudinal Panel Studies in Squatter Communities:  
Lessons from a re-study of Rio's favelas: 1969-2003**

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## Abstract

This paper addresses the methods used, problems encountered and solutions utilized in the process of re-locating and re-interviewing squatters who had participated in a study in 1968-69 in Rio de Janeiro. The original research (published in 1976 as *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Politics and Poverty in Rio de Janeiro*), involved living in three favela communities and interviewing 200 randomly-selected residents (men and women 16-65 years of age) and 50 leaders (positionally and reputationally selected) from each

Now, three decades later, we are conducting a re-study whose objectives are:

- To understand the intra-and inter-generational dynamics of urban poverty;
- To explore the changing mythology and reality of ‘marginality’;
- To trace life history patterns against macro political and economic transformations;
- To test the mediating effects of civil society and social networks; and
- To see the effects of local, national and international public policies

The study traces life trajectories across four generations: the original interviewees, their parents, their children and their grandchildren. It combines qualitative and quantitative methods including direct observation, in-depth open-ended interviews, participatory re-creation of the community history in each community, (using the DRP - Rapid Participatory Diagnostic - method), the application of survey instruments (questionnaires), the collection of life histories, and the re-analysis of existing data sets and research materials. We work with the concepts of trans-generational transmission of poverty, inequality, marginality, exclusion, and social mobility.

The major methodological problems we encountered, how we approached them and what lessons we learned comprise the bulk of the paper. We discuss issues of re-locating original interviewees; dealing with those who had died but whose families we found; verifying the identity of the re-located individuals (given that we had only first names); gaining access to the communities in light of increasing violence; formulating a revised questionnaire that would be comparable to the original one but relevant to the current moment; re-creating the contextual histories of the three communities; selective memory and memory loss; and the problems of bias introduced by only locating one third of the original sample and that group being the youngest and (according to the 1969 data) having slightly higher family incomes, more access to services, more children and tighter community integration in comparison with the respondents we could not locate.

## Context

Since 1969 Brazil has undergone major political transitions from dictatorship to “opening” to democracy; major economic transformations from “miracle” boom to triple-digit inflation, to bust to precarious stability; and major policy changes from favela removal to upgrading and integration. It appears that the cumulative effects of macro-level gains, poverty programs, and community efforts have not significantly reduced urban poverty. In fact, both the absolute number of poor persons and the percentage of Rio’s population living in favelas have consistently increased over these three decades, as has the degree of inequality. By following the life trajectories of individuals interviewed three decades ago and their descendants, and by re-creating the histories of the three squatter communities (favelas) they lived in, we hope to better understand the dynamics of the inter- and intra-generational persistence of poverty and social mobility. By looking at four generations (original interviewees, their parents, their children, and their grandchildren) we can explore what endogenous and exogenous factors made a difference in breaking the poverty cycle over time.

## Research Objectives and Conceptual Framework

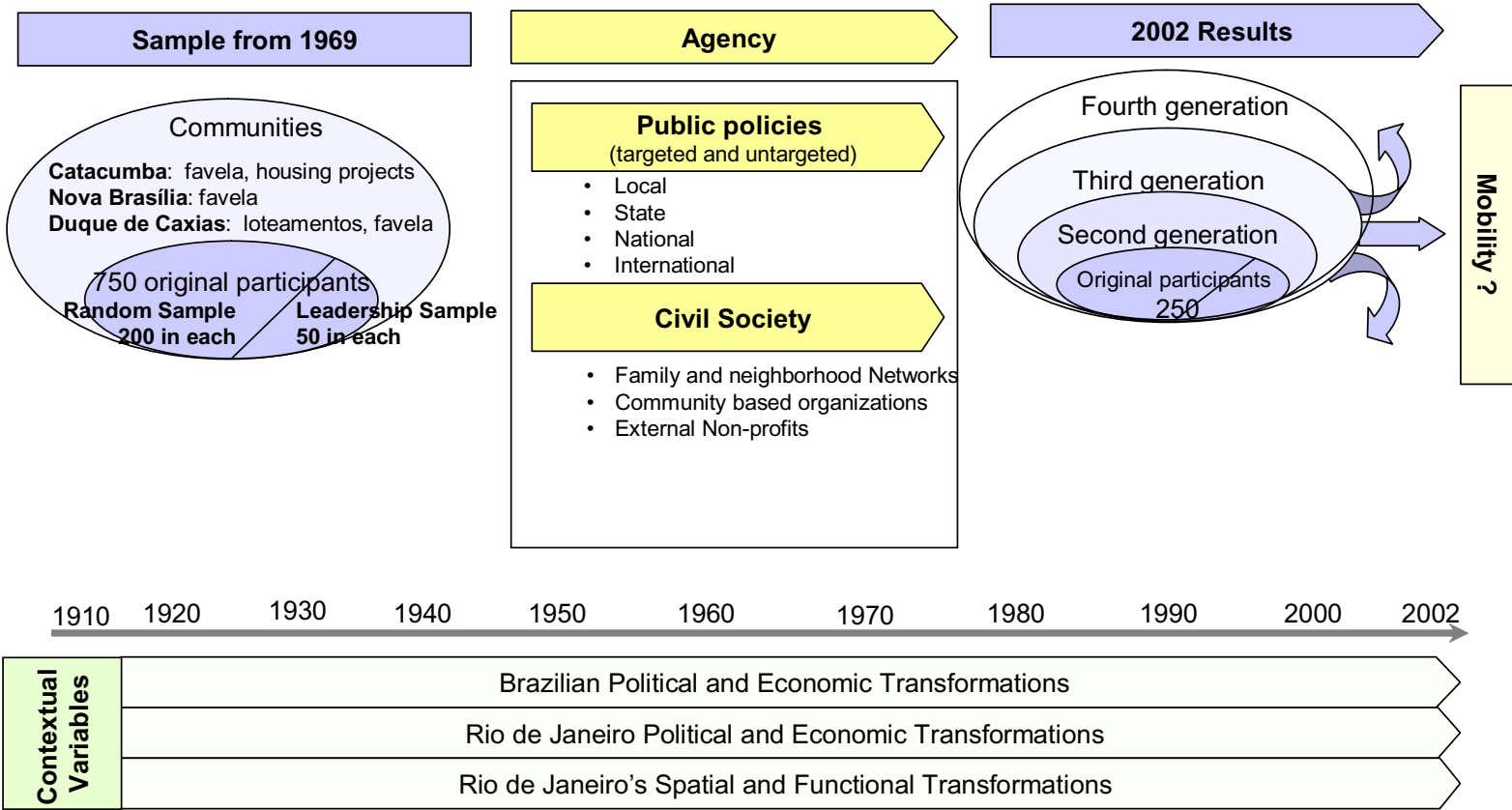
This paper addresses the methods used, problems encountered and solutions utilized in the process of re-locating and re-interviewing squatters who had participated in a study during 1968-69 in Rio de Janeiro. The original research (published in 1976 as *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Politics and Poverty in Rio de Janeiro*), involved living in three favela communities and interviewing 200 randomly-selected residents (men and women 16-65 years of age) and 50 leaders (positionally and reputationally selected) from each. The first community, Catacumba, in the up-scale residential South Zone was forcibly removed in 1970 and the residents relocated in public housing projects (conjuntos) distant from the city, including the infamous City of God (Cidade de Deus). The second, Nova Brasilia, in the industrial North Zone, is part of the notorious Complexo do Alemão, where journalist Tim Lopez was tortured and murdered and is one of the last areas untouched by the widespread upgrading project, Favela-Bairro. In the third site, Duque de Caxias, in the peripheral Fluminense lowlands, half of the interviewees were favelados (selected in a proportional random sample among the three existing favelas) and half were owners of small-unserviced lots in the five poorest areas of the municipality. (One of these favelas, Beira-Mar is now also famous because it is the neighborhood of Fernandinho Beira-Mar, thought to be the most powerful drug lord in Brazil.)

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- To see the effects of local, national and international public policies.

A schematic diagram of the Conceptual Framework can be found on page 3. To see how the goals and objectives of the research are translated into tasks, outcomes, and products, see chart “The Dynamics of the Urban Poor” on page 4.

# Conceptual Framework



## THE DYNAMICS OF THE URBAN POOR AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Goals	Objectives	Tasks	Products	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To understand the dynamics of urban poverty and mobility</b></li> <li>• <b>To explore the effects of public policy on low income individuals, families, and communities</b></li> <li>• <b>To trace life history patterns against major political and economic transformations and urban evolution</b></li> <li>• <b>To test the mediating effects of civil society and social networks</b></li> <li>• <b>To better inform decision-makers about poverty reduction</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trace the life trajectories of favelados over 30 years</li> <li>• Identify coping mechanisms and survival strategies for overcoming poverty</li> <li>• Train and employ favelados along with university students for research team</li> <li>• Evaluate the impact of public policy on the urban poor in Rio contrasting targeted and untargeted policies</li> <li>• Identify milestones in the political, economic, and urban changes in Brazil</li> <li>• Explore the role of NGOs and community-based associations in mobility</li> <li>• Convene stakeholders and policy meetings to test results and disseminate findings</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commission Longitudinal Trend and Policy Studies</li> <li>2. Review Literature and Secondary Data</li> <li>3. Relocate Original Interviewees or their Families and Descendants</li> <li>4. Draw New Random and Leadership Samples from Original Communities</li> <li>5. Select Policy-Specific Upgraded Favelas and Sample</li> <li>6. Prepare and Pre-Test Survey Instruments</li> <li>7. Field Interviews</li> <li>8. Contextual Research</li> <li>9. Coding of Life History Data, Questionnaires, and Interview Results</li> <li>10. Data Analysis</li> <li>11. Draft Report</li> <li>12. Brazilian Conference on Favelas: From Removal to Urbanization</li> <li>13. International Symposium at World Bank</li> <li>14. Final Report</li> <li>15. Dissemination to Specific Target Audiences</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longitudinal data on the life trajectories of Rio's favelados for use in other studies</li> <li>• Capacity Building: Favelados trained as part of research team documenting their own reality</li> <li>• Input into WDR 2000</li> <li>• Video documenting squatter removal vs. upgrading consequences</li> <li>• Policy implications derived from research findings</li> <li>• Special issue of the IPPUR journal about favelas and public policy</li> <li>• Final Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger <b>Knowledge Base</b> on the factors that shape and perpetuate urban poverty</li> <li>• <b>Clearer Understanding</b> of the role local, national, and international policies play in lives of the urban poor</li> <li>• <b>Increased awareness</b> and capacity of favelados, community organizations, local officials</li> <li>• Improved <b>allocation of scarce resources</b> for squatter upgrading and urban poverty</li> <li>• Creation of <b>Methodology</b> for use in longitudinal studies of urban poverty and mobility</li> <li>• Where political will exists, higher probability of <b>Policy Success</b></li> <li>• <b>Learning community</b> focused on upgrading and urban poverty</li> </ul>

The idea was to use the original 1968-69 data set, locate as many of the original 750 participants as possible, and re-interview them as well as their children and grandchildren to trace life trajectories across time and space. The study combines qualitative and quantitative methods and is divided into three phases:

**Phase I: Exploratory Research-** to assess the feasibility of finding original interviewees, difficulty of access to the communities, and receptivity to participating in the re-study. We conducted a series of open-ended and semi-structured interviews with “survivors” from the original sample, collecting their personal narratives, and beginning to see how they described their experiences over this period of time, what was recalled and not, what were the benchmarks in their own lives and that of the communities, and what meaning they assigned to words, concepts and images.

**Phase II: Implementation - Interviews Using Survey Instrument and Life History Matrices.** We re-interviewed 262 out of the original 750 study participants, and we are now in the process of interviewing a random sample of their children 16 years or older (394 out of 1005) and beginning to draw a random sample of their grandchildren (16 years or older). The reason we decided to include grandchildren, despite the drop in numbers, is that we suspect that some of the mobility the original interviewees expected for their children when they decided to migrate to the city, has only begun to show up in the next generation (grandchildren).

This phase also included contextual interviews and participatory collective reconstruction of community histories (using a methodology called DRP – Diagnostico Rapido Participativo) as well as leadership interviews with old and new leaders on struggles past, challenges present and what has changed over time. We videotaped several of the interviews, the DRP’s and key moments such as three former leaders of Catacumba returning to the abandoned park that was the site of their homes and discussing their recollections of growing up there and the politics that led to their eviction.

**Phase III: New Random Sample in Communities and Matched Policy Favelas** (not yet started) This will involve drawing new random samples in the original communities and applying the same survey instrument and life history matrix, enabling us to compare the communities at two points in time, and to assess bias in the sub-sample we are following.

We also intend to select similar favelas with opposite policy interventions and compare the lives of residents in those with our original communities. For example, we will select a South Zone favela that was not removed and had similar relevant characteristics as Catacumba back in 1968; and pick a North Zone favela similar to Nova Brasilia back in 1968 that has benefited from a series of upgrading programs including Favela-Bairro.

### **Concepts of Poverty, Inequality, Marginality, Exclusion and Mobility**

The literature provides us with enlightening discussion on the above concepts. The excellent literature review by Yaqub<sup>1</sup> provides one of the clearest discussions of trans-generation persistence of poverty. He concludes that “studies are hindered by the lack of multiple generation data (covering offspring and parents) and panel data (tracking the same individual over time).”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Yaqub, Shahin, ‘Born Poor, Stay Poor?’, Poverty Research Unit, University of Sussex, Falmer, BRIGHTON. BN1 9QN. England, Working Paper 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Yaqub, pp.7.

For the purposes of our work Hulme <sup>3</sup> also provides most useful definitions and distinctions, starting with Amartya Sen's warning that "the category 'poor' is not merely inadequate for evaluative exercises and a nuisance for causal analysis, it can also have distorting effects on policy matters."<sup>4</sup>

We are basing our understanding of these terms and their relationship with each other not only on the literature, but on the way they are used and understood by community residents themselves.

In short, we use, and have used from the beginning of the first study, a multi-dimensional perspective incorporating social, cultural, political, and economic components in our understanding of what it means to be poor, disenfranchised, excluded, stigmatized, etc The concept of marginality has evolved along with the changing reality as I discuss in the attached section of my recent article. The idea of choice, freedom, citizenship, voice, dignity, rights, responsibilities have all come to the fore in this new discussion

### Indicators

The work is based on multi-generational life trajectories. We have limited data on the parents of the original interviewees (place of birth, level of education, and principle occupation) and more robust data for each of the original participants and for a randomly-selected sample of their children and grandchildren over 16 years of age. Our questionnaire to the interviewees contains the following sections:

- ◆ **Control:** Basic information on the education, occupation, contribution and participation of the entire family group and the household members,
- ◆ **Year-by-year Life Histories Matrix** (based on the original methodology of Balan, Browning and Jelin<sup>5</sup>) which track changes in residence, occupation, education, family status and (from 1969 on) health. We are trying to track the life fluctuations and detect periods of upward and downward mobility in both absolute and relative terms.
- ◆ **Domestic economy:** includes assets and income sources, the nature of the residence and collective urban services and monthly expenditures of the household unit.
- ◆ **Social capital** including friendship and kinship networks (nature, extent and frequency), association membership, and participation in community activities.
- ◆ A section on **violence, police, drug traffic and personal security** was added to the questions on the use of public space in the original questionnaire.
- ◆ **Perceptions on Public Policy:** Political information, perceptions and participation, on public policies, citizenship and contacts with various levels of government.
- ◆ **Social mobility:** we used some of the questions of Graham and Birdsall and the ladder from the "Latino Barometro." We ask a series of questions about **aspirations and expectations** (their own and those their parents had for them) and about how the person compares his or her own status to that of various reference groups – siblings, other community members, and those outside the community. We also use perception questions about **exclusion, stigma and discrimination**, and how some of these have changed over time.

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<sup>3</sup> Hulme, David, "Conceptualizing Chronic Poverty," forthcoming in World Development, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Hulme (2003), pp.3.

<sup>5</sup> Balan, Jorge; Browning L; Jelin, Elizabeth; Litzler, Lee, "A computerized approach to the processing and analysis of life stories obtained in sample surveys," Behavioral Science, 14, n° 2, 1969, p.105-120.

## **Problems, Approaches, and Lessons Learned**

We encountered problems of many types including conceptual, methodological, technical and logistical. I will highlight a few of the major challenges we faced and how we overcame them in hopes that this will be useful for others embarking on panel studies under similar circumstances. A set of longitudinal panel studies in squatter settlements from different cities and countries would indeed be a powerful resource for addressing the unanswered questions about persistent poverty and social mobility and the policy implications thereof.

- 1) **Re-locating Original Interviewees:** We faced several serious difficulties in relocation, including the fact that 30 years had passed; that one of the communities had been removed and the residents scattered into several public housing projects; and that in the interests of confidentiality during the height of the dictatorship, we only asked for first names (except in the cases of the leadership sample).

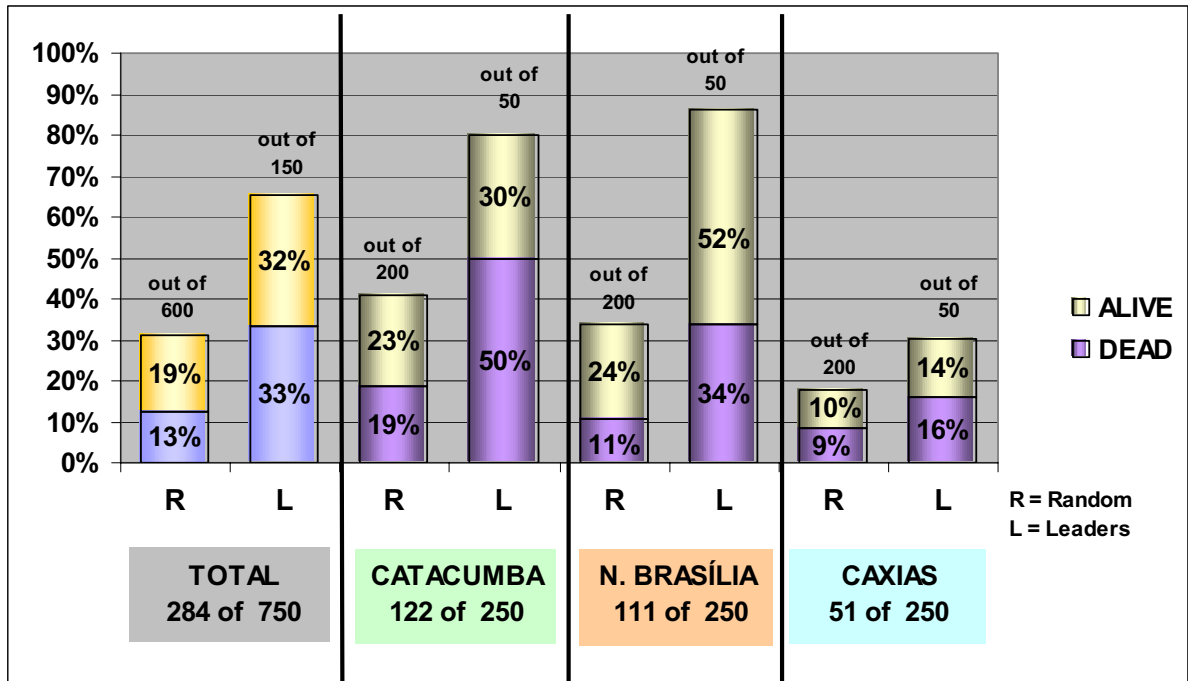
**Our Approach:** I started by re-contacting and visiting my closest friends and the families with whom I had stayed during my time in the communities. I had maintained contact with them over the years and was able to find them easily and ask for their help. It was readily obvious from the start of Phase I that university students would have an impossible time trying to re-locate the families, so we composed teams of community residents, often the children or neighbors of original study participants. We developed a training program for them and a form of remuneration based in part on hours worked and in part on successful location of original participants.

They started at the original address and if the person was no longer there asked for any leads or information. (It is interesting that 50% of those we found were either in the same house or in the same neighborhood, so that made part of our task easier). If no information was known, however, they went to the neighbors on both sides and the opposite houses. If no one remembered the person or family, they went to the various community organizations, churches, local hang-outs, etc. We even created posters with the name of the study saying “we want to find you again” showing a photo of me in 1969, the drawing that was the cover of the book, (which many had been given as gifts or seen after its publication) and giving our office address and phone number. We also attempted to have original participants contact us, using announcements on the local community radio stations and the local newsletters, although the results were limited.

**Lessons Learned:** We found a counter-intuitive result—the percentage of people relocated was highest in the very community we expected it to be lowest (Catacumba, which had been removed in 1970) and lowest in the place we expected it to be highest (Caxias, where half the interviewees were land owners). The reason for this is the strength of social networks. The Catacumba residents who had fought so many collective battles for water, electricity, sanitation, street paving and finally against removal had much more powerful bonds, despite their geographic separation. Those in the loteamentos did not participate in collective struggles for urban services, did not form many community organizations and, in large part, did not know their neighbors. When a family moved out, the sale was a purely market transaction and few kept in touch with the former owners. Things were made worse by the fact that many of the names and street numbers had been changed and some of the names of the neighborhoods as well. Favelas have a living memory that private property does not.



This explains the chart below showing the figures of relocated people from each community. Clearly, we had a much greater success rate with the leaders, not only because we had their last names, but also because they were widely known.



- 2) **Dealing with Original Interviewees Who Have Died:** As the chart also shows, we were unable to locate the families of many of the original participants, even those who had passed away. What we did in this case was to fill in the Life History Matrix using triangulation in reconstructing the person's residential, occupational, educational, family and health histories, working with the spouse and eldest children. Of course, we could not apply the questionnaire in these cases, but we did include all of their children in the running list of the next generation and sampled them proportionately.
- 3) **Verifying the Identity of the Re-located Individuals:** In the middle of our interviewing process, we discovered a daunting problem. As the data from the Life Histories and Questionnaires was being checked for consistency before coding and digitizing the results, we noticed that some of the information did not match the profile of the original person interviewed. Some were the wrong age to have possibly been included in the original sample, for others the birthplace of the mother or father did not match, etc.

**Our Approach:** Once we realized that there had been some misidentification of respondents, we halted the coding and went back to systematically review each person identified, using key variables for determination. We found 45 falsely identified individuals, all with the same first name as the original respondent. Two modifications were consequently made in our procedures: 1) we used the data from the Life History Matrices from 1969 to cross-check the validity of each of the persons identified thus far, and we added several other pieces of information about the original respondent to the packet of information we gave to the field team doing the search.

**Lessons Learned:** This revision cost us precious time and money, so we recommend future researchers utilize a rigorous verification process from the beginning. Currently we are cross-checking key information ( the age and gender of each child as well as the date of marriage ) for each questionnaire that comes in from the field and calling the interviewee to check any uncertainties.

- 4) **Access to the Communities and the Problem of Violence:** Without doubt the biggest change in the research environment from the late 1960's to the present is the expropriation of the space of the favela communities by drug-related gangs, vying with each other for control of the turf and engaged in armed battles with the police (who are also complicitous in and benefiting from the drug and arms sales within the favelas). Among all of the challenges faced by the re-study team, that of violence is without doubt the greatest and most difficult to overcome. It had several negative effects in our research: 1) the unwillingness of many researchers (even within the community) to participate in the study, and the drop-out rate of others. For example, the traffickers noticed that one of our team members who is a resident of Quitungo (a housing project where many of the Catacumba residents were re-located) was out visiting several apartments everyday and began to suspect she was spying for the authorities, so she was threatened and forced to leave the project; 2) Several families of original interviewees began to move out of their communities due to fear of being caught in the crossfire. Several had been in Nova Brasilia all of their lives and fled back to their or their spouses' hometowns; others had lived in the housing projects for 30 years since they were relocated there and left to rent apartments in outlying neighborhoods, fearing that their children would become involved if they stayed. 3) Severe delays were caused in the fieldwork process as no one was able to enter the communities on the days the gangs were in armed battle or the police had decided to conduct a raid. The interviewers could not even leave their homes to apply questionnaires. 4) There was a high rate of refusal to answer questions about violence. The rates of "do not know/do not want to answer" in questions related to dealers, police, or violence was up to 40% on some questions, compared with almost zero on most others. About ten families would not even give the names or locations of their children, fearing they might be involved with traffic.

**Our Approach:** This re-study is dangerous work and must be treated as such. What we did to mitigate the danger was to negotiate access to the communities with the Leaders of the Resident's Associations (who are usually placed in their positions by the drug lords) and to visibly identify all team members for their protection. Each researcher was given a "kit" including a bright turquoise T-shirt with the Mega-Cities logo, a photo ID name tag to wear around their neck with the name of the study, their name, the office telephone number, etc.; a letter signed by me explaining the study and identifying the interviewer by name as part of the team, etc. We also called the interviewee each morning before anyone went to conduct interviews, asking if it was safe to come and when there was doubt, we re-scheduled the interview.

**Lessons Learned:** No matter how careful you are there is the unexpected. We recommend sending interviewers in pairs and keeping them in close touch with the field supervisors.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> I was almost killed myself, one sunny day while waiting for the people to arrive for the participatory community history reconstruction in Nova Brasilia. The meeting was set for a Sunday at the Resident's Association and had been approved, but while waiting I decided to take pictures of some of the same places I had photographed 30 years ago. Soon I was surrounded by angry young men, well armed and wanting my

- 5) **Questionnaire:** As the original 1968/69 questionnaire was a main part of our methodology and used in hypothesis-testing and drawing conclusions we were faced with the problem of how much to update it and how much to leave in its original form. We scrutinized the content, language, and underlying theoretical constructs. Some of the areas of concern which had arisen in the open-ended interviews were absent, such as violence. Other items which figured prominently in more recent literature, such as household composition and authority, were not covered in great detail. Many phrases and words sounded archaic and inappropriate. Our problem was to revise the instrument in such a way as to provide a basis for comparison between responses then and now, while adding new sections permitting comparison with current studies in the field. (These studies included Moser's longitudinal study of household responses to poverty<sup>7</sup> and Birdsall and Graham's work on social mobility.)<sup>8</sup>

**How Obstacles Were Overcome:** What we did was to eliminate the section on attitudinal modernity and try to update the use of words and phrases so as to be comprehensible. We also added several sections including one on violence, and a matrix of household composition and contribution along with more information about the expenditure patterns of the family. We also used the ladder of social mobility that was recommended by Birdsall and Graham. The result is that we ended up with a very long questionnaire, containing 124 questions in addition to the Life History Matrix. This took over two hours to apply; and we are finding that, although the original participants have enjoyed going through it, the children often become impatient. We then considered shortening the questionnaire for the next generation and decided against it on the basis of lack of comparability.

**Lessons Learned:** We would not use such a long questionnaire again; but, until we finish the analysis, we cannot say which items were really the most useful and provided most insight. Perhaps we might have done a second pre-test and analysis, but we were pressed for time and funds, so we went ahead after the first pre-test. In my original study, I did do a second pre-test of the revised questionnaire after the results from the first one were incorporated. We are also left with the problem that on the questions where we modified the language to sound less archaic, we do not have exact comparability. We have decided that for the new random samples in Phase III, we will go back to the original questionnaire and be as faithful as possible to those items we retain.

- 6) **Contextual Questionnaire:** We prepared a Contextual Questionnaire based on the one I had developed and used in the original study, and applied it to elders of the community and the former leaders. It was very problematic this time as each of the persons responding had a different perspective on the history of the community and remembered different events as

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camera. Evidently I had taken pictures of some prohibited areas without knowing it. Because two of the community residents on their way to the meeting intervened, and we went to the Resident's Association where the President was able to speak for me, they only took my film, not the camera. But a group of them were waiting for me 6 hours later at the end of the day's meeting, and I had to be put into a taxi in a big hurry.

<sup>7</sup> Moser, Caroline. *Confronting Crisis: A Comparative Study of Household Responses to Poverty and Vulnerability in Four Poor Urban Communities*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1996.

<sup>8</sup> BirdSall, Nancy, and Carol Graham. *New Markets, New Opportunities? Economic and Social Mobility in a Changing World*. Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 2000.

important and different time periods for key changes. This presented a challenge of coherence and reliability which we were not able to overcome through newspaper accounts from the time (the favelas appeared very little at that time, except for removals) nor from books, theses or dissertations (none of which covered our communities).

**Our Approach:** We needed a collective memory in order to reconstitute the history of each community and cross-check dates and events. We didn't want to impose what we considered the benchmark events in each place but see it from the resident's point of view. We decided to employ a participatory methodology called the DRP (Rapid Participatory Diagnostic). It consists of bringing several members of the community together to interpret their own reality and concerns. We used an enormous time-line covering the entire wall, marking only key calendar dates starting with 1920, showing where 1968 would be, and going up to the present year. We let the participants fill in all the other years as they saw relevant.

The participants were given sticky pads and invited to write on them what they considered the most important events in the life of the community and place them on the time line. They ended up with several cross-cutting categories such as urban services, housing, drugs and violence, natural disasters, major political events, etc. There was much discussion and arguing back and forth about the exact dates and names and that is when people overcame their initial shyness and started to have fun with it. We took notes, did videotapes, and are using the brown paper scrolls with the sticky notes on them to write up the community histories.

**Lessons Learned:** The people know best and together they know more!

- 7) **Memory:** One of the major difficulties in studies done over time, especially such a long period of time, is the fallibility of memory and its selective nature, a problem deepened by the advanced age of most of our original sample. As we know, memory is a construct which is constantly being reconstructed. We are asking people to remember all their residential, occupational and educational changes over the past thirty years. We are trying to capture the messy ups and downs of real life, and the way people have coped with crises, and do this not for a handful of people but hundreds of people across generations. These data are difficult to collect, to code and to analyze.

**Our Approach:** We have discovered that the Life History Matrix works quite well as an entry point into the interviews. It encourages the interviewer and interviewee to sit side by side and try to fill in the changes together, going back and forth in time and across categories. One item, such as the birth of a child, helps jog the memory on other items, such as place of residents; and likewise, a move to a new place is often associated with a change job or lack of work. This becomes a collaborative exercise which is often enjoyable and which uses triangulation to help fill in memory lapses. Our real challenge now is how to interpret the data as we need to control for normal changes in the life cycle as well as the cohorts that entered the labor force at a specific moment in time. Thus, the year of the event and the age of the person must both be present in the interpretation of upward or downward mobility. And, as we control for these sub-groups, the numbers in each become smaller and thus the reliability weaker.

In addition, we are grappling with the reality that many changes are not for better or worse, but simply trade-offs maximizing different things. For example, should leaving the favela for a peripheral neighborhood always be considered a step up, even if the person said they left not by their own choice but for fear of violence and that they are

terribly lonely and isolated in their new setting? Likewise, should moving from a salaried job to working for oneself be considered a step down if the person is earning more or the same in the informal sector and has more freedom and flexibility? These are some of the issues we are currently discussing in interpreting our data.

**Lessons Learned:** We are finding that the richer the data and closer to reality, the harder it is to draw simple conclusions or find coherent patterns. This is why our qualitative data and personal narratives are so important to the interpretation of our data.

- 8) **Bias:** While it is most unusual to be able to re-locate over 1/3 of a sample after 3 decades, (262 people out of 750), there is still the risk that the 2/3 *not* located would present an entirely different picture, either much better or much worse, and that we are therefore unable to generalize from our findings. To this considerable risk of bias we add the possible distortion that the people we found alive from the original sample were the youngest age cohort.

**Our Approach** To try to measure our bias we compared three groups using the original 1969 data : 1) living original participants who we have complete questionnaire data on for both time periods; 2) dead original interviewees for whom we have re-constructed Life Histories; and 3) all those from the original study who we could not find. Despite the age and community biases, we found the three groups to be fairly homogeneous, giving us confidence that we were still dealing with a relatively representative sample. There was a slight tendency for those found to have higher family income, more access to services, have more children, and be more integrated in their communities but the differences were not significant. We might still wonder whether those who remained in the same communities and were therefore easiest to find, were the failures who couldn't make it out, or the successes who did not end up on the streets.

In order to check on this we made special efforts to interview all located participants. I even made a trip to Joao Pessoa, Natal, Brasilia, Belo Horizonte, Sao Paulo and Porto Alegre to conduct interviews with the one or two individuals we had located in those places.

**Lessons Learned:** We cannot reach definitive conclusions without the benefit of Phase III, in which we will draw new random samples in the original communities. That will give us the ability to compare what has happened in the communities at large with what has happened in the lives of those we found from our sample. By selecting matched favelas with opposite policy interventions we will also be able to give policymakers more guidance as to what was effective.

**Multi-generational Portraits:** The other thing I am doing in order to get a sense of how the selection of random children within a family can affect our perceptions of the next generation, is selecting one leader and one random-person from each of the three communities and visiting the homes and workplaces of each of their siblings, children, and grandchildren. I started this last summer and will continue it this July and August. I will also interview in depth the "outliers" i.e. those people who were at the top of the heap in 1969 and are now at the bottom, and those who were at the bottom and have risen to the top. This will provide additional insight as to what factors account for the extremes of upward and downward mobility