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# Marginality: From Myth to Reality in the *Favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, 1969–2002

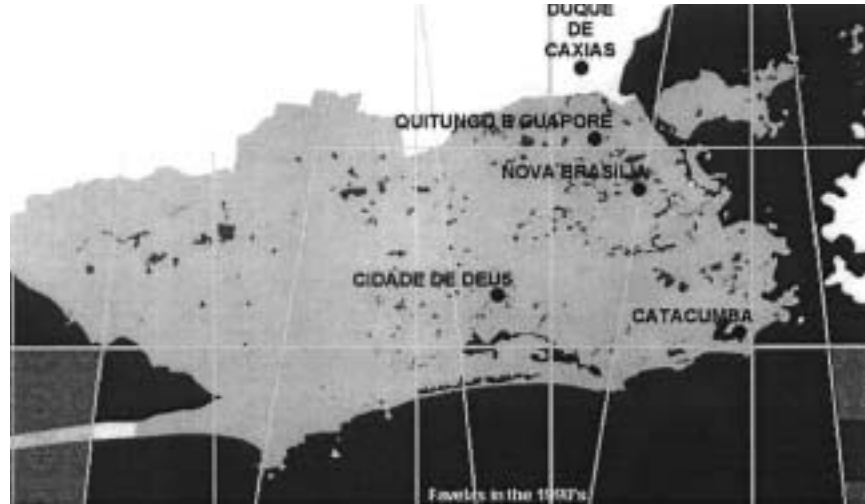
Janice E. Perlman



In 1968–69 I lived in three low-income communities in Rio de Janeiro. I had become interested in cityward migration as an undergraduate anthropology student doing fieldwork in Brazil's northeast. Over the years I had followed the trajectories of families and individuals from fishing and agricultural villages to the squatter settlements and unserviced *loteamentos* (subdivisions) in Rio de Janeiro. The three communities I selected to study represented the various parts of the city where poor people could then live. They were Catacumba, a *favela* (squatter settlement) in the wealthy South Zone (which has since been removed and its residents relocated to more distant public housing); Nova Brasília, a *favela* in the industrial North Zone (now a battleground between police and drug traffickers); and eight low-income communities in Duque de Caxias, a peripheral municipality in the Fluminense Lowlands (Baixada Fluminense).<sup>1</sup> In each place I interviewed two hundred men and women (sixteen to sixty-five years old) selected at random, and fifty community leaders chosen by position and/or reputation. The locations of the three communities and the two housing project sites (Conjuntos de Quitungo, Guapore, and Cidade de Deus — City of God) are shown on the accompanying map (see FIGURE 5.1).

The data on these 750 people and their communities provided the basis for my doctoral dissertation on the impact of urban experience; and after follow-up work in 1973, the research was also incorporated into my book, *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro*. The book argued that the prevailing “myths” about social, cultural, political, and economic marginality were “empirically false, analytically misleading, and insidious in their policy implications.”<sup>2</sup>

Ten years later, in 1979, I returned to Rio with hopes of following up on the lives of the individuals I had interviewed, and began the process of relocating

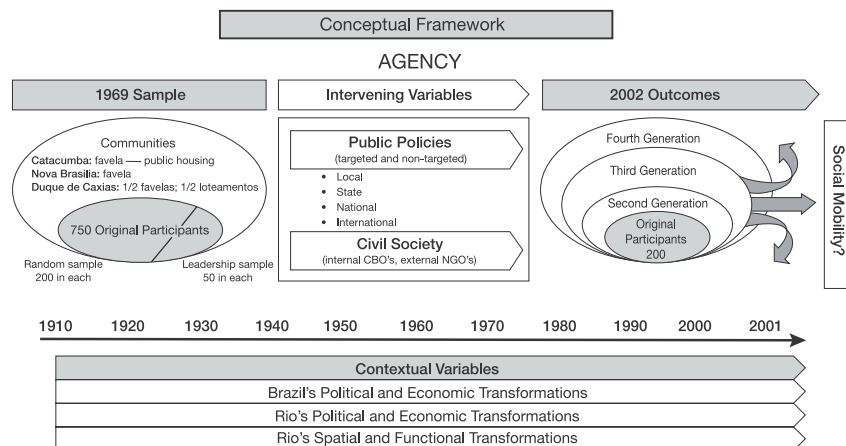


**Figure 5.1. Favela locations in Rio de Janeiro city.**

*Source: Prourb – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Urbanismo da Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (Available online at [www.fau.ufrj.br/prourb/index2.htm](http://www.fau.ufrj.br/prourb/index2.htm)).*

them, but funding fell through and the project was dropped. When I returned to the idea again in 1989, I discovered the “funding climate” was not receptive to public-policy issues or theoretical insights involving poverty, inequality, or social mobility. It was not until 1998, thirty years after the original study, that several foundations and international aid agencies expressed interest in funding a restudy of the people I had worked with and the communities in which I had lived.<sup>3</sup> By then, poverty, and the vast gap between the world’s rich and poor, had again surfaced as an important issue — this time in relation to sustainable communities, peaceful societies, and public policy. And the question of how to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty and reverse the trend toward increased inequality had likewise regained relevance.

This chapter is based on the preliminary findings of this new longitudinal panel study. As in the original work, it draws on both qualitative and quantitative methods. Conceptually, the research follows individual lives and policy impacts in the context of macro-level political and economic transformation at both the national and city levels (see FIGURE 5.2). Phase I involved a feasibility study to determine the possibility of finding the original participants after thirty years, and then the conduct of in-depth interviews with 36 individuals.<sup>4</sup> Phase II involved the creation of a survey instrument adapted from the one used in the original research, the pretest and modification of this questionnaire, and its application to the original participants (or their spouses or eldest children in cases where the original interviewee was no longer living).<sup>5</sup> It also included interviews with a ran-



**Figure 5.2. The dynamics of urban poverty and implications for public policy: a longitudinal study of Rio de Janeiro's poor (1968–2001).**

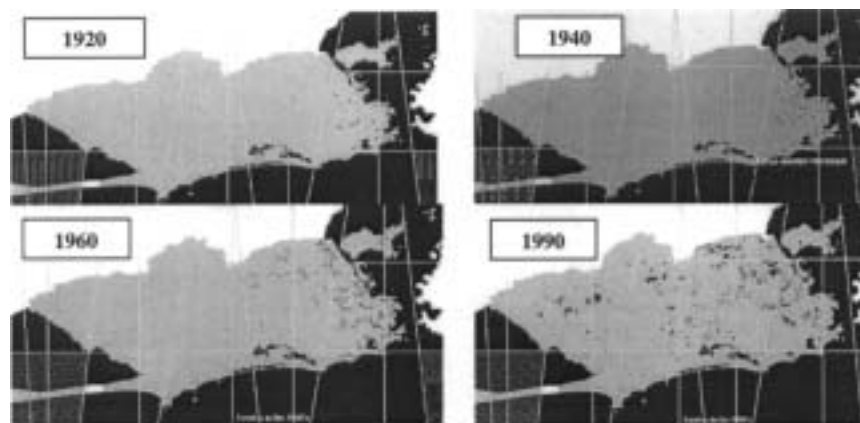
Source: Proub — Programa de Pós-Graduação em Urbanismo da Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Available online at [www.fau.ufrj.br/prourb/index2.htm](http://www.fau.ufrj.br/prourb/index2.htm).

dom sample of the original participants' children; the completion of a series of contextual interviews about the communities themselves, leading to a "collective" reconstruction of each community's history; and a collection of year-by-year life histories, documenting all changes in residential, occupational, educational and family conditions.

## FAVELA GROWTH IN RIO DE JANEIRO

Despite three decades of public-policy efforts in Brazil — first to eradicate *favelas*, then to upgrade and integrate them into the city — both their number and the number of people living in them have continued to grow. There were approximately three hundred *favelas* in Rio at the time of my original study; there are now at least twice as many.

Furthermore, as the accompanying maps show, not only have *favelas* increased in number and size, they have merged to form vast contiguous agglomerations, "complexes" of communities across adjacent hillsides (see FIGURE 5.3). Each of these is the size of a large Brazilian city, and the largest — Rocinha, Jacarezinho, Complexo de Alemão, and Complexo de Mare — have a combined population of more than half a million. Between 1950 and 2000 Rio's *favela* population grew much more rapidly than the city as a whole (see FIGURE 5.4). The fastest growth rates were in the 1950s and the 1960s; but the growth of Rio's *favelas* has greatly exceeded that for the entire city in every decade except the 1970s, when a policy



**Figure 5.3. Growth of favelas in Rio de Janeiro (1920–1990).**

Source: Prourb — Programa de Pós-Graduação em Urbanismo da Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Available online at [www.fau.ufrj.br/prourb/index2.htm](http://www.fau.ufrj.br/prourb/index2.htm).

of massive *favela* removal dislocated approximately 17,000 families, or about 100,000 individuals.<sup>6</sup>

Most striking perhaps is that during the period 1980–90, when the overall city growth rate dropped precipitously to 7.6 percent, *favela* populations surged by 40.5 percent. Then, from 1990 to 2000, when the city's growth rate leveled off at just less than 7 percent, *favela* populations continued to grow by 24 percent. One might add that these figures certainly underestimate real conditions, since

YEAR	FAVELA POP. (a)	CITY POP. 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%

\* Includes some 144 cases, most of which fall into the "small" category, comprising colonias registered as having less than 10 lots.

**Figure 5.4. Growth rates of favelas and Rio de Janeiro city population by decade.**

Source: author with Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2000 Census. Available online at [www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/censo2000](http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/censo2000).

they fail to include the numerous illegal subdivisions that have arisen recently, as areas for possible invasion and squatting have been consolidated and marketized.

By most every measure, then, the percentage of Rio's population living in *favelas* is now at an all-time high. But the figures also indicate that *favela* growth has not been spread evenly over the metropolitan region. In the twelve years from 1980 to 1992, for example, the *favela* growth rate in the South and North Zones was 21 and 15 percent, respectively. Meanwhile, in the West Zone, where the new urban elite has been moving (Barra de Tijuca), the number of *favelas* grew by 127 percent during the same period, while the *favela* population grew by 108 percent.<sup>7</sup> The pattern would seem to indicate that new *favela* locations continue an older pattern of residence in proximity to the service and construction jobs in more affluent areas.

### THREE LIVES: FOUR GENERATIONS

The first challenge was to relocate original study participants after thirty years. To protect anonymity in 1968–69, at the height of the dictatorship, interviewees' last names were never recorded. Nevertheless, by creating teams of community residents we were able to find some information on 487 of the 750 original participants, to locate 242 of them, and to interview 227 — about one-third.

Due to the varying nature of the three communities that were part of the original work, I had expected our success rates to differ markedly. I had thought we would find the fewest number of the original interviewees from Catacumba, since families there had been forcibly evicted in 1970 and scattered among distant public housing projects.<sup>8</sup> Surprisingly, however, it was among the Catacumba group that we had the highest relocation success rate. This may be explained by the strong sense of solidarity created through years of struggle for collective urban services, culminating in the long battle against eviction. By contrast, the lowest relocation success rate was in Duque de Caxias — not so much in the *favelas*, but in the privately owned lots. Contrary to popular wisdom, there has been a much higher turnover rate among owners of the *loteamentos* than in *favelas*, and social ties were much weaker.

I might add that the re-encounter with the original interviewees and their families was a powerful emotional experience on both sides. It was joyful and poignant. We laughed and cried. People had gone through a lot in these thirty years and were eager to tell their stories. They wanted to bear witness, to give testimony, to be heard. They were also excited to see me again, the young “hippie-looking,” “hard-working” American who had lived among them and shared their daily lives at a time when even bus and taxi drivers were afraid to stop too near their communities. They were eager to learn my life story as well. Was I married? Did

I have children? Where was I living? What was I doing? Had I been in New York on 9/11? Thus, what I am reporting on here is not only based on official questionnaire and life-history data, but on in-depth open-ended interviews involving the mutual reconstruction of lives, often lasting several afternoons and evenings. I will begin with three vignettes, one from each of the communities.

#### “TWICE DISPLACED”: THE STORY OF MARGARIDA

When I first met Margarida (Marga) she was a twenty-five-year-old single mother living with her two young children in a small wooden shack in the *favela* of Catacumba. To get to her house you had to climb an almost vertical path around and beneath dozens of other shacks. It took about twenty minutes to wind one’s way up from the street in front of the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon — much more if it were raining and the path had turned into a slippery slide of mud and sewage (see FIGURE 5.5).

Marga was born and raised in Catacumba. Both her parents were illiterate. Her mother was from Niteroi and had worked as a maid all of her life; her father was an unskilled manual laborer from Saquarema. Margarida was the second of four children, all of whom still live not far from one another. In 1968–69 she “came along” as the maid for a small apartment I had temporarily sublet in Apoador (a middle-class neighborhood between Ipanema and Copacabana). She had completed four



**Figure 5.5. View of Catacumba from the Lagoa Rodrigo Freitas in 1969.**

The location in the midst of the upscale residential South Zone gave residents abundant access to service and construction jobs as well as to the good schools and clinics in the area. Despite their removal in 1970 to disparate housing projects, their common struggles created strong communal ties which persist to this day.

*Photo by author.*

years of primary school, and had been working as a domestic ever since. Her daughter Beti was then eight, and her son Gilberto was seven. Their father had gone to the pharmacy one evening to get some aspirin and never returned.

The family lived in the *favela* on weekends, and in the small maid's quarters of the apartment during the week. The children went to a good school (using the apartment address for registration), and they had good health care nearby and lots of family and friends within the *favela*. Their lives were full of activities: picnics to Paqueta Island on the weekends, soccer games at the Youth Athletic Club, dances, and lots of sharing of good times and bad.

Two years later that lifestyle was eradicated forever. Marga and her family (along with 2,074 other families in Catacumba) were forcibly removed by helmeted police, put in garbage trucks with whatever possessions they could salvage, and taken to a distant public housing project called the Conjunto de Quitungo. This was at the height of the dictatorship, when 100,000 *favelados* were evicted from their homes within a period of two to three years. They were devastated. Friends and relatives were relocated to other projects, some separated by four hours of travel, and most of the community leaders disappeared.

Marga's lucky break was that she had just met Geraldo, a bright man seven years her junior who had a relatively stable job as a checkout clerk in a nearby supermarket (and is now a *gerente*, manager). Eventually, she had four more children with him (three girls and a boy) and was able to stop working outside the house (see FIGURE 5.6). Over time Marga and Geraldo made new friends and established new ways of coping with life in the housing project. I stayed in touch with them over the years and visited every time I was in Rio for conferences, meetings, or other work.

By the time I returned in 1999 to resume my research, Marga had been living in the same apartment for almost thirty years, and Beti and Gilberto had purchased their own apartments in the same housing project and were raising their own children. But one day after my return, a group from one of the *commandos* (drug gangs)



**Figure 5.6. Margarida, her new husband Geraldo ("Pingo"), and myself in 1973.**

The photo was taken the first time I visited Marga in her apartment in the Quitungo housing project. Like many others, she suffered severe depression and disorientation after being relocated. Today she still misses her life in Catacumba, despite having adapted over the years to apartment living.

*Photo by author.*



came to Marga's apartment looking for her youngest son, Wagner. Apparently, he had made friends with members of a rival gang. They said if she didn't turn him over, they would kill her and the entire family. Luckily, Wagner wasn't home, and over the weekend Marga's daughters mobilized to scan the newspapers for low-income rentals everywhere within a one-hour bus ride. By Monday they had moved to a two-bedroom apartment in Irajá. Marga now feels safer and can sleep at night. But she cries every day from loneliness and isolation, and admits they will soon have to move again, even further away, since this apartment is too expensive.

Of Marga's children, Beti is the eldest. She considers herself a seamstress, but was unemployed for a long time before finally finding temporary work as a babysitter (*baba*). Unfortunately, the job is at the extreme other end of the city, and she now only comes home once every two weeks. She has heard of another job, every other day, assisting an elderly woman in Ipanema, and she intends to interview for it. But she fears her dark skin color may reduce her chances.<sup>9</sup> Her only son is eighteen and an unemployed school dropout.

Marga's son Gilberto is a specialist in air conditioner and refrigerator repairs, a skill he learned working in a factory. He has worked in many types of jobs on and off and can do most anything, but has been unable to find steady work since the factory closed almost eight years ago. Recently, he was forced to sell his apartment, and he now alternates staying at Beti's or at Regina's (his mother's former neighbor). His wife supposedly "went crazy" and walked out on him and their fifteen-year-old son, Elbert, who is still in school but now lives with Margarida.

All four of Margarida and Geraldó's children — Eliana (thirty-one), Elisangela (twenty-eight), Viviane (twenty-four), and Wagner (twenty-one) — still live at home. Eliana completed high school, and has just been promoted from sales clerk to manager at a stationery store. Viviane, who never finished high school, used to work as a computer assistant, but was fired, and now works as a cashier in the same store as her sister. Wagner dropped out after the fourth year of primary school and has worked intermittently as a *marceneiro*, making wood furniture. His mother claims he does not sell or use drugs, that he just got in with the wrong crowd.

Elisangela, the most sophisticated member of the family, brings in a steady income from her job as a cleaning girl for TV Globo. Despite never having completed high school, she is intelligent, well-spoken, and well-connected. When a TV program requires someone to stand in as a maid, they often shoot her in the role. She thinks the family should combine its resources to construct a house along the north coast of the city. She says the prices for small lots there are good, and that she has friends who could help them.

#### "LEFT BEHIND": THE STORY OF ZÉ CABO

José Manuel da Silva (known as Zé Cabo) was one of the most respected and established leaders in Nova Brasília when I first met him in 1968. He was forty



years old then, and President of the Residents Association. He had moved to Rio de Janeiro when he was sixteen from a small city in the interior of Rio Grande do Norte. Neither of his parents had attended school, and he was the fifth of nineteen children. He moved to Nova Brasília at the age of twenty-nine, after working in the Marines.

Although José did finish elementary school, he learned much of what he knows traveling across Brazil and being exposed to many ideas and people. This is why he was more politically savvy than others in the community. It was he who led the collective struggles in Nova Brasília through the 1960s and 1970s for water, electricity, drainage, sewer connections, and street paving. And it was he who fought for land titles and negotiated with the candidates and government officials on behalf of the community. He also played a critical role in acquiring the land on which the Residents Association was constructed.

At the time of the original study, José and his wife, Adelina, had three boys and a girl. José was working for the military police — which is where he acquired the nickname Zé Cabo (*cabo* indicating the rank of captain within the military police). The family lived on the main street, Avenida Nova Brasília (see FIGURE 5.7). There was always something good cooking on the stove, and their home was a place where others could come for help and advice. The community, being in the



**Figure 5.7. Nova Brasília's main street from the terrace of Jose Cabo's house in 1973.**

Commercial uses, here visible at the street level only, have now taken over most former second- and third-floor residential space as well. People come from around the region to do their shopping here.

*Photo by author.*

North Zone amid factories and working-class neighborhoods, was not threatened with removal, but it was generally ignored by politicians after each election.

Over the years, I stayed in touch with José and his family. In the early 1990s his wife died of a heart attack. Then, due to medical bills, debts, and the increasing danger of drug-related violence on the street where he lived, he decided to sell his home. With the proceeds, he bought a tiny piece of land in a more remote area of the *favela*, built a new house, and financed the construction of houses elsewhere for his daughter and one of his grandsons.

In this expanded new house he supports the mother of his two “other” daughters (ages twenty-three and twenty-four), their young children, and an elderly aunt. He is discouraged that Nova Brasília still does not have full urban services, was overlooked by the widespread Favela-Bairro program, and is totally permeated by drug dealers — including the Residents Association, the school, and the so-called nonprofits. It is part of the Complexo de Alemão, one of the most dangerous *favelas* in the city.<sup>10</sup> It was in this area that on June 3, 2002, the journalist Tim Lopes was tortured and murdered while working on a story about drugs and youth sex at funk dances. Police are afraid to go there except in organized raids, and even then they are often out-armed by the locals.<sup>11</sup>

None of José’s children from his first marriage live in the *favela* anymore. José’s brother and wife have since moved to Natal, capital of Rio Grande do Norte, where they were born. They have a nice house there with an upstairs apartment for José, but he only comes to visit. He tells them Nova Brasília “is my community, and I wouldn’t know what to do with myself anywhere else.” But he confides that he is tired of the gunshots every night, the constant fear, and the bullet holes in his walls. He might consider selling his house if he could get a reasonable price.

“My greatest achievement in life is that none of my kids are on drugs, in jail, or murdered,” he says. This initially made me suspect that his children were having great difficulties in life. In fact, all of José’s four children from his first marriage are doing quite well.

Of these children, Wanderley, the eldest (now fifty-two) never finished high school but has a job with the *Caixa Econômica Federal*. He lives in Japeri (a municipality outside Rio de Janeiro). All three of his children are working in the computer field.

José’s second oldest child, Waney, is forty-eight. Currently out of work, he lives on his pension from years in the civil police. He says he would be getting a higher retirement benefit if he had stayed a full term, but he left early when he was offered a good job as a deliveryman for a South Zone company. The company was owned by a woman who liked his work, but she took on two male associates, and as Waney explained it, “She was assassinated by one of them, and they took all her money and closed the business.”

Waney has three children. The eldest, Wagner, used some of the money from José’s house sale to build a simple, attractive wood-frame house in a nice

gated community in the interior of Niteroi. He earns a decent living fixing car air conditioners, and his wife works in a boutique in a nearby shopping mall. Patricia, his younger sister (twenty-one), is known as the “smart one” in the family, and attended law school for one year. But instead of completing her degree, she dropped out to go to Candido Mendes University in Niteroi to study fashion design, and then started her own clothing line. Waney’s youngest daughter, Cynthia, is fifteen years old and is still attending school.

The third of José’s children from his first marriage, Wandelina (known as a “live wire” in her youth) dropped out of school after five years. She is now forty-eight and lives in Santa Cruz. This is a safe area, but more than two hours by car from the center of Rio — much longer by bus. Wandelina is retired from her job in an elementary school cafeteria, and now works in the library of a newly renovated cultural center. She is separated and has a fifteen-year-old son, who she is struggling to keep out of trouble. Fortunately, the son is a soccer star and can stay on the team only if he stays in school. Currently, he has a scholarship from Zico’s soccer school (a well-known former player), and he has already traveled to Switzerland and the U.S. to participate in international competitions.

José’s youngest son, Wandeney, is now forty-five. He attended a university for a few years, but never finished. He lives in Santa Cruz and works for the state Motor Vehicle Bureau. He is very involved in local politics. Although he does not have any children, he has been with the same girlfriend for two years, and his father and older brothers hope he will marry her.

Both José’s daughters from his second marriage are having their difficulties. The oldest, Sandra (twenty-four), managed to finish high school, but she is unemployed and still lives with José. She is a single mother of Caroline (six) and Catarina (three months). Sandra’s sister, Solange (twenty-three), never finished junior high school. She lives next door and is supported by her father, as she has been unable to find work.

It is Zé Cabo’s dream to move out of the *favela*, but not to Natal or even Niteroi or Santa Cruz, where his children live. Instead, he wants to live in an apartment in Gloria, a wonderful neighborhood close to the center of downtown Rio.

#### “NO MORE FRUIT ON THE TABLE”: THE STORY OF DJANIRA

In 1968, when I first met Djanira, she was an activist in Vila Operaria, a planned invasion in the municipality of Caxias (see FIGURE 5.8). Beautiful, energetic and articulate, she had helped in planning the invasion and organizing the community. As part of the invasion, lands were set aside for schools, churches, sports facilities, and other public uses. No one with a police record was allowed to squat there, and all had to sign the local statute, which, among other things, protected women’s rights to their homes.<sup>12</sup>

Djanira was born in 1936 in Recife (the capital of Pernambuco), one of twenty-five children, twenty-one of whom survived. Of her three siblings who



**Figure 5.8 The Municipal Building and Plaza in the center of Caxias in 1969.**

This is about a fifteen-minute bus ride from Djanira's neighborhood, Vila Operária. Today the buildings around the plaza are more sleek and sophisticated. The plaza itself has been taken over by vehicles, reflecting the explosive growth of the municipality.

*Photo by author.*

are still alive today, her brother is a clerk in Campo Grande, one sister is a widow living in Olaria, and another sister lives in Caxias. Djanira's parents were both illiterate, and neither attended school. Growing up, her family was extremely poor and often hungry. Her mother, who took in laundry to supplement her husband's earnings as a traveling salesman, died of tuberculosis when Djanira was seven. Afterwards, Djanira went to a Catholic school for two years, but was forced to leave when she was nine, the year her father died from a brain hemorrhage. Together with her older brothers and sisters, she made her way to Irajá, a neighborhood in Rio's North Zone, where she continued for two more years of school. She then worked as a babysitter and maid, living in the homes where she worked, often being badly treated, even beaten.

When Djanira was twenty-one, she married and moved to Niterói, where her husband's family had a plot of land. Then, at the age of twenty-seven, she moved to Vila Operária, where she could finally have a house of her own. Today, Djanira lives in that same house, which her family built. The street outside is now paved with cobblestones, and the house is hidden behind iron gates. But inside it is the same. Her small courtyard is filled with flowering plants and songbirds in cages, and the front door is always open, leading directly to her living room and large

kitchen. From the courtyard you can ascend to the second floor where the rest of the family lives — varying in size depending on the fortunes of her extended clan.

I remember Djanira fighting for land tenure, urban services, and the local school. Early on, the Residents Association set up an amusement park to generate income so they could pay for more qualified teachers (see FIGURE 5.9). Djanira was rounded up after one of the demonstrations for property titles, and was with the others at the police station when she went into labor and almost delivered her daughter. On the spot she says she named the little girl “Janiss” in my honor. Djanira eventually had ten children by two husbands, and raised them by working as the *merendeira* (lunch preparer) for the school next door. Then, when she was thirty-three years old, she went back to finish high school, qualifying to become a social worker in the Municipal Hospital Duque de Caxias, where she worked for the next twenty-nine years.

When I revisited Djanira she was still slender and beautiful, but she was nearly destitute, and suffering from health problems. Her only income was a small pension of about US\$70 per month, a sum that only covered her electricity and phone bills. Her food is now being paid for by her daughter, Celia Regina, who lives with her and works at the same hospital where she once worked.

Djanira’s life is today consumed by a fight for the pension of her common-law husband of forty years. They were together until his death three years ago, but he never registered any of their four children, and so all his assets have gone to his two children from his first wife. Before he died, he and Djanira led a relatively comfortable life. He had many assets: two homes, a *sítio* in the country, and stocks (including Petrobras, Banco do Brasil, Light, and Correios). But today all Djanira is legally entitled to is his pension, and she has not even been able to get this because she cannot afford a lawyer.

“When you were here before, I always had a bowl full of fruit on my table,” she told me. “Now it is empty. I can barely afford rice and beans.”

One morning our team came to a meeting of old-timers at Djanira’s house, but we could hardly get past the police cars. A dead body had been dumped near-



**Figure 5.9. Djanira (left) with one of the teachers from the Vila Operária Municipal School in 1969.**

As part of their fight for the school, the Residents Association set up an amusement park, and used the proceeds to help construct the building and hire qualified teachers.

*Photo by author.*

by at dawn, and the police were just taking it away. Fear is pervasive in her neighborhood, and Djanira is afraid to visit the public areas she fought so hard to create. Even the Residents Association has been taken over by drug dealers.

Back then I participated in everything. . . . Now I can't participate in anything. . . . I see things going wrong and cannot do anything about it. It's too dangerous. The violence is so bad here that no one will deliver anything to my house. They are afraid of being robbed. If you interview for a job and they see your address, they say the job has been filled. In our time, we at least had respect and each other's solidarity; now everyone keeps to themselves.

The life stories of Djanira's children and grandchildren vary considerably. Her eldest child, Marco Antonio (forty-five), never finished high school, but now works as an administrative assistant in the Community Health Office. He is married, has three children, and lives in Vila São Luiz, a neighborhood of Caxias. His eldest son, Marcio (twenty-two) is married, and his wife is expecting a baby, but because the young couple has no money, they are living with his parents. Marco Antonio's other son, Sandro (nineteen), was accepted to a prestigious preparatory course for university (*pré-vestibular*) with a full scholarship, and wants to be a doctor. His daughter, Bruna (fifteen), is in her first year of high school.

Two of Djanira's ten children have university degrees. Marta Janete (forty) has a degree in pedagogy and has worked in the housing department of the Caxias city government for twenty-three years. She lives in Vila Operária but is searching for a house in Santa Cruz. Marta Janete's two children and one granddaughter live with Djanira in the upstairs apartment. Paulo (eighteen) is finishing junior high school, wants to work, but cannot find a job. Kelly (twenty-two) wanted to be a model, but last year got pregnant, and is now attending the second year of high school. Her one-year-old daughter is named Milena.

Jorge Luis (thirty-nine) is Djanira's other child with a university degree. He studied law and accounting, and today practices law from his office near the Caxias city center. He lost his first wife to cancer at a very young age. His daughter Joicy is seven years old and attending elementary school.

Roberto (twenty-seven), another of Djanira's children, never completed high school but has a decent job as a sanitary worker at SUCAN (the Federal Public Health Agency). He lives half the time with Djanira, and half the time with Djanira's niece (who helped raise him, and now lives in Jacarepaguá, in Rio's West Zone). Janiss (thirty-two), my namesake, lives with her adopted daughter in a planned invasion in Santa Lucia, a rural part of Caxias. For ten years she also worked with SUCAN. Her job was to go around with tanks of DDT on her back spraying against dengue and malaria. During that time she inhaled a good deal of toxic spray and now has chronic bronchitis. But because she was never formally hired, she is not entitled to health benefits.

Of Djanira's other children, Jane Marcia (forty-one) completed only three years of schooling and is a poor, unemployed housewife. Raldo (thirty-three) finished junior high school and works as a transportation inspector. He lives in Santa Cruz with his wife and three kids: Luciano (sixteen), Juliete (twelve), and Felipe (six) — all of whom are attending school. Raquel (twenty-four) completed junior high school, and is a housewife with a seven-year-old daughter Stefani, who is attending elementary school.

Finally, two of Djanira's children still live with her. One is Celia Regina (thirty-eight). She never finished high school, but she works as a clerk in the same hospital where Djanira once worked. Celia-Regina's son Rafael (fifteen), a junior high school student, also lives with her and Djanira. Celia-Regina is also raising Mathew, a one-year-old. The last of Djanira's children, Almir (thirty-five), only studied for three years. For a time he worked as a *trocador de ônibus* (bus-fare collector), and was once assaulted in an armed robbery. He now has a defective arm and sells sweets across the street from her house. He lives in the small apartment on top of Djanira's house with his wife (who supports the family selling *quentinhas*, cooked lunch, for the school and workers) and daughter Diana (eleven).

#### A COMPLEX PICTURE

The above stories are messy and contradictory, revealing a mixture of despair and hope. Overall, they reveal several general changes since 1969 in the world of Rio's *favelas*. For example, there is a sense of isolation in comparison to earlier times, and a fear that pervades all aspects of life. Principally, this may be traced to the violence between drug dealers and the police, and among various gangs. A part of everyday life now, this was barely present in 1968–69.

At the same time, there has been a clear upgrading of infrastructure in the communities and an overall increase in household goods and appliances. But the simultaneous increase in the gap between rich and poor is vividly reflected in the sense that these individuals feel more distant from the world of *asfalto* (the formal life of pavement) than they did thirty years ago.

The respondents to our new survey also do not feel like full-fledged citizens. And, ironically, they are less empowered within their communities than they were during the military dictatorship. Nevertheless, their children and grandchildren — to varying degrees — have more education and higher incomes (if they are working) than they did. And many among this new generation have moved out of the original “irregular” communities, into low-income neighborhoods (some quite peripheral), where they participate in the legitimate world of rental or ownership.

Considered as a whole, the above stories help illustrate five major themes I have noticed since 1969. I have termed these the metamorphosis of marginality; the sphere of fear; mobility with inequality; disillusionment with democracy; and optimism for the future.



## THE METAMORPHOSIS OF MARGINALITY

I researched and wrote *The Myth of Marginality* during a specific historical moment, in the context of fundamental disagreements over the nature and consequences of rapid urbanization and dependent development. My work was part of a profound critique of then-prevailing paradigms used to explain the urban poor and the irregular settlements in which they lived.

In the modernization literature, migrants from the countryside to the city were seen as maladapted to city life, and thereby responsible for their own poverty and failure to enter formal job and housing markets.<sup>13</sup> Squatter settlements were seen as “cancerous sores on the beautiful body of the city,” dens of crime, violence, prostitution, and social breakdown. It was widely assumed that the dwellers in the precarious shacks were precarious themselves, and that comparing their condition with the surrounding opulence would turn them into angry revolutionaries. Such was the nightmare/fear of the Right and the daydream/hope of the Left.<sup>14</sup> However, on both sides the sense that squatters were “other” and not part of the “normal” city was pervasive. This seemingly common-sense view was legitimized by social scientists and used to justify public policies of removal.

Starting in the mid-1960s several seminal writers challenged this conventional/academic “wisdom.” These included Alejandro Portes, Jose Nun, Anibal Quijano, Manuel Castells, Florestan Fernandes, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso.<sup>15</sup> Empirical studies in Latin American cities including Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, São Paulo, Santiago, Buenos Aires, Lima, Bogota, Mexico City, and Monterrey served to discredit the propositions of marginality and the erroneous stereotypes surrounding the urban poor.<sup>16</sup> Lastly, Morse and Mangin wrote excellent review articles on the subject, which appeared in the 1970s.<sup>17</sup>

These works, along with my own, showed how the concept of marginality had been used to “blame the victim” in academic and public-policy discourse.<sup>18</sup> 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 MYTH OF MARGINALITY

One of my first objectives in *The Myth of Marginality* was to synthesize the collected body of literature regarding the social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions of marginality into a series of propositions and concepts that could be empirically tested.<sup>19</sup> For Rio de Janeiro, I found that despite their wide acceptance at all levels of society, these “myths” were “empirically false, analytically misleading, and insidious in their policy implications.” As I wrote then:

The evidence strongly indicates that the *favelados* are not *marginal*, but in fact integrated into the 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. *It is my contention that the favela residents are not economically and politically marginal, but are excluded and repressed; that they are not socially and culturally marginal, but stigmatized and excluded from a closed class system.*<sup>20</sup>

I went on to show how the marginality ideology was so strong in Brazil in the 1970s that it created a self-fulfilling prophecy. In particular, the *favela*-removal policy it justified perversely created the conditions it was designed to eliminate. In fact, the *favela* was an extremely functional solution to many of the problems faced by its residents. It provided access to jobs and services, a tightly knit community in which reciprocal favors mitigated hardship, and above all, free housing. This was clearly not the case in the housing projects (*conjuntos*) to which *favela* residents were consigned by the government. In the government projects, they were separated from kin and friendship networks; located far from jobs, schools and clinics; and charged monthly payments beyond their means.<sup>21</sup> Relocation also diminished family earnings by eliminating many of the services and odd jobs family members could perform after school, while caring for children, or when filling in time between other tasks.

Javier Auyero aptly summarized the idea of the “marginal mass” as a permanent structural feature of late capitalism as follows:

In contrast with the behaviorist and value-centered approach, the structural-historical perspective on marginality focused on the process of import substitution industrialization and its intrinsic inability to absorb the growing mass of the labor force . . . the functioning of the “dependent labor market” was generating an excessive amount of unemployment. 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.<sup>22</sup>

In my concluding discussion of “Marginality and Urban Poverty,” I explored this in greater depth, contesting the validity of the assumptions underpinning the behaviorist approach, and showing the structural, functional, and political utility of the myths and their relation to the objective conditions of poverty and dependent development.<sup>23</sup> I also concluded that *favela* residents:

... do not have the attitudes or behaviors supposedly associated with marginal groups. Socially, they are well organized and cohesive and make wide use of the urban milieu and its institutions. Culturally, they contribute (their music, slang, soccer, and samba) to the "mainstream," are highly optimistic, and aspire to better education for their children and improved homes and living conditions. Economically, they do the worst jobs for the lowest pay, under the most arduous conditions, with the least security. Politically, they are neither apathetic nor radical. They are aware of and keenly involved in those aspects of politics that affect their lives, both within and outside the *favela* ... [but] they are politically intimidated and manipulated in order to maintain the status quo.<sup>24</sup>

And I asserted that:

... they have the aspirations of the bourgeoisie, the perseverance of pioneers, and the values of patriots ... what they do not have is the opportunity to fulfill their aspirations. The closed nature of the class structure makes it extremely difficult to achieve the hoped-for social mobility.<sup>25</sup>

In deconstructing the erroneous assumptions underpinning the marginality framework, I challenged the presumed co-variation (rather than independence) of dimensions; the idea that poverty is a consequence of characteristics of the poor (rather than a condition of society itself); and the use of a consensus rather than conflict model of society. Furthermore, I noted how the persistence of the myths, despite their lack of correspondence with reality, could be explained not only by the ethnocentric snobbery and prudish moralizing of class bias, but by "the ideological-political function of preserving the social order which generated them."<sup>26</sup> To wit:

The marginality myths justify the existence of extreme inequality and the inability of the system to provide even minimal standards of living for vast portions of its population. By blaming these conditions on the lack of certain attributes of the squatter population, the myths preserve the legitimacy and credibility of the structural rules of the game.<sup>27</sup>

As Jose Artur Rio confirmed:

The *favela* is a necessity of the Brazilian social structure. It demands relations of economic dependence, which result in temporary or permanent misery of the dependent element for the benefits of society.<sup>28</sup>

This dependency-school critique proposed that the traits which defined marginality were only the external symptoms of a form of society rooted in the

historical process of industrialization and economic growth in Latin America. In fact, the symptoms of marginality resulted from a model of development (or underdevelopment<sup>29</sup>) defined by the exclusion of vast sectors of the population from society's main productive apparatus.<sup>30</sup>

Yet, as the dependency school pointed out, even if this population segment was excluded from the *benefits* of the new dominant sector, it was *included* in processes of capital accumulation, both through a chain of exploitation linking their labor to productive processes, and through lowering the reproduction cost of labor.<sup>31</sup> From this perspective, I wrote that marginality could be seen as "the inevitable reverse side of new capital accumulation, insofar as new multinational monopoly investment was increasingly separating the places where the surplus value is produced and the markets where people have sufficient income to consume the products."<sup>32</sup>

I also wrote that the myths of marginality persisted because they played useful psychosocial functions. In particular, they provided a scapegoat for a wide array of societal problems, thus legitimating dominant norms. Marginality was considered the source of all forms of deviance, perversity, and criminality, thus "purifying" the self-image of the rest of society (what I called a "specular relationship").<sup>33</sup> Even more insidiously, the myths shaped the self-image of those labeled marginal in a way that was useful for society, as *favelados* internalized the negative definition ascribed to them, and blamed their own ignorance, laziness, or worthlessness for their lack of "success."<sup>34</sup>

Finally, the issue of marginality also had powerful political implications which supported the populist politicians, and then military dictatorship, of the period. According to Manuel Castells, "marginality became a political issue not because some people are 'outside the system,' but because the ruling classes were trying to use the absence of organization and consciousness of a particular sector in order to obtain political support for their own objectives, offering in exchange a clientelistic or patronage relationship."<sup>35</sup> The underlying dynamic of populist politicians consisted of playing off the masses' desire for mobility against the oligarchy's fear of revolution. To the oligarchy, they could promise to keep the masses in check; to the masses, they could claim the ability to win concessions from the elite.<sup>36</sup>

#### NEW MEANINGS OF MARGINALITY

Brazil has changed dramatically over the past thirty years. A gradual political *abertura* (opening), starting in the late 1970s, led through a series of incremental steps to the end of the dictatorship in 1984–85 and the redemocratization of the country. However, the "economic miracle" of the 1970s also gave way to triple-digit inflation during the 1980s, then stagnation and a series of devaluations of the currency. Efforts to curb inflation culminated in the Real Plan (Plano Real) of 1993, but this did not solve the problem of economic growth, which remained low during the 1990s. Continued financial instability has also contributed to

growing unemployment and inequality over the past decade. Thus, while the discourse on poverty may have changed in Brazil, the reality of poverty remains, with the top 10 percent of the population earning 50 percent of the national income, while about 34 percent live below the poverty line.<sup>37</sup>

The term “marginality” was not widely used in academic or activist circles after the 1970s. The 1970s were characterized by deconstructing the “theories of marginality” from the “phenomenon of marginality.”<sup>38</sup> And then, with the democratic opening of the 1980s, new voices of opposition emerged, and the discourse turned toward concepts of social exclusion, inequality, injustice, and spatial segregation. These issues were also linked to issues of transparency, participatory democracy, and citizenship. In particular, the concept of exclusion was seen to extend beyond economic dualism and underemployment, to a question of rights and opportunities of full citizenship. In policy terms, the most recent response has been the Favela-Bairro program, which has focused on upgrading the physical infrastructure in *favelas* as a means of integrating them into surrounding neighborhoods. However, this massive program has not addressed issues of insertion in the labor market, or provided an inclusive model of development.

Ironically, however, the word “marginal” is now appearing with more frequency in the press, popular music, and common parlance than at any time since the publication of my book in the mid-1970s. The principal reason is that it has been invested with new connotations, specifically as a reference to drug and arms dealers and “outlaws” (*bandidos*). Daily headlines in the newspapers scream about the violence between the *bandidos* and/or *marginais* and the police. Likewise, rap songs and funk music talk about being “marginal” as a bad/good/tough thing — almost a black-pride spin-off, a call to rise up in revolt. In response, the middle class is again fearful of *favelas*. As police and gangs confront each other, everyone else worries about being caught in the crossfire. Meanwhile, discussion has emerged in the press of having the government declare a state of emergency and send in the federal police or the army.<sup>39</sup>

Today, therefore, even if *favelados* are no longer considered marginal, the *favelas*, as territories controlled by drug dealers, are seen as harboring “marginals,” “the marginality,” or “the movement” (i.e., drug dealers). As a result, the *favelados*, whose space has been occupied by drug traffickers (because it was unprotected and easier to hide in) are now associated with the dealers themselves. Inside the *favela* a distinction is made — we are “the workers” (*trabalhadores*), they are “the movement.” But outside, a sense that the favelas are the source of the problem, rather than the home of its most obvious victims, has once again arisen. Today, for example, the rates of violent death inside *favelas* are much higher than in the rest of the city. Considering that half of all deaths among Rio de Janeiro youth are caused by homicide, it is clear that many young *favelados* (especially men) are being murdered every day, both by the dealers and the police.<sup>40</sup>

As Loïc Wacquant has written, “the strong trope of disorganization reinforces the logic of making a few ‘worst cases’ stand for the whole.”<sup>41</sup> This is nowhere more evident than in Rio, where the press alternatively presents *favelados* as hostages of the *bandidos* and as their accomplices. Both stereotypes are daily renewed by stories of *favelados* being killed by police, dealers expelling residents from their homes (with police protection), and mass riots and the burning of public buses in protest against police killings.

Meanwhile, in academic circles, such terms as “the underclass,” the “new poverty,” “the new marginality,” or “advanced marginality” have (re)emerged in the analyses of excluded populations in advanced capitalist countries, particularly the black ghettos of the United States and the stigmatized slums of Europe. Most pointedly, Wacquant has documented the contiguous configuration of color, class, and place in the Chicago ghetto, the French *banlieue*, and the British and Dutch “inner cities,” out of which emerges a “distinctive regime of urban marginality.”<sup>42</sup>

The argument is that in addition to the effects of “industrial marginality,” in which massive unemployment leads to low incomes, deteriorated working conditions, and weakened labor guarantees (for those lucky enough to have jobs), a “postindustrial” marginality has also arisen, with properties all its own. Thus, thirty years later, we are witnessing a resurgence of the term in relation to new constraints, stigmas, territorial separations, and dependencies (on the welfare state). And it has emerged in relation to institutions within “territories of urban relegation” which serve functions parallel to those of the state.<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, Wacquant has posited four structural dynamics (“logics”) that are jointly reshaping the nature of urban poverty in rich societies. These can be paraphrased as follows: 1) the resurgence of social inequality in the context of overall prosperity and the elimination of jobs for unskilled workers; 2) an “absolute surplus population” that will never work again, as well as a form of poverty that is becoming more persistent for those who do have jobs, as a result of low rates of pay and the exploitation of temporary workers; 3) the retrenchment of the welfare state, as programs for the poor are cut and turned into instruments of surveillance and control; and 4) spatial concentration and stigmatization and a diminishing sense of community life.<sup>44</sup>

In general, the first two of these dynamics apply to Rio’s *favelas*. In fact, they were part of the “old marginality” — although they have intensified over the decades. However, the second two do not fit the realities of Rio’s poor, partly because Brazil has never fully developed a welfare state, and partly because poverty is more spatially dispersed in Rio. Recent research in Buenos Aires and Guadalajara has enriched this discussion.<sup>45</sup>

Today, with regard to the *favela* communities I studied thirty years ago, I want to know to what extent propositions of “advanced marginality” hold in relation to Rio de Janeiro. Is there a marked difference in the life trajectories of the original

participants compared with those of their children? And how do the fluctuations in people's lives vary (or not) with fluctuations in their community, and in the macro-political economy of their city and their country?

#### NEW RESPONSES TO MARGINALITY

Despite the importance of the new manifestations of informality described above, Wacquant's definition of the ghetto as a segregated space organized in response to certain constraints only partially applies to *favelas*.<sup>46</sup> Yes, they arose and persist due to economic necessity and material deprivation, physical and social insecurity, racial and class prejudice, and territorial stigma. But increased inequality, deindustrialization, erosion of worker protections, and growth in the informal sector are equally powerful contextual factors.

Likewise, bureaucratic apathy and administrative ineptness do not precisely capture the reality of present state-*favela* relationships (and never did, as populist politics is so very different). Yes, bureaucrats can be apathetic and administrators can be inept. But there are larger issues of political corruption; of links between *bicheiros* (gambling rings), drug and arms dealers, and the police; and of electoral favors and patronage politics. Similarly, Wacquant's notion of "parallel institutions that serve as functional substitutes for and a protective buffer against the dominant institutions of the encompassive society, duplicating the latter only at an incomplete and inferior level" does not apply well to *favelas*—although some believe the drug lords have established a "parallel power" (*poder paralelo*).<sup>47</sup>

Nor do various aspects of the supposed "retrenchment of the welfare state" apply in the case of Rio. In Brazil, the welfare state is still under construction. Many of the most important existing guarantees were put into place by Getulio Vargas as part of the Estado Novo (1937–45).<sup>48</sup> More than half (55 percent) of our original random sample, and 84 percent of the leadership sample, defined state-supported retirement payments (*aposentadoria*) as their main source of current income (often supporting children and grandchildren). Between the Estado Novo and the 1964 military coup, and during the twenty years of military dictatorship that ensued, Brazil's welfare state did not expand significantly. Throughout this period there was little concern for a "social safety net." This may explain why, when asked "Who is the politician who has done the most to help you and people like you?" the answer most often given by those in our sample was not any recent mayor or governor, but Getulio Vargas. Since the mid-1980s, however, and particularly in the last five years, the welfare state has been expanding, with new programs and benefits for the poor.

The notion of "parallel power" or "a parallel state" to depict authority and benefit structures in the *favelas* is facile. It is true that in many *favelas* drug traffickers are better armed and more evident than the police, but this often comes with the complicity of the police. The police may even confiscate arms and drugs in one community and sell them in another, and they certainly supplement their



meager wages with the payoffs they receive to turn a blind eye to drug sales. It is no wonder they will not risk answering calls for help at night.

Similarly, the concept of parallel power might imply that dealers run schools, day-care centers, health clinics, job-training centers, and soup kitchens — as well as control *favela* community organizations, sports groups, and religious associations. But the reality is that the state, though inadequate to the task, is very much in evidence. It runs the day-care centers (insufficient and inferior as they may be); the schools (although drug lords have the power to close them during periods of high conflict); the clinics and hospitals (understaffed and underequipped as they are); and the “popular restaurants” and skills-training programs. Certain favors may be conferred by the drug lords: for example, they may arrange to drive people to the doctor, or get school fellowships. But this is more akin to old-school “boss”/patronage politics than the “new marginality.”

Meanwhile, religious associations have largely maintained their independence. In fact, some who have left the drug world have only done so with support from the rapidly growing evangelical movement.<sup>49</sup> In fact, it is where the state is most absent — in Residents Associations, local sports clubs, and funk dances — that the tension is greatest between *favela* residents and traffickers. Generally, there is peace as long as space is not contested by rival gangs. But when turf wars heat up, the loss of lives equals that of countries engaged in civil war.

All these conditions exist simultaneously with the expansion of the Brazilian welfare state and the persistence of patronage, clientelism, and corruption. And in this regard, the real policy challenge may be to move away from paternalism and toward universalistic rights, entitlements, and guarantees. This is beginning to happen — slowly. One example is the “citizen check” (*cheque cidadão*), a social program started by former state governor Antony Garotinho (1998–2002). It provides a monthly stipend to poor families, which must be spent on food and personal hygiene items.<sup>50</sup> The state government has also gained popularity by setting up “popular restaurants” (equivalent to soup kitchens), which offer subsidized meals for one real (approximately US\$0.30).<sup>51</sup> A further example of the electoral power of Rio’s poor is a city-run social program, the “guaranteed minimum income” (*programa de renda mínima*), which complements the earnings of poor families with average payments of approximately R\$120 (US\$40) per month.<sup>52</sup>

At the national level, the two most important new initiatives are the Bolsa Alimentação (Food Grant) and Bolsa Escola (School Grant). The Food Grant was started in 2001 to fight malnutrition and child mortality; by the end of the year it had reached 1.6 million people.<sup>53</sup> The School Grant is supposed to compensate families for what a child could earn working on the streets (begging, parking/watching cars, doing circus tricks at traffic lights, etc).<sup>54</sup> Although certainly no match for what a child could earn as an *avião* (delivery boy) or *olheiro* (police lookout) in the drug trade, it does represent a step forward.

While clearly representing an advance over the period of military rule, all these programs are still based on state handouts. The only program which really aims to change the structural logic of the system may be Comunidade Solidária (Community Solidarity). Created in 1995 by Ruth Cardoso, wife of President F.H. Cardoso, its goal is to raise US\$2 billion a year to strengthen civil society; create social programs for literacy, job-training, and income-generation; and motivate college students to perform volunteer work in low-income areas.<sup>55</sup>

Returning to Waquant's final point, that concerning spatial and racial concentration, there are other disconnects between social reality in Rio's *favelas* and the "new marginality." Specifically, not all of Rio's poor live in *favelas*, and not all *favelados* are poor. Indeed, rental and sales prices in some *favelas* are higher than in some areas of Copacabana or Botafogo.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, Rio's *favelas* are not ethnically, socially, culturally, nor economically homogeneous. People of many types live there for many reasons. In contrast to the almost total racial segregation described by authors of the new marginality, Rio's *favelas* have always been racially mixed.

At the time of my original study, the random sample showed 21 percent of *favelados* were black, 30 percent mulatto, and 49 percent white. I wrote,

This approximate racial balance is typical of Rio's *favelas*, but should not be taken to reflect racial equality in the society as a whole. The third who are black represent nearly all of Rio's blacks, while those who were white are but a fraction of all whites living in the city.<sup>57</sup>

In the 2002 restudy the percentages of each racial group were almost identical. Interestingly, among those we were able to relocate, we found little correlation between race and social mobility, educational level, occupational status, political attitudes, or perception of prejudice. However, after these thirty years there was a clear tendency for blacks to remain concentrated in *favelas*, and for whites to move to residential neighborhoods. Half of the blacks but only one-third of the whites from the original study still lived in *favelas*, compared to one-seventh of blacks and one-third of whites who had moved to residential neighborhoods. While this does reflect a certain level of racial discrimination in the housing market, it does not support the more comprehensive notion of "bounded territories of urban relegation." Furthermore, we found that both the perception of racial prejudice and the sense of "black pride" had increased over the years.<sup>58</sup>

## THE FRAMING OF FEAR

*To live in a place where daily 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 that is not in jail. It is prison 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]? It is terrible, it is oppressing. Nobody wants to live like this.*  
(Quitungo resident, sixty years old)

I now turn to the second of the five themes that have emerged from our restudy. The single biggest difference in the *favelas* today as compared with thirty years ago is a pervasive atmosphere of fear. In the late 1960s people were afraid of being forcibly relocated by the housing authorities of the dictatorship. Today they are afraid of dying in the crossfire between police and dealers, or between opposing gangs.

*Sixteen Favelas in Rio De Janeiro To Be Raided by Police* (O Globo, May 30, 2002)  
Schools and business closed, and people fled the streets as several squads of police searched for marginals in *favelas*. The day after the confrontation between police and criminals in the *morros* of Coroa and da Mineira, which left four injured and stopped traffic in the Santa Barbara tunnel, the atmosphere was tense in Catumbi. On order from the general commander of the Military Police, . . . the Special Operation Squad will raid 16 *favelas* in Rio.

*Six Buses Set on Fire in Protest* (O Globo, June 20, 2002)  
Violence and acts of vandalism broke out on the streets of Rio de Janeiro. The population was rioting against the police . . . accusing them of killing two young (19 and 25) residents of Favela Vila Cruzeiro where the journalist Tim Lopes was murdered on June 2. According to the police, the two victims were dealers who fired first against the police.

*Innocence in the Territory of Fear* (Jornal Do Brasil, March 4, 2002)  
Mothers in the Morro of São Carlos raise their children in the crossfire and lose hope of seeing them grow up removed from drug dealers.

These three newspaper accounts highlight the different ways the media portrays the relationship between *favelas* and violence. In the first, *favelas* are portrayed as the locus of violence, instigating a coordinated police action to retake control for the state. The second reports on the reaction of *favelados* to perceived police injustice in the murder of two youngsters who were taken to be armed drug dealers, thereby justifying their deaths. The third depicts the *favelados* as innocent victims. In all three, violence is integral to daily life in the *favelas*.

The people we interviewed are afraid of dying every time they step out their front doors, and they fear their children will not come home from school alive. Even inside their homes they do not feel safe. At any moment they fear the police may kick in their doors on the pretense — or reality — of tracking down a dealer.

Alternatively, they fear someone fleeing the police might put a gun to their heads and insist on being hidden, fed, and housed. Such violence is the major motive cited by those who have moved out of *favela* communities.

In the 1960s there was serious drinking and some drug use, mostly marijuana; but cocaine changed everything. Cocaine first appeared in *favelas* in the late 1970s, where it would be divided up and repackaged for local sale. First the rich of the city, then the middle and popular classes, became buyers, and eventually the dealers became better organized — and armed. In the 1960s a few outlaws in Rio had handguns, but now all dealers carry automatic weapons. There is complicity between narcotraffickers and the police, and certain government officials, including candidates for city council and state assembly. With such potential wealth at stake, there is limited interest in stopping the inflow of drugs from Colombia and Bolivia or curtailing the outflow to the United States and Europe.

The new reality is reflected in the lives of *favelados* in multiple and pernicious ways. Most importantly, the very communities in which they are trying to lead normal lives have become “contested spaces,” increasingly occupied by mid-level dealers and their legions. Meanwhile, the kingpins are said to live in luxury in South Zone penthouses, or in the United States and Europe. Almost one out of every five of our respondents had a family member who had been a victim of homicide. When asked in 1969, “What do you most like and dislike about living in Rio?” 16 percent said that crime and violence were their main complaint. Today, on informal inquiry, 60 percent gave this response.

As discussed above, we found little evidence that drug dealers had set up a “parallel state” of paternalistic benefits for the poor. There is a lot of talk about the new *caciquismo*, wherein the drug lords provide schooling, health care, food, and protection to residents in exchange for loyalty. But this was not the case in the communities we studied. While it is undoubtedly true that some people come to the dealers in cases of emergency — needing a ride to the hospital for an ailing relative, money for food if they are hungry, or perhaps access to a place in the local school — this is the exception rather than the rule. Only 10 percent said that the drug dealers had ever helped them in any way (3 percent said the police had helped); and 13 percent said the dealers had harmed them (10 percent said the police had harmed them). The majority of respondents were afraid to even answer the question. What seems to describe the situation best is not the loyalty of residents to the dealers, but a de facto state of domination by violence. Several people explained they needed to stay on good terms with the dealers, because “the police go home at night and leave them and their families at the mercy of those with the weapons.”

The pervasive presence of the dealers has had devastating effects on community life. Compared with thirty years ago there is considerably less “hanging out” in public space, less participation in community associations, and (especially

when there is a war between *commandos*) less visiting among friends and relatives. Membership in every kind of organization, with the exception of evangelical churches, has declined drastically. The internal space of the community is no longer the locus for leisure or recreation. These were the things that formerly united and bound the community together.

In 1969 more than half (54 percent) of the original interviewees felt their communities were "very united," and another 24 percent said "united"; only 21 percent said there was a "total" or "partial lack" of unity. Today the numbers are reversed: 58 percent claim there is a "lack of unity," while less than 6 percent feel the community is "very united."

#### LEVEL OF LIVING, MOBILITY, AND THE INCREASE IN INEQUALITY

Another major finding that is emerging is that although collective consumption of urban services and individual consumption of household goods has increased notably over the last three decades, the gap between rich and poor has increased even more. This is reflected in an ever-receding sense of becoming *gente*, the Brazilian word for "person" or "human being." One of the most successful of the original interviewees (one who gave his daughter a computer for her fifteenth birthday) was full of hope when I first met him. At the time, he was in his late twenties, had graduated from an excellent Jesuit high school, and thought that if he worked hard enough and long enough he could achieve the dignity and status of a person from the South Zone. Now, after having worked for thirty years in the military police and continuing after retirement as a private security guard (his wife having held a job in a sewing factory and continuing to sew after her retirement), he said he still feels "light years away" from being *gente*.

No doubt, there have been significant improvements in the quality of life of those I interviewed. For the vast majority, living standards have improved. This is readily apparent with regard to access to collective urban services such as water, sewerage, and electricity, which are now virtually universal. Homebuilding materials have also gone from stucco or wood for at least half of the population, to brick and mortar for nearly everyone.

Of these improvements, perhaps the most dramatic has been piped water. In 1969 only one-third of the households had running water. I distinctly remember the long lines of girls and women waiting to fill their square five-gallon metal cans at the slow-running water spigot and then walking long distances up steep hills with the cans balanced on their heads. For large families, getting enough water for cooking, cleaning, and washing could take the better part of a day, and lines formed before dawn. One date everyone remembers is the arrival of running

water. In the communities we studied, although not in all of Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*, access to running water is now virtually universal.

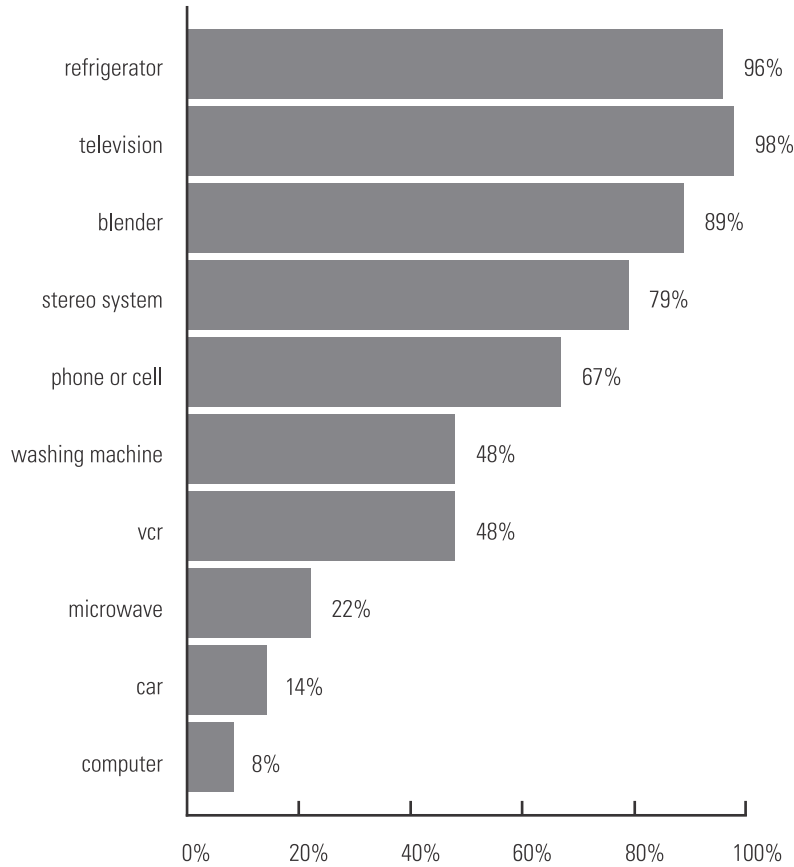
The second biggest transformation has been the advent of electricity — i.e., access to a “legal” power connection. Traditionally, illegal connections were run from the city's electric lines into *cabines* controlled by one (or a small group) of residents. Since electric meters were unavailable, a flat monthly rate was charged based on the number of outlets in a home. This meant that poor families frequently paid more than the wealthy in the surrounding neighborhoods for considerably more precarious service. Failure to pay meant immediate cutoff and a return to kerosene lanterns for light and ember-filled irons for pressing clothes. In 1969 less than half of all *favela* households had any electricity at all; today it is close to 100 percent. The advent of electricity preceded that of running water in almost every case, as it was a private, not a public service.<sup>59</sup>

In terms of individual consumption of household appliances, the pattern is equally impressive (see FIGURE 5.10). In 1969 only 64 percent of families owned TVs, 58 percent refrigerators, and 25 percent stereos. The most striking lifestyle change involves having a refrigerator. This has meant freedom for women from daily shopping — and from spoiled foods, especially milk for infants and young children.

For anyone who recalls the level of living in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas* thirty years ago, or is familiar with squatter settlements in Africa or pavement dwellers in India, the *favelados* and ex-*favelados* of Rio seem to live in relative luxury. They might not have savings accounts, but their purchasing power provides impressive proof that not all people living in *favelas*, *conjuntos*, or low-income neighborhoods are poor.

Still, the reality is considerably more complex than the percentages suggest. For example, 86 percent of interviewees said they owned their own homes, but almost none had legal title to either property or dwelling. Many had built their own homes or expanded the homes their parents had built earlier. Others had purchased their homes, but in the informal market (i.e., without legal title). Even then, the prices they paid were shockingly high. In fact, in some of the more desirable *favelas* real estate prices are higher than in Botafogo, or certain parts of Copacabana (see FIGURE 5.11).

While there have been major upgrading projects over the past decade — bringing water, closed sewers, electricity, and paved access roads into the *favelas* (most recently, and on the largest scale, through the Favela-Bairro program) — the issue of land ownership remains unresolved. The de facto use of land through “squatters rights” (*usucapião*) and the informal titles of sale exchanged upon purchase would not hold up in court if land or home ownership came into dispute. Still, since it is no longer politically feasible for the government to engage in massive eradication on the scale of the late 1960s and 1970s, people feel they own their homes if they are not paying rent.<sup>60</sup> Most importantly, they have the right to pass them on to their children. In addition, of the original sample, only 30 per-



**Figure 5.10 Ownership of consumer goods by *favela* family in 2002.**

Source: author.

cent still live in *favelas*. Another 37 percent live in housing projects (*conjuntos*) in which their rent has gone toward ownership, and the rest live in peripheral neighborhoods, where they are often owners of small land plots.

It is noteworthy that 67 percent of the original sample now have either a regular or a cellular telephone. When I did my original study, only a handful of families, mostly merchants, had private phones, and public phones were scarce in or near the *favelas*. Generally, there was only a phone in the Residents Association, which took messages as a service to members. This was a great hardship in terms of being available on the odd-job market, and especially in times of health crises. One of the classical samba songs of the 1960s talked of the disillusionment of those on the hillsides (*favelados, morros*), where people die needlessly because there were no telephones to call the doctor or cars to fetch him.<sup>61</sup>



MINIMUM SALARIES (%)		
YEAR	1969	2001
1 MS or less	11	15
1 MS to 2 MS	38	29
2 MS to 3 MS	29	11
3 MS to 4 MS	12	14
4 MS to 5 MS	3	11
More than 5 MS	6	20
Total	100%	100%

Note: MS stands for *salario mínimo* or minimum wage. In 1969 it was approximately US\$36 per month; in 2001 it was about US\$77 per month. Although the dollar amount was higher, the actual value of the minimum salary decreased. The economists believe that the purchasing power of the 1969 minimum salary would be equal to only US\$67 today, but in 2001 the purchasing power of the MS was US\$60. I believe the increase in the number of people earning one minimum salary or less is due to age factors, with many people living on retirement pensions.

**Figure 5.11. Family incomes 1969 and 2001.**

Washing machines were also virtually nonexistent in the *favelas* thirty years ago. People washed their laundry in the lagoon or in rivers, and laid it out on the grass to dry. I was surprised to see that more than half of the restudy group now have washing machines. This is a luxury item — as are video players, which again are owned by almost half the families.

The family income of these original respondents has also increased, even controlling for the decreased purchasing power of the minimum wage. Forty-seven percent now have higher family incomes, while 32 percent of incomes were lower and 21 percent have remained the same. During the last thirty years income inequality in Brazil has increased significantly. In Rio, the richest 1 percent hold 11.8 percent of total income, while the poorest 58 percent hold only 13.1 percent. This means that every person in the highest strata has the income of forty-eight people in the lowest strata.<sup>62</sup>

One effect of this disparity is that the very people who possess all the new consumer goods just referred to still consider themselves “poor,” and overwhelmingly feel they do not earn enough for a “dignified life.” For example, 48 percent have a monthly family income of about R\$500 (US\$244) or less, but only 18 percent of the group feels this is sufficient for a “decent life.” When asked, most said R\$1,000 per month was the minimum for a decent life, but only 18 percent were in that bracket.<sup>63</sup> Only one-fifth of these original interviewees are now earning enough to live decently according to their own standards.

Despite the modest gains in family income, people feel they have lost ground, that the gap between them and the rest of society has widened. They are right. While the poor have improved their standing in absolute terms, they have lost ground relative to the rest of the population.

Such conditions may increase awareness of discrimination of all types. In 1969, 64 percent of those interviewed said that racial discrimination existed; today, 85 percent say so. It is no surprise then that of all the many stigmas faced by Rio

de Janeiro's urban poor, skin color is the most widely perceived (88 percent). But racial discrimination is only one factor dividing "us" and "them." Simply living in a *favela* may be equally stigmatizing, and many people told of being afraid to give correct addresses on job interviews, knowing that eyebrows would be raised and the interview terminated if this were known. Thus, an unanticipated benefit of being removed from Catacumba to public housing in 1970 was sometimes that people were able to land jobs they had been rejected for in the past.

A further three-quarters of those interviewed reported being discriminated against for their style of dress. Regardless of skin color or place of residence, there is a strong bias against those who do not dress in the accepted style of the South Zone (i.e., of the upper-middle class). This has a lot to do with pervasive television marketing of brand-name clothing, especially jeans, sneakers, shirts, etc. On one occasion I listened to young people assessing job prospects by their earning power in terms of acquiring "status-bearing apparel." A man in his twenties explained that he had investigated the possibility of working as a bus-fare collector, but had calculated that after paying for his transportation, buying his lunch "on the street," and purchasing his uniform, his take-home would be so little that he could not buy a brand-name shirt or Nike running shoes for the foreseeable future. This was enough to discourage him from working at all (and certainly makes entering the drug traffic much more appealing).

No such reasoning was in evidence thirty years ago, perhaps because worldwide consumer standards were not as prevalent. At that time only 48 percent reported watching television every day, as opposed to 90 percent today. However, the status images in the minds of *favela* and *conjunto* residents today are not those of the Carioca or the Brazilian elite, but those of a global culture, and most of the prestige items are foreign made (or rip-offs of such). Yet when asked what impact globalization had on their lives, 88 percent said it had no impact at all. Among the rest, 10 percent said it had a negative impact (citing job loss as the main concern). Thus, there would seem to be little awareness about the effect of "created needs" on self-esteem.

When I interviewed Rita in her clothing store in Nova Brasilia, she seemed to be one of the "success stories." She had always sewn and designed clothing, and had worked in a factory while her husband was alive. After he died, she had opened up her own store on Avenida Nova Brasilia, the main commercial street in the *favela*. She was doing very well now, going in her truck monthly to Sao Paulo to purchase clothing, and then selling it at a mark-up — in addition to selling what she designed and made herself. In fact, she had moved out of the *favela* into a nearby apartment building, and owned a house on the beach. When her son got his girlfriend pregnant and had to support her, she even bought him a shoe store across the street. Nevertheless, she told me of her recent humiliation when she had gone to an upscale downtown Rio store to buy a pair of eyeglasses. At first they ignored her, but then they were openly rude when she insisted on seeing the pair she liked. As she is light-

skinned, I pressed her to tell me what it was that made them treat her badly, and she explained it was because she was dressed like someone from the North Zone.<sup>64</sup>

What about gender bias? Fifty-six percent said there was discrimination against women. This plays itself out within the household as well as in the work world. As in Mexico, there is a high incidence of verbal and physical abuse in the home.<sup>65</sup> But this is not openly discussed, and the few *delegacias da mulher* (women's police stations) are not sufficient. Nevertheless, women are becoming bolder, and many told me they were fighting back.

Most of the income that women generated when I was living in Rio in 1968–69 came through domestic work. The women typically lived in the houses of their “patrons” during the week, often with their children, which gave them the opportunity to eat well, send their children to good schools, and have access to excellent health care. They returned to the *favelas* over the weekend with spending money for their households.

Today, with the decline in purchasing power of the middle class, the rising costs of housing in Rio de Janeiro (leading to a tendency to live in smaller apartments), the institution of minimum-wage and benefit requirements for domestic help, and the convenience of laundromats, food-delivery, frozen foods, and new domestic appliances, many families have cut their domestic help to one or two days a week. Much unemployment among women has ensued, especially since it has been difficult for women to break into other areas of work. This certainly deserves further study. In the city of Rio de Janeiro the mean income for men is nearly R\$587; for women it is just less than R\$382.

The increase in part-time work for women in their own homes does allow them to combine domestic activities with paid employment, but it also means that earnings are more erratic. As a consequence, more women are insecure about their working conditions today than they were decades ago. And although many have gone to work in stores where there is greater prestige, they work more hours and earn less. The incidence of female-headed households has also increased from 18.1 percent in 1991 to 24.9 percent in 2000.<sup>66</sup>

## DISILLUSIONMENT WITH DEMOCRACY

There was great hope that the *abertura* (gradual reintroduction of democratic rights and principles) and the end of the dictatorship in 1984 would bring new opportunities for the underclass. It seemed reasonable that regaining the direct vote for mayor, governor, and president, along with freedom of speech, assembly, and the press (curtailed following the military coup in 1964), would lead to improvements for the urban poor. During the dictatorship strict censorship had prevented the free flow of ideas, people had been tortured and killed for opposi-

tion beliefs and activities, and the presence of military police had severely constrained civilian activity.

I had anticipated that the end of the dictatorship would bring a flourishing of democratic participation, community organizations, and civil associations of all kinds, which could engage in bargaining and negotiating with the state for increased investment in community upgrading. I imagined that the disenfranchised would have a greater "voice," demanding their fair share of urban services, good schools, local clinics, and improved public transportation. It also stood to reason this would bring improvements to the community as a whole, and to the life chances of the *favelados* and their families.

Indeed, in the years immediately following the dictatorship there was a burgeoning of participatory activity, with many grassroots organizations springing up in the *favelas*, and a plethora of nonprofits taking an active role in the cause of justice and equity for the *favela* population. However, another picture has also emerged since then. Internal community organizations have become fragmented and fragile because of a lack of resources; nonprofits have turned their attention to broad campaigns against hunger and violence; drug dealers have appeared on the scene; and party politics has shown its fickle face. With too many candidates courting the *favela* vote, and too many promises that go unfulfilled, political corruption has become too visible, and cynicism has set in.

In 1969, 36 percent of those interviewed said "the Brazilian people do not have the capacity to choose their candidates." This figure should have decreased over the last thirty years; instead, it has risen to 51 percent. The increase reflects deep and widespread frustration, which is greatest among those who believed in 1969 that Brazilians were able to choose their candidates wisely. Of the 38 percent of people who believed in the wisdom of the popular vote in 1969, 57 percent have now changed their opinion in a negative direction. This shows that those with the highest hopes for democracy were the first to notice that gaining the direct vote was not sufficient to achieve power, or even honest representation.

In our new survey, a follow-up question asked whether an individual had ever been helped or harmed by various levels of government. Less than half said government had helped them. By contrast, 52 percent said the national government of President Cardoso had harmed them. While it is true that many national initiatives are implemented through state or local governments, which claim all the credit, this was a devastating critique for a president who is a world-renowned urban sociologist, committed to social justice, and it may help explain the recent landslide election of the Labor Party candidate, Luis Ignácio Lula da Silva.

Among all levels, state government was seen as the most helpful, with 37 percent responding positively. City government was a close second, with 25 percent responding favorably. However, in both cases 16 percent of respondents said they had been harmed, while the rest were neutral.

International agencies, such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the Inter-American Development Bank received the lowest rating of all, with only 3 percent saying they had been helped by these organizations, and 25 percent saying they had been harmed by them (although about 35 percent did not know what they were). Such a high level of ignorance is interesting in light of the enormous investment in the Favela-Bairro program by the Inter-American Development Bank, along with CEF (Caixa Econômica Federal), the European Union, and the City of Rio de Janeiro. Favela-Bairro was started in 1994 (during Mayor Cesar Maia's first mandate), and since then has benefited 158 communities (4 big, 119 medium, 35 small) and more than 600,000 people. None of the *favela* communities in our study have been beneficiaries yet, although there are plans to bring the program to Nova Brasília in 2003.

The people we interviewed said there have been improvements since the end of the dictatorship in the areas of housing, sanitation, transportation, and access to (but not quality of) education; but that health services, security, exclusion, and the economic situation had gotten worse. Indeed, Rio lost thousands of jobs in manufacturing over the past fifteen years. This makes it difficult to know whether the nostalgia for the period of the dictatorship is really a longing for better economic times and for more personal safety. One thing often mentioned in open-ended interviews is that during the dictatorship there was much less crime and violence, no gang and drug wars to worry about, and less police abuse. *Favelados* didn't have many rights (in fact, they confused rights and duties); but more of them had jobs, and while they may have worried about removal, they didn't fear for their lives.

#### AGENCY AND OPTIMISM

The final set of findings I will mention adds a ray of hope to the rather bleak picture I have described thus far. On the positive side, the attitudes, beliefs, and values of community members reflect much less passivity and paternalism than three decades ago. There is a much stronger belief that political participation can make a difference, especially at the local level — and that organizing and mobilizing are necessary to bring the demands of the poor to the attention of the government.

Several comparisons between current responses and those from 1969 are illuminating in this regard. For example, today 66 percent (compared with only 33 percent in 1969) said that “all Brazilians should participate in political life,” rather than “politics should remain in the hands of the politicians.” Furthermore, 30 percent (compared with 11 percent in 1969) thought that their participation can influence government decisions. And 67 percent (compared with 30 percent in 1969) had actually sought the help of a government agency.

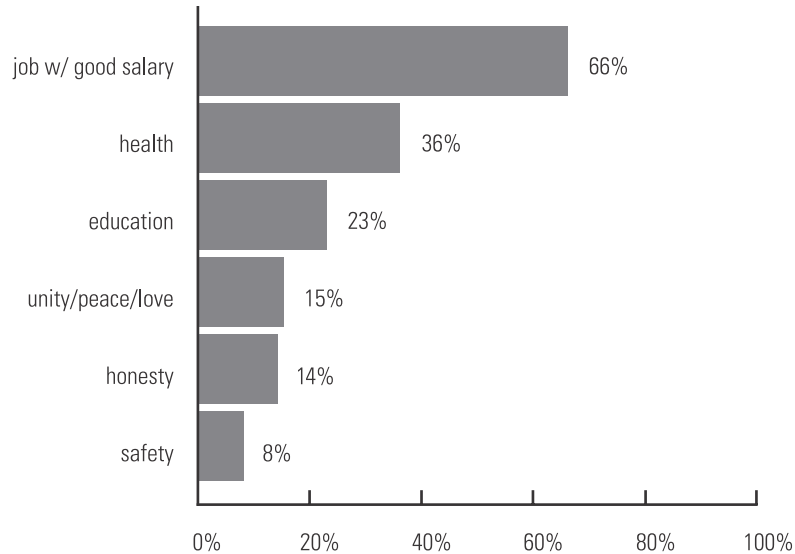
During the dictatorship, many organizations emerged in *favelas* to demand water, electricity, sewage, pavement, etc., but their scope of action was limited to the community level. Today the people we interviewed felt committed to playing a role in the larger political life of their city and country. Their general cynicism about influencing government decisions may be a realistic response to what they have learned over time. But it is still encouraging that twice as many as before think they can make a difference. One-third of a population willing to act on their beliefs can indeed change the discourse, if not actually change public policy. And the population has become more sophisticated in knowing how to seek redress of grievances or assistance from public institutions. Not that they are well treated when they make such appeals. But they have learned that when they go as a group, well dressed, well spoken, and persistent, they cannot be ignored.

This issue about the importance of mobilizing to demand respect is fundamental, and is one of the most positive developments since my earlier study. For example, in our restudy, 60 percent (as compared with 40 percent in 1969) said “government acts only when the people organize.” And 67 percent (as compared with 26 percent in 1969) contended that “government leaders do not try to understand the problems of the poor.” But underlying these numbers is a new awareness that remaining passive and “waiting one’s turn” is not the answer. The idea I heard repeatedly in the late 1960s was that “we are humble people, we do not ask for much, and if we are patient our problems will be taken care of once the more important public concerns have been handled.” I did not hear anything of the kind in any conversation or interview this time, and I take that as a positive paradigm shift. Here are people ready and willing to be proactive in attaining their goals for a better life.

This raises the question of how people define a “better life.” By far the most important concern was for “a good job with a good salary.” Altogether, 67 percent gave this answer on an open-ended question. The next most frequent response, “health,” received less than half that level (30 percent), while “education” received only 23 percent (see FIGURE 5.12).

This is the same dilemma faced by poor people in cities throughout the world. What kind of jobs can they find today when unskilled and semi-skilled employment is growing ever more scarce, and when the qualifications for good jobs are becoming ever more elevated? One person said to me that in her day, parents told their children, “If you don’t stay in school and study, you’ll end up being a garbage collector.” Now, to even apply for the job of a garbage collector, you need a high school diploma, and even then thousands of applicants compete for the same positions.

In response to a standard set of questions about whether conditions had gotten better or worse in the past five years (and whether they could be expected to improve or deteriorate in the next five years), we found that the “closer to home” the frame of reference was set, the more optimistic the assessments were. Thus,



**Figure 5.12. Most important factor for a "successful life."**

*Source: author*

44 percent said conditions had become worse or much worse in Brazil in the past five years, and 38 percent thought they would get worse or much worse in the next five years. (The distribution was rather bifurcated, with 36 percent saying conditions had gotten better, and 30 percent thinking they would get better). They were more optimistic about Rio de Janeiro, with 49 percent saying conditions had improved, and 48 percent saying they would improve (33 percent said they had gotten worse, and 27 percent thought they would get worse). In terms of their own communities, optimism was still higher, with 51 percent saying conditions had improved, and 48 percent saying they would improve (versus 26 percent saying they had gotten worse, and 16 percent thinking they would get worse).

The sample was most optimistic about their own lives — perhaps because they feel they have more control and are willing to struggle hard to improve their conditions. A total of 53 percent thought their lives had improved over the past five years (versus 29 percent who thought they had gotten worse). Meanwhile, 58 percent thought their lives would improve over the next five years (compared with only 15 percent who thought they would get worse). When asked to compare their current lives with their expectations and aspirations for themselves, more than half (55 percent) said their lives were better or much better than they had expected or hoped; a fifth (22 percent) said their lives were about the same; and another fifth (21 percent) said they were worse off or much worse off. Further analysis of these groups may reveal what factors led to each outcome.

## FURTHER RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The preliminary findings presented here are part of a broader research endeavor. The idea is to trace the life histories of the people interviewed in 1968–69 across time, looking for patterns about intra- and intergenerational mobility. Among the main goals will be to understand the dynamics of urban poverty, exclusion, and socioeconomic mobility; to investigate the meaning and reality of marginality, and how both have been transformed; to trace patterns of life history in relation to macro political and economic transformations at both the national and city levels (and in the context of the spatial evolution of the city fabric); to investigate the impact of public-policy interventions at the local, state, national, and international levels (not only those targeted to *favelas* and poverty, but also nontargeted initiatives that may have had an even greater impact on the lives of Rio's poor); and to explore the mediating effects of the civil society and social networks in helping cope with hard times and take advantage of opportunities in good times.

The interviews with original study participants and their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren will provide rich insights into how life has evolved over time against the backdrop of continually transforming external conditions. Most longitudinal studies are based on interviewing a set of randomly selected people in the same community, making it impossible to discern whether apparent upward mobility is due to the improvement of life conditions for the same people, or their displacement by people of better means. This is the problem with using aggregate data such as the household census. By following the same people and their descendants over time and gathering year-by-year life histories, we will be breaking new ground. As the Director of IPEA (Brazil's National Institute of Economic Research) said, their agency's information provides only "still photos" at different points in time. Our hope is to develop information with the fluidity of a video.

## NOTES

1. Of these eight communities in Caxias, three are *favelas* (Vila Operaria, Favela do Mangue, and Favela Central), and five are legal neighborhoods of unserviced lots called *loteamentos nao-urbanizados* (Centenário, São Sebastiao, Sarapui, Olavo Bilac, and Leopoldina). Half of the sample were squatters from the three *favelas*; half were homeowners from the subdivisions.

2. J. Perlman, *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1976).

3. Among the funders for this research have been the World Bank, the Tinker Foundation, the Fullbright Commission, DFID/DPU, the Dutch Trust Fund, and the



Starwood Foundation. In-kind support has been received from the Mega-Cities Project and Trinity College.

4. I would like to acknowledge Profs. Carlos Vaiuer and Pedro Abramo at IPPUR/UFRJ, and their graduate students Flavia Braga, Teresa Farinha, and Andrea Cunha, for their help in Phase I.

5. This chapter owes a debt of gratitude to the Phase II research team in Rio de Janeiro, composed of Graziella Moraes, Sonia Kalil, Lia Rocha, and Josinaldo Aleixo, with help from Edmiere Exaltação, and methodological guidance from Prof. Ignacio Cano.

6. Official information from Secretaria de Planejamento e Coordenação Geral do Estado da Guanabara (1973).

7. Information from IPLAN/Rio. Available online at [www.armazemdedados.rio.rj.gov.br/index.htm](http://www.armazemdedados.rio.rj.gov.br/index.htm). Also see the current study by Pedro Abramo of IPPUR/UFRJ for the Instituto Pereira Passos on the detection of irregular settlements in the 1990s.

8. Most were assigned to units in five-story walk-up housing blocks, known as *conjuntos*, principally the *conjuntos* of Guapore and Quitungo in the Vila de Penha. Others were placed in Cidade de Deus or Nova Holanda. A 2002 film on Cidade de Deus galvanized attention to the plight of those living there.

9. Beti eventually got this job, but after several months the woman died, and as this chapter was going to press she was again unemployed.

10. The Complexo de Alemão has nearly 57,000 inhabitants; Nova Brasília, with more than 15,000, is the largest of the eleven *favelas* that comprise it. Data from "Estado Vai Disputar Jovens com o Tráfico," *O Globo* (July 14, 2002), 20.

11. When I tried to take new photos of the streets and open spaces shown in my book, I was suddenly surrounded by a group of young men who took away my camera and ripped out the film. My equipment was only returned when I was able to convince them to accompany me to the Residents Association, where the president had agreed to hold a meeting of old-timers to reconstruct the community's history for our study.

12. Among other provisions, it stipulated that if a husband and wife fought, it was the husband who would have to leave. The wife and children were entitled to stay in the house.

13. A. Inkeles, "The Modernization of Man," in M. Weiner, ed., *Modernization: The Dynamics of Growth* (New York: Basic Books, 1966); D. Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1964); E. Hagen, *On the Theory of Social Change* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1962); L. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1966); D. McClelland, *The Achievement Motive* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953); and M. Millikan and D. Blackmer, *The Emerging Nations* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1961).

14. Even Franz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, speaks of uprooted peasants circling aimlessly around the city as a natural source of revolutionary activity.

15. A. Portes, "The Urban Slum in Chile: Types and Correlates," *Ekistics* 202 (September 1972); A. Portes, "Rationality in the Slum: An Essay in Interpretative Sociology," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 14, no. 3 (1972), 268–86; J. Nun, "Superpoblación Relativa, Ejército

Industrial de Reserva y Masa Marginal," *Revista Latinoamericana de Sociología* 69, no. 2 (1969); J. Nun, "Marginalidad y Otras Cuestiones," *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* (1972), 97–129; A. Quijano, *Notas Sobre el Concepto de Marginalidad Social* (Santiago, Chile: Economic Commission for Latin America Report, División de Asuntos Sociales, October 1966); A. Quijano, *Dependencia, Cambio Social y Urbanización en Latinoamérica* (Santiago, Chile: Economic Commission for Latin America Report, Social Affairs Division, 1967); A. Quijano, "La Formación de un Universo Marginal en las Ciudades de América Latina," in M. Castells, ed., *Imperialismo y Urbanización en América Latina* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1973); M. Castells, "La Nueva Estructura de la Dependencia y los Procesos Políticos de Cambio Social en América Latina," paper presented to X Congreso Interamericano de Planificación, Panamá, September 1974; M. Castells, "Clase, Estado y Marginalidad Urbana," in *Estructura de Clase y Política Urbana en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones SIAP, 1974); F. Fernandes, *Sociedade de Classes e Subdesenvolvimento* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1968); and F. Cardoso, "The Brazilian Political Model," paper prepared for a workshop on Brazilian development, Yale University, April 1971.

16. For studies on Rio de Janeiro, see A. Leeds and E. Leeds, "Brazil and the Myth of Urban Rurality: Urban Experience, Work, and Values in 'Squatterments' of Rio de Janeiro and Lima," paper presented at St. Thomas Conference, November 1967. For studies on Salvador and São Paulo, see M. Berlinck, "Relações de Classe Numa Sociedade Neoliberalista Dependente: Marginalidade e Poder em São Paulo" (São Paulo: mimeograph). For studies on Santiago, see Castells, "Clase, Estado y Marginalidad Urbana"; CIDU Report by the team on population studies (Equipo de Estudios Poblacionales), "Reindicación Urbana y Lucha Política: Los Campamentos de Pobladores in Santiago de Chile," *EURE* 2, no. 6 (November 1972); and F. Kuznetzoff, "Housing Policies or Housing Politics: An Evaluation of the Chilean Experience" (Berkeley, Calif.: Department of City and Regional Planning, University of California, 1974). For studies on Buenos Aires, see M. Marculis, "Migración y Marginalidad en la Sociedad Argentina," *Série SIAP* 10 (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1968). For studies on Lima, see J. Turner, "Four Autonomous Settlements in Lima, Peru," paper presented at Latin American Colloquium, Department of Sociology, Brandeis University, May 1967. For studies on Bogotá, see R. Cardona, "Los Asentamientos Espontáneos de Vivienda," in R. Cardona, ed., *Las Migraciones Internas* (Bogotá, Columbia: ACOFAME, 1973). For studies on Mexico City, see H. Muñoz García, O. Oliveira, and C. Stein, "Categorías de Migrantes y Nativos y Algunas de sus Características Socio-económicas" (México: Universidad Nacional, February 1971, mimeograph); and S. Eckstein, *The Poverty of Revolution: The State and the Urban Poor in Mexico* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977). For studies on Monterrey, see Balan, Browning, and Jelin, "A Computerized Approach to the Processing and Analysis of Life Stories Obtained in Sample Surveys," *Behavioral Science* 14, no. 2 (1969), p.105–20.

17. Richard Morse, "Trends and Issues in Latin American Urban Research, 1965–1970," *Latin American Research Review* 6, no. 1 (1971); and William P. Mangin, "Latin American Squatter Settlements: A Problem and a Solution," *Latin American Research Review* 2, no. 3 (1976)

18. W. Ryan, *Blaming the Victim* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971).

19. The eight propositions and the corresponding concepts of this “ideal type” are presented in figure form on pp. 130–31 of Perlman, *Myth of Marginality*.

20. Perlman, *Myth of Marginality*, 195.

21. People were charged monthly payments of 25 percent of their former family incomes. However, the cost of bus transportation to and from the *conjuntos* was so high that in general only one person in each family (the highest earner) could afford the trip, leading to a precipitous drop in household earnings. Families who fell badly behind in their payments were relegated to “triage housing” even further from the city, in a place ironically called *paciência* (patience).

22. J. Auyero, “Wacquant in the Argentine Slums: Comment on Loïc Wacquant’s ‘Three Pernicious Premises in the Study of the American Ghetto,’” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 21, no. 3 (September 1997), 508–12.

23. Perlman, *Myth of Marginality*, 242–62.

24. *Ibid.*, 243.

25. *Ibid.*, 243.

26. *Ibid.*, 246.

27. *Ibid.*, 248.

28. *Ibid.*, 245, footnote 4.

29. A.G. Frank, “The Development of Underdevelopment in Brazil,” in *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), p. 50–62.

30. Perlman, *Myth of Marginality*, 251.

31. *Ibid.*, 258.

32. *Ibid.*, 257.

33. *Ibid.*, 259.

34. *Ibid.*, 250.

35. Castells, cited in Perlman, *Myth of Marginality*, 258, footnote 24.

36. I pointed out that the *favelados* also provided symbolic constituencies for other political actors, from conservatives who needed them to blame for social ills, to radicals who claimed to speak on their behalf and needed them to justify their actions. See Perlman, *Myth of Marginality*, 260.

37. R. Paes e Barros, R. Henriques, and R. Mendonca, “A Estabilidade Inaceitável: Desigualdade e Pobreza no Brasil,” in *Desigualdade e Pobreza no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: IPEA, 2000).

38. C. Silveira, “Contribuições para a Agenda Social,” in *Agenda de Desenvolvimento Humano e Sustentável para o Brasil do Século XXII* (Brasília: Forum XXI/PNUD, 2000).

39. In 1992, during the world meeting on environment “Rio 92,” the army actually occupied the *favelas* for one week, “to guarantee the security in town.”

40. See, for example, I. Cano, “The Use of Lethal Force by Police in Rio de Janeiro,” *Boletim do ISER* (Rio de Janeiro, April 1998), in which the author claims that the number of violent deaths caused by the police in Rio de Janeiro is the same as all police-related deaths in the entire United States. See also L. Soares, *Violência e Criminalidade no Estado do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Hama, 1998).

41. L. Wacquant, "Three Pernicious Premises in the Study of the American Ghetto," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 21, no. 2 (June 1997), 341–54.

42. L. Wacquant, "The Rise of Advanced Marginality: Notes on its Nature and Implications," *Acta Sociológica* 39 (1996).

43. Wacquant, "The Rise of Advanced Marginality"; Wacquant, "Three Pernicious Premises"; and L. Wacquant, "Urban Marginality in the Coming Millennium," *Urban Studies* 36 (September 1999).

44. Wacquant, "Three Pernicious Premises."

45. In testing these formulations against conditions in Buenos Aires, Javier Auyero focused on "structural joblessness, massification of unemployment and increasingly insecure wage-labor relations; the functional disconnect from macroeconomic changes; and a particular combination of malign and benign state neglect/abandonment." Meanwhile, in relation to Guadalajara, Mercedes de la Rocha has discussed a change in perspective from the "resources of poverty" in the 1960s and 1970s (which showed the ingenious coping mechanisms and survival strategies of the poor), to the "poverty of resources" in the 1990s (in which the limits of coping are surpassed and the capacity of survival is threatened). She found that the "deep restructuring and resulting persistent economic and social hardship that have characterized much of the Americas for the past two decades" (1980s and 1990s) had eroded the poor's capacity for action, social mobility, and even reproduction. M. Rocha, "From the Resources of Poverty to the Poverty of Resources? The Erosion of a Survival Model," in *Latin American Perspectives* 119, no. 4 (July 2001), 72–100.

46. Wacquant, "Three Pernicious Premises."

47. *Ibid.*, 341.

48. These included retirement pensions, worker identification (*carteira de trabalho*), minimum wage (*salário mínimo*), labor unions, and limited social rights such as state-subsidized health care, low-income housing programs, etc.

49. The evangelical churches have increasingly replaced the Afro-Brazilian spiritist centers (*terreiros*) of candomblé, macumba, and unibanda that were so prevalent in the *favelas* thirty years ago.

50. According to Garotinho's Website, this program assists 37,000 families in the state of Rio de Janeiro. However, since this money is only distributed through religious institutions, there is no state administrative supervision, and distribution may in fact occur according to the rules of patronage rather than universalism.

51. The state pays R\$1.60 (US\$0.50) toward the cost of the meal.

52. São Paulo's program is even bigger. It provides an income supplement of up to R\$180 (US\$60) for families with children younger than fifteen (who must be attending school if they are older than seven).

53. It pays R\$15 (US\$5) to R\$45 (US\$15) per family for up to six months. However, families must achieve goals in terms of child health and weight minimums; there must be proof of child vaccinations; and prenatal exams are required for pregnant women.

54. This federal program, which (since 2000) provides families a small stipend for each

child who remains in school, is administered through the city government. It pays R\$30 (US\$10) per month per child for as many as three children. Altogether, it assists 4.9 million families and 8.5 million children, ages seven to fourteen.

55. Its main funding comes from private-sector and foundation partners, and its board includes public figures from every sector of society. During the two mandates of the present administration it has reached more than 53 million people. Again, this does not fit with the notion of state apathy. And, as far as we know, bureaucratic ineptitude is much greater in long-stalled programs to regularize land tenure.

56. P. Abramo, "Notas sobre a Teoria Econômica da Favela: Mobilidade Residencial e Mercado Informal," in *Anais do IX Congresso Nacional da ANPPUR*, Rio de Janeiro, May, 2001.

57. Perlman, *Myth of Marginality*, 58.

58. An interesting phenomenon is the "darkening" of the original interviewees, according to their own self-definition. When asked about race today, they defined themselves much more frequently as black or mulatto than in 1968 — as if having African roots had become a source of pride rather than stigma.

59. After the Light Company was privatized in 1996, it realized it could expand markets and reduce losses considerably if it treated the *favela* population as clients/customers rather than outlaws.

60. The *favela*-removal policies prevailed from 1962 until the second half of the 1970s. Although in the first Cesar Maia government there were some removals of *favelas* in areas of "high risk" (usually in rich neighborhoods like Barra da Tijuca and Recreio), this cannot be considered a policy, especially since Maia also implemented the Favela-Bairro program.

61. "Acender as Velas," composed in 1965 by Ze Keti.

62. As documented using the THEIL-L rate, which varies from 0 to 1 — with 1 representing the highest degree of income inequality. According to this measure, the inequality rate in 1970 in Rio was 0.36. This increased to 0.59 in the 1980s, and to 0.61 in 1990. In Duque de Caxias the inequality rate was 0.19 in 1970, 0.30 in 1980, and 0.39 in 1990. See Atlas do Desenvolvimento Humano — IPEA, Fundação João Pinheiro and IBGE/PNUD, Rio de Janeiro, 1998.

63. The exchange rate between Brazilian *reals* and U.S. dollars used here is the mean of the 2000/2001 rates.

64. It was this anecdote, related in an open-ended interview, that led me to refine the questionnaire to include mention of both the North Zone and manner of dressing in queries about discrimination.

65. Rocha, "From the Resources of Poverty to the Poverty of Resources?"

66. 2000 IBGE Census. Available at [www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/censo2000](http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/censo2000).