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The Divergent Favela:  
Development, Security, and Resistance in Rocinha  
by  
Aaron Marcel McClain

FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES

SKIDMORE COLLEGE

MAY 2017

Advisors: Sukari Ivester, Mehment Odekon

**THE MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM IN LIBERAL STUDIES**  
**SKIDMORE COLLEGE**

*To Mom...*

*To Lynda Benjamin, Kimberly Turner, Terrance and Tayari Holliday...*

*To Sarah Kirnon, George CL Cummings, and Nathan Alexander...*

*To Sandra Welter, Michael Mudrovich, Ellen Eldridge, and Jacqueline Scoones...*

*To Yaisha Harding, Sarah Gill, Caitlin O'Donnell, Meg Healy, Ally, and Claudia...*

*To Sherry Keith, Thomas Long, Vanessa Agard-Jones, Rick Scarce, Tyrone Simpson, and*

*Marcos Burgos...*

*To Daniela Avila, Luciana Lage, and Nancy Friedman...*

*To Sukari Ivester and Mehmet Odekon...*

*To Chris...*

*To Rocinha and its residents, native or foreign, temporary or forever...*

*Thank You. Obrigado.*

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### **Abstract**

The sports mega-events of the past decade – most prominently the 2016 Olympic Games – spurred intense urban development in Brasil. This is most specifically true of Rio de Janeiro, which hosted the Olympics. These events were seen as an opportunity to make large public investments in improving many of Rio’s favelas – the city’s famously marginalized and “informal” housing settlements. This paper examines improvements made and/or attempted in Rocinha, the largest settlement of its kind in South America. It looks critically at the intersection of development and security. In the scheme of Olympic development, the latter permits the former. Despite the appearance of progress and good will, however, this form of development continues the long history of neglect and segregation of favelas. Residents of Rocinha, long accustomed to state neglect and disregard, practice forms of resistance that are both explicit and subtle. Through this resistance, they demand and claim citizenship and the rights that it provides.

### **Introduction**

I was lost one night. I made a wrong turn after exiting the mall and ended up at Praia São Conrado. I stayed for a while staring at waves crashing from a black expanse onto the lit beach. A man in a polo, board shorts, and baseball cap passed in front of me and descended steps leading down to the beach. I assumed that he was from Rocinha, the nearby favela I had been living in for a week. He disappeared when he reached the beach, and I continued to stare at the waves. Cars passed behind me, coming from the mountain tunnel that connects São Conrado to Barra da Tijuca, a large residential and shopping district of Rio de Janeiro. Amidst the traffic and the waves, I heard the door of a single car shut behind me. I knew exactly what it was.

An officer of the civil police walked toward the edge of the wall and peered down into the beach. He was uniformed in all black – cargo pants, shirt, and cap – with a rifle held to his chest, finger on trigger. I presumed him to be in search for the man that passed me minutes earlier. I don't believe I was in any immediate danger but I decided not to stay. The opportunity for wonder and reflection abruptly interrupted, I turned and headed back to Rocinha.

Life in Rocinha – and around it – is similarly made up of threads of the everyday woven with the troublesome presence of the state. This paper examines recent interventions made in Rocinha – the largest favela in Rio de Janeiro – by city, state, and national governments. These interventions permanently placed a state presence within Rocinha as Rio prepared to showcase itself during mega-sporting events – the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games. On the face of things, these interventions confronted more than a century of neglect, contempt, and violence that have characterized the favela experience throughout the

city for more than a hundred years. In Rocinha, I argue, these interventions had the peculiar effect of reinforcing and altering the problems they were meant to fix.

### **Background**

My intention was to conduct research around the lived experiences of favela residents whose community had been occupied by the Unidade da Polícia Pacificadora (Police Pacification Unit, UPP). After a tour and days of routine walking around Rocinha, I quickly understood that the UPP program was part of a larger effort to modernize and integrate the favela. Uniformed men performing construction on the outskirts of the community pointed to development occurring throughout Rio in preparation for the fast-approaching Olympic Games. The tour took me to an area toward the top of the favela, a row of parks and facilities. These were installed through the Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento (Growth Acceleration Program, PAC). After seeing the acronym reappear in various places and hearing of it from different residents, I suspected that the program had a life of its own. Where I thought I would study the UPP program in isolation, I became more curious about the coexistence of security and development in Rocinha.

The PAC is a federal public works program first launched in 2007 by then-president Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva (Lula). It followed national economic successes for which his administration is credited. These successes included increased wages, employment, consumption, and credit reforms – an overall drastic improvement in Brasil’s fortunes and a signal of its ascendance. Renewed in 2015 for a second time, PAC has now been implemented in three phases and overseen by three different presidents, spending around US\$700 billion in total national investment (Duarte and Bertol, 2016). It promised to install and improve infrastructure and social development in Brasil’s disadvantaged areas, both rural



and urban (Reid, 2014). In Rio, all three levels of government bought in to PAC and its attendant security program, the UPP. Governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro Sérgio Cabral (2007-2014) developed the UPP program based on a similar program in Colombia and a pilot program conceptualized by Colonel Magno Nazareth Cerqueira of the *socialismo moreno* movement<sup>1</sup>. At the municipal level, Mayor Eduardo Paes (2009-2016) vowed a monthly bonus to UPP officers and urbanization projects through the Morar Carioca program, a localized version of the PAC (Freeman, 2012).

In a neoliberal scheme, two other powerful forces should be added to the tripartite levels of government: international corporations/organizations and private elites. Mega-events such as the Olympics necessitate opportunities for massive infrastructural investment such as the PAC. In the case of the Olympics, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) influences the course of development within the host city as it seeks to promote and preserve its brand to extract profit from licensing deals. Cities may partner with private elites with profit and self-serving interests to bring these developments into reality.

These programs and actors have each physically altered the terrain of Rocinha in mutually reinforcing ways. They perpetuate the favela's history of marginalization while apparently intending to integrate it. While the merit of some aspects of the PAC and UPP

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<sup>1</sup> Leonel Brizola, a socialist who formed the Partido Democrático Trabalhista (Democratic Labor Part, PDT), won the governorship of the state of Rio de Janeiro in 1982 in the first elections of the democratic opening. He is probably the governor with the most conciliatory stance toward favelados, bringing favela leaders into party leadership and administration posts while making their needs the center of his campaign and eventual tenure. Brizola and the PDT described their movement as *socialismo moreno* - brown socialism - linking socialism's redistributive practices to Brazil's racial and cultural diversity. Colonel Cerqueira was the chief of military police during the two Brizola administrations and emphasized a new security policy of community policing over the previous practice of *pé na porta* (foot in the door) (McCann, 2014).

should be recognized, as a whole they continue the history of physical and material insecurity with which Rocinha residents have contended for decades. These programs have also stifled the practice of self-determination and inclusion that would give Rocinha residents their share of the “rights to the city”. Rocinha residents respond by conceptualizing their space as a place of normalcy and protest despite living in a place they experience as insecure. Their space is normal in that they carry out their lives as if unaffected by government programs, living life more or less as they always have. They embed their day-to-day lives with protests both subtle and explicit. These “social tactics” imagine a space of hope and self-reliance.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is a synthesis of inquiry by scholars of anthropology, sociology, history, and language. Themes of the “possessability” of nationalism and the access that it provides appear continually. Where nationalism may be used by elites to co-opt space and dominate creative rights, it is used simultaneously by marginalized peoples to fashion inclusive alternatives. The “Olympic moment” in Brasil is not the focal point of this study, but is an interesting point from which to launch an analysis. The ideal of the Olympics is that they represent both symbolic and economic opportunity. Thinking about the Games and about the role of sport in modern life offers us a chance to explore a capitalist critique of development. Rio’s hosting of the Olympics was a project to remake the city along capitalist, entrepreneurial lines. This process relies on dispossessing inhabitants of their property, security, and self-determination.

The Olympics represent what is essentially a top-down process whereby decision-making is in the hands squarely of the city, economic and political elites, and the IOC. There is tension between the top-down decision-making and the bottom-up response of Rocinha

residents. Henri Lefebvre's "rights to the city" is a useful focal point to examine the slate of practices put into place directly or indirectly in the name of Olympic development. In Rocinha, there is no action without a reaction, as residents have sought to impact the space in which they dwell also. Their response is to the long-standing inequality that affects their community. Olympic development, through the PAC and UPP, has contributed to this. The way that they shape their response to their everyday living uncovers how the citizenry might practice the rights to the city.

I work from the understanding that the nation has become the city – that ideals of nationhood have become shaped through urban understanding. Nationhood is crafted as a possession that decides the players involved in decision-making. Thus, in trying to take possession of the nation, players within a city can claim the right to shape their urban outcomes. The devolvement from the nation to the city may have begun with Napoleon in 19<sup>th</sup> Century France, as he embarked on a grand remaking of Paris, the center of his empire, with the imagination of Haussman (Harvey, 2008). Over time, the city – as a sub-national entity – has assumed more responsibility and authority over matters of economic development, social services, infrastructure, and spatial planning. In this arena, local governance institutions have assumed greater authority in making urban policy and are less beholden to governing institutions at larger scales (Purcell, 2002). I would add private elites alongside governance institutions in the mix of those practicing local authority.

The city is a capitalist endeavor that, as capitalism tends to do, concentrates the control of resources into the hands of a few and gives them outsized influence over the lives of those who extract those resources. Says Harvey (2008, p.25), "...Cities have arisen through the geographical and social concentrations of surplus product. Urbanization has

always been, therefore, a class phenomenon of some sort since surpluses have been extracted from somewhere and from somebody (usually an oppressed peasantry) while the control over the disbursement of the surplus typically lies in a few hands.” Capitalist structures rely on continuous growth, needing unending accumulation and reinvestment for survival. Urbanization has been used to evade threats to capitalism by absorbing “the surplus product that capitalists are perpetually producing in search of surplus value” (Harvey, 2008, p. 26). Olympic development concentrates place-making power into the hands of elites in and around Rio as they pursue surplus value in the form of constant flows of investment that would permit continuous growth. This pursuit disadvantages and harms favelas by failing or refusing to treat them as integrated spaces of Rio’s landscape.

Lefebvre’s right to the city is the ability to shape urban space. It is practiced through the rights to participation and appropriation. Right to participation gives *citadins*, practitioners of citizenship, a central role in decisions that contribute to the production of urban space. Decisions could be under the auspice of any entity that affects production of urban space, but maintains the central and direct decision-making roles of all inhabitants. Right to appropriation is the right to physically access, occupy, and use urban space. It also entails the right to produce urban space that inhabitants occupy (Purcell, 2002).

The practice of “scaling” creates a dynamic of inside vs. outside, us vs. them. In the Westphalian national sense, opposing entities are divided along national borders. Right to the city rearranges this scalar arrangement along urban boundaries: “us” is inhabitants of the city while “them” consists of those who inhabit other places. I am tempted to read this as a manifesto for the marginalized, but it may more accurately pose as a structural exploration of how urban space is produced. The production of urban space is divided into three processes:

perceived space, conceived space, and lived space. Perceived space is the daily space defined objectively by physical limits. Conceived space is the mental representation of space, the constructs of it. Lived space is the actual experience of everyday life in the city and is comprised of the social relations within space (Purcell, 2002).

Jaguaribe and Salmon (2016) create the idea of “urban imaginaries”, the process by which cities with established “cultural capital” reinvent themselves. Urban imaginaries consist of the “imagery, narratives (of both past and future), practices, and daily rituals” that produce city life and “provide identifying signposts for both inhabitants and visitors” (33). Various agents including city planners, engineers, architects, municipal authorities, artists, the media, urban dwellers, and tourists have produced them throughout history. In addition to envisioning future urbanity, urban imaginaries offer a “blueprint” for the “(re)construction” of the physical environment to create new urban landscapes “appropriate for their competitive purpose” (33). Imagineering is the process by which urban imaginaries are produced and made – literally – concrete. It consists of the themed urban planning and aggressive promotion strategies used to reinvent, position, and sell cities in a global context. Urban imaginaries also provide the foundation for narratives about urban community as well as the nature of community itself. This encompasses the interpretation of the past, present and future as well as the rules of inclusion, exclusion and representation within the urban community.

Simpson (2016) deconstructs the craft of language in the urban setting. According to Simpson, the city is unknowable in its totality. In an effort to describe a city, which is both home and foreign land, citizens make the creative use of language. This language has the curious power to determine who has rights to the city and who is left on the margins. Most

important for Simpson is the use of the word “ghetto”, used by elites to designate a place and people as socially deviant and undeserving of citizenship. This creates a classification of elite and middle-class spaces as national and marginalized spaces as anti-national. The term is used within neighborhoods deemed “ghetto” in both apathetic and adoring ways. It can denote disdain for the physical conditions in which one lives and a degree of loathing acceptance of the popularized meaning of the term. Contrastingly, it can take on a similar spirit as that of “nigga” or “b---h” in America, denoting belonging, familiarity, and adoration.

The favela is often described as a “slum” or “shantytown” composed of “shacks”. “Slum” and “shantytown” can easily be substituted for “ghetto” in that they describe spaces on the periphery, separated from the practice of mainstream life and inclusion. The image of the shack suggests impermanence and precariousness. This suggestion is central in imagining that favelas are an inconvenient and disposable blight on the otherwise *Cidade Maravilhosa*. But just as the idea of the ghetto, the favela is conceptualized internally in mutually reliant and contrasting ways. A man with whom I conversed briefly after a volunteer project in Laboriaux neighborhood lamented the contrast that “in the city, there are places for dogs to play. Here, we don’t have parks for children to play.” Manoela, one of my respondents, stated during her interview that she thought of the Rocinha as home and couldn’t think of leaving it unless caring for her young son required it. Before the police “arrived,” she felt completely safe in her neighborhood, confident that realities that *asfalta*<sup>2</sup> cariocas contended with were not a part of life in Rocinha. Underlying both perspectives is the recognition that life in the favela is different from life in the asfalta. Whereas one perspective detests this difference, the other reveres it. Favela residents, then, imagine their spaces in more complex ways than those offered by popular and dominant renderings of the “ghetto” or the “slum”.

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<sup>2</sup> asphalt, the formal city

The use of a language of urban inclusion and exclusion encapsulates the belief of urban inclusion and exclusion. Janice Perlman's study of three favelas in the 1960's is paramount to understanding social stratification in Rio de Janeiro. Perlman builds a model containing the most important and vocal pieces of the construct of marginalization. This construct is a "myth" because it diverges from the reality that favelas are tightly integrated into the city landscape and share in its outcomes. The "myth of marginality" holds that favelas are:

- Internally disorganized and externally isolated
- Culturally traditional, rural, and poor
- Economically parasitic and parochial
- Politically apathetic and radical (2005)

Embedded in this construct is the concept of Brazilian nationalism. The words emblazoned across the Brazilian flag are *ordem e progresso* – order and progress. These are ideals forged from the positivist underpinnings of the First Republic of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Positivism is the tenet of a society hierarchically organized and Brasil has social stratification emblazoned across its flag. Chaos and traditionalism are characteristics that stand in direct conflict with these national ideals. Thus, the assumed nature of the favela makes it a threat to the fabric of the nation.

Embedded throughout this examination is the use of "social strategies" and the resultant use of "social tactics". Penglase (2014) articulates the overarching structure of "insecurity" insidious to the favela. Documenting his experiences specifically in the community of Caxambu, Penglase shows that the favela experiences sudden and sweeping changes in safety as police forces battle with drug traffickers. Dealing with fragile times of

peace and the ever-present possibility of violent outbreaks requires the use of “social tactics,” a concept of Michel de Certeau on which Penglase rests his analysis. Social tactics, as Penglase describes, are ways of operating by the powerless in response to the “strategies” of the powerful. Strategies “seek to create places in conformity with abstract models” and “are able to produce, tabulate, and impose and impose these spaces” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 29-30). Tactics do not necessarily challenge or resist systems of power but seek to manage life within them. They have the power only to manipulate and divert impositions of strategies on their spaces (Penglase, 2014; de Certeau, 1984). Olympic development represents a deliberate strategy to alter the favela so they fit within Rio’s entrepreneurial aims.

The Prefeitura (the municipal government of Rio), the IOC, and the residents of Rocinha could be seen as actors with varying degrees of influence over the production of space in Rocinha. The PAC makes Rocinha residents “them” though they inhabit the same space as the “us” of Rio. This is true even within the Rocinha limits that residents occupy and access with more regularity than government/governance forces that dominate this space and the tourists and investors for whom these forces produce this space. These forces conceive Rocinha colonially, a space to be dominated and reformed to suit its accumulation of capital. The PAC and UPP programs make use of various strategies to control physical space in the favela and reform its conception. This conception conflicts with that of Rocinha residents, who believe themselves and their home to be inherently granted democratic ideals of accessibility. They employ social tactics that manage the imposition of government and governance forces.

### **Methodology**



I entered Rocinha with a small breadth of anthropological and sociological readings about favelas under my belt. However, with only this reading and the endless supply of news accounts to guide my expectations, I felt it more appropriate to limit the extent to which I'd allow preexisting theory to guide my observations. To be sure, much of the theory I had read prior to my time in Rocinha informed my observations and shaped my expectations – most strongly those of Freeman (2012), McCann (2014), Perlman (2005), and Penglase (2014). I did not treat these, though, as monoliths to be strengthened or disproven. Rather, I sought to build conclusions based in large part on my observations, what researchers call inductive reasoning. It was only after I had begun to extract such conclusions that I sought to frame my observations with the larger body of established work.

My findings were thus “‘grounded’ in the actual data collected” (Maxwell, 2005 pp. 43), the defining characteristic of grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) are concerned with grounded theory and its “discovery of theory from data” (pp. 1). When conducted this way, social theory can be guaranteed to generate useful insights about relationships between data. Glaser and Strauss allow that the researcher should have a perspective with which to approach their research, but only to the point that this perspective helps her or him catch relevant data and abstract theories from the scrutiny of this data. Grounded research produces theory that is inseparable from the data, making it widely accessible, difficult to completely refute, and self-confirming. It guards against the forceful application of ill-fitting theories and the overreliance of a single example to explain a theory.

Given my unfamiliarity with both subjective research and with the subject of my research, the grounded approach allowed me to experience Rocinha as the newcomer that I was –both to research and to Brasil. This experience was often confusing, as I didn't always

understand what I was seeing. With even the theory mentioned above to guide me, I doubted that my data and experiences fit as neatly as I would have expected. Context came from the familiarity of routine and from the responses of interviewees. Respondents often confirmed or corrected my observations and pointed me toward other sources of data. Most of the knowledge about Rocinha held here is the product of direct input from the residents with whom I interacted.

Maxwell (2005) goes into depth about the tension between the over-and-under-application of theory in research. He makes a twofold comparison of existing theory to a coat closet and a spotlight. A theory is like a coat closet in that it can hold different pieces of data and allow them to be compared to each other. Theory is like a spotlight in that it can “illuminate” what the researcher sees, drawing their attention to particular phenomena and on relationships that might go unnoticed otherwise. The limits of existing theory are that they can neither hold nor illuminate all of the data a researcher may need to compare and analyze. It can further distort what a researcher observes in the field, separating them from the instincts that may bear insight and understanding. While I limited the influence of existing theory while in the field, it became a necessary guide in connecting the data.

In the case of this study, the work of Lefebvre, Simpson, and Jaguaribe and Salmon put a spotlight on the data I gathered. I had a loose array of data I struggled to synthesize into a coherent whole. There were also pieces I could not have understood in complete isolation of existing theory, like Simpson’s conceptualization of the ghetto and the nation. In the field, I had begun to formulate conclusions about the subtle ways that residents resist their oppressive conditions. These conclusions, though, seemed baseless without an examination of what those conditions are. Lefebvre’s “rights to the city” became an important focal point,

as it helped me to understand the power dynamics I was seeing in front of me. Jaguaribe and Salmon's description of "Imagineering", which is a process oriented externally, helped me to see that the shaping of Rocinha by both elite and internal actors is intentional. Though they studied the ways in which different areas of Rio are branded (externally oriented), I wondered how the concept of imaginaries could be interpreted when internally oriented. I mean here to ask about how forces view a space that is to be altered, rather than how that space is altered. It is from this pondering that I saw that political and economic elites understand Rocinha in quite a different way than residents. This tension, as understood through development and security, reveals that the imagination of favela is divergent – that elites and residents would use and shape this space in conflicting ways.

I lived in Rocinha for eight weeks as a volunteer for an afterschool non-profit organization conducting classes for children and adults. I later volunteer at a second nonprofit, a crèche and community organization in a more impoverished section of Rocinha. I conducted two focus groups – one with five respondents and the other with six – with attendees from the first nonprofit. I supplemented these with interviews from various residents in the favela and statements from conversations with other residents outside of formal interviews. All statements used here from outside of formal interviews have been permitted by the speaker.

Through the focus groups and interviews, I gathered responses from seventeen residents. Neither the length of my visit nor the size of my sampling was ample enough to satisfy questions about trustworthiness of my data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) prescribe actions the researcher can take to improve the trustworthiness of their findings. One of these prescriptions, prolonged engagement, was not possible for me, given personal constraints. To

address this I took a tour of the favela with a Brazilian-born resident, participated in community projects, and attended a meeting of local activists. These opportunities, along with visits to two other favelas, provided a measure of insight and breadth that prolonged engagement seeks to establish.

I remained in what Lincoln and Guba call persistent observation throughout my stay. On a daily basis, I took note of certain phenomena (e.g. the location of police cars) and continuously distilled them into usable observations. These observations helped form my interview questions and formed the basis of member checking. Member checking allowed me to tease tensions between what I saw and what residents understood. For instance, one respondent insisted that the neighborhood was “pacified”, even though I could see that traffickers still had a looming presence. Another felt that the neighborhood was too congested to grow even though I had seen continual construction of new homes. Member checking was a necessity giving the small sample I had. The makeup of this sample, given its size, was another concern. I realized that the participants of the first focus group were well educated, professional, lived in closer proximity to main streets, and were more likely to seek opportunities like free language classes in the community. To balance this, I sought the opinions of those who lived in more secluded parts of the community. The comparison and contrast between attitudes toward development and policing is where many of the findings throughout this study were drawn.

I had the fortune of meeting Dr. Marcos Burgos, a recent PhD graduate, at the community meeting that I attended. He took a blessed interest in my project and served as an ad hoc mentor. He has pledged support throughout the refining and writing process. With regards to trustworthiness, a meeting with him functioned as peer debriefing. He asked

questions about my processes, samples, and theoretical applications with an experienced perspective. Of course, my academic advisors serve a similar role, but Lincoln and Guba specifically ask that a peer debriefer not have authority over the researcher. Dr. Burgos' probing revealed further background investigation to be done and additional aspects to consider in my analysis.

I informed all from whom I collected data that I was conducting research and planned to write an extended paper about my findings. I assured them all that I would not identify them by name providing each respondent a pseudonym instead. Two respondents, the leader of Rocinha Sem Fronteiras<sup>3</sup> and the director of the crèche, explicitly gave me permission to use their names. I have decided not to do so as to further protect the identities of the people they work with.

Rocinha residents are eager to share their experiences, within boundaries. One attempt at an interview was dead from the beginning, as the potential respondent feared the consequences of talking about the drug trade or the police. I made it a point to omit questions about the drug trade, as many of the respondents lived in close proximity to armed traffickers. This is a reality for the Rocinha resident that must be mined carefully. Even the director of the nonprofit I initially served, who lives outside of the favela, strongly rejected my request to connect me with a city official who lives in his condominium building. He himself thought he would be vulnerable to attack if it looked like he was communicating with authorities. Knowing the very real nature of this threat, I did not discuss the responses outside of my interviews, save for the advisors for this study and with Marcos Burgos.

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<sup>3</sup> Rocinha Without Borders (RSF), a group of community members that meet monthly to discuss and organize community advocacy activities.

What I realized from my observations was that Rocinha is a location that is difficult to define using few and simple descriptions. This matters in a practical way because policy prescriptions are inherently definitive. In order for a policy to be implemented, the problem it addresses must first be defined, along with all of its intricacies. The definition of the problem informs the shape of the prescription. Rocinha is big and small. It is both global and local. There is economic, social, religious, and educational differentiation within its boundaries. It is self-sufficient yet dependent on the city in which it lies. Yet, despite its perceptible difference from the integrated parts of Rio, what struck me most often was a sense of normalcy – normalcy that lacked pretentiousness. It is hard to read from day-to-day life here that people are either totally oppressed or totally self-aggrandizing. They seem to live within these extremes, trying to make the best from the hands they are dealt. I came to understand that Rocinha is a place of intense optimism. This optimism is based on an innate Brazilianness, a deep sense of belonging that is socially and politically attuned. I left Rocinha knowing that it would not be sufficient to examine the nature of ad hoc policing or development programs in isolation from discussing the people they were imposed upon. The ideal of policy is that it is responsive to the citizens it is meant to serve. While it is true that many favelas lack essential infrastructure, have poor access to services, and maneuver around the presence of traffickers and police, it is also true that they might face these challenges with sophisticated means of coping and resistance. Understanding this may help shape more appropriate and inclusive policy.

In the interest of transparency and fairness, I feel required to make mention of potential personal bias. I entered Rocinha with a decidedly pro-favelado stance. I took to heart stories like those of Sandro do Nascimento and Claudia da Silva Ferreira, both killed at

the hands of police. In my view, policing in general and the UPP program specifically was essentially terroristic in nature when it came to favela residents. A co-volunteer challenged me in pointing out that policing is needed, as evidenced by a purse snatching that he witnessed. I had to wrestle with the real necessity of police and eventually realized that I was wrestling with the wrong question. Policing is an extension of an effective government. Rather than focus on its necessity, we should critique the way it is implemented and what its presence means for already marginalized citizens. This question has salience for me as an African American male. Throughout the preparation for my study in Rio, my country was ripped apart by disturbingly regular shootings of unarmed black men and women at the hands of police (or vigilantes). Two of these shootings took place within hours of each other in two different states while I was in Rio. During local and national furor over the shooting of Michael Brown in 2014, I stood in line one Saturday morning at a Starbucks. A police officer stood in front of me and glared at me on high alert. When our glances met, he placed his hand on the butt of his gun and kept it there until I left the café. I do not trust police.

I took this distrust to Brasil, realizing that as I was observing officers in Rocinha, I was looking only for evidence of their misconduct and mistreatment. After the very first event I witnessed involving police, which will be described later in this study, my assumption was unsettled and I was perplexed. I came across more than a few sightings of police interacting positively with members of the community, something I was frankly not looking for. I wrestled with the apparent well-meaning of improvements and security in the favela and often wondered if I was being critical for the sake of rebellion. Hearing responses of different impressions only strengthened this doubt. I feel that this doubt has propelled the

study presented here, which tries to reconcile commonalities amongst different impressions. Positive or negative, the presence of police has meaning.

### **A Favela**

Socioeconomic hierarchy in Brasil traces linearly to the country's colonial beginnings. Explorers representing Portugal enslaved indigenous peoples, sometimes taking them back to Europe to display the exoticism of the colony. Catholic missionaries eventually arrived looking to establish the church's presence. Much to the annoyance of settlers, they held natives in missionary compounds for religious conversion and labor. The *bandeirantes*, frontiersmen, pleaded for the empire to intervene, eventually gaining unfettered access to natives for labor. Diseases to which indigenous peoples had no prior immunity decimated their numbers. Colonists turned to the African slave trade for new sources of labor. Escaped slaves formed quilombos to establish community and evade recapture. These quilombos were an early form of informal settlements in Brasil (Marcílio, 1984; Hemming, 1984; Levine, 1999).

In a specifically urban context, inequality in Brasil can be traced back to the arrival of the Portuguese court in Rio. Brasil is unique in that it was once a colonial post that became the center of the empire. Portugal became dependent upon Great Britain for protection from Spain and France amidst the Industrial Revolution. In 1807, Napoleon invaded Portugal to impose a blockade he had established between Britain and the continent. Dom João VI, the regent in place of his mentally incapable mother, chose to transfer the Portuguese court to Brasil. The British Navy escorted between 10,000 and 15,000 Portuguese people to the colony, inclusive of the entire bureaucratic apparatus. The court arrived in Salvador before establishing itself in Rio in 1808. To collect tariffs, João opened the colony's economy,



opening ports and permitting the building of factories. This mainly benefited Britain, making Brasil a client state for the first time. After elevating Brasil from its colonial status to that of a *reino* (kingdom), João's court sought to insert European culture there. He formed the National Library from archives taken from Portugal, constructed professional schools patterned after French models, and invited French artists to found a school for the arts (Fausto & Fausto, 1999; Alden, 1984; Levine, 1999). Dom João thus began the formation of Rio toward elite forms of nationalism.

Morro da Providência is proverbially deemed the “first favela,” although communities like it existed in Rio prior to its formation (McCann, 2014; Carvalho, 2013). The events that brought Providência to be inextricably tie the fortune of the favela to the idea of the nation and the moral and political limits of its government. Having adopted a republican constitution just six years earlier, Brasil sent soldiers on an expedition to overthrow a millenarian community in the backlands of Canudos, Bahia in the northeast in 1897. The teachings of Antonio Vicente Mendes Maciel, a Catholic mystic, gained a large following amongst northeasterners who endured economic depression, ongoing droughts, and police harassment. These inhabitants rejected the secularism of the Republic, preferring instead the traditions of the monarchy. Maciel provided them a structured life, which many appreciated. The community, which he called “New Jerusalem”, grew to as many as thirty-five thousand people dwelling amongst five thousand mud huts scattered below hills and low mountains. New Jerusalem in 1897 was the largest urban site in the state of Bahia outside of Salvador, the state capital (Levine, 1999).

Its attraction to northeasterners meant a deficit of labor in neighboring states, which fed tales of religious fanaticism amongst elites of the region. The Catholic Church was in a

concerted campaign to reestablish orthodox practice throughout the world. Visiting missionaries were aghast when they saw the lay practices of the community. These dynamics, economic and social in nature, made New Jerusalem susceptible to invasion. They successfully resisted three assaults by the Brazilian Army before succumbing to a fourth, brutal campaign (Levine, 1999). Euclides da Cunha who documented the events of the Canudos war said of Brasil, "... we played in this action the singular role of unconscious mercenaries" (1901, p. xxx).

To recruit an army for the fourth expedition of the Canudos campaign, the government promised money and land to those who would serve. Upon their success, soldiers from the Canudos war went to the Ministry of War office in Rio de Janeiro – then the capital of Brasil – to demand what they were promised. When the government could not provide compensation, the soldiers occupied a hill near the Ministry and built homes on it. A tenement nearby had been razed and around a thousand of its displaced citizens moved to the newly settled hill. The new residents of the hill, the *morro*, called their new formation "Morro da Favela" after the hardy plant seen throughout the arid lands of Canudos (Arias, 2006). Providência still stands on this hill today and is one of the major recipients of PAC attention.

Although only indirectly related to the formation of the favela, the elimination of community in Canudos is embedded in particular themes that repeat themselves throughout the century-plus history of the favela in Rio de Janeiro: existence along the socioeconomic periphery; the influence of international institutions on its fate; the invocation of nationalistic ideals; and the perception of a threat to those ideals. Also, the consistent military campaign

and its barbaric conclusion share similarities with the threats of favela removal and brutalization of favela residents at the hands of police.

Since Providência's formation, favela communities have faced various campaigns of subjection by the state. The administrations of President Francisco de Paula Rodrigues Alves and Rio mayor Francisco Pereira Passos worked in tandem to transform the landscape of the then capital. Pereira Passos himself was a French-trained engineer inspired by Haussman's renewal of Paris. The renovations that he oversaw included the Parisian-style boulevard Avenida Central and the overhaul of the port. This renovation, though, was accompanied by demolitions, hygienic interventions against tenements, and mandatory smallpox vaccination. The mandatory vaccination, specifically, ignited a riot that was violently repressed, most notably in hillsides closest to the port. Disease continued to affect Rio's citizens despite the vaccination mandate, particularly for poorer Cariocas. The state became closely aligned with promoting medicine, nutrition, and cleanliness. Its removal of slums pushed working-class residents to hillsides or to the outskirts of the city (Williams et al., 2016).

In 1917, President Epitácio Pessoa decided to hold the Independence Centenary International Exposition in Rio five years later. Pessoa intended for this yearlong World's Fair to showcase Brasil's growing economic development. Rio was again reshaped in the vision of elites and to eradicate the threat of infectious diseases. The plan for redeveloping the city was similar to the Passos plans of years earlier. The removal of Morro do Castelo, a hill close to the shoreline, displaced residents who had lived in a long-established favela there. This was one of many forced relocations associated with the Exposition, which was meant to show Rio as a modern center safe for tourism and investment (Goldblatt, 2014).

In 1926, a crony of President Washington Luis hired Alfred Agache to beautify Rio de Janeiro. Agache was a founding member of a group of French urbanists who saw the former colonial cities in Africa and Latin America as laboratories for their theories. He published a report in 1930 that was an extensive accounting of Rio's conditions and his plans for it. Agache's plan advocated near total social segregation, with an industrial zone and residential areas for laborers placed in the city's suburbs. Agache's report held that favelas were inhabited by nomadic populations resistant to hygiene. Implied here was that their removal would not cause any great controversy. Agache termed the question about favelas, "the problem of the favelas," which he argued could be solved by their complete eradication. Favelados would be placed laborer garden-villas where they would undergo civilian education that would normalize them for urban life (Carvalho, 2013).

Agache's plans were largely abandoned after the 1930 revolution that brought Getúlio Vargas to power (Carvalho, 2013). However, elite disdain toward the favela persisted through the Vargas regime, the civilian government that replaced him, and the military dictatorship that eventually claimed power (Perlman, 2005). It wasn't until the democratic opening of the 1980's and the Brizola governorship that state powers began to treat favelas as integral to Rio society. Though imperfect, Brizola's outreach to favelas sought to develop them and make them administratively seamless with Rio's asfalta. The PAC adopted a similar rhetoric, but in practice seems to be based on the elite-first ideologies of the past. The view that the favela is an impermanent, troublesome, and marginal entity has historically justified actions to materially change or remove it. The PAC and UPP programs extend this viewpoint in practice. As Morro da Providência settled within clear view of the Ministry of

War, so too do many favelas throughout Rio de Janeiro sit in conspicuous view to the middle class and wealthy neighborhoods they border.

Honing a definition of a favela, then, becomes an important task. One-word definitions favored by even the most responsible of newspaper outlets simplify what is boundlessly complex. RioOnWatch (2014), mirroring Simpson's examination of the "ghetto", refutes many of the definitions commonly attached to the favela. Along similar lines, Perlman contends that the only thing that separates the favela from the rest of the city is the stigma attached to them. They counter the notion that favelas are destitute "slums", noting that many are vibrant with brick and cement homes built for endurance. Many have running water, electricity, garbage service, and internet access, although these services may often be imperfect. Many also have schools, health centers and high rental prices (RioOnWatch, 2014).

Favelas are not universally poor, as 65% of their residents belong to the middle class. Brazil's favela residents as a whole are responsible for \$38.6 billion in commercial activity. There are also poor neighborhoods in Rio that are not favelas. Thinking of the favela as a squatter settlement is similarly inapplicable. As evidenced in the history of Providência, it is true that favelas find their beginnings as squatter settlements. The evolution of the favela over the last half-century, however, spurred Brazil to implement some of the strongest housing rights in the world. This includes the *usucapião*, or the right to adverse possession. This legal doctrine holds that if a squatter occupies land under specific conditions for a defined statutory period, they become the legal owner of the land. This doctrine has been in place in various iterations throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This includes the years of the military dictatorship, though adverse possession rights were at their weakest here. Favelados have

legal rights to their land even though titling has not been universally granted (RioOnWatch, 2014; McCann, 2014).

The one unifying characteristic of the favela is their history. Each favela finds its beginnings in an unmet need for housing. They were unplanned and un-serviced settlements. These settlements formed without municipal regulation, creating and nurturing an informal real estate market. They evolved through various stages of consolidation and diversification based on their individual cultures and access to resources, jobs, knowledge, and the city. Despite multiple attempts, mainly since the democratic opening of the 1980s, favelas have yet to be fully integrated into the city (Williamson, 2015; McCann, 2014).

### **Rocinha**

Rocinha began as a community of French and Italian immigrants in the 1930s. The word “rocinha” translates to “little farm”, reflecting the vocation of these early settlers. By many estimates, it is the largest favela in Rio de Janeiro and the largest “informal” community in all of South America. The latest Rio de Janeiro census counts just over 69,000 residents in Rocinha. Census estimates of favelas, however, are often untrustworthy because of the difficulties and dangers of navigating them. Many residents of Rocinha report not having been visited by a census worker during the last collection of data. Internal estimates of Rocinha’s population range between 200,000 and 300,000. The lower end of this range would make Rocinha’s population larger than Little Rock, Arkansas. The top of this range would make it about equal in population to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This population, however large, is concentrated into an area just less than a square kilometer.



**Figure 1** View of Rio de Janeiro from Laboriaux. In the foreground is Gávea. The American school is in the left foreground.

Rocinha sits in the Zona Sul (South Zone) on a hillside between wealthy enclaves Gávea and São Conrado. These neighborhoods have the highest property values and property taxes in Rio de Janeiro. The neighborhood just outside of Rocinha in Gávea is a gated community of small mansions. The American School, an institution known for schooling many of Brasil's dignitaries, is within this gated community. Further into Gávea is the Jockey Club, which sits near the Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas. The Túnel Zuzu Angel passes under a large hill from Gávea to Estrada Lagoa Barra, a busy street that sits at the front of Rocinha and leads toward São Conrado.

São Conrado shares its name with the adjacent beach. It is made up of has several tall condominium complexes and luxury hotels. One of the complexes has lighted tennis courts; while one of the hotels sits next to a small golf course completely obstructed from view by walls and barbed wire. Within this space is the Fashion Mall from which I had gotten lost the one weekend night. The selection of stores and restaurants here is reflective of the wealthy

community around it. The São Conrado neighborhood itself ends at another mountain through which a tunnel is built connecting it to Barra da Tijuca on the other side. This gives São Conrado a secluded feel that would likely enhance its luxury if it weren't for the troubles of the hillside.

Estrada da Gávea (EdG) is the main thoroughfare in Rocinha. It bisects the favela from Avenida Niemeyer at the bottom of one side of the hill to Gávea on the other side of the hill. Despite portions where it winds dramatically, EdG is the only street in the favela that can reasonably accommodate vehicle traffic. As the main thoroughfare, it is used by buses, taxi drivers, moto-taxis, and commuter vans traveling beyond Gávea. It connects to all of the major business streets in Rocinha. There are businesses in more secluded parts of Rocinha, for sure. But the vast majority of shops, restaurants, and services are within easy access of the thoroughfare. Because of its centrality and its connection to most other parts of Rocinha, EdG also receives a lot of foot traffic. Its physical openness makes it amenable to government services, shops, and restaurants that line the street virtually from beginning to end.

Homes in Rocinha are mostly built around and on top of each other as need arises out of brick and mortar. This has created alleys, *becos*, often too narrow to allow more than one person through at a time. As the housing is unplanned, these *becos* can lead to dead ends or other pathways that appear spontaneously. The deeper one takes these alleys into the favela, the more precarious life seems to become. It is this mazelike construction that allows remaining traffickers cover from police forces. Trash collection happens mostly along EdG and on the busy, open streets. But trucks and trash collectors cannot get into these narrow spaces and residents don't have trash bins or curbs to roll them out to. More dangerous is the



open sewage that runs through some of these spaces, often within unacceptable proximity to homes.

### **Developing Rocinha**

Together with the UPP Program, the government's main mechanism for Olympic related development in Rocinha, the PAC, represents the practices of taming, hiding, and controlling. The programs are meant to tame Rocinha through security measures that neutralize random outbreaks of violence and development which symbolically re-territorializes order of large public spaces into the hands of city forces. The programs hide Rocinha in the sense that the reality of this violence and drug territorialization is forced into the interior of the favela along with the reality of the most abject inequality. The programs control both the strategic image of a modern but populist city and the range of disruptions to those images. Understanding these strategies as the aim of the government and its private enablers helps us understand that the daily and community-centered activities of Rocinha residents are protests, in addition to the real conventional protests they occasionally undertake.

### **Portão Vermelho**

Near the peak of Rocinha off of EdG is a somewhat sectioned-off area of the favela known as the Portão Vermelho. This former row of houses and farms gets its name from a time in Rocinha when the Corrida das Baratinhas – a famous car race – took place along EdG. To help avoid the numerous accidents that happened along this turn, the gate that closed off the row was painted red. The section gets its name from this painting – “o Portão Vermelho,” the Red Gate (CIESPI, 2016). The contributions of the PAC are concentrated in this triangular-shaped area. Luan, an intense and thoughtful student a year out of high school,

informed me that this area was once “a favela within a favela” and that the families that lived here were removed to make space for the beautification that took place. A long dirt path bisects the Portão and is surrounded on both sides by various fields and facilities.

Immediately after a bit of stored building materials, there is a gated red clay tennis court on the left. Clay courts are more difficult to maintain than the asphalt courts on which most play. Despite their superior playability, clay courts are usually the privilege of country-club members. This is true in the United States as well as Rio de Janeiro, where a private club owning clay courts can be seen in nearby Gávea. I was once invited to play a game with adult students and a co-volunteer after evening classes. I regretfully abstained because they played on asphalt public courts between Lapa and Botafogo. An hour-plus bus ride away, this was too far for me to go on a weeknight, even though they were driving. Their willingness to travel this far to play though a court was within minutes from them made me curious about the usability of the facilities within Portão Vermelho. During my tour in the middle of a weekday, there were two very skilled players using the courts, but who dressed as if they played collegiately or semi-professionally. Based solely on their dress and the air of confidence they carried, I doubted that they lived in Rocinha. The courts have opened such lessons at some point. Either this, or they lived in a nearby and had heard of the public court with limited use – a jewel in the tennis community.

A bit further down is an amphitheater large enough to seat about 250 patrons. The seating area of ascending stairs is sectioned off by a cement wall and metal rails and is enclosed within the forest that is a marker of the upper limits of Rocinha. The black stage is enclosed in a rectangular backdrop, the interior of which is adorned in wood paneling. On the day I was here, the stage was covered in dirt footprints and there was a pile of swept garbage

and leaves at its base. There was evidently some activity and maintenance here, although it remains unclear to me the extent of this.



**Figure 2** The amphitheater inside Portão Vermelho.

Further down on the right of the path is a gated cement soccer field. Across from this is a small, two-story white building on which the phrase “Som da Roça, UPP Rocinha” (Sound of Rock, UPP Rocinha) is painted along with some decorative music notes. Eduarda, a gregarious and multilingual student who acted as my tour guide, takes regular saxophone lessons in this building with a UPP officer. The offering of community activities like this is one of the ideals of the UPP Social, the community outreach arm of the UPP. Eduarda speaks fondly of the officer from whom she takes lessons and tried to connect me with her so that I could gain the perspective of police. Our schedules unfortunately conflicted.

The most remarkable of the facilities created in the Portão Vermelho is the Parque Ecológico da Rocinha, the Ecological Park of Rocinha. The park is a beautiful integration of recreational space with the forested backdrop of the favela. The PAC constructed a group of cement ramps leading to terraced platforms perched against the hillside. There are seating areas, barbecue grills and tables for picnics as well as small cement houses and jungle gyms in which children can play. A raised and railed pathway of stairs and ramps leads wanderers further into the tree-covered hillside and to a pond and waterfall that Eduarda has enjoyed with her family.

The detail of my descriptions of the facilities within Portão Vermelho serves mostly to convey the dissonant nature of their existence. On the day of my tour, the tennis players were joined by a few males using the soccer field, UPP officers going in and out of their headquarters there, and construction workers at the entrance. Respondents had an altogether different reporting of the space than what I anticipated. Those who have seen it consistently referred to the development as “beautiful”. On whole, however, they make little to no use of the facilities here. Contrary to my glee over the clay court, José – one of the adult students who had invited me to play tennis with his group – chooses not to use it because it is poorly maintained. Luan, who used to play tennis and football in Portão Vermelho, echoed this sentiment:

“Ecological Park has awesome places for picnics or barbecue; it’s beautiful for everybody to be there on the weekend. But everything has been broken there when I have passed there. They don’t have any lights. Everything there to make barbecue or picnics is broken because there is not anybody to look after the area. The tennis courts are good; they have people there every day to



play and teach the kids. It is very useful. The football field is good; people play volleyball there. But you can't play at night because there aren't lights to see anything. And the theater has nothing around it.”



**Figure 3** A portion of the Ecological Park inside Portão Vermelho

Luan's analysis captures the sentiment of most of the respondents I spoke to about the area. For residents, the development of the area is not sufficient to guarantee its use. They feel that improvement cannot be divorced from thoughtful strategy and engagement. The construction of the area, though ongoing, was reportedly not accompanied by a serious advertising or outreach effort within Rocinha. Some didn't even know that the facilities existed. During conversations about the disuse of Portão Vermelho, respondents imagined ways they could have been informed about its availability. They suggested a well-publicized

opening involving artists. They pointed toward Vidigal, their “brother” favela, which has a thriving artistic community that would be primed to take advantage of the Portão Vermelho theater. Rocinha, residents expressed, needs active artists who could engage the community with regularly planned events, clubs, and classes in order for the space to realize the benefits it idealizes. They called also for ongoing management of the spaces the government creates, rather than the build-and-let-them-have-it approach they see.

Portão Vermelho’s location at the top of the favela is another barrier to its use. Atop the hill, the facilities can potentially serve only a portion of Rocinha. Its distance for much of the community -- many of who live in hilly areas along Estrada da Gávea or in the almost subterranean depths of the favela – makes it inaccessible or undesirable. Transit to the top of the hill via bus, commuter van, or moto-taxi is an expense, even if a small one. Moreover, the path going through Portão Vermelho is unpaved. This makes uses of its offerings unappealing for days after a storm, as residents would need to slog through mud to enjoy it. Luan was dismissive in his frustration of the project as a whole: “They don’t think. They just make but they don’t think about what the area has around or who is going to there, just make. It doesn’t make sense.”

Respondents pointed to other PAC projects as better conceptualized for the engagement and enjoyment of the community. One praised the library – the Biblioteca Parque da Rocinha (Rocinha Park Library) for its central location and array of programming. The library sits between Cachopa – a populous area above the thoroughfare—and Rua 4/Rua Nova, the street redesigned by PAC that is an access point for residents that live deep within Rocinha’s interior. This area is visited with heavy foot traffic and has plentiful eating and shopping. The area around Portão Vermelho, by contrast, is locked by the forested peak of



the hill at the same turn that made racing cars hazardous. Despite the apparent good intentions of the PAC, the strategy behind the Portão Vermelho falls short of integration's ideals.



**Figure 4** Rocinha from Laboriaux. The arc in the top left quadrant is the Passarela da Rocinha. The pool and field above it are parts of the Complexo Esportivo. The pink, yellow, and purple buildings in the center are the Rua 4 apartment complexes.

The resign and frustration with which respondents spoke about the Portão Vermelho projects revealed a deep fissure between the desires of developers and the wishes of residents. The construction of the facilities here in absence of deep, consistent consultation with the people they would benefit represents an imposition as much as a democratic alignment of priorities. It is this coin-of-two-sides reality of development that characterizes many of the PAC projects. While outwardly attractive and seeming to improve conditions, many PAC projects in favelas are hegemonic spatial reformations with incomplete benefits to residents. Residents, however, can imagine what thriving use of their space looks like. Their

explanations for the Portão Vermelho's failure to attract much of the community and their specific prescriptions for how the area could have been a success equalizes them in conceptualization with the planners of the project. It shows that they are actively aware of their needs and desires for their community.

#### **Developments with Promise: Biblioteca Parque, Complexo Esportivo, and Rua 4**

The PAC has sought some commendable projects, however. The library to which Luan pointed, the Biblioteca Parque da Rocinha is one of four such libraries in the municipal area of Rio de Janeiro. One of the other three sits within the favela of Manguinhos in the city's North Zone. The other one within city limits is the Biblioteca Parque Estadual, which sits in the Zona Central not far from the renovated Porto Maravilha (the Marvelous Port). The lone Biblioteca Parque outside of the city of Rio de Janeiro is in Niteroi, a wealthy municipality that sits on the Guanabara Bay opposite the Porto Maravilha. That there are two of these libraries within favelas and two in wealthier parts of the municipality suggests an attempt to weave the favela and asfalta together. If they can share similar facilities, they might share similar fates.

Of the four locations, Rocinha's is externally the most straightforward in design, though still handsome. The library is housed in a modern five-story building of cream-colored, stucco construction. A floor-to-ceiling steel-framed window on the first floor allows pedestrians to see into the library and allows those sitting in the first floor's couches and desks to peer outside. The building's façade is adorned with the streams of five pastel-colored kites whose frames seem to float above. There is a terrace off of the third floor with window panels covered also in bright pastels. The building defies the older brick and cement construction that surrounds it. The kites and colorfulness imbue a sense of whimsy in a



neighborhood not known to be whimsical. The bright newness of the building links it to the Complexo Esportivo just on the outside of Rocinha; the bright pastels tie it to Rua Nova, the project housing a few blocks up the main street. Inside, the library is meticulously maintained, with an elevator, cement flooring along the stairway, and brushed steel signs detailing the offerings on each floor. In addition to the requisite supply of books, the library offers DVD checkouts, an area for watching films, recording studios, multipurpose spaces for courses, a school kitchen, and a café (Secretária de Cultura, 2017). Unfortunately, all four libraries closed in December of 2016 in the aftermath of the government upheaval and recent recession. A Google search shows that the Rocinha, Mangueiras, and Niterói locations have reopened, while the Centro location remains closed. The continuity of operations, though, is dependent upon fiscal realities (Forte, 2016; Healy, 2016).

The Complexo Esportivo is an impressive facility by most standards. Opened in 2010, it connects to Rocinha via the Passarela over Estrada Lagoa Barra. The complex's two swimming pools and soccer field sit on the roof and are visible from any hillside above EdG. They are complimented by indoor spaces for basketball, table tennis, biking, volleyball, and martial arts, among other activities. The tennis court in Portão Vermelho is technically part of the facility as well. The complex is almost always teeming with activity, even late into the evening. It closes at 10pm on the weekdays, and soccer players can be seen deep into the evening playing on the well-lit field (Portal da SUDERJ, 2017).

The spaces dedicated to martial arts are on the street level building. Eduarda arranged for me to take a capoeira class here one Friday morning. Our group practiced alongside a trio of judokas who seemed skilled beyond the typical layman. When considering this area of the complex, I think of the capoeirista Miguel, one of the nonprofit's adult students who practices

with his dojo at the CIEP<sup>4</sup> building that sits at the opening of Vila Verde, a sub-bairro in Rocinha. I am also reminded of a group of capoeiristas from the dojo that practices at Complexo Esportivo. This group performs daily for tourists in one of the playgrounds along Rua 4. Their use, and that of the judokas at the complex, of government-provided spaces for their craft illustrates one of the better outcomes of favela upgrades. The Complexo Esportivo is not nearly enough to address all of the problems in Rocinha, but it points to the ideals of incorporation by providing spaces that favelados can enthusiastically adapt for activities that are important to them.

Prior to its redevelopment in 2010, Rua 4 was an alley of about 60 centimeters in width, similar to many of the areas deeper in Rocinha. It was poorly ventilated and had some of the highest rates of tuberculosis in the state. It is difficult to imagine that this was ever the case. The street is now a long walkway of about twelve meters in width, and its connection of EdG and the busy street of Caminho dos Boiaderos (CdB) is open, colorful, and peaceful. The street is closed off to vehicle traffic, although it is one of the few streets in Rocinha with enough space for a row of vehicle parking. This makes it a serene route toward EdG that is void of much of the noise and craze in busier areas. The playground here is where a group of capoeiristas performs for tourists when they walk through and is a large place for children to play. At the intersection of Rua 4 and EdG, the PAC built 144 family units in a new apartment complex. Although this redevelopment required evictions and relocations, the Rua

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<sup>4</sup> CIEPs, or Centros Integrados de Educação Pública, were model schools built by the Brizola administration across the state. Three hundred were built in the city of Rio, most of them in or near favelas. The administration intended for the schools serving favelas to be fix-alls for social problems children might face. In addition to schooling, the CIEPs promised meals, showers, lodging, and social services for students. CIEPs were available on weekends for community meetings, cultural activities, and night classes for teens and adults. Their structures still stand in many favelas, although the concept has been long abandoned (McCann, 2014).

4 improvements seen to be one case where the government initially delivered on its promises (Roller, 2011).

### **The State's Self-Referencing**

The mural along EdG installed by the Museu Sankofa, discussed below, has an image of a woman encircled in the various accomplishments of the first state of the PAC – the Complexo Esportivo, the model crèche, the Central Cultural, Rua 4, and the overall quality of life in Rocinha. Despite the success of sports complex and the apparent success of Rua 4, the crèche and the Cultural Center have never come to fruition. There are many residents who would question how much their quality of life has improved. The success of some projects has not been realized across others. This part of the mural stands as a monument to the incompleteness of the PAC's vision. The mural makes other, favorable references to the PAC, including the phrase, "Health is the result of cleanliness." These references to the PAC, and by extension the government that implemented it, are part of an effort to install the government's thumbprint on the favela. This is propaganda that directly associates the government with the wellbeing of the favela.

On the exterior of one of the Rua Nova buildings is a tile mosaic depicting a two towers of favela homes against the backdrop of Corcovado, the mountain on which the Christ the Redeemer statue sits. "Rocinha" is spelled out across the top of the mosaic. On the lower right of the piece, there is a plaque that names Caixa, one of Brazil's large banks, and the Federal Government of Brazil as the benefactors of the construction. The "Brasil" is formed in all capital letters in green tiles and the yellow diamond of the flag encapsulating a blue circle covers the "A". Below this is the motto: "Pais rico é pais sem pobreza" – A rich country is a country without poverty. Simpson observes that "ghettoes" are conceptualized as

places that exist counter to the mainstream interests of the nation and are often denied the ability to display the nation's symbols. This is a strategy that denies them the dignity of equality that would necessitate their rights. Only when a ghetto has been captured and reformed is it allowed to display the symbols of the nation, deeming it included and safe. This often takes place when many of the ghetto's inhabitants have been ushered out after gentrification.



Figure 5 The mosaic that adorns a Rua 4 complex along Estrada da Gávea

The mosaic mimics this strategy. The reference to the nation and to its flag is a claim that the favela, following pacification, has been formally absorbed into the national interest. Its position on the side of a Rua Nova complex and facing the foot traffic on the main thoroughfare makes it this statement oriented intentionally to both residents and potential tourists. To the residents, who harbor longstanding distrust for the government, the mosaic is a promise and an outreach. It links the favela to the country's resources and wealth

and attempts to establish a relationship between the country and the favela. For the tourist, the mosaic is meant to reinforce the safety of the favela and to portray the government as a beneficent entity that justly provides for the welfare of its most disadvantaged populations while maintaining control over them.



Figure 6 A closer look at the mosaic on the Rua 4 complex

The self-referencing nature of the government's intra-favela promotion efforts began from the very announcement of the PAC the year after Rio had been awarded the Games. Lula had hand-selected Dilma Roussef – one of his deputies who had once sat on the board of Petrobras – to be his successor. To shore up her incomplete political profile, Lula began to publicly associate Roussef with his political achievements. The first of these efforts was in

2008 in the Complexo do Alemão, the adjoining of two favelas in the North Zone that together may be more populous than Rocinha. Some Alemão residents had to climb 1200 steps from the favela's base to reach their homes. At this ceremony, Lula announced that the federal and state governments would collaborate to build a cable car system through the PAC that would alleviate the physicality of this journey. Having put her in charge of the program from its outset, Lula framed Roussef as the "mother of the PAC" (Reid, 2014) and linked the favela to the nation's fortunes.

### **O Teleférico ou Saneamento Básico?**

By far the largest tension surrounding PAC developments has been that between residents' demand for public health and the state's desire to install a cable car system over Rocinha. When residents spoke about their health concerns, they spoke about *saneamento básico* (basic sanitation) and *lixo* (trash) to near exclusion. In the few instances in which they did mention the health system, they spoke only about how insufficient it is. One of the respondents, a shy but serious high school student who attended English classes, spoke of the Hospital Municipal Miguel Couto that sits in Gávea. He spoke with sober resignation as he described the poor quality of the hospital, listing it among sanitation and education as some of the inadequate services that Rocinha residents receive.

On EdG facing the Curva da S and in front of the CIEP is the Unidade de Pronto Atendimento (Emergency Care Unit, UPA). The PAC built this center to offer twenty-four emergency care to Rocinha residents. Of all those with whom I spoke, only Eduarda and Luan mentioned the UPA. They both did so in a fairly benign fashion, mentioning it in a list of other PAC items. It was perplexing that such an obvious and important inclusion would go almost unmentioned by residents. The neglect of the UPA's presence doesn't necessarily

indicate that residents do not use it or aren't aware of it<sup>5</sup>. Rather, it is evidence that they feel the UPA by itself is not sufficient to solve the health crisis within Rocinha. It also points to the gap between what they were promised and what they ultimately received. The UPA was initially planned as a full-scale hospital. Its scope was decreased as the state government ran out of funding. The UPA was built in its place, and intermediary between a clinic and a hospital, in time for Rousseff's presidential campaign (Burgos, 2016).

Perched on an incline just outside of sub-bairro Roupa Suja, beyond a set of semi-hidden steps and blocked off by a makeshift fence of a large wooden scrap, stands a singular tall white column. This is the first post of what was intended to be Rocinha's *teléferico*, an aerial cable car system. A grim reminder of the project's ultimate futility, it is also a symbol of the effectiveness of united community action. The *teléferico* was intended for PAC 2, the second phase of the program overseen by the Rousseff administration. It would have followed similar *teleféricos* installed in Providência and the aforementioned system in Complexo do Alemão. The design was for a large station to be built at the base of the Passarela and for cars to transport passengers through six stops toward the top of the hill. The project was estimated to cost R\$700 million, 44% of the R\$1.6 billion of PAC 2 projects in Rocinha (Lima Neto, 2015).

I came across the *teléferico* in the hallowed first favela unintentionally. I was looking to visit a museum in the northern reaches of Centro dedicated to a slave burial site that had

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<sup>5</sup> Manoela, who has still yet to familiarize herself with most of Rocinha, took her son to the UPA when he contracted pneumonia. Nem is said to have enclosed himself in the UPA, surrounding it with armed traffickers as he dealt with debilitating stress and an overdose in the days before his arrest (Gomes & Carvalho, 2011).

been uncovered by a couple looking to renovate their home<sup>6</sup>. Public transit placed me just barely within the skyscrapers of Centro, not far from the Porto Maravilha. From here, it was a twenty-five minute walk through Gamboa, a sparse industrial area of warehouses, unpaved roadsides, and what looked to be a tiny flatland favela. The museum, unfortunately closed while a rail system was being built in front of it, sat within an area of old colonial-era structures. The area seems to be in transition, apparent in the rail installation and the swarms of construction crews elsewhere. Unwittingly, I found the Providência teleférico as I entered the area. Curious about this large modern structure that towered above this historic area, and curious more about this first favela, I boarded a car. I caught an aerial view of the favela and the sprawl of homes beneath me. I could make out a little bit of movement as the car stopped at the entrance to the favela, but otherwise felt distant from the neighborhood. I continued the ride, which eventually descended down into the Centro below. Getting off, I was within a block of a major transit cross point, from where passengers have the option of catching a bus, getting on the subway, or taking a train outside of the city. After the walk through an unfamiliar area on a warm day, I was relieved to be able to catch the metro back toward Rocinha.

Therein lies the problem with the teleférico. It benefited me, a tourist who would be leaving the country the following day. Its benefits for the residents over whose homes it travels is more controversial. Providência's hilltop location makes navigation difficult for even the most able-bodied residents. For those who are older or deal with physical

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<sup>6</sup> This is the Instituto de Pesquisa e Memória Novos Pretos. Another site in the Port area, the Valongo, was uncovered in 2011 as the city began renovations for the port. The Valongo was the holding house for arriving Africans before they were auctioned off into slavery. Many of those who died during the passage were buried here. Inequality is literally part of Rio's terrain.



impairments, the challenge is even greater. The system also provides direct access to the transportation hub below the morro. The teleférico is beneficial in this regard, as it eases the physical toll of climbing the hill and the large central staircase.

The price of the teleférico, though, is a heavy one. The UPP established a post in Providência in 2010. By 2012, eight hundred homes were marked for demolition by city authorities. Many residents left for work one morning and returned home that evening to see an “SMH” – the ominous marking of the Secretária Municipal de Habitação e Cidadania (Municipal Housing Authority) – spray painted on their doors. They then had to deal with the insecurity of finding out when they would be removed and where they would be placed. The community also lost a central square that had a soccer court amidst shops and benches where residents used to gather (Freeman, 2012). The teleférico in Complexo do Alemão came about through similar means. Caught in the fascination with a favela I wouldn’t roam, the expanse of city and port below me, and the relief of quick transport, I had to struggle to remember that my comfort had life-changing consequences for others.

Purcell applies Lefebvre’s rights to the city to the extreme, detailing how its literal implementation would give a resident of Los Angeles input into decisions being made in a small Mexican village. He does this to illustrate that the scalar reorganization that Lefebvre favors, if purely applied, could allow limitless access to a city in a way that would ultimately negate the meaningful creative power of locals that he intends. I wonder if Purcell’s scenario already exists. In thinking about how my pleasure in riding the teleférico in Providência was permitted only through detachment from the reality of its installation, I realize that the city government and its private developers successfully created the impression for which they had hoped. They created a project catered to the desires of tourists while neglecting – or outright

trampling on – the needs of local inhabitants. In so doing, they gave the tourist outsized influence over the creation of local space. This is not the formal power that Purcell questions, and the tourist may be unaware of their influence. Yet these caveats do not preclude the existence of that power.

The start of the teleférico in Rocinha required invasions that mirror those of Providência and Complexo do Alemão. Many families in the Roupa Suja neighborhood where construction began were asked to leave. The incline toward the top of Roupa Suja is dotted with piles of rubble and other remains of their demolished homes. Rita, one of the cooks at the crèche, moved to another part of Rocinha, after being told that her home would need to be removed. The government gave her a stipend that covered the apparent value of her home so that she could purchase one of similar value elsewhere. Others were simply provided housing in other locations, including Rua 4. From estimates provided by government agencies, the Roupa Suja removals appear to be only the beginning. The Empresa de Obras Públicas (EMOP), the state public works agency, told residents that thousands of homes would need to be removed to make room for roads that would transport materials and to allow access to the locations chosen for stations. The Federal Ministry of Cities estimated that 7,000 people would be removed for all PAC 2 projects in Rocinha. A state official who had worked on projects throughout Rocinha felt that 10,000 people would be removed for the teleférico and that the project would “generate enormous consequences” (Freeman and Burgos, 2016).

Questions remain about how useful a teleférico would be in Rocinha. The experiences in Providência and Complexo do Alemão suggest that a similar system in Rocinha wouldn't serve as much of the population as it hopes. Those who favor the project are those who live

toward the top of Rocinha. The cars, however, would be in continuous motion and not amenable to seniors or those with disabilities. They would also be too small to help carry some of the large cargo that residents often need to tote up the hill (Neto, 2015).



**Figure 7** A channel of garbage and flowing waste in Rua 2. Residents feel that sanitation should be the first priority of any redevelopment.

For now, only the single pillar outside of Roupá Suja stands. The project has been halted, for the time being, because of the government's current financial woes and pushback from residents. After the RSF meeting I attended, Augusto, the group's organizer, handed me a pamphlet advertising their efforts to secure basic sanitation in Rocinha. RSF advocated for the \$R1.6 billion in PAC 2 funds to be allocated toward sanitation projects, which are a higher priority for Rocinha residents. Luciana, the owner of the crèche, echoed these sentiments in an unrelated interview, explaining, "We do not need a teleférico." I will never

forget the searing spite with which she expressed her disdain. RSF and Rocinha 100%, another community advocacy organization, participated in a protest organized jointly with Vidigal. Two thousand people marched peacefully in this demonstration toward the apartment of then-governor Cabral in Leblon<sup>7</sup>. One of their chants matched a demand on the pamphlet Augusto gave me: “Saneamento Básico – SIM! Teleférico – NAO!” (Duarte Santos, 2014; Steiker-Ginzberg, 2013).

### **Transport**

One of the criticisms on the pamphlet is one I levied above: “...os turistas vão adorar.” This observation can be applied to all of the transportation “improvements” associated with the Olympic Games. Each of these is interconnected.

There are commuter vans circling the Zona Sul with more regularity than city buses. They begin their routes on Estrada da Gávea on the very edge of Rocinha. From here, they service the Rocinha thoroughfare, Gávea, Leblon, Ipanema, São Conrado, and Vidigal. These vans are each numbered and marked with the seal of the Rio Prefeitura, but the experience is much less formal than that of a city bus. The driver operates the van while another person stands in the open sliding door calling out to potential passengers as it passes them. The van makes all of the regular stops, but solicits passengers along the way. Passengers are not required to pay the fare before they board because the van is meant to keep moving. The operators collect fares – which match those of city buses – before passengers disembark.

Favela residents used these vans almost exclusively. So when asked if I had been on a combi, I gleefully replied that I had. I thought that the lax, personal nature of the van and its near exclusive use by favela residents meant that it was a combi. I was mistaken. Combis –

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<sup>7</sup> Leblon is the upscale neighborhood that sits between Gávea and Ipanema, within walking distance to Vidigal.

so called after the Volkswagen model – are vans that provide informal van services in favelas throughout the city. They are a low-cost option for getting up and down steep hills in the favelas and to destinations in the city. They are popular also because their informality allows passengers to control where they stop. Combis join a fleet of semi-formal transport vans that service holes in the bus system. Since their growth in the mid-90s – owing to the affordability of new vans and the ability to self-employ – the semi-formal vans have faced consistent regulation (Balassiano & Campos Alexandre, 2013).



Figure 8 City approved commuter vans in queue outside of Rocinha

My supervisor at the nonprofit warned me against taking combis, directing me instead to look for vans that had the markings of the city. Even this was a half-hearted recommendation, as she seemed to suggest that buses were the most legitimate service. She

warned that the unmarked vans, though, often tried to cheat riders by taking them off of their routes and charging inconsistent prices.

The vans that I had taken through the Zona Sul are a response to informal and semi-formal van services in the city. A tourist couple was attached on a van in March of 2013. By April, city officials had banned van services and endorsed the formal Zona Sul service (Conde, 2013). This service is more closely supervised than that of the previous systems. Reportedly, vans are required to pick up and leave passengers at designated stops. Drivers wear uniforms are not allowed to yell out the van's destination. The vans are also equipped to accept the same electronic fare cards that permit use on buses and subways and include GPS systems. Similar services in the Zona Oeste and Zona Norte began later that year (Globo, 2013).

Reading of these rules was confusing because my experience differed. I often caught a ride in between bus stops. The assistant to the driver would call the destination out to me from the passenger seat or from the sliding doorway. If I signaled interest, the van would stop a little bit in front of me so that I could board. Surely the fares were the same as those of buses, and there were scanners for reading fare cards. But neither the drivers nor assistants ever wore a uniform of any kind. Throughout the twenty-year history of regulating van service in Rio, new rules have lacked bite because there has been no monitoring system to enforce them (Balassiano & Campos Alexandre, 2013). This would explain how the vans I rode could operate in defiance of the regulations. This is also the beauty of the vans: their operation outside of formal rules allows them to adjust their services to the needs of their passengers. So while I could never leave the Zona Sul on one of these, I could use the service from any point within their range.

The range of these vans is reinforced through the GPS systems installed on board. One official involved in the regulation explained, “Our goal is to monitor efficiently.” Then-mayor Paes insisted that the rollout of the service was unrelated to the assault in March, saying that it was already in the works to weaken control of van services by drug gangs (Conde, 2013). The Rio Times (2012) reports that there is doubt that this control still exists. So while the Paes may not have timed the new service as a direct response to the previous month’s assault, the regulations on van service are interlinked with surveillance and security matters that consider the tourist. This is another instance of the erosion of the rights to the city of favela residents. This system appropriates a homegrown solution and redefines it to accommodate the security needs of tourists.

The sign at the Rocinha van-stop advertises the route of vans leaving from this point: São Conrado – Jardim de Alah (via Rocinha). The “via Rocinha” is in un-bold, smaller type. A few meters away is the entrance to the subway extension meant to connect Zona Sul locations to new service in Barra da Tijuca and services already running in Ipanema. There is a second entrance across the street, connected to the São Conrado neighborhood. The placards on both entrances contain the name of the stop: São Conrado. The significance of a metro stop attached to Rocinha cannot be overstated. It significantly truncates trips requiring hour-plus rides on multiple buses or services. However, the naming of the station cannot be overstated either. Daniela, one of the attendees at the RSF meeting that strategized the altering the name of the metro station, impressed, “The name has very strong significance.” In a group of twenty, there were a few dissenters over this notion, but the consensus was that the naming of the metro station was important. Daniela worried later that, “People will not know that this is our space.” Luan had informed me weeks earlier that while he was excited



for the metro and thought it was a good thing, the service would not be available for normal patron until after the Games had passed. Opening just days before the Olympics, the stop would only be open to patrons furnishing tickets to Olympic events. Everyone else would have to wait until the Games concluded<sup>8</sup>.

Official transit solutions in Rocinha have rendered its citizens unequal even in the space they inhabit most intimately. These solutions have imposed consequences on their lives that are real and perhaps yet to come. These consequences come under the assumption that residents will benefit from the changes being made. Yet there are aspects of each that deny Rocinha residents the creative power on which they built their lives in the first place. PAC developments have re-territorialized Rocinha, claimed them as spaces belonging to the city. While being a part of the city is supposed to include all of the benefits of infrastructure, services, and rights that the formal city enjoys, Rocinha has seen its claim to these goods subverted for the city's own benefit. The city has turned Rocinha into a curated space that communicates to outsiders that it is an omnipotent entity with a hold on its problems. The government has dominated space of Rocinha and in so doing has dominated the rights to the city.

### **Securing Rocinha**

Rio's model for favela integration in the scope of mega-sporting events has been to link development to security. The hallmark program for bringing about security outcomes is the Unidade da Polícia Pacificadora (UPP) program. The UPP is based on a Colombian model of development and security implemented in Medellin and Bogota. Sergio Cabral, the

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<sup>8</sup> To qualify this, a blog post published on September 20, 2016, weeks after my departure and the Games, shows a picture of one metro entrance that says "São Conrado/Rocinha." RSF's efforts seem to have worked.



governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro, and his Secretary of Public Security, José Mariano Beltrame, visited these cities in early 2007, piqued by their dramatic drops in homicides. Inspired by the Colombian example, they loosely formed the predecessor to the UPP program. In the summer of that year, they ordered 1300 state and federal police to surround Complexo do Alemão as part of the security strategy for the Pan-American Games to take place in July. This would make way for the teleférico system that Lula would announce the next year with Rouseff by his side. The forces invaded the complex and killed 19 people, including a two-year old child being rocked to sleep (Moreira Alves & Evanson, 2011). Some of these showed markers of being executed (Freeman, 2012; Costa Vargas, 2013). Numerous people were injured, abused, or otherwise violated as police fired 180,000 bullets and conducted door-to-door searches for drugs, weapons, and traffickers while intentionally damaging or stealing property. This action became known as the “PAN massacre” (Freeman, 2012). Even before being fully conceptualized, the UPP program was establishing the forms of dominance it would generalize in favelas throughout the city.

The installation of a UPP unit occurs in two phases. The favela is first targeted and militarily captured by a squad of Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais (BOPE) officers. BOPE is the state of Rio de Janeiro’s unit of elite tactical officers. They are specially trained and provided with the most sophisticated weaponry and armor. Their task is to forcefully and/or fatally eliminate drug traffickers and liberate the favela from their influence. This is how a favela comes to be “pacified”. Once gangs have been effectively neutralized, units of Rio’s civilian police enter the community and construct permanent posts from which they conduct regular community-centered policing and social outreach. UPP officers are specially trained to be the bridge between the favela and the government. The community-policing

aspect of the program is novel in the history of Brasil's urban security mechanisms. It represented a change from previous programs that had installed traditional police officers in the favelas to retake territories from traffickers without sensitivity toward favela residents. The UPP model, in contrast, was meant to emphasize democratic, citizen-oriented police practices performed by officers who were separate from traditional police agencies. The "proximity policing" of the UPP would have patrols visibly walking the streets as symbols of accessible government and security apparatuses. It stressed accountability to the citizen, proximity to the public, and prevention (Denyer Willis & Mota Prado, 2014).

The security aspect of the UPP was intended to precede the installation of social development and integration programs through UPP Social. In order to "reverse the legacies of violence and territorial exclusion," these programs were to include urban regularization, development of public services, support for business development, cultural and sports programs for youth, and other recreational activities. These programs would be ushered in along with a new focus on social inclusion, communication channels, and participatory management. The program generally failed to garner the wide resident participation for which it had aimed, owing to non-transparent and unaccountable officials pushing plans that were established prior to any favela engagement. The program involved an ambitious integration of various agencies to deliver the promised programming. This would have involved a structural rethinking of the city government that was too big of a task for an ad hoc program unless it was meant to be a sustained effort. Also, there were accusations that UPP officers usurped the representation of grassroots organizations and residents associations, effectively rendering them voiceless.

Eventually, UPP Social revealed itself as another program with hegemonic designs of the favela masked as inclusion. In response to Rocinha residents' demands that UPP Social pursue basic sanitation before the teleférico installation, Eduarda La Rocque, president of the Instituto Perreira Passos (IPP), the independent planning agency commissioned by the city to implement the program, stated, "In reality the priorities are those of the city of Rio de Janeiro as a whole. We are paying taxes to invest R\$1.8 billion in Rocinha, so the society as a whole has to identify the priority. [We do not] have to cater to what the favela wants" (Pereira Leite, 2012; Bentsi-Enchill et. al, 2015). This is one of the more explicit denouncements of favela rights while being a rare admission by state and private actors that their goals align more with the desires of "the city" than the guarantee of democratic access to the city for all of its inhabitants. This is an improper equating of the favela and the rest of the city. While integration is the desired end for all, it cannot be successfully achieved by imposing the goals of the city with those of the favela. Doing so only perpetuates the division between the two by denying the real, material needs of the favela.

### **Occupy and Contain**

In the daily context that I witnessed, the UPP program took on the tones of a military occupation, an example of what Graham (2010) calls the "new military urbanism." Graham finds that "militarized techniques of tracking and targeting must permanently colonize the city landscape and the spaces of everyday life in... the West as well as the world's neo-colonial frontiers" (XIV). Graham points to the need of urban centers, including the one imagined by Haussman, to capture their unclaimed spaces and convert them for military and commercial purposes. Urban warfare blurs the lines between policing, intelligence, and the

military; between war and peace; and between local, national, and global operations. Says Graham:

“...state power centers increasingly expend resources trying to separate bodies, deemed malign and threatening from those deemed valuable and threatened within the everyday spaces of cities and the infrastructures that lace them together. Instead of legal or human rights and legal systems based on universal citizenship, these emerging security politics are founded on the profiling of individuals, places, behaviors, associations, and groups. Such practices assign these subjects risk categories based on their perceived association with violence, disruption or resistance against the dominant geographical orders sustaining global, neoliberal capitalism” (XV).

The targeted entry of military-level police has unmistakable parallels to an occupation campaign. In Rocinha, the order imposed by this initial intensive is sustained by daily monitoring by UPP officers. The UPP force has sectioned off locations of the favela that are important to the city’s efforts at branding itself. These are mainly locations along EdG, but police regularly occupy spaces on the main commercial routes of Via Apia and Caminho dos Boiadeiros as well. There is a patrol car regularly positioned on EdG at these locations, ordered from the lowest geographical point ascending sequentially toward the top of Rocinha:

- Avenida Niemeyer (the entrance to Rocinha from São Conrado)
- Via Apia
- Entrance to Vila Verde (just above the UPA health center)
- entrance to Rua 2

- entrance to Portão Vermelho

On any walk up EdG, patrol cars can be spotted driving up and down the street regularly.

The car that is parked at the intersection of Via Apia and EdG is interesting. Via Apia is a busy, albeit short, uphill street running north-south. Its base forms the entrance to Rocinha at Rua Gen. Olímpio Mourão Filho (Rua Gen.), a small side street coming from Túnel Zuzu Angel. Its traffic consists overwhelmingly of people on foot dodging moto-taxis, which have posts by the entrance. The cars that do travel on Via Apia – mostly taxis – travel southbound from EdG. But the patrol vehicle parked at this intersection makes its trip northward from Rua Gen. most weekday mornings around 9am. After I noticed this, I counted only two other non-police vehicles that traveled this direction on Via Apia. The police car's drive is a symbolic one, simultaneously announcing and establishing the police's presence in a fashion that maximizes visibility.

Where Via Apia meets Rua Gen. is where the Rocinha Passarela begins. One more patrol car is normally parked under the Passarela, monitoring pedestrian traffic along Caminho dos Boiaderos and toward Roupas Sujas. In addition to the patrol cars parked throughout the visible areas, Via Apia and CdB routinely have officers roaming on foot. In fact, there are two bank branches with ATMs on CdB, a Banco do Brasil and a Caixa. These are on the same side of CdB separated by an alley. There is usually a quartet of officers standing outside of the Caixa or inside the ATM area of the Banco do Brasil.

Detailing the regular location of police vehicles helps to understand the strategy of the program. Quite simply, where the police are, traffickers are not. The pacification of Rocinha did not end the traffic, nor was it meant to (Freeman, 2012). Instead, the goal was to contain it to make way for development and tourism. This is not dissimilar to the way a war

of occupation is carried out. This pattern is evident in the recent Western interventions in the Middle East. An initial campaign that neutralizes enemy combatants is followed by a sustained occupation meant to contain any remaining rivals while rebuilding takes place. With the exception of two unarmed males I suspected at different occasions might have been involved in the drug trade, I did not knowingly see any traffickers in the main streets. I did cross them, however, when going to places in Rocinha's interiors. In these places, the traffickers made themselves known by the guns they carried across their chests or in their pockets. It is in these areas that they still influence the lives of residents, though maybe not with the force with which they once did. For the most part, drug dealers seem to have been sectioned off away from the main streets by the presence of police patrols in these areas.

Placing police officers up and down EdG, at the entrances, and under the Passarela also connects the police force to the investments PAC has made in the community. Save the Complexo Esportivo and Passarela, all of PAC's developments are located along Estrada da Gávea. The patrol along Avenida Niemeyer also places officers within sight of both metro entrances. The juxtaposition of development and security further curates the experience of Rocinha for the potential tourist or outsider, as they can clearly see which areas are safe while beholding the government's efforts.

There is one last location where a patrol car is often located. From EdG's peak near Laboriaux, it winds down the other side of the hill where Gávea begins. A police car is stationed outside of the gated community of mansions here, giving residents there private security via public officers. Taken with the patrols at the other end of EdG, the UPP sections off Rocinha into a secured zone that marks it as a place of danger that must be contained within its borders.

The Rocinha UPP headquarters in Portão Vermelho is a large white rectangular building with a blue roof and “UPP” emblazoned across the top. While the other developments in Portão Vermelho are either too small to see or obscured by tree cover, the UPP headquarters is the only building in Portão Vermelho that one can see from ground-level locations in the favela. Eduarda informed me that favelas expand from initial construction on the hillside. This helped the burgeoning communities avoid the threat of removal. The placement of the UPP headquarters in a visible location at the top of the favela reorients this bit of invention and uses it for its own symbolic and functional purposes. The placement on the tops of hill allows police to observe from above (Freeman, 2012). This is a Foucaultian application of surveillance that elicits compliance with minimal force (2007).

### **The Panopticon on Foot and Wheels**

The use of officers on foot and in patrol cars further reinforces Foucaultian compliance in Rocinha. While I was sitting in the square at Rua 4 on a late morning, I noticed a young man in his late twenties standing over a seated older woman, perhaps in her early seventies. I was touched by the attention the man showed to the lady. When she suddenly rested her head on her cane, he put his hand on her back and bent over to ask about her condition. A few minutes later, a patrol car drove by. As its windows were tinted, I could only make out the menacing smile on one officer's face. As the car passed, he surveyed the bustling scene of children, motorcyclists, and other pedestrians. I looked back to the young man with the woman. He kept his hand on her back but stood with his head frozen to his right looking after the police vehicle, holding a solemn expression.



**Figure 9** Rocinha from a southeast sub-bairro. The UPP headquarters is under the peak in the center.

Another night, I walked through an alley from Via Apia to get cash from the Banco do Brasil for a bus ride to Ipanema. As I entered the beco, I could see two officers at the other opening walking in my direction. One of them a woman, they both had their handguns pointed toward the ground with their arms fully extended. They looked to their right and to their left, stalking each crevice and alleyway in obvious pursuit of someone. I was immediately overcome with fear. I noticed that the other three or four people who stood down the stretch of the alleyway did nothing. They stared silently at the officers. I worried that if I turned and left, I would have appeared suspicious. But I knew also that continuing toward them was not an option, as I had no desire to be any closer to an officer prepared to



shoot. I experienced this fear and indecision while the others in the alleyway continued to stand and watch. I turned and walked in the other direction swiftly, hoping to evade the officers' attention and any resulting trouble. I soon saw a separate group of officers manning routine patrols on Via Apia and worried that they might have been in communication with the officers I had just tried to avoid. It wasn't evident, however, that they noticed me. I went on with my night without incident.

On another weekday between classes, I went to run an errand on Via Apia. I came across four officers walking in the opposite direction. An officer in front held his rifle pointed down across his chest, a finger on the trigger and a hand holding the end of the barrel. He stared at me with a smug smile as we crossed. The officers behind him chatted amongst themselves, guns holstered and unbothered by anything. After I passed the officers, I saw two shirtless boys, about ten or eleven, fidgeting gleefully between themselves. One of them pulled the string of a small plastic popper, sending out a loud popping noise. I stood worried that this would trigger some kind of reaction from the police only yards away. The boys shared by concern, their laughing turning immediately to horror as they stared at the officers. Only one of the officers turned to look at them, seeming more confused than roused. Nothing further, however, happened.

When I asked how residents behave differently amidst pacification, José, the student who had invited me to play tennis, defiantly and dismissively stated that he carries on with his life as if they were not there. When I asked minutes later about a scene I had witnessed where an officer prevented a group of girls from reentering a bus from the back door, José led the chorus with, "It's not right!" He added that police should exclusively use their own vehicles for transport and not use buses. Given this observation, I suspect that his response

about behavioral changes was a bit of bravado meant to put a measure of psychic distance between him and the invasive presence of police. Luan recalled soon after that he had been on a bus that was full of armed UPP officers and that he was afraid for the entirety of his ride. The UPP has brought about the physical occupation of Rocinha, quite obviously. But the occupation occurs within psychological lines as well. The presence of police in every day spaces shapes what residents feel that they do and where they can go. It reduces behavior into the scale of what is safe and acceptable. The close monitoring of police is a tactic by which residents negotiate their wellbeing in this environment.

### **Normalizing Police Presence**

Part of pacification is the possibility of sudden shootouts as BOPE reenters a favela in pursuit of gang targets. Because their efforts depend in part on surprising their target, they do not announce their intention to enter. The action can happen at any time of day and on any day of the week. These actions do not account for the possibility of civilian casualties, as they often take place around school hours, placing children in danger. Once the BOPE enters the favela, it is usually in a flurry of gunshots. Residents are only made aware of a potential shootout if they happen to have a connection with a drug dealer. There is usually an officer with ties to drug traffic who will inform their connect of an impending police action. Residents who do not have this type of information must do everything they can to avoid getting caught in the sudden crossfire (Moreira Alves & Evanson, 2011).

One of these actions took place on May 20, 2016, a week before my arrival. A few of my co-volunteers told me in separate conversations that at around 3pm, while they were still teaching, They were frightened by the outbreak of gunshots. By 11am, children in Rocinha have finished their school day and have filled the streets. Many play with each other on Via

Apia or in the alleys that separate it from CdB. There is a prominent alley in which a few teens set up a makeshift ping pong table every day and play. At the nonprofit, many of the children would be on their way at around 3pm for afternoon and early evening classes. The indiscriminate shooting of BOPE forces leaves children vulnerable to gunfire.

Rocinha em Foco is a Facebook page that acts as a sounding board for all events in Rocinha. Community members use the page to solicit help in finding lost children or pets, to advertise community events and leisure, or to alert community members about potential dangers. As an example, when I saw a fire in Roupa Suja from the Biblioteca one afternoon that was larger than the normal trash-burning fires<sup>9</sup>, a resident had posted images of the fire. Other residents used the comments section to cry aloud their anger over the absence of firefighters and the state. On May 20<sup>th</sup>, there are several smart phone videos posted of otherwise placid Rocinha scenes strewn with the sounds of gunfire. A photo shows holes in the walls of one resident resulting from stray bullets. These were posted after separate posts alerted any would-be readers that BOPE was entering near the Passarela and that, later, the gunfire had settled but BOPE was still roaming the favela.

The videos posted are remarkable in that they reveal so much about how Rocinha residents might treat their precarious environment while not directly showing what their dangers are. One video is taken from a balcony or window in a building two or three stories up. Visually, it is nothing more than a wide shot of the favela before it. The only action in the video is muffled conversation and the sounds of bullets fired but unseen (Rocinha em Foco, 2016b). A video from the same day is shot from a storefront along EdG, as a commuter van

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<sup>9</sup> Small fires on the mountain above Roupa Suja occur daily as residents burn their trash here. Without a direct street front, trash collection is impossible here except for city workers who occasionally enter to clear the becos. Burning trash is one of the only viable ways of ridding of it for Roupa Suja residents who live higher on the hill.

passes before the camera in a hurry. Despite the gunfire that can be heard, a teen stands sheltered in the store across the street, fidgeting a little but remaining in place (Rocinha em Foco, 2016a). These images suggest that residents have acclimated to these events – at least while they are happening. The otherwise uninterrupted space in the first video seems to normalize the gunfire. The second video seems like a slice of life with only subtle indicators – the fidgeting youth and the speeding van – that something is awry. Moreira Alves and Evanson (2011) quote a resident of another favela as explaining, “Once the shooting is over, everybody is out on the street, having a beer, shopping at the food market, going to work. They move about normally. People believe that they have to go on living normally” (47).



Figure 10 Behind this moto-taxi stand, police officers standing outside of the Bradesco branch on Via Apia.

I'm reminded of Helena, a studious and insightful chemical engineering major, who told me that she hid in her apartment when the shooting broke out. When the three-hour barrage was finished, she left for the home of a friend who was preparing for their wedding. The moment she made it to her friend's home, gunfire resumed. Helena informed me that Via Apia had breakouts of violence amongst rival gangs prior to pacification. Rocinha has had experience with randomized warfare before pacification. They have adapted to it, finding ways to weave their lives around it.

Lefebvre observes that social dynamics create space (Penglase, 2014). That this relationship between social dynamics and space is reflexive is worth considering. Manoela, one of the employees at the crèche, now understands her community to be a fearsome place. On a late night, she realized that she needed to buy diapers for her son. She waited for her boyfriend to return home from work so that he could watch their son. Though he offered to take the cash to go purchase the diapers himself, Manoela insisted that she was fine with doing so. Prior to pacification, this would have been a routine trip to the store for her through an area in which she felt her personhood was secure. The pacified environment, though, meant that as soon as Manoela stepped out into the dark beco, she was overcome with fear. Throughout the errand, she looked constantly over her shoulder to spot a would-be predator. All the while, she prayed to see another person in the alleyway, to guarantee her security. She completed the errand and returned home without incident, but not without gripping fear. While telling this story, Manoela widened her eyes and looked over each shoulder, acting out her new understanding of space in pacified Rocinha. In the absence of security enforced by traffickers, Manoela now feels vulnerable. She says that incidents of rape, break-ins, and theft were not present when the traffickers were in control but occur more often with police

in control. She previously felt secure in her neighborhood to the point that she mocked her friends who lived in the *asfalta* because crime was an assumed part of their reality. Manoela's vulnerability has physically and psychologically altered the way in which she interacts with her neighborhood.

### **Rocinha Resisting**

Rocinha residents embed their community with forms of resistance that challenge dominance of their space by hegemonic PAC projects and UPP presence. Their resistance also challenges long-established prejudices of *favelados* as non-national places devoid of citizenship and its benefits. Some of these forms are as explicit as the walk toward the home of Governor Cabral. The mural of the *Museu da Rocinha Sankofa Memória e História* (Sankofa Museum of Rocinha Memory and History) could be viewed as one such protest as it grants Rocinha residents the dignity inherent in having access to history. The museum, whose permanent physical space is still being planned, is a close partnership between Rio's government and the *União Pro-Melhoramentos dos Moradores da Rocinha* (Union for the Improvements for Residents of Rocinha, UPMMR), one of the more prominent advocacy groups within Rocinha. At one point, space for the museum was to be provided within Laboriaux, which had been threatened with evictions (Calado, 2015). The impact of this mural as a form of protest is diminished by the museum's cooperation with the Ministry of Culture. When powerful actors directly influence the shape of a protest, the protest loses its resistant nature.

The mural is further eroded as a form of protest by its inclusion of a painting celebrating PAC projects, especially those that have not come to fruition. Residents have taken to using this mural as a canvas for protests of their own, either spray-painting on it

directly or placing homemade signs over it. The sign in Figure 11 can be translated to say, “The people have lost faith and are still destroying themselves. It is time to save yourself. Faith in God.” Another directs, “Do not let your eyes take you to other roads. Seek God for he is close.” It would be easy to dismiss such signs as mere evangelism, especially given the plethora of churches of various denominations along EdG. The placement of the signs over this mural, however, specifically targets the messaging of its words and images. Moreover, the demand of godly faith defines the limits of power structures that this mural glorifies.



Figure 11 PAC "achievements" painted on the Museu Sankofa's mural

Other forms of resistance are – as Certeau imagines tactics – less immediately visible. They occur in everyday life, taking the cover of common assumptions. I attended a samba at an Italian nonprofit in Vila Verde one Saturday night. I had gotten there after other

volunteers had left, so I was relieved to run into Eduarda. She was sitting at the bar with a friend who had settled in Rocinha after volunteering with the same organization for which I was working. The environment was communal and celebratory. When the band performed, everyone in the crowd sang along, throwing their arms to the air in egalitarian joy. I asked Eduarda how it was that everyone knew these songs and was able to sing them on cue. This, perhaps, shouldn't have been as remarkable to me as it was, but I was caught by the sense of worry-free unity in the room. Eduarda educated me: these were songs that were famous throughout Brasil, songs that everyone knew. She gave the sense that the songs were almost canonical, a requirement for every Brazilian to be able to participate in celebration.

Part of my curiosity about this came from the naïve notion that because favelas are stigmatized as marginal, they do not participate in popular national forms of culture. I unwittingly believed that the favelado favored homegrown forms of art like bailes funk, capoeira, and HipHop. The favela had indeed imparted a flavor of its own on the national art form of Samba, but I assumed that the music's mainstream popularity made it unattractive. I remained curious about the way that this particular samba unfolded.

A Festa Julina celebration I had attended at the crèche earlier this same day was also a local observation of a national celebration. Festa de São João is a remnant of colonial times, an annual commemoration of a popular Catholic saint and his arrival into the Portuguese city of Porto. The festivities also celebrate two other popular saints and are held toward the end of June every year in alliance with summer solstice. In fact, I witnessed a Festa Junina celebration just outside of Morro da Urca before a hike there. The events carry a less orthodox meaning in Brasil than they do in Portugal, where the dates of the saints are always observed on the same days.



In Brasil, Festa de São João is more closely associated with the rural Northeast and is more centered on activities for children. The festivities almost take on the appearance of a rite of passage, as children dress up in plaid shirts, overalls, and straw hats and take on painted moustaches and freckles. At some, the children undergo mock marriage ceremonies accompanied by coquettish dances. Some observe the festivals in July though they still commemorate the same saints whose days of commemoration are in June – hence the difference between “Junina” and “Julina”.

The crèche spent a couple of weeks preparing for their festivities on this Saturday afternoon. They invited the families of every child who attended the crèche or who partook in their classes – it was an event designed very specifically for this community. The ladies who operated the crèche prepared carnival games for the younger while the older youth wrote and acted a play for the children and parents.

This celebration differed in its community focus from the one I walked past the month before, which was set up as a street fair for the general public. The next day, I would spend a short amount of time at another Festa organized by women who operated the crèche that fed the nonprofit at which I worked. I was going to skip this one, as it took place only hours before I left Brasil. I reconsidered when a mother I had seen in the streets insisted that I come. The event here was also a gathering of familiar faces, children and parents who had seen each other every day at the crèche below the project.

Rocinha residents practice “Brazilianness” with the breezy assumption that it is their right to do so. But given the denial of rights and citizenship that is evident in the government’s treatment of their space, their intent on observing the same customs as other

Brazilians constitutes a radical claiming of their national inclusion. Rocinha residents not only claim these customs, but also reproduce them in ways that are specific to them.

What I sensed at the Samba that night in Vila Verde was a deep sense of community, of comfort amongst peers. Attendees had obviously put a lot of effort into their appearance, yet they stopped short of the suit jackets and sequined dresses of a samba to which I had been in the tourist hotspot of Lapa weeks earlier. That samba was created for patrons with no necessary connection between them. These club-goers surely enjoyed themselves; they joined in the singing of well-known songs but did so within smaller groups or couples. In Rocinha, the attendees all seemed to know each other, which made for a more intimate and relaxed celebration. They constantly greeted and conversed with each other across the room. When they sang in unison, they did so by intently looking into each other's eyes and singing the lyrics mutually to each other, smiling all the while. The São João festivities similarly differed within the favela from their counterparts outside of it. The celebrations were groups of events created by members of defined communities meant for the mutually beneficial consumption of those members. In Rocinha, Brazilianness is realized through localized shared outcomes and shared experiences.

### **Compressing Time**

The Museu Sankofa mural may be problematic in its co-optation by administrative entities, but the intent attached to it has meaning beyond this. The predominant image on this mural is a green and white rendition of a Sankofa. The Sankofa is an image in the mythology of the Akan peoples in Ghana depicting a bird peering backward, fetching a kernel from its back. With its feet planted facing forward, the Sankofa symbolizes movement toward the future by being grounded in history. The Sankofa embodies simultaneous notions of the past,

present, and future. The museum's adaption of the symbol for Rocinha specifically collects the favela into a unified whole sharing a history and the struggle for a better future.

However prevalent the Sankofa is in the minds of Rocinha's inhabitants and however deep the collusion between the government and the UPMMR are less important than the possibility that residents embody the meanings of the symbol and museum. One of the more subtle tactics of residents is the compression of time; their futures are produced by their current predicaments, which are informed by their experiences of the past.



Figure 12 The emblem of the Museu Sankofa on the Mural along Estrada da Gávea

Rocinha's museum is one of the community museums in development in several favelas across the city. These museums were spurred by the *Programa Cultura Viva* (Living Culture Program) initiated by the federal Ministry of Culture in 2004 that promoted cultural

diversity programs throughout the country. In Rocinha, the museum takes on an anthropological curiosity about the histories of the favela's residents. In fact, the project's concept is based on the work of anthropology professor Lygia Segala, who in the 1970s started a literacy project in Rocinha that involved residents collecting oral histories. The 19,000 photos and documents she collected along with then-UPMMR president Tania Regina Silva became the basis for the Museu Sankofa's collection. With a museum space still in the works to hold and display these photos, the Museu has taken its exhibits directly to residents. It held an exhibit in 2015 at the Biblioteca Parque displaying photos of street vendors in Rocinha's past. It curated a multimedia exhibit in Rua 4's square that invited residents and passersby to watch videos, view photos, and read stories about the favela's past. The project continues to host *Chá de Museu* (Museum Tea), inviting community members to share their memories with organizers. This collection of stories is intended to locate the central narrative of Rocinha in the voice of the resident. This allows an excluded population an active role in shaping their history. It also creates a direct link between the past and the present. (Cronin, 2016; Calado, 2015). Antônio Firmino, one of the museum's organizers, told a reporter, "We are talking about the past, but the past is also present. So it is a living memory. It's not just simply something nostalgic" (Cronin, 2016).

Some of the accounts that the Museu collected are included in the companion book *Contos da Rocinha: Memórias Femininas em Tres Tempos*, or Tales of Rocinha: Memories of Women in Three Times. The stories of this book are exclusively those of women and are in keeping with the Sankofa's connection of past, present and future. One of these stories is that of Creuza, who turned to the drug trade after a childhood in a troubled home. No longer active in the trade, Creuza sees that today's youth have more opportunities than she did

because of the technologies available to them (da Silvos, 2012). Creuza's statement echoes what Eduarda told me during our tour. She stated that Rocinha residents are able to endure hardship because they know that "Life gets better with the time."

A motivation that I heard amongst many residents is that of one day leaving Rocinha. Luciana stated, confidently as always, that she "[doesn't] believe people live here because they want to." No one, she says, desires life in a cramped, rat-infested place. She herself is fueled by past students of hers who have come back to her with reports of success. This allows her to continue imagining her current students growing up, getting married, passing the Vestibular, going to school, finding stable professions and moving out of Rocinha. Save marriage, there are serious hurdles for each of these hopes for youth in Rocinha. Reaching maturity is no guarantee in a drug territory made more precarious by police who are known to target youth. Luciana's own nephew and some of his friends were shot dead by police on their way to work one afternoon<sup>10</sup>. Additionally, incomplete schooling makes collegiate access all the more distant for favelado youth. The work of organizations like Luciana's and the nonprofit at which I worked provide supplementary education geared toward shoring up these deficiencies. They are organizations that on a daily basis confront very real barriers to equality. The notion of personal betterment is central to their work, and this notion is attached to the goal of these students being able to choose to create lives in better places should they so choose.

When talking with residents I found that they both love Rocinha and consider futures elsewhere. I asked all of those whom I interviewed what part of Brasil their families were

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<sup>10</sup> The government has formally recognized that the killing of Luciana's nephew was unwarranted. They have sent a letter of apology to Luciana's sister, but have done nothing else.

from in order to place their experiences in the context of Rio's history. While a couple were born in Rio and had lived here their whole lives, the families of most everyone else came to Rio from the Northeast in order to find work. This is consistent with the massive urbanization that took place in the 60s and 70s as rural Brazilians, mostly from the Northeast, moved in masses to São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in search of jobs and better lives. In Rio, they settled into the hillside communities as these offered much of the available affordable housing (Perlman, 2005). Population growth continues within Rios favelas, but the massive migration of the 60s and 70s is the period of its greatest concentration. I asked residents of their thoughts about life in Rocinha and many spoke glowingly. They consistently stated that they were "thankful" for their ascendants' decision to move and of being "proud" to live in a place with the "opportunity" that Rocinha provides.

Even still, their home is a place they don't imagine inhabiting for the rest of their lives. Manoela loves the favela and its vibrancy. She had no designs on leaving until she had her son. The responsibilities of parenthood, she says, have made her reconsider her attachment to Rocinha. Her parents, in addition to building her an apartment within the favela, own a property in the countryside of the State of Rio de Janeiro. Manoela does not imagine that she would enjoy the slower pace of life; she finds both pleasure and safety in Rocinha's legions of people. But she knows that the environment in the countryside would be better for her son's development. The sounds of gunfire in the distance reinforce this.

There were two male students, each a martial artist, who wanted to seek opportunities in other countries. One a judoka and the other a jiu-jitsu practitioner, they both wanted to learn English so that they could teach or perform their arts in the US or Dubai and find better lives for their children. Hugo, the jiu-jitsu practitioner earnestly and intently sat in English

classes, taking copious notes on flash cards and asking constant questions. He often came prepared with specific jiu-jitsu related words – *cotovelo* (elbow) or *fuga* (escape) – he wanted translated so that he could convey them in English when abroad.

Eduarda, who once lived in Germany with her then-boyfriend, is motivated by a curiosity about the world. Her family and many friends are in Rocinha, but she does not imagine staying put. Eduarda may not feel as kindred to contemporary Rocinha as does Manoela. When telling me of the Parque Ecológico, she said that she enjoys spending time with her nieces and nephews in quiet settings like the waterfall there. One of the reasons she feels the space may not be as used as it could potentially be is because many residents prize conspicuous consumption over quiet, intimate opportunities like this. She observes that many like to spend money on clothes, jewelry, and entertainment in an attempt to mimic the luxuries they imagine wealthy Cariocas enjoy. Regardless, Eduarda feels both intimacy and disconnection with her home. She and her friends talk about moving back to the Northeast where their families are from and where life is less hectic. She also looks for the day she can explore beyond Brasil's borders.

Luan, grounded and intense, is similar to Eduarda in insightfulness. Just a year out of high school at the time of my visit, he is looking into flight classes in hopes of one day flying for a commercial airline. Throughout my stay, Luan offered perhaps the most definitive statement of self-reliance. He explained that the government is corrupt because the people are corrupt; government is a reflection of the people it serves. He does not rely on the government making meaningful changes to Rocinha because he feels the people must change first.

This active consideration of the past and the future gives the present a haunting importance. Knowing that the present is both shaped and generative, residents give it the utmost importance. I participated in a community service project that reintroduced me to Laboriaux during one of my last weekends in Rio. Laboriaux is a steep uphill neighborhood at the very top of Rocinha. There is a pathway that leads to the community garden that was once filled in by homes. These homes were casualties in a landslide that swept them away amidst heavy storms years earlier. The remnants of these homes are still evident in the impressions left in the homes that still stand, a feature of neighborhoods (like Rua 4) that have undergone reformation in Rocinha. The city capitalized on this catastrophe, using it as the reason to mandate that Laboriaux residents vacate their homes. City officials harassed many Laboriaux residents, demeaning them after giving them notices to leave. It is speculated that these eviction attempts were a dispossession strategy meant to take advantage of the neighborhood's location and views. The attempts were ill-fated, however, as Laboriaux residents won the right to stay through a combination of protests and negotiations (Freeman and Burgos, 2016).

The name of the project, *A Caixinha que Nos Queremos* (The Little Box We Want), which was accompanied with a hash tag on social media, is yet another direct claim on space. It challenges the suggestion that residents are helpless and their homes disposable. Instead, it grants them power and utility as decision-makers in their neighborhood, traits that undoubtedly played a part in their victory. It also cements their status as citizens.

Throughout the day, volunteers engaged in several projects to beautify the garden space here: planting shrubs for fruits and vegetables, gathering dirt from the nearby forest, painting and decorating walls, making planters for flowers, and creating paths in the garden,



amongst other activities. Wark, the Rocinha graffiti artist whose work can be seen throughout the Zona Sul, was there with friends to create a large mural on the backside of a structure. The project brought together Laboriaux residents, the leader of the neighborhood's resident association, AirBnB homeowners from throughout the city, employees of the company, and organizers from Favela Verde, which sponsors sustainable development projects in favelas.



Figure 13 The Livraria Pública in Laboriaux

I did not meet any Laboriaux residents who rented space on AirBnB. Considering that favela tourism – of which I admittedly took advantage for this study – has emerged an industry with a life of its own, it would be odd if there weren't any. AirBnB's presence would then take an obvious strategic purpose, beautifying a neighborhood that would permit higher rents. Seen without cynicism, however, the project is an example of what development could be if it involved elites supporting the creative self-determination of inhabitants. If the

Livraria Pública is any indication, such creative self-determination would instill a sense of both local pride and national citizenship within Rocinha.



Figure 14 The Livraria Pública's offerings

A friend and I returned to Laboriaux days later. She wanted to see the completed space before she returned to the States. One of the residents of Laboriaux passed by, in a jacket and khakis, as it was a cool, gray day. He looked to be going to school or to work, as he was in his early twenties and carrying a backpack. His expression was welcoming and satisfied as he walked toward us. He opened for us two old refrigerators that had been painted in playful designs by children on the day of the garden project. In one of the refrigerators was a selection of magazines. And in the other was a set of books. This, he proudly told us, formed the community library of Laboriaux. The items within are available to members of this neighborhood to take and borrow, only needing to fill out a sign-in sheet

located inside the door. He had a palpable sense of glee as he told us that the library would include more offerings as time went by.

The Livraria Pública is yet another example of tactical defiance in Rocinha. It is more or less a public service provided by residents themselves rather than the government. This makes it a statement of independence, of self-reliance; it symbolizes that residents will provide for themselves what they have the means to in the absence of a sensitive state. It also forms a physical representation of what attentive and consultative development would be in the community. Lastly, it renders the Laboriaux resident a citizen with rights to the land that cannot be erased by landslides or evictions. These statements take place in the ever-important present, for it is this moment that shapes future outcomes. Citizenship and hope now, even if it has to be self-created, claim broader rights and hopes for the future.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

If Rocinha's integration is the ideal, and if it is something about which the state is serious, then the cries and actions of Rocinha's inhabitants must be treated as serious. Handling the complaints of favela residents as the misguided and disruptive rumblings of marginalized people only reinforces that marginalization. The intelligence of the social tactics here described is that they act as government institutions that point toward real solutions while simultaneously enacting those solutions. The nonprofits at which I worked and the Livraria Pública are all self-made institutions that stand in where the government has fallen short. The demand for sanitation in place of the teleférico is an active imagining of simple wellbeing and practice of citizenship. The quiet monitoring of police and everyday whereabouts, while necessary to negotiate one's immediate safety, is commentary on the truth of security. These tactics are but a small sampling of the creative self-reliance the

Rocinha's inhabitants employ to manage and confront elite strategies of domination. These strategies seek to produce the favela as a space that is included in the city's grasp of control. The success of this strategy would communicate that Rio de Janeiro, in addition to its beauty and culture, is a place worthy of tourism and investment because it is modern and safe. It is this outwardly focused model of development and security that perpetuates inequality while claiming to eliminate it.

The tension between this strategy and the tactics employed by Rocinha's residents is explained by the right to the city. The Olympic model of development grants the right to production to governance institutions and private elites. These actors seek to influence the production of space to the benefit of a select, privileged few. In practice, this means that Rocinha residents who inhabit their home live with piecemeal solutions that neglect their needs for health, education, and security. In the hands of governance institutions and private elites, the city also places the rights to production and appropriation in the hands of tourists, who have space created to cater to their wishes. This leaves the inhabitants of Rocinha to employ the social tactics described in this study to claim the rights to production and appropriation through outright means of creation and influence.

Bringing about meaningful change would require a complete reorientation of the relationship between the city and those to whom it grants the right to the city. It would require that they bring favela residents to the table and actively include them in decision-making from beginning to end. This would incorporate the creative force of Rocinha's inhabitants. This enfranchisement is necessitated by the fact that the favela is a solution-producing entity. The strength of the favela is its ability to create living situations

independent of the state. This can be harnessed to create a favela that is granted the full slate of government services while maintaining its unique formation.

For one, security could be imagined not as a gateway to development but to include development. This would reorient the practice of security away from the sole prevention of violence and instead confront the environmental and socioeconomic violence of the state. It would hold that security is achieved through inhabitable living conditions and access rather than brute force. The covering of the channel that carries sewage to São Conrado could have an immediate impact on security by lowering the contact of residents with pathogens. The redevelopment of Rua 4 is a commendable example of this up until the point where the government neglects ongoing maintenance. In what was the area with the highest rates of tuberculosis in Rocinha is now a group of attractive apartments complimented by a spacious avenue with direct access to the commercial district. The state could recommit itself to maintaining the complexes and to similar redevelopment of Rua 1 and Rua 2 that were once planned through Morar Carioca. While providing protection from disease-ridden sewage, this would have the corollary effect of providing new avenues that would permit municipal entities to enter and maintain the cleanliness of the favela. This would help to extend the services available on EdG to those who currently live in Rocinha's unreachable interior.

Actions such as improving the sanitation infrastructure and recommitting to housing redevelopment would start to challenge the perception of a callous and self-serving government. Distrust for the government is long-standing and difficult to overcome. The presence of an unpredictable and at times abusive police force as the only consistent presence of the state exacerbates this distrust. The state could improve its relationship with Rocinha not only through resident-focused redevelopment but also in the consistent maintenance of

that redevelopment. The difference between the Portão Vermelho redevelopment and the Biblioteca Parque is instructive here. The residents that are aware of the Portão Vermelho improvements enjoy them, but feel alienated by the lack of outreach and maintenance. This thwarts the usefulness of these offerings as recreational and creative spaces for residents. Instead, they are but another facelift created without resident consultation and with little long-term meaning. The Biblioteca, on the other hand, is consistently staffed and operates regularly. Its central location makes it accessible to most of the favela, whereas the Portão Vermelho is only reachable to the immediate area. Despite the threats from budget constraints that have already closed one of the four branches, the library's current operation is meaningful. It shows that interventions can be successful if they are coupled with intentioned long-term support by the state.

For the residents who have been placed in the Rua Nova apartment complexes, new frustrations have come from the lack of maintenance for the apartments. Residents have reported having to deal with leaking roofs and normal wear and tear on the buildings without attention from the municipal authorities (Roller, 2011). This leaves residents living in imperfect housing that oddly parallels the problems they may have dealt with in self-constructed homes. The century-plus history of neglect and/or disdain toward favelas means that their integration cannot be realized through large but quick infrastructure projects. The results of this approach, as illustrated through PAC, have fallen short. A truly resident-centered and integrative approach would be prepared to buck this history in favor of a long investment of time and resources. This would reorient favela development from elites and toward inhabitants. Using this avenue to grant the right to the city to favela residents – a right

for which they have waited since their beginnings – could provide a more direct path toward the security that all seek. The nation belongs also to them.

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