Divine mediations: pentecostalism, politics and mass media in a favela in Rio de Janeiro
Oosterbaan, M.

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1. Ascending the Morro

I was very excited the first time I climbed up the morro de Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho. It was during my first stay in Rio de Janeiro when I was looking for a place to do fieldwork among people who attended Pentecostal churches in the city. Since many evangélicos live in favelas, the morro de Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho promised to be an excellent place for my research. The morro de Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho is a favela close to the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema. My friend and colleague Marcus Cardoso, who was conducting research among members of a Catholic chapel in the morro, had taken me along with him. As we climbed up the morro de Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho that day, I felt anxious and thrilled at the same time. Many Brazilians had warned me of the dangers in entering a favela in Rio de Janeiro. There had been several heavy armed confrontations between policemen and people from drug gangs in the morro de Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho. To counter the violence, the police had set up police-posts in the community, but, according to Marcus we should stay alert.

We parked the car in Copacabana and walked up to the street that went up in the direction of the favela. From this direction the community of Pavão-Pavãozinho could only be entered by way of a long ascending flight of steps. At the top of the steps there was a small police post where several men guarded the entrance to the community. After passing them we walked through the community Pavão-Pavãozinho towards the community of Cantagalo until we encountered the police post guarding the entrance at the other side. From there on we went to the elevator at the far end of the community of Cantagalo. It was winter in Brazil and I saw several boys playing with their pipas, as there was enough wind to get them high up in the air. I heard the sounds of music from the small houses and occasionally I caught a glimpse of televisions that were turned on. Higher up we passed a church of the Assembléia de Deus and when I peeped in I could see and hear people playing gospel music. It was there and then that I decided I wanted to do fieldwork in the morro de Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho.

When I returned to Rio de Janeiro in February 2002, I revisited the favela and I quickly learned that some things had changed. The police post that was originally placed

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43 Morro literally means hill. This is the word most inhabitants of the favela Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho use when they speak of the place.

44 At that time undergraduate student Anthropology at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ)

45 Kites
at the top of the flight of steps leading into the favela was no longer there. Instead, several young men had taken the place of the policemen and, when we arrived at the top, one of them asked us what we wanted and what we were doing there. Marcus explained that he was working with people from the Catholic chapel in Pavão-Pavãozinho and with a slight nod of his head the young man let us pass through. Obviously this frontier between the favela and Copacabana was now in the hands of traficantes (drug traffickers), instead of policemen. The police had set up a new post way down, not even close to the beginning of the flight of steps, but 300 meters further up the road leading to an entrance to the community of Cantagalo. Frontiers had changed and the traficantes had regained one important spot where they could simultaneously police the borders of the community and sell drugs to people who climbed up the steps.46

One of the main purposes of this chapter is to clarify the weak position of the state and the popularity of the Pentecostal churches that present alternative utopias and life projects for the individuals in Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho. I will describe the relation between the inhabitants, the community police-force *Gpae*, and the traficantes so it becomes clear that Pentecostalism is preached in an area with specific ‘rules’, exercised by traficantes, which coincide with other forms of governance such as that of the *Gpae* police-force. While the *Gpae* attempted to regain the trust of the inhabitants, its ambivalent relation to the tráfico (drug trade) and the population hindered the possibility of change. Another purpose of this chapter is to explain that, contrary to the recurring descriptions of favelas, they are not pre-modern islands in an overall modern Brazilian society. Their genesis and subsequent categorization is the product of what might be called Brazilian modernity. The favelas originated at the beginning of the twentieth century when rural workers (often former slaves) had migrated to the city. When the city was restructured according to European standards, people sought their refuge up the hills. The subsequent history shows both exclusion and inclusion of the favela inhabitants throughout the city. The demarcation of the space of the morro de Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho from the urban areas around it, and the subsequent dynamics of exclusion and inclusion of the favela inhabitants, has been enforced by the relative absence of state institutions and by the liberal economy of contemporary Brazil. On the one hand, this liberal economy has placed the inhabitants at the heart of the contemporary Brazilian consumption society. The inhabitants supply relatively cheap labor and demand a certain quantity of consumption products. On the other hand, they

46 This look-out had been occupied by traficantes long before the police took position there.
are confronted with life at the margins of that consumption society. Their low income forces them to live in a place characterized by a striking absence of the enforcement of certain rights and duties, which designated state institutions should provide for all citizens in Rio de Janeiro.

1.1 The Favelas of Rio de Janeiro

Favelas can be translated as urban slums, shantytowns or squatter settlements depending on the various discourses that are related to these mostly 'illegally' occupied territories. My dictionary translates it as: 'settlements of poorly built shacks', which is untrue because the majority of the houses are certainly not poorly built. It is very hard to define these 'settlements' without associating oneself with some kind of political position. In Rio de Janeiro there are plenty of substitute names for the settlements depending on different political projects through history. Other names such as: 'aglomerado subnormal' (subnormal agglomerate), 'comunidade carente' (destitute community) 'comunidade de baixa renda' (low-income community) or simply 'comunidade' (community) or morro, to name some examples, all point to different positions people and organizations have taken and take in the struggle over meaning and power both in and outside the favela. To name an example how state-institutions define the settlements, the definition for favela in the census of 2000 is: 'aglomerado subnormal' (subnormal agglomerate), that according to the IBGE means the following: aglomerado subnormal (favelas and similar places) is a set consisting of, at the minimum fifty-one habituation units (shacks, houses...), occupying or having occupied until recently terrain belonging to someone else (public or private), usually arranged in dense and disorderly form and in general are in need of essential public services (translation mine). I largely use the name morro, since that is how the inhabitants of Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho designate their place.

The city of Rio de Janeiro has roughly 5.8 million inhabitants. There are two important distinctions that form part of the cityscape of the cariocas. Both are related to

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47 Michaelis 2001. São Paulo, Melhoramentos
50 *Cariocas* is the Brazilian term to describe the people of Rio de Janeiro. It is also used locally to describe Rio de Janeiro as place of birth or of identity vis a vis other regions or cities in Brazil. People from São Paulo are commonly referred to as Paulistas, for example.
the social segregation in the city, which among many other reasons is the result of the migration to the city during the last one and a half centuries. The first is the distinction between *zona norte* and *zona sul*, the North zone and the South zone. The second is the distinction between the *morro* and the *asfalto*. *Zona sul* side starts at the center and reaches along the beaches of the Guanabara Bay and the Ocean to the South. The center consists of a mixture of old ‘colonial’ neighborhoods and mass construction neighborhoods, apartment buildings and business towers. Starting in the center going South one finds the monumental buildings of the city center, the government institutes, the shopping malls, business centers, the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema and bars and restaurants. Starting from the center going North one finds the port of Rio de Janeiro, the bus-terminal, the Maracanã football stadium, and the highway that leads you in and out of the city. Most of the neighborhoods in *zona sul* consist of middle-class apartment buildings, the neighborhoods North of the center, *zona norte*, on the other hand, largely consist of industry and large lower-class neighborhoods.

The second important social-geographical dichotomy that *cariocas* use is the distinction *morro* (hill) and *asfalto* (asphalt). Both *zona norte* and *zona sul* have many favelas. However, the favelas of *zona sul* are built mostly on the hills in the city and they are therefore commonly referred to as morros. The favelas *planas*, literally ‘flat’ favelas, of the *zona norte* sometimes stretch out over kilometers and from a distance seem like an ocean of orange and gray figures—reflecting the colors of bricks and of cement. People in the favela Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho commonly used the distinction morro and asfalto to describe the difference between their place of residence and the other neighborhoods that were not favela-like. If one stands at Copacabana- or Ipanema beach, one can clearly see the orange colored houses of the settlements of *Vidigal*, Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho, or *Chapeu Mangueira*, which are built on the hills that surround the neighborhoods. If one stands on the *Corcovado* at the side of the famous statue of *Christo Redentor*, which gives the visitor a ‘godly-like’ perspective on Rio de Janeiro (de Certeau 1984), one can clearly see that the different neighborhoods are built between and around the many populated hills and mountains and the sea.51 On most maps of Rio de Janeiro, the favelas are not represented however. On the maps of the city these hills appear as green unpopulated areas as if neither the favelas nor their population

51 To be able to stand next to the statue of Jesus, overlooking the city, creates an interesting link between religious discourses about the role of Jesus as caretaker and savior and the common desire to overlook the city, to ‘read’ it instead of being swallowed by it (de Certeau 1984: 91-93).
exists. The opposite is the case, however. The census of 2000\textsuperscript{52} showed that Rio de Janeiro has 513 favelas compared to roughly 300 in 1970 (Perlman 1977). The Parreiro Passos institute even gives 704 favelas, a much higher number. It was also estimated that 18.7 percent of the population of the city of Rio de Janeiro lives in favelas while in 1996 it was estimated 17 percent.\textsuperscript{53} According to research, these numbers most probably keep rising since the favelas are still growing both in zona norte and zona sul.\textsuperscript{46}

1.2 The Morro de Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho

The morro de Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho, which consists of two communities (comunidades)\textsuperscript{55} Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho, is located on two hills between the neighborhoods of Copacabana, Ipanema and Lagoa. The morro de Cantagalo was first inhabited by people in 1907, according to the municipal registry of favelas in Rio de Janeiro.\textsuperscript{56} Manoel Ribeiro, an urban planner and architect who discusses the history of the morro, speaks of the first settlements of wooden shacks in 1936 (Ribeiro 2003: 45). According to Guida Nunes, Cantagalo appeared for the first time in studies focused on the problem of favelas between 1940 and 1942.\textsuperscript{57} In 1976 Nunes writes that Cantagalo had 4000 inhabitants and Pavão-Pavãozinho 2700.\textsuperscript{58} Numbers of inhabitants counted or estimated in 1979 and 1981 range between approximately 7000 and 9000 for Cantagalo and approximately 3500 and 4500 for Pavão-Pavãozinho. According to the presidente da associação de moradores,\textsuperscript{59} the total number of inhabitants of Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho was 25,000. However, the possibility of exaggerations of the number of inhabitants for political reasons should be taken into account. Leaders of organizations in favelas have often bargained with politicians for improvements in return for votes and

\textsuperscript{52} Censo 2000 of the IBGE.
\textsuperscript{53} Globo 28th of April 2001.
\textsuperscript{54} According to an article in O Jornal do Brasil based upon an investigation headed by the Secretaria Municipal de Urbanismo (JB 24/2/02).
\textsuperscript{55} The term comunidade is often used in the context of political representation to people and institutions outside the morro, for example in the context of this unification or in the context of the elections.
\textsuperscript{56} According to a research done in 1981, presented in the documents of the Cadastro das Favelas do Municipio do Rio de Janeiro.
\textsuperscript{57} Nunes 1976: 19
\textsuperscript{58} Nunes 1976: 46
\textsuperscript{59} Associação de moradores literally means association of inhabitants. The association of inhabitants is a common type of administrative and political representation in favelas in Rio de Janeiro, see also Chapters Two and Three. Sebastião Teodoro, the president of the two associations of inhabitants, died after a car-crash, which caused a number of ruptures in the field of local politics. I will discuss this in detail in Chapter Three.
over-estimating the electorate could be part of the bargaining process. Other estimations of the population give between 17,000 and 20,000,60 which would be much more realistic given the numbers in the previous years.61

The community Pavão-Pavãozinho is located on a morro that divides the neighborhoods Ipanema, Copacabana and Lagoa; the community Cantagalo is located on a smaller hill on the side of Pavão-Pavãozinho in the neighborhood of Ipanema. The two communities are divided by one paved road – the estrada de Cantagalo - commonly described as the estrada (street) by the inhabitants. It is one of the main frontiers between Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho. The two communities, Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho are often described as separate and are in fact divided by important structural and historical differences. Elderly people whom I interviewed told me that the morro de Cantagalo was inhabited before the morro de Pavão and that people from Cantagalo slowly started to cut their way through the bush (mattá) to occupy morro de Pavão, when Cantagalo became more crowded.62

Historically the two were much more divided than they are now. The divisions during the last decades were mostly caused by the tráfico. Different gangs were occupying the communities. According to several inhabitants there was a time when traficantes did not let people pass from one area to the other since they were at war with each other. However, such disputes were not uncommon within the two comunidades either. Both Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho had been internally divided for periods as well. Apart from the fact that they were distinct communities historically, both communities had their own associação de moradores and were therefore recognized as separate administrative units, with their own cultura according to some.63

On the one hand, I met many people who lived in one part of the morro and visited their church, their relatives and friends in the other part of the morro and made no rigid distinction between the two communities. On the other hand, other people claimed they did not like to go to the other community, since they knew nobody there,

60 http://www.comcienca.br/reportagens/violencia/vio03.htm. Other local leaders also estimated it around 20,000 inhabitants.
61 In the last census of 2000 the count for Cantagalo comes to 3200 inhabitants, but that does not seem to be correct. In 1995 Livio Sansone estimates the population of Cantagalo to be around 10,000 inhabitants (Sansone 2002, 159). Sansone writes that in 1995 the Presidente da Associação de Moradores said there were 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants in Cantagalo alone, while he estimates it at 10,000. A similar difference in estimation happened when I asked another president.
62 Such a movement is corroborated by the work of Manoel Ribeiro (2003). However Ribeiro also focuses on the agglomerations that were built near a hotel in Pavão around the same time.
63 In one of the meetings of the council of leaders, one man used the term 'cultura' to explain that these two communities each had their own background and could therefore not simply be merged in to one.
were not accustomed to the *meninos* (boys) of the tráfico or did not know the routes in the labyrinth of alleys. Sometimes my friends from Cantagalo also advised me I should not walk around in Pavão-Pavãozinho too much, because there the traficantes did not know me and therefore they would certainly stop me in order to question me. Sometimes, especially in the beginning, I took their advice, later I felt more secure, specifically after I had met more people from Pavão-Pavãozinho. Yet I understood more and more that for many people of both communities being embedded in their own direct environment meant security. Those people who were not familiar with the other community generally did not like venturing into the unknown. It meant taking risks that were simply not necessary and therefore better not taken. Despite these community sentiments, the borders between the two communities are not quite visible for those who know nothing about its history and present. This is the outcome of architectural modifications through the years. Furthermore, inhabitants were planning to unite the two *associações de moradores* during my research. I will not go into specificities concerning this unification here. Suffice to say that to the outside the two communities are represented as one *complexo* at various levels, including the level of the drug gang. Therefore, I will generally refer to Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho as a whole, unless the inhabitants refer to the differences between the two communities.

The literature suggests that the biggest booms in population were the result of the mass-construction projects in the two neighborhoods Copacabana and Ipanema between the 1940s and the 1960s, as described by Gilberto Velho (1999), which would suggest that the favela has simply grown along with its neighbors. The massive investments in the ever-bigger buildings of Copacabana and later Ipanema called for workers who moved to the surrounding morros (de Pinho Vial 2001). Manoel Ribeiro also writes that most of the first occupants of the morro earned their income from housework and 'jobs in the construction of the apartment buildings in Copacabana (Ribeiro 2003: 45).' This concurs with the arguments of Cavalcanti who argues that, though favelas might always have been seen as a problem, at the same time they were the *locus* of the workers who were needed to carry out the labor to construct the huge buildings in the surrounding neighborhood. 'The favelas spread throughout Rio as the city itself expanded. Wherever there was a construction boom, the nearby mountainsides would soon present improvised dwellings, constructed by the builders of the new constructions, and their wives, to be employed in middle class homes as maids (Cavalcanti 2001: 13).'
According to the inhabitants the favela has transformed significantly during the last thirty years, of which the most important infrastructure changes, according most of the inhabitants, are the connection and distribution of electricity (*light*), running water (*caixa de água, bomba*), rudimentary sewers (*esgoto*), the building of the earlier mentioned *estrada* and the transformation of the houses from wooden barracks into houses of concrete and brick. This does not mean that these works are all completed, not to mention the lack of maintenance and restoration of what is there. While there are still many wooden barracks left, the number of houses made of brick and cement keeps growing and therefore the number of inhabitants. The upshot is more people are using the same facilities and that is why restorations are necessary.

Geographically the morro is separated from the asfalto in many ways. Looking at the roads and the apartment buildings surrounding the morro one might be seized by the idea that people have tried to ‘hide’ the favela behind large constructions so its reality would be banished from sight, or at least as far as this is possible. There is, however, one street from Copacabana to Ipanema – Rua Saint Roman - which leads to one paved road that enters the favela. This paved road leads from Copacabana/Ipanema to the CIEP, a type of school (building) designed by Oscar Niemeyer that was constructed throughout the whole of Rio de Janeiro during the term of office of Sr. Brizola. The inhabitants often call this building the ‘Brizolão’, after its founder. In Cantagalo, the CIEP was housed in an enormous hotel on the hill that had been abandoned and appropriated by the state government. The CIEP of Cantagalo also housed NGOs and state institutions that were formed to improve the situation in the morro. The road that leads to the CIEP was planned and constructed by the government in the 1980s and cuts the favela in half. There are various entrances to the morro. Cantagalo has six entrances; three situated on the estrada de Cantagalo, one accessible from Rua Saint Roman and one accessible from the asfalto in Ipanema. Pavão-Pavãozinho has four entrances, one situated directly on the estrada, two, long, narrow flights of stairs ascending from Rua Saint Roman in Copacabana and one via *Nova Brasília*, a part of the favela that is situated on morro de Pavão. All these entrances are guarded, either by the police or by the traficantes.

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64 Special thanks goes to Claudio Napoleão who never tired of telling me about the history of the morro.
Fig. 10. View on Copacabana from Cantagalo

Fig. 11. View on Ipanema from Cantagalo
Fig. 12. View on Pavão-Pavãozinho from the beach of Copacabana
The contrast between the asfalto of Copacabana and Ipanema and the morro is very sharp. The tall buildings, the traffic, the large shops and the movement of people on the asfalto compared to the small brick houses, the maze of small paths and stairs with tiny shops (bireshkai) in the morro. Together these differences make Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho seem like a little village that is surrounded by an enormous city. However, it is not the city that looks down on the village, on the contrary, the people in the morro look out over the rooftops of even the highest buildings in Copacabana and Ipanema and beyond the buildings is the most wonderful view of the sea. Many inhabitants considered this inversion of a set of common dichotomies, the poor village that overlooks the wealthy city instead of the other way around, a priceless treasure. There are also several apartment buildings that face towards the morro, however, and standing on the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema one can see the favela clearly.

At first sight Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho appears to be a labyrinth. The favela is a complex of narrow alleys and small stairs leading to houses that are built close or on top of each other. Many inhabitants have found creative ways of building their houses of brick and cement against the hillsides, not to mention those who have created their own apartment buildings with four to five levels. Luckily for the inhabitants of Pavão-Pavãozinho, during my fieldwork the municipal government repaired the bondinho (tram) that takes people from the Rua Saint Roman half-way up the morro. Besides the bondinho there was also a private combi (mini-van) that takes people from Copacabana to the CIEP for the same price as a bus ticket. Nevertheless, many people still have to climb the hill with their groceries and their construction materials. Either because the combi was too expensive or because neither combi nor bondinho comes near their houses.

Why is it so problematical to simply identify favelas or morros as slums? There are several reasons: People who are not familiar with the 'inside' of a favela, foreigners, cariocas and other Brazilians, commonly find it hard to imagine in what kind of conditions people actually live. Stories and images about poverty circulate alongside those about crime and violence. These stories and images are mostly formulated along an axis with extreme poles, opposing the richest to the poorest, the safest to the most insecure and so forth, rather than giving a general description of these conditions and the possibilities or lack of them that people have to improve their situation. Although there was a time in which favelas in zona sul consisted largely of wooden shacks, nowadays the main construction materials in favelas are brick and cement. That means that now people do live in more or less secure or 'solid' housing conditions.
Contrary to what some people imagine many favelas are quite well organized. Mostly the infrastructure is not totally 'planned' and therefore they may lack facilities, but many of the favelas in zona sul do have rudimentary sewers, running water, electricity and phone. They have planned and built these themselves or with the help of government institutions and private companies. In Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho not everyone has access to these facilities, however, and this is a matter of debate between inhabitants, the city- and the state-institutions. Improvements in access to facilities and technologies often mean an improvement in the living-conditions of the people who live in a favela. Many people in Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho told me about the moment they achieved access to one of these facilities. Most of them were thrilled when they connected their house to the water distribution network in the morro so they could fill their caixa de agua (water-reservoir) regularly and have running water in their houses.

Access to these facilities is also a sign of difference in status and wealth within the community and therefore a hot topic among inhabitants. Furthermore, access to these facilities forms an important part of the ideas that people have about the inhabitants of the favela and the ideas the inhabitants have about themselves in relation to 'others'. For example, when I asked a friend of mine about the ideas other people in Rio de Janeiro have about life in a favela, she said: 'Some people were surprised when I told them we had a bathroom in our house.' The 35-year-old woman who leads the Associação das Costureiras Autónomas do Morro do Cantagalo, an association of needlewomen called 'Corte Arte' laughed bitterly about the ideas some people have when they talk about favelas, but I also noticed she took pride in saying she had a bathroom because it countered recurring ideas about the 'unhygienic' conditions in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro that some people had expressed to her.

Though the socio-economic differences between the asfalto and the morro are considerable, there is a risk of exaggerating the differences, which not only might give a wrong impression of the circumstances of the people who live in favelas, but also stigmatize them by continuously describing them in the same interconnected terms of: underdevelopment, poverty, lack of education and so on, without demonstrating what daily life might actually look like and to see that many supra-local structures are the same for people living in a lower middle-class neighborhood and people living in a favela. Furthermore, when I talked about favelas with people from Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho they often opposed the idea that 'they' were living in the 'deplorable' circumstances many people tend to associate with life in slums. In these talks they often
referred to Rocinha, a huge favela not far of, saying that though it is a favela it can be considered a bairro (a neighborhood) with its own bank and its own shopping area. One man even said they had a Bob’s – the Brazilian equivalent of McDonald’s – all the way up at the top of Rocinha to back his point that favelas were not all underdeveloped.

There are several distinctions in and among the favelas in Rio de Janeiro. There is a difference in wealth and social mobility between them as well as a difference in conditions related to the drug gangs. There are differences between the people living in the same favela. For example, one day I climbed up the morro de Pavão with a group of people working for and with the NGO Viva Rio. We were trying to gather people from the highest areas on top of the hill in the church of the Assembléia de Deus nearby. This area is called Vietnã (Vietnam), according to one of the inhabitants because there once were bloody struggles between drug gangs. Just below there is an area called caranguejo (crab) because it is such a muddy and sandy part of the morro. Living there means living in the mud like a crab. In these areas on the top we encountered small wooden shacks of old people who had to climb all the way up with their groceries on a daily basis. Not only was I upset by the poverty of the people living so high up the hill, I was also surprised by the people from Cantagalo who saw that part of the morro as ‘really’ poor and needy and their situation as much better.

The fact that there are all these names for different areas in the favela points to another important aspect. Many favelas have existed for a long period and have their own histories and their own background. We should be mindful not to describe the people living there as people without history. Many people I spoke to have told me about periods in Brazilian history that might have been silenced or forgotten, for example older people in the morro who came from the poor rural areas in the 1950s to find work in the city when first the sugar cane and the coffee export had declined, and after that the fruit export. At the same time we should be mindful not to exoticize the inhabitants as if they alone nurture ‘real’ Brazilian traditions. Many favelas consist of migrants from the North of Brazil, for example from Ceará, Pernambuco or Bahia, and have different ideas about what ‘real’ Brazilianness is all about.

Since the 1980s the morro has become the terrain of traficantes who use the favela as a drug distribution center for the neighborhood. Because Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho is a maze of buildings and alleys located on a hill, it is a strategic position for organized drug gangs who sell cocaine and marihuana to the inhabitants and people from the neighborhoods of Copacabana and Ipanema. Not only is it located nearby the
beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema, where many people who go out in bars and clubs are eager to buy drugs, it is also easy to defend against competing drug gangs or the police. The presence of the traficantes has had an enormous impact on all people and social institutions in the morro. In the mid-1990s there were several long periods of armed confrontations between traficantes when different drug gangs occupied Cantagal o and Pavão-Pavãozinho. Several people told me that at the height of the fights they had to sleep on the floor or under their beds to narrow the chances of being hit by a bala perdida (stray bullet). It was not uncommon for inhabitants to find a dead body lying in one of the alleys the next day. One of the stories I heard from several people was that one chefe of the tráfico was so brutal that he had decapitated one of his opponents and displayed the head to many people as he walked around with it in the morro. After one drug gang conquered the territory of both communities the violence diminished slightly.

People from Ipanema and Copacabana often feel threatened by the proximity of the favelas. On several occasions I witnessed how shopkeepers in the vicinity of the morro kept their doors shut when they had heard rumors of an upcoming confrontation. However, the relationship between the inhabitants of the morro and the asfalto is much closer than might have been expected. Many women in Cantagal o work as an empregada doméstica (housemaid) with the middle-class families in the surrounding neighborhoods and many men work in the huge apartment buildings as porteiro (doorman). Many young people of Cantagal o have jobs in the neighborhood, for example, as employee in the stores of Ipanema. Many people also have their share in the informal economy of the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema.

Unquestionably the relationship between the morro and the asfalto is much more complex than the rigid dichotomy might presume. Although there seems to be a mutual construction of ‘otherness’ based on several categories, such as, wealth, religion, violence and security, civil rights and duties, there is also a mutual necessity of coexistence which seems to be forgotten at times when the boundaries between them are drawn more sharply, for example, in times of violence related to the tráfico. Apart from the quite functional necessity of coexistence in the light of the formal economy, the relationship between those who sell and those who buy the drugs in the favela might also be seen as mutual necessity of coexistence, though in the light of an informal (criminal) economy. The demarcation of the space of the favela from the areas around it, and the subsequent

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56 For more information on the distribution and consumption of cocaine in Copacabana see Luiz Fernando Almeida Pereira (2003).
dynamics of exclusion and inclusion of the favela inhabitants despite their mutual coexistence is not something that emerged in the past few decades. Genesis and history of the favelas shows they are not pre-modern islands in an overall modern Brazilian society, but that favelas are the product of a specific Brazilian modernity, characterized by a history of colonialism and slave trade.

1.3 Imagining Modernity and its Counterparts

Global socio-political transformations of the last few centuries, mostly described as modernity, have influenced large numbers of the world population in unequal terms with unequal effects. According to Timothy Mitchell, modernity can best be portrayed as a continuous effort to recreate an envisioned order. Mitchell (2000), who wrote extensively on colonialism in Egypt, argues that all the novel institutional forms and political practices that were developed in the nineteenth century - urban planning, forced migration amongst them - were organized around the: ‘simulation, diagramming, and replication of the real (Mitchell 2000: 17).’ Yet, such replication was in itself a simulacra rather than a simulation. The ‘colonial-modern involves creating an effect we recognize as reality by organizing the world endlessly to represent it (ibid).’ Both in the colony and the homeland, social and political institutions were organized to recreate an original that in the very practice of being copied could be imagined as real. Therefore, Mitchell argues, modernity should not be regarded as a stage in history but rather as the staging of history. Modernity is first and foremost the work of representation, which not only creates a sense of that which is not yet in place but also, more importantly a sense of that which is in place. Such a vision allowed for a schematization of time and place, which represented the non-West as that which was not yet in relation to the West, as Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) has also argued with respect to the relationship between ‘Europe’ and India. Mitchell hastens to add that such a vision was not developed in what we now often describe as the West, to be copied afterwards in the non-West. Not only were certain innovations developed in what we call the non-West, but also, more importantly, this particular image of the spatial temporal order was replicated around the globe both in the colony and the so-called West. In Mitchell’s terms “Modernity was staged as the West”, not in the West.
In such an imagination of spatial-temporal order the nation-state occupied a central position.

The closed, imaginary space of the modern nation state is produced through forms of mapping, boundary making, border control and the management of cultural forms and economic flows that create what Thongchai Winichakul calls the “geo-body” of the nation. Like the medical body, the geo-body appears as a physical object that preexists its social constitution, rather than as the effect of a process of difference (Mitchell 2000: 26).

Here I wish to relate such an imagination of the nation as a geo-body to the ordering of space and people in Brazil at the beginning of the century. The genesis of the favelas in Rio de Janeiro and their subsequent categorization as pre- or non-modern conglomerates is strongly related to the imagination of Rio de Janeiro as the representation of the ‘modern’ Brazilian nation, modeled after French urban planning in the late-nineteenth century. Yet, as we will see below, favelas were part of many of the developments we often call modern, despite the many attempts to represent it as its counterpart. The people who lived and live there work in the city and participate fully in the social, cultural and economic life of the metropolis.

The birth of the favela is related to several large-scale social transformations in Brazil. From the work of the historian Armelle Enders (2002), among others, it becomes clear that the birth of the first favelas at the turn of the twentieth century was a result of the growing population on the one hand and the ideas of the ruling classes on civilization, sickness, health and hygiene on the other. As with other metropolis the city of Rio de Janeiro witnessed an enormous growth of population in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Between 1838 and 1920 the population grew from 137,000 to 1,150,000 (Enders 2002: 159). The beginning of the industrialization and urbanization of Rio de Janeiro under the rule of emperor Dom Pedro II was accompanied by a migration from, for example, Portugal but also from within Brazil, especially Bahia people searched for a better future in Rio de Janeiro. From the birth of the republic in 1889 till 1906, the population of the city even grew explosively from 500,000 to 800,000 as a result of the migration. The abolition of the slave trade within Brazil in 1888 and the declining sugar cane industry in the north caused an influx of immigrants searching for work. With that a vibrant mixture of religious and cultural traditions from other areas expanded in the city of Rio de Janeiro. 'In its plasticity, this popular culture would incorporate elements of various cultural codes, in which the traditions of negros would play a leading role and
would give it cohesion and coherence (Moura 1995: 87).' With all the newcomers, housing became a problem. Owing to the inflow of inhabitants, the center became a crowded place where, according to the elites, sickness and filth reigned. In the old city the large mansions of the aristocrats who left the center were subdivided in to numerous spaces and to be sublet or people went to live in cortiços, large conglomerations of houses and shacks with a single opening to the street. As Armelle Enders writes, these cortiços became a thorn in the eye of the authorities. Especially in relation to the ruling ideas on hygiene and moral conduct:

The promiscuity between individuals, between men and animals, shortage of water and sanitary installations, the risk of fire, the difficulty of identifying the inhabitants of the cortiços, its more or less illegal character, all this contributed to convince the municipality they had to disappear (Enders 2002: 202).

With the advent of the republic, the higienistas, as Enders calls them, convinced the authorities to evacuate one of the largest cortiços in Rio de Janeiro at the time. In January 1893, the mayor ordered the evacuation of this cortiço called 'Cabeça de Porco' and the inhabitants had to search for other places to live. ‘Without a doubt a part of them climbed the hill called morro da Providência, very nearby and put up new shacks on its hillsides (ibid: 203, translation mine).’

Many authors place the birth of the first favela four years after that event, when soldiers returned from a military campaign in Canudos and those veterans who could not find a place to live were authorized to build their houses on the same hill. After they occupied this morro da Providência, they baptized it morro da Favela after which similar hills that became inhabited were commonly named favela (Nunes 1976, Perlman 1977, Souto de Oliveira & Marcier 1998, Enders 2002).67 The soldiers were not the first inhabitants of the morro da Providência, this honor falls to the inhabitants of the cortiço Cabeça de Porco’, who had built their houses on this government property illegally (Souto de Oliveira & Marcier 1998). Souto de Oliveira & Marcier refer to Vaz (1986) and to Abreu (1986) who have found evidence that another hill, morro de Santo António, was already inhabited by

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67 Origins of this name slightly differ according to the different authors, though they might possibly complement each other. Nunes says that the soldiers who came to live on the morro da Providência used the name favela probably as an allusion to a plant that grew in the dry hinterlands of Bahia (Nunes 1976: 19). Enders also states that the name refers to a ‘thorny’ plant that grows in the dry hinterland, however, she says the name was given to a strategic hill used to conquer the Citadel of Canudos by the soldiers (Enders 2002: 203). Souto de Oliveira and Marcier quote Díaz da Cruz (1941), who states that it was the wives and girlfriends of the soldiers, natives of a mountain range called Favela near Canudos, who coined the name in Rio de Janeiro: Favela (Souto de Oliveira & Marcier 1998: 65).
other soldiers in 1893, with permission from the government (Souto de Oliveira & Marcier 1998: 105).

However it may be, it is clear that after the birth of the first favelas, occupation of the hills in Rio de Janeiro became a widespread phenomenon. The occupations increased during the urban restructuring projects carried out by Francisco Perreiro Passos, under the rule of the newly elected president of the republic Rodrigues Alves. When Passos became mayor, he wanted to make of the city: ‘a capital that would be reason for pride for the country and no longer a lamentable showcase of Brazil.’ In the satirical magazines, the federal capital was often called ‘capital fedorenta (stinking capital)’ (Enders 2002: 211, translation mine).’ Filled with admiration for what had been done in Paris under Haussman, Perreiro Passos, with the help of Oswaldo Cruz and Francisco Bicalho, created wide avenues, streets and parks, but in order to do that they demolished large parts of the center and drove away around 20,000 people from their barracks, cortiços and pensions. (ibid: 214). Furthermore, they passed new laws that were aimed to improve health and ensure fewer disease like the yellow fever but also forbade all kinds of folk and afro-Brazilian religious practices or small business ventures that seemed ‘uncivilized’ in the eyes of the elites.

In other words, as Mariana Cavalcanti (2001) also describes, the favelas grew as the consequence of measures that were taken to remodel the city in order to create the ‘modern’ Rio de Janeiro that was envisioned at the end of the nineteenth century. A vision of an urban utopia which led to plans to remodel the city into a European-like metropolis went hand in hand with a ‘modernist’ view on ‘dangerous classes’, ‘traditional (post-slavery, African) lifestyles’ and ‘backward’ habits, which stood in the way of this utopian vision and had to be removed from sight. As a result of the demolition and ‘restructuring’ of the city in the years that followed, the poor were driven from the center onto the hillsides where they their houses of collected material from demolished buildings (Cavalcanti 2001, Enders 2002).

The way the favelas were characterized from that point on would be in part a continuation of the specific modern discourse on civilization that was constructed under Perreiro Passos (Valladares 1978). Cavalcanti, for example, traces the genealogy of the concept of the ‘divided city’ (Ventura 1994), which followed the violence in and surrounding the favelas in the 1990s back to the nineteenth century in order to unravel

68 Article presented at the summer school of The Interdisciplinary Network on Globalization August 27 – September 1, 2001, Amsterdam.
the particular ‘modernizing’ discourse which has been part and parcel of the ‘favela-problem’ from the outset. In the eyes of the elites the favelas were the counterparts of the ‘modern’ society that was being built and hence became sites of the backward ‘non-modern’ society that was to be left behind. This, however, also shaped the possibility for a certain internal exoticism of these islands of ‘non-modernity’ in the 1920s. Since the favelas were seen as backward, they could also gradually be portrayed by certain intellectuals and artists as the sites where one could ‘still’ find ‘genuine’ Brazilian culture and customs, hence constructing an image of the favela as both a threat and an ‘authentic’ part of Brazilian society.

There were particular local, national and international changes that transformed the relationship between the inhabitants of favelas and the authorities of Rio de Janeiro from the beginning of the twentieth century till the present. According to Nunes, until 1940 the authorities did not pay much attention to the favelas built on the morros of Rio de Janeiro. After that, they gradually became identified as a social problem that had to be solved somehow. Migration to the city led to a rapid increase in the number of the favelas and an increase in the population living in them. According to Lícia de Prado Valladares (1978), between 1945 and 1965 governmental urban planning strategies oscillated between eliminating the favelas and removing the population to *Parques Proletários* (social housing projects) and ‘urbanizing’ them - improving their standards so as to secure better housing and health conditions.

The increase in the population of the favelas had a particular impact on politics in Rio de Janeiro between 1945 and 1965. The favelas kept growing without a properly working policy on housing and urban planning. The democratic system of direct representation created space for new political projects aimed at the poor population of the favelas. Politicians searching for an electorate came to the favelas with promises to improve the housing conditions when elected. ‘In this way the politicians became true middlemen between the local population and the “world outside” where the resources and services came from (Valladares 1978: 27).’ Although often the politicians did not keep their promises, inhabitants were also very well aware of how to ‘play’ the politicians and promised support they would eventually not give. This mechanism was facilitated

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69 In the 1920s the *morro de Castelo* that housed some of the poorest people of the city was demolished because the authorities wanted more space near the center to sell to rich constructors.

70 According to Valladares, in 1948 there were 105 favelas in Rio de Janeiro with a population of roughly 139,000. Nunes says that in 1960 there were 147 favelas with a total population of 335,000 and in 1970 there were 300 favelas with a total population of one million people.
when the state administration promoted the creation of *associações de moradores* (associations of inhabitants) in many favelas in 1961. These associations provided a new political infra-structure, encouraging local leadership and therefore political representatives on the part of the inhabitants and a new platform on which politicians from the outside could manifest themselves as protectors of the favela on a supra-local level.\(^7\)

This ended with the military coup in 1964, when direct democratic elections for the President of the Republic and the State Governments were suspended. The political situation in Brazil changed dramatically in 1968, when the military rulers decided to take control of almost all the political organs in the Republic. Politicians and intellectuals who were not in exile were imprisoned, censorship was introduced, political and individual rights were suspended and the military government gave itself the right to violate many human rights under the banner of ‘national security’ (Enders 2002). The political representation of the favelas was cut back even farther in 1967 when the government put the associations of inhabitants under its direct rule, replacing their leaders with its own functionaries.

Apart from the cutting down of the political representation of many favelas, between 1960 and 1970 many favelas were scheduled to be ‘removed’ and this fate did indeed befall many of them. The new avenues that were created in the city necessitated the removal of older favelas, though it also meant new spaces to occupy. As a result of urban transformations new spaces outside the center were also created that gave room for government planned neighborhoods for the ‘removed’ population, but also for new favelas. In 1968, the military government wanted to create one coherent policy regarding the favelas and with the formation of the CHISAM,\(^7\) it intended to eradicate all such settlements. In this time many inhabitants of the favelas resisted the plans to remove them, which was quite problematic because the military government was suspicious of any kind of uprising (Valladares 1978: 30).

Valladares also points out the relationship between the real-estate speculation in the city and the urge to remove some of the favelas. Some areas in the city became more expensive as a result of the expansion outward and new connections between remote areas. Especially in certain locations in *zona sul*, where the favela Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho is also located, real-estate corporations were eager to build luxurious

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\(^7\) In Chapter Three I will describe these *associações de moradores* in more details.

\(^7\) CHISAM - *Coordenação de Interesse Social da Área Metropolitana.*
Apartments (Gay 1994). Apart from the fact that the failure to liberate these locations meant a loss of profit, it also led to intolerance on the part of the middle and upper classes with respect to people who lived ‘illegally’ on expensive pieces of real-estate. These transformations led to a growing negative image in the press where favela inhabitants were sometimes identified as parasites and marginal people.

1.4 Inclusion and Exclusion

In her influential study ‘O mito da marginalidade’ (The Myth of Marginality), Janice Perlman (1977) investigated the social, political and economic participation of inhabitants of four favelas in 1968/69. She severely criticized theories of marginalization and ideas about ‘marginal’ people that were popular in academic and political circles at the time. Armed with the results of thorough research, she dislodged many of the presuppositions that were used to explain the relative poverty of favelados (inhabitants of favelas). Many theories and opinions were based upon presupposed ‘cultural’ and ‘individual’ traits of the favelados as well as on ‘their’ presumed social behavior. Specifically, she showed that, contrary to what most people thought (and think), these people had work outside the favela, produced and consumed at the same level as non-favelados and participated in local and supra-local organizations and associations. In 2003 Perlman herself wrote about her book: ‘The book argues that the existing ‘myths’ about the social, cultural, political and economic marginality were “empirically false, analytically wrong and devastating in its implications for public policy directed at favelas”. I concluded that the favelados were not “economically or politically marginal, but explored and repressed; were not socially or culturally marginal but stigmatized and excluded from a closed social system” (Perlman 2003).’

Though perhaps the term ‘marginal’ has made way for other academic concepts, and some policies concerning favelas were written on the basis of new and better ideas, many favelados are still stigmatized. Several inhabitants of the morro told me how this affected them. One of my friends, who created decors and artwork for television programs told me that none of his employers or colleagues knew that he lived in a favela. Out of fear that he would no longer be employed, he never told anyone. Despite the fact that he lived in the morro, he had a post address in Copacabana. Similarly, many young inhabitants told me they always said they lived in Copacabana when they introduced
themselves to strangers. They knew they would be treated worse if they said they were from the morro. Understandably, many people considered it very painful that they – *trabalhadores* (workers) - had to struggle to pay the costs for their health and household in the most difficult circumstances, while they felt looked down upon by the people of the asfalto.

While many inhabitants of the morro earned their income from jobs on the asfalto, the economic inequality between people of the morro and the asfalto was enormous. According to Zygmunt Bauman economic inequality is not definable in terms of income alone:

> It is one thing to be poor in a society of producers and universal employment; it is quite a different thing to be poor in a society of consumers, in which life-projects are built around consumer choice rather than work, professional skills, or jobs (Bauman 1998: 1).

To the inhabitants of the morro - close to the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema, where commodities and life-styles are continuously on display - the difference between those who have and those who have not was painfully obvious. For some inhabitants, the lack of money stood for an exclusion from urban social life at large. Take for example Maria, mother of nine children, living on a pension of R$ 180 per month. Maria was taking care of a household of five to seven people, depending on who had found a job for how long. During the time she had no extra income she declined to descend the morro with her friends and decided to stay seated at her own stoop in the morro. When I asked her why she no longer descended to the ‘street’ (*a rua*) she said: ‘To do what in the street? Only to keep looking in the shop windows (*vitrinas*), oh no, I don’t like walking around with no money.’ The moment she earned some extra *reais* cleaning the apartment of ‘foreigners/tourists’ in Ipanema, she started to descend to Ipanema and Copacabana again, even though still she could buy little or nothing of the things she desired.

Contrary to what is often suggested in the Brazilian newspapers, favelados are not a homogeneous group of poor people. Despite the poverty in the morro, people were also aware of the socio-economic positions of their neighbors within the morro. There were not only many different groups of people but also much difference in income between individuals and families. In their discussion of life in various favelas Pedrosa (*et al* 1990) talk about ‘favelas inside favelas’ and favelados that can be considered *classe meia*

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73 In some shops the inhabitants could buy on credit, however, in many cases they required a *cartão* (credit card), which only people with jobs in the formal economy could obtain.
(middle class), who live among the poor. Inside the morro these differences betrayed themselves mostly in talk about the things people had - the clothes they wore, the appliances in their homes or the cellular phones they carried. People continuously looked at each other to see who was doing well and who was doing worse; to see who had made which purchases under what circumstances. This recurring talk about ‘things’ among people who have so little consumption-power not only demonstrates the importance of commodities as signs of the social position of people in the same poor socio-economic situation, it also demonstrates the pervasive ideology of consumption as a life project (Clarke 2003).

1.5 Tráfico and Violence in Rio de Janeiro

Peace, in Brazilian society, is distributed like food, justice, domiciles, civil rights, education, health and freedom: it is the privilege of the elites. Or more appositely, it was. For a time now everything has changed. Not because the conservatives have been converted to the democratic credo, but because there is no way to contain criminality and violence within the limits that traditionally bound them. Insecurity has been dispersed over the city. Fear is, today, a democratic sentiment. (Soares 2000: 45, translation mine)

Anyone who visits Rio de Janeiro will be warned of the inherent dangers and anyone who lives there is aware of them. The fear of being carjacked, robbed in the streets or worse, to be hit by a bala perdida (stray bullet) is common to many if not all cariocas.4 The statistics on crime and violence in Rio de Janeiro are terrifying. According to the work of Alba Zaluar (1998), the index of homicides grew alarmingly during the 1980s. The index went up from twenty-three homicides on a population of 100,000 in 1982 to 63.03 homicides on a population of 100,000 in 1990. During this period the population of the city only grew by 1.13 percent. In a recent study, Luke Dowdney compared the homicides committed with firearms between different urban regions worldwide. The index of 1999 showed that Rio de Janeiro suffered 41.5 homicides by firearms on a population of 100,000 (the state of Rio de Janeiro 46.5) while the state of New York

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4 In 1996 it was calculated that 10.8 percent of the population between 16 and 65 had been victim of a criminal act in the last twelve months. In 2000 the total population was roughly 5.9 million, of whom 3.9 million between the age of 16 and 65 Source: Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística - IBGE, Anuário Estatístico do Brasil - 1997 e Censo Demográfico 2000. População residente, por idade e por grupos de idade, segundo as Áreas de Planejamento Regiões Administrativa e Bairros - 2000. The statistics on crime and violence come from: Coleção Estudos da Cidade: Relatório de desenvolvimento humano sustentável da cidade do Rio de Janeiro, abril 2001. Prefeitura de Cidade do Rio de Janeiro.
counted 5.6 and the state of Washington 10.2 on a population of 100,000. (Dowdney 2003: 96). Both Dowdney en Waiselfisz (2004) confirm that organized crime greatly affects young people in the urban areas of Brazil. According to UNESCO, the index of homicides among young people (15-24) in Brazil rose from 30 on a population of 100,000 in 1980 to 54.4 in 2002.75

The image of Rio de Janeiro as one of the most violent cities in the world is primarily related to the drugs traffic. Each and every month the city is the locus of violent encounters between drug traffickers - traficantes - and policemen. The favelas of the zona sul and zona norte in Rio de Janeiro are widely known for the violence that takes place as a result of their function as local centers of narco-tráfico, the sale of cocaine and marihuana to the individual consumer or small dealer76. Especially in and around the favelas, the threat of armed violence between different gangs or between a gang and the police puts a great strain on the inhabitants, who unfortunately do not have many possibilities to move to safer places in the city. Drug gangs police their territory thoroughly to defend the favela in case of an attack by other gangs.

The recurring (threat of) armed violence in and around favelas demonstrates the incapacity of the state to gain the monopoly of violence in these areas. During my research, the drug gangs that control large territories inside the city were named 'O Poder Paralelo' ('the parallel power') in the press, following scientific literature on the subject (Leeds 1996). The term parallel power, or parallel polities, indicates the existence of parallel systems of power that operate, sometimes in competition with each other but also often in accord. The continuation of the existence of these parallel polities is largely the result of the incapability of the police force to change the situation (Leeds 1996; Soares 2000). The majority of the population of the favelas mistrusts the police, especially the Polícia Militar, because of its involvement with organized crime and because of the enormously high rates of homicide committed by the police. According to a research by ISER,77 the number of people who died in a confrontation with the police rose from 155 in 1993 to 358 in 1995. Many of these encounters happen in the contexts of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and are related to drug traffic. Besides the history of violation of civil rights by the police, policemen themselves are also often involved in the drug trade, kidnapping, extortion and other criminal activities (Ventura 1994, Leeds 1996,

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75 Julio Jacobo Waiselfisz: Mapa da Violência IV: Os Jovens do Brasil, UNESCO 2004
76 In 1992, 65 percent of the violent murders in Rio de Janeiro was connected in one way or another with the traffic of drugs (Soares 2000: 267)
Ascending the Morro (Zaluar 1998, Soares 2000, Alvito 2001). In other words: while the police and drug gangs could be seen as conflicting power systems, in fact the fight between them is not always one of good against evil. Policemen often attempt to gain a portion of the profits from the drug trade by force or they operate hand in hand with the drug gangs.

Rio de Janeiro has three large fracções (fractions) of traficantes, organizations that are structured along hierarchies with ties to other international criminal organizations in Brazil, Bolivia and Columbia. The fractions are often mentioned in relation to armed confrontation between people from different favelas, either one attempting to take over the other’s territory where drugs are sold. The names of the fracções are *Comando Vermelho* (CV), *Terceiro Comando* (TC) and *Amigos dos Amigos* (AA). These names and initials are regularly used in Rio de Janeiro, by people from the gangs as well as the inhabitants of the favelas and the press. It is commonly assumed that they are well-structured organizations. However, if they are tightly structured, pyramid-shaped organizations, which are ‘headed’ by particular people might well be questioned. ‘Without entering into too many details we can say that in reality, CV and TC, contrary to what their names indicate, do not exist as “commandos” with a single organization, under central control. What exists, in reality, is only a conjunction of alliances established by the local chef of the tráfico with other chefs who on their part have particular allies and enemies, and so on (Alvito 2001:83).’

One could also argue that while the gangs are commonly described as traficantes by journalists and academics, they do not differ so much from youth gangs that occupy different urban territories in other parts of the world, for instance Los Angeles or Cape Town. These gangs are not generally defined as drug-trading gangs, even though the drugs trade is also important. Nevertheless, in Rio de Janeiro the rise of the gangs and the drugs trade is commonly seen as intertwined historically, hence the continued reference to them as traficantes.

Organized crime grew considerably when cocaine became big business in Rio de Janeiro. During the military regime that took control in 1964 and lasted till 1984, political prisoners and bank robbers where imprisoned together in the prison of Ilha Grande near Rio de Janeiro. Together they formed the *Falange Vermelha*, a new type of criminal organization that was much better structured internally.78 In the late 1970s, when cocaine appeared as a lucrative means for trade, the *Falange Vermelha*, now called *Comando Vermelho*, made cocaine traffic its main enterprise. Initially Brazil was primarily used to

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78 See also Leeds 1996: 56. Leeds reaches the same conclusion as Alvito.
ship cocaine from Latin America to Europe and the United States. From the 1980s a
domestic market was also supplied.

Although marijuana was sold in the favelas before cocaine, the lucrative cocaine
business influenced community life to a much greater extent. Favelas became the place
where the bulk of the drugs were distributed and sold to individual consumers. In
contrast to cities where drugs traffic is concealed from sight, the narco-tráflico in the
favelas takes place between the densely built houses and alleys in the favela and is
therefore visible to the inhabitants. All the buyer has to do is climb the morro, enter the
favela, and go to the spot were the drugs are sold, commonly referred to as the boca-de-
fumo (mouth of smoke). These bocas-de-fumo are often guarded by armed men who must
protect the selling points against other gangs that seek to take them over by force.
Inhabitants of favelas are the innocent victims of the violent confrontations between
these gangs. To give an impression of the severity of the situation, Perlman gives some
statistics of the people she interviewed: 18 percent of the 439 people she interviewed in
2000 from four favelas said they had a family member who had been a victim of a
homicide. In the eyes of the people in the surrounding neighborhoods the constant news
about chaotic violence, robberies and assaults strengthens the already existing fear of the
favelas as dangerous places and many people live in guarded condomínios or move to the
newly built suburbia of Barra de Tijuca, where large, gated communities form the majority.

Most of the people involved in the drug gangs are young men. Depending on
their rank in the hierarchy of the movimento (the movement), as inhabitants also tend to
call the drug gangs, they can be armed or unarmed. There are people who defend the
morro against attacks (soldados or seguranças), but there also many who are doing other
kind of work, for example, on the look-out for possible danger (olheiro-lookers) or
transporting smaller quantities of drugs within the favela or outside of it (aviões-airplanes).
There are young men who manage the drugs selling points (gerente-manager) and there is
the boss (dono) who is in charge of the local organization.

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80 This is exemplified by the fact that Perlman (1977) hardly mentioned drugs in relation to life in the
favela, while in her latest discussion of the same favelas in 2003 she acknowledges the great consequences
of the drug trade in the favelas.

81 When cocaine became available for the domestic market it was at first sold primarily to the rich.
Eventually it became popular among all classes. Ironically, the fact that the cocaine that is sold in many of
the favelas and the weapons that are used to protect it come from other Latin American countries is a very
strong argument against those who see favelas as isolated areas that are not participating in global flows of
goods, services and images. The participation in the global drugs and weapons trade, amongst other things,
demonstrates that favelas are actively involved in what some refer to as the globalization processes.
Fig. 13. The GPAE post at the entrance of Pavão-Pavãozinho from the estrada.

Fig. 14. Graffiti of the Comando Vermelho. On the right side is written: ‘Separated we are strong, together we are invincible’ P.P.G. stands for ‘Pavão, Pavãozinho, Galo.’
Fig. 15. A view from within Cantagalo
Apart from the violent confrontations there are several other consequences of the presence of the traficantes in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Crime is not limited to drugs-related incidents, the trade in weapons has also increased substantially (Leeds 1996). Furthermore the possession of arms has also made robbery, carjacking and other kinds of criminal activities much more violent. Local political organizations such as the associacao de moradores are pressured to cooperate with the trafico, or at least not to interfere. Inhabitants of the favelas are threatened not to hinder traficantes at their work. In the absence of other institutions that maintain law and order, the traficantes rule over the favela inhabitants. Unauthorized violence, robbery or other crimes committed by inhabitants can be severely punished by the dono who acts as a despotic ruler. Living in a favela can therefore be relatively safe as long as one does not obstruct the trafico. Specifically those who willfully participate in the trafico run the risk of falling victim to the violence. Lisete, a sixteen-year-old girl put it like this: 'In the morro only those die who deserve to.'

While I understood that she meant that it was far less dangerous for those who avoided relations with traficantes, this was not entirely true. The effects of the presence of the traficantes in the morro are devastating. I was shocked when at a certain moment in my research I discovered that of those people I had contact with who were born in the favela, there was hardly one family that had no (hi)story of violence or death as a result of drug-gang related issues and other crimes that are committed: either by being part of the movimento or as a victim of it, on purpose or by accident. For example, one of my friends, a young painter, seemingly carelessly showed me the scars of the bullet that went through his shoulder. He had passed by the boca-de-fumo on its way down when a gunfight broke out.

At the time of my research, Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho was considered one of the favelas in Rio de Janeiro that was demonstrating improvements in all areas of social life. The government of the state of Rio de Janeiro had liberated money to improve the local infrastructure, the municipal government was investing money in the housing conditions and, most importantly, since the year 2000 a community police force was continuously present in the morro. During the 1990s, Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho had been involved in several periods of violent confrontations between gangs and one of the prime measures taken by the state government to put an end to the armed violence in the favela was the formation of the community police force Cpae (Grupo de Policiamento em

82 'No morro só morre quem deve.'