Divine mediations: pentecostalism, politics and mass media in a favela in Rio de Janeiro
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4. ‘Deliver this Favela’. Pentecostalism, Mass Media and Politics through the Prism of the Local

One afternoon in the early phase of my research, I heard the community loudspeaker (alto falante) transmitting the message that Bispo Marcelo Crivella of the Igreja Universal was coming to the morro to perform an oração (prayer) in the community square in Pavão. Of course I was eager to photograph this event in the public spaces of the community, not least because Bispo Crivella was on the point of launching his campaign for senator for the state of Rio de Janeiro. My evangelical landlady told me that he was coming to film the ‘development’ work that was being done in the community in the quadra de Pavão, one of the few community (public) squares where large events could be held. This square was significant in the division of territory in the morro. On the right side it marked the end of the police supervision. From their posts the men of Gpae simply could not see the square. On the left side it marked the entrance to the territory of the traficantes. That entrance was generally guarded by young boys, often armed with guns. Apart from the usual soccer games between children, the square was used for different purposes: assemblies of the associação de moradores were held there, but also large Pentecostal gatherings or baile-funk parties. The square did and ,does not pertain to one particular group and often is the locus of seemingly opposing movements, for example the Pentecostal movement and that of the tráfico.

While I was waiting with my camera in my hand, Marcelo Crivella arrived in the square with a large following. Among them was a cameraman, a couple of young obreiros who lived in the morro, two pastors of local churches of the Assembléia de Deus (Pastor Denilson and Pastor Abraham) and Sebastião Teodoro, the president of the associação de moradores of both Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho. Sebastião was also a self-confessed evangélico and one of the leaders of the Assembléia de Deus Muralhas de São in Pavão-Pavãozinho under the leadership of Pastor Antônio de Oliveira. Upon arrival, Bispo Crivella shook hands while the people who were waiting in the square were aligned in front of the camera. Sebastião had gathered children of a community crèche, adolescents of a state-subsidized community project and some inhabitants to perform in a couple of short three-minute clips, designed to demonstrate Bispo Crivella’s visit to the

179 An oração is often held collectively.
'poorest' and 'neediest' (carencio) places of Rio de Janeiro. Silence was requested and the recording began. Crivella commenced with an oraçao for the people of the community. He closed his eyes and spoke out loud to the Lord, asking Him to bless the young children and to grant the inhabitants of Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho a prosperous life. After his oraçao Sebastião was also given an opportunity to speak. He thanked the Lord for the fact that there was no more violence in the communities and that with His help there would be only progress for all.

After the oraçoes Crivella invited the people present to receive a healing and a libertação (deliverance). He put his hands on the sides of their heads and charged the evil demons (emostos) to abandon the person. This type of exorcism is very common in the services of the Igreja Universal, especially during the culto de libertação or sessao de descarnego. The ritual has also often been broadcast on TV Record, the television channel of this church. The first public exorcisms on the quadra de Pavão were filmed by the cameraman in Crivella’s retinue and by a cameraman Sebastião had brought along. Yet, at a certain moment, Sebastião pointed to a barrack building a bit higher than the square and down came several bare breasted young men, who stood in a row in front of Marcelo Crivella, neatly waiting to be ‘delivered of evil’. Suddenly both cameras were put on stand-by and, though I wanted to raise my arms in order to take a photo, I noticed two things that made me change my mind. The first was the sudden disinterest everyone seemed to feign and the second was a tattoo with the letters ‘CV’ on the shoulder of one of the boys. Just in time I understood that in this context ‘CV’ stood for Comando Vermelho and that taking photos of these men was not the wisest thing to do. I had heard from many inhabitants that the boys of the tráfico are not fond of possibly being recognized in photos. I lowered my camera and looked at what happened. It surprised me that the traficantes who ‘control’ the favela by means of force descended to the square to be delivered of evil by the hands of Bispo Marcelo Crivella. Crivella grabbed one of the boys tightly by his head, seemingly struggled with the unleashed powers and forcefully called out ‘Sai!’ (leave) several times. During this ritual, the two pastors of the Assembleia de Deus stood behind Crivella with their hands raised in the direction of the Bispo and the boy. As I understood it they were directing the positive spiritual energy of the Holy Ghost to aid the process of deliverance. After Crivella had performed the same ritual practice on all three traficantes, their faces showed signs of relief and they disappeared back to the barrack building they came from. Crivella shook some hands, left the favela and everyone went their way.
Fig. 32. Bispo Crivella arriving at the morro

Fig. 33 Bispo Crivella and Sebastião Teodoro
Fig. 34 Collective oração at the quadra de Pavão

Fig. 35 Recording the collective oração at the quadra de Pavão
What should be made of this public performance that united several religious/political figures by means of a common Pentecostal language and practice? What does the exorcism of traficantes in a public square, located between police and drugs-gang-territory, tell us about the local and supra-local power relations? How was it possible that a Bispo of the Igreja Universal, mostly known through television and other mass media, could appear as a powerful mediator of Holy Spirit in the community? What is the role of the pastors of the local churches of the Assembléia de Deus and the president of the association of inhabitants? Why did they collaborate with a famous Bispo of the Igreja Universal?

In this chapter I will try to answer these questions. The most intriguing point is that the Assembléia de Deus and the Igreja Universal are often portrayed as competitors in the religious arena. Specifically, the political success of the Igreja Universal suggests that it has become the most popular of the two. I will argue that the cooperation between the pastors of the different churches, the president of the associação de moradores and Bispo Crivella exemplifies the political struggles in the favela and the role that Pentecostal churches play in them. When we analyze the networks in which traficantes, local governors and politicians are connected, we must conclude that the relation between the Assembléia de Deus and the Igreja Universal should also be described in terms of complementarity, not just competition.

Both the Assembléia de Deus and the Igreja Universal occupy positions in the political arena of the morro. Both offer a powerful language and a set of practices that can serve as a response to the presence of the traficantes. People of the Assembléia de Deus and the Igreja Universal discursively oppose Pentecostalism to crime, violence and the traffico. Yet, they do not actively oppose the traficantes. They offer a spiritual path that promises redemption for all those who accept Jesus as their Savior, including the traficantes. While the Assembléia de Deus and the Igreja Universal present similar ideological projects, their organizations are very different and so is their relation to the morro. The Igreja Universal has big churches, mostly located on the asfalto. It has a large media network and a hierarchical, bureaucratic organization. Therefore, the Igreja Universal has been able to put forward popular pastor/politicians like Marcelo Crivella. The Assembléia de Deus is made up of looser networks of churches that are firmly embedded in local communities. In the morro the pastors of the Assembléia de Deus occupy positions in the local governance, but they have to operate in the framework of the local power relations. While people like Crivella are considered to stand above the
local wheelings and dealings, they do need to collaborate with local leaders from time to
time so as to address local people effectively.

4.1 The Pentecostal Discourse of Peace and Redemption

During and after the video-recording of Marcelo Crivella, the local Pentecostal pastors
and Sebastião Teodoro joined forces to fight against the demons that haunted the
trafficantes. This collective exorcism, which united the Bispo of the Igreja Universal and
the pastors of the local Assembléia de Deus, displayed the opposition against violence
and crime through a discourse of peace (paź) and redemption that was often voiced by
people of both of the churches. In the previous chapter I have described some of the
ways the Igreja Universal opposes itself to crime and violence. It is not the only
Pentecostal church which presents itself as a powerful force against evil, the people of
the Assembléia de Deus employ similar practices. During many cultos of the churches of
the Assembléia de Deus in which I participated, and in the many individual conversations
I had with inhabitants, the pastors and adherents emphasized the power of the churches
to battle the tràfico and to bring peace to the morro.

Pastor Denilson, the chairman of the conselho de liderança after Sebastião
Teodoro and leader of the Assembléia de Deus Jardim 25 de Agosto, was also present at
the collective exorcism. In his own preaching, he generally stressed the power of the
Lord to save those involved in the tràfico. During the cultos of his church I witnessed
several moving testimonies, among them one by a guest-preacher who had come to tell
of his experiences in the tràfico in São Paulo. The man told us how he used to be a gerente
de boca-de-fumo, (manager of a drugs-trading point) in a neighborhood of São Paulo. He
had been involved in armed confrontations with a rival gang in the neighborhood and
one night, when he was dealing with some of his mates, several men appeared and
opened fire at close range. He tried to duck down, but he was sure that his last moment
on Earth had come. Yet, when the shooting stopped, he saw that he was the only man
alive at the scene. All others had been killed by gunfire. The fact that they had missed
him at such a short distance was truly miraculous and at that moment he knew that it was

180 People of the Assembléia de Deus normally greet each other with the phrase: "Paz do Senhor". Even
outside the religious context, the invocation of the word peace (paź) had become very common.
181 As I will discuss in detail in the next chapter, he himself had been involved in the tràfico until he had
almost been killed. After his near-death experience he understood that it was no coincidence he had
survived and he made a choice to join the Assembléia de Deus.
God Who had saved him. Hence he became a preacher, dedicated to telling his story to people all over Brazil. His emotional testimony was carefully crafted and delivered with passionate exclamations so typical of Pentecostal preaching. The audience responded with cheers and ‘Hallelujah.’

The other pastor present at the collective exorcism was Pastor Abrahão of the Assembléia de Deus Caminhando pela Fé. In a culto held not long before Crivella’s visit, he preached about those boys that were involved in the tráfico. On his way up to the church Pastor Abrahão had seen that there were so many young men who spent their money on liquor and drugs (Pó – cocaína). Instead of condemning them, he asked the church-members to pray for them: ‘Those boys that walk around with their weapons, why do you think they carry a weapon? Because they are afraid. They are afraid because they do not have Jesus in their lives. Who has Jesus in his life does not need a weapon.’ We all had to raise our hands so as to direct the Holy Spirit towards these boys. While we were standing there, eyes closed, with our hands directed at the imaginary boys holding drugs and arms, we prayed out aloud that they would be saved by the power God. Not unlike the louvor that can transmit the Holy Spirit throughout the morro, the collective raising of both hands toward the traficantes transmitted the Holy Spirit towards those who should be saved.

This discourse of peace and redemption in opposition to the ‘evil’ practices of the young boys echoed throughout the Pentecostal institutions in the morro. Though it was certainly not the only evil people preached about in the churches and houses, in every church at one time or another the people emphasized Christianity’s power to liberate the boys involved in the tráfico. In general, the men and women of the churches thought that, while perhaps they could not save these traficantes immediately, they would keep approaching them and telling them to come to church, hoping that in the future they would decide to get out of the life they were living. According to many, the traficantes acknowledged their righteousness and respected the local Pentecostal churches. Take, for example, my landlady who told me that the doors of her church – the Assembléia de Deus in Pavão – were always open for the boys involved in the tráfico: ‘Last Thursday a boy with a gun this large [holds out both hands far apart] entered the veranda of our church. He left his weapon on the veranda and entered to ask for a prayer.’ When I asked her why he asked for a prayer, she replied: ‘They believe in God. They just don’t have the power to get out of the life they live. Many of them are the sons
of crentes, they know the Word even though they are doing those things in the world, they know the Bible.'

The churches were often imagined as safe-havens against the evil that haunted the traficantes. Many evangélicos thought the behavior of the traficantes was the result of demonic possession. Another example of the discourse in which local Pentecostal churches are imagined as sacred places comes from the Missionária (Missionary) Edineia Cordeiro de Melo, who lived in a house in Cantagalo, close to the boca-de-fumo where the drugs were sold. The first time I talked to her while passing by on my way down to Ipanema, she explained that her house used to be of the Comando Vermelho and that the boys used it to store their drugs and hide when the police would enter the morro. When I held a longer interview with her, she gave me her long testimony in which she explained that she was sent by God to buy that house to preach the evangelho to those who had not heard the word of God. During the interview, she explained her mission in an emotional tone not uncommon to those who preach in the Assembléia de Deus:

I have a team of youngsters, ex-feticeiras, ex-prostitutas, ex-ladões, ex-matadores,\(^\text{182}\) who have done horrible things, but today they are cleansed (limpo) by the word of God and they are ministers of the evangelho of the Lord Jesus Christ here on Earth...I have this team of youngsters that are sons in faith, produced by the word of God, recovered not with chemicals but with the power of Jesus Christ who is the liberator.

When I asked her if there were no complications with the traficantes when she bought the house, she explained:

When I bought it, they came and when I presented myself as the buyer they left the house. I did not encounter problems with them. I am praying for them that God will save them and He will save them in the name of the Lord Jesus. They only charge those that interfere with them, I am here praying...originally it was a hell here, and mind you, I am talking about different periods, it was a hell. Now there is peace in this place, a peace that Jesus Christ granted, before I came here, He had shown me He was going to send me to a place that was a hell and that would be transformed into heaven.

While she explicitly stated that it was through her preaching and praying that people were saved by God, and through her that the house transformed from a hell into heaven, in fact there were no confrontations with the traficantes. She prayed for them. She did not interfere with their business and they did not interfere with hers. Missionária Edineia,

\(^{182}\) Ex-feticeiras, ex-prostitutas, ex-ladões, ex-matadores can be translated as ex-witches, ex-prostitutes, ex-criminals and ex-killers.
who was a member of the Assembléia de Deus in Leblon, was quite a celebrity in the morro and there were several people who told me they converted after her preaching. She held cultos in her house and was trying hard to raise money to open more churches. Her success story even featured in the Christian magazine *Defesa da Fé* (fig. 36), which she proudly showed to me during the interview. In the small article in the magazine exactly the same testimony was summarized with these same words and sentences, exemplifying the standardization of her testimony into an instantly deliverable proof of her mediation of God's powers.

The molding of her testimony into a standardized text should also be seen in relation to an arena of religious commodities and the position of *rentes* in it as entrepreneurs. After many of my interviews and church recordings, people showed an interest in obtaining a copy of the interview/testemunha or *pregação* to send to other pastors and believers. Many of them hoped to be invited to other churches in Brazil and to preach there or to give their *testemunha*. Several young men, who did not have a regular position in a church in the morro, preached in the churches of the Assembléia de Deus from time to time. All of them told me they were also often invited to preach in other morros in Rio de Janeiro. As in the case of the ex-traficante from São Paulo, obtaining a public reputation as powerful preacher in circles of the Assembléia de Deus provided these people with a possibility to travel and perhaps even become famous outside Rio de Janeiro. More practically, the recorded *pregações* and *testemunhas* could also provide some extra income. In the case of Missionária Edinea this was exemplified in the audiotapes of her testimony, which she sold to anyone who was interested.

The audiotapes of Missionária Edinea and other powerful testimonies concerning violence that circulated around in the morro should be seen in relation to a broad web of mass media that link the violence in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro to the Pentecostal discourse of peace and redemption. In the previous chapter I have described the media of the *Igreja Universal*. Here I would like to shed some light on the media of the Assembléia de Deus. Not long after the murder on Tim Lopes, the official magazine of the Assembléia de Deus, the *Mensageiro da Paz*, opened with the headline: 'Churches overcome violence in the morros' on the front page (October 2002). The large color-photo on the front page shows a church of the Assembléia de Deus in Vila Cruzeiro, the favela where Tim Lopes was murdered (fig. 37). The article below the photo had the following to say:

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183 See Chapter Three.
The preaching of the Gospel has diminished the occurrence of violence in several high risk localities in Brazil, as social scientists throughout the country will verify. In places where public authority (poder público), the Roman Catholic Church and NGOs do not penetrate, the evangelical churches, above all the Assembléia de Deus, make their mark with their presence as Christian reference of liberation (libertação)...In the photo above, the Assembléia de Deus in Vila Cruzeiro in Rio de Janeiro, a high risk neighborhood where the journalist of Globo was murdered. The church [in the neighborhood] is one of the points to which the young people who run from the drugs and the criminality in the region turn.

Further on in the Mensageiro da Paz, the article continues: 'There are countless testimonies of people whose lives have been transformed by the preaching of the Gospel in morros and favelas where organized crime reigns virtually supreme. In most of these places, the churches are the only alternative for those who do not want to opt for drugs or crime'. The reputation of the power of the churches of the Assembléia de Deus to transform the lives of those involved in the tráfico reaches beyond Brazil. Take, for example, the preacher of the Assembléia de Deus on the cover of Newsweek (July 3, 2000). The photo shows a preacher of the Assembléia de Deus, dressed in suit and tie with a Bible in his hands. The headline reads: ‘The Holy War on Drugs: Brazil, street-smart preachers are taking the flight to crime-ridden neighborhoods.’ The article tells of the life of Demétrio Martins who was once a drug lord in the ‘infamous’ morro de Alemão. After barely surviving a gunfight with the police, he understood that it was God Who had saved him and converted to the Assembléia de Deus. The reputation of the pastors of the Assembléia de Deus to oppose crime at a local level by means of their spiritual powers has also often boosted their legitimacy as local leaders in the favelas.

The similarity between the practices and discourses of the Igreja Universal and Assembléia de Deus indicates why their political projects are aligned. Nevertheless, the question arises why it was Marcelo Crivella from the Igreja Universal who was performing the deliverance in the square in the morro? And why would the pastors of the Assembléia de Deus collaborate with him? Did they not have their own famous pastor/politician and if so, why not?

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185 Newsweek 2000-07-03 ‘Deliver Us From Evil’.
4.2 Institutional Differences

Many social scientists have emphasized the distinctiveness of the neo-Pentecostal churches in relation to the classic Pentecostal churches such as the Assembléia de Deus (Freston 1994; Mariano 1999; Campos 1997; Kramer 2001). In contrast to the Assembléia de Deus, the methods of the neo-Pentecostal churches are characterized by the intensive use of mass media, a style of preaching referred to as ‘the gospel of health and wealth’, and an active role in Brazilian politics. Since the Igreja Universal and the Assembléia de Deus direct their message to the same group of people (Fernandes et al 1998), these churches are often described as competitors and in terms of their recent growth and political success in Brazil at large, the Igreja Universal is definitively the more successful one.

The outcome of the 2002 elections showed that the politicians affiliated with the Igreja Universal did extremely well - both at the state and federal level. Marcelo Crivella became senator of the state of Rio de Janeiro, Bispo Rodrigues was re-elected as federal deputy and numerous pastors and Bispos were elected as state deputies. During the same elections, politicians affiliated with the Assembléia de Deus also stood for state and federal positions with some success. Yet, they did not do as well. The pastor-president of the Assembléia de Deus de Madureira, Manoel Ferreira, who was competing with Crivella for a position in the senate on behalf of Rio de Janeiro, lost to his far more glamorous Pentecostal competitor. Compare, for example, the photo of Pastor Ferreira (fig. 38) and Bispo Marcelo Crivella (fig. 39). Crivella’s victory over Ferreira was a bit surprising since the Assembléia de Deus has more adherents than the Igreja Universal, but clearly the Igreja Universal has been able to channel political support to particular people of their church much more efficiently.

During the last twenty-five years, the Igreja Universal has been able to generate a steady influx of revenue. It demands a monthly *dizimo* (tithe) of their adherents and asks for *ofertas* (donations) in return for special blessings. The Igreja Universal has a highly centralized, bureaucratic organization, which hierarchy is as follows: obreiro, evangelista, pastor, auxiliary Bispo, Bispo, member of the council of Bispos and head Bispo of the state (spiritual and administrative coordinator). The church has innumerable obreiros working for it for practically nothing and all of them are answerable to the pastor of a specific congregation. The pastor is responsible for his congregation, but he answers to the Bispo of his region or part of the city. Bispo Rodrigues says: ‘the hierarchy is strictly
adhered to; we do not accept insubordination." One of the benefits of its well-run organization is that the money of the dizimo and ofertas is efficiently channeled and reinvested in new churches, electronic mass media, propaganda material, salaries and suchlike. Another benefit is that, in theory, any obreiro can become a Bispo and acquire fame and fortune within the church organization, or at least they can become pastor, earn a decent salary and travel around Brazil or even the world. Several of the obreiros in the morro aspired to such a career and were working hard for the church with these prospects in mind.

The efficient, hierarchical structure of the Igreja Universal also exposed itself in well-planned political campaigns in which specific pastors and Bispos were put forward for specific political posts. Particular Bispos who represent the political branches of the church regularly appear in its newspapers, magazines and other mass media and as such become well-known political figures. At elections times, the pastors of the churches of the Igreja Universal call their members to vote for these church candidates who were put forward by the directorate of the Igreja Universal (Conrado 2001: 91; Oro 2003: 56). Personally, I witnessed how the pastor of the Igreja Universal in Copacabana informed the church members authoritatively: 'We are voting for federal deputy, Bispo Rodrigues; for state deputy Pastor Armando José and for Senator Marcelo Crivella.' Besides such voting instructions during church services, they also called on their obreiros to rally for them in the streets. During the political campaigns of the elections in 2002 the obreiros in the morro were distributing pamphlets, stickers and signs in the streets (fig. 39) and, throughout the city, I saw young obreiros who were waving flags of the Partido Liberal or carrying banners of the party.

Even though there were many churches of the Assembléia de Deus in the morro, I never saw any member of the Assembléia de Deus who was campaigning for a specific candidate of the church. In the morro, I did encounter several signs and posters of Rosinha Garotinho, who identified herself as a crente of the Assembléia de Deus. However, her political campaign was not directly initiated by the church. During the 2002 elections for state governor, Rosinha Garotinho and Benedita da Silva - former governor of Rio de Janeiro, both publicly known as crentes of the Assembléia de Deus - were competing against each other and each of them entered into a collaboration with branches of the Assembléia de Deus.

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Jesus Cristo é o Poder que Liberta!

"Deus tem levantado o seu remanescente na terra"

Missionária Edineia Cordeiro de Melo, associada na cidade de Campos (Rio de Janeiro) em 02/02/1953, pertence ao Ministério da Igreja Evangélica Assembleia de Deus no Leblon, Pastor Presidente José Vicente Vieira. Ela juntamente com os seus três filhos Samuel, Davi e Julio César foram tirados da morte do veneno para a vida no ano de 1996. Sua luta é incansável para a recuperação de vidas não com químicas, mas com a Palavra de Deus. É Dirigente do Trabalho de Libertação Jesus Cristo é o Poder que Liberta a qual foi a fundadora em 1979 e Deus tem operado poderosamente pois, mendigos e viúvas são recuperados para a sociedade os enfermos, as prostitutas, os fetichistas têm sido libertados e recebido a cura espiritual e física através do Evangelho do Senhor Jesus Cristo. Comprou uma casa na comunidade do Cantagalo em Ipanema RJ e tem aumentado ela comprando matérias usadas para melhor atender as vidas necessitadas. Muitos são os filhos na fé que a missionária tem gerado no Brasil e fora dele, formando assim uma grande equipe evangélica jovens para Cristo. Deus tem usado poderosamente ela para abrir igrejas em vários lugares, pois não mede esforços para atender o Ídolo do Senhor.

Fig. 36. Missionária Edineia Cordeiro de Melo

Igrejas superam violência nos morros

A pregação do Evangelho em áreas consideradas de alto risco tem diminuído o índigo de violência em algumas localidades do Brasil, com reconhecimento de cientistas socio-culturais e religiosos. Os líderes da Assembleia de Deus, manhã perigosa como um referencial estudo de libertação. O MP (Ministerio Público) ainda não pode deixar de investigar os prováveis motivos de violência nos morros. A violência é uma das maiores preocupações das comunidades, principalmente em áreas de alto índice de criminalidade. A paz é um dos pontos de referência para as pessoas que buscam uma vida de fé e de paz.

Fig. 37. Mensageiro da Paz. A magazine of the Assembleia de Deus
Fig. 38. Manoel Ferreira in a newspaper of the Assembléia de Deus de Madureira

Fig. 39. Bispo Crivella on a pamphlet distributed in the morro
Unlike the Igreja Universal, the Assembléia de Deus as a whole does not control which candidates are presented as crentes of the Assembléia de Deus. While different branches of the Assembléia de Deus did put forward particular pastors as their political representatives, they could not channel political support in the way the Igreja Universal did. The result of such a lack of effective channeling of political support is that candidates who were affiliated to the church competed with each other, as in the case of Rosinha Garotinho and Benedita da Silva. One of the reasons of the absence of a definite political project was the organization of the church:

The system of government is oligarchical, grouped in lineages around *caudilho*-type *Pastores-presidentes*. The AG is a complex web of (geographically intertwined) networks of mother-churches and dependent churches. The *Pastor-presidente* is effectively a bishop...The General Convention is a relatively weak national centre. The main route to the Pastorate is a lengthy apprenticeship to one of the *caudilos*. The generally slow ladder of promotion is a strong means of social control in the hands of the *Pastores-presidentes*... (Preston 1995: 123).

Clara Mafra argues that one of the important differences between the Assembléia de Deus and the Igreja Universal is the type of ‘crowds’ (*multidões*) they are capable of unifying in their churches (Mafra 2002: 35). The Igreja Universal manages to gather much bigger crowds of believers for its cultos. It managed to fill the Maracanã stadion, one of the biggest in the world, several times with 120,000 to 200,000 of its faithful followers in the last decade (Mafra 2002: 43). The Assembléia de Deus has never organized such a mass event. Following Benjamin,187 Mafra argues that the formation of ‘masses’ has a distinctive social and political meaning in ‘modern’ societies (Mafra 2002: 36). The participation in masses that is common to large events in the cities creates the possibility for a type of ‘anonymity’ and ‘indifference’ to others. As they become part of a collective movement, the ‘individuality’ of the men and women is momentarily elevated into a collectivity that may lead thousands of people to make the same gestures and sing the same songs. The surrender to the collective, the posture of indifference that makes it possible to relate to the anonymous—also gives leeway for a collective ‘discipline’, hence the powerful political significance of these crowds.

Besides the enormous crowds of people the Igreja Universal gathers in its mega churches, it has systematized its rituals across time and space, thereby creating a highly recognizable uniformity in appearance and routines. In contrast, the churches of the

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187 Walter Benjamin Illuminations 1968, *On Some Motifs in Baudelaire*
Assembléia de Deus consist of ‘local moral communities’ (Mafra 2002: 41) that are often governed by ‘mother churches’, but operate quite independently. The possibility for a certain anonymous or indifferent attitude is much smaller since the community is made up of local participants who are intimately related. Furthermore, their ‘functions’ in the churches are based on individual ‘religious’ qualities that are authorized by the church community (Mafra 2002:37-54). The channeling of political support via the mega churches is tightly related to the media of the Igreja Universal. We have already seen some examples in the previous chapter. Here I wish to return its media and elaborate on its appeal to the inhabitants of the morro.

4.3 Pentecostal Politicians in the Age of Mass Media

The differences in the use of mass media in relation to politics have important consequences. The Igreja Universal has found various ways to link its religious/political message to the harsh socio-economic conditions of Brazil. In 1994 the Igreja Universal created its own NGO, the Associação Beneficente Crista (ABC), which develops social assistance programs. Representations of these programs show that the church’s action reaches beyond the realm of the spiritual (Oro 2003: 57). Aligning itself with the socialist Workers Party (PT) before the 2002 elections was a serious effort to demonstrate its opposition against corruption, and their willingness to redistribute wealth honestly. During my conversations with people from the Igreja Universal and the Assembléia de Deus, they often referred to a mass publicized social project of Bispo Marcelo Crivella. The large project, projeto Nordeste, consisted of an irrigation plan in the very dry interior of the Northeast of Brazil that he supposedly funded with the money he earned from his gospel CDs (see also Birman 2006). The project was mass mediated - indeed mass advertised - inside and outside the churches for a long period in 2001 and 2002.188 Many people referred to this project as a sign of what the Igreja Universal was doing for Brazil and the Brazilians. Take, for example, Patricia, a woman of fifty-two, who attended the Igreja Universal in Ipanema:

I saw Crivella in our church when he came back from Africa...He was telling what it was like, but I don’t remember exactly, it was a long time ago. It was when I started attending the church. Right now he is senator,

188 See, for example, the Folha Universal 29 de Septembro 2002 or the magazine Plenitude No. 80, 2001
senator of the republic, I have arranged plenty of votes for him. Even Luiz [her son] voted for him. He helps people very much, I don’t know if you heard of the Projeto Nordeste, Fazenda Canãa? When he made his first CD, he made a contract. With all the money he earned from the CDs he bought a fazenda in Bahia. I don’t know if I still have the [video]tape here, but I had it. He kept recording CDs and selling them in the church and today he has a contract with Pão de Azúcar [supermarket-chain], every fortnight a CD with orações comes out in the in the newspaper O Dia. Today, the fazenda has a school and a doctor, it is helping many people. He has fertilized the ground, which was completely dry, now it has beans. He is helping many needy families. I have arranged many votes for him because all the salary he earns in the chamber will go to the project, helping needy families. You see so many people dying of hunger, if you see the misery over there, it breaks you heart. I voted for him.

Not only the people who attended the Igreja Universal were enthusiastic about Crivella and his project. A good example is Marcus, who congregated in the Assembléia de Deus: ‘For senator I am going to vote for Bispo Crivella. He is doing good work in Bahia...he has done this work in Bahia and automatically he can extend it to the whole of Brazil. If he does, and I believe he will do good work for Brazil, he can even become president of Brazil. Certainly.’

Often people would stress that they did not simply follow their church in picking their candidates. A neighbor of mine, a young man who attended the Assembléia de Deus, stressed that he did not vote for Crivella because of his religion: ‘I will vote for him, but not because of the religion, there are people who say he puts religion up front. I will vote for him because of what he did there in the Nordeste. Not because of religion.’ True as this may be, his image as a social, caring person was carefully crafted within church media and he used the channels and networks of different evangelical churches to present himself as both a religious and a social politician. As a result, his social appearance was firmly embedded within an evangelical framework. Exactly because it was nearly impossible to separate his religious and his social characteristics, people could say they voted for him because of what he did in the Northeast, not because of his religious position.

Pragmatic considerations about the social/therapeutic work of religious institutions fitted in well with the mass media approach of the Igreja Universal. See, for example, what Marco, who lived in Cantagalo and was part of the grupo evangelismo of the Igreja Universal had to say. Marco criticized the Assembléia de Deus. His complaint was it was only open at particular times during the week and it did not offer a continuous succor: ‘You should not have to wait until Thursdays, the Igreja Universal is always open.
and then we have the radio that is functioning, the television that is functioning. It is not as with the traditional churches where you can't talk or where you can't enter when you are wearing shorts.' Thinking from the perspective of the efficiency of bringing the gospel, Marco thought of the Igreja Universal simply as better because it was like a business (empresa): 'In the Igreja Universal the pastor works well, because he is only doing spiritual work, the pastors here [in the morro] work and then afterwards they still have to preach.' The attraction of the Igreja Universal as a church that 'works well' is exemplified by people who point out the differences with the local churches which they say do not grow, do not bring prosperity, peace and social change in the manner the Igreja Universal is doing.

In many of my conversations with the people from the Igreja Universal, I heard the echo of the mediated self-presentation of the church in which businessmen and women are saved from bankruptcy, violent men become God-fearing and tranquil and the expansion of the church is seen as proof of their members' faith in God and His blessing of them. Renato, a man in his forties, believed it was not until the growth of the Igreja Universal that there were fewer assaults and violent confrontations between the police and the traficantes in the morro: 'It was the Igreja Universal that changed everything, it was the fruit of their prayers (orações), before that social work was absent and after that those who were violent learned to love through the gospel (evangelismo).'

Pertinently many people who attended the Igreja Universal illustrated its power to transform lives by criticizing the local churches, both in terms of their doctrines and their organization (and members). Many of the people of the Igreja Universal pointed out the faults in the 'traditional' churches. Take, for example, the words of Dona Linda, who praised the Igreja Universal at the expense of the local churches. Dona Linda lived opposite Pastor Abrahão of the Assembléia de Deus, who had left his wife after an affair with a married woman from his church. She knew of this 'scandal' through the local gossip - as many others in the morro did. According to Dona Linda: 'The church that has the most faith is the Igreja Universal. The Igreja Universal preaches the truth. There the pastors can't have other women, only one. They follow the Bible correctly, not like the others, like this man here did [giggle], the pastor who has another lover. You can't have that, the Universal follows the Bible properly.' Though I doubt that pastors of the
Igreja Universal never have affairs, here I merely want to sketch that the image of the Igreja Universal as a correct and efficient church is among other reasons possible because pastors do not live in the morro. Their projects can be presented as clean, unpolluted and efficient in contrast to the work of the Assembléia de Deus because they do not interfere in the ‘messy’ local situation of the morro, where positions of people often remain ambivalent.

The description of the differences between the two churches gives us an answer to the question why Marcelo Crivella and not a pastor of the Assembléia de Deus was the authority par excellence to fulfill the role of savior of the community. The Igreja Universal has been able to channel support to people like Crivella efficiently wielding its organization and its mass media shrewdly. Crivella was a well-known religious/political figure whose (spiritual) powers were often mediatized. His public authority was therefore based partly on his capacity to perform such a libertação in public. The local pastors of the Assembléia de Deus also recognized this authority and sought to demonstrate their own vis-à-vis Crivella and the inhabitants. Obviously for the local church-leaders collaboration provided a means to confirm their religious/political status and authority in the morro and strengthen their ties with supra-local politicians. The question which remains is why would Crivella need them?

4.4 Local Embeddedness

Contrary to the Bispo of the Igreja Universal, the pastors of the Assembléia de Deus who were present at the collective deliverance were firmly embedded in the local political institutions of the morro. Crivella needed them because they, in collaboration with the president of the associaçao de moradores, could set the stage on which Crivella could perform. They brought together the children and other inhabitants who had to be filmed and they supported Crivella’s performance. They could do so because they were

189 See, for example, the revealing book Nos Bastidores do Reino: A vida Secreta na Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (1995), written by Mário Justino, who was pastor in the Igreja Universal and reveals among other things the adultery that was committed by many Pastors of the church.
190 The irony of the remarks of Dona Linda stem from the fact that pastor Abrahão was one of the local pastors who collaborated in the video shoot of Crivella and helped to create an image of him as savior of the morro. Similarly, Renato, the man who was convinced that it was the Igreja Universal that caused the decrease in violence in the morro did not mention that, in contrast to those of the Igreja Universal, the pastors of the Assembléia de Deus did participate in the conselho de liderança, where decisions were made to improve the situation of the inhabitants.
considered important local leaders. These leaders of the churches of the Assembléia de Deus were involved with the local government in different ways. Some represented their churches in the conselho de liderança but many of them were also involved in the associação de moradores. These local institutions were important to the favela because through them the people could negotiate with state institutions and politicians of behalf of the favela population.

Looking at the role of state institutions in the favelas, the work of Blom Hansen and Stepputat (2002) is very useful. Instead of treating the state as an actual all-pervasive institution whose authority is self-legitimizing, they argue for an analysis of the postcolonial state as: ‘A multitude of discrete operations, procedures, and representations in which it appears in the every day life of ordinary people. By treating the state as a dispersed ensemble of institutional practices and techniques of governance we can also produce multiple ethnographic sites from where the state can be studied and comprehended in terms of its effects...’ (ibid: 14). This portrayal of the state overcomes a rigid state-civil society dichotomy. It creates space in which to see which kinds of institutions and actors are involved in the struggles over local governance and how these may be related to supra-local political struggles. At this juncture, I will describe some of the important institutions in the morro.

4.5 The Associação de Moradores

The associação de moradores is a very important institution in almost all the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. They are the recognized administrative and political representations of these favelas. The first were formed in the 1940s with the help of left-wing parties (Cunha 2002: 26), however most were formed later in the early 1960s when many were co-opted by the state in order to improve control and regulation and impose possible resettlement projects (Burgos 1998: 31). Later these associations were also formed independently with the help of NGOs or the Catholic Church. In many associations, the president is chosen by a select group of sócios (members). However, more and more communities now elect their president democratically for a period of years (Oliveira et al

191 This does not imply that they totally discard the depiction of the state as something that exceeds society, on the contrary, such an idea of the state as omniscient and omnipotent is crucial to the process of modern governance. It is what they call the state’s own myth of itself that produces spectacles, procedures, architecture and such, which subsequently enforce a variety of disciplining practices (Hansen and Stepputat 2002: 17).
In practice this does not necessarily mean that the leaders change regularly. For example the former president of Pavão-Pavãozinho, Sebastião Teodoro had held office for twenty-one years. The statutes of the associações de moradores in the morro say that a mandate of a president lasts three years unless he/she is re-elected.

In the favelas that were not removed (see Chapter One) these associations served as a community institution through which the infrastructure could be improved considerably (Gay 1994). The associations allowed contacts to be maintained with politicians and state institutions. Especially during the first period of the state-governor, Leonel Brizola, who founded the Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT), many social projects that were initiated in the seventies were carried out (ibid: 81). For many favelas in zona sul this meant that, for the first time, inhabitants could enjoy running water, sewers (CEDAE), garbage recollection (Comlurb) and electricity (Light). The associations could organize equal distribution and charge people an amount for the public services they could now access.

In Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho I met many inhabitants who considered Brizola the only politician-governor who had really done something major for the morro. For example, the estrada de Cantagalo, the paved road that leads up to the building of the CIEP, was built during his governorship. This admiration for Brizola is most probably related to the special place Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho acquired during his term of office. In 1984 heavy rainfall caused landslides in Pavão-Pavãozinho and many houses collapsed down the hill, resulting in several casualties. According to Robert Gay (1994), the governing party of Brizola (PDT) reacted with several social measures that were aimed not only at helping the victims of the landslides but also at representing Brizola as the benefactor of the favelados throughout the city. After the landslides:

The PDT responded by drawing up plans for the state and municipal administrations under its control to transform the two slums into “model

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192 Brizola was elected state-governor twice in his career from 1983 to 1987 and from 1991 to 1995. For further reading on the immensely popular politician Brizola who was in exile during the military regime see Enders 2002.

193 For further reading on the importance of these state institutions and the transformations in the favelas see, for example, Oliveira 1993; Burgos 1998; Enders 2002.

194 Besides, these important facilities, there are other services and links that are facilitated through the existence of the associations, for example: the postal address of the associations may be used for all inhabitants; people may register it as their address and hence receive mail. Many alleys in the morro have no name and the regular postmen (correio) do not climb up to distribute the mail door to door. Another service the associations in Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho provide is a community television cable for R$ 8 per month.

195 Centros Integrados de Educação Pública (Public Education Centre) for a description of the morro, see chapter one.
favelas.” Accordingly Pavão/Pavãozinho and Cantagalo were to benefit from each of the various programs that the PDT was in the process of developing in the region’s favelas, as well as others that were specifically designed for this project. The urbanization of Pavão/Pavãozinho and Cantagalo subsequently became a symbol of the Brizola administration’s commitment to the favela population of Rio (Gay 1994: 63-64).

During my research, the local leaders were trying to unite the associações de moradores of the two communities Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho. Both associations were formed in 1961. The attempt to achieve unification of the two associations has to be seen as part of the planned transformations of the favela into a favela-bairro (a favela neighborhood) by the municipal government (Prefeitura Rio de Janeiro). One of the transformations involves the ‘urbanization’ of the favela, for example, the restructuring of the local infrastructure in order to legalize the settlements and to improve the quality of the roads, paths sewers and other public works. Local leaders were generally in favor of uniting the two associations, among other reasons because many of the contracts with the city and state government have to be signed by the president of each association, which makes for complications for the plans that involve the whole favela.

Politically speaking, one association that speaks for the whole favela achieves a much better bargaining position than two at election time. One unified associação de moradores represents a larger population and is therefore more interesting to politicians, who hope to win the votes of the favela population by promising infrastructural improvements. The drawback is that such a system favors clientelistic relations between politicians and the associations. For example, the president of the associação de moradores de Cantagalo explained that before the elections of 2002 he spoke to the representatives of Rosinha Garotinho and he bargained with her that if she should win, she would continue to support several projects that had come to a full stop. She agreed she would continue with the social projects that had started during the governorship of her husband if she were to win. The president of the associação de moradores de Cantagalo also explained that the purchase of the alto falante was only possible because he bargained during earlier elections, stressing that the community needed such a communication system.

196 The property in the morro is supposed to get a ‘legal’ status so that the favela can become a favela-bairro, a favela-neighborhood. For more information on the favela-bairro projects see for example: http://www.rio.rj.gov.br/planoestrategico/plano93_96/pl_proje2.html, or http://www.rio.rj.gov.br/habitacao/favela_bairro.htm.
Notwithstanding all attempts, the local leaders had problems convincing the inhabitants that the unification had to take place. In December 2002, the presidents of the associações de moradores summoned all inhabitants to attend a general assembly in the quadra de escola de samba in Cantagalo to vote about the unification of the two associations. The message was repeated for several days. All this was in vain as almost none of the inhabitants showed up at the general assembly in December 2002 and those who did, voiced their fear that instead of unification such a process would mean annexation of one community by the other, depending on who spoke. Incontrovertibly, many people were suspicious of the reason for this unification. During the general assembly, a friend of mine said to me that someone had told her this voting was all ‘teatro’ and that the traficantes wanted this unification now that one faction controlled the whole morro. César, another friend who was involved in many social projects in the morro, also on behalf of the Baptist congregation, heard this and objected strongly. He believed this was the best for the community and he was not there to help traficantes but the inhabitants. Nevertheless, not many people felt that their vote could and would initiate change. They suspected that the traficantes decided what actually would happen anyway.

4.6 Conselho de Liderança, Viva Rio and Criança Esperança (Globo)

Simultaneously with the entrance of the police force Gpae and the plans for the urbanization of the morro, a number of measures were taken to improve the standard of living in the morro. The leaders of the two communities, Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho, formed one conselho de liderança. According to a local newspaper that was created and distributed in May 2002 by Sebastião Teodoro, it was he who initiated the conselho de liderança. Others said, however, that it was formed with the help of Viva Rio, a powerful NGO in Rio de Janeiro. My involvement in the conselho de liderança started only after the death of Sebastião Teodoro and it is therefore not entirely clear what the changes were that followed his death. During my research I participated several times in the meetings of the conselho de liderança.

197 Because of the disappointing number of people who showed up the unification had to be delayed. The president of the associação de moradores of Cantagalo told me that he was convinced people would see the benefits for the future and vote in favor. He had already planned where the new office of the associação de moradores de Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho had to be built.

198 Conselho de liderança, is the council of leaders of the social organizations of Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho.
The conselho de liderança consisted of people who were heading social organizations or organizing social projects in the morro. Almost all of the participants had been born and raised in the morro. Participants included, for example, directors of the local crèches, the director of the NGO Corte Arte made up of needlewomen, the 'religious' leaders such as the pastors of the Protestant and Pentecostal churches and the Sisters of the Catholic chapel, someone from the escola de samba, the presidents of the associações de moradores and the major or the present commander of Gpae. There were about thirty-two organizations in the morro whose representatives theoretically all had a right to a place in the council. The people who were seated in the council represented the social organizations and theoretically could speak for a large part of the population of the morro. One of the functions of this council was to ensure the adequate communication of the problems of the inhabitants to other organizations so that measures could be taken to improve the situation. Although this looked promising, from my discussions with the members I understood that the council faced multiple problems. Briefly after its formation several representatives did not show up again. Therefore it became difficult for the council to speak in the name of the 'whole community' and its authority in relation to the inhabitants and to the organizations outside the morro subsequently diminished. In Chapter One I already mentioned the fact that the Catholic sisters of the chapel in Pavão-Pavãozinho no longer attended the council because they were dissatisfied with the way it was run.

The Pentecostal pastors and members of Pentecostal organizations were very active in the council. In the meetings in which I participated, they were the only representatives of the 'religious' institutions besides the pastor of the Baptist church. Sebastião Teodoro, who also headed the conselho de liderança, was an outspoken evangelical, who used different means to evangelize in the morro, including community radio and local cable television. Whenever possible, he emphasized God's will to develop social projects in the morro, linking development ideologies to religious zeal. After the death of Sebastião, Pastor Denilson of the Assembléia de Deus Jardim 25 de Agosto became chairman in the conselho. Pastor Denilson was also involved in many other social projects, for example, the construction of a crèche on top of his church and the negotiations with supra-local institutions in the name of the association of inhabitants.

One of the recurring topics in the council was the relationship between leaders of the favela and the non-governmental organizations, specifically Espaço Criança Esperança - the Rede Globo/Unicef project - and Viva Rio. The management of the project Espaço
Deliver the Favela

_Criança Esperança_ is in the hands of _Viva Rio_ and the money comes from Unicef and Rede Globo de Televisão, which asks its viewers to donate money during special _Criança Esperança_ broadcast shows. According to the organization itself, the _Espaço Criança Esperança_, 'constitutes permanent action that seeks to fill the leisure time of children and youngsters with sports, artistic and cultural practices with educational purposes, the promotion of citizenship and breeding of a culture of peace (translation mine)._199 The idea behind the project is that sports will have multiple beneficial effects in the lives of these children who have been and are often confronted with violence and other negative influences. Self-confidence, self-discipline, conflict resolution and teamwork are a number of the effects aspired to that are supposed to contribute to what they call a 'culture of peace' and behavior that is associated with good 'citizenship'.200

Several community leaders were very cynical about the fact that Globo, Brazil's most powerful broadcast-media empire, was involved with _Criança Esperança_. Despite the great work the coordinators and employees of the project had done in the eyes of many inhabitants, Globo's ulterior motives were often mistrusted. People felt that Globo's representation of itself as a philanthropic organization that cared enormously for inhabitants of the morro was not entirely based on the facts. Both the organization of the project and Globo constantly underlined the positive effects for the children and the community in quite a self-congratulatory fashion. For example, on a promotion-CD they present a quote from a young boy, Marcos Vinicius (10 years) who said: 'I am in the _Espaço Criança Esperança_ to have a better future. The future has arrived. The future is _Espaço Criança Esperança._'201 During its Christmas broadcasts in 2002, TV Globo showed smiling children from the morro and on its website they showed children playing sports and dancing dressed in their _Criança Esperança_ shirts. In the advertisements of the project Globo presented a large number of national and international celebrities who had visited the _Espaço Criança Esperança_. Globo has brought _tekenovela_ actors, television program hosts, bands and other famous people to the space in CIEP in an effort to show the children and the Brazilian public that they are cared for. The mass mediated charity,

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199 "Constitui uma ação permanente que ocupa o tempo disponível de crianças e jovens através de práticas esportivas, artísticas e culturais com propósitos educacionais, promotores da cidadania e de fomento de uma Cultura de Paz" According to the promotion-CD of the project _Espaço Criança Esperança_ that was given to me by the president of the association of inhabitants of Cantagalo. See also http://www.vivario.org.br.

200 See also http://www.vivario.org.br. _Espaço Criança Esperança_. The idea that sports have a 'healthy' societal function is widespread. If, in fact, these sports activities help to resolve many of the social problems is often presumed but rarely investigated.

201 "Estou no _Espaço Criança Esperança_ para ter um futuro melhor. O futuro para mim já chegou. O futuro é o _Espaço Criança Esperança_" Depoimento de Marcos Vinicius, 10 anos, para produtora TV1, em 10 abril 2002.
based on the presence of mass media stars, has a self-fulfilling component that leaves unanswered many questions about the effects of this kind of charity in the long run. The people on the council wondered what benefits it would eventually bring to the community and they were irritated by the fact that they were not treated as equal partners.

The pastors of the Assembléia de Deus who were involved in the local governance presented themselves as caretakers of the community and they were generally trusted as honest men who acted in the name of the Lord. I have mentioned the work of Pastor Denilson, but he was definitively not the only one, as Pastor Abrahão was also very involved. The church doors of Pastor Abrahão were open to all. At the end of the cultos there was always a moment in which people could come forward and ask the church members to pray for them or bless them. Occasionally young men who were involved in the tráfico came for a blessing. Pastor Abrahão saw this as a chance to convert them and show that God loved them despite of their sins. Besides this ‘spiritual’ aid Abrahão was also responsible for the distribution of the cheque cidadão, a welfare project of the government of Garotinho. He also participated in the meetings with Viva Rio. Abrahão was constantly telling me what kind of social projects he wanted to introduce to the morro, all through his small church. He wanted to build a crèche on top of the small church building; he wanted to construct a community speaker-system, much like the alto falante of the associação de moradores, but then through the whole morro so that communications would be improved.202 While this shows that the leaders of churches of the Assembléia de Deus occupied positions in the local government and they helped to set the stage for Crivella’s video clip, the president of the associações de moradores was the linch pin who tied the different parties together.

4.7 Sebastião Teodoro Filho, Presidente of the Morro

The visit of Marcelo Crivella was arranged and facilitated by the president of the two associações de moradores in the morro. When I started my research in the morro in February 2002, Marcus Cardoso and Clara Mafra advised me to visit Sebastião Teodoro before doing anything. Sebastião held many key positions in the local governance, he was

202 Pastor Abrahão did in fact commit adultery and the members of his church were terribly ashamed. Yet they explained it as work of the devil and were willing to forgive him if he would temporarily hand over the church. He refused and left the church just before the end of my fieldwork.
the president of both the associação de moradores of Pavão-Pavãozinho (for twenty-one years) and of Cantagalo (just one year). He was appointed representative of the complexo Pavão-Pavãozinho/Cantagalo. He was also the coordinator of the conselho de liderança, and he was appointed coordinator of the Centro Comunitário da Defesa da Cidadania (CCDC) of the state government of Rio de Janeiro. He was a member of the PL (Partido Liberal), a political party that has many ‘evangélicos’ in its ranks, and last, but not least, he was the deputy-leader (segundo dirigente) of the Assembléia de Deus Muralhas de São in Pavão-Pavãozinho. Sebastião Teodoro maintained the central position in the social organizations of the morro and was undoubtedly the strong man there.

According to many leaders and inhabitants of the morro, Sebastião Teodoro always worked very hard to improve conditions in the favela and he was therefore well respected. His position was extremely ambivalent, however. A considerable number of people believed he had been directly involved with the tráfico himself or at least was friendly with them. Some people said he had been the chefe at a particular point in time; others said he had been seen walking around armed with a gun. According to some people, his life had changed with his conversion to Pentecostalism, hence his position in the Assembléia de Deus. Others were dubious about his ulterior motives. An examination of the information shows that it is unlikely that he was the chefe at the time I started my research, however the many different stories that were told about him made it very likely he was involved with the tráfico in one way or another. One inhabitant also had doubts about the nature of the pressures that were brought to bear on the former president of the associação de moradores de Cantagalo to resign from his office which enabled Sebastião to take over the position and attain total control. To me and to many inhabitants it was never entirely clear what position he held and this was most probably one of the reasons he became such a powerful figure in the morro. Playing different cards simultaneously, maintaining links with different groups is not only the nature of politics, but also the exemplification of the jogo de cintura in the morro and perhaps in Brazil at large.

The ambiguities about the president in Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho obtained another dimension because Sebastião Teodoro also represented another powerful group in the morro, the evangélicos. His ability to unite powerful positions in the morro also

203 Centro Comunitário da Defesa da Cidadania (CCDC) is a government institution developed to improve ‘citizenship’ by means of informing people of their rights and duties as citizens. The presence of this organization in CIEP is an eloquent testimony to the efforts of the state to conquer ‘terrain’ in the space of the morro by incorporating inhabitants in state institutions and regulations.

204 Knowing the jogo de cintura could best be translated as the ability to ‘wheel and deal’.
showed itself through his involvement in the ‘religious’ domain. Sebastião appeared as both pastor (dirigente) and as presidente of the community on many religious/political occasions at which many people from the morro were gathered. This strengthened both his religious and his political authority to a great extent. As mentioned, to some his involvement with the Pentecostal organizations was quite ambivalent. There were those who claimed he had been consecrated as a pastor and had wanted to form his own church; others said he was no real pastor. His ‘conversion’ to Pentecostalism was considered doubtful by many, especially by non-Pentecostals, because they were aware of his ‘former’ life.

Sebastião Teodoro tried hard to demonstrate that he was a crente. He invested money, time and energy in evangelizing in the morro. He had supported an evangelical radio program on the local radio station in the time before my research and he occasionally put videos of Pentecostal preachers on the local cable television channel. On reflection, his involvement in Pentecostalism should in my opinion also be seen as another means of securing his grip on the political situation in the morro. The popularity of the Pentecostal churches among the inhabitants is related to the image of pastors as ‘trustworthy’ people pursuing strong social and political projects in the name of the Lord. The symbolic opposition to violence and the religious utopian visions (images) of a society em paz (at peace) are but a few of the possible meanings attached to politicians/local leaders who rally in the name of Jesus Christ.

In the night of 6 to 7 of July 2002, Sebastião Teodoro died in a car crash when he was on his way to his second house in the interior of the state of Rio de Janeiro. This led to many questions and doubts at first and some important changes after. His death was received with mixed emotions as some people saw in him a hero and a fighter for the community, whereas others had never trusted him completely. Some people doubted that he died in a car crash and thought it was most probably homicide, suspecting his involvement in crime. Others did not believe he was really dead and went to see him when he was placed on the bier in the associação de moradores of Pavão-Pavózinho. One of the inhabitants told me special police forces had come to the morro to arrest him two days before his death, but he was released after the intervention of the local police authorities.

His death left a void in the local political configuration and a major shift was the result. The vice-presidents of the two associações de moradores were appointed

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205 See Chapter Seven for a description of the local cable programs.
presidents of the separate associations. The new presidents did not provide total clarity on the ambiguous relation between the associação de moradores and the tráfico. The new president of the associação de moradores of Cantagalo was, to my knowledge, not involved and reasonably straightforward in his efforts not to interfere in their business as long as he could run the association. The new president of the associação de moradores of Pavão-Pavãozinho was more closely related to them. Once when I went to visit her in the associação de moradores, she introduced me to the chefe of the tráfico of the morro, who was also visiting her. I also heard from people closely associated with the community politics that she was pressured by people from the tráfico to approve baile funk parties and they felt she was seeking too much approval from the traficantes.

At that time the chefe do tráfico responsible for the daily management of the morro was Cajú. His boss – the real chefe - was in jail just as most of the ‘leaders’ of the drugs gang the Comando Vermelho (see Chapter One). When the president introduced me, she did not say I was a researcher but a foreigner who was doing a social project, and thus helping the comunidade. The reason why she introduced me as someone working in favor of the comunidade is that, in general, in the morro this is considered a legitimate reason for an ‘outsider’ to walk around and stick his nose in certain matters. The chefe was no older than I, around twenty-five probably. I shook his hand, surprised about the ordinariness of the situation. Was this the feared chefe, this young man, with little to none of the charisma I had expected? I had seen a picture of him in the newspaper months before when he had been caught by the police for illegal possession of firearms and he was a suspect of multiple murders and other violent crimes. In the picture he seemed very ‘dangerous’ and cool, in ‘reality’ he was shorter than me and appeared nervous.

Even after the death of Sebastião Teodoro several people voiced the opinion that behind the façade of the associação de moradores, the chefe do tráfico managed the place. Some expressed the opinion that local leaders, including those of the associação de moradores, could have nice ideas and good projects and were not involved with the tráfico, but they could not do anything without the consent of the chefe do tráfico: ‘quem manda é o dono (the boss is the one who decides),’ as one of my friends put it. For some of my friends it was clear that good ideas and projects would come and go, but the tráfico

206 In a similar vein, Marcus Alvito describes that when he started his research in the favela Acari in Rio de Janeiro, he was presented to the chefe of the tráfico by one of the community leaders (Alvito 2001: 154).
207 Cajú was killed in a confrontation with the police shortly after my return to the Netherlands.
208 At that time, my girlfriend and I were raising money to donate computers and printers to social institutions in the morro.
was there to stay and remain the ultimate authority. Others were much more optimistic, however, including some of my friends among the local leaders. Nevertheless, it was clear that involvement in local politics meant that one had to deal with the presence of the tráfico in one way or another. When Pastor Abrahão was threatened by the husband of the woman with whom he had an affair, traficantes protected the pastor because, according to them, he had done much for the community. At that moment Abrahão was not at all remorseful that they were there to protect him. This indicates that, even while religious leaders discursively opposed Pentecostalism to the tráfico, local relations were generally much more ambiguous.

4.8 Networks: Tráfico, Local Governance and Pentecostalism

Shortly after a council meeting in the beginning of November, my friend Angela, director of *Corte&Arte*,209 told me that a delegation of the traficantes had showed up unexpectedly. Four boys, who participated in the meeting, expressed their worries about certain social problems in the favela. Angela was astonished, particularly about the fact that one of them spoke eloquently and appeared to be better informed than some of the ‘regular’ participants. She also said he constantly spoke in a manner that presented the tráfico as one of the institutions in the morro that could influence the social situation in much the same way the other social organizations in the council could. The appearance of the four young men points to the complexity of the situation in the morro, where the tráfico is influential, even though some would like to deny or downplay that fact. The council probably did not count on the participation of the traficantes, but, strange as it may seem, their participation made perfect sense. All organizations that represented a social group were asked to participate and these men did represent a powerful group in the morro. Their presence also showed how difficult it was to create a break with the past. The new political forum of the council could not easily escape the political structures of the morro in which the tráfico remained very influential.

Discussions about the political struggles and the possibility of democratic rule in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro focus mostly on the relation between the police, the tráfico,

209 *Corte&Arte* (Associação de Costureira Autônoma do Morro do Cantagalo) is an association of needlewomen from the community who seek to produce garments collectively to circumvent dependency on vendors with small capital who pay low labour costs. Angela was also a prominent member of the Baptist Church in Cantagalo.
the associação de moradores, the NGOs and state officials or politicians. In much of the
literature about the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, the relationship between the tráfico and the
associação de moradores is described as ambivalent. The political projects of the people
in the associação de moradores were largely aimed at bringing development to the favelas
(electricity, water, sewers), which was in the best interest of all. According to the
literature the democratic element was accompanied by the participation of many of the
inhabitants (Zaluar 1985: 174; Alvito 2001: 154). However, the political representation of
the people inside the favela to the politicians and state officials outside created room for
brokers and the positions in the associação de moradores were therefore not free from
power struggles or pressures from within the favela (Gay 1994).

Since the advent of the tráfico in Rio de Janeiro, there have been many attempts by
the traficantes to influence the people of the associação de moradores for example to do
them favors in return for their support (Pedrosa 1990: 61). In many favelas the
associação de moradores is controlled (in)directly by the traficantes or is pressured to
follow their lead. It is therefore often not clear to the inhabitants what position people of
the associação de moradores adopt in relation to the tráfico. One recent example comes
from the work of Marcus Alvito (2001), who has described the ambivalent relation
between community leaders and the traficantes in the favela Acari in Rio de Janeiro.
Alvito argues that, even though inhabitants often speak of a local leader being 'involved'
with the tráfico or not, the relationship between the tráfico and the president of the
associações de moradores is better described as a continuum. Many leaders of the
associações de moradores are in fact trying to mediate between different power holders
who offer different things and ask different things in return: the traficantes, the police,
the politicians plus many others. Alvito, for example, describes how leaders of the
associação de moradores seek relations with local traficantes and with politicians
depending on the influence and reach of each of them (Alvito 2001: 162).

Desmond Arias convincingly argues that in order to understand how power is
distributed in the favelas, one needs to examine closely the networks between the police,
the tráfico, the associação de moradores, the NGOs and state officials or politicians.
(Arias 2004). Arias states: 'In order to understand politics in Rio we need to understand
not just how state and society deal with each other but how cross-institutional networks
interact that bring together state, social and criminal actors (ibid: 20).’ This network
approach differs from the common clientelist approach often put forward in studies of
politics in the favelas. According to Arias:
Clientelist approaches cannot adequately explain the roles of illegal networks because criminals cannot work directly and personally with politicians and because illegal networks engage in many other activities. The classic triadic clientelist relationship typical of Rio until the early 1990's was based on a politician establishing relations with a local broker who would provide the politician with access to a source of votes. Existing writing is largely silent on the issue of exactly how traffickers and politicians maintain relations (Arias 2004: 4).

Arias argues that traficantes cannot operate directly with legitimate state institutions, but seek intermediaries to negotiate access to state officials and resources. To do so, they need to maintain relations with other political actors in the favela, for example, the people of the associação de moradores, or, in my case, of the conselho de liderança. Besides possible access to state resources, they need to maintain relations with these political actors in the favelas in order to obviate violent conflict and to maintain a certain degree of trust among the favela residents.

Arias claims that these networks also include NGOs and religious organizations. I would like to take this insight as a point of departure to obtain a better understanding of role religious organizations play in the local governance and specifically how Pentecostal pastors attain authority in the complex power struggles in which no single organization can govern on its own. Though people of the Assembleia de Deus and the Igreja Universal discursively and spiritually oppose Pentecostalism to crime, violence and tráfico, they do not take direct action against the traficantes. While they disagree with substance abuse and violence, the Pentecostals pray for traficantes rather than hinder them in their work. They offer a spiritual path that promises redemption for all those who accept Jesus as their Savior, including the traficantes. This mechanism sheds light on the question of why Sebastião Teodoro affiliated himself with Pentecostal leaders both in and outside the community. Without wanting to discard his spiritual motivations, his conversion to the Assembleia de Deus also provided him with a powerful political network and a means to oppose him discursively to the tráfico through Pentecostal language and practice. He did not have to act against the traficantes, but rather against the demons that haunted them.

The example of the collective deliverance demonstrates that traficantes and Pentecostal leaders interact in a different way than might have been expected. The traficantes did not merely allow Crivella to enter the morro to set up an alliance between local and supra-local politicians, they were involved in the legitimation of his political
project, namely the promise of deliverance of evil. This calls for a further investigation of the importance of (religious) mass media that cross-cut the networks. As I have argued, the Igreja Universal has managed to present itself as a viable political alternative by means of its representation of masses of believers in their temples in relation to the representations of pastor-politicians who act as mediators of the Holy Spirit. The political support that Crivella mobilized during his visit was largely dependent on his mass media appearances. The willing involvement of the local leaders and pastors - even those of different Pentecostal churches - demonstrated how important mass media are in attaining religious and political power.

It is in my opinion absolutely no coincidence that the collective deliverance was held right after the video shoot. The celebrity status of Bispo Crivella, generated through his repeated appearance on television and in other mass media, influenced local power relations. His visit created the opportunity for the local leaders to demonstrate their relationship with a famous Bispo and provided them with a chance to confirm their own religious status in the morro. Similarly, the appearance of traficantes cannot not be easily detached from the celebrity status of this Bispo. While clearly Sebastião Teodoro performed the function of mediator when he signaled them to come down, no other pastor present could have led such a collective deliverance of traficantes. His status as powerful liberator of evil clearly produced a setting in which they felt attracted to come down and participate.

The example of the video-recording and the collective deliverance demonstrates that the relationship between Pentecostalism, politics and mass media generates space for a new type of populism, one that envisions worldly progress for 'the people' through spiritual interventions mediated by pastor-politicians. At times, the Pentecostal churches offer an image of progress rather than actual change, especially in the case of the Igreja Universal. This was exemplified in the visit of Marcelo Crivella. The visit presented a contradiction that dissolved as quickly as it appeared. In front of the camera, Crivella argued that the violence in the community had disappeared, thanks to the spiritual interventions mediated by the Pentecostal pastors. Yet, when the traficantes descended his cameraman stopped filming. The fact that we all had to stop filming demonstrated that not much had actually changed in the morro. Inhabitants still had to live under the regime of the *lei do silêncio* (law of silence), which also meant that no pictures could be taken of people who were involved in the tráfico, let alone 'catch' them on video-tape.
Deliver this Favela

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that when we analyze the local networks in which traficantes, local governance and politicians are connected, and place these in relation to the mass media of the two churches, it is clear that the Assembléia de Deus and the Igreja Universal complement each other as much as they compete with each other. The churches of the Assembléia de Deus are popular in the morro and the pastors occupy important positions in the local socio-political field. While the Assembléia de Deus also highlights the relationship between violence and deliverance, it has not exploited the capacities of mass media in their political project in the same way as the Igreja Universal has done. This is partly related to the structural differences between the churches, which explains the incapacity of the Assembléia de Deus to formulate one coherent religious-political ideology and leadership. The capacity of the Assembléia de Deus to attain political power at the local level by means of its religious leaders is also its greatest weakness in comparison with the Igreja Universal. The ability to perform politics in the complex power struggles in the morro is predicated on a daily negotiation of power. Any links to local politics means that the trafico has to be dealt with to a certain degree.

By contrast, the pastors of the Igreja Universal bypass many of the local power struggles. The church employs its mass media, its mass cathedrals and its mass events to present pastors as exceptional men of faith who also obtain political positions at a different, political level, as this visit of Crivella also demonstrates. The well-orchestrated political campaigns are mostly centered on positions in the state and federal government, not on political positions in the favelas. While the Igreja Universal advertises itself as a church that is able to transform the social situation in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, the church barely participates in local matters in the morro in the way the pastors and members of the churches of the Assembléia de Deus do. The pastors of the Igreja Universal do not live in the morro and do not participate in local political processes and
organizations. Though at times the people of the Igreja Universal distributed small amounts of food like rice or beans (*cesta básica*) to poor people in the morro, there were no structural social projects in the morro. While the Igreja Universal manages to present itself as an efficient church that brings forth pastor-politicians who help local communities, it can only do so by maintaining relations with the local governance, including people of the Assembléia de Deus. Despite the fame of Marcelo Crivella, his video shoot in the morro was only possible because he collaborated with the local leaders of the Assembléia de Deus and with the president of the associações de moradores.