The Rhetoric of Collectivity: An Anthropological Examination of a Brazilian Favela

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May 1991

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Abstract

This research is based on one year of anthropological fieldwork in a well-established vertical shantytown with a population of around 200,000 located between the two most affluent residential neighbourhoods in Rio de Janeiro. The thesis addresses the question of the political organisation of this shantytown's population and aims to understand this question by looking at how these people are divided among themselves at all levels of organisation.

Chapter 1 provides the context. It portrays the infrastructural development of the shantytown and investigates its population's economic well-being, and traces the significance of both of these factors for its political potential. The remainder of the thesis consists of two parts. In the first part (Chapters 2-4) I examine what organisational principles are at work at local levels and the degree to which they can ultimately play a part in group formation. The analysis starts with an examination of these principles at the most local level (i.e. in the household) and then expands to wider levels. Thus Chapter 2 sets out the form kinship relations take in the household, and traces their importance in larger group formations. Chapter 3 examines relations between neighbours and the degree to which locality and regionality is articulated. Chapter 4 looks at the shantytown as a whole, questioning to what extent and in what ways its population expresses itself as a social unit, a "community". This chapter also explores other potential principles on which this population bases its identity (e.g. rural associations, skin colour, religious persuasion), the degree to which these are articulated and can serve as a basis of mobilisation. The first part of the thesis provides a basis for the second part (Chapters 5-8), which examines in detail the development and dynamics of political activity in the shantytown.

The form that the political activity takes depends partly on the resource structure and the wider national political context. These are developed in the first two historical chapters of the second part. The purpose of these chapters is to identify the major developments in national politics at federal and local level, the policies that governing bodies implemented which directly affected this shantytown population, and how these shaped the power structure in the shantytown. Chapter 5 develops the story during the repressive years, while Chapter 6 takes it from there. The emphasis of the thesis falls on the final two chapters, which portray the workings of the political activities in the shantytown at the time of fieldwork, drawing together all previous chapters. The first of these examines in detail how leadership in action groups is established and maintained, it spells out the organisational models according to which they operate, and the relations between the groups. The problematic nature of relations with the political party structure and the resident drug traffickers causes them to be articulated in a different hidden sphere. Their examination forms the subject of a separate last chapter.

The picture that emerges is one of constantly changing group formations that exist as a result of temporary individually-motivated interests at all levels. Locally, kinship, locality and other sources of identity are not well articulated as organising principles. For example, in the case of kinship, residential units are largely formed on the basis of primary kin relations, though in actuality, their composition is easily transformed and there is little evidence of larger kinship networks. Similarly, in the case of locality, there are action groups which present themselves as local neighbourhood centres, but these draw political support from all parts of the shantytown and their leaders cannot be said to represent their own neighbourhood. These principles do not by themselves account for group formation at higher levels of shantytown organisation and they do not play a significant part in mobilisation for action group activity.

The resulting sense of flexibility and division is reflected in the action groups which are highly competitive, short-lasting affairs. This is partly because resources are scarce, short-termed and unreliable and individuals rise and fall in response to these initiatives. The same individuals monopolise these resources and act

as patrons who gather around them a temporary clientele. A case study of two particular groups shows that there is a contradiction between the groups' ideals (largely defined by the national political context) as formulated in the language of their activists, on the one hand, and their actual workings (a clear example of the old-style patronage politics, criticised in the national rhetoric) on the other hand. This contradiction is particularly apparent in the groups' relationships with the political party structure and the drug traffickers. These are therefore denied in public, yet both are important elements in the shantytown's power structure. The resulting picture is a complex one in which different organisational principles interrelate and play differing parts.

Acknowledgements

I owe thanks to many people, without whose support this thesis would not have been possible. In Brazil my good friends Alda and Teotônio Ferreira, Marinês Pio Gomes and Chico and Iara Bazelmans provided me with everything I asked for and more, with the Brazilian hospitality to which I discovered no limits. I also owe a lot to my friends Mariluci da Silva Pinheiro, Cristiano Camerman, Gilmar and Rosimar de Souza Ribeiro, and Claudio and Pascale Charlier, who allowed me to share their experiences as Brazilian social workers. Many long conversations with them provided me with a lot of food for thought and helped me understand some of the complex bureaucratic structure in which it all takes place. Thanks also to IBRADES and IUPERJ for the use of their libraries especially.

My fieldwork would not have been possible with the generous help, patience and friendship of many people in Rocinha. I would like to mention especially: my good neighbours Dona Joselita and Seu Joaquím, Silvio and Luciana, Seu Alberto and Salete; my friends from ASPA Crèche (especially Clotilde, Zilda, Rita and Antônio, Nelí and Maria); from the other ASPA groups (especially Marlúcia, Arlinda, Marta and Vera); from AMABB, Robertinho and Martins; from the Methodista, Dona Nancy and the Pastor and all the *tias* (especially Regina and Suelí); from Império da Gávea, especially Gerê and Lua; from Rua Dois, especially Sérgio and Fábio; from Alegria das Crianças, Francisca, Gonçalinha, Anita and Aurélio; from Rua Um, especially, Marlí and Antônia. I dedicate this thesis to them, and to all small people like them whose lives are a daily struggle often fought in silence. They are overlooked or ignored by the powerful who make decisions that affect them directly and often adversely. I wrote this thesis in the hope that I can at least remind these decision-makers of their existence.

There were many people (especially from outside Rocinha) whose views I didn't always agree with, but were very kind to me in their own ways. From these I would like to mention especially Marta, some members of the Residents Association of São Conrado, Capitão Orizon, staff of Escola Paula Brito, Light, CEDAE, SMDS, LBA, DEC, IPLANRIO, CEHAB and Seu Joel from Vila Canoa. There are many

others who supported me during my fieldwork whose names I have forgotten to mention or never learned. Not only did they teach me all I know about Rocinha, I owe to them a lot more than I can even express.

I thank the ESRC for funding the first three years of my research, and Peter Flynn for arranging it for me and taking me on. In Glasgow University, I thank the rest of the people of the Institute of Latin American Studies also for their support, but especially my supervisor, Simon Mitchell, for the time and encouragement he gave me and, more importantly, for teaching me to do anthropological research.

In Edinburgh University, I thank the people in the Department of Social Anthropology for generously allowing me the use of their facilities and participation in Departmental activities, and I would like to thank my friends and fellow postgraduates there, especially Anne Marie Bostyn, who counselled me through difficult times. Special thanks are due to Mark Nuttal and Bertha Treiger for their laborious proof-reading and elaborate comments which unquestionably greatly improved the quality of my work.

I thank my parents who taught me to keep battling and provided me with a basis which enabled me to do so. Finally, thousands of thanks to Bob Fisher, who supported me in all the above ways. Without his love and encouragement, technical support throughout the years, example of dedication to his own work and critical feedback on mine, I might not have finished this thesis.

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Introduction

In this thesis I address the question of the political organisation of Rocinha, a shantytown in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I discuss how the residents of this shantytown organised themselves to improve their living conditions, the type of leadership that arose (the kind of links these leaders had with their following and how they recruited and maintained these). The ultimate challenge is to account for the kind of social groupings visible at community level. These are described in the second part of this thesis. This question ultimately touches on all areas of social life (e.g. people's aspirations, their loyalties to different categories of people around them, the stability of their practical arrangements, their attitudes towards official structures), and I attempt to answer this question in its full complexity, within the tradition of anthropological holism. It was my aim to immerse myself into all aspects of these people's lives, by setting up a meaningful personal relationship with as many people as I could, by learning their "language" in its full sense and by living their lives as much as I could (Okely 1983).[1] In line with this aim, I spent one year (from June 1985 to June 1986) living in Rocinha.

Few authors on the subject of the political organisation of the urban poor have approached their subject matter in this way. A handful of case studies of shantytowns were written in the mid-1970s (e.g. Peattie 1968, Roberts 1973, Cornelius

[1]This is radically opposed to a quantitative method in which the researcher aims to distance him/herself from the subject in an attempt to gather "objective" data. As in both these approaches the researcher aims to "understand" the subject, the opposed direction of these methods appears as a curious paradox (Roberts 1976). In this respect, I opt for participant observation as I side with Cesara in distinguishing "doing science" from "understanding" (Cesara 1982).

1975, Lomnitz 1977, Lobo 1982). Since then, there has been a tendency for researchers to move into higher-level theoretical concerns. A clear example of this is Roberts (1978). The Brazilian literature on shantytowns is similarly almost exclusively concerned with the question of Urban Social Movements (e.g. Santos 1981). This can partly be explained by the reluctance of researchers to do conventional anthropological fieldwork (i.e. participant observation) in a shantytown. In Brazil particularly, this is reinforced by the general claim among people who do not live in shantytowns, that shantytowns are "dangerous" places, to be avoided at all times. In line with this, many expressed concern about my safety, some about my sanity. The portrayal of shantytowns in the popular press (the constant emphasis on extreme violence especially associated with the drug traffickers and the stereotypical associations of *o marginal* (the marginal)) supports and encourages this reluctance.[2] All this confirms the fact that in Brazil, the poor and the rich live in separate worlds, a veritable cultural apartheid, with little communication between the two.

The resulting lack of detailed data about shantytown political processes shows up in the quality of the material produced in the literature. Authors draw conclusions about "popular politics" often based on formal interviews with leadership alone leading to claims which do not stand up against evidence from more local levels of activity. I deal with this question explicitly in my conclusion.

I recognise that the method I am advocating has its limitations. It is worth recalling Worsley's observation that methodology chapters in sociological textbooks are invariably incomplete and idealistic (Worsley 1987). Advocated methods inevitably fall down both in view of the complexity of the subject matter (i.e. human beings (Worsley 1987)), and the complexity of the research process itself (the role

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[2]It is interesting to note that some journalists (and even academic authors) still find it necessary to stress the existence of orderly behaviour in shantytowns periodically to counteract the negative image of the marginal shantytown resident portrayed elsewhere. This, in view of the fact that marginality theory and the "culture of poverty" stereotypes were widely criticised and condemned almost twenty years ago. (I am thinking particularly of a series of articles printed in Jornal do Brasil written in collaboration with some sociologists (JB 29/7/1990 to 3/8/1990).)

of the researcher, as fieldworker and author, in the interpretive exercise in a specific historical (socially and politically) situation (Clifford & Marcus 1986, Geertz 1988, Clifford 1988)). In comparison with most anthropologists, my problems were enlarged because of the size and the nature of the population I was addressing. Rocinha had an estimated population of 150,000 to 200,000.[3] It was also extremely heterogeneous (in terms of people's background and economic capacity), and this was clearly visible to anyone who merely visited the place. It was therefore not a well-defined "community" of which I could get to know a large proportion of its people well. I was dealing with a city-sized population of which all but a tiny part remained anonymous to me.

I did my fieldwork as follows. I contacted a social worker who introduced me to a group of residents by arranging for me to meet them in an action group meeting in Rocinha. At that meeting I expressed a wish to live in Rocinha and several of the groups' members approached me with an interest in my cause and apparent willingness to help me. With their help, finding a suitable place to stay proved easy. There was a wide range of accommodation available to rent. I moved into a 3 by 2 m room on top of a three-story building, with the use of a separate (1 by 2 m) bathroom about a quarter of the way up the hill in the centre of Rocinha. Living there proved difficult, as I faced all the problems these residents usually faced: intense summer heat with little wind, continual plagues of insects of all kinds, chronic water shortage, an almost total lack of privacy and noise from neighbours all around me for a minimum of 20 hours a day, intolerable stench, and especially, fear of drug traffickers who did their business (literally) on my doorstep. Additionally, I suffered (in the first six months especially) from loneliness and anxiety about my role as a researcher, especially in the context of the extremely urgent needs of my surroundings. These problems were painful at the time, but were alleviated as I got more used to them, and (more importantly) as I had some neighbours on whom I could rely for some emotional support as we shared many of these problems.

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[3]See Chapter 1 for the confusion about population figures.

To give myself a role, I worked in various action groups (first daily in one daycare centre, then also in two others (run by very different organisations) on alternate days), getting to know the work and work relations as I became personally involved in all aspects of these groups' activities. Gradually I developed friendships with some of my colleagues who introduced me to their homes, also in other parts of Rocinha. As I familiarised myself with these surroundings, I gradually expanded my horizons both socially and geographically by following up contacts outside this environment. At work in the action groups, I gradually spent more of my time with group members on trips to bureaucratic contacts outside Rocinha, to meetings of other groups and other political events, both in and outside Rocinha, and less time actually working in the groups, while maintaining regular contact. This allowed me to follow up other connections independently to gain access to other parts of Rocinha and zoom into certain events and conflicts from different angles. In this way, towards the end, I spent more time with officials (police, bureaucrats), various kinds of social workers and other shantytown activists.

To all but a tiny proportion of people in Rocinha, I went by unnoticed. Of those I did get to know, some (especially some of my neighbours) regarded me as a potentially useful patron. To some of these, after discovering how little I had to offer, I then became a well-meaning *gringa* (Lit: foreigner, often used in a derogatory way) who either irritated them with continual questioning, amused them when blundering about, or threatened them as I was seen as spying for another group or some external concern. By outside social workers, I was occasionally (especially towards the end) approached to comment on seemingly insolvable problems of group dynamics, and I had to actively stop myself from taking a substantial role in the running of the groups (chairing meetings, organising events, sorting out problems as they arose) and them from delegating these tasks to me. It proved impossible (and undesirable) to take a passive "observer's" role, even in a very minimal sense of the word, and it was difficult to know where to draw the line between responding to the needs of my "informants", and on the other hand doing "what was good" for my job as a researcher.

Becoming personally involved with a selected number of people posed prob-

lems of access to information, especially as the topics I examined were sensitive. The way this shantytown was divided meant that close contact with one group threatened members of another group. In this sense, my activities were restricted, although the size of the place, and my relative anonymity, worked to my advantage in this respect. As I was not restricted to a certain particular informant, I could weave my way into situations through more than one channel. Literary material (biographical accounts, community journals, newspapers) in this respect was also useful to me in overcoming this problem.

There was one additional problem peculiar to my fieldwork which continually plagued me. This was the almost total inaccessibility to inside data about the operation of drug traffickers and leaders' politically sensitive personal contacts with authorities. These, for obvious reasons, were hidden from the public, yet they loomed large in my search for patterns. The traffickers were, for example, a major political force to be reckoned with in Rocinha and I conclude in my study (especially Chapter 8) that every other group had politically consequential connections of the kind mentioned, which they hid from the "public sphere". If an analysis is to attain its desired complexity, it will not do to simply ignore this fact, nor to simplify it by writing up just what was claimed in public. So, I question why I do not know of one study about shantytown politics that addresses the important influence of traffickers in its internal affairs. And, what happened to the widespread gossip about dirty dealing of electoral politics, in these studies? What of the obvious contradictions between rhetoric and practice in the so-called "left-wing" "grassroots" "movements"? Instead, I have made an attempt to accommodate this data seriously and in its entirity. With regards to the traffickers and other "irregular" dealings especially, I have overcome some problems by using supporting material from sources such as popular newspapers, gossip or by speculation based on knowledge of the structural position of the different parties involved. Believing fully in the motto (so well summed up by Barrington Moore) that those in power have a lot to hide, I have also been guided by my "sympathy with the victims of historical processes and scepticism about the victors' claims",

and I have used these emotions, hints and intuition fully as part of my research equipment (Barrington Moore 1966:523).

In the end, the findings with which I came back were full of holes, particularly where it directly involved the traffickers or electoral politics. However, I had a wealth of detail from diverse experiences. From numerous detailed case studies I had gathered, I could later deduce "what must have been the case" to fill in some of the holes. It was this detail (or "deep play", "thick description" (Geertz 1973)) which hinted at patterns which gradually emerged. My research situation in Rocinha was therefore much like the child sitting under the table in one room, trying to understand what went on in the house (Peattie 1968). Comparing the results of this kind of analysis with others, I conclude that this method was at least as valuable and certainly much more comprehensive than that of those who never entered the house at all, but talked to people as they came out (taking Peattie's analogy a little bit further). I opted for working on the bits of which I was sure (and I have acknowledged in my writing where my data came from) and have brought enough detail into my description that the reader can ultimately judge the validity of my case from the internal coherence of the evidence.

Chapter 1

The Context

According to the 1980 census, Rio de Janeiro had a population of over five million. Estimates in 1985 were 5,615,149 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Book of the Year 1987). The Zona Sul (the South Zone) and Centro (Centre) of the city were inhabited by the better off and their main commercial and business activities took place there. These parts are world-famous for their beautiful beaches and many tourists all year round admire the spectacular views over the city from the top of one of many steep green mountains, like the Corcovado (on which the enormous statue of Christ is situated) or Pão de Açucar (the Sugar Loaf Mountain). These parts of the city contrast sharply with the suburbial North, North-West and Eastern zones, which have an industrial character and house the large low-income population in shantytowns and housing estates. Most of their inhabitants commute for several hours daily in overcrowded buses and trains to the Centro and Zona Sul to work.

The steep mountains of the Zona Sul and Centro, however, also house a large number of poorer people. Their shantytown homes are piled up densely against the green and rocky slopes on terrain which was in earlier years considered least suitable for the building of residential apartment blocks. Because these sites were so near the beaches, Rio's best restaurants and other recreational sites, numerous boutiques and shops of all kinds and one of the largest national business centres, their value has become greatly inflated in this desperately overcrowded city. Most

cariocas (Lit: inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro) refer to these with the term *morro* (Lit: hill) or the less specific term *favela* (best translated into shantytown).[1]

Rocinha was one such *morro* in the Zona Sul of Rio de Janeiro. It covered an area of between 450,000 and 550,000 square meters and was situated between the peaks of two neighbouring mountains: Morro Dois Irmãos (which separated Gávea and Alto-Leblon from São Conrado) and Morro do Laboriau (located further into São Conrado) (see Figure 1–1).[2] Rocinha covered the steep North-West slope of Morro Dois Irmãos right down to its foot in São Conrado, and then crawled up the even steeper South-East slope of Morro do Laboriau into a large protected National Park, Floresta de Tijuca. At the bottom of the *morro*, a very busy dual carriage way, providing the link between Leblon/Jardim Botánico and São Conrado/Barra de Tijuca and cutting through Morro Dois Irmãos in two long tunnels, marked the end of Rocinha. Rocinha was therefore most visible from São Conrado and interacted most with its residents. São Conrado spread out West along the dual carriage way, parallel to the beautiful beach, Praia Pepino. São Conrado was a largely residential *bairro* (Lit: district, neighbourhood), relatively recently built and consisted of a long stretch of some of the most luxurious high-rise apartment blocks of Rio de Janeiro. It was also the location of two of Rio's five most expensive hotels (Hotel Nacional and Hotel Intercontinental) situated no more than five minutes walking distance from the bottom of Rocinha. At the top of the *morro*, enormous boulders and a steep rock wall (Pedra Dois Irmãos) provided a natural boundary to Rocinha (see also the topographical map of Rocinha, Figure 1–2). Part of Rocinha spread over the top of the slope connecting the two mountains a little way down the other side into Gávea. Here, its residents were close neighbours with the very affluent mansions of Gávea's richest residents and Rio's

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[1]Some of their residents objected to the use of this last term to describe their neighbourhood since it had negative connotations (see Chapter 4). Since it is the most commonly used term, however, I will use it as a general reference term throughout this thesis.

[2]FEEMA (1980:16) gives 453,440 m^2, while IPLANRIO (1982:4) 543,360 m^2.

Source/Year	Population	Residences	Area in m^2
SMP 1979	97,945	19,589	453,440
SMD 1979	150,000	30,000	
FL XIII 1979	200,000	23,000	
Veja 1978		145,000	
IBGE 1980	32,960	8,453	
IPLANRIO 1981			543,360

Table 1–1: Population Estimates for Rocinha (IPLANRIO 1982:4)

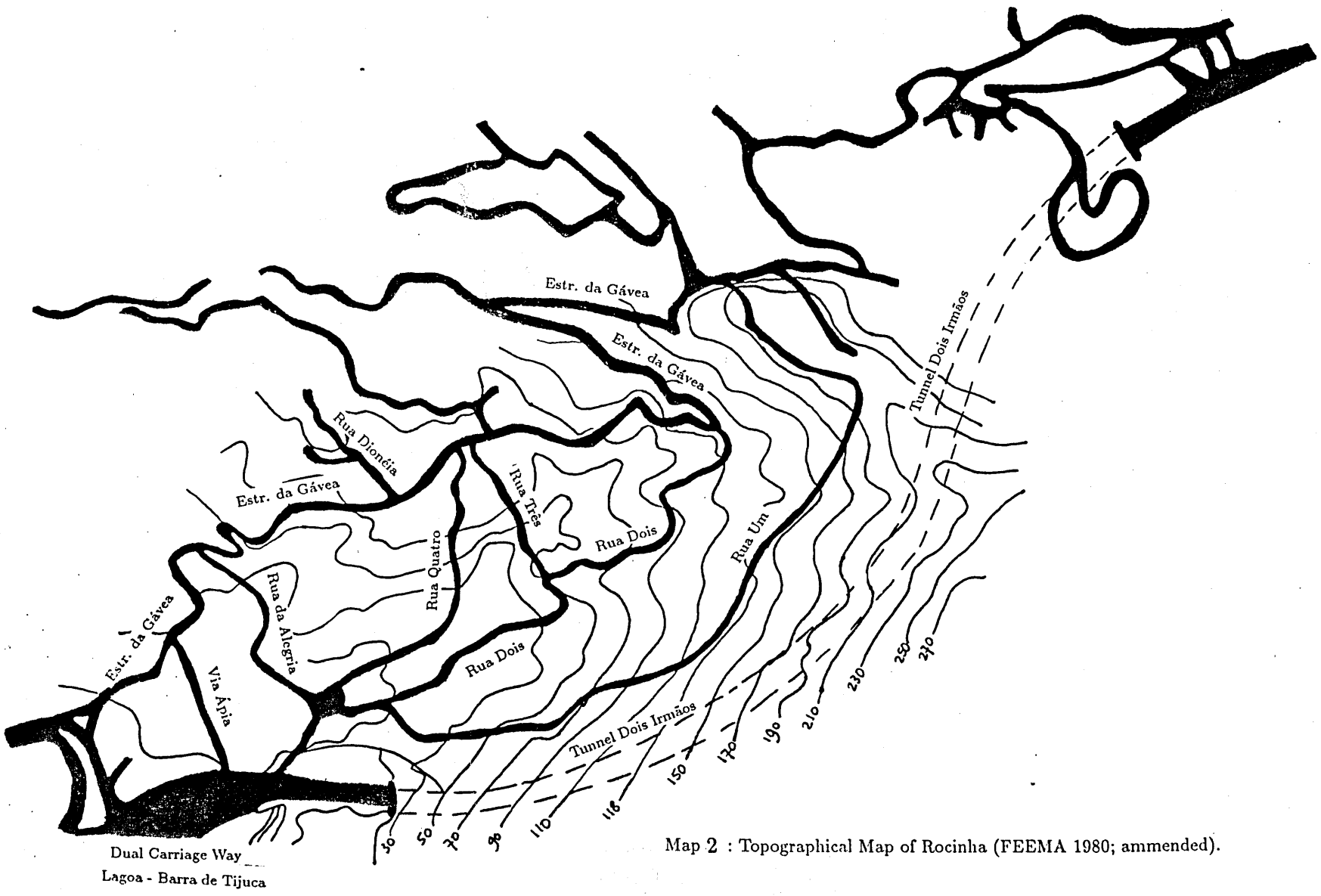
Escola Americana (the American School) with its tennis courts, baseball pitches and outdoor swimming pools.

How many people resided in Rocinha at the time of fieldwork remained unclear. The numbers quoted in the most recent Cadastro das Favelas do Municipio do Rio de Janeiro 043/019 of IPLANRIO (1982) (a municipal organisation whose task it was to survey and compose databases for all *favelas* within the boundaries of the city of Rio de Janeiro) are set out in Table 1–1. These represented the most authoritative sources recorded before 1982, including the estimate taken from the most recent census carried out by IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística) in 1980. IPLANRIO repeated IBGE's conservative estimate of 32,960 in their most recent document on population data of *favelas* in the city of Rio de Janeiro (IPLANRIO 1984), and lists Rocinha here as the largest *favela* in Rio de Janeiro.

To show Rocinha's size relative to other *morros* of the same region of the city for comparison, I have listed the population figures for most of the other *morros* of the Zona Sul in Table 1–2. Since these figures were taken from the same source (IPLANRIO 1984), they can be taken to be roughly equally inaccurate as the figures quoted for Rocinha. From these figures it was clear how much larger Rocinha was than the other *morros* in the Zona Sul. More recent estimates were found in Light's documentation (the company responsible for the installation of electricity networks in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro). Light claimed to have installed a to-

Map I: Rio de Janeiro's Zona Sul and Centro.
The schematic (tourist) view of a small part of the city, showing São Conrado with its mountains Morro do Laboriau and Morro Dois Irmãos, on whose Northern slope (hidden on the map) Rocinha stretches down into São Conrado, climbing up the Southeast side (the visible side on the map) of Morro do Laboriau. It also shows the dual carriage way from São Conrado which passes along the bottom of Rocinha and disappears into Morro Dois Irmãos; the hotels; the Golf Club and Praia Pepino, Rocinha's local beach. Estrada da Gávea appears from behind Morro do Laboriau, on its way down, curving into the hidden wealthiest parts of Gávea behind the lower mountain to the East of Morro do Laboriau. The empty space to the North of Tijuca is deceptive, as the city's less wealthy parts stretch out for many miles in this direction. The map also shows the approximate location of other Zona Sul morros.

SERRA DO MAR
SERRA DOS ORGAOS 818 M
PICO DEDO DE DEUS 910 M
Petrópolis 66 km
Teresópolis 95 km
Subúrbios do Grande Rio
BAÍA DE GUANABARA
Praia da Moreninha
Parque dos Tamoios
Ilha de Paquetá
Aeroporto Internacional
Ilha do Governador
Ponte Rio-Niterói
MARACANÃ
8
5
Av. Rio de Janeiro
Ilha Fiscal
Cascatinha
Floresta de Tijuca
TIJUCA
Rua São Francisco Xavier
Avenida Maracanã
Rua Mariz Barros
Rua Frei Caneca
Rua Estácio de Sá
Av. Salvador de Sá
Av. Presidente Vargas
CENTRO
ESTÁCIO
RIO COMPRIDO
Arcos da Lapa
Teatro Municipal
LAPA
Av. Rio Branco
Aeroport
6
Rua Conde de Bonfim
Rua Haddock Lobo
3
Elev. Paulo de Frontin
Estrada das Furnas
Vista Chinesa
GLÓRIA
Outeiro da Glória
Monumento da II Guerra
Museu de Arte Moderna
LARANJEIRAS
Hotel Glória
7
Barra da Tijuca
Angra dos Reis
Jaguanum
Estrada D. Castorina
Estrada do Redentor
Rua das Laranjeiras
Rua do Catete
Av. Almte Barroso
Av. Dom Henrique
Flamengo
Vila Parque da Cidade
Morro Azul
Morro Santa Marta
BOTAFOGO
Av. Gal Nações
FLAMENGO
Barra Shopping
Vila Canoa
Estrada das Canoas
Estrada da Gávea
Morro do Laboriau
Praia de Botafogo
Rua São Clemente
Rua Voluntários da Pátria
Rua Real Grandeza
Rua Mena Barreto
Rio Sul Shopping Center
Babilônia
Hotel Leme Palace
URCA
2
Hotel Intercontinental
Gávea Golf Club
Hotel Nacional
Rocinha
4
Rua Jardim Botânico
JARDIM BOTÂNICO
LEME
SÃO CONRADO
GÁVEA
Jóquei Clube
Av. Borges de Medeiros
Av. Epitácio Pessoa
Av. Princesa Isabel
Hotel Meridien
Leme
Hotel Sheraton
Estrada Lagoa Barra
Rua Mario Ribeiro
Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas
Hotel Copacabana Palace
H. STERN
Morro Dois Irmãos
Vidigal
Av. Visconde de Albuquerque
Hotel Marina Palace
Av. Bartolomeu Mitre
LEBLON
Cabritos
Lagoa
Rua Siqueira Campos
Rua Figueiredo Magalhães
Pompeu Loureiro
Rua Barata Ribeiro
Rua Santa Clara
Av. Niemeyer
Praça Antero de Quental
Av. Ataulfo de Paiva
Rua Gal. San Martin
Rua Garcia D'Avila
IPANEMA
Praça Eugênio Jardim
Xavier da Silveira
Hotel Othon Palace
Morro do Cantagalo
COPACABANA
Miguel Lemos
Leblon
Av. Delfim Moreira
Hotel Praia Ipanema
Rua Aníbal de Mendonça
Hotel Caesar Park
Rua Visconde de Pirajá
Rua Prudente de Morais
Hotel Sol Ipanema
Av. Vieira Souto
Ipanema
Pal.
Bulhões de Carvalho
Francisco Sá
Rua Raul Pompéia
Av. Nossa Senhora de Copacabana
Av. Atlântica
Copacabana
Av. Rainha Elizabeth
Joaquim Nabuco
Hotel Rio Palace
Arpoador
Forte Copacabana



Map 2 : Topographical Map of Rocinha (FEEMA 1980; ammended).

REGIÃO ADMINISTRATIVA	*FAVELA*	POPULATION
VI Lagoa	Chacara do Céu	655
	Morro do Cantagalo	2,974
	Rocinha	32,966
	Vidigal	5,721
	Vila Parque da Cidade	1,371
V Copacabana	Babilônia	958
	Cabritos	2,306
	Chapéu Mangueira	1,089
	Pavão-Pavãozinho	2,938
IV Botafogo	Morro Santa Marta	5,356
	Morro Azul	844
XXIV Barra da Tijuca	Vila Canoa	780

Table 1–2: Population of Largest *Favelas* in Zona Sul per Região Administrativa (IPLANRIO 1984:14-20) (Most of these *morros* are shown on Figure 1–1.)

tal of 9,634 connections in Rocinha over the years, which they considered to be roughly equal to the total number of residences.[3] The Light director I interviewed, however, was not aware of the scale on which "irregularities" from the old days were still occurring.

Multiplying this number by 7 (which they took to be the average number of occupants per residence), they came to a total population number of around 70,000 to 77,000 for Rocinha. CEDAE (Companhia Estadual de Águas e Esgotos, responsible for the installation of water networks in Rocinha) used Light's number of 9,634 estimated residences, but they multiplied this number by 5 to calculate its population, concluding that it lies around 50,000 (CEDAE 1985:26). Quotes I came across in the media during the time of my fieldwork ranged from 150,000 to 300,000, averaging at about 210,000.

This large variation in population estimates is explained firstly by the difference in the sources and procedures used to obtain the data (aerial photography, different sampling techniques, estimates from data on electricity and water network installations and from claims made by local groups). Disagreements in these calculations occurred about the average number of occupants per residence.[4] Secondly, and more importantly, it is explained by the different purposes which the population numbers were to serve when quoted in combination with the interests of the investigating body by whom the quotation was given. The fact that the quotations from the president of one of Rocinha's Residents Associations varied considerably according to the context in which he was quoting, illustrates what I mean. On one occasion he quoted 150,000 in my presence, warning me that it was

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[3]Quoted in a more recent progress report of PROFACE (Programa de Favelas da CEDAE (CEDAE 1985:26)). PROFACE was created in 1983 to install water networks in some *favelas*.

[4]Whereas IBGE came to a conservative average of 3.9 people per residence for its data on Rocinha (IPLANRIO 1984:15), the number 4.37 was quoted by IPLANRIO as the average number of people per privately owned occupied residence in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro (IPLANRIO 1984:11). In contrast, the Secretaria Municipal do Planejamento (SMP) used an average of 5 people per residence, as did CEDAE (1985), while Fundação Leão XIII used an even higher estimated average of 8.69 (IPLANRIO 1982:4). Light used an average of 7 occupants per residence (personal communication with Light director).

in his interest in this particular situation to provide an underestimated number. On many occasions I heard a number as high as 300,000.

Reconsidering the numbers quoted by government and government-related agencies in this light, and considering the fact that they were considerably out of date given Rocinha's rapid growth in recent years, I suggest that these official numbers were highly underestimated and conclude that they can therefore not be considered as an accurate indicator of Rocinha's population at the time of fieldwork. Judging from the quotations I came across from different sources with different purposes, I would settle for a number somewhere between 150,000 and 200,000.

Rocinha grew to that size mainly because of a dramatic increase in the number of rural Brazilians migrating from relatively underdeveloped parts of Brazil to the more affluent cities. Rio de Janeiro was one of the fastest growing cities in the country. In the period between 1950 and 1960, for example, its population grew with an annual rate of 10.3% (Valladares 1978a). According to Parisse (1969), 7% of this growth occurred in the *favela* population. The large majority of Rocinha's residents had originally come from the Northeast (and particularly from Ceará and Paraíba) but there were also a large number of people from Minas Gerais.

The growth of Rocinha was also caused by the drastic *favela* removal politics which the government implemented especially in the late 1960s. (I elaborate on these policies in Chapters 5 and 6.) Between the years 1962 and 1965, the residences of almost 42,000 people were demolished, and after a period of relative inactivity (from 1965-1968), proposals were drawn up to eliminate all of the remaining *favelas* from the city centre by 1976 in a giant anti-*favela* movement which involved the "resettlement" of a proposed annual average of 92,000 *favelados* (inhabitants of *favelas*). According to COHAB's records, they actually succeeded in removing 97,260 people from 53 different *favelas* in the city centre by March 1974 (Valladares 1978a).

Large low-income housing blocks were built in far away suburbs in which the *favelados* whose houses had been destroyed were meant to be resettled. However, most of these housing projects proved inadequate for their prospective inhabitants'

needs.[5] The ultimate effect was that the remaining *favelas* in the city centre (of which Rocinha was one) grew enormously, and many new *favelas* cropped up in other previously unoccupied parts of the city.[6]

Rocinha's recorded history goes back to the 1920s. At that time, its population was small and its wooden shacks were spread widely over the side of the *morro*, giving it a distinctly rural character. The name "Rocinha" (Lit: little *roça*, *roça* being the Brazilian word for "small garden", "cleared land") was said to stem from the fact that many of its people at the time made a living by growing fruits and vegetables, breeding hens, goats, sheep and even cattle, and selling these products in markets in the city (Varal 1983). The land had little commercial value since the city limits were still a long way away and its main development was in a different direction. In the late 1920s, a company which owned the land made an attempt to divide part of it into plots and sell them to some of their occupants. These were people of low income (small traders and manual workers with jobs in small nearby factories). By the end of the next decade, 80 plots had been sold. However, these sales were not officially recognised by the city administration since there was no urban infrastructure in the area. The only way of access to the area at the time was by an unpaved road, Estrada da Gávea. The company had no means to legalise the situation and when it went bankrupt, and later the owner died, the inheritors lost interest in the land.

When, in 1938, the government decided to asphalt and illuminate Estrada da Gávea (it became part of the public road network), the area rapidly grew

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[5]The most serious complaints were that mortgages were well above what its clientele could afford to pay, the estates were situated far outside the city centre so that the residents had to commute to their work in a transport network which was inadequate as well as very expensive for their small incomes. Basic infrastructure (such as schools, medical facilities, daycare centres, shops, but also sewage drainage, a regular water and electricity supply) was non-existent or else inadequate. The list of serious complaints is long and well documented (e.g. Valladares 1978a, Perlman 1976).

[6]During the years of the government's most intensive removal programmes (1970 to 1974), the number of *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro grew from 162 to 283, while Rio de Janeiro's *favela* population grew by just over 200,000 people. (Data from IBGE and FLXIII quoted in Valladares 1978a:43.)

	1950-60	1960-74	1974-80	1950-80
% of Population Growth	228	128	190	2,070
% of Residences Growth	883	149	160	6,248

Table 1–3: Rocinha's Population Growth between 1950-80 (FEEMA 1980:20)

denser. From the figures listed in Table 1-3, it can be seen how rapidly Rocinha's population grew between the years 1950 and 1980 (Table 1–3).

A big change occurred in 1964, when a company divided part of the area (now known as Bairro Barcelos, situated along the then still non-existent dual carriage way at the bottom of the *morro*) into plots of about 80 square meters and imposed a grid of streets onto it. The plots were sold to individuals, largely poor people who were residing on them at the time. The development of this area was further stimulated by the construction of a tunnel in 1968 through Morro Dois Irmãos to make room for a dual carriage way to link Gávea/Leblon with São Conrado. The immediate consequence of this was the removal of the population settled on this part of the *morro* (known as Pombal at the time).[7] With the construction of the tunnel, Rio de Janeiro's development took off in the direction of São Conrado (and beyond it towards Barra de Tijuca). In 1969, the construction of a luxurious hotel (Hotel Nacional) was a significant mark in its growth in this direction which affected Rocinha. With these developments, the market for jobs (especially in the service and construction industry) grew increasingly and Rocinha especially benefited from this owing to its privileged location. This was also the reason why many households forced to move from other *favelas* in the Zona Sul settled in Rocinha and it accounted for the rate at which it was still growing at the time of fieldwork. At this time, its main commercial centre, until then located along

[7]Many were resettled on the few larger open spaces left further uphill, which were used as public leisure ground (e.g. Rocinha's only football pitch was filled in in this way).

Estrada da Gávea, now gradually shifted towards the area closer to the new dual carriage way.

Most documentation on Rocinha[8] and indeed the residents themselves, talks of Rocinha as consisting of different *bairros* (see Figure 1–3). These *bairros* were named after the original road network which connected different parts of Rocinha. They were further subdivided into smaller areas (e.g. Noventanove and Teirreirão were areas in Rua Um). Their names referred to some physical landmark in or near the area, or some historical event that had taken place in the area (e.g. Faz Depressa (Lit: Do Quickly) referred to a period in which new residents built their huts quickly overnight to avoid the inspection of supervising authorities. Roupa Suja (Lit: Dirty Clothes) referred to the continual lack of water in this area.) They differed, among other things, in density, construction patterns and availability of public services.

But, although heterogeneity was the first characteristic that strikes the visitor to Rocinha, there were also several general characteristics that applied to Rocinha as a whole. As its population settled more or less randomly, controls on settlement imposed by authorities proved largely ineffective (e.g. supervising bodies were bribed and settlements were constructed over night out of sight of the supervising bodies (see Chapters 5 and 6)). As a result, the area rapidly transformed into an enormous mass of houses, constructed chaotically around each other. The original road network which gave access from Estrada da Gávea (Rua Um (Lit: Street One), Dois (Two), Três (Three) and Quatro (Four)) were transformed out of all recognition from main *ruas* (streets) into small *becos* (alleyways) varying on average from 1 to 2 meters in width, becoming part of an enormous labyrinth. In most places one was obliged to walk in single file and squeeze to let oncomers go by. Only those that were thoroughly familiar with a certain area could avoid

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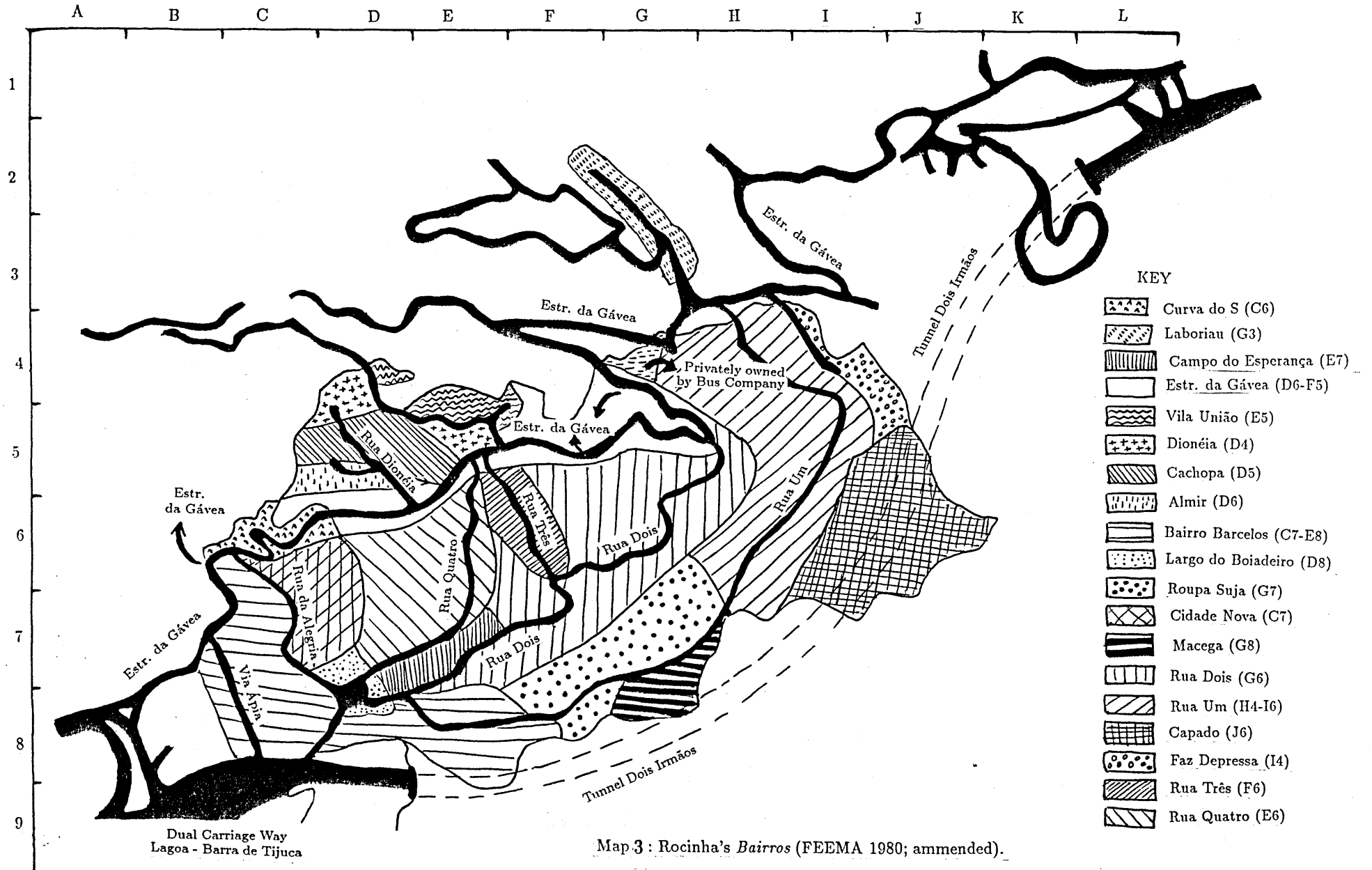
[8]A list of documentation about Rocinha is listed separately in the Bibliography.



Map 3 : Rocinha's *Bairros* (FEEMA 1980; ammended).

getting stuck in dead-end *becos* and circling around trying to find a way out. Most *ruas* were transformed in this way.[9]

There was therefore no vehicular access to most of Rocinha. As firebrigades were also barred from entering, this obviously posed a severe security threat. During fieldwork, a large number of houses burned down on several occasions as people watched helplessly, and, at the time many talked about a similar incident a few years before. This also created obstacles to proposals for large infrastructural improvements, as it prevented the entry of building equipment and, besides, there was no room to build any structures without the removal of a large number of existing houses.[10] The lack of vehicular access also meant that people were restricted to walking, except for along one direction; along the side of Rocinha, Estrada da Gávea. Since 1965, an extremely overcrowded bus ran along Estrada da Gávea (a badly paved road with many sharp S-curves, starting at the bottom of the hill in São Conrado, climbing steeply along the North-West side of Rocinha, over the top of the hill down into Gávea on the other side) to the city centre.

The most serious problem resulting from the lack of vehicular access into Rocinha was the presence of household waste. A small number of waste containers (*lixeiros*) were only recently provided along main roads in Bairro Barcelos and along Estrada da Gávea. These were emptied infrequently and served for the whole population of Rocinha. In practice, they were located too far for most residents (some areas were as much as 15 minutes walk from a main road of access). As a result, waste was dumped on unoccupied terrain (under and between the houses) piling up over time. Rocinha's population was therefore continually

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[9]The upper half of Rua Dois and Bairro Barcelos, at the bottom of the hill, which still offered vehicular access into a part of Rocinha, were an exception to this.

[10]For example, when the government built a sewage canal through Campo do Esperança in 1981, the residences of 76 families, most of whom were small traders, had to be removed. After a long protest campaign (these families were not easily going to give up their houses and livelihoods), they managed to persuade the government to rehouse these people in Rocinha, in the forest at the highest point of Estrada da Gávea, later known as Laboriau. Seventy six units were built (and rebuilt after some of them fell down in landslides) and finally inaugurated in 1982.

plagued by the strong stench of household waste rotting in the hot sun, blocking drains (causing serious flooding and the consequent mud slides in some parts of Rocinha in which houses fell over like stacks of cards in times of heavy rains), attracting vermin (enormous rats and infestations of insects of all kinds). In recent years, the waste removal company (COMLURB) employed a small team of local workers to remove rubbish from public spaces around the *lixeiros* (where the waste was especially a problem to the local residents). However, their workload far exceeded their capacity and the equipment they had available to do their job was inadequate. Another small attempt to alleviate this waste problem was made a few years ago, when the government built an "*elevador do lixo*" (Lit: elevator for waste) a conveyor-belt-like system to transport waste in buckets from the highest part of Roupa Suja (one particularly high and problematic *bairro*) down to be emptied into the waste containers at the bottom of the *morro*. In the past, residents aware of the hygiene and other hazards of the abundance of this uncollected waste, had made attempts to organise clean up campaigns in some areas. However, it was soon recognised that a problem of this size and nature could not be handled in this way; the problem is insolvable without the regular access of vehicles to empty *lixeiros* regularly in all parts of Rocinha.

Claims by development reports and community workers that inadequate facilities for rubbish disposal account for the extremely high infant mortality rates in shantytowns, were visibly substantiated. Infants crawled along filthy alleyways and local rubbish dumps were practically the only open spaces for slightly older children to play. There were always some individuals (frequently small children) sifting through waste left in public spaces and at *lixeiros* in search for usable scraps and/or edible remains.

Vehicular access was also the key to the solution for many other problems. This was particularly clear when looking at Bairro Barcelos, at the bottom of the hill, which contrasted sharply with the rest of Rocinha. Vehicular access to this *bairro* existed at several points. In almost all respects it was much better serviced

in terms of infrastructure than other areas.[11] The grid of streets (laid out by the above-mentioned company in 1964) had been roughly preserved and, at the time of fieldwork some of these streets were still wide enough for access with small cars in one direction and there were even two badly paved main streets, which provided direct access from Estrada da Gávea and the dual carriage way. In single file, even small trucks could pass along these main streets. This had facilitated the construction of higher buildings, the installation of water and electricity networks, the digging of drains and other infrastructure. Partly for this reason too, Bairro Barcelos had become Rocinha's centre of commercial activities: there was a large variety of shops (bakeries, small supermarkets, shops selling clothes, furniture and construction materials, butchers, barbers, a newsagent, several garages and numerous *biroscas* (Lit: bars, cafés)). Every Sunday morning, market stalls selling fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, fish, clothes and religious articles filled up the narrow muddy main street.

As a result, in recent years Bairro Barcelos had grown vertically in a dramatic way. Increasing demand for accommodation encouraged many residents to expand their houses to rent out parts of it, and some individuals took the opportunity to develop this into a large-scale profitable business (JB 24/11/1985). The highest apartment block in Bairro Barcelos reached 7 floors at the time of fieldwork, while their average height was around 2-3 floors in this part of Rocinha. According to the secretary of AMABB (the Residents Association of Bairro Barcelos), an estimated 85 to 90% of the population of Bairro Barcelos lived in rented accommodation and its population was thus highly mobile. The area was said to accommodate about 10 to 15% of Rocinha's population.

This had also allowed Bairro Barcelos to negotiate the regularisation of its land titles (AMABB was looking into this problem at the time of fieldwork). In recent

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[11]The differences between the different *bairros* could also partly be explained by their topographical characteristics. While some of Rocinha's terrain was very steep (elevation levels varied from 10 to 235 m), it also had some level areas, which facilitated the construction of infrastructural facilities. Without vehicular access, however, these possibilities were much more restricted (see Figure 1–2).

years, pressure groups had pressed for the need to grant *favelados* an official title to their land, since the sales contracted in 1964 were not officially recognised. Many legal obstacles had to be resolved before such process could begin. For example, local and national laws about the minimum width of the streets, certain building requirements, minimum size of plots in Rocinha, requirements of infrastructural facilities (including water and electricity, drainage of sewage, public illumination, vehicular access, and public services such as a school per certain number of people, public telephones and medical facilities) had to be wholly or partly revised. The regulations which dictated tax contributions, also presented a major problem for Rocinha in this respect, as it was located in an affluent residential area where rates were well above what *favelados* could afford. Although still a long way from being "regularised", Bairro Barcelos was less problematic to authorities in these respects than the rest of Rocinha, which in turn encouraged them to press ahead with their demands.[12] So, for example, an electricity network covered the whole of Bairro Barcelos, and Light had also installed public illumination in this area, unlike in the rest of Rocinha, where the residents themselves were responsible for installing lights to illuminate their public spaces.[13] Most of the public telephones were also installed here (there were three in Bairro Barcelos). The others were found along Estrada da Gávea and one along Rua Dois. Most of the time, however, none of them were in working order.[14] As the first *bairro* of Rocinha, Bairro Barcelos also received a piped water system to each house. Its residents supplied CEDAE with

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[12]According to the president of AMABB, the owners of about 30% of the property in Bairro Barcelos had already started paying *imposto predial* (Lit: tax on buildings) and *imposto territorial* (land tax i.e. equivalent to the British rates system), while AMABB was negotiating arrangements for amnesty for those that had not started to contribute in time and would have to pay large amounts.

[13]The cost of this, however, was added onto the residents' electricity bills which was not the case for the residents of other *bairros* of Rio de Janeiro.

[14]I have noted the importance of a telephone for Rocinha's residents as a way of contacting officials outside the *favela* (e.g. about job applications, information about funding and meetings), especially in the face of its isolation from Rio's administrative and commercial centre and the expense of local transport for a low-income population (see Chapter 4).

all the material needed for the extension of the existing network from São Conrado in 1977.[15]

Rocinha's second major problem was water provision for the rest of the shantytown. Until 1981, people in the largest part of Rocinha relied on various natural springs and wells dug at several points by the residents themselves, supplying them with water which people knew to be contaminated. At the bottom of the hill, some individuals clandestinely extended the network from Bairro Barcelos after 1977. Those individuals were known to charge extortionate prices (and cut off those that refused or could not afford to pay), and were widely condemned at the time (see Chapters 5 and 6). After much pressure group activity, the government finally installed a temporary network which consisted of a few public water points (*bicas públicas*) in 1982, located along Estrada da Gávea and Rua Um and Dois. Later that year, they succeeded in the approval of a project which would extend this provisional network to cover interior parts of the *morro* including Rua Três and Quatro. Residents themselves, in voluntary workgroups, then worked to extend this network of *bicas públicas* to supply water directly into people's houses in these areas, as well as extend it to areas so far not covered further into the *morro*.

In this same way, at the initiative of one resident, another independent network was installed in Rua Quatro and Cidade Nova (both very densely populated areas) to solve the desperate shortages in these areas. A large reservoir was built and daily filled up by CEDAE water trucks from outside. This system was privately owned and operated, and again high rates were charged to the users of this highly unreliable service. During the time of my fieldwork, CEDAE was working on a project to solve some of these problems by extending the existing network to cover the houses of about 35,000 people (with about 7,000 connections). Again, this was

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[15]According to CEDAE (in a progress report of PROFACE (CEDAE 1985)), a total of around 2,000 water connections were installed in Bairro Barcelos then, serving a population of around 20,000 people. If these figures were correct, the population of Rocinha would fall between 150,000 and 200,000, taking Bairro Barcelos to accommodate around 10 to 15% of Rocinha's population.

a contract between CEDAE and the residents of the area themselves who had to pay a negotiated sum of money over the period of one year in monthly installments.

Many problems seriously disrupted the working of these improvised uncoordinated water networks. There were cases of water *donos* (Lit: owners; exploiters selling water to third parties) and the absence of a supervising body to maintain these precarious systems which led to much water going to waste. In some cases the leaks caused serious long-term flooding of areas downhill.

By the end of my fieldwork, there were still some areas of Rocinha outside the reach of these partial "solutions". The residents of the highest parts of Cachopa and Rua Dionéia, for example, were still relying mainly on public water *bicas* and natural springs in the area. The precariousness of these networks also meant a continual shortage of water in most areas throughout Rocinha. Even in the areas which were supposed to be "regularised" as far as CEDAE was concerned (such as the area in which I lived), the number of users far outweighed the capacity of the system, resulting in long times of the day in which there was no water at all. There were weeks during which we had to get up during the night (2-5 a.m.) to take a shower or collect water for cooking and washing. These experiences taught me that the importance of an adequate water supply in this context (of extreme heat and population density) cannot be overestimated. These problems were also common for Bairro Barcelos' residents whose water supply was erratic since the system was not built to support so many users, and especially not to accommodate the irregular extensions. It was a great deal better supplied than many other areas of Rocinha, though.

The *bairros* of Rocinha can thus be described with reference to their location in relation to the main roads of access which largely determined the extent to which they were serviced. The *bairros* just above Bairro Barcelos (known as Cidade Nova and Rua Quatro) were, after Bairro Barcelos, the most densely populated areas of Rocinha. This was obviously due to their privileged location; next to Estrada da Gávea, and at the same time close to the bottom of Rocinha which gave them easy access to the services of São Conrado (the supermarket, the bus stops, the beach). Except for a few large trees, greenery had largely disappeared in this area, making

room for the construction of houses and narrow, concreted steep pathways. These *bairros* were characterised by a mixture of different types of housing, largely brick, but still some remaining wooden constructions. Most buildings were several floors high and here also a large (unknown) percentage of the population lived in rented accommodation. Serious flooding in the area had been mostly resolved by the digging of drains, largely done by voluntary work groups in the mid-1970s.

In the same way, the poorest areas of Rocinha (Roupa Suja and Macega) were situated furthest away from access by Estrada da Gávea, on very steep terrain above the mouth of the tunnel. Roupa Suja could only be reached through long, steep and slippery narrow paths. Only recently has the construction of steep narrow concrete steps facilitated direct access to these areas. The areas still had a large number of wooden houses, whose height in the highest parts of the area, did not exceed one floor. The lower parts of the area were densely populated, with *becos* narrower than in most parts of Rocinha. Most were still unpaved and hence bumpy and slippery (from free-flowing waste water). Its water supply was irregular and did not cover the whole area and many people were still relying on water from *bicas públicas* (those installed by CEDAE in 1982) or natural springs and contaminated wells dug by the residents themselves.

The *bairros* situated nearest to the rock top of Morro Dois Irmãos (Capado and the higher parts of Rua Um) were furthest away in terms of access from the main roads. Some of these areas were some 20 minutes walk from Estrada da Gávea or Bairro Barcelos. Consequently, they still retained their relatively rural character. Many larger wooden constructions, some of them with small gardens, still existed in these areas, and some rearing of animals (chickens, a goat) was even visible. Some of the residents of the higher parts of Rua Um looked out over the top of the *morro* East over Rio de Janeiro, a spectacular view across the beaches. At this altitude a fresh wind blew, unlike the other parts of Rocinha further downhill where the lack of ventilation led to humidity (the cause of serious respiratory problems for many people), the presence of a constant suffocating bad smell, and intense heat exacerbated through the absorption of the concrete structures and the lack of trees which provided natural shade from the hot sun. Due to their

location, waste disposal in these areas was a major problem. At several places large dumps were growing on unoccupied terrain, too steep for other purposes. These greener areas also attracted many mosquitos which were a serious health hazard to the residents. These areas, extremely steep in places, were also most vulnerable to dangerous mudslides. Water here was gathered mainly from natural sources and public taps lower down the hill. As one approached Estrada da Gávea from here, the area (known as Rua Um) became more densely populated and the constructions were higher and largely brick. Vertical expansion was more frequently seen and the area closest to the main road was another secondary commercial centre of Rocinha. Shops of all kinds lined its most frequented *becos* on both sides.

As a general rule, therefore, the further away from access roads, the less dense the population, the lower the buildings, the more variety in their construction materials, and the less greenery. Also, as a rule, these areas had the poorer population and were the least well serviced. These rules applied also to the centre of Rocinha.[16]

The areas along the North-West side of Estrada da Gávea, built into the Floresta da Tijuca (Cachopa, Vila União, Almir and Dionéia), had been steadily growing vertically in recent years, even though their terrain rose steeply. The buildings were largely brick and the areas were fairly densely populated. Again this could be partly explained by the fact that they were partly accessible by small vehicles by steep badly paved roads branching off Estrada da Gávea. Their highest parts were not covered by the existing water networks. The residents relied on

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[16]Rua Dois, for example, had a main road of access from Estrada da Gávea, which allowed small vehicles in for a small distance. That part of Rua Dois was therefore more densely populated and constructions were generally higher. Some small traders serving the local population operated in the area. In the lower, poorer parts of Rua Dois (Campo do Esperança), there was a high diversity of buildings. Some parts of the area were much like Roupa Suja, in that *becos* were narrow and difficult to walk, largely unpaved, and lined with large quantities of waste. Campo do Esperança was largely flat and situated near the bottom of the *morro*. However, its topography and location within Rocinha meant that it seriously flooded each year at times of rain. The building of a large sewage canal in 1981 (mentioned above) solved this problem only in some parts of the area.

natural springs and/or *bicas públicas* located further downhill along Estrada da Gávea. There was confusion about rights to settlement in this part of Rocinha, which caused violent conflicts in the past (see Chapters 5 and 6) and was still a long way from being resolved.

This rough sketch of Rocinha's physical context gives us some important provisional clues about its political organisation. One major point to note is its marginality. Its location (it stood so visibly apart from its affluent neighbours) and size partly accounts for its isolation from official structures in Rio de Janeiro. It was an anomaly in almost all respects. Its almost total lack of infrastructure violated all local specifications and most of its inhabitants did not have access to state education, health provision and other services, including policing and other state institutions to keep "order". To fill these gaps, some of Rocinha's people mobilised themselves periodically to protest against these desperate deficiencies in basic services. Officially, the burden of this was supposed to fall on the Residents Association (it was formed at the initiative of the government in the early 1960s (see Chapters 5 and 6)), which were held accountable by the authorities for the *favelas*' political organisation and other matters of internal order. One would assume that this common marginality to the establishment, would provide the basis for a certain political unity of this population.

However, we have also seen from this sketch (and this is the second major point to note), the appearance of heterogeneity within Rocinha, and the resulting different priorities of political demands. The population of different *bairros* was faced with very different problems according to the topographical characteristics and spatial arrangements of the terrain on which it was located (e.g. possibility for vehicular access and distance from main access roads) and each had developed within these limits. Thus, while Bairro Barcelos' population's main preoccupation was now with land titles, rent controls and the safety of high building structures, people in Macega were struggling with chronic water shortages, mosquito control and mudslides. These different pressures predictably encouraged political divisions within this population which, as will be clear below, were enforced by the structure of external resources which they confronted.

A third point that comes out of this superficial description, is Rocinha's economic heterogeneity expressed in the diversity of the building structures visible in Rocinha, among other things. People's economic well-being is a point which needs closer examination since, for obvious reasons, it is of crucial importance to their political potential.

In general terms, Rocinha's location was privileged economically, in that it was very close to an area of Rio de Janeiro where the demand for jobs of all kinds was high. Rocinha could be seen as an infinite supply of cheap labour, readily available to the neighbouring residential and commercial areas. In this respect, Rocinha's population represented the elite of Rio's "urban poor". Detailed information on the occupational structure and standard of living of Rocinha's population at the time of fieldwork was not available to me. The only survey I came across that included economic data was a questionnaire distributed in 1980 by a group working for FEEMA (FEEMA 1980).[17] Its results confirmed many claims generally held about Rocinha. For example, that its working population was mainly employed in the tertiary sector (service industry and commerce). In the questionnaire, the occupations most frequently mentioned included: salesperson, construction worker, porter/nightwatchman, hairdresser, a job in transport (like taxidriver, bus driver, mechanic), in private residence (like nanny, gardener, driver, cleaner, cook), in the catering industry and hotels, in a shop, in an office (like cleaner, servant) or as a *biscateiro* (a general term to describe someone who is self-employed doing a large range of odd jobs (e.g. ranging from sweets salesperson to self-employed decorator)). This term could therefore include many of the above mentioned occupations and the phrasing of the questionnaire was confusing at this point.

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[17]The questionnaire was drawn up for a project which aimed towards the elimination of the large rat population in a particular area of Rocinha. It only covered 91 houses situated in specific *becos* in Rua Dois, Três and Quatro, Campo do Esperança and Bairro Barcelos, the areas in which the project was intended to be implemented. No families from the higher situated and generally poorer areas of Rocinha were therefore included in the questionnaire.

Those with a guaranteed salary in the tertiary sector were entitled to at least one *salário mínimo* (Lit: minimum salary). The *salário mínimo* was first determined in Brazil by president Vargas in 1940 and was defined to be " ... a minimum pay owed to every full-time adult worker, to satisfy his/her normal needs of food, housing, clothing, hygiene, and transport." (Saboia 1985:19).[18] The item food was calculated on the basis of a determined list of products from different nutritional groups, forming essential elements in the diet of one adult for one month. In the calculations of the *salário mínimo* 50 to 60% of the total monthly pay was reserved for this item (Saboia 1985:27).

The low salaries of Rocinha's main income providers, meant that the largest part of their income was normally spent on essential domestic items. After bus fares to and from work and some pocket money had been deducted, there remained little to spend on household materials.[19] In households with monthly incomes, monthly supplies of staple foods and a few essential cleaning materials were often bought when the salary came in and it was then the mother's responsibility to make sure that supplies lasted until the end of the month.[20] Highly valued staple foods such as rice, beans (*comida forte* (Woortmann 1986)), cooking oil, sugar and salt[21] were purchased first. Part of the rest was kept aside to buy essentials like milk, bread, margarine, a few cloves of garlic, or an onion to season the rice and beans, a few eggs or some common fruits (like oranges and bananas). Extras, like

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[18]Note that the needs of his/her family were not mentioned and not included in the calculation of its total value.

[19]Note Chant's comments on the inegalitarian distribution of income within the household due to the male's control over his earnings (Chant 1985a). There was ample evidence that this also happened in Rocinha and also that female income providers were guilty of appropriating a disproportionate share of the household's total income (see also Chapter 2).

[20]For *diaristas* dependent on irregular daily incomes, budgeting became even more difficult. Moreover, *diaristas* lost also out because they were forced to buy staple foods in smaller quantities and therefore at higher prices.

[21]Coffee prices had risen so sharply that coffee was considered a luxury item. For most it was replaced with *mate* (a green tea) taken with large amounts of sugar.

potatoes, *aipim* (mandioca), or other vegetables were only considered when the budget allowed more generous spending, or for the special Sunday lunch, when even a bit of chicken, second-rate beef or a sausage could be included.

Any remaining income had to cover the gas supply (for cooking), the electricity bill or other household items essential for the running of the house (e.g. matches, lightbulb, other repairs and replacements). More personal items (e.g. clothing) for dependents of the household, including the sick, elderly, small children or temporary dependents from other households were generally included as a lower priority, and those considered capable of earning their own wages were expected to cover those costs themselves. I examine the distribution of income from different earners below.

The acquisition of highly valued domestic electrical appliances (refrigerator, TV, iron, liquidiser, stereo equipment, in that order) required careful planning over a long time. They could be bought on credit at extremely high interest rates. They were proudly exhibited in the livingroom, where guests were received and neighbours could look in. Often, the household head saved money for these items by secretly putting some aside from the monthly budget (into a savings account, or simply hidden in the house) or even by taking on extra temporary work. The little money saved this way also had to cover emergencies which were a regular occurrence in the average household's life. The threat of running short before the end of the month was very real, considering the tightness of the budget for most households. Supplementary expenses easily left holes in the carefully planned budget and often resulted in the foregoing of food which made up by far the largest part of the budget for many. In this light, the idea of going hungry towards the end of the month as a reality for many, becomes easily understandable.

Over the years, the real value of the *salário mínimo* fluctuated according to the policies of successive governments and the bargaining power of the trade unions. The purchase value of the current *salário mínimo* was considerably smaller than it was at the time of its installation (Saboia 1985). During the time of fieldwork, the *salário mínimo* in Rio de Janeiro was readjusted every six months (in May and November) roughly in line with the inflation rate. In March 1986, however, the

Sarney government overnight implemented O Plano Cruzado, declaring the annual inflation rate to be zero on March, 1 1986, and replacing the national currency (the Cruzeiro) by the new Cruzado (worth 1,000 Cruzeiros). All prices were frozen. The *salário mínimo* was fixed at $Cz 800 (the average rate it would have gone to three months before, if it had been kept in line with inflation) while prices were frozen at their current rate (Folha de São Paulo 1/3/1986). Additionally, as a result of the freezing of the prices, many products (e.g. milk and meat) rapidly disappeared from the market, creating urgent shortages and a growing black market to substitute the missing products at much inflated prices.

The argument that the minimum salary was merely a standard, but, in practice, people earned multiples of the minimum salary, was true for some I knew, but was certainly not the rule. Many of my friends were *biscateiros*, whose income was extremely irregular and hard to define in terms of minimum salaries. Other informants, such as the coordinators of the action groups, raised their salaries to the equivalent of one minimum salary per month during the time that I was there. Their economic well-being, however, varied considerably, since some were the only income provider in their household (some with many dependents), while others had earning partners. Even in the last case, however, they were visibly struggling to make ends meet. It becomes obvious that the number of income earners in each household was therefore a crucial determinant of its well-being.

The survey mentioned above supplied figures on the number of income providers in the households it interviewed. It found just over two people per residence to be working.[22] These figures are problematic, in that they do not mention the fact that there may be members of the household contributing to the total budget irregularly (e.g. small children who make a little money by doing odd jobs like watching cars, washing the windscreens, polishing shoes, selling sweets at the doors of cinemas, theatres, traffic lights or on city buses, sorting and selling waste (paper, iron, wood or food) or simply begging). Such occupations could be described by

[22]Out of total 435 residents (living in 91 houses or 4.8 per house) interviewed, 189 people were found to be working (FEEMA 1980:99-100).

the term "*biscateiro*" by some respondents, and included in the total number of "workers" of the household in the above figure, while not by others. This data alone also tells us little about the size of the households' total income. More specific information is needed on the type of work people engaged in, especially seeing how variable this was within this economic sector.

As far as the number of income earners per household went, the main income provider of the household was usually considered to be the male head of the household if present. His female partner and others in the household worked outside the house ideally only at times when his income could not cover expenses, which was the case in many households, and the income they contributed (even if significant in proportion to total household earnings) was considered to be mere *ajuda* (Lit: help) (also confirmed by other authors such as Woortmann (1986)). (See also Chapter 2 on the division of labour within households.) The number of earners in the household was obviously also affected by the availability of work, and the economic recession resulted in the general public claim that work was not easily available at the time of fieldwork (less easily than, for example, in 1980, when the survey was done). Looking for work was expensive and time-consuming and a frequent topic of conversation. According to my neighbour, a respected spiritual consultant in the area, a large number of his clients came to him in search for spiritual help for this difficult task of finding regular employment. The claim that people's standard of living had been falling sharply over recent years as a result of the scarcity of decent jobs, or work at all, was frequently expressed.

Additionally, there was another important complicating factor affecting the economic well-being of Rocinha's people. This was the number of dependents, which varied considerably from time to time within each household. This was partly because the Brazilian state's support for the disabled, elderly, orphans, unemployed or others unable to provide for themselves reached very few individuals in the lower economic sectors, and these were usually provided for within a local structure (family or neighbourhood). Support for the unemployed, for example, was still non-existent, though in discussion at the time of fieldwork. However,

even under the proposed scheme only very few of the total number of people out of work in Rocinha would qualify for this benefit.

Additionally, many of Rocinha's main income providers were *diaristas*, i.e. they worked for daily wages with no long-term contract or job guarantees of any kind. Their wages were low and irregular and they often worked longer hours than those on a more regular monthly income. Since each day off was at the cost of a total loss of income for that day, these were minimised (this included the weekends). In times of special need there were often no reserves to draw on, since working hours and other resources had already been maximised to get by during normal times. At such times, they became temporarily dependent on other households. These times (such as sickness, causing possible loss of income as well as medical expenses, or temporary unemployment, causing loss of income as well as extra bus fares and other resources looking and applying for jobs) were common for households in Rocinha. Health problems, for example, were very common and were not surprising considering the lack of sanitation, the demanding workload to which the workers were submitted daily and their often limited diet (Bohadana et al. 1983). Temporary unemployment was also a consequence of the structure of the labour market for this population. For most, there was an almost total lack of job security (e.g. Johnson & Bernstein 1982).

Total household income and the number of dependents was also largely related to the household's stage in the lifecycle. (This has been recognised in the literature (e.g. Murphy & Selby 1985; Selby et al. 1981)). For example, a family with small children tie the mother to the home, preventing her from contributing financially. As children grow older, they could themselves start earning to contribute to their upkeep. As they become teenagers, they were expected to make contributions to the household budget. The household then entered a phase of relative affluence, lasting until children left their parents' home to set up their own. The case study below is an example of a family going through that stage. It also illustrates the relative contribution from different income earners in a household and the allocation of responsibilities of household matters.

Sergio [fictitious name] is 22 and works in an administrative job in

> one of Rio's most expensive hotels. He lives with both of his parents, his two sisters and his girlfriend. His father is a chauffeur for a foreign diplomat; his younger sister (10) is still at school, his older sister (24) works in a supermarket and her 3 year-old daughter lives with them too. His girlfriend (19) works part-time in a restaurant and studies at night. Sergio has been trying to save enough to set up house with his girlfriend for a number of years. They have already acquired several pieces of second hand furniture, now in use in Sergio's parents' house. Although he does not pay his parents for rent or board, he does make contributions towards the purchase of larger household items and bills. He and his father discuss together the purchase of larger items, needed urgently (e.g. a large saucepan, a reserve gas tank for cooking, a new shower head). On his own initiative, he will also occasionally treat the household to luxury items such as a chicken for a Sunday lunch, or a bottle of shampoo for his mother. His mother will sometimes approach him for extras (bus fares to appointments in hospital, a school book for his younger sister, part of the electricity bill), when his father's salary has fallen short. He covers his own more personal expenses (clothes, bus fares) and subsidises his girlfriend's studies as much as he can. The main income provider of the family is considered his father, whose entire salary (not exceeding Sergio's) goes towards the running of the house. His older sister's lower wages go towards her own personal expenses (bus fares, clothes), while the rest is spent on further maintenance of her child (medication, toys, clothes).

There were other complicating factors affecting household income, not accounted for by figures such as those presented in the questionnaire results. For example, one way in which many people of Rocinha contributed to their earnings, was by investing their savings into expanding their property, parts of which they sold or rented out to others, as I mentioned above. Some individuals (in Bairro Barcelos especially) did this on a large scale. Many buildings were transformed into large blocks subdivided into *quartos* (rooms), *kitchenetes* (bedsits), or *apartamentos* (flats) which were rented out individually. Most *kitchenetes* I visited consisted of one room (measuring about 3 by 4 m or smaller) with built-in sink ("kitchen") and access to "bathroom" (a space of about 1.5 to 2 m^2 with fitted WC and sometimes shower point above it) sometimes shared with others. This type of accommodation was commonly rented by young families with small children. *Quartos* were cheaper and often smaller with no private water supply. There were no controls over the rent charged for such accommodation, and the monthly rates had been rising sharply in response to the acute shortage of low-

income housing especially in the centre of Rio de Janeiro. Indeed, rent rises had been so steep that this type of accommodation (especially *kitchenetes*) was not affordable to the poorest of Rocinha.[23] Additional difficulties were the requirement of the two to three month deposit paid at entry, and commonly contracts ran to a maximum of six months after which they had to be renewed and thus monthly rates could rise indiscriminately. Needless to say, the quality of most of this type of accommodation left much to be desired and offered tenants no security of any kind.

Whether or not one owned or rented what kind of property in Rocinha, therefore greatly affected one's living standard. As a general rule, recent arrivals got the worst deals. They were vulnerable to being forced into renting the worst quality of accommodation at extortionate rates. Some of those who had arrived early in Rocinha's history had had the opportunity to expand their property, either to accommodate relatives, and/or to rent it out temporarily for extra income. The uncontrolled rises in rent charged in Rocinha were visibly giving rise to a process of substituting the poorest population by a slightly better off one, especially in the better serviced *bairros* like Bairro Barcelos and along Estrada da Gávea where most of the residents rented their accommodation. In the rest of Rocinha, this same trend was becoming apparent, although recently small property owners opted increasingly for selling their property or part of it (as opposed to renting it out), since the payment of rent at these rates could never be guaranteed.[24]

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[23]The monthly rate commonly charged for a *kitchenete* in Bairro Barcelos (the main rental market in Rocinha), was about $Cz 400 to $Cz 600 (equivalent to 1/2 to 3/4 monthly minimum salaries). Larger *apartamentos* were rented out for as much as $Cz 800 to $Cz 900, while there were also cheaper *quartos* available for about $Cz 300 to $Cz 400.

[24]These practices added up to an extremely complex property "ownership" structure. The building in which I stayed, for example, was three stories high and had been expanded vertically by the original owner who lived on the ground floor with a brother and nephew who shared a bed (they worked on alternate shifts) in a temporary arrangement. The rest of the ground floor was rented out to a couple with a child. The first floor was bought by another couple, and at the top, there were two small rooms of which I rented one, and a tiny bathroom. My immediate neighbour was an elderly person who had been staying there rent-free (as a respected religious expert and friend of the owner) for some

The two main messages we get from this rather rough sketch of various factors which affected people's economic well-being, were firstly, that although we were dealing with a relatively privileged population of urban poor within Rio de Janeiro, the general level of income was low, had been falling, and except for a few extremely rich individuals (e.g. those who cashed in on the property market), it was a daily struggle to make ends meet for most.

On the other hand, within this general characterisation, it was also very clear that Rocinha was extremely heterogeneous economically. The large range of jobs in which its population engaged accounted partly for this high degree of economic diversity. Living conditions ranged from an economic situation commonly associated with the lowest middle classes in Brazil to one of absolute poverty and very serious deprivation. This heterogeneity was immediately visible from the different types and sizes of the houses one found in Rocinha (brightly painted and sometimes externally tiled bungalows visibly equipped with electrical appliances, were situated next to heavily overcrowded shaky wooden structures). And from the different ways in which the inhabitants dressed (fashion-conscious cheap imitations of middle-class dress walked next to bare-footed ragged individuals) relative affluence was obvious. It was also obvious from the development of specialised commerce (like the beauty parlours, newsagent, furniture shops, the large range of goods one could buy in the grocery stores and stalls) in parts of Rocinha.

Like any establishment of this size and heterogeneity, Rocinha had also developed a job market of its own, and a considerable number of people found ways of making a living inside Rocinha. Apart from such jobs as running shops of all kinds, there was a large number of people with jobs in the service sector, like construction workers, handy people (such as plumbers, electricians, carpenters), painters and decorators, outside washing and child minding, small removal companies and even hiring out wedding dresses and other clothing for special occasions. Many

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time. An attempt to "regularise" the land title of this building alone, would therefore involve negotiation between at least five parties, two of whom claimed "ownership" over the building.

walking street vendors sold small household articles and food door-to-door, while others contributed to their earnings by producing crafts at home like hammocks, pots and pans, clothing (school uniforms, wedding dresses, everyday clothing), furniture, handbags, dolls, jewelry, religious articles, pieces of art. Due to the difficulty of access to Rocinha, there was a demand for people to carry goods up and down the narrow *becos* for a pittance all over Rocinha. Adults, teenagers and small children were hired to carry bags of cement, piles of bricks, and other materials to and from building sites, groceries from supermarkets at the bottom of the hill to residences located in the further removed parts of Rocinha, products to stock the many *biroscas* selling in the interior of the *morro* and many were hired to carry water to supply those outside the reach of the water networks or temporarily without reserves.

If we think about the consequences these observations have for Rocinha's potential for political organisation, we can provisionally conclude firstly that, in terms of the productive process, the diversity of employment meant that few worked in the same or even similar places. Their income widely diverged, and working conditions differed considerably. In this sense, there was no common suffering or common "enemy" against whom complaints could be directed. Additionally, and partly because of this, the well-documented point about the "informal" sector is that it is politically "unorganisable" at any level (Roxborough 1979, Gugler 1988). Moreover, the fact that Rocinha had its own labour market, showed especially how diverse people's interests were, if one takes their position in the productive process to be a major determinant of these. The conventional Marxist concept of "class" did therefore not have much analytical value for this study. The overwhelming impression was that of heterogeneity and orthodox Marxist terminology was not useful in the examination of political interests and groupings (c.f. Lloyd 1982).

At this abstract level, what these people did have in common was their deprivation from basic infrastructure and other basic services. Again, this kind of deprivation was extremely diverse within Rocinha, as is clear from the first half of this chapter. Despite this heterogeneity organisations did exist around these residential issues. The context in which this political activity took place favoured the

emergence of this activity in some ways, but dampened it in other ways. Briefly,[25] a military dictatorship had installed itself with a coup in 1964. Its subsequent policies ensured that by the early 1970s most spontaneous grassroots political activity had ceased. The only voices which survived the regime's atrocities were some professional organisations concerned with human rights violations (e.g. the OAB, a national association of lawyers, and the ABI, a national press association) and the Catholic Church, which had gathered around it most remaining popular initiatives. When the regime's language changed in the second half of the decade, a large wave of new political activity emerged suddenly in response, such as independent labour and neighbourhood organisations, and mass demonstrations around explosive issues such as transport costs and basic wage levels. Reforms to the partidary system encouraged the creation of new parties such as the Workers Party (the PT) in 1979. A lot of the earlier activities especially were initiated by the Church whose language had become politicised (partly in response to developments elsewhere) and whose presence among the poor made it a valuable resource to potential activists in practical terms. In some areas it closely collaborated with the PT (e.g. the strikes and protest movements of 1979-1980 in the state of São Paulo (Kowarick 1988)).

In Rio de Janeiro, at the time of fieldwork, a lot of this activity had been incorporated and hence was defused into traditional local political processes. The political context was dominated by a strong political machine with widespread clientelistic connections which had established itself firmly in the shantytowns by co-opting its leaderships. In the presence of these strong links, the PT succeeded in recruiting only very little support in popular sectors in Rio de Janeiro. Tactics of subsequent governments ensured the continuity of traditional clientelistic methods in this state undermining the effectiveness of grassroots initiatives and the potential of new initiatives in party politics (Gay 1988). These tactics, for example, included the creation of a separate municipal channel for launching large-scale

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[25]In Chapters 5 and 6 I set out the political context and its effects on Rocinha's political activists in detail.

urbanisation programmes in the early 1980s (e.g. "*Cada família um lote*", which promised to sort out land titles for shantytown residents; large projects for water piping and electrification in some of the largest city centre *favelas*), and other efforts by the state government (e.g. the building of a large number of enormous schooling complexes and the promise of increased popular participation in all sectors of government). Much of the grassroots leadership was employed into these programmes or their support in the shantytowns depended in some way or other on these programmes. As far as the Church initiatives were concerned, though politicised and encouraging, contradictions within the conservative Rio de Janeiro hierarchy (Mainwaring 1986, Gay 1988) limited the impact of its activists (e.g. those in the Pastoral de Favelas, which cooperated closely with Associations of *favela* leaderships (FAFERJ) and other residents associations (FAMERJ)).

Such tactics and problems therefore ensured the continuity of clientelistic structures (Gay spells this process out in detail (1988)), and in many ways shaped the form and potential of this grassroots political activity. Exactly what form this kind of activity took and the effects it had on the population of Rocinha, became the focus of my thesis.

Chapter 2

Kinship

In this chapter, I will look at people's immediate social surroundings; their relations with the members of their household. In the following chapters, I will look at wider social circles. (Chapter 3 will examine the neighbourhood, Chapter 4 the "Community" as a whole.) At each of these levels I will look at the quality of people's social relations, the intensity of interaction, the stability of practical arrangements and so on. This sets the background for discovering the social morphology of this population. By asking to what extent these principles (of kinship, locality and community) are articulated in the social organisation of Rocinha's people in these chapters, I am setting the scene for the examination of the operation of the politics of Rocinha's action groups.

Família was an important organising concept for the people of Rocinha. It functioned as an ideal pattern to which people aspired, but few actually experienced this ideal in practice. This situation appears as a contradiction and creates for the analyst the acute problem of how to generalise about kin relations in Rocinha. The contradiction is immediately clear from a collection of "Stories of Rocinha", collected from Rocinha's community schools (Picolê, Picolé 1983).[1] The first sto-

[1]The pupils were asked to tell each other short stories and/or draw pictures on one of many topics answering the question: "*O que é que a Rocinha tem, pessoal?*" (Lit: "What does Rocinha have, kids?") The stories were compiled by social workers funded mainly by the Brazilian Ministry of Culture (MEC/SEC) under the project "*Interação*

ries in the booklet are entitled respectively: "*Casa*" (Home/House) and "*Família*" (Family), marking the centrality of these topics in the children's minds.

CASA
Esta casa aquí é da mamãe e do papai. Eles brigam todo dia e nem dão comida para nós. Os nossos irmãos ficam todinhos com fome. Eles não dão dinheiro para comprar café, leite e açúcar. Tem um sol lindo e bonito e nós vamos à praia. Lá na praia tinha um arco-íris. Na minha casa tem um pé de jaca. A gente todo dia come jaca. Meus irmãos todinhos sobem lá na laje e soltam pipa. Na minha casa tem um cachorro. E acabou.

HOUSE
This house here is my mother's and father's. They fight all day and don't even give us food. Our brothers and sisters are hungry all the time. They don't give money to buy coffee, milk and sugar. The sun shines really pretty and we are going to the beach. There was a rainbow on the beach. There is a jack tree at my house. We eat jack fruit every day. All my brothers and sisters climb on the roof to fly a kite. We have a dog at home. And finished.

(Picolê, Picolé 1983:5)

FAMÍLIA
Na minha casa estava todo mundo reunido. Eudes, meu irmão, meu pai Pedro, minha mãe Teresa, minha irmã Marlúcia, minha irmã Vera, o nosso cachorro Pupi e o nosso papagaio Louro. A gente estava conversando coisa bonita sobre a família da gente que ainda está no Ceará. Nós pensamos nas coisas bonitas que a gente vai fazer quando for para lá. A gente estava conversando sobre a saudade do Ceará.

FAMILY
Everybody was united at home. Eudes, my brother, my father Pedro, my mother Teresa, my sister Marlúcia, my sister Vera, our dog Pupi and our parrot Louro. We were saying a lot of nice things about our relatives who are still in Ceará. We thought about all the nice things we will do when we go there. We were talking about how homesick we were for Ceará.

(Picolê, Picolé 1983:6)

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entre educação básica e os diferentes contextos culturais existentes no país: memória social da favela e educação básica." (Lit: Interaction between basic education and the different cultural contexts existing in the country: social memory of the *favela* and basic education.)(Picolê, Picolé 1983:4).

The second story clearly represents the ideal picture of the little girl's family. She expresses the unity of parents and siblings (and pets), and the desire to unite the rest of the family in Rocinha ("... our relatives who are still in Ceará."). It brings to mind a picture of well-established and active kinship networks in which each knows their place and all help each other survive in the adverse conditions of poverty (Lomnitz 1977, Das & Jesser 1980, Pollard & Wilburg 1978, Lomnitz & Pérez-Lizaur 1984). It confirms the much emphasised idea that these networks are even maintained across distances and serve to help rural migrants adapt in urban conditions (Leeds & Leeds 1970). Furthermore, the family here is portrayed as nostalgically reminiscing about their rural roots ("We were talking about how homesick we were for Ceará") suggesting that they in fact feel themselves belonging there more than in the city; suggesting the image of the "peasant in the city" (Mangin 1967, 1970; Kemper 1977).

The first story creates the reverse image; of total family breakdown ("They fight all day and don't even give us food") and social disorganisation in the face of poverty. Not the house interior but the roof space and the beach (both in public space (see also Chapter 3)) are described favourably and the only member of the household who deserves special mention in a positive light is the dog. The suggested image here is Lewis' picture of the "Culture of Poverty" (Lewis 1966, 1968, especially well assessed in Perlman 1976:114-118) in which even the most basic bond between kin (that between parents and children) has disintegrated.

These are two extremes which both existed, at least in the minds of Rocinha's children. It is my intention to clarify which of these extremes represented the real situation in Rocinha best. I propose to do this by investigating the ideals expressed by Rocinha's people, the composition of the co-residential unit, the allocation of roles within these households and the type of relations maintained with *parentes* (relatives) who resided outside the household.

Parentes are all those persons descended from one's four grandparents. All cognatic relatives as far as the degree of first cousin were usually recognised. One knows one's *parentes* as extensions of the nuclear family, the main unit towards

which obligations and interests were directed. The ideal *família* in Rocinha had a wider meaning than this. It reminded me of the clan-type *parentela* which Wagley described to exist in rural Brazil (Wagley 1963). It included all members of this wider extended kin network, and often also others (strictly speaking not *parentes)* who were effectively incorporated into it.

The *parentela* is a large "ancestor-oriented" group of followers collected around a powerful personality on whom it depends for patronage, without which one could not get by in Brazil. Members were not only kin, but also associated *agregados* (Lit: those gathered together; servants and their relatives adopted into the *parentela*). Relations were strengthened and extended by the ritual kinship bonds of the *compadrio* system and the sharing of the clan surname. The *parentela* was amorphous and more a series of ideal patterns which stated how an individual ought to act as member of a kinship group. "Perhaps more than any other Brazilian institution these ideal patterns provided points of reference throughout an individual's life." (Wagley 1963:193). The actual *parentela* was only realised in the circles of a very small elite. Yet Wagley argues: "The image of the traditional *parentela* persists in Brazil as an ideal pattern for people of various classes in the cities, the towns, and even the countryside." (ibid:203).

In Rocinha, the ideal *família* existed in a similar way. In schools, the idea of family solidarity (*união*) was emphasised to its little pupils. There was strong disapproval of those that were not loyal to family obligations (i.e. "bad" fathers and mothers, and "ungrateful" children). Pity was expressed towards those who had lost family connections. A phrase often heard in this situation was: " ... *que não tem família, não tem ninguém*" (Lit:"[people] who don't have relatives, have nobody.") (Bohadana & Pêgo 1981:16).

This magical *união* between family members was celebrated on occasions like birthdays, Easter and Christmas, and occasional special Sunday lunches, in which relatives visited each other. On these occasions elaborate meals were prepared with many ingredients not normally available during the week. Pieces of meat were even barbecued on rooftops and other dishes (such as salads) not considered

"real food" appeared.[2] Cheerful and loud music was played while adults caught up on the latest news and children played with each other. Small presents were exchanged and bonds between sisters, brothers, and cousins were renewed. For many families such visits, even if they were within Rocinha, were a major expedition, long planned in advance and a high-light in their routine life, which rarely involved travelling anywhere beyond the work-home journey.

A small elite in Rocinha in fact maintained a kinship network similar to the *parentela.* These families had established themselves in the early stages of Rocinha's development, when space was abundant (see also Chapter 5), and other resources (water, jobs, building materials) were shared between only a small number of people. They claimed their best share, infiltrating the different institutions as they appeared as time went on. As more relatives arrived, they built up their little empire in numbers and space claims and gained a following of people, who relied on their patronage as Rocinha became more crowded and resources became scarcer.

In cases where these managed to establish themselves in one locality, often more cooperation and contact existed. This was especially true for those members of the kin group for whom family bonds were strongest, such as between mothers and their daughters and between the oldest sister and the rest of her siblings. Mothers perhaps visited married daughters several times a week, went shopping together or helped each other out in daily activities, even though they did not share the same household any more. In larger concentrated families, younger siblings ate and stayed in the houses of their older married siblings, and helped each other out at work. Very intimate relations between kin like this were seen, but they were by no means the rule.

The family of the little girl telling her story above is an example of such a *parentela*-like elite family in Rocinha. Her father was one of the main characters

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[2]Words to designate greenery often appeared in their diminutive form (*saladinha, verdurinha*), a sign that they only served to decorate the meal. They were just "*coisinhas que não enchem barriga*" (Lit: thingamies that don't fill the stomach) (c.f. Zaluar 1985:106-7), or, *comida fraca* (Woortmann 1986).

involved in the Residents Association (see later chapters), her mother ran a sowing workshop with several other women, two of her sisters had important roles in other action groups and her brother ran a *birosca* (café, corner shop) helped by two other younger siblings. The parental house served as a focal point for family get-togethers, despite the fact that several of her siblings were married and had their own households elsewhere.

There were several such families with a large number of children (some of whom were adopted into them) and a noticeable presence in Rocinha, although these were the exceptions rather than the rule. There were few of them (only a handful or so), and their solidarity did not last. The reasons for this were that large families of recent rural origin were generally the poorest in Rocinha nowadays. They were not the elite, and those who did well were not large any more in terms of offspring. Both these facts were confirmed by Wahl de Medeiros Valle 1980, quoted in Bohadana & Pêgo 1981 (see also later in this chapter). The offspring of those who did do well had a chance to move out of Rocinha (often with the help of educational qualifications, see also Chapter 4). Unlike in the *parentelas*, relatives could provide economic help for each other in the form of recommendations to a good patron, or the borrowing and lending of small tools or capital to start up, but one rarely saw lines of specialisation passed on from parents to children. There were few family businesses and the number of people they employed was very small. Each went his/her own way as far as making a living was concerned. Power and status was therefore not passed on through families. This was also the reason why there were no more mafia-style "ruling families" in Rocinha.

The involvement of the same family in so many different institutions rooted in Rocinha (as the one described) was also unusual. To "get ahead" in the world, residents more often involved themselves in outside activities rather than in those rooted in Rocinha itself. This was indeed already visible in the example described: the two sisters active in action group activities were both talking of leaving out of financial necessity, despite the fact that they enjoyed high status in the organisations and were appointed to the most important jobs since "they know so many people and so much about Rocinha".

Furthermore, solidarity within these large families disintegrated also for reasons which applied to all families in Rocinha: the geographic and economic mobility of its population. Resulting differences in the standards of living between related households resulted in the deterioration of their relationship as exchange between them became less balanced over time. Relationships were in danger of becoming increasingly exploitative and/or paternalistic rather than egalitarian and reciprocal as a result.

Relatives were also increasingly less concentrated geographically, even those who established themselves in Rocinha first. Differences in living standards caused relatives to move apart geographically. But also, owing to the fact that Rocinha was becoming extremely densely populated with no space to expand existing accommodation (e.g. to accommodate a newly married couple). It was increasingly difficult to find anywhere to live in Rocinha at all, let alone in the same neighbourhood. The members of the family described in the example were widely spread all over Rocinha. And it is easy to see how most kin ties became inactive across geographical distances. Personality differences, political, and economic differences, or simply a lack of resources (both time and money) and the difficulty of communicating with someone who did not live in one's immediate neighbourhood (see also Chapter 3 on communication problems inside Rocinha), were all factors which facilitated the splitting up of members of the same kin group.

Family links across distances were perhaps more regarded for insurance purposes, i.e. links to be drawn on in times of severe need, such as accommodation when temporarily homeless, a place to put small children when taking on a daytime job, or a place to stay when single and too old to look after oneself. However, for coping in daily routines, neighbours would and often did, take on a role at least as important as members of the kin group. Neighbour relations could grow at least as intimate and all-embracing as relations with relatives. The use of fictitious kin terms perhaps illustrated this. The terms *tio, tia* (uncle, aunt) were easily used to refer to a well-respected unrelated adult, expressing intimacy and approval. For example, the children and their parents used these terms to address the staff of the daycare centre and the teachers at primary-level education. Parents encouraged

children to use these terms to address adult neighbours. The term *irmão* (brother) was often used to express and encourage friendship between men. It was also often used in political dialogue.

What emerges from the above is that the *família* (like the *parentela*) existed as an ideal pattern, a model of the desirable form of behaviour. This model organised the way people behaved as members of a family, even though in practice few actually experienced the institution of the large well-integrated *família.* Secondly, and this partly follows from the first point, what was important for Rocinha's residents was not the working of this system strictly according to its ideals. What was striking was the flexibility of their practical arrangements: the ease with which this institution incorporated members like neighbours, for example, who often took on the same importance as relatives. This is confirmed by Wagley quoting a Brazilian author on the subject of *parentela*: "[parentela] expresses less the tie of filial relationship than participation in a vast kinship system." (op. cit.:189, quoting Candido 1951:299).

More evidence to support this observation, was the ease with which Rocinha's residents adopted members of other households into their own. Cardoso confirms this in data from a São Paulo *favela* (Cardoso 1984). The reasons for adoption could be various. The original family could be in no economic condition to bring up the child, there could be no one to look after it during the day, they could not want the child, or simply the adoption took place because the new parents lived in an environment considered somehow better for the baby (financially or simply near a daycare centre or a school). The host household could simply need helpers in domestic work or an additional income provider.

Permanently adopted children were normally incorporated into their foster families and their socialisation was not considered any more problematic than the socialisation of their own children. (Also confirmed by Cardoso 1984.) By virtue of their socialisation within the new kinship group, these children were considered on par with other members of the hosting household. The pervasiveness of the terms *filho de criação, irmão de criação, mãe de criação* and so on, (Lit: son-, brother-, mother-"through bringing up", i.e. foster-son, brother, mother) clearly

illustrates this. Babies were often adopted into the households of the mother's relatives (like the mother's sisters' or the mother's mother's) but also into the households of neighbours, good friends or even patrons.[3]

These arrangements were much more readily undertaken than by, for example, U.K. middle-class foster parents, who insist on going through extremely lengthy procedures to ensure the legality and permanence of the adoption. It is not done lightly.[4] By contrast, Cardoso (ibid:197) argues that in the *favelados'* definition of kinship "consanguinity is only part of the definition and not an essential part at that." and "The relation between ascendants and descendents is conceptualised as a matter of the educational process [where *educação* in Brazil refers to the socializing of children in manners, morals, obedience, respect, etc. Translator's note.] within the family, rather than as depending on continuity of blood lines alone." (ibid:200). Socialisation was therefore at the basis of real kinship ties. Blood ties alone did not define who had what obligations to whom. These ties could only be exploited effectively if they had been activated somehow for some length of time. It is for this reason that I will elaborate extensively on other factors which influenced the realisation of kin ties. Among others, these were residential patterns, the role of the parents and other relatives in the socialisation of the children and marital arrangements.

As far as household composition was concerned, the nuclear family was probably the most widespread residential unit in Rocinha. Even though data on household composition was not available to me at the time of fieldwork, the literature on low-income urban settlements confirms that this was the case elsewhere in Brazil. For example, Zaluar found about 70% of her sample in a Rio de Janeiro low-income

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[3]The ease with which adoption took place took on a terrifying reality for me when a young local single mother repeatedly tried to persuade me to take on her newborn (since, in her opinion I could provide it with a better home than she could), and others told me of finding abandoned babies on their door steps.

[4]Cardoso confirms that a class difference exists in Brazil: "the middle classes lay primary stress upon the family as a biological unit, and in these classes there is a correspondingly less frequent incidence of adoption." (Cardoso 1984:202).

housing estate to be "complete nuclear" (Zaluar 1985:96). Caldeira found 60% in São Paulo (Caldeira 1984:91). Merrick & Schminck give different data, but again show a clear majority of nuclear families in their sample in a Belo Horizonte *favela* (Merrick & Schminck 1983). This is also the case for low-income settlements elsewhere in Latin America (e.g. in Mexico: Ward 1976, Garcia, Muñoz & de Oliveira 1982). And this (both parents and children cohabitating as a complete independent residential unit) was indeed the ideal for Rocinha's residents. However, this ideal appeared to both the analyst and residents in contradiction with people's preferences and in many cases contradicted practical arrangements. This will be apparent from the ethnographic evidence below. The ideal of the nuclear family (as with the ideal of the grand integrated *família*) in many cases no more than a guide to behaviour in a world where many failed to live up to this ideal.

The ideal can be spelled out as follows: In the "proper" course of events, an engaged couple saved up to be able to start a new household independently at the time of marriage. The woman was supposed to be a virgin, and the wedding celebrations were a major occasion for the members of both families. Girls married at an early age and being single was seen as a transitional stage. Marriage, in turn, was expected to lead towards offspring. A couple without children could never be considered to constitute a complete "family". Cardoso mentions that "when a woman is pregnant it is said that she is "*esperando família*"" (Lit: expecting a family) (Cardoso 1984:199), i.e. the word for "family" in this commonly used expression is in fact synonymous with "children". This ideal did not go unchallenged, however. Women expressed the wish to control the number of children they bore (also confirmed in Rocinha's literature: Bohadana & Pêgo 1981, Morro Mulher 1984, Rocinha, Mães e Vidas 1985). This was largely in response to economic conditions based on the belief that a family should be consciously planned, in line with the economic potential of the household. Topics such as the inadequacy of sexual education for most women in Rocinha, the taboo about discussing such matters as contraceptives and their cost and unavailability, were widely discussed. (In the literature they are the women's main concerns.)

Abortions were officially not allowed in Brazil, but were commonly undertaken

by private clinics. The expenses involved, were well beyond the budgets of most households in Rocinha, especially of women who undertook them without their husbands' knowledge. Instead, back street alternatives were tried out and most women knew stories of others who failed horrifically at such attempts. (This is also confirmed by Rocinha, Mães e Vidas 1985 and Bohadana & Pêgo 1981.) In fact, the average number of children per woman between the ages 20 and 30 in Rocinha was recorded to be 2, and 4 for women over 30 years of age in that study. Women with more than 5 children were generally resident in the higher/poorer parts of Rocinha, and had been resident in Rio for less than 5 years (Bohadana & Pêgo 1981, quoting data from a PhD by Wahl de Medeiros Valle, Frankfurt 1980).

This data supports my impressions that families with a larger number of children were poorer in Rocinha, and also that poverty was related to the time of arrival in Rio de Janeiro. This is because poverty is related to stages in life cycles (Gonzalez de la Rocha 1984a, Murphy & Selby 1985, Garcia, Muñoz & de Oliveira 1982) and those who migrated were in or coming up to the "expansion stage" of the family (Gonzalez de la Rocha 1984a, 1988).[5]

This also corresponds to Caldeira's findings on people's expectations. She found that the inhabitants of the low-income settlement expected to climb the ladder gradually as they got older and as they found their niche in the labour market. This fact may in itself have implications for the actual standard of living of a household (Caldeira 1984). (See also Chapter 4.)

Ideal roles within the nuclear household were as follows: The mother was the main socialiser of the children. It was her, often sole, responsibility to look after them, care for them and educate them. Ideally, she stayed with them during the day, taught them manners and morals, as well as found them a place in school to prepare them for the future. The mother was largely to blame for a teenager who

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[5]This was not because of the difference in psychological and other characteristics between rural and urban people (as assumed by many earlier writers on the subject e.g. Ray 1969, Redfield 1947, 1956; Foster 1965). The implications of these latter assumptions are ably assessed by Long (1977), and Leeds & Leeds clearly demonstrated the non-rural nature of urban *favela* residents (Leeds & Leeds 1970).

became involved in the drug trade or petty crime and it was not uncommon to hear women question the solitude of the mother in the education and orientation of their children:

[o pai] se liga na televisão, vai dormir e não quer saber mais de nada. Nos sábados ele dá algum dinheiro para os meninos, mas vai para a praia jogar bola e não chama eles para irem também. Volta, almoça, e vai dormir. Quando acorda, fica vendo televisão.

[their father] sits in front of the T.V., sleeps and does not want to know about anything else. On Saturdays he gives the kids some money, but goes to the beach to play football and does not invite them along with him. He comes back, eats his lunch, and falls asleep. When he wakes up, he continues to watch T.V.

(Rocinha, Mães e Vidas 1985:117)

The father (*pai de família*) was regarded as the principal income provider of the family, the one who reproduced the family unit (Fausto Neto 1982).[6] All other contributions were merely regarded as *ajuda* (Lit: help). Many men did not like their wives to work outside the house, allowing them to compete with their status as the income provider of the family. (Also confirmed by Zaluar 1985, Caldeira 1984, Rocinha, Mães e Vidas 1985.) On the night of the last day of the month, the supermarket at the bottom of the *morro* was crowded with fathers, surrounded by their children, shopping for the month's supply of staple foods, soap, and other frequently used household essentials. Whereas the father, almost literally, "*bota comida pra dentro da casa*" (Lit: gets the food into the house), it was the mother's task to budget and control its consumption (as discussed in the previous chapter). (Also confirmed by Zaluar 1985 and Caldeira 1984.) A good father was proud of his work, and maximised his hours in order to satisfy the needs of his household. He was respected in this light, and his identity as the head of

[6]Fausto Neto describes in detail the workers' family as a reproductive unit, its internal role division and its consumption patterns.

the household unit depended on his role as the "worker". Vice versa, others were classified as subordinate to him (Woortmann 1986, Fausto Neto 1982).[7]

Owing to his status as a "worker", he enjoyed many privileges in the house. He was exempted from all household tasks such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes. His food had to be ready and served to him when he got home from work (a reserved best and largest share of the pot)[8] and his clothes had to be clean and ironed. He could not be disturbed when resting, and the programme of the mother's household activities completely centered around his timetable. (This is also illustrated by the quotation above.) He was also the main authority figure in the household, often enforced by his role as the main income provider of the household. He decided who could stay in the house (even if it was not his) and made other major decisions. In the case of an absent father, the oldest resident male (often the oldest son or the mother's brother, depending on their age) took his place. Children knew that he could not be contradicted for their own good, and often this applied to his female partner too. Married men frequently engaged in affairs with other women, which their wives often knew and accepted. The reverse however (of women having lovers and publicly being known to do so) was severely punished and also highly disapproved of by both sexes.

It is clear from the above that in the nuclear family a sharp division of labour existed between the sexes. This division of roles was such that nuclear households in practice were decidedly matrifocal: the mother's role was central to the internal organisation and continuation of the unit.[9] As seen above, it was the mother who

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[7]The decline in the real value of wages damaged the status of the income provider, who was no longer able to provide for the needs of the family with his wages alone (c.f. Zaluar 1985).

[8]This touches on another point made by several other authors, that priorities of food consumption in the household reflect ideas and practices around food production (e.g. Woortmann 1986, Zaluar 1985, Fausto Neto 1982, Caldeira 1984).

[9]The term matrifocality has been defined in many ways. (For a synopsis of different definitions: Solien de Gonzales 1965, 1970a. Also: Safa 1974, Blumberg & Garcia 1977, Chant 1985a.) I take the term in a wider sense to mean a tendency for the role of the mother to be articulated strongly. It is she who is the stable figure within the

carried ultimate responsibility for the socialisation of the children and often this led to the development of intimate relations between mothers and their children, especially female. The mother's role was automatically carried on to the oldest daughter, to whom a working mother commonly left most household tasks (such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes). The practice of leaving small children in the care of their only barely older sister while both parents were at work was also common. Relations between mothers and their daughters, and between their daughters and the rest of the children were therefore often particularly articulated. The mother and/or older sister were often the main source of advice and information, the person to confide one's problems in, the first person to draw on in times of need, and often the person cited as one's best friend (Rocinha, Mães e Vidas 1985, Morro Mulher 1984, Picolê, Picolé 1983). The fact that these relations lay at the basis of the organisation of the kinship system was further evident from the fact that one rarely saw a household consisting of a father with children alone, where the female partner was absent. The reverse, a single parent female-headed household was much more common.

The strong sexual division of roles, the authority of the male household head and the resulting strong bond between the mother and her offspring (particularly daughters) in nuclear families, are a potential threat to their stability. They led to communication problems between husbands and wives. These were evident from the common topics of conversation between women. They complained of feeling trapped by their male partner's dominance. To fulfill their own needs for a more independent life, they talked of having to undertake things in secret. They complained of the restrictions their husbands imposed on their movements outside the house, in particular the prohibition against working in paid employment which threatened their status and power as the only income provider and allowed women to come into contact with a wider social circle.

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household and she makes all the major domestic decisions. It is also her kinsmen that often dominate within the household as opposed to those of her husband. (Also used in this sense by Safa 1974, Solien de Gonzales 1970b.) I differ here with definitions used elsewhere which restrict its usage to families in which the father is absent in the residential unit altogether (e.g. Chant 1985a:28, Chant 1985b:636).

In practice, however, many of Rocinha's women did work in paid employment outside the house. This was increasingly recognised to be necessary as the real value of wages had declined sharply and households found it increasingly difficult to manage on one income alone. Within nuclear households, women were a labour reserve to be drawn upon in times of need. This was also confirmed to be the case in studies of other low-income settlements (e.g. Safa 1986, Schminck 1986, Gonzalez de la Rocha 1988). I differ here from Chant who makes the point that the prohibition on working outside the house imposed by male household heads in nuclear families results in situations in which the members of these households see themselves as living in unnecessary poverty (Chant 1985a). In Rocinha, this was only so in extreme cases.[10]

This data added to my impression that the ideal of the happy self-sufficient nuclear family preferably with lots of children posed a contradiction of which women (who formed the backbone of this household structure and who were responsible for budgeting and organising it), especially, were acutely aware. It is evidence for the fact that the accepted "normal" course of events and, in a way, the ideal family structure towards which Rocinha residents strove, was inherently unstable in practice, especially in this economic climate which challenged the traditional roles within the household. It is not surprising that the nuclear household transformed into alternative structures. These variations should be seen as positive responses to changing practical circumstances.

Some households were female-headed single parent households, which sometimes led to a pattern of serial monogamy where the female head cohabitated with several partners in succession. The children resulting from each union usually remained with their mother. More commonly, the household was an extended version of the nuclear family, either male or female headed, in which case all or

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[10]Many of Rocinha's community groups were run by women. They complained about their husbands' attempts to restrict their participation in these "male" activities and their accusations of neglecting their household duties. However, these complaints did not stop most of them from spending a lot of time in community-related activities outside their homes.

part of a nuclear family was adopted into the household. In the literature, a lot of speculation exists about the workability and/or desirability of these alternative household structures (Buvinić, Lycette & McGreevey 1983, Lenero-Otero 1977, Chant 1985a, 1985b, 1987, Chant & Ward 1987). As has been pointed out by Chant especially, the trend has been to consider any form other than the nuclear household to be inefficient or otherwise undesirable. They have been analysed in this light as a result. Female-headed single parent families, for example, are assumed to be "so hard-pressed financially that they have to find economic support from another male" (Chant 1985b:638). Their assumed temporary character meant that they could be ignored for the purpose of analysis and/or explained away as exceptions arising in response to the male's conditions (Chant 1985b). Similar assumptions are made about extended households: that they are made up out of a nuclear family hosting others who are temporarily accommodated, in response to an emergency situation. The added members are assumed to be an undesirable burden to the hosting unit (Das & Jesser 1980, Kemper 1977, Pollard & Wilburg 1978, Lomnitz 1977). With this in mind, how did these alternative household structures work, and how were they regarded by Rocinha's people?

Female-headed single parent households were regarded as the households which were economically least well off in Rocinha. It was generally held to be true by social workers and acted upon: crèches often targeted single parent female-headed households for this reason: they were "*os mais carentes*" (the most vulnerable).[11] It was noticeable that many of those households were resident in Rocinha's poorest accommodation (high rent, temporary accommodation especially in Bairro Barcelos and/or owner-occupants in the poorer parts of Rocinha (least well serviced and poorer construction)). Data from different low-income settlements supports the fact that female-headed single parent households were economically less well off than nuclear or extended households in shantytowns elsewhere (Lomnitz 1977,

[11]They claimed that they assessed the actual living standard of their potential clientele, but in fact, these home visitors discussed at length the difficulties of doing so, not in the least because they found it too embarrassing to ask questions relating to economic well-being. Note also that their assessment was carried out before the child(ren) was/were accepted into daycare. (See also Chapter 7.)

Pollard & Wilburg 1978, Selby et al 1981). The reasons for this were: in comparison with males, women's economic potential in the labour market (especially single mothers) was much lower. In the Brazilian labour market, women were discriminated against. Fewer jobs were available for them and these were concentrated in the worst paid sectors. Even where the jobs were the same as for men, their pay did not match the male equivalent (Merrick & Schminck 1983, Caldeira 1984). This has been observed to be true for other Latin American and Third World countries in general (e.g. Gonzalez de la Rocha 1988). Women (especially single parents) also had the additional burden of domestic duties and were available for more restricted work hours. The availability of daycare for the younger children and education for the older ones, is here a crucial determinant of the living standard of a single parent female-headed household. In Rocinha, the provision of both of these was inadequate. From this point of view, therefore, the relative poverty of female-headed single parent households was not surprising.[12]

As far as the situation in extended households was concerned, it was true that the Brazilian state's support for those that were somehow unable to provide for themselves only reached a very restricted number of families of the lower classes. The family therefore often took on these functions. Related orphans, sick, disabled or elderly people were provided for in this way, and one could often see families putting up unemployed or homeless relatives and their families. Thus, many others in some way related to the family were often incorporated into the residential unit. The existence of the extended household in Rocinha was encouraged by the acute shortage of accommodation (there were simply not enough houses to support each potentially independent nuclear household). This was due to its privileged location in the centre of Rio (as pointed out in the previous chapter) which attracted outsiders, worsening the condition and the quality of existing

[12]Chant argues against this position by pointing out that female-headed single parent households often have a higher number of income contributors which, she argues, offers more economic security to the household members. This is firstly because it is more secure in an unstable labour market to depend on more than one income. Secondly, income distribution within these households was more equitable (Chant 1985a). I evaluate both of these points below.

accommodation (sub-standard, and no guarantee of being able to stay long term), which forced people to move around.

This is not the only reason for which extended households were formed. They could just be formed out of a positive decision by the individuals involved. In practice, extended households often worked out to the advantage of their members. Childcare and other domestic work (which is especially time-consuming in badly-serviced low-income settlements), for example, was shared out between several people, in extended households. Childcare especially could be shared when there were more adults around. This allowed more adult members of the household to work outside the home, thereby increasing the number of income contributors and maximising their income potential more effectively.[13] There was no reason to assume therefore that extended households were made up of large numbers of unproductive dependents (see also Chant 1985a:21). In fact, and this is supported by Caldeira (1984): new members either contributed to the hosting household's income and/or budgeted their expenses separately from the hosting household. Indeed, to examine the way in which these alternative household structures worked, we need to look more closely at how traditionally male and female roles (of income provider and socialiser, respectively) were distributed in these households.

The same pattern of role division existed in nuclear households and extended households. Male adults took on the role of income providers. Even if he was not the husband of the key female in the household (he could be her brother or oldest son), he took on this role. He took major economic decisions and was regarded as the father figure in the household. (This is also supported by Zaluar 1985:97.)

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[13]Households that relied on the income of more than one income earner were not necessarily better off in terms of total household income. This was especially true if none of these additional income earners were adult males. Such "secondary" earners (and they included female household heads) were marginalised in the labour market to such an extent (and especially if they were young children) that the total of their incomes often did not match the income of an adult male. Nevertheless, one could argue that the members of these households were still economically better off, since the number of income earners was more important to a household's economic well-being than the size of the main income provider's wage per se. The former offered more security to the household, especially important in a labour market which was unstable for all workers (Chant 1985a).

Women and very young children only worked to contribute to the household budget if this was perceived as economically necessary. I am not here including the odd jobs many children in Rocinha did to earn their own spending money. Even though this money could be substantial, it was not seen as part of the household budget (confirmed by Valladares 1989). Women and children were drawn on in times of need, as they were in the nuclear household. The same rules applied for female-headed households. I disagree here with Chant (1985a, 1985b, 1987) who claims that in extended households, compared with nuclear households, the number of workers is higher.[14] I would argue that in non-nuclear households more members worked only in response to the economic needs of the household. Additionally, I saw no evidence for the claim Chant makes that the authority of the male was less articulated in non-nuclear households. As I argued above, in the absence of a husband, this role was taken by another male (usually the oldest son or the mother's brother).[15]

The way income was pooled within these households is a final point which has to be considered as it clarifies the different roles within these household structures. The internal distribution of total household income is also an important factor for assessing the economic well-being of the members of these different household structures (Chant 1985a, 1985b, 1987, Chant & Ward 1987). According to Chant "male heads are apt to retain some of their wages" (ibid:25), and argues that this is particularly the case in nuclear households where the male head is in a position of power as a sole earner, and where he is under peer pressure to express his *machismo* (i.e. being seen to be in control of his wife's expenditure and being seen to indulge in male activities). I found these claims not to hold for Rocinha. The arrangements in several households which I knew intimately (households which were regarded as respectable in the neighbourhood) confirmed

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[14]She attributes this to the fact that the male authority syndrome (which, she argues, keeps members of nuclear households from working) is less articulated in non-nuclear households, allowing others to maximise their income potential.

[15]Chant does not mention the role of either of these in the internal dynamics of the households she examines.

my impressions of what went on in other households (whether extended, nuclear or other), that each earner had the right to decide how to spend his/her income. It was seen as the duty of the male household head to provide "enough" for his dependents to live off, not to provide an equal share for each of them. In the same way, teenage wage earners were regarded favourably if they contributed regularly towards major household expenses such as bills and household appliances. Their contributions were seen as favours, not imperative. This is also demonstrated in my case study in the previous chapter. In fact, Zaluar talks of conflicts "between collective consumption of the family and individual consumption of the older children." (Zaluar 1985:103). She says of teenage girls that the problem "'of parents not having money for clothes' can serve as an incentive to enter into the labour market, looking for their own income." (ibid:103) [my emphasis].[16] Caldeira supports these impressions in her data from a shantytown in São Paulo. Although she does not possess data with enough detail to show exactly what percentage of children's income is appropriated by the household (as opposed to individually spent) (Caldeira 1984:93), she does stress that certain members of the household "work to help their husbands or parents. The word help here is not used accidentally: it is in this way that this participation into the budget is conceived by the household heads, by the children and by the women themselves." (ibid:92-93).[17] As far as the parental role in contributing to household income goes, according to Rocinha's residents both parents were responsible to their offspring, but for different aspects of their needs, and I concluded that in Rocinha both parents were equally likely to neglect these responsibilities. There was good evidence for the existence of the stereotypical drunken/gambling male who spent large parts of his wage packet

[16]Clothes particularly offered the opportunity to escape from being identified as "poor". This is a point (also made by Zaluar) on which I elaborate in Chapter 4.

[17]We may here have the case supporting Chant. That due to the hegemonic authority of the male head, others are not allowed to contribute equally to the household's income. However, that does not take away from the point I am making here, namely, that incomes were not necessarily equally pooled in households that had more than one income earner.

on which the entire family depended on his own vices (of which Chant speaks) Equally prominent was the female equivalent (both the stereotype as well as the actual examples). Their vices were drink, or (less commonly) gambling, but (more often) spending on make-up and unaffordable clothing, at the expense of the rest of the household.

In sum, there were many different workable household structures in Rocinha. I have given some detail about their workings, thereby challenging some of the assumptions made in the literature. Questions need to be answered about the reasons for which Rocinha's residents opted for a certain structure as opposed to another one. What were the factors which limited their choices, and how readily did households move away from the ideal, normative structure of the nuclear family?

My detour on the economic viability of different household structures showed that the relative economic efficiency of certain structures is not a strong enough factor alone to determine the particular household structure, even though economic factors were strong determinants to household members. Particular household roles within the household were also shown in the context of other important cultural factors.

In Rocinha, the ideal was the nuclear family, and the roles of the members within the ideal household structure were those as defined above. Any household structure that deviated from these normative guides was "less desirable" to Rocinha's people. So, for example, in female-headed single parent households, more working members could compensate for the difference in income. They could even be economically and socially "better off" than in a nuclear structure. However, this household structure offended Rocinha's residents' sense of order. They did not admire a woman running a household by herself. Instead, when the situation presented itself, the single woman was criticised firstly, for not being a proper mother for her children (if there were any), since she was not considered to be in a position to do that job properly, and secondly, for depriving the children of a father. Gossip accumulated about the reasons for which she did not have a

male partner like everyone else (she was either a prostitute, gay or "difficult").[18] Women running households by themselves were not admirable but "matter out of place" (Douglas 1966) and regarded with suspicion. As I mentioned above, the women running the action groups were married and publicly recognised to be tied down by their husbands. Their roles as political leaders were clearly defined and limited to certain tasks.

To the residents, a situation of disorganisation (a situation to be avoided) arose through a lack of income to meet basic needs. An absent male household head was to blame. There was also disorganisation if the patterns of role division within the household were disturbed. The absence of key figures also led to disturbance of other members' roles. If the male head was not around, the blame for inadequate income was not fully passed on to the female head, since she "cannot be expected to cope with everything herself." It was also disorganisation if the female household head had to work all day to supplement income, and/or if her absence in the home affected her role as the main socialiser of the children, or if the children had to spend their time contributing to household income instead of playing,[19] in education or, when old enough, saving up for their own households. These were all situations to be avoided. However, when, due to practical circumstances ideals could not be realised, the household structure adapted easily to these circumstances. For example, in the case of an absent father, another adult male in the household would take on his role. In the case of an absent mother, a neighbour, an older daughter, mother's sister or perhaps a grandmother could take this role.

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[18]I found myself (as a single female household head) constantly in the situation of having to answer questions about why I did not have a boyfriend in Rocinha. At one stage, rumours went around concerning my alleged weird sexual habits. My neighbours, even those I knew intimately, could not understand how I could cope without a male to "protect" me during the night, and to carry out all those "male" jobs around the house. On occasions, they arranged for someone to take on this role for me (e.g. they insisted that someone should sleep in my house during times of shootouts, they recruited men to carry water for me at times of water cuts).

[19]Mothers approved of and encouraged their children to take on odd jobs within Rocinha, with which they earned their own pocket money. This was distinct from child labour proper, in that it was combined with play and the money earned could be substantial, but the household as a whole did not depend on it for its survival.

In this way, Rocinha's households were flexible and easily adaptable to changing circumstances. As long as these foster household members carried out their job, no problems were perceived. This was also illustrated by the ease with which different members were adopted into the household.

In terms of the pattern of role division, there were guidelines modelled on the nuclear family. These were not flexible. In each respectable household, there were some kind of male household head whose responsibility it was to fulfill the role of income provider-cum-authority figure. Similarly for a mother figure-cum-socialiser.

I conclude therefore, that in Rocinha there were clear ideals as far as kinship behaviour was concerned. The ideals (the nuclear household and the large *família*) provided a normative guide for behaviour for individuals. They prescribed roles into which individuals were supposed to slot during their course of life. In actuality, however, it turned out that few individuals lived out these ideals. The structure of the household and wider kinship network was easily changing. They were temporary and flexible structures, adaptable to changing circumstances.

Across households, factors like economic status and personality differences were very real factors which affected kinship relations. This situation was further encouraged by the fact that Rocinha's people were geographically and economically mobile. Their residence, even within Rocinha, was often impermanent, especially for the newly married in parental accommodation. Their relative economic mobility also affected kinship relations. And this was encouraged by the fact that even within households, incomes were not automatically pooled. These differences were allowed to be articulated, adding to the inherent instability of kinship networks. Ultimate arrangements depended more on the practical demands of the situation. Individual preferences and personality differences counted more than abstract loyalties.

The resulting picture is that Rocinha's families and households were not well integrated. Non-nuclear households or disintegrated *famílias* were a common reality for Rocinha and existing structures were flexible. These are all signs that

in practice, loyalty to kin was not an important priority for Rocinha's people and consequently, it was not well expressed in its social organisation.

Chapter 3

Locality

In the last chapter I looked at people's loyalty towards their kin. This chapter examines neighbourhood as socially recognised and distinct, and discusses residents' ties to this locality and the kind of relations they maintained with each other. The question which is ultimately important is the extent to which the neighbourhood can be used as an analytical tool in the social organisation of Rocinha's population.

Generally, relations between my neighbours in the *beco* (alleyway) in which I lived were not good. They talked about each other behind their back and complained about each other's habits. There was a lot of gossip in which bad feeling was expressed. It turned out that there was little direct contact between them. Each household more or less lived its own life.

Those that had been in the *beco* for a long time claimed that it had not always been that way. There was general agreement among them that nowadays "you cannot count on each other's help any more" ("not even your neighbours"). "In the old days" they said, "you knew all the people in your street." At the time of fieldwork, all empty spaces had been filled in with houses. As the people that passed through these *becos* had become increasingly anonymous, locals became more suspicious of each other. There was a lot of paranoia about theft. ("You are not safe in your own street any more.") The plants on the veranda and clothes on the washing line were seen at risk. As a result, old-timers nostalgically recalled, plants that used to decorate the streets had now been done away with and the streets had come to look less friendly. People took precautions against theft by

building higher walls and bars in their windows and tried to confine themselves more to their private space. The separation between private (domestic) and public (street) space had grown sharper over time although, as seen below, they still considerably overlapped. People attempted to keep to themselves more, behind doors, gates, walls and fences. Or, so they said. From my observations, however, it was clear that my neighbours (and people throughout Rocinha) extended their domestic activities into the public space surrounding their houses. Washing lines (always full of clothes) were attached in public space. Roof tops were utilised fully. People often sat on doorsteps to pass the time. Washing facilities were often located outside the house. The female head of the household (generally the person to be at home, if anyone was) spent most of her activities around, rather than inside the house.[1] The use household members made of their house reminded me of the use we make of our tent when we go camping. Crowded conditions and bad ventilation inside the house also encouraged residents to do so.

The space immediately surrounding their houses became an extension of these. Domestic space overflowed into public space. This is more evidently the case from the fact that only when no-one was in, windows and doors were shut. Windows were made of wood (seldom with a glass pane) and curtains were rare (if any, they were a status symbol and mostly fulfilled a decorative rather than functional purpose). There was therefore no further barrier between public and private space.

Additionally, the livingroom (the space most intensively used) was usually located at the front of the house. This room was also the one through which one entered from the street into the house and was often the only door into the house. In a situation like this, there was a perceived need to encourage the definition of boundaries between the inside and the outside of the house.

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[1]Her main activities were washing clothes, cooking, shopping, cleaning the house and looking after children. As mentioned above, washing facilities were often located on the outside of the house and often shared with other households in public space. (When inside the house, there was often a window above the sink.) Children played in the street and women spent a lot of their time sitting on the doorstep watching them.

A high threshold, often marked this boundary. The bottom half of the door was kept closed or a knee-high panel was nailed in front of the door.[2] Most houses had a doormat or floorcloth spread out in the door opening. At informal visits, people took off their footwear and left it at the door before entering the house. At least once daily, the livingroom floor was swept and mopped to give it a shiny appearance. An expensive waxer was a highly valued piece of household equipment, and tins of wax took a relatively large proportion of total household expenditure. On entry into the house, remarks were often made to apologise about the state of the floor. Many people in Rocinha washed their shoes frequently, especially their better pairs, which dried on washing lines alongside other clothing.

These cultural devices show the need to mark the inside from the outside of the house. Their widespread existence confirms the residents' attempt to confine domestic activity to the inside of the house and vice versa, to keep dirt out in the street, separate from the cleanliness of domestic space (Douglas 1966). This is a sign of the precariousness of these boundaries in the first place.

The area immediately surrounding the houses thus was an extension of domestic space which was not quite public space. Other writers have recognised the special status of this space. Caldeira (1984), for example, elaborates on this idea by using the concept of *pedaço* (Lit: patch of land, turf), taken from Magnani (1984). *Pedaço* takes its meaning in the contrast between private and public space: the space between the city (the strange, the unknown and threatening) and the house (the familiar and domestic). It can be used in a geographical as well as social sense (Magnani 1984:137). Geographically, *pedaço* is that part of the world which its members experience daily because of their similar lifestyles. There is something familiar about it because of everyday use. It has a nucleus like, for example, the *padaria* (bakery), the *birosca* (local pub/corner shop, café) or the local public telephone which centres residents' daily activities in certain

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[2]It has to be noted here that these thresholds also served an important practical function. They prevented babies and toddlers from crawling out into the street and minimised the invasion of rats, mice, cockroaches and many others of a wide range of insects, strange dogs and cats and other unwanted visitors.

ways. Socially, one becomes part of *o pedaço* by exposing one's family, friendship and neighbour ties to other members of one's *pedaço* and by familiarising oneself with those of others.

I am reminded here of Hoggart's vivid description of the neighbourhood in a working class neighbourhood in a British city described through the eyes of the little boy who grew up in it. He describes the familiarity of the smells and sounds of the streets and the intimacy with which neighbours know each other (Hoggart 1957:64-68). Caldeira and Magnani argue that this familiarity is reflected in the quality of the social relations between members of the same *pedaço.* Among neighbours, they argue, there exists a certain idea of belonging to "us". These people know each other by name and stand in a particular relation to each other ("friend of so-and-so", "lives in the house next to so-and-so"). There exists a certain contract between them and gossip defines the agreed codes of behaviour. According to Magnani, even strangers can become part of *o pedaço* by going through the *ritual do mé* (sharing a drink in the local bar during which they could expose the familiar to the locals, whose trust and protection they can thereafter enjoy) (Magnani 1984:135, 139).

Below, I want to examine to what extent this *pedaço* concept is useful as an analytical tool in Rocinha. I will argue that to a certain extent there is always a sense of geographical belonging to a particular place of residence. In that weak sense, therefore, the concept is a truism. It does not follow that this shared space is actively transformed into a clearly visible social space. I.e. the familiarity of *o pedaço* is not necessarily reflected in the quality of social relations between the members of *o pedaço.* It is the degree to which this was the case in Rocinha which is at issue.

The degree to which one shared neighbours' lives in Rocinha's *becos* was high. The physical layout of *beco* space was conducive to this. The narrow *becos* echoed sound, and conversations that took place below, beside or above your house could easily be overheard. Anyone passing through could be accurately inspected. Indeed, many housewives spent a large part of their day in the window or on the doorstep overseeing *beco* life. Children played in these *becos*, running up and down

the narrow corridors, chasing insects, sliding on bits of cardboard, making up toys from bits and pieces they found. This was especially true since (as seen above) households did not confine their domestic activities to the insides of their house.

The familiarity of faces, sounds and smells (of which Hoggart speaks) is very clearly recalled in my memory of living in one of Rocinha's *becos*. The members of my *beco* knew the faces of most of the people that passed through, they could identify the sounds as those of particular people and their activities at certain times of the day (c.f. Caldeira 1984:119). Sounds were not anonymous noise. The extent to which this was true is illustrated in this diary entry I made at the time.

> ... The people of my *beco* have a lot in common: We pass the same shop, where the *português* (Portuguese) sits in the window. We watch the rats flee when we step over the drain at the entrance of our *beco*. We watch a certain group of individuals drinking and gambling at the corner bar. We suffer from the strong stench of the garbage dump around the corner. We all queue at the *padaria* (bakery) for our morning rolls and bags of milk. We stand in the same long queues for the occasionally working public telephone. We do most of our shopping in the same supermarket, and we get our fresh stuff from our local Sunday market. We use the same bus stop for going into town and we see each other on a Saturday morning on the beach, together with all the other folk. We all have sleepless nights when the gangs are shooting at each other and complain to each other about them the following day. We together speculate about what might have happened and when it will end. During times of many shootouts, we are all shaky and bounce up at loud noises, paranoid of another attack and ready to dive into a safe hideout.
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> During the hotter nights, we sit up on our verandas, or lean out of our windows, whispering to each other and waiting for our houses to cool down a bit more so we can go back inside for another attempt to sleep. We collectively listen to crying babies from the neighbour and to loud arguments and insults yelled back and forth between the couple that lives behind us ... We speculate on when our water tanks will fill up again. We get up at 4 a.m. to be the first to take a shower while the water lasts. We inquire into each other's ability to cope and where we can go for more water, whose tank has filled up first and someone's complaint to the Associação [Residents Association] about these continual shortages ...

There was always conversation and interaction relating to any of these events between neighbours. We had a lot in common and shared many traumatic and

important events in our daily lives. In virtue of this common experience, we shared a certain "us" identity. People from other areas also identified us as a unit in this way. They would tell us: "You lot" had a bad time last week (with the shootouts), "your *beco*" is particularly bad for violence, overcrowding, lack of water. In this sense also my *beco*, was a clearly defined unit "*o nosso beco*" (our alleyway). And ours was short, narrow and dead-ending. It had no side streets and it was lined with houses on both sides. Those, whose doors opened into this street, belonged to "*o povo do nosso beco*" (the people of our alleyway).

There were other physical factors that were conducive to the formation of the *pedaço* as a distinct social space. These were to do with how the *pedaço* fitted into the rest of Rocinha and the means by which it communicated with the world at large. Communication systems inside Rocinha (e.g. state services such as mail delivery and public telephones) were only very partly in place or absent altogether. They were largely informally organised and they depended on networks between neighbours. Vice versa, they created involvement between members of the same *pedaço*. Most of these services had become centered around *biroscas* (compare with Magnani 1984:137). *Biroscas* had, in that sense, become invaluable little *pedaço* centres on which neighbours depended for the fulfillment of these services.

Firstly, *birosqueiros* (Lit: the managers of the *biroscas*) had become central in the task of mail distribution. Mail was not normally delivered to the door but to important land marks such as *biroscas*, churches or other organisations. Our electricity bills, for example, were distributed through the local *birosqueiro* at the end of our *beco*. The *birosqueiro* delivered our bills as we passed his shop daily. In most parts of Rocinha, *birosqueiros* served this function. One depended therefore on their goodwill and initiative for the arrival of one's mail.[3] An official address system had been imposed onto Rocinha by the electricity company (Light) in order to work out electricity bills for its customers. However, these addresses were not

[3]A large pile of out of date mail was searched through to find a postcard that I had addressed to a neighbour. This was evidence that in this system many letters remained undelivered.

used by the locals apart from in the delivery of these bills. Indigenous names of some *becos* and main streets appeared in it, but most were labelled and numbered by the company. Except for the occasional one in Bairro Barcelos, there were no name plates in Rocinha. By far the majority of streets and *becos* were unlabelled and unnumbered.[4]

Similarly, contacting a particular person in Rocinha inevitably involved *birosqueiros* at some stage. As *biroscas* featured as geographical markers, points that stood out in the maze-like unlabelled streets, they were used in explanations of the whereabouts of some place (e.g."Behind so-and-so's bar", "Turn left at so-and-so's bar"), and were used as places where people arranged to meet. They also acted as local information centres (e.g. to find out where someone's house was, you were told the way to a certain *birosca* "and you ask there"). If you wanted to leave a message for someone who usually followed the same track, or if you wanted to know if s/he was in and did not want to bother walking any further uphill, the *birosqueiro* would help you out. If there were any posters advertising local events, they would be pinned up around their *biroscas.* They were usually located along a main trail, or where two important ones met, and often they made a good stop for those going uphill to catch their breath and rest out of the bright sunshine, while the *birosqueiro* supplied a glass of cold water. S/he would join in while sharing a drink with friends and catching up with the local gossip.

These places were also used by locals for commercial purposes. If you needed a small repair job done, you consulted them about the local availability of such a service and they mediated in such small commercial dealings. The *birosca* usually acted as a local all-purpose shop, where you got your fresh rolls and your sack

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[4]A street sign and door number was a sign of prestige, something that belonged *no asfalto* (Lit: on the asphalt, i.e. in non-shantytown neighbourhoods, where streets were usually paved), not *no morro.* (This was another reason why Bairro Barcelos was more like *no asfalto* and not like the rest of Rocinha. It was the only part of Rocinha where street names and house numbers were used and visible.) Towards the end of my fieldwork, I discovered (to my surprise) that the building I shared with other households (not in Bairro Barcelos), had a street number which someone had chalked onto the door: a back-to-front nine, barely legible.

of milk in the morning. Small children were sent there to collect last-minute messages (an ounce of butter, a few cloves of garlic, an onion, a bar of soap). Or some major shopping could be done there if you had too little time for an expedition to the supermarket. Little children spent their small change there on sweets and homemade *picolê* (ice lolly) and they sold single cigarettes and snacks. The *birosqueiro* could even give you a small interest-free loan in desperate times, or could sell you small items on credit, to be paid off some time in the future.

Biroscas were usually run by members of the same household, often a middle-aged couple, sometimes helped out by their grown up children. They stayed open as long as there was clientele, which meant an early rise to serve some breakfast on their way to work, until late at night when the clientele usually changed as the place would be frequented by some of the local drunks. *Birosqueiros* were often brought up in Rocinha and were familiar with local developments. They also shared the locals' preferences and habits (compare with Machado da Silva 1969). They might have given up their job after many years and decided to invest their savings into changing their house into a bar and investing in a small stock of goods. Since the cost of living for them was slightly lower (from consuming goods bought at reduced prices through wholesale and good contacts) and they owned their own little businesses, *birosqueiros* enjoyed perhaps a slightly more secure lifestyle than the average Rocinha person. However, their savings were often reinvested into their business, or into the education of their children, and their lifestyle was therefore not much different from their customers'.

Birosqueiros were largely self-sufficient except for employing younger children in the neighbourhood or others looking for odd jobs, to carry supplies uphill. As they were very much rooted into neighbourhood affairs, they often made valuable contributions to politically active groups. They were often key figures in such groups (see also in Chapter 7). This centralising role was further encouraged by the fact that many *birosqueiros* possessed a telephone. For the purpose of entering into contact with people who lived outside Rocinha (especially patrons, employees) and vice versa, for outsiders to contact a Rocinha resident (e.g. for an answer to a

job application), the importance of the telephone cannot be underestimated.[5] The few existing public telephones were rarely in working order and only occasionally got repaired. They were situated along main streets only. Queues in front of those that happened to be in working order were long. The need for a secure income over a long time was a prerequisite for the purchase of a telephone which few people in Rocinha had. Those who acquired one, instantly became "leaders". They could now be reached by major contacts from outside and had first access to valuable information. They became the centre from which neighbourhood gossip spread, since messages were left for many neighbours, and one could see queues of waiting (gossiping) callers in a telephone owner's living room and around a *birosca* equipped with a telephone.

In all these ways, the *birosca* served as a kind of local neighbourhood centre. It acted as a focus of *pedaço* activity. In the first instance, these geographical units much resembled *o pedaço* of which Caldeira and Magnani speak. However, they claim that the familiarity and cooperation between members of the same *pedaço* creates a sense of belonging which is reflected in the quality of their social relations and they use the concept of locality to analyse the social organisation of the shantytown residents under investigation. Zaluar, for example, explicitly claims: "*A representação da localidade é uma das mais importantes na ideologia do pobre urbano desta cidade.*" (Lit: Locality is one of the most important representations in the ideology of the urban poor of this shantytown.) (Zaluar 1985:175). I would argue, however, that before any conclusions can be drawn about the importance of locality to the social organisation of Rocinha, two further issues have to be investigated. The first of these is whether this alleged *pedaço* unity was reified in social practice. Given there existed all this potential for neighbourhood cooperation within the *pedaço* unit, was there evidence of mobilisation around these local issues? It turned out that (as Zaluar found to be the case in Cidade de Deus) if

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[5]This is especially true since Brazilians who did not live in a *morro* had a particular idea about them. In general, they accused anyone who entered them as mad in view of the lethal risks they thought they took when doing so. In many cases, entering into contact with a Rocinha resident was thus impossible except by telephone.

we look at Rocinha's action groups (as will be clear in later chapters), Rocinha was politically divided along territorial lines. I would argue, however, that this was not (as Zaluar concludes) evidence for the existence of this loyalty at more local levels. This is borne out by the fact that, if we look at the quality of social relations between neighbours at the local level (which is the second issue to be dealt with below), we find that it was such that the apparent failure to mobilise around local issues was not surprising.

There were many problems which the members of our *pedaço* shared. We were all subjected to the shortage of water, for example. It affected some houses more than others depending on the position of the house in relation to the main water network, but it affected everybody to some extent and forced us into cooperation. However, no collective action was successfully taken to overcome this problem. Solutions were found (e.g. keys were briefly loaned for access to the houses of those who did have water temporarily and trips to alternative water sources were made), but these measures were only privately undertaken and when collectively, only with one's best friends. Similarly, we were all subjected to the violence and the disturbing presence of the drug traffickers in our *beco*. Instead of the problems arising from their presence being solved collectively, they led to conflicts dividing neighbours against each other.

There were two points in particular about which long standing disagreements existed between neighbours. These were both related to the presence of the traffickers. The first dispute concerned street lighting. This was crucial to the traffickers since bad visibility meant that they were vulnerable to attacks from patrolling police and rival gangs. The situation with regard to street lighting in our *beco* was "irregular" in that it consisted of bulbs privately fitted onto the outside of people's houses. Residents themselves were responsible for switching these on and off and the costs of running these was supposed to be divided between them. There were people who never paid their share and there were also sharp disagreements about the times at which these lights were to be turned on and off.[6]

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[6]On a few occasions people banged on the door of the person in charge (by virtue of

The other matter over which neighbours argued was the possibility of fixing a gate at the entrance of our *beco*. This would shut out the traffickers. (This solution had been used in other parts of Rocinha.)[7] In response to my questions as to why no gate had been put up, the blame was put on "certain families at the end of the *beco* who refuse to cooperate", in the same way as "they refuse to cooperate" with the bill for public lights, and in the same way as they demand that the lights be switched on at night, which helped the traffickers. The implication was that these families cooperated with "them" rather than with "us". These accusations matched the way neighbours accused each other of behaving like "them".

These examples are instructive about the nature of neighbourhood relations. Apparently, neighbours failed to even attempt to resolve this situation collectively; the presence of the traffickers led to mutual accusations instead of unity between them. Two possible conclusions can be drawn about the reasons for the outcome of this situation. The first one was the most obvious from listening to neighbours' complaints about each other. That neighbours were divided between those who "cooperate with the traffickers" and those who condemned their presence. Alternatively, one could argue, that all objected to their presence but they were internally divided to such an extent (for other reasons) that they could not manage to cooperate over even a subject as serious as that. At issue is therefore the question of the extent to which the traffickers were perceived as a threat to domestic order and how this threat affected relations between neighbours.

The traffickers' *bocas*[8] were strategically located in narrow *becos*, through which

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the location of the meter inside her domestic space) and shouted loud demands for the lights to be turned on. In response, the latter yelled back that if they wanted them on they should also pay for them, showing her resentment and special authority over this matter.

[7]Once in the past this had been done, I was told, but the gate had been demolished by the traffickers soon afterwards with warnings to the initiators of the idea.

[8]One of the main drugbarons of Rio de Janeiro was based in Rocinha and operated a network of tightly organised and heavily armed sub-*chefes* who, in turn, were in charge of a large number of teenagers (some girls but mostly boys) employed to staff specific locations (*bocas*) where drugs were bought and sold.

vehicular access was impossible and therefore were sheltered from police patrols. One of them was located in my *beco*.[9] The teenagers who guarded these were armed, their guns visibly stuck in the rim of their cotton bermudas, and they played with them, getting them out for comparison and discussion. Most of them grew up in Rocinha. They knew their way around extremely well and this was an essential requirement for their job. One of my neighbours often talked of some of them as having grown up with her son (21) and as knowing their mothers and whereabouts of the rest of their families. They were in our *beco* most days and nights. Mostly they were alone, but at times in pairs, and several times a day a group of them got together there. When alone, they flirted with the local girls while waiting for a friend to come with news, their food or a drug deal. They watched us hanging out our washing, taking care of our children, going shopping, chatting to friends. Occasionally we exchanged smalltalk. Sometimes they asked politely to use our toilet. Sometimes (e.g. when the weather was bad) someone offered one a glass of water. This communication usually only happened when they were on their own. Most of the time, we just looked at them looking at us.

They sat on our doorsteps, and stored bundles of money and drugs under the slates, in the drain pipes and behind the window shutters of our houses. We disturbed their dealings when we forced them to make room for us to pass. In these situations we tried hard to ignore them and not to see what we were not supposed to see, and did our best to minimise contact. When they got together, we saw them snorting cocaine and we smelled the smoke of their hashish cigarettes. We saw them counting their piles of 5,000 Cruzeiro notes (the value of the monthly minimum salary at the time was roughly 10 to 16 of those notes) and sachets of cocaine and we heard them discussing the instructions from their *gerentes* (Lit: bosses, managers of the *bocas*) and recent police or gang raids on other *bocas*.

Neighbours complained about the mess they left (wrappings of take-away lunches, empty cigarette packets). They complained about them urinating against the house and flattening carefully tended plants. One or two of them were always

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[9]In Chapter 8 I expand on the operation and organisation of these traffickers.

there. We knew them by name and we could easily identify their mates and their regular clients. We knew their bosses and how they related to them. When we had not seen them for a while, we speculated on what accounted for their absence. This is one of my diary entries:

> I wake up with a loud bang of a gun shot. My heart beats like mad, and I lie pressed flat on my bed. I reach out for the window and push it closed. I am too far away from the door to close it, and it worries me but I am too scared to get up to do so. Outside there is a dead silence. I calculate the direction from which the shot must have come, and lie there waiting for the next one. More shots. I crawl against the wall as far as I can and keep thinking about that open door. Minutes go by. It seems like an hour, before I can hear some shuffling at the end of our *beco*. Then, light tennis shoes running about, excited voices whispering. My heart still beating away, I raise my head a bit to hear best what is going on outside. Noises have moved into a different direction and they get weaker. After a while, I get the courage to get up to the window and I can see neighbours' doors and windows cracking open and heads peeping out, ready to dive back in at the slightest noise. Those at the street level stay closed, as they are every night, even despite the heat and almost total lack of ventilation. Some start whispering across the street, trying to find out what happened. It takes a while to get back to sleep. Questions are going round inside our heads. Whose voices were these? What kind of guns did they use? Did anyone get hurt? Are the people at the ground level okay?

Shoot-outs, of which this is an example, occurred frequently during the period of my fieldwork. They were the consequence of gangwars and police raids and they occurred mostly at night, when targets were more easily caught unaware with poor visibility.[10]

At first hand, the account of our experience of the gangs appears paradoxical. The teenagers were, on the one hand, publicly ignored and ostracised. On the other hand, they were carefully approached and attempts were made to incorporate them into our daily lives (a few exchanges of words, or, very occasionally, of favours). The fear the gangs inspired, the threat they posed to domestic order and the consequent reaction of outcasting them is clearly there. The members of the gangs

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[10]Hence the importance of street lighting.

conformed to the image of "the men who make themselves respected". *O Chefão* (Lit: The Big Boss, the drugbaron who was based in Rocinha) was said to never be seen in public without his team of heavily armed body guards. His sub-*chefes* or *gerentes* publicly displayed their machine guns and other arms inside Rocinha. Assassinations between gang members were known to be extremely violent and cruel. One morning, the visibly mutilated dead body of one of those teenagers was lying on our garbage dump, exposed for all to see. Indeed *o bandido* (the criminal) has no choice but to relie on his own resources to settle accounts and maintain power. He cannot use other mechanisms conventionally used in the society with which he is at odds. Among his own resources, violence and cruelty are most effective (Hobsbawn 1969).

This image of fear was also clearly illustrated by the belief that the streets were unsafe after dark. In the early evening hours the streets were empty except for small groups around local bars, and people hurrying home from work. In parts of Rocinha with which one was not familiar, it was considered "dangerous" to be on the streets at night. Coming back from evening meetings, people accompanied each other to their doorsteps and stayed in each other's houses if they lived too far apart. One neighbour forced her daughter to decline a valuable job offer since it required her to leave the house in the dark. Only *vagabundo* (general term to refer to those who are "up to no good") were about on the streets at night; those who did not work and drank all night and those associated with the traffickers.

Children from an early age were instructed to stay away from traffickers and much of the residents' conversation centered around how to keep their children from associating with them. There were rumours that children were easy victims. They were said to be used by the traffickers initially as *aviãozinhos* (Lit: little aeroplanes) carrying messages between the members of the gang or acting as an intermediary between the traffickers and their clientele, in return for sweets or other small rewards. As their involvement with the traffickers increased, it was believed to be inevitable that they became drawn into the gangs' activities further. Sweets became cigarettes and sooner or later payment in kind; a cut from their friends' *trouxinho* (a small packet of drugs).

"Drugs" *(drogas)* were thought to be immediately addictive, and little distinction was made between the different kinds. There existed an attitude of strong disapproval towards the use of drugs. They were believed to make you violent and sexually perverted. Bad bandits were those that used their guns not only to rob the residents of their possessions on the street, but the worst ones were reputed to invade someone's house for robbery and/or to sexually abuse them. Rumours of robbery and rape in the victim's house were constantly in circulation and clearly formed part of the residents' conception of the traffickers' wickedness.

Traffickers were also believed to be an extremely bad example to children. The trafficker was believed to use bad language, and to have other bad manners (urinated in public, did not dress respectably (often went around bare-chested)). Most accusations were linked to the more general failure of the *bandido* to respect the worker (*o trabalhador*) and the values associated with this category.

Those that worked (*trabalhadores*) were *moradores* (residents); they were associated with having a home and belonging to a family. *O trabalhador*, as the head of the family was respected as an income provider. The extent to which s/he was respected depended on how well s/he provided for her/his family, how well mannered the children were, and the state of the house. In the opposing category was the *bandido* who lived on the street (*"Fica por aí"*) in public space, the category of dirt. The *bandido* thus challenged all the values associated with the *trabalhador* concerning family organisation and social respectability. This is why their presence in *o nosso beco* (which was an extension of our domestic space) was perceived as a real threat and communication with them was minimised.[11]

The traffickers inspired fear and were seen as a threat. Yet, residents also saw these teenagers as bored and wasted and suffering all weather extremes. They saw them violently maltreated by police and their colleagues, and they knew that

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[11]There existed another species of criminal in Rocinha, namely those that made a living out of robbing richer folk in the streets (*no asfalto*). *O pivete* was also armed (knives, guns) and was generally thought to be only active outside Rocinha. Sometimes s/he acted in organised gangs, usually in a pair. *Pivetes* did not necessarily take part in drug trafficking, but posed the same threat to the *trabalhador* and his family.

their life expectancy was short. Moreover, they built up a relation with them. The fact that these teenagers shared their language and culture might explain this sympathy with them. Moreover, according to my neighbours, the sorry state of these teenagers could be accounted for by their *falta de educação* (they were *ignorantes*): the fact that their mother was not in a position *(não teve condições)* to take proper care of them, which led them into this vice.[12] The drugs themselves were believed to account for their violence and other disturbing behaviour. Often long-term unemployment was seen as a contributing cause of their involvement. Unemployment, in turn, was held to be the government's fault. The government *(o governo)* was also to blame for the low salaries which were inadequate to support the worker and their families. Working long hours in humiliating jobs, for a monthly income which in the end did not even feed the family, was believed to lead to *revolta*, protest. ("*A gente têm que roubar assim.*" (Lit: People have no option but to steal this way.).) These were explanations used by the residents themselves, for the loss of faith in the work ethic. The image of the proud worker was gradually transformed into a coward *(otário)* who passively accepted bad treatment for bad pay. There existed a strong sense that one was being exploited and that something was wrong. ("*Alguma coisa não está certo.*" (C.f. Zaluar 1985).)

The teenagers were thus exempted from blame for the state they were in. In this way, the *bandido* was also a rebel who rejected societal values of oppression. Other residents identified with him/her, as they were subjected to and disapproved of these same pressures. The *bandido* was therefore an anti-conformist, who was free in a sense that the worker was not (Hobsbawn 1969).[13] Thus, those who "made

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[12]Because the mother was responsible for moral and school education for their children. See also Chapter 2.

[13]*Bandidos*, although they were anti-conformist, differed from other types of rebels like those that were active in action groups, the "revolutionaries". *Bandidos* took on a form of self-help within the traditional order. They set up a system which was parasitic on the status quo. They were pragmatic and not prophets. The *bandido*, had no new visions, s/he was part of the culture in which s/he acted and essentially shared its value system. S/he only rejected that part of it which held up the state hierarchy. This distinction clarifies the nature of the *bandido's* rebellious status.

it" in this world of criminality indeed became a kind of hero to the people. Some of them corresponded to a Robin Hood-type image; a heroic figure who is universally present in all cultures (Hobsbawn 1969). To a certain extent they celebrated the opposition between "us" and "them", between the poor *(os pobres)* and the rich *(os ricos)*, who, in a sense, formed different moral communities (Bailey 1966) (See also Chapter 4). The ideal bandit took from *o rico* (who, in any case, stole their wealth from *o pobre* in the first place) and redistributed it among those who deserved it. S/he thus rights wrongs. S/he was the champion, in that s/he (as one of "us") was successful in a society which favoured "them" (and marginalised "us"). The law (which treated both as criminals) differed here from public opinion.

In reality however, this distinction was not clear-cut. The shantytown Robin Hood left much to be desired and this identification was clearly an ambiguous one. However, this hero element was certainly visible. The big *Chefão* of Rocinha threw elaborate parties, where supplies of *chope* and *churrasco* (beer and barbecued meats) were lavish, on his account.[14] He was said to subsidise parties for weddings and funeral expenses of his shantytown neighbours, and helped them with the cost of essentials like school uniforms. He provided a large part of the costs towards the *bloco's* (Carnival club) outfit. Rumours had it that he bribed the judges into promoting them.[15]

Despite the picture of them being violent, cruel and fear inspiring, people assured me that the traffickers fought only among themselves and against police. They did not involve outsiders against their will in their world of drugs and violence. ("*Eles não mexem com morador.*" (Lit: They do not involve the resident.).)

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[14]On his birthday, the *Chefão* sealed off the two main entrances to part of Rocinha and treated all its inhabitants to a party. As well as providing lavish supplies of food and drink (appropriate to a complete celebration), he also displayed a huge collection of weapons to the public. In October 1985 he also launched an enormous pre-election party (see Chapter 8).

[15]Rocinha had two *blocos carnavalescos*, with their own *quadras* (courtyards where they prepared and practiced). During the year the *blocos* prepared an outfit which was displayed competitively at Carnival time (*o desfile*). The winner of one *desfile*, was promoted to a higher league the following year.

Once you are involved you cannot change your mind, however. Anyone who got assassinated by them had only themselves to blame, so they said. It was only the very bad bandit who involved the *morador* in his world against his will.

The *Chefão* was also the big patron of the shantytown: he both provided as well as protected them. In the absence of state authorities, the *bandido* filled in the power vacuum. They said that in conflicts between residents, the drug gangs could be called on for "protection" and/or to settle disputes. *O pivete* who robbed *moradores* in Rocinha was rumoured to be punished by *O Chefão*'s heavies. Similarly, misbehaviour within the gang's network was thought to be severely punished. In a sense then, they acted as an internal police force. And in view of the extremely bad image the state police force had in Rocinha (see also in Chapter 8), they were "our" armed force against "theirs". It was mainly from this position that the *Chefão* got his image as a protector. Yet at the same time, people were aware of the fact that the more established he became in his position, the more ambiguous his image became. His relation to the locals increasingly came to be identified as a powerful boss, who was corrupt and ruled over us, just like the authorities did.[16]

The traffickers threatened the order of the domestic world, and moreover, they posed a threat against which the residents could not take action. Thus, there existed a basic situation of conflict. One possible response to such a situation, is to outcast the evil agent. Given that these were enemies who could not be challenged by any other means, this was one obvious way to gain social advantage over them. And, in fact, the way the traffickers were ostracised was comparable to the ascription of witchcraft in some societies. The gangs represented the "standardized nightmares of the community" (Wilson, quoted in Lewis 1976:84). As we have seen, many of the characteristics attributed to them were the inverse of

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[16]He would always be in opposition to the hierarchy of the authorities and in that sense he would never become one of "them". Yet, to be successful he had to make connections with traditional wealth and power. (For example, he needs a stable clientele for his drugs, secure financial backing from banks, some sort of agreements with police (to ensure the safety of his business).) He therefore inevitably moved towards becoming one of "them".

the community's ideals of respectability and decency. Moreover, the image the *morador* had of the *bandido* exaggerated in many ways their experience of them. Charges levelled against them were often irrational and they imputed a degree of mystical malevolence. All public association with them was carefully avoided, and talk about them had to be hidden (whispered) for fear of the belief that "they will get you next". Whenever something went wrong, people whispered that "*O Chefão* is behind this". There was a morbid fascination with the power associated with the gangs and their omnipotence in shantytown affairs. (See also Chapter 8.) People who did not get along also accused each other of this form of evil. Neighbours accused each other of behaving like the traffickers. These accusations were highly charged since the values associated with *o bandido* were the antithesis of those of the respectable worker and family person.

The human tendency of playing down the defects of our own behaviour and that of people like "us", while exaggerating the imperfections of people like "them" were at work here (Pocock 1975:210). One family, for example, barely communicated with another family. The charges against them were that the adult members of that family did not have a proper job (they went to the beach during weekday "work" hours), they dressed in a sexually explicit way, they had children with no legitimate fathers, and these were allowed to run about lose in the streets. These criticisms reflect exactly those values associated with the *bandido.* (The rejection of a proper job, the family structure and other aspects of domestic order.) The "inability to find work" of their own offspring became "unwillingness to work" and "laziness" of the rival family. The fact that the head of the first family was looking after the illegitimate offspring of her own daughter did not make the latter "sexually promiscuous" in the way the neighbour's daughter was condemned. This also explains what appeared curiously contradictory at first sight: that one neighbour strongly condemned another (rival) for associating with *o bandido*, while not questioning the fact that they maintained the same kind of contact with the local bandit themselves. "Expressing concern for one's fellow citizen" became: deliberate "flirting with *o vagabundo*". Sympathy for the "many families whose houses are too small for their children to play indoors", somehow turned into accusations

of deliberately "allowing these kids to mix with *o bandido*". The accusation of "refusing to cooperate" with a collective attempt to solve the problems arising from the presence of the traffickers in our *beco*, was of the same nature.[17] It is interesting to note that these allegations were never made in the presence of the accused. The accusations therefore never led to confrontations, they stayed in the realm of gossip. There were witchcraft accusations, but never any witchhunts. As a result, tension in social relations created by these allegations remained and was never resolved. (See Chapter 8 for the details on why these accusations, and for that matter, any subject matter relating to the traffickers and their doings, were forbidden public territory.)

This is evidence for the fact that my neighbours were highly divided against one another. There existed cliques between them, each accusing members of the other of "unrespectable behaviour". If we look at their actual behaviour, we find that they shared the same model of respectability and its antithesis (the behaviour of the traffickers). Real behavioural differences and fundamental differences of goals were therefore not at the basis of these neighbourhood divisions.

These findings firstly refute our first hypothesis: that neighbours could not agree to mobilise against the traffickers' presence because they were divided in kind: between those who condemned and those who cooperated with them. Secondly, they are evidence against a picture of local neighbourhood unity and the social cohesion between the members of one *pedaço*. Magnani and Caldeira's assumptions about the nature of social relations within the *pedaço* were not true for Rocinha. There was a sense of familiarity between members of the same *pedaço* in that the relations between them were not anonymous. So, some people, particularly those who had been in the *beco* for a long time, greeted each other with short comments and some even stopped for a few words. All knew some personal details about the other and some referred to each other by name. However, most were only

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[17]Rival politicians of different action groups also accused each other of maintaining links with the gangs and these accusations were hotly contested. Mere suspicion of contact with gang members was enough to ruin one's credibility in this political scene. I will elaborate on this in Chapters 7 and 8.

known through indirect contact, from observation after many hours of leaning out of the window, from overhearing bits of conversation and overseeing major events like parties, weddings, and visits from relatives or friends. This personal information had been gathered indirectly and stayed at the level of stereotypes - a higher level of generalisation than that gathered directly (like that between members of the same household or close friends). I am referring here to a process similar to that of simplification which occurs when any level of society engages with another. (For example, the reductionism which occurs when a small community is forced to communicate the characteristics of its identity to the members of the larger society of which it forms a part (c.f. Cohen 1982:8).) People's images of each other in Rocinha stayed in this impersonal realm. They were highly simplified. They were about "What people think" and "What they will say" and they were reinforced by media stereotypes (c.f. Frankenberg on relations between neighbours on British housing estates (Frankenberg 1966) and Bell's analysis of gossip (Bell 1974)). As they talked about each other, rather than to each other, their relations did not go beyond this level. These stereotypes caused a lot of speculation between friends and were expressed in the gossip which was rife within Rocinha's *pedaços.*

My interpretation of this widespread existence of gossip therefore contrasts with Caldeira's. She sees it in a positive sense; as evidence of the existence of a collective contract and hence as evidence of the agreement between members of the *pedaço* about certain codes of behaviour which are implicitly expressed in this gossip (Caldeira 1984:121-123). I would argue that the existence of gossip was evidence of the contrary: it was an expression of difference, of singling out those who did not conform and hence could be seen as a sign of insecurity about these rules. It was not a sign of social cohesion. Moreover, the gossip itself contributed to this situation, since the accusations implicit in it had a divisive effect (c.f. Bell 1974). This was clear in the case of allegations about the associations with the traffickers.

Zaluar touches on this point. She recognises the presence of gossip as a strongly divisive element in the neighbourhood. She admits that this comes to her as a

surprise (" ... creating an unexpected conflict area.") (Zaluar 1985:125)[18] and admits that it remains a question mark to her ("The disturbing presence of envy, a feared weapon, mentioned and criticised by them, but, judging from its maleficent effects, also very effective, remained to me a question mark.") (ibid:125).[19] She ignores it as important evidence which contradicts her conclusions about the close association and social cohesion within the neighbourhood.

When dismissing people's loyalty to their neighbourhood in Rocinha, we have to account for one more question which emerges in later chapters. This is the fact that action groups were divided along territorial lines. Each *bairro* had its own "community centre" with a handful of local "leaders". This evidence has been considered by others as evidence for the existence of strong loyalty to local neighbourhood and the strength of the locality principle in the social organisation of the shantytown. For example, Zaluar uses the concept of *pedaço* in this way for Cidade de Deus. She claims that each *pedaço* has its own organisations, and locals identify with them. Moreover, the units of gang territoriality correspond to the residents' identification with these units. Each gang has their *pedaço* to defend. *Pedaço* is, according to Zaluar, therefore reflected both in community organisation as well as gang organisation (Zaluar 1985:175-180). It is from this evidence mainly that she deduces the importance of the locality principle at all levels of organisation in Cidade de Deus.

There is a confusion of levels of analysis here. Zaluar's *pedaços* are Rocinha's *bairros*. Magnani and Caldeira do not specify their level of analysis, and that in itself suggests a confusion of different levels. I would argue that these different levels of analysis should be kept clearly separate. One cannot deduce the existence of loyalty to the neighbourhood merely on the basis of evidence from material about the organisation of action groups (which is what Zaluar does, and others

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[18]"... *criando uma área de conflito não esperado.*" (Zaluar 1985:125)

[19]"*A presença inquietante da inveja, uma arma muito temida, mencionada e criticada entre eles, mas, a julgar pelos efeitos maléficos, também muito eficaz, ficou-me como um ponto de interrogação*" (ibid:125)

who claim the importance of territoriality in shantytowns' political organisation). In a later chapter, we look closely at the factors which determined organisation at this higher level. We conclude that the resulting social formations at this level were determined to a large extent by factors which lie outside the shantytown and community politics was largely shaped according to the structure of outside resources, i.e. there were externally imposed political forces at work at this level.

One cannot claim that in Rocinha locality was a strong organising principle just because its action groups united people of the same *bairro* and their strength was derived from the fact that its members had something in common, i.e. they shared the historical development of the *bairro*, fought the same battles and suffered from the same infrastructural problems (which were particular to particular *bairros*, as shown in Chapter 1). This is an idea used in the language of Rocinha's politicians, since the externally determined political framework demanded that politicians justify themselves in this way. The politician in Rocinha had to show representativity and also was set up to compete against the action groups of other shantytowns and those of other *bairros* within Rocinha. This above claim responded to both of these demands. It justified their claim of representativity. It also allowed them to claim their resources on the basis of the needs in view of the historical struggle and suffering of their particular *bairro.* The structure of the resources outside the shantytown thus encouraged the use of territorial identification, at least in language.

Besides, evidence from action groups' activities contradicted these claims of loyalty to particular *bairros* and hence the strength of the territoriality principle. In practice, people moved around between different action groups based in separate *bairros*, and this was not a problem or even worth comment. (For example, ASPA's key employees were from all over Rocinha. They lived there and socialised there. This was true despite accusations that ASPA only catered for the bottom part of the *morro*).

The centralising role of the *birosqueiros* at local levels did not manifest itself beyond these immediate local functions. I have mentioned that, in a few cases, *birosqueiros* became "leaders". However, they held this position not on the ba-

sis of their *birosca* clientele, nor on the centralising function of their business. It was not *birosca* premises that turned into "community centres", which were newly established premises, or buildings in disuse often belonging previously to organisations or institutions that had moved elsewhere. Besides, some *birosqueiros*-turned-"community leaders" associated with centres in *bairros* different from the one in which they ran their business. Thus there was no analytic continuity between Rocinha's *pedaços* (of which *biroscas* were the nuclei) and its *bairros* which centred around action groups. In sum, Rocinha's "community centres" were associated with a certain neighbourhood, and territorial identity was expressed in the political language used by their promoters. This can be explained by the demands imposed by an external framework. However, at a closer look, little about them was localised. This issue will be further elaborated in a wider context of political rhetoric in Chapter 7.

Finally, it has to be mentioned that geographical mobility is also another factor which disrupted the importance of locality in Rocinha's social organisation. The fact that people moved around prevented them from building up long-term stable neighbourhood units. This factor mitigated the stability and strength of all social formations in this shantytown, but its disruptive quality was especially evident when considering the locality principle.

I conclude that the locality principle was not a strongly organising one in the social organisation of the neighbourhood. An examination of relations at this level shows that neighbours did not express a great sense of loyalty to each other on the basis of belonging to the same *pedaço*. Evidently, there was a sense of geographical belonging, especially within the *beco*, whose familiarity and intimacy I have described. This was especially true for those who had been in Rocinha for many years. However, there were few such old-timers left, and they were spread thinly. For many, their networks had fallen apart (if they ever existed) and they had not incorporated the large amounts of newcomers.

The high geographical mobility (due partly to the large amounts of rental accommodation that existed in Rocinha) partly explains the weakness of the bonds formed at this level. Further factors which explain this will also be revealed in

following chapters. The sense of geographical belonging was not translated into social space. Despite the large potential for collective activity within the neighbourhood, mobilisation and cooperation around these urgent shared problems was conspicuously absent. And despite (or maybe I should say; because of) the intimacy and familiarity of *beco* life, social relations between neighbours remained static. Communication stayed in the realm of gossip, neighbours talked about each other rather than to each other and several conflicts concerning the use of *beco* space were evident in my *beco.*

With regard to the use of this valuable space, People kept a close eye on each other over who was using what for what purposes. It was a scene of competition and disagreements rather than consultation and discussion. This can be partly explained by the fact that housing was a highly valued (often only) source of investment for these people. Expansion and improvement of their houses was therefore a constant preoccupation. In my *beco* there was always someone at it. Yet, at the same time, the availability of space was extremely restricted. The slightest alteration seriously affected the living conditions of several neighbours. For example, enlarging a window, could have the effect of subjecting one's neighbours to easier access by burglars, endangering the stability of the building, depriving them of privacy. The construction of one floor on top of a neighbouring house could deprive one of light, privacy, extensively used roof space, and ventilation. It could cause drainage problems and one could have to move one's TV aerial for better reception. Competition for an already inadequate water supply would be even higher. This was apart from the noises involved in the building process, which usually took place at nights and/or in weekends and went on forever. The new floor could be sold to new people with whom one had to build up a new relation of trust. Personal dislikes could easily become a source of tension within a *beco.*

Rules regarding building restrictions were laid down by the Residents Association. For example, a minimum width of *becos* and a maximum height of buildings had been imposed and, officially, permission had to be granted before anyone could build at all. However, in practice people just built often leading to (violent) conflicts between neighbours. Officially, neighbour disputes could be referred to the

Residents Association. In reality the Association was believed to be highly partial and "all corrupt" and for most people therefore not a suitable arbiter in disputes. (See also in Chapter 7.)

If the *pedaço* concept is applied to a slightly wider circle of social relations, we see a *birosca* unit, centralising neighbourhood activities. However, the *birosca* merely fulfilled the residents' physical needs and it did not feature as a centralising force in social space. At this level too, I conclude that the *pedaço* unit is redundant as an analytical tool. We looked at social relations at the highest level, that of Rocinha's politically active groups, and concluded the same again. This last point will be picked up again in later chapters.

Chapter 4

Community Identity?

I have considered the nature of social relations between household members and neighbours. The question that remains is that of people's identification with Rocinha as a whole, something one could call "community identity". The chapter concerns questions such as those of religious persuasion, colour awareness and rural association which all make up a person's identity. These factors affect the kind of links that exist between a political leader and his/her followers, and indeed, what kind of issues a potential politician can draw on to mobilise people. It is clear therefore, that these factors have to be dealt with if the question of political organisation of this shantytown is to be understood fully.

I am not concerned with adding to academic debates about what a "community" might consist of, removed from its contextual data. The history of this debate; the different usages to which the concept has been put and the different meanings assigned to it in the process, illustrates that such a debate is endless and leads to unnecessary conceptual confusion (c.f. Stacey 1969). Nor am I concerned with more recent theoretical questions about the ways in which identity can be expressed. To get away from definitions and for practical purposes, I will take the "community", in line with Cohen (1985) as "symbolically constructed, as a system of values, norms, moral codes which provides a sense of identity within a bounded whole to its members." (Hamilton 1985:9, Editor's foreword in Cohen 1985). This assertion is useful when answering the question of how people construct communities and I shall make use of it for this purpose. However, the question of what

kind of communities they construct, i.e. to what extent these are cohesive social units, is not posed. Cohen points out that people create communities by using, creating and manipulating the symbols which the group has in common.

> People put down their social markers symbolically, using the symbolic vocabulary which they can most comfortably assimilate to themselves, and then contributing to it creatively. They thereby make community. (Cohen 1985:28)

This quote shows that he takes for granted the existence of such a system of values, norms and moral codes in common, and assumes that this common system is the vehicle with which members build their identity. He is not concerned with the possibility of the existence of a group of people constructing their identity with social concepts and symbols other than those which they have in common, or with the question of whether the way they articulate this system of symbols is cohesive or divisive and to what extent they do this at all. It is with these questions that I am concerned in this chapter. When speaking of the extent to which Rocinha was a "community", I am thus concerned with determining to what degree its members were able to infuse this notional unit with vitality; to what extent they constructed symbols which were meaningful to all and from which they derived a sense of identity. The chapter will be looking for cultural characteristics which Rocinha's residents shared or failed to share and which were potentially cohesive or divisive (such as religious persuasion, colour awareness, rural association). It will examine the nature of the residents' aspirations, the presence/absence of the residents' emotional investment into Rocinha as a whole, the presence/absence of a common adversary and the extent to which their daily movements centred around Rocinha.

One possible way from which a unit derives its identity is from its difference from others (see also Barth 1969). This is most visible when the unit interacts with another one considered different by its members. It can also occur when an external agent (e.g. society at large or another shantytown) assigns a label to the unit. However, the mere existence of these situations (an external agent recognised by members, or an existing label assigned to it from outside) is not enough to deduce the existence of a collectivity as perceived by the members themselves. An

answer to the question of the nature of Rocinha as a collectivity is therefore not a straightforward one. We have to distinguish between the question of the residents' conception of themselves as a collective category from others labelling them as a category. Furthermore, there is the question of whether the residents act as a collectivity as opposed to them merely constituting a conceptual unit. Indeed, the question of subcommunities occurs. The answer to these questions may not be uniform. In some ways the residents may positively encourage a collective identity, while in other ways there is an absence or even resistance against the idea. The aim in this chapter is to determine the extent to which and in what ways collective identity is expressed positively and negatively in all of these spheres, so as to acquire a clearer picture of where Rocinha's residents' social commitments were located.

There were externally assigned labels to Rocinha's residents. These were: *favelado* (*favela* resident; relating to their place of residence (*morro* as opposed to *asfalto*)), *pobre* (poor; relating to their economic well-being), *nordestino* (from the Northeast of Brazil; relating to their origins (rural)) and *preto* (black; relating to their skin colour). I shall examine the values associated with these designations and the reality they had within Rocinha and the implications of this for the assignment of a collective identity to its residents.

The first obvious source of common identity was derived from their common place of residence. Rocinha was a *morro* in the middle of a very affluent neighbourhood (*o asfalto*). As described in Chapter 1, its boundaries were very clear. There was no misunderstanding about one's whereabouts in São Conrado. On the São Conrado side, the end of Rocinha was clearly marked by a dual carriage way, along which *o rico* sped past at a safe distance in his/her car. On the Gávea side, Rocinha was isolated from its wealthy neighbours by a wide (about 200m) band of no-person's land owned by the state water company which was kept strictly clear of invaders.[1] On both other sides, Rocinha was bordered by unpopulated

[1]I witnessed one occasion in which the police eradicated a group of invaders from this land without mercy. This had not been the first time - the cleared site showed

mountainous wasteland (the expansive Floresta de Tijuca on one side and on the other, the steep rocky surfaces of the top of the mountain on which Rocinha was located). Only Rocinha's people (*o pobre*) entered Rocinha. The São Conrado resident (*o rico*) had no need to and as a rule avoided Rocinha carefully. One of the directors of the Residents Association of São Conrado mentioned its member's proposal to construct a wall around Rocinha. In many ways this wall between Rocinha and its neighbours already existed.

The assignment of identity (i.e. of Rocinha's residents as belonging to *o morro*) was clearly true not only for Rocinha's residents but also for most *favelados.* Thus, *o pobre* belongs to *o morro*, and *o rico* to *o asfalto*, and at first sight the two were physically kept apart. To Rocinha's residents this opposition was not a source of strength and in many ways this perception of difference was imposed upon them by others, by *o rico.* This was clear from the fact that the avoidance of each others' territory only worked one way: *o rico* avoided the *morro*, but *o pobre* spent most of his/her time *no asfalto* (most of Rocinha's residents worked there). If they had a choice about it, both *rico* and *pobre* would spend their time *no asfalto.* Rocinha's residents did not show pride or interest in being identified as belonging to *o morro*, but instead, the concern of hiding their real place of residence to friends outside Rocinha, was expressed openly. When asked by an outsider where they lived, the answer was invariably "São Conrado" or "Gávea". The main reference in the official mailing address several people gave to me on my departure was "Estrada da Gávea"; it did not include "Rocinha". The use of this official address itself expressed an attempt to upgrade Rocinha from *morro* to *asfalto* (See also Chapter 3).[2]

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remnants of previous settlers. On the occasion, the government acted in the name of safety ("danger of subsidence") and Rocinha's Residents Association clearly refused to back the invaders' protests, publicly sharing the government's concerns.

[2]The importance of the telephone as an anonymous way of entering into contact with someone outside, is again confirmed here and also note the prestige attached to the use of official street labelling and house numbering.

As far as identification with *o pobre* is concerned, the same observations can be made. People hid their economic deprivation by investing in their appearance. For many, clothing made up a large part of their total expenditure. They had clothes for "going out" (meaning: leaving Rocinha) and a different set of much more basic (often dark coloured) clothes for around the house and local expeditions. In the case of shoes, this was especially evident; white tennis shoes or light coloured high-heeled ladies' shoes contrasted with *chinelos* (plastic slippers) worn around Rocinha. Some women changed their shoes at the bottom of the hill, on the way out or into Rocinha.

The appearance of one of Rocinha's political leaders (longish hair, bearded (unusual in Brazil) and casually dressed, notably always wearing *chinelos*) caused offence to both his adversaries as well as his supporters. His opponents took his "deliberate underdressing" as evidence for his alleged two-sidedness and manipulative behaviour. His supporters felt that he was letting them down. To him personally, his appearance was a political statement (particularly his *chinelos*, shoes of the poor) but was not shared by his supporters. Similar controversy surrounded another leader. Not only her appearance caused offence; she was also known as being "foul-mouthed" (something which Rocinha's residents very seriously condemned) and she gained little sympathy for her public insistence on being accepted by the establishment as *pobre*, with the language and appearance of *o pobre*. This supposedly "indigenous" language (as was her appearance) was dismissed by Rocinha's people as *palavrão, sujeira* (Lit: swearing, dirt).[3]

The designation of *pobre* had connotations of dirt to society at large. Public attempts to demonstrate immaculate cleanliness, (e.g. clean and ironed clothes (often of light colours) and houses) showed in themselves efforts to dissociate oneself from *o pobre* and the associations which were attached to this label. This

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[3]These claims were part of her larger political campaign which argued for the recognition and acceptance of *favelado* culture in its own right, by the authorities. To the great majority of Rocinha's people, however, this claim was ridiculed and she was dismissed as an excentric. The lack of support for her cause was demonstrated in the fact that it never got off the ground in the first place. (I will elaborate on this point in Chapter 7.)

was also expressed in the defensive and apologetic often heard expression: "*Uma casa pobre mas limpa*" (Lit: A poor but clean house).

To a large extent, the allocation of negative value to categories of *pobre/morro* can be explained by the fact that this was imposed upon Rocinha by the Brazilian establishment. This externally assigned label was rooted in the concept of marginality which to Latin Americans means "on the edge" / "outside mainstream". Mainstream is defined not in terms of what the majority does (in terms of numbers), but what those in power (a small minority) define to be the norm. The designation of the label "marginal" therefore involves an element of power and privilege. As Perlman points out, the label "*marginal*" implies the negative stereotyping of the poor in all areas of social life (Perlman 1976). Many others have pointed out how this negative stereotyping is also reflected in the literature on the poor and has (partly because of this) had direct effects on policies towards the poor (see Nelson 1979). Thus, in terms of economic contribution, the poor are seen as parasitic or non-participating. In terms of political orientation, they are seen as pathetically apathetic or dangerously radical. In terms of social organisation, chaotic and delinquent, and so on.

This does not explain why the people of Rocinha themselves adopted these negative connotations. For them, they had a divisive, not an integrative/cohesive effect. They were not questioned in any collective way (or, those who tried to do this, did not find much support within Rocinha). They thereby undermined their own potentially cohesive symbols. To be *pobre*, thus, was not something to be proud of, but something to be hidden.

It is not surprising then, to find that Rocinha's people's ideals involved moving out of the *favela.* Many were ambitious and had expectations to move up the social ladder (also confirmed by Caldeira 1984, Cardoso 1978, Durham 1988). For many, it was their dream to be like *o patrão* (Lit: the patron, boss, or, someone who belonged to the category of *o rico*) and they adopted their behaviour as much as they could. Those who "made it" often moved out, even if they could only very nearly afford the greatly increased living expenses *no asfalto.*

There is a paradox here, since one also knew from experience that very few

pobres ever succeeded in making this move. In fact, Caldeira also confirms that people actually believed that they could not become *rico*. The people of the São Paulo shantytown she examined are said to claim that one is born *rico* or *pobre*. Only winning a lottery (or a similar miracle) can get one out of this category. (And indeed, the pervasiveness of gambling in Rocinha confirms their efforts to dissociate themselves from the category in which they belonged.) Social mobility was only conceivable within the "us", *pobre* category. There was a corresponding sense of resentment against *o rico*, who was blamed for being *rico* at the expense of *o pobre*. *O rico* was said not to need to work; s/he just enriched him/herself on the work of *o pobre* ("*Não faz nada, só manda*"(Lit: Doesn't do anything, just gives orders)). While *o pobre* worked hard ("*Trabalha honestamente*"(Lit: Works in an honest way)), yet still remained *pobre*, *o rico* was stingy (s/he would "rather throw something away than give it to *o pobre*" and "*Rouba pra ficar mais rico*" (Lit: Robs to become even richer)). *O pobre*, on the other hand, was generous ("would always divide things with someone who was *pobre mesmo*" (Lit: really poor)). The image of *o pobre* here is one of moral cleanliness (*gente boa*) and contrasts with that of *o rico*.

In this contrast, *o rico* and *o pobre* belonged to two different moral communities. (This has also been noted by Caldeira.) Interaction between "us" and "them" who belonged to different moral communities, was evaluated not according to the rules governing relationships between "us" (evaluations in terms of "good" or "bad") but in terms of expediency (Bailey 1966). This would explain why relations with *o rico* were exploitative rather than reciprocal. However, I would propose that the above evidence is not enough to argue for the existence of two clearly defined morally separate communities for Rocinha's people. Firstly, there was no clearly defined "us", and secondly, there was no clearly defined "them" either.

Rocinha's people did not see themselves as a uniform category *pobre*. This is illustrated in the frequently heard expression quoted above: that *o pobre* will always divide things with *o pobre mesmo*. *Pobre* was made up of different degrees of economic well-being. There were those who were *menos pobre* (less poor) or

mais pobre (poorer) (see also Caldeira 1984). For example, "*Roupa Suja é pobre mesmo*" (Lit: Roupa Suja [part of Rocinha] is really poor). Bairro Barcelos was also an interesting case here since its residents were negatively accused of having false pretensions, of trying to be like *o rico*. "*Só falta parede*" (Lit: Just short of constructing a wall between us), people said. And they told me that its inhabitants claimed to be living in "Bairro Barcelos", not "Rocinha". This kind of subdivision of *o pobre* into further categories showed that people themselves did not allow this uniform category to be constructed. This was one attempt to resolve the above-mentioned paradox - namely that they aimed towards becoming *o rico* but recognised that few ever achieved this aim. It also illustrated people's wish to disassociate themselves from everyone else in the shantytown.

O rico was also not a uniform category to Rocinha's people. *O rico* in reality was someone who acted like one's *patrão*. The relationship one had with a *patrão* was not merely exploitative. Bailey's formula does not work when applied to Rocinha's people's relations with their *patrões*. Standards of good and bad did rule these relationships. It was a hierarchical relationship of dependency and the point about patron-client relations is that they did not emphasise class antagonism (e.g. Eisenstadt & Roniger 1984). Moreover, these relationships were found within the same class of *pobre*: someone within this category could (and did) become *patrão* of *o pobre mesmo*. *O pobre* also aimed towards becoming someone like *o meu patrão* (Lit: my boss). S/he was not someone whose world was of a totally different kind.

The example of Bairro Barcelos further illustrated the tendency to single oneself out by claiming to be better than or different from the rest of the population. This was particularly clear from the often heard claim expressed in many different ways that "I live here, but I am not like them". Those who succeeded, especially, expressed this clearly as they dissociated themselves in quality by calling the majority *vagabundo* and *marginal*, implying that "I am not one of them".

It emerges that Rocinha's people themselves assigned negative value to these labels. They resisted being classified under these general categories and made efforts to escape from being associated with them. The point has already been

made that this was not only the case for Rocinha's residents, but for all *pobre.* Rocinha's residents were in this case no exception. As I mentioned, to a certain extent, the negative value assigned to these values can be explained by the way they were regarded by society at large, as expressed in the media and in the behaviour of the public. This does not explain, however, why Rocinha's residents did not challenge these negative associations in any collective way. This can only be because they accepted these values themselves. This also becomes clear if we look at further associations related to the marginality concept, namely the question of origins.

To be poor is to be a migrant, i.e. a newcomer and hence marginal. Much of the literature on urban poor in the 1950s and 60s was preoccupied with the idea that the cause of urban poverty and the resulting social delinquency was an inability on the part of the poor to cope with "urban ways". "Peasant mentalities" and rural characteristics were seen as the cause of their "backwardness", as "obstacles" to their "development", and the proper "integration" into the rest of society (e.g. Foster's limited good (Foster 1965), Ray's aspiring vs backwards classes (Ray 1969)). In line with these literary assumptions, we find the popular assignment of a common rurality to Rocinha's residents. By the media, Rocinha was often designated as "*O capital do Nordeste*" (Lit: The capital of the Northeast). This suggests the image of a physically distinct location inside Rio de Janeiro (a question with which I have dealt). It also suggests that it was characteristically "Northeastern", i.e. a culturally distinct unit, one of rural character in the (urban) centre of Rio de Janeiro.

The assumption that a large percentage of Rocinha's inhabitants had a rural past, was questionable in itself. Many of those who came from rural parts came a long time ago. Rocinha dated back to the 1920s and many of its people arrived in the 1950s. The migration flow was continuing at the time of fieldwork. Many of the earlier generation had raised families in Rocinha. And there were also many who were born and reared in other urban places before they came to Rocinha. Those of rural origins came from many different Brazilian states, not only those of the Northeast. The assumption that Rocinha's residents were *nordestino* was

challenged by individuals in Rocinha. For example, it was said that there were a large number of *mineiros* (Lit: from Minas Gerais). Moreover, the Northeast was not seen as a uniform category: there were at least two different kinds of Northeasterners recognised by them and these (the *cearense* and *paraibano* (Lit: from Ceará, from Paraíba)) had their own stereotyped characteristics (e.g. the latter was nicknamed *cabeça chata* (Lit: flat head, as in: no brains) by the former). All this was evidence that Rocinha's residents rejected the assignment of "Northeastern" culture. I would argue moreover, that these origins were not important to the people of Rocinha in this sense. They did not feature in conversations and certainly were not organising principles in a social sense. For example, there were no social clubs for *paraibanos* or *cearenses* and I was not aware of any active networks relating to those of the same origin.[4] For those who did come from rural parts, the maintenance of this connection was weak. Occasionally, one heard of someone returning to visit relatives left behind but the great majority in Rocinha did not maintain rural connections in any way. In many cases, they came from rural areas voluntarily and left them behind for a good reason. A friend who travelled to her place of origin commented on the impoverished living conditions of that place and how life was much better having left there.

Consider also the food Rocinha's residents ate, for example. Again this was part of the popular myth of rurality. I would argue that (in contrast to public opinion) those foods characteristically associated with the Brazilian Northeast were rarely eaten in Rocinha. When they were available in Rio de Janeiro, they were prepared and sold by Northeastern people who most likely were *favelados*, but marketed for the middle and upper classes. What people in Rocinha ate daily was a basic diet of rice and beans (accompanied by additional dishes if they could afford them). This was also the basic diet for the rich (although accompaniments like meat were, for them, essential for a complete meal). The food valued especially by Rocinha's people (and bought as special treats) was American-style fastfood.

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[4]In some cases they were used in naming: "*Paraibano*" was a fairly common nickname, and "*Casa do Ceará*" was the name of a local shop.

It was the food of the rich, not that associated with their supposed place of origin. This kind of food was not a collectively valued symbol of Rocinha's identity, nor was any other kind of food. Possibly jack fruit could be considered uniquely Rocinha food. There were a large number of fruit-bearing jack trees in Rocinha. But the fruit was associated with extreme poverty and had negative connotations. It was certainly not seen by the people themselves as a collectively valued food item. Indeed, the fact that it was not is significant in itself.

I have already mentioned people's appearance. Women particularly attempted to dress like their middle class counterparts.[5] "Rural" forms of dress were associated with poverty, and as argued above, in Rocinha dress was used as one way of ridding oneself of the identity of *pobre*. Similarly, there was no production of traditional crafts or any such other local expertise in Rocinha (or any associated with the Northeast, for that matter). A few people produced and sold products (such as handbags, cheap cotton clothes, dolls) to supplement their income. These products were not distinctive but much resembled the mass-produced ones. Their expertise was not collectively recognised, it was not traditionally passed on, nor did most of it demand a lot of expertise. The products were largely functional rather than elaborately decorated. The people involved in this type of home production were largely marginal women (also in Rocinha). Some were commissioned by a particular patron who marketed and sold the produce. I would argue again that, as was the case with food and appearance, crafts production was not a basis for identity for the people of Rocinha nor was it important for any collective identity in this shantytown.

As far as music goes, traditional country music (*forrô*) was heard much less in Rocinha than the music played on the media (often foreign). Its lyrics typically addressed subjects like romance and sexual desire. Outside the *blocos*, few people played their own instrument. On occasions one could see a bunch of musicians

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[5]I only saw one Baiana in Rocinha (a person dressed in an outfit of multiple layered white lace-edged skirts, a dress considered typically Northeastern). She was visibly on her way out of Rocinha, carrying a tray of Northeastern delicacies for sale downtown.

singing and playing around a *birosca.* These were very few and mostly the same people. I did not come across any publicly organised *pagodes* in Rocinha (parties often with live music, where people dance different patterned dances to traditional tunes).

Rurality was (like poverty) something to be hidden. Rural images were negative and sneered at in line with its associations with marginality. There existed the "rural bumpkin" image which had associations with poverty, illiteracy and backwardness (defined in contrast to urban sophistication). My impressions on this subject contrast very sharply with the existing image of the nostalgic rural migrant, trapped involuntarily in the city, waiting for an opportunity to return to their place of origin.[6]

One last most revealing incident regarding the status and significance of rurality in the mind of Rocinha's people was the response I received to inviting some friends and neighbours to accompany me to the *Feira* at São Cristovão. This was a weekly Sunday market in São Cristovão (on the edges of Rio de Janeiro) where one could find all things "Northeastern" (e.g. *repentistas* (singers who compose a song on the spot about you in return for a little money), Northeastern dishes of all kinds cooked on the spot, *cigarros de palha* (strong cigarettes whose contents are cut from strings of tarry tobacco, and rolled in bits of straw), mosquito nets, hammocks, *literatura de cordel* (traditional popular literature) and so on). It also offered a large selection of cheap clothes and household utensils. It contrasted sharply with the up-market tourist-targeted craft fairs in downtown Rio de Janeiro, in that it was large, crowded and attracted a very different much lower income clientele. My neighbours declined my invitation and their response was

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[6]It is true that there were a few people in Rocinha, whose preoccupation was to emphasise these rural origins. This was in line with external political forces (part of the *abertura* movement (see Chapters 5 and 6)) whose protagonists emphasised the creation of a collective identity to encourage direct "community involvement" in political affairs. As a result, some funds were made available to encourage these initiatives. Within Rocinha there was very little support for these projects. (I elaborate on these points in Chapter 7.) This was shown in the fact that these projects practically were non-events in Rocinha: they had neither attracted support nor opposition to any significant degree.

surprise at my interest in going. They described the place as dirty in several different ways.

Most of Rocinha's residents shunned rural associations. They lived in a world in which they liked to be seen to be striving forward to follow the example of those of higher classes, whose ideals and lifestyles they knew and copied from daily interactions with them at work and through the media. The use of these (rural) symbols in a positive way by a few politicians in Rocinha can be explained by the demands and initiatives of external sources; the content and associations of *abertura* language. (I elaborate extensively on this idea in Chapter 7.) This was only a passing phase and was not drawing much support from Rocinha's people. The situation in Rocinha in this respect was strikingly different from that of Ceilândia, a low-income settlement in Brasília[7] where people's origins were a constant subject of comment and debate, as was their preoccupation with returning "*prá minha terra*" (Lit: to my homeland) as soon as they had built up their fortune (Knottenbelt 1984). This may be explained in part by their much more recent arrival in Brasília, and the more uniformly rural background of these people. In Ceilândia, people wrote letters "home" collectively, to save on stamps and to pool news and writing skills. Their rural culture was very much alive: birthdays and other special occasions were excuses for the collective preparation of special foods, typically Northeastern. While I was there, they celebrated a whole series of collectively recognised religiously significant days. These involved traditional costumed dancing (*quadrilhas*) rehearsed and prepared a long time before the actual day, and the construction of *tendinhas* and *barracas* (small decorated tents) in which all sorts of Northeastern delicacies were sold at very low prices. They proudly exhibited their rural origins in many areas of their social life. Rocinha, in comparison, had little to show.

This brings us to the last association related to the marginality concept: the question of skin colour. To be black (*preto*), was to be poor, and there were various cultural manifestations (Carnival, Afro-Brazilian religion) which were to

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[7]I spent six months in Ceilândia in 1983 for undergraduate research.

the general public clearly associated with shantytowns. The first thing to note about this issue is the fact that Rocinha's people were clearly mixed in terms of skin colour and recognised to be so by them. There was a range of people from black to white. People identified, referred and described others by their particular shade of skin colour and, as has been noted in the literature, they possessed a large vocabulary for this purpose (Skidmore 1974). The usage of "people of colour" (*gente de cor*) by official spokespersons on the topic was deceiving, as they were not seen as one uniform group by the people themselves (Dzidzienyo 1979). To Rocinha's people the equation *pobre=preto* was not valid. No one obvious group of people with the same racial features stood out in appearance in particular. The situation with regard to the question of race relations in a Brazilian shantytown was therefore a different one from that in shantytowns in many other Latin American countries such as Peru and Bolivia, where ethnic characteristics were visible and emphasised by shantytown inhabitants (c.f. Lobo 1982; Mangin 1967, 1970; Doughty 1970; Buechler 1970; Stearman 1985).

I did not come across anyone who called themselves "*Indio*" in Rocinha. Generally, my contacts shared the media view of the Indian. They were sympathetic with the issue of the threat to their culture but the issues were portrayed in a naive way. The media image of the Indian was that of an innocent child; naked, illiterate and beautiful and living in their own world of strange customs and bizarre beliefs threatened by the big wide world. The issues were too far removed from the reality of Rocinha's people to treat the Indian other than this media stereotype. The issue did not have any practical implications for most of Rocinha's people.

The situation with regard to "people of colour", however, was more complex.[8] Black consciousness was explicitly expressed by some individuals who frequently raised the question of the marginalisation of *o negro* and point at discriminatory behaviour in conversations. For the majority, however, the official stance (that

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[8]The complexity of the issue of race relations and the question of colour awareness in Brazil, is clear from the enormity of the literature on this topic. It is not my intention to address this topic in full. Merely to make some prominent observations about the situation in Rocinha as far as it was relevant to political mobilisation in action groups.

there is no racism in Brazil), was clearly accepted. In their eyes black activists did not have much credibility. They were dismissed as irrelevant, or as extremists at worst. This majority included those who would be most obvious targets of discrimination. Discrimination was denied to exist (e.g. by citing the anti-discrimination law drawn up in 1951 and by comparing Brazil with the United States), or explained away as caused by something else (e.g. class instead of race; this argument is also used widely in Brazilian academic circles). Or it was dismissed as racial prejudice rather than discrimination (Dzidzienyo 1979). They cited famous black heros as examples of the fairness of Brazilian society with respect to colour (the most famous one being Pelé, the football star), but ignored that these were only very few, and only existed in the area of sport and entertainment, not in areas of decision-making which could affect the destination of other blacks (points which black activist groups elsewhere repeatedly made). Black women in Rocinha (as elsewhere in Brazil) went to extremes to whiten their skin and straighten their hair, and marriage preferences for a whiter spouse were explicit and unquestioned. Mixed couples were few in Rocinha and they attracted negative gossip from the large majority.

The fact that all Brazilian people explicitly recognised other shades of skin colour and (in line with the official "whitening" ideal) discrimination occurred in different degrees towards people of different shades, disarming the person who claimed to be a victim of racial discrimination. This may be part of the reason why tension between black and white was so well suppressed. This also explains in part why, when the issue arose in meetings and conversation, most people (of all colours) did not want to know.[9] Given this general observation, what of the cultural manifestations such as Carnival and Afro-Brazilian religion and/or to what extent could these be seen as manifestations of black consciousness? To what extent were they important in terms of the political identity of their participants or of Rocinha as a whole?

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[9]This became evident to me in a workshop organised by a Church-related NGO for "Dia do Negro" (National Negro Day) whose attendance was noticeably low, and the participants in the discussions were remarkably indifferent.

Rocinha did not have one samba school which was publicly recognised to be representing it as a whole. In this, it contrasted with shantytowns such as Mangueira and numerous others. Instead, it had *blocos carnavalescos* (much smaller in size and of much inferior quality than the samba school proper). The largest of these had its own premises, a *quadra* (an open asphalted square and several shacks for administrative and storage purposes). Its location was geographically isolated from Rocinha; on the other side of the dual carriage way in São Conrado. Through the year, this *bloco* ran weekly discos, and a daycare centre on its premises. The latter's facilities were extremely precarious and often blame was put on the *bloco*'s directors to whom (it was said) the daycare centre was only important because it served as an obstacle in the government's plans to remove the *bloco* from its premises. (A first-class hotel was being built right next to it, whose owners were unlikely to be willing to put up with the *bloco*'s noise and clientele in its immediate environs.)

Around Carnival time, activities around the *bloco* increased. A theme was selected in November around which elaborately decorated costumes and a float were prepared in the weeks ahead. I received a variety of answers in response to my inquiries about the sources of the finances for these materials. Some assured me that they raised all funds themselves. Others maintained that a large part of it came from the state government's Tourist Board (through political connections) and some rumoured that a *bicheiro* (owner of the game *jogo do bicho* (see Chapter 8)) and even Rocinha's drug baron) was behind this.[10]

To many in Rocinha, the *bloco* brought up associations with corruption and the underworld. Rumours circulated about regular drug trafficking on the *quadra*, and

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[10]It was hard to gain any inside information into the *bloco*'s workings. I worked in its daycare centre on a regular basis, however, this did not allow me into the *bloco*'s directors' meetings, or any other inside activities (permission was denied to me). It was run by a separate group and operated at different times of the day from the daycare centre. Attendance to its social activities (mainly discos starting around midnight) was hard because I had difficulties in persuading my informants to accompany me (see also in text ahead). Attending alone proved risky (going to and from the *quadra* at those times of the night).

everyone knew the story about the shootout that happened there during crèche hours. When I tried to persuade some of my close contacts to accompany me to the *bloco*'s disco evenings, their reaction was revealing: "*É coisa do marginal*" (Lit: That is something *o marginal* does), "*Tem só vagabundo ali*" (Lit: That place is only for *vagabundo*). When I braved the outing alone one night, I discovered that I was the only light-skinned person there, disco music (not samba) was played, large amounts of beer were available at highly reduced prices (rumoured to be a gift from the drug baron), and the majority of the audience was teenage. Many of my informants frowned upon my intentions of attending *bloco* activities, just as Carnival itself was shunned by many of Rocinha's people. In response to my inquiries about what my neighbours were going to do at Carnival time, many expressed the wish to leave Rio de Janeiro. Most spent these days watching TV. They warned me continually about the violence expressed during these days, and commented a lot on the distastefulness of the sexuality displayed. When the *bloco* marched through Rocinha on one of the Carnival days, it attracted only very little response. Few knew when it was due to perform or what the results of these performances were afterwards. Many felt that it was out of hand and much exaggerated by the media; it did not belong to them anymore, but was hi-jacked by the Tourist Board. (Rio de Janeiro is internationally reknowned for Carnival and the state government explicitly exploited this potential income-generating opportunity, especially in recent years.)

Among its core group of supporters, the *bloco* and its activities were seen in a very different way. In many ways, these members saw themselves as practising and learning an art which was respected for its own sake.[11] The *bloco*'s office holders were the experts and respected for their "knowledge" (although at least in one of Rocinha's *blocos*, their claims to expertise were debated and the core group of supporters were factionalised sharply under different competing office holders and candidates for these offices). These office holders expressed strong opinions

[11]Most of the literature on samba schools and Carnival takes this perspective and is therefore not helpful for the question addressed in this thesis.

on "how things should be done", especially with regard to the public performance (*desfile*), and there were many elaborate rules (see, for example, Leopoldi 1978). The *bloco*'s organisation was an extremely hierarchical affair in which different office holders were allocated with specific responsibilities and accompanying status, expressed in the choreography and ritual of the *desfile* itself.[12] Differences in involvement and expertise were also expressed in the different categories of membership which originated mainly in the 1960s as part of the *bloco*'s response to increased commercialisation. Large numbers were recruited for their membership fees then. Few of these actively participated in the *desfiles* themselves, but attended the *quadra* for more general social purposes.

In terms of content, therefore, despite the fact that Carnival and Carnival-related activities almost exclusively attracted black people, Rocinha's *blocos* cannot be seen as an expression of black consciousness of its black population. Carnival was publicly acknowledged to be a black speciality, one which enriched the dominantly white Brazilian society. For a small minority of members, the focus was on a particular expertise, highly ritualised and in many ways very conservative. For the majority, it was merely a place to socialise. Organisationally, it constituted a separate political sphere with its own hierarchical structure and leadership problems. Only very few who participated in these activities expressed black consciousness explicitly. The *bloco* was not an appropriate channel for this sentiment. Those few who did, argued that to be black meant to be poor and therefore to live in a shantytown. But as seen from the above, they did not have Rocinha's support for these claims. The great majority in Rocinha, and the majority of those who participated in *bloco* activities, did not explicitly see themselves as a group, or as victims of racial prejudice. They did not collectively express an identity in terms of skin colour. Skin colour did not serve as a basis on which Rocinha's leaders could mobilise its population, or even part of it.

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[12]Goldwasser talks of different roles in the performance as being strongly invested with the *bloco*'s identity. She mentions that some of these roles were even passed on along family lines (Goldwasser 1975).

Moreover, Carnival to the general public, was the festival associated with *o pobre*, and especially with those from the *morros*. The samba schools were often cited as representative and uniting institutions of these poor. Carnival, according to the media, was the one time of the year in which their relation with the rich was reversed, when they come down from their *morros* and dictate terms *no asfalto*. It was the only time when the rich admired the poor for the activities in which they were seen to excel. In their samba they express their frustrations and forget their worries. Many of my informants, however, strongly disagreed. They argued that the significance of Carnival for the poor was exaggerated in the media. Certainly for Rocinha's residents, my evidence shows that it is debatable whether it was such a big event for them at all. Also in terms of its identity, Carnival in Rocinha was not a celebration which drew its residents together, or expressed this notional unity in any other way. In sum, Carnival in Rocinha was far from a collective celebration in which either "Rocinha", or "*o pobre*" expressed their skills and solidarity. For one, Rocinha did not have one representative *bloco*. Secondly, as pointed out above, it was strongly disapproved of by many, and seen as a nuisance and violent. The marginalisation of the *bloco* in Rocinha can partly be explained by its associations with *o pobre* and *o preto* (black). Its status in Rocinha itself was clearly dubious and this may have been for this reason.

I have not so far discussed the question of religion and whether it provided occasions or symbols in which Rocinha's people expressed their collectivity. The great majority of Rocinha's inhabitants were Catholics. Most were baptised and publicly called themselves "Catholic". This group contained people with a range of practices. Only a very small minority practised Catholicism closely under the local priest. These regularly attended mass and were active organisers of the local Church activities. Some participated in catechism for youngsters, Bible reading groups or in a choir for the Church services. Some attended the monthly Pastoral de Favela meetings (organised by the Church hierarchy) and communicated with similar such groups in other shantytowns. Members of this category were predominantly female.

There was a small group of radical religious activists who were not necessarily

engaged in these Church-organised activities under the local priest. They also called themselves Catholic, and were recognised by others to be so. They were politically active and used religious language in their political activities. The running of several action groups depended largely on them. Some of the key persons who accompanied this group were ex-clergymen/women. There was a certain tension between this latter group, whom I will call Liberation Theologists, and the priest-linked minority.[13]

The great majority did not participate in either of these groups. The religious beliefs and practices they expressed could be referred to as "Folk Catholicism" (c.f. Zaluar 1983). Of these, many also attended consultations with Umbanda spiritualists. In the past, the attitude of Church officials towards these beliefs and practices (such as the adoration of particular saints, pilgrimages to their place of miraculous performances or the use of music, exhaustive dancing, trance and other rituals) were that they were seen as inferior kinds of religious practice originating from the uneducated migrants from rural areas to urban centres. These rural tendencies had to be suppressed by educating them into higher, more important religious beliefs and practices. Gradually, especially post-Vatican II, Church officials had become more tolerant of these practices, to such an extent that the situation was now practically reversed. These practices were now actively encouraged by more liberal clergy in an attempt to revive religious significance in people's lives (Cleary 1985). The conservative members of the small devout group did not accept these liberal attitudes, and their attitudes towards Afro-Brazilian religious practices were sharply critical and hostile. They were publicly suspicious of Umbanda practices and in Rocinha, it was an insult to be called *macumbeiro* (Lit: one who practices Macumba, a popular denigrating term for Umbanda, also used by the media). As a result, those who approached these centres or spiritualist consultants kept this fact to themselves and allegations of engagement in these practices were part of a list of people's malicious gossip. Practitioners themselves were defen-

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[13]In meetings of one group members divided sharply into these two groups over issues such as the use of the Church premises for strictly speaking "non-religious" activities, and vice versa, the place of strictly religious activities in other groups.

sive and apologetic about their practices. My neighbour, a spiritualist consultant widely known and respected among Umbanda practitioners in my neighbourhood, responded extremely defensively to my continuous enquiries about his profession. His answers to my questions were usually in the form of a defence against widely prevailing accusations of corruption (gross monetary exploitation and false claims of religious expertise) and the use of "black" evil powers for practitioners' personal purposes. His (and several other neighbours') practices were a source of tension among neighbours in my *beco.*

There was also a religious minority in Rocinha: the *crentes* (a denigrating term which referred to all Protestants only used by non-Protestants).[14] *Crentes* were seen as the odd ones out in many ways. They were seen to be living a different lifestyle with their own rules of conduct, and isolated themselves from other families in my *becos* (as they did elsewhere in Rocinha) and this created tension between neighbours. Rumours circulated about strange practices they engaged in and these were linked to exaggerated horror stories about extreme religious sects.[15] These churches were also associated with interference of external forces in shantytown affairs. ("Doing it our way" as opposed to passive acceptance of paternalistic help or forced external imposition, was a demand which was continually emphasised in political dialogue (see Chapter 7).) Undoubtedly, their status has suffered because of prevailing anti-Americanism among many new Brazilian movements.[16]

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[14]Most non-Protestants surprisingly did not distinguish between different kinds of Protestantism in Rocinha.

[15]Commonly heard stories were about how "they take a large part" of members' monthly income, how "they indoctrinate" members by manipulating their mind in dangerous spiritualist practices and how "they forbid all good things in life" (exposure of skin, dancing/music, consumption of alcohol, which to Rocinha's people, constituted their main sources of available immediate pleasure).

[16]A slanderous and factually inaccurate article about the American Methodist Church of Rocinha in a glossy weekly represented the extreme of negative attitudes towards these Protestant churches in Rocinha. Summarily, it characterised the Methodista as a powerful wealthy establishment which forcefully imposed itself on Rocinha. It was portrayed as part of "American Imperialism" and as making good business by exploiting

So, in Rocinha, the norm was to be Catholic, like the rest of Brazilian society. This meant to call oneself Catholic, to respect the local priest and Church establishment, to celebrate one's most important rites of passage (at death, birth and marriage) in this Church, and to recognise the main festivals of this religion (Christmas, Easter). One cannot justifiably claim "Catholicism" to exist in Rocinha in the form of a cohesive church community adhering to an established religious persuasion. The large majority practiced bits and pieces of different religious persuasions (Umbanda and Catholicism); they practised Catholicism neither in particular, nor with great intensity. There was, for example, little visible religious symbolism in Rocinha. I spotted only very few portraits of religious characters in people's houses. I noticed their absence on the walls of public buildings (with the exception of Churches). There were no roadside shrines (apart from the Umbanda *trabalhos* (Lit: works; candles, sacrificed chickens and often flowers appeared mainly on crossroads). These were abhorred by Catholic Church-goers. Furthermore, public religious festivals such as Easter[17] were comparatively low key. In comparison with my findings in a Brasília shantytown (where for example, Semana Santa (Holy Week) was a busy week of festivities, mobilising a large number of the population (Knottenbelt 1984)), Rocinha's religious activities were practically non-existent.

Those who did practise either of these religions exclusively, were divided amongst themselves. For the Catholics, those who adhered to one particular priest were divided against those who were explicitly politically active. Similarly, those who practised Umbanda intensely were divided according to the consultant they approached. (These competed publicly with each other for respect and recognition

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the very poor financially while corrupting them ideologically with their foreign ideas (Fatos June 1 1985). As mentioned above, unlike what may be the case in shantytowns elsewhere in Latin America, most of my non-Protestant informants did not distinguish between the established denominational churches (e.g. the Methodist Church) and the more recently arrived evangelical sects of which there were several in Rocinha (Beeson & Pearce 1984), and indeed, nor did the author of the Fatos article. Members of both were regarded with equal suspicion.

[17]Unfortunately I was unable to witness Christmas celebrations in Rocinha.

(c.f. Brown 1986).) The minority of *crentes*, by contrast, were seen as a separate group by non-*crentes*. This group practiced their religion more intensely than did the large Catholic/Umbanda majority. However, they did not see themselves as belonging to one religion. They competed very much among themselves and did not share any buildings, festivities or other communal symbols or events. None of these religions manifested themselves as tight communities, and none mobilised Rocinha as a collectivity. On the whole, to the exception of some devout practitioners under all three religious persuasions, Rocinha's residents could be said to be not very religious in practice.

The popular claim that Umbanda was the religion of the poor, often echoed in the media and academic sources is misleading for this and several other reasons (Fry 1978, Singer & Brant 1980, Bastide 1978). Evidence has shown that most Umbanda *centros* are located not in shantytowns, but in lower middle class suburbial areas where its practitioners, including *favelados*, frequent them (c.f. Brown 1986). More importantly, as shown above, Umbanda was seen as something unrespectable within Rocinha as much as it was outside it. Perhaps this was explained because of its associations with the black movement (its origins from a slave past; nowadays it is increasingly reactivated in the context of black consciousness (Singer & Brant 1980, Cleary 1985)). It was marginalised in similar ways as the *bloco* in Rocinha. The extent to which Umbanda was a protest religion and challenged the establishment (and its associations with the poor for this reason) is also debatable (e.g. Brown 1986).

The question of Afro-Brazilian religion is therefore similar to that of *bloco* activity, in that it suffered from the same associations with marginality. However, it also differed considerably in that I found no evidence of any radical expression of black consciousness in these spheres, and it seemed for that reason to be more accessible to all including non-*favela* residents. I expect, however, that with the increase in organised expression of political protest in many areas of Brazilian society, the expression of black consciousness too will manifest itself more in this area. I found no evidence which supported these writers' claims.

So far, I have looked at several potential areas in which we expected to find

a source of social cohesion among Rocinha's residents. Labels such as *favelado, pobre, preto* and *nordestino* imposed upon them by society at large were shown to contain largely negative associations, and Rocinha's residents shied away from them. So, although potentially cohesive, their common origins failed to organise people into associations which emphasised these origins. There was no evidence of any associations organised around rural background or associated manifestations. As far as skin colour is concerned, we found some degree of organisation around black consciousness. It was more appropriate to talk of a very small marginalised subcommunity here. Black consciousness certainly did not act as an organising force for the shantytown at large. In similar ways, different subcommunities were found organised on the basis of religious persuasion and there was tension between these. This was particularly clear in the case of different Protestant sects. To a certain extent this was also the case for small groups of devout Catholics, divided amongst themselves into more or less radical or conservative and aligned under different practising priests. This was less true for Umbanda practitioners. Small groups of regular clients gathered around several minor experts. Most practitioners consulted a number of different specialists on an ad hoc basis (more as a local healer who provides an alternative solution in times of strife) and in terms of religious identity, they called themselves and thought of themselves as "Catholic". Were there other further sources of identity which provided a basis on which Rocinha's residents could think of themselves as "*Rocinhense*"[18], or act as a collectivity, as belonging to Rocinha, as distinct from the other poor? For example, did Rocinha's population express a collective identity in the form of arts, leisure? Or, did they invest in/share a local hero? (The question of political identity and leadership will be addressed in later chapters.) I cannot think of one person whose behaviour they collectively publicly admired and whose example they followed. The extent to which the *Chefão* (the drug baron) fulfilled this role is elaborately discussed in Chapters 3 and 8. I argue there that his image was too controversial to qualify for

[18]That the label "Rocinhense" was not used (or any other which denoted Rocinha's population) may be significant in itself.

this role. Did Rocinha's people express "community identity" in any other way? In the form of arts or leisure?

In weekends, especially on Saturdays, one could see many families descending to São Conrado beach (only a few minutes walk from the bottom of Rocinha) where some got together into teams to play football or volleyball. These teams, as far as I knew, did not mobilise Rocinha or any other parts thereof in any lasting ways. Their activities only attracted the attention of some passing spectators, and their games were ad hoc. There was no organised activity which represented any social units.[19] Most other leisure activities were very much individual, or between close friends rather than institutionally organised. It has to be noted here too, that for most leisure did not exist as a separate category (Magnani 1984).[20] In the area of arts, several books were published about Rocinha, with the cooperation of various groups. One of these (Varal de Lembranças (Lit: Clothesline of Memories) (1983)) tells the story of Rocinha from its beginnings. It presents an emotional account of the "community's struggle" in the face of adverse political conditions. The existence of the book can, at first sight, be taken as evidence for the existence of a solid community, and indeed this was the original purpose behind the book.[21] According to some informants, however, the book only presented one side of the story. It effectively left out large parts of the "community" it proposed to write

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[19]One book on Rocinha mentions the existence of a football club which seemed very active at the time. Since it lost its pitch in Rocinha (it was allocated to the victims of large mud slides in 1966-67), its activities came to a halt (Varal 1983).

[20]Most just worked and slept and the time between these two activities was spent travelling to and from work and for physical maintenance; activities related to eating and cleaning, all activities which took up large amounts of time especially in shantytowns. The remaining time was often spent in front of the TV, and many claimed that they had neither the time, energy or money to undertake anything else. For most, this pattern continued seven days a week.

[21]There were several other books published about Rocinha or by Rocinha's people (See Bibliography). Most were of the former type and were compiled by outsiders. (I would include Picolê, Picolé in this category.) As for those written and compiled by Rocinha's people, some were not about Rocinha but addressed particular topics such as women's issues (e.g. Morro Mulher and Rocinha, Mães e Vidas). Or, presented the life story of Rocinha's residents (e.g. de Oliveira 1986). Varal was therefore the only collective effort which attempted to deal with Rocinha as a whole.

about, according to these informants. This situation is, of course, predictable, and theoretically, we can allow for this by arguing that (in line with Cohen) what is important is not the content of the symbols the community has in common, but the fact that their form is shared (Cohen 1978). Their content can be (and is) interpreted differently by different members of the community. Indeed, this allows for individuality to exist within a cultural whole. Or indeed, we could take this example as a case in which the (commonly owned) symbol is being manipulated by some. The process of manipulation is essential for keeping these symbols alive (Cohen 1985). These arguments save the claim that the book can be seen as the symbolic manifestation of a community.

The point about this book, however, was that it was not of much importance to Rocinha's people. (Or, in Cohen's words, not even the form was shared by the people.) The large majority did not know of its existence. Comments from those who did know about it were made in a disinterested way. This was especially confirmed to me by the fact that it was hard for me to find a copy of it, and people were surprised and irritated at my interest in it. When at last I found copies of it in the houses of individuals, they competed with each other to sell them to me. Some time later the topic came up in a meeting that there were piles of the book forgotten in a corner of a classroom.[22] The fact that it was put together at all was explained by the efforts of some social workers who, in line with Freire's methodology of constructing a "community identity" by keeping its memory alive (e.g. Banck & Doimo 1987), raised some funding for these kinds of projects.[23]

In this way, there also existed a Theatre Group in Rocinha, who initiated similar projects, with the help of state funding. The group continually ran into trouble because of the lack of support from others in Rocinha, on whom they

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[22]When the topic was addressed in a meeting of what to do with these piles of books (they were in the way), the issue barely merited any attention. Beyond a few practical details, the meeting moved on to the next topic.

[23]An example of this was the government project under which funding was provided to compile the collection of children's stories Picolê, Picolé (see footnote 1, Chapter 2) and Varal de Lembranças (see Chapter 5).

depended for space. When they tried to act out a street theatre project, about the story of a woman and the difficulties she encounters when moving from the Northeast to Rocinha (acting out the rural myth), they were criticised by many, firstly, because of the perceived irrelevance of the story for Rocinha's people, and secondly, on the grounds that it glorified the main character of the story. It has to be noted that its critics were sceptical, however. They were dismissive in a disinterested way, not angry. The play did not provoke a public controversy. Nothing of much importance was at stake. (Demonstrated also by the fact that the lack of support for the group was not publicly contested.) The second charge is constructive in that it shows the tendency of Rocinha's residents to object to one-person shows, which, in the end, was an important factor which influenced their willingness to construct a common identity. Rocinha's people did not easily allow one person to be at the centre of attention. Individuals tried to steal the show, but they were not allowed to do so by the rest. This pattern was reflected in all areas of social life. In Samba/Carnival manifestations, the group as a whole performs, each performing individual competing for attention with the others and the performance is highly ritualised. In this, as in other performing activities, the emphasis is on participation of the audience. The audience will not passively watch. This feature was also apparent in the running of group meetings (see in Chapter 7). As Magnani also noted when analysing the content and reception of popular circus performances in São Paulo suburbs, the degree to which these performances were judged a success by their spectators, depended on the way they managed to strike a chord in their audience's own life experience, not by the skills of the performers (Magnani 1984). This partly explains the absence of a local hero. These observations have wide implications for the dynamics of the Rocinha's leadership (on which I elaborate in the second part of this thesis). As for community identity, it again illustrates that we were dealing with a group of strong individuals who did not leave any space for the expression of a common identity.

To conclude, I return to my initial question. It emerges from the material presented in this chapter that Rocinha's people did not express the unity of their

"community" to a great extent. Instead, if anything, we have evidence for the existence of several subcommunities. Rocinha's population as a whole had few uniting symbols. The importance of those that they did recognise was slight and many were invested with a largely negative value. The material presented here creates the impression that the identity of these people did not greatly depend on their residence in Rocinha, but instead, on their personal achievements in other ways.

The question of this chapter is significant to my thesis in that it provides the analyst with a picture of what it was that the politician in Rocinha could draw on (or could not draw on) when mobilising support in the political scene. First of all, it confirms the heterogeneity of its population. It is becoming clear that the people of Rocinha did not see themselves as part of one category, clearly separate from their neighbours or from those for whom they worked (*o rico*). They did not see themselves as sharing the same background, nor did they see themselves as a group which was victimised by society at large (either on grounds of skin colour or through economic exploitation). Their appearance, the food they ate and the music they played did not provide them with a sense of belonging to the same group. They shied away from other characteristics traditionally attributed to them as a group. Their religious persuasions seemed to motivate the majority only weakly and here too they were divided among themselves both within the same creed as between the different ones. In terms of activities in the area of sports and entertainment, they likewise did not show a great interest in promoting themselves as part of a whole. The evidence in this chapter helps to explain why none of these issues (poverty and marginality, rurality, skin colour, and so on) were articulated clearly in political organisations, and why it was difficult to mobilise Rocinha's people for the purpose of promoting it as a totality. Moreover, it shows that we are dealing with individuals whose aspirations were different from those needed to sustain a cohesive "community".

Chapter 5

The Development of Leadership: Pre-1976

In the remainder of this thesis, I will present Rocinha's political organisation as it appeared to me at the time of fieldwork. Ultimately, it is the aim of this thesis to characterise the different types of political groupings I found and account for the particular relations between them.

At first sight, there were two different sets of political activities at work. Firstly, there were those associated with the action groups. These action groups were numerous and diverse. They included Rocinha's *Centros Comunitários* (Community Centres) of Rua Um, Rua Dois and Cachopa. Each accommodated many different groups active in the area of education (adult night classes of several different grades, day classes for children of different ages and standards, groups teaching basic professional skills such as needlework and other crafts, woodwork, electrical repairs) or recreation (film, chess, theatre, dance, gymnastics and other sports). Other groups attached to these *Centros Comunitários* operated in the area of health: basic health provision, home visiting groups targeting pregnant women and new mothers, vaccination campaigns or some other public health activities. The action groups included the various crèches and a handful of independent "community schools". They also included Rocinha's *blocos carnavalescos* or the Residents Association representing Bairro Barcelos, which ran a small medical centre and various leisure groups and supported other such action groups in Rocinha. Or they included other new groups which emerged around a topical issue such as

the outbreak of *dengue* (a disabling tropical disease spread by mosquitos, which was widespread in Rocinha towards the end of my fieldwork), or in response to media publicity surrounding street children and the mentally and physically handicapped.

Each one of these action groups were publicly concerned with improving the different needs of a section of Rocinha. Apart from running their various activities, some were engaged in wider political activities. The extent of this wider concern varied from group to group. This involved attending meetings which had a direct bearing on the finance of the groups (such as those organised by funding agencies announcing their future directions or proposals for new projects), or various activities to promote the voice of low-income populations in higher-level decision-making and/or put pressure on government structures in other ways. Many committees and federations had been set up and workshops, conferences and pressure group meetings were held to this end. They were organised in very different ways. Some were large and more professional than others, some were funded by charities or government grants, some relied exclusively on volunteers, and some were run by religious organisations.

There existed another different set of political activities in Rocinha. The individuals active in these rarely involved themselves in the activities of the action groups (or at least not publicly) but appeared on the scene on different kinds of occasions. These occasions were usually events of importance to electoral politics: inaugurations, crisis events (such as the removal of a recently-built expansion of Rocinha, the outbreak of an epidemic or a recent gang war or wave of police activities in Rocinha), one-off large-scale government spending programmes such as the *Brizolão* (an enormous school complex initiated by the state government, named after the governor himself, Brizola) or a large children's holiday camp for six weeks during the summer break. These occasions were usually better publicised, often involving higher levels of government and/or police, and took place often in the presence of the press. The above mentioned action groups tried to stay clear from these sorts of occasions.

Information about the dynamics of these sorts of political activities was diffi-

cult to gather. Inside information was denied to me by some of those involved on several occasions and indirect rumours about these activities were often contradictory. It was much harder therefore to know anything about them at all, and the reasons for this will be clarified below. Yet their influence on the political organisation of Rocinha was visibly significant and I cannot therefore ignore them in my analysis. I will therefore examine this sphere only where it is of importance to the understanding of the activities of the action groups and my focus will be on the activities of the action groups.

The political context of the time of fieldwork (1985-86) was post-*abertura*. *Abertura* officially started in 1979. It was to be the "opening up" of a dictatorship which had imposed repressive policies for fifteen years. Once the lid was taken off, movements started cropping up everywhere, raising questions which people had been forced to keep silent until now. Books and reports were published, posters designed, T-shirts printed in a campaign in which everyone was encouraged to participate. Debates were organised about the need for real popular participation in decision-making, decentralisation of power, the recognition and fulfillment of basic human rights, and so on, urging people to speak up about their oppressed situation. Research was undertaken, exposing many issues whose publication had not been permitted before. Conflicts, so far suppressed, now came to the surface (e.g. see Singer 1980).

The period from 1978 to 1980, especially, saw the birth of a large number of movements (for example, the Cost of Living Movement, and the movement against BNH policies) both Church-related and others. Also it marked the growth and reorganisation of other political structures such as syndical movements, which were presently run according to a structure established as part of Vargas' paternalistic labour laws in the 1940s (Moreira Alves 1987, da Silva 1982). Their hierarchical structure prevented effective horizontal organisational links and their government-controlled funds defeated their original purpose. The first conference linking medical syndicates and health authorities to popular movements was also

held in 1979 (CEBES 1981, Cordeiro 1983, FAMERJ 1982).[1] Throughout 1978 and 1979, industry was disrupted by many strikes, mainly over salary controls which the government now admitted to have manipulated (a loss of 34.1% in the salary's real value over the 1973-1974 period) was now exposed (Moreira Alves 1984). Success in wage rises in foreign-controlled car industries in São Paulo led to strikes elsewhere, and even to white-collar involvement (Abramo 1988). In 1979, a major party reform was initiated. The existing two-party structure was to be replaced by a multi-party system in preparation for the direct elections for state and municipal posts in November 1982, the first direct elections the country had seen for many years. These changes were within the guidelines set by the regime and what was perhaps most notable about these changes was not so much the practice of the political institutions (as they stayed much the same), but the change of political rhetoric which was perceived in all political activity.[2] New jargon was suddenly in circulation; new ideas were articulated and current political language was challenged. It was therefore a time of political optimism which had profound effects at all levels of political activity.

In Rocinha, new groups were founded in response to new financial initiatives and many started mobilising to create opportunities for participation and exploit this newly found political space. By 1985 the initial enthusiasm had worn off, although the rhetoric that had come with it had become common currency.

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[1] A financial crisis in the INPS (National Health Service) came to light in 1974, when a current crisis was further fuelled by a widely publicised national epidemic of meningitis, which in turn led to investigations into other health conditions. Subsequent reports showed the dark side of the "economic miracle": large increases in infant mortality rates in São Paulo, Brazil's main "growth" area. The government reacted with the creation and reorganisation of a series of institutions. These measures were evaluated at the conference as equally inefficient as their predecessors had been. Additionally, it was confirmed that over the previous six years, government support had been increasingly used to build, expand and equip a new highly profitable private health industry for the rich.

[2] "Rhetoric" here is used in its widest sense, to mean the total form in which the political process is articulated. I include the particular practices in which political discussion is held as well as the jargon used. In this I differ from some authors which address the debate on "rhetoric" such as Bloch (1975) and Paine (1981), who merely refer to the actual language used in political speech.

When organising themselves, people compared themselves with what was "before *abertura*" and their main concern was with attacking politically influential forces which were formed in the shantytown during earlier times. It is clear, therefore, that the political activity I witnessed in Rocinha at the time of fieldwork could not be understood without reference to its more general contemporary political context. It can also be traced back to certain historical national political developments (e.g. government attitudes towards shantytowns reflected in their housing policies) which encouraged certain forms of shantytown action groups with their particular forms of leadership.

A point made repeatedly in the literature (e.g. Caldeira (1984), Eckstein (1977), Peattie (1968), Zaluar (1985)), is that shantytowns are politically and economically peripheral. While it is clear that Rocinha's inhabitants were not merely passive receivers of these wider processes (such as, for example, the "people under tutelage" as described by Honigmann & Honigmann (1965), Rocinha has a number of indigenous "leaders" who were strong individuals), the shantytown's leaderships' actions can be seen partly as reactions to initiatives taken outside their control at higher levels. Leaders can therefore be seen as dynamic entrepreneurs learning to become increasingly sophisticated in their attempts to monopolise resources to enhance their own economic and political status (Machado da Silva 1967, 1969). The current political structure in Rocinha partly depended therefore directly on the policies governments adopted towards it in the past. Similarly, the strength of the leadership of action groups could be partly seen as a function of their funding period (which was in turn a function of the place the project occupied in the funding agency's overall plan), of the publicity the project received in the media, and so on. But to merely present these external developments as given, would disregard the symbolic dimension of the political process in which people take part (Cohen 1969). It is the task of these chapters to examine how these past developments at these higher levels were interpreted, manipulated and used by Rocinha's politicians and what the power structure in Rocinha looked like as a result. These chapters will trace the national context from which *abertura* developed, the political implications for Rio de Janeiro's local governments (the

governing bodies with which Rocinha's population dealt most closely), and the kind of policies these governments produced, relating these developments at every stage to what consequences they had for Rocinha. The latter also was largely determined by its internal infrastructural development in that the kind of leadership that developed within Rocinha was very much based on a historical monopoly over certain infrastructural resources. This first chapter will deal with developments up to the mid-1970s, which was the more repressive time. The following chapter will take up the story from there.

To convey the picture to the reader, I will quote selectively from one particular source, namely from Varal de Lembranças. (The translations are my own.) Varal de Lembranças (Lit: Washline of Memories) is a collection of *Histórias da Rocinha* (Stories of Rocinha), its subtitle, gathered by a group of social workers in cooperation with several different leaders of Rocinha, over the period 1980 to 1983. Much of the material in the book is presented in interview form quoting named people talking about their past. The explicit aim of the book is to "*mostrar a cultura do morro*" (Lit: show the shantytown's culture) (Varal 1983). It contains stories that to the majority of Rocinha's people represented their every day experiences and it is organised in chronological order under the following headings:[3]

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[3] *Mutirão*, referred to in the translation below, is a common form of workteams of volunteers mobilised to work on particular infrastructural problems in their free time.

O Tempo de Antes da Vinda pra Rocinha	The Time before Coming to Rocinha
Antigamente, ou o Tempo dos Barracos Cobertos com Telha de Papelão Pichado	The Old Days, or the Time of Shacks Covered with Tarred Cardboard
Tempo dos Políticos	Time of the Politicians
O Tempo das Enchentes	The Time of the Floods
Tempo do Medo da Remoção	Time of the Fear of Eradication
Tempo do Mutirão	Time of Mutirão
Tempo de Hoje em Dia	Time of Today

(Varal:6-7)

Varal (as any text (Clifford & Marcus 1986)) is clearly dated. It was put together with the explicit political aim to preserve and reconstruct historical and contemporary accounts of deprived "communities", in the initial stages of the *abertura* period.[4] It presents the views of particular leaders in Rocinha. It promotes some views, criticises others and omits others. My decision to quote from Varal, however, does not mean that I commit myself to these views only. I extensively quote this material as it provides particularly rich illustration and clarification on some topics in a way that I cannot reproduce otherwise.

Looking at the government's attitudes towards shantytowns as reflected in its housing policies, a clear trend is visible which has been spelled out by several authors (Portes 1979, Valladares 1978a). The general pattern was an alternation between, on the one hand, total intolerance of their existence (justified by marginality theories which see them as the cause of all social evil (Perlman 1976)) leading to attempts at eradicating them with official plans for rehousing their inhabitants in large peripheral low-income housing estates. On the other hand, there

[4]It was funded on the same project as Picolê, Picolé (1983) (see Footnote 1 in Chapter 2).

were more liberal trends towards upgrading them at times when electoral support was needed for the maintenance of political power.

As early as 1886, concern was expressed about the shantytown problem in Rio de Janeiro.[5] The Zona Sul had started to develop and the demand for cheap labour rose. This encouraged the random settlement of poor migrants. The first action to be taken to solve the problem was an attempt to clear them away. Vargas' corporatist administration passed a law to limit their growth in 1937, and initiated the building of *parques proletários* (Lit: low-income housing projects) in the Zona Sul to house the *favelados* temporarily on their way to more permanent suburbial low-income housing estates (Leeds & Leeds 1972, Salmen 1969). In Rocinha, these measures took the form of various restrictions and the appearance of the *guardas sanitários.* There was confusion over what their role was. According to some, they came as part of a sanitation campaign. According to others, they were forest guards in charge of controlling the expansion of Rocinha into the forest (JB 23/5/1973). Whatever they were, they had the reputation of being corrupt:

" ... mas faziam 'vista grossa', mediante recompensa em dinheiro."	" ... but they 'turned a blind eye' when offered money."

(ibid.)

Nevertheless, with the presence of these patrolling agents, new residents from then on undertook their construction at night during their absence. The inspectors' targets were empty buildings, residences inhabited by single men, and migrants who lacked identity and work documents. New residents therefore "borrowed" a family and a set of furniture and bribed the officials generously, to prevent their new houses from being demolished and their materials from being carted off (and sold elsewhere) by the guards (Varal:38).

Those trying to repair or improve their house, needed licences which could be obtained from the municipal authorities (Varal:52). Also brick constructions were

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[5]The information on governments' housing policies in Rio de Janeiro presented here is mainly taken from the following sources: Ames 1973, Leeds & Leeds 1972, Perlman 1976, Portes 1979, Rush 1974, Salmen 1969, Valladares 1978a & 1978b.

torn down by the authorities. People responded by building brick walls inside their wooden huts (Varal:46). The presence of the *guardas* undoubtedly had the effect of stimulating Rocinha's population growth, rather than restricting it, since for the *guardas* their job became big business. Slowly more people appeared and by 1951 there was an estimated 5000 people on the mountain (Varal:50).[6]

"Em toda parte tinha barraco ... Cada barraco tinha uma espécie de lote grande."	"There were shacks all over the place ... Every shack had a kind of back-yard."

(Varal:51)

The stories in Varal hint at the practice of irregular land dealings by a handful of individuals (especially the *guardas*) who enriched themselves rapidly, to which others responded by turning this to their own advantage. There is no evidence of any collective effort to counteract the less pleasant consequences of these developments: the chaotic growth of Rocinha ("shacks all over the place") and the consequent infrastructural problems. This picture becomes a familiar one as time went on.

Vargas' ambitious project was discontinued and, at the time of fieldwork the *parques proletários* were still there. Vargas' Estado Novo collapsed and the subsequent Dutra government introduced a new style of more liberal populist politics incompatible with the continuation of these eradication plans. This government relied on popular support which took the form of patronage building in all sectors of the electorate. As a result construction around the *parques proletários* became irregular and messy, as governments gave in to the demands of different pressure groups. Questions concerning welfare, especially, became increasingly politicised and action taken towards *favelados* was often uncoordinated and contradictory (Malloy 1979). In the shantytowns, it also meant the appearance and interference of politicians in its internal affairs.

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[6]According to FEEMA, there were 4,513 inhabitants in Rocinha in 1950 (quoting Medina & Valladares 1968 (FEEMA 1980:20)).

The first reference to this interference in Rocinha is again in the question of settlement. It was now the politicians who were seen to distribute land titles in Rocinha and this time for prospective voters. According to an article in the *Jornal do Brasil* (JB) in 1973:

"... passou-os [os terrenos] para o Sr. R. C., que durante uma campanha para vereador cedeu muitas terras aos seus eleitores em potencial. Ele não se elegeu, mas a favela cresceu bastante. Outro político, A. da F., também usou a favela como reduto eleitoral... com muito êxito."	"... passed it [the land] on to Mr. R. C., who during an election campaign for councillor gave many plots away to his potential voters. He didn't get elected, but the *favela* grew amply. Another politician, A. F., also used the *favela* as an election stronghold ... very successfully."

(JB 23/5/1973)

The immediate result of this was that suddenly Rocinha's population grew rapidly:

"Foi aquela avalancha. A área encheu-se de casebres, ocupados de imediato por gente que chegava de toda parte, nessa avidez de um abrigo numa área próxima do trabalho e da praia!"	"It was like an avalanche. The area filled with shacks, which were immediately occupied by people who arrived from all over the place, in their eagerness for shelter in an area near work and the beach!"

(Varal:63)

The result is predictable: the abundance of the early days was over. Space became increasingly cramped, and the pressure of the lack of infrastructure for the growing number of people rapidly began to be felt. Basic necessities such as the demand for water were not met. The building up of household waste, the drainage of sewage and rain water, the attraction of vermin and other basic problems became increasingly urgent. This in itself stimulated the influx of politicians, especially in 1950-1960, the years just before the military coup (1964). Now they came with promises for improvements to basic services: water, roads, electricity, waste removal, and so on. This needy population proved a perfect target for election purposes.

To maintain links with this population, contacts were established with a *cabo-*

eleitoral (canvasser) who was contracted to work for him/her in the shantytown. This *cabo-eleitoral* would preferably be one of the shantytown's most senior respected people. Such a post not only helped the candidate, it also enhanced the *cabo's* own prestige greatly. S/He would be seen as the person that succeeded in attracting favours to the shantytown otherwise inaccessible. I quote Seu C. at length:

"Cabo-eleitoral é uma pessoa amiga, é uma pessoa considerada naquele bairro. O povo, sabe como é, tudo o povo vem pedir àquela pessoa. Uma pessoa, bem tratada, bem respeitada e que respeita também os demais, né? E assim fui eu. Criado aqui, tinha uma grande consideração pelo povo da Rocinha, ... sempre amigo."

"*Cabo-eleitoral* is a friendly person, an esteemed person in that area. People, you know how it is, people come to ask everything of that person. A person who is treated well and respected and who also respects the others, you know? And this was like me. I was brought up here, and I had great consideration for the people of Rocinha, ... always a friend to them."

(Varal:67-68)

Seu C.'s example also shows how a *cabo* could serve to build up a large personal domain.

"Com o passar dos anos, veio o R. C. ... era candidato a vereador e me chamou pra trabalhar com ele. Na época ele me autorizou a deixar fazer esses barracos todos aí, no morro, a mando dele ... Aí [ele] falou: "C., quer tomar conta disso? Eu te pago 150 contos por mês ... tudo dado." E assim eu fui tomar conta dos terrenos dos Barcelos. Comecei a abrir essa rua aqui através da política ... Eles falaram pra mim: "C., o que você quer fazer?" "Eu quero abrir essa estrada." ... Eles me deram um trator ... Aí apareceu um senhor com o nome de Dr. E. ... ele disse: "C., os Barcelos mandaram lotear isso aqui, e é pra você me ajudar." E assim eu fui ajudar ... Loteamos tudo. Comecei a vender a 20, 40, 80, 100 contos o lote ... Eu tinha uma comissão de 5% ... Aí, daqui, dali, vendendo. Vendi tudo."

"As the years went by, R. C. ... arrived ... he was standing for councillor and approached me to work with him. At the time he authorised me to have all those shacks on the hill there built, at his orders ... So [he] said:"C., do you want to take care of these? I will pay 150 *contos* monthly ... cash in hand. So I took charge over the Barcelos plots. I started to dig out this street here with this kind of politics. They said to me: "C., what would you like to do?" "I want to build a road." ... They gave me a tractor ... Then a man named Dr. E. appeared ... he said: "C., Barcelos sent me here to divide this estate into lots, and you can help me." And so I went to help ... We allocated all of it. I began to sell for 20, 40, 80, 100 *contos* per lot ... I got a commission of 5% ... So here we were selling a bit from here, from there. I sold everything."

(Varal:66-67)

The *cabo-eleitoral*'s job was to do the politician's "community work". Not only was s/he assigned to "administrate the works" going on in the shantytown, and to distribute the favours, s/he also was to organise political events such as speeches and parties around election times. Seu C.:

"Tinha bebida, distribuía churrasco. Eu dava muita coisa. Dava arroz, dava feijão, batata. Dei muitas coisas."

"There was drink, I distributed barbecued meat. I gave many things. There was rice, beans, potatoes. I gave lots of things."

(Varal:68)

And most importantly her/his job was to encourage people to register and vote on the day of the election itself. O Chico B.:

"Ás vezes, o serviço da gente é facilitar um documento. Levo ele lá na região, se ele não sabe. Se ele não tiver dinheiro, tiro o retrato do camarada. Se for possível, no registro, a gente paga tudo."

"Sometimes it is our job to help getting a document. I take him to the Região [where one registers to vote], if he doesn't know where that is. If he doesn't have any money, I take this pal's photograph [needed for the voting register]. If possible, we pay everything for him at the register."

(Varal:64)

They obviously gained a lot of prestige for themselves, but their relationship with the outside politician was one of dependence. *Cabos*, for example, could not campaign for political posts themselves. These were reserved for the better off. I quote Seu C., who would have been a likely candidate in Rocinha at the time:

"O Senhor nunca pensou em se candidatar, Seu C.? ... Já há muitos anos ... Mas eu fiz um cálculo e o meu dinheiro não dava ... Eu não tinha dinheiro pra gastar na campanha ... Tem muitos [gastos da campanha], né? O sujeito tem um carro, ele tem que comprar gasolina. Se tem uma pessoa doente, aí a gente tem que locomover ela para o hospital. Tudo é gasto ... cheguei, mas retirei, porque o dinheiro não dava."

"Have you never thought of running for office, Mr. C.? ... Yes, many years ago ... But I did a calculation, and my money wouldn't do ... I didn't have the money to spend on a campaign ... This is a lot [cost of a campaign], you know. The candidate has a car, he has to buy petrol. If there is someone sick, then you have to take her to hospital. All this is expensive ... I did it, but withdrew, because I didn't have enough money."

(Varal:69; See also Machado da Silva 1967 & 1969.)

The early *cabo-eleitorais* in Rocinha, therefore had the appearance of a patron portraying themselves as "father-like" figures (Kenny 1960, Silverman 1965). Clients came to them with all their problems ("people come to ask everything of that person"), to whom they offered protection and wisdom (e.g. telling them how to vote) (Boissevain 1966). They presented themselves as being at their clients' service in times of need (e.g. when someone needs a lift to hospital) and as an infinitely generous person ("I gave lots of things."). The image corresponds closely to Sahlins' generalised reciprocity: there is no mention of what they demanded in return except for respect and friendship (basic to this kind of relationship (Wolf

1966)). Additionally they gained their clients' trust in virtue of being a senior indigenous person ("brought up here"). The truth of the statement that "gifts make friends", clearly applies and this picture of them resembles that of a starting patron (Gouldner 1960, Henriksen 1971) creating a basis from which they can later draw to their advantage, i.e. dictate the terms under which their clientele will later return the favours. It becomes clear that they got a great deal out of this in return. The loyalty from their followers allowed them to build up great wealth as they used this support to bargain with politicians, who gave them monopolised control over the sale of land in Rocinha.

Another basic characteristic of the patron-client relation is clearly identified here: both patrons and clients gain access to resources to which they otherwise do not have. The patrons attracted "works" to the shantytown (e.g. the paving of the street) and carried out numerous small services for their clientele. They created a dependence on such resources (these were newly introduced by them) from which they could benefit in turn later (Henriksen 1971).[7] Key to their status was their personal contact with their clientele and their clients' dependence on the resources they offered. From the above, the image clearly corresponds to the traditional patron as presented in the works of Barnes 1986, Eisenstadt & Roniger 1984, for example.

As problems of infrastructure in Rocinha became more urgent, the politicians were increasingly criticised and their dealings with the *cabos* were increasingly questioned. The politicians' promises of great things like infrastructural improvements such as water, electricity, roads, land titles and education (all of which were by now desperately inadequate under the strain of the fast-growing population) mostly remained promises. And even the small presents which people expected to be distributed, remained absent.

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[7]In this sense, therefore, patrons acted as brokers (as most patrons do) (Paine 1971).

"Ave Maria! o papel dos políticos aqui é de fazer vergonha! É tudo conversa fiada! A gente não acredita mais não ... Não vai dar mesmo, não é ... Então é melhor não prometer."

"By God! The way politicians here behave is shameful! It is all just words! People here don't believe them any more, no ... It is not good enough, no ... It's not good enough, don't you think? ... I'd be better if they didn't promise anything."

(Varal:78-79)

Moreover, where they did touch basic structural questions such as land titles, water and electricity, their interference was usually disadvantageous to most people in Rocinha. The question of the distribution of land titles, mentioned above for example, had disastrous results. Not only did it lead to the enormous population influx at the time, the way they went about dividing and selling off land also led to the creation of powerful landlords such as Seu C. (as should be clear from the above quotes) whose credibility diminished rapidly because of a number of factors. They could not establish personal contact with a large part of the newly resident population, the goodies they delivered now began to run in short supply (both the smaller favours (for a larger population) and the politicians' "works" (which remained just promises)). In other words, they could not respond to clients' needs any more and expectations began to grow unbalanced. As their personal wealth became more obvious as time went on, they were increasingly resented, particularly as land and property was in short supply.

Once such a power structure had been established, it was hard to correct it in later years, when competition for land increased. The question of land titles in some parts of Rocinha remained unresolved throughout its history and led to a lot of violence and political divisions cutting right across its population, even still at the time of fieldwork. (See, for example, the disputes reported in Rocinha's journals Informativo and Tagarela.) The details of the complex issue of land titles becomes clearer in the following chapter.

Similarly, the development of infrastructure like water and electricity led to long-lasting conflicts, owing to the interference of these politicians. With regard to water, for example, the demand was so high that individuals would take the

initiative, often sponsored by politicians, to tap water pipes and extend them into improvised networks for a clientele who had become members of their "water society" (*sociedade de água*). High membership fees were charged monthly. Yet the supply for the water network would dry up as the number of members exceeded its capacity and effectively left its members without the water for which they had paid. (See for example Varal:52-53.) The installment of small water networks only in some selected places provided opportunities for individuals to exploit their neighbours. These conflicts were only resolved in some places, when the water supply was "regularised" by the state water company CEDAE (mostly only after 1980, see Chapter 1). In other places these problems continued at the time of fieldwork. In the case of electricity, the pattern was similar.

"Naquele tempo era luz de lampião. Só podia ter luz quem estivesse residindo na periferia da Estrada da Gávea, ... Dessas cabines, os moradores iam pedindo um biquinho, e aí foi se estendendo ... "

"At that time it was electricity from the street lights. The only people who had access to electricity were those who lived around Estrada da Gávea, ... People asked for a connection from those electricity meters, and that way it gradually expanded ... "

(Varal:56)

That is when the troubles started. These private illegally extended networks (sponsored by politicians) fell into the hands of private "owners" and, like in the *sociedades de água*, some overcharged their customers and made profitable business out of it. Customers in turn would refuse to pay which meant that Light (the state electricity company) repeatedly intervened by cutting off supplies altogether.

So far, what emerges is a basic power structure of a few individuals who controlled water, electricity and land, and who were often sponsored by outside politicians for electoral purposes. They appeared as powerful bosses whose activities were often extremely exploitative. The image of the beneficent *patrão* was beginning to crumble as Rocinha's population began to grow fast, when personal contacts were lost and space and basic facilities were increasingly becoming more scarce. National developments over the following years also affected this leadership in several ways. First of all, there was the foundation of the Fundação Leão XIII

who became an important agent in social welfare in shantytowns (Leeds & Leeds 1972, Valladares 1978a). Secondly, there was an attempt at creating Residents Associations in shantytowns to coordinate the construction of infrastructure and to act as a mediator for various welfare programmes (Diniz 1982b).

As far as policies were concerned, governments at different levels failed to formulate clear policies to deal with the growing shantytown problem. As debates about the shantytown problem continued, commissions were established to eradicate them, but no action was taken beyond attempts to take the census of their inhabitants (Valladares 1978a). As a result, shantytown populations were targeted with discontinuous, often contradictory projects of an ad hoc nature aimed at gaining their support.

The foundation of the Fundação Leão XIII reflected these contradictory policies. It was founded with a dual purpose. Firstly, it was to extend state control into the shantytowns, by implanting a social centre in the middle of each one. The Fundação Leão XIII was directly linked to the Catholic Church until the early 1960s which legitimated its actions to the shantytown inhabitants. The initiative had come from the federal government and went together with a large-scale attempt to eliminate the growing Communist movement at the time (Leeds & Leeds 1972). Secondly, its purpose was to provide some services in shantytowns to extend patronage ties. Later, as it was increasingly used as a government tool to infiltrate shantytowns and keep control over their political activities (ibid.), the Fundação Leão XIII came to adopt a significant role in shantytown politics.

It was not until 1956, in the growing climate of national populism (after the following Kubitschek government was elected) that a more substantive attempt was made to solve some of the urgent shantytown problems. In Rio de Janeiro, the organisation SERFHA was set up in 1956 to carry out policies to recognise the shantytowns as functional and therefore not to eradicate them but to upgrade them in loco instead (Diniz 1982b, Leeds & Leeds 1972). They differed from the Fundação Leão XIII's practices, in that they tried to keep the *favelados*' political independence by organising them into co-ops and encouraging self-sufficiency with a large *Operação Mutirão* (Operation *Mutirão*) campaign, encouraging collective

voluntary work teams recruited in the shantytowns to solve the worst of their problems themselves (Diniz 1982b). Rios (the secretary under the administration responsible for these programmes) in this way opened channels of communication between *favelados* and the government's administrators. This temporarily marked a significant shift in policies and reflected a trend characteristic of the then rising national movement towards a more democratic government. This pattern was to be repeated in 1975, when again a repressive government changed its policies towards more liberal attitudes.

SERFHA actively pursued its activities in Rocinha in those early years. Rios' urbanising policies were becoming substantiated in Rocinha in the form of the appearance of the first brick houses.

"Não tinha casa de alvenaria. A primeira casa foi lá em cima, ... Ela pintou de branco e ficou uma maravilha! Mas isso tudo começou numa reunião em que o Dr. Artur Rios disse assim: ... Faz um buraco ali, um aqui, bota uns vergalhõezinhos, faz o primeiro pilotis, levanta alvenaria, bota laje e tal."

"There were no concrete houses [when the Associação was founded]. The first house was there at the top, ... She painted it white and it turned out brilliant! But that all started in a meeting in which Dr. Artur Rios said this: ... You dig a hole there, one here, put in a few iron rods, put up the first stilt, build up the brickwork, roof on top and things."

(Varal:83)

Thus, SERFHA was present in Rocinha, encouraging people to improve their houses, and they instructed them how to go about this. At that time, according to Varal, there existed another organisation active in Rocinha, CANDE (Associação de Mulheres Democráticas), which carried out similar urbanisation projects (Varal:83). However, when Lacerda came to power later, the tables turned. In a move against the national Goulart government of the time which supported the liberalising trend, he fired Rios, as shantytowns' political independence threatened his move towards increasing centralisation (Perlman 1976). Lacerda abolished SERFHA and revived the Fundação Leão XIII, which was from now on incorporated officially into the state's welfare services. *Favelados* were now again to be treated as dependent masses in need of paternalistic orientation and moral guid-

ance. His move marked the end of open communication between them and the government administration for many years to come (Leeds & Leeds 1972).

He was also the first governor to criticise the existence of the shantytowns seriously. He urged for national coordinated action in order to eradicate them and created the institution COHAB-GB (Companhia de Habitação Popular da Guanabara), which was to be in charge of this job. Lacerda had several motives. Firstly, he was working on his own political career for the presidential post, and hoped to provide low-cost housing for a large poor electorate (Leeds & Leeds 1972). At the same time he was acting against the current nationalistic Goulart government by using COHAB-GB to attract large grants from abroad for the building of low-income housing estates (ibid.). His large-scale construction plans encouraged private enterprise favouring the housing and property sector and created a large number of jobs for technical personnel all greatly extending his patronage to these sectors. The creation of COHAB-GB in 1962 marked the initiation of a series of programmes towards the eradication of the existing inner-city shantytowns in Rio de Janeiro, particularly those located in the wealthy Zona Sul.

In these years, there was a continuing tension therefore between those who worked in favour of upgrading shantytowns and those who aimed to eradicate them. Simultaneously, all government sectors were out to tempt shantytown inhabitants with patronage in return for electoral support. It was in this political climate that the Residents Associations were created.

In many shantytowns Residents Associations were created in 1960-1961 (Diniz 1982b). This happened at that time in response to SERFHA's *Projeto Mutirão* (Lit: Mutirão Project, launched in 1960) which brought a lot of plans and promises into the open. These Residents Associations were needed in order to implement these projects effectively (Valladares 1977). On the other hand, now that Lacerda had taken over the state governorship in Rio de Janeiro, their creation also suited his ambitions to strengthen political control inside shantytowns in his attempt to extend the power of his state government. These two political forces acting through the Residents Associations in the shantytowns were continually pulling in opposite directions. This was especially visible in the implementation of contra-

dicting projects within the shantytown culminating in a recurrent fight over the directorate of the Residents Association. In this situation, a Residents Association as an impartial coordinator of shantytown resources was clearly an impossibility. Their creation was therefore bound to increase tension. On the one hand, Lacerda's politicians backed and founded the Residents Association (according to one ex-president of the Residents Association):

"A fundação da Associação foi em agosto de 1960, quando o governador Carlos Lacerda entrou. Ele teve aquela idéia assim de fazer umas reuniões com associações de morros ... Aí foi aquela briga, negócios de política. O político tal queria o grupo tal ... Era tudo ligado com os políticos."

"The foundation of the Residents Association was in August 1960, when the governor Carlos Lacerda entered into office. He had this idea of holding meetings with *favela* associations ... And then it was nothing but trouble, politics. A certain politician wanting a certain group ... It was all to do with these politicians."

(Varal:83)

And according to Seu I.:

"As Associações foram criadas com interesse político, para o político usar as directorias como cabos eleitorais. A Associação aqui na Rocinha foi formada por um grupo de pessoas simpatizantes ao ex-governador Lacerda ... "

"The associations were founded with political interests, for politicians to use their directors as *cabos-eleitorais.* The Association here in Rocinha was formed by a group of people who were supporters of the ex-governor Lacerda ... "

(Varal:82)

And:

"Quando Lacerda autorizou que se fundasse associação na favela, mandou que se compusesse uma equipe de 12 homens, para que dirigesse a Associação."

"When Lacerda authorised the foundation of the Association in the *favela*, he put a group of 12 men in charge of the Association."

(Varal:87)

On the other hand, SERFHA's personnel, backed by Rios' policies, tried to make a political claim in Rocinha trough the building of its *sede* (Lit: seat; clubhouse).

"Então fundamos a Associação lá em cima, no barracão do lado do barraco do Seu M. Botamos uma placa com o nome que naquela época era Serviço de Recuperação de Favela (SERFHA) ... "

"So then we founded the Association there at the top, in the big shack next to Mr. M. We put a plaque on the door with the name which at the time was SERFHA ... "

(Varal:83)

However:

"Aí começou a briga entre o administrador [o Lacerda] e o Dr. Artur Rios."

"So then a row started between the administrator [Lacerda] and Dr. Artur Rios."

(Varal:83)

The story clearly illustrates the contradictory policies between the different levels of government, a situation which caught the new Residents Association in the middle. Both parties competed for the directorate of the Association to gain access to Rocinha to implement their own policies.

At the time, the creation of the Residents Association in Rocinha served a purpose for both parties involved (both the *donos* as well as the politicians): on the one hand, it served as a legitimation for outside politicians to continue as they had before, except, now with the "permission" of the "representative" body of the shantytown behind them. It also worked to the advantage of the shantytown's bosses in that they now had official backing from outside the shantytown to continue their exploitative practices. Additionally, they were now officially in a position where they could monopolise all the state resources coming to the shantytown (see also Machado da Silva 1969).

From the point of view of the rest of the population, it had the effect of dividing this leadership politically in a struggle for these resources, on which their own reputation and power inside the shanty depended. In effect, the Association failed to perform its task as an impartial representative body, coordinating the shantytown's upgrading projects. Instead, it became a battleground for politicians of different parties and levels of government in their struggle to gain influence over the shantytown's voters.

Initial participation in the Association's activities was high: it claimed a membership of 939 three months after its foundation in 1961 (Valladares 1977:1398). The promise of urbanisation projects for Rocinha, in particular the talk of the construction of schools and a medico-dental centre, undoubtedly attracted this large number of members. But after barely one year, the first president stood down, having failed to implement any of the promised facilities. Allegations of corruption helped to discredit the organisation soon after its foundation and during the immediately following years many subsequent directors fell.

This is what the situation looked like up until the 1964 coup. After the coup, the repressive forces of the military government allowed a similar pattern to continue for the following fifteen years ahead. Let us look at the details of how the coup and the following repressive years affected Rocinha's political activities.

A military regime took power in a coup in 1964. They saw it as their task to rectify what they thought was threatening the nation. The overthrow brought an end to the rising democratic trend in Brazil which had been built up slowly since 1945 (Skidmore 1967). The overthrow was a result of several factors whose relative importance is disputed in the literature (Flynn 1978, Moreira Alves 1984, Skidmore 1967). Here it is enough to mention that it was a combination of several political and economic factors. The military drew up a plan for the installation of a particular development model which was to be implemented in stages. At first, the object was to eliminate the "internal enemy" and take control of society by means of widespread repression and with the help of a sophisticated Information Service. Political parties were abolished, and most grassroots movements eliminated (Moreira Alves 1984). Those allowed to exist were co-opted. By 1966, widespread economic reforms had started: a series of salary control laws were passed partly to attract multinational and foreign-linked national capital. On top of that there was open intervention in syndical politics and universities. From several sources, we get a detailed picture of what happened in Rocinha as a result of the coup and the subsequent period of repressive politics.

The military government abolished the existing party structure and many of the politicians who had entered Rocinha with their promises, were now *cassados*

(Lit: cancelled, abolished, in practice this often meant that they went voluntarily into exile abroad). The immediate result of this was the collapse of the projects sponsored by them. Their *cabos-eleitorais*, or other representatives and administrators which had run them in the shantytowns, automatically took complete charge. The absence of the politicians had the effect of officially turning the directors of the *sociedades de água* and *luz* into powerful *donos de água* and *luz*, and released all previous restrictions on their exploitative activities (Varal). The fear of the government's repressive practices, protected them from public criticism with the result that they could only be challenged at a personal level. This situation led to violence and arguments deeply dividing neighbours.

Moreover, 1966 was the year of the rains and consequent floodings (*Tempo das Enchentes* in Varal).

"Foram semanas de chuva, uns 15 dias por aí. Todo mundo desenganado da vida. A gente desanimou. Parecia que o mundo estava acabando ... Aqui na Rocinha, foi uma calamidade. Muita gente morreu, muito barraco caiu ... Os barracos não resistiam porque a terra ia cedendo ... Quem tinha cabeça largava os barracos, quem ficava morria."

"It rained for weeks, about a fortnight or so. Everybody was disillusioned with life. People lost faith. It seemed like the world was coming to an end ... Here in Rocinha, it was a calamity. Many people died, many shacks fell down ... The shacks couldn't resist it because the earth would give way ... Those who had any sense left their shacks behind, those who stayed died."

(Varal:94) (See also Ames 1973 and Rush 1974.)

People recall their helplessness in the face of what was happening, the struggle to survive and the help they gave each other. There was no mention of collectively organised activities. Several did recall the minimal paternalistic assistance provided by the Fundação Leão XIII. It was the start of a new electoral term of the state government and the Fundação was used as a tool in an attempt to improve the government's image by increasing its populist, paternalist services in these times of need (Leeds & Leeds 1972). Otherwise the shantytown dwellers had to rely on their own contacts for help. There was no evidence of any major official rescue operation other than the Fundação, and the references to the help

of the *madames* (Lit: madams; from neighbouring areas such as Gávea and São Conrado) (Varal:94-95) suggest that there was little more than band-aid type solutions to these disastrous conditions in Rocinha at the time. The rains marked the beginning of a series of repressive forces on the shantytowns. Over the following years, the political scene in Rocinha became increasingly repressed by the implementation of several federally imposed restrictive measures.

The first measure of direct government intervention in the shantytowns came in 1966 in the form of the CEE (Comissão Estadual de Energia) (Diniz 1982a, 1982b, Valladares 1978):

" ... surgiu aí uma regulamentação de que as favelas deviam ter uma Comissão de Luz. A Comissão filiou-se depois à Comissão Estadual de Energia (CEE). A CEE foi uma ação do Governo com fins de moralizar essas leis. Tinha um estatuto uniforme para todas as Comissões de Luz. Contávamos também com a sua assistência para facilitar a administração e orientar as comissões. Mas acabou que com muito calouro na coisa, a própria CEE teve muito problema de ordem jurídica."

" ... then there appeared this regulation that the *favelas* had to have an Electricity Commission. The Commission was later affiliated to the State Commission of Energy (CEE). The CEE was a measure of the government to enforce these laws. There was a uniform statute for all the Electricity Commissions. We also counted on their assistance with administration and they adviced the Commissions. But it all ended with a lot of troubles in this business, the CEE itself had a lot of legal problems."

(Varal:56)

One individual chosen by the government worked for the CEE.

"A sua função era receber a energia da Light (por delegação da antiga Comissão Estadual de Energia) e distribuí-la na favela."

"It was his job to receive energy from Light (delegated by the old CEE) and to redistribute this in the *favela*."

(JB 7/11/1977)

He was kept in this powerful position with the help of the government and his own private protection racket in the shantytown. Inevitably, conflicts over the control of the CEE escalated.

Direct government intervention in Rocinha's affairs clearly had the effect of officially transferring power to and protecting the monopoly over a potentially lucrative and exploitative business of one individual. It also had the effect of concentrating power over affairs concerning the shantytown as a whole into the hands of one individual. The government further enforced this kind of power structure in the shantytown with the implementation of two subsequent decrees designed to maintain effective control over *favela* leadership (Diniz 1982a, Valladares 1978). *Decreto* (Decree) N 870 in 1967 effectively placed the *favelados*' Residents Association under direct control of the state's Secretary of Social Services and the Regional Administration.[8]

The subsequent *Decreto* E 3.330 of 1969 imposed the official recognition of only one Residents Association in each shantytown and officially permitted government intervention in this Association. This prevented the creation of dissident associations to act parallel to the government-controlled associations. From now on, the government had to approve the Associations' statutes and financial planning officially. Representatives of these government organs obligatorily had to be part of election committees founded a certain number of days before elections took place, in order for them to be recognised as "valid". These Associations were known as *juntas governativas* (Lit: governing councils). The Fundação Leão XIII had become the state government's main tool in this process of maintaining control. Its representatives had a physical foundation (a "community centre") in all shantytowns and attended all political meetings that took place in them. These agents took on tasks such as the supervision of elections (the registration of voters and the polling procedures), the administration of certain projects (e.g. taking census) demanded by the decrees (Diniz 1982a).

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[8]These had been created as a result of Lacerda's reorganisation of the state's body of social services, in 1963. It was his intention to coordinate all existing organs involved in Social Services under one body, CEDES, a step towards the increase of state control over social welfare activities (Diniz 1982a). At the time, Fundação Leão XIII came to function under its directorates as well. The Regional Administrations (*Regiões Administrativas*) also were originally created under Lacerda, with the intention to decentralise the state government. In effect, they functioned as extensions of state power in local affairs and as local branches of party control (Diniz 1982a).

After the implementation of the decrees, all channels with the outside were dominated by a few individuals active in this *junta* and during this period Rocinha's political activities virtually came to a halt. Not only electricity networks but all other shantytown affairs (water, leisure activities) became directly administered by these few. They, in turn, received orders from government institutions on whose approval they depended. In the eyes of Rocinha's inhabitants, this Residents Association was discredited and participation was low (Diniz 1982b, Valladares 1977).

In the absence of any other legitimate channels, this exploitative power structure was to establish itself more firmly over the years of repressive government influences. Elsewhere in the shantytown, there was little going on except possibly for in the churches, which were active at the time. The Protestant churches especially (of which there were six different ones with a total membership of over 600 by 1968 (Valladares 1977)) had a variety of activities on offer from sports to a small "community school". Valladares also reports high levels of mobilisation of members of the Catholic Church at times of special occasions in the religious calendar (Valladares 1977:1397). Apart from these special occasions, however, these religious organisations were run in a highly centralised manner by the priest and pastors in charge who delegated tasks to a few key members. Perhaps only a central core of fifteen members were actively involved in the organisation of the activities of the Catholic Church, whereas all others would attend Church masses infrequently (ibid.).

Participation in all action groups decreased rapidly at the time. What happened to SOREG (Sociedade Recreativa e Educacional da Gávea) was typical of other organisations:

> SOREG was set up in 1965 on the initiative of a teacher who taught in the only existing school in Rocinha then run by the Fundação Leão XIII (Valladares 1977). It was a social club and ran a school with about 200 pupils. Its membership was high (1363 by 1968) but it mainly attracted the wealthier members of Rocinha and it had a large number of members from outside. It ran discos, feasts, and sports activities mainly, and was essentially non-political in nature. It ran with support from paternalistic state-controlled organisations such as

> the LBA and the Fundação Leão XIII, and from its relatively high membership fees.
>
> Under the strain of repression, it started to become increasingly divided internally. A crisis in 1967 led to the resignation of its president and the head of the school. The Residents Association's government-linked directors took over its administration, and from 1968 its functions were reduced to recreational activities. Previously active members became increasingly passive, and annual elections for new directors in the following years were only disputed by one party, elected each successive year by only a few votes. By 1972, its activities were totally paralysed when its terrain (so scarce in Rocinha) was sold to a bus company, which today is using it as a fenced off parking space (G4 on Figure 1–3). Rocinha had now lost its last reasonably sized open space for recreational purposes.[9]

The establishment of government control over the shantytowns' leadership was now complete. This guaranteed the undisturbed continuation of certain economic policies which were central to the regime's plan for many years (Moreira Alves 1984). With regard to housing policies particularly, there is a clear parallel between the implementation of certain policies and the need for popular support. It is worth examining this in detail.

Lacerda had initiated the destructive large-scale shantytown relocation programmes in 1962. These particularly suited the regime's economic plan which favoured the borrowing of large amounts of foreign capital (particularly from the USA) to initiate the building of low-cost housing on a massive scale. The monetarist economists in charge saw the scheme as a way of stimulating the economy and created the BNH (the National Housing Bank) in 1964 for this purpose (Portes 1979).[10]

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[9]The football pitch which existed at the bottom of Rua Dois had disappeared earlier, after the government-backed directors of the Association in 1966 decided to settle some of the families left stranded by the rains of that year onto it, causing a row, which is remembered vividly even today (see also Varal:35).

[10]This Bank was to be funded by the FGTS, a fund into which workers paid a percentage of their wages as a form of forced savings deducted at the source. The aim of the BNH was to encourage house ownership among low-income groups and to stimulate the construction of low-income housing to meet demands. However, in effect, its workings had the reverse effect: these projects were increasingly substituted by luxury housing

As mentioned above, Lacerda's government had sacked Rios in 1962 which marked the end of SERFHA'S urbanising activities in the shantytowns. Its activities were paralysed in the following year. The creation of COHAB-GB, in 1962, marked the beginning of his *favela* eradication programme. However, it soon became clear that the newly-built housing estates did not correspond to the *favelados*' demands. They were inadequate in terms of location (too far away from jobs and people's relations), in terms of quality (badly constructed, no infrastructural support; basic services were often absent or totally inadequate, like transport, sewage, water provision, schooling), and even their design did not correspond to people's needs. Additionally, many buyers simply could not afford the mortgage payments on top of the extra transport costs, which were issues ignored at the planning stage (see especially Valladares 1978a).

The result was a chaotic situation in the financing of these projects; widespread defaults in payments, with no means to enforce payments from people whose wages simply could not support these rates. Large-scale parallel speculation and irregular black market dealings resulted (Valladares 1978b), and gradually, a different clientele (salaried with 3 to 5 minimum salaries, not the targeted *favelados*, many of whom had no regular income) moved into the newly-built housing projects. This tendency was encouraged by later BNH policies, which specified a minimum regular income for eligible candidates to their housing schemes, a measure instituted in response to the high rates of defaults. (By 1974, the rate of default on payments had reached 93% (Portes 1979).) Consequently, as hillside *favelas* in the city centre disappeared, those that remained grew in size to accommodate the displaced victims of the eradications. New *favelas* also emerged (Valladares 1978a).

Public protest against the large-scale eradication programmes and forced removals was suppressed by the regime's apparatus. For example, in defence against these removals, many new Residents Associations responded collectively by or-

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for higher economic sectors. In effect, this scheme could be seen as a machine to make money for the government under social disguise (Schwarz 1980).

ganising themselves into a Federation (FAFEG) in 1962. When they organised a demonstration against the removal of Pasmado, a large Zona Sul *favela*, in the following year, its leaders were met with machine guns (Perlman 1976, Valladares 1978a). Large-scale criticism of these housing policies led to the defeat of Lacerda's candidate in the next elections. Under Negrão de Lima (1965 to 1970) COHAB-GB was reoriented towards focussing on improving the recently-built housing estates and sorting out its chaotic administration, resulting in a sharp fall in the number of projects built (Portes 1979).

A return to what used to be SERFHA's activities was attempted by the creation of CODESCO in 1968, when a group of young enthusiastic architects started projects to urbanise three shantytowns. In collaboration with their inhabitants, projects were designed to improve their living conditions, employing local residents and financed with grants, paid back by the inhabitants in long-term installments calculated within their means. These types of projects were contradictory to the assumptions behind the BNH and the government's monetarist policies. They also did not support the civil construction industry or the finance and savings companies (Leeds & Leeds 1972).

Later in 1968, CHISAM (created by federal decree overriding state domain) was to solve the *favela* problem at a national level. Under the pretext of coordinating all housing policies CHISAM restarted an intensive programme of the "rehabilitation" of 66 shantytowns in the short term, both by replacing existing *barracos* (Lit: huts, shacks) by houses, a task given to CODESCO, as well as by relocation. In fact, CHISAM allocated little money to the former and took control over CODESCO and other active agencies. From 1969 to mid-1972, CHISAM's policies of forced relocation dominated all action taken in Rio (Valladares 1978b). The extremely paternalistic attitudes behind CHISAM's proposals were that *favelados* were in need of rehabilitation because their environment was the cause of their social evil. They had to be "integrated" into housing schemes to become properly part of Brazilian society (Perlman 1976, Rush 1974).

Other motivations behind their eradication programmes became increasingly obvious. The objective had been to remove all irregular settlements from the

expensive land in Rio's Zona Sul. Their presence delayed the construction of luxury residences and interfered with the idea of an "orderly city", involving the isolation of the poor from the rich. The fact that CHISAM largely stopped its activities in mid-1972, when almost all Zona Sul *favelas* had been removed, also demonstrated this. This also coincided with the end of Chagas Freitas' term as governor of Guanabara (wider Rio de Janeiro) whose personal interests in the property business were publicly known (Diniz 1982a).

Since 1973, when CHISAM's activities came to an end, eviction programmes have only been carried out as part of specific programmes (e.g. as a result of landslides or the building of a tunnel/highways). In 1975, COHAB-GB was disbanded and CEHAB, now essentially an instrument of the BNH, took its place. But the BNH's building programme was bankrupt and CEHAB received loans instead of grants. The building of new settlements virtually came to a halt. By 1976, the end of its last phase of eradications, its programmes stabilised at around 25% of its intended budget for low-income housing. Most of its efforts still went into attempting to sort out the chaos created over the past years (Portes 1979). By 1976, CHISAM's last intensive phase of eradications had left the Zona Sul of Rio de Janeiro virtually stripped of *morros*. The only remaining visible larger ones at that time were Rocinha in São Conrado, and Santa Marta in Botafogo. Both grew enormously during that period.

In Rocinha, the threat of removals also became a reality. In 1968, there were plans for a tunnel to be built through Pombal, the lower part of Rocinha.[11] This tunnel was to provide access to a new neighbourhood (São Conrado) for the development of luxury residences and tourist accommodation. The presence of these nearby luxury residences would later provide Rocinha's population with many jobs, mainly in the service sector. At the time, however, people's most immediate concern was with a further removal threat, since it meant an increasing likelihood

[11]This explains the sudden high participation rate in 1968 elections for the Residents Association's fifth directorate (Valladares 1977).

of Rocinha's total removal as part of the government's general cleaning up of the affluent Zona Sul of the city. (See e.g. Camerman 1981 and Oliveira 1981.)[12]

Protest as pointed out before, was risky business at the time. In that same year, the leaders of FAFEG were imprisoned during a peaceful protest against removals. In the following year (1969) Praia do Pinto, a *favela* on the list to be removed but well organised and predicted as problematic, burned down. Arson was suspected (Perlman 1976). Not surprisingly, the activities of the Residents Associations came to a total halt during the following five years (1970-1975) (Valladares 1977).

Later in 1970 Pombal was removed and during the following year, the construction of Hotel Nacional was completed. People clearly remember firstly, that many construction workers died during the building of the tunnel and secondly, the way the project was carried out:

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[12]In fact explicit reference was made to this threat in one of the Residents Association's leaflets distributed in August 1980:

"Todos na Rocinha sabem que as construtoras de São Conrado, quando vendiam um apartamento a alguém, prometiam que a Rocinha seria removida dentro de dois anos. No tempo do prefeito M. T., estas imobilárias tinham muita força junto ao governo, e a Rocinha foi ameaçada de remoção várias vezes."

"Everybody in Rocinha knows that when the builders of São Conrado sold an apartment to someone, they promised that Rocinha would be removed within two years. At the time of Mayor M. T., these estate agents had a lot of power in the government, and Rocinha was threatened with removal several times."

(Informativo no. 71, 30/8/1980)

"Depois, quando foi um bel dia, sem eles esperarem nem nada, chegou o carro aí da Polícia Militar. Eu sei que chegou aí o carro da polícia pra apanhar todo mundo, pra remover tudinho. Ah! minha gente! Começou a chorar todo mundo. Eles pegam sem dó nem compaixão. Vai pegando. Vai jogando lá ... E se é televisão e todas essas coisas, vai jogando do mesmo jeito ... Quando foi já agora próximo, esse pessoal foi, como diz o outro, remanejado. Não, foram jogados lá pra Santa Cruz, pra outros lados distantes. Já voltaram quase todos, já estão aqui na Rocinha novamente ... O pessoal voltou, todos aí devendo o BNH, né? A prestação da casa lá, é de morte."

"And then, suddenly on a certain day, without anyone expecting them, the car of the Polícia Militar arrived here. I know that this police car arrived to pick up everybody, to remove everything. Oh! Dear! Everybody started to cry. They loaded everything without any compassion. And they loaded. And they threw things around ... Whether it was a television or any of these things, they threw them in the same way ... At the time, these people were, as the others call it, re-housed. No, they were thrown out, all the way to Santa Cruz, and other distant places. Already almost all returned, they're here back in Rocinha again ... People came back, all in debt to the BNH, you know. The mortgage for a house there kills you."

(Varal:101)

These were times of general repression when people disappeared without trace and when the government exercised repressive measures in a general policy of terror. It was a time when each had to rely on their own resources and fight their problems on their own, when salaries lost their value sharply and Social Welfare facilities, already shaky, were dismantled (e.g. see footnote 1). Life in Rocinha became increasingly tense, with exploitative practices given free reign. The floodings represented the climax of those sufferings of a period during which everything had gradually got so much worse for everyone.

People remember them as the dark days of fear of government policies which presented an immediate threat to their livelihoods. Yet they could not mobilise a response to these threats. They came from above, just as the rains had come from above just like the search lights from the helicopters. The floods, like the regime's repressive politics, were invisible forces threatening people who could only appeal to each other privately for comfort. Indeed, to the people themselves the rains

were explicitly associated with the repressive measures:[13]

"Esse tempo de enchentes teve essas explicações. No governo do Castelo Branco, ele tirou o dia de São Sebastião, o feriado. Na posse do governo Negrão de Lima, quando o Castelo já tinha passado o cargo, foi o maior toró. Parecia o maior dilúvio! Foram semanas de chuva ... Isso foi castigo dado por São Sebastião. Depois, nenhum governo quer tirar o feriado de São Sebastião. Nesse tempo, toda a Rocinha chorou."

"That time of the floodings had these explanations. During the time of Castelo Branco's government, he cancelled the holiday of São Sebastião. When the governor Negrão de Lima took office, after Castelo Branco had left office, there was a huge down pour. This enormous flood happened! It rained for weeks ... This was punishment given by São Sebastião. After this, no government wants to cancel that holiday. At that time, the whole of Rocinha cried."

(Varal:94-95)

The rains and consequent floodings of 1966, became the concrete experience by which the repressive years of the regime were remembered by these people.[14]

So far, then, we can draw the following conclusions. As far as government attitudes towards shantytowns were concerned, it emerges that they fluctuated between the two extremes of eradication and upgrading. Moreover, these policies reflected the nature of the government which promoted them; eradication was pursued only by a more repressive regime, whereas upgrading suited a government which relied more on popular support. In the shantytowns, repressive policies had the effect of encouraging powerful bosses who dominated the shantytown's political structure with the result that other political activities ended. The politicians who appeared in the shantytowns tempting inhabitants with promises of small upgrading projects which revitalised other potentially active entrepreneurs remained absent in these repressive times.

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[13]Castelo Branco (referred to in the following passage) headed the first military government in 1964.

[14]This explains the fact that the book Varal lacks any other major reference to the coup and the repressive government practices which followed it, despite the traumatic consequences it had for these people.

If we look in more detail at this leadership, we find powerful *donos* who supplied their clients with services, and forced them into dependency. These *donos* differed from earlier "patrons" in that they had lost their ideological hegemony over their clientele. A close look reveals that the relationships between these *donos* and their clients was not a contract in which relations were reciprocal and entered into voluntarily (e.g. as portrayed in Foster 1977). This relationship was "lop-sided". It had reached an imbalance, but not in the sense as Pitt-Rivers envisaged (Pitt-Rivers 1954:140) (see Paine's criticism of Pitt-Rivers (Paine 1971)). Expectations had been violated and it was not a patron-client relationship any more, since the patron had lost his/her ability to set the terms over the relationship with his/her clients (Paine 1971). The obligation of the receiver to return with respect and loyalty, paid back in the form of dutiful support (Wolf 1966) had also disappeared. My example therefore confirms claims in the literature that how the relation is evaluated depends on people's own (emic) ideologies and can change over time (Gilsenan 1977, Scott 1977, Silverman 1977). Henriksen's observations, following Barth's model (Barth 1966), that the patron-client relation can be seen as a transaction between two people at a particular moment, i.e. as part of a series of transactions (Henriksen 1971), is helpful here in overcoming previous accusations in the literature of the patron-client model as unable to cope with conflict (see especially Eisenstadt & Lemarchand 1981, Gellner & Waterbury 1977). The coercive factor in this relationship is clearly important and had been overlooked by many authors (Hall 1977).[15] Indeed, in Rocinha the nature of this relation changed over time. In the later years of repression, the relation between patrons and clients lacked conventional associations of respect and loyalty. Clients were forced into this dependence. These *donos* offered services which could not otherwise be obtained and they regarded their bosses as exploitative (see e.g. the vicious campaigns reported in Informativo and Tagarela challenging particular *donos*). They did not gain respect from this position, as Seu C.'s quotation

[15]This does not preclude the possibility that people in this relationship search for dependence and protection, and hence spontaneously attach themselves to patrons (Hutchinson 1966).

might lead us to believe during earlier times, when Rocinha was still small and infrastructural problems were not of the same urgency.

The term "*patrão*" there had positive connotations, whereas the latter term (*dono*) had strongly negative connotations. *Dono* for example, was not used as a reference term in the person's presence. They were associated with *política*, and referred to as *políticos* in some instances. They are associated with "*propaganda*", "*conversa fiada*" (Lit: useless talk, idle chatter) (see e.g. Varal:78-79 and 83 quoted above), suggesting distrust and suspicion which was in fact the opposite to the defining characteristic of the conventional patron-client relation (loyalty). They cannot therefore be sources of respect.

On the basis of the above observations, we can draw some preliminary conclusions about the nature of leadership which emerged over the time described so far. In sum, leadership with a stable following remained absent. The position of existing leaders was created through the interference of outsiders associated with a widely feared regime during repressive times.[16] The residents' reaction to these *donos* later (the fact that they were totally discredited in the post-repression years) shows clearly that there was no other basis for their position as "leaders" of the Residents Association.

Moreover, these *donos*, even if they qualified otherwise, could not rely on personal contacts with their clients as a solid basis for leadership. As far as the clients were concerned, they represented a highly mobile and fast-growing population which made it impossible for any "leader" to establish personal links with his/her "following". Clients also did not mobilise into a collectivity. The large growth rate and the constantly changing composition of the population discouraged people to invest in the unit as a whole. In short: it gives the impression

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[16]These "leaders" established themselves through outside interference, be it through the undiscriminating and highly personalistic way in which outside politicians imputed influential individuals in Rocinha with real exclusive power (as described in the beginning of this chapter) or be it through repressive policies which actively sought to exclude certain protesting voices and actively protected the position of these individuals who were disliked by many in Rocinha. These early "leaders" formed the basis of what was later to become the Chagas machine (see ahead).

that no one really "belonged" there, and this was encouraged by the question of land ownership. Property owners were variable and often remained anonymous to Rocinha's people. When known, they were mostly outsiders (e.g. a construction company, various politicians, others who settled some personal deals. There were even allegations of Fundação Leão XIII officials engaging in land sales in Rocinha (Oliveira 1981)). Besides, the whole shantytown, in the face of widespread eradications of similar settlements in the city centre, was threatened with demolition giving a strong sense of impermanence.

All these factors add up to a picture of impermanence and division, generating the opposite to the impression of a collectivity supporting itself and possibly a handful of "leaders". There is evidence of the opposite tendency: of individuals acting in their own interests, competing with each other to make their own stakes in the temporary opportunities offered to them. Rules were bent and evaded ("borrowing" families and furniture, building inside fake screens). Deals were made between individuals pushing the situation to their own advantage and they played each other off when challenged on these matters. Collective projects were sacrificed in the process, such as the football pitch and the recreational society SOREG. Indeed, in times of repression, the authorities promoted these tactics of divide and rule.

The developments of the political scene post-repression with the influx of politicians and the establishment of many different factions, revitalised the picture in the shantytown, as portrayed in the next chapter. It will be clear that these further developments confirm this picture of fluctuation and division, of "leaders" with no following, who appeared and disappeared in quick succession.

Chapter 6

The Development of Leadership: Post-1976

By 1976, opposition groups had gained support from all sectors of society, including the elite, and led to mass demonstrations and riots throughout Brazil. The stability of the regime depended solely on its high economic growth rate and when the economy began to run into difficulties it had great problems maintaining itself. The discourse of the subsequent president (Geisel) in 1974 changed accordingly in an attempt to ease the tension (Moreira Alves 1984). The crisis sparked off talk of liberalisation (*distensão*) and increased attempts at negotiation with opposition groups. Local elections were staged as proof of these relaxation policies. However, as the opposition party (MDB) proved to be unexpectedly strong and turned out to have a good chance of winning the elections, the government introduced restrictive measures to prevent themselves from losing control over local political posts. It soon became clear that this plan for "liberalisation" was threatening the implementation of the government's economic plan: demonstrations on the streets of São Paulo in 1975 and 1976 in defence of basic human rights (denouncing torture, disappearances and random imprisonments without trial) were met with repression and the regime had launched another intensive national campaign to find members of two underground Communist parties. Just before the 1976 elections for municipal posts (which threatened another MDB victory), the government passed Lei Falcão which forbade the expression of political ideas on TV and radio. The election campaign was thereby restricted to the presentation of

a photograph, name and party of the candidates, suppressing debates and securing a government party majority. Formal opposition at higher levels was made impossible by other measures (such as the "bionic senators" and the Pacote de Abril). The Church (through the CNBB (National Brazilian Council of Bishops), the MDB (the formal opposition party), and all other remaining official organisations (such as the independent voice of lawyers, OAB (Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil) and the Brazilian Press Association) had now joined together in opposition to the regime. And soon, the weight of the growing external debt and the rising inflation rate were also beginning to affect business and industrial interests who demanded decision power in economic spheres.

The above is a story of an oppressive regime intent on implementing a particular economic plan at all costs. Pressure from strikes, riots and other incidents repeatedly developed temporary crises. To off-set these crises, it introduced talk of liberalisation to prevent the total loss of legitimacy. Towards the late 1970s, when the regime itself did not have an economic basis from which to act, overall social conditions had eroded to such an extent, that pressure gave way to a more substantial opening up of government structures, *abertura* (Moreira Alves 1984). Gradually, since 1974, political pressure was forcing the regime to use increasingly more sophisticated means of control. This time it was less through violence as through the control over political structures. It was during this time that the Chagas machine, which firmly controlled all political outlets at local levels, gained a lot of strength in the state of Rio de Janeiro. It is worth examining how it came to establish itself and what sort of tactics it employed to maintain support at these very local levels, i.e. at the levels which most affected Rocinha's politicians.

The party political context was the following: with the 1964 military takeover, the multi-party system ceased to exist. By the end of 1965, it had been replaced with a two-party system. The heterogeneous "opposition" party, which dominated the political scene in Rio de Janeiro from 1965 to 1979 (the duration of the two-party system) (Diniz 1983) was represented by one faction under the leadership of Chagas Freitas. "Chaguismo" was a classical example of patronage politics in operation. Central to its success was the creation of personal links

with its electorate reflected in the priority given to their "community politics".[1] The Chaguista politician associated him/herself with a certain locality by keeping in touch through personal links with its leadership, becoming their patron. In Rocinha, these consisted of the *cabos*, installed in earlier political processes, as described elaborately in the previous chapter.

Links were reactivated and maintained through the distribution of favours (granted in return for political support) which created relations of dependence rather than competing with groups and other parties (stimulating critical debate) as described in Chapter 5. In this way, local political groups were co-opted and became linked to a highly centralised structure of personal relations built up through the granting of favours (e.g. Eisenstadt & Roniger 1984). One way to maintain control was by the creation of the Conselho de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social (CEDES) in 1975, which was constituted by all secretaries of the state government and presidented by Chagas, the governor himself (Diniz 1982a) (see footnote 8 in Chapter 5). All social welfare questions passed through this Conselho. The Fundação Leão XIII, which had firmly established itself in shantytown leadership during the repressive years, was used as a state government tool for the implementation of this kind of machine politics and the maintenance of control over dissidents.[2] The *Regiões Administrativas* also served this function. They were staffed with party personnel and acted as intermediary and potential distributor of favours for the electorate. The way the *Regiões Administrativas* and the Fundação Leão XIII created jobs and goodies to distribute to prospective voters was in the form of "works" for certain shantytowns (e.g. the asphalting of a

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[1]Election results support this fact too: Chaguistas in general did better in more local elections (for example, in state, not federal, elections support for them was more marked) (Diniz 1982a).

[2]The extent to which Chaguista politicians were involved in Fundação Leão XIII's activities came to the surface in later years. In 1979, the president of the Fundação Leão XIII was publicly accused of having dismissed 300 of its employees previously "for no just cause" and substituted them with his own people (Diniz 1982a). Evidence that this affected Rocinha comes from the reports in one of Rocinha's newspapers about a campaign to reinstall a Fundação Leão XIII social worker who had been working for Rocinha for more than six years (Tagarela no. 9, May 1978).

road, the implementation of a small water network, the building of a "community centre", as described in the previous chapter). The Chaguista politician's main target was the shantytowns' Residents Associations' directors (who were established in their position through the government-controlled *juntas* through the interference of the Fundação Leão XIII) who could organise public meetings to introduce the Chaguista politician to "their community" so that each project was personally associated with a particular "donor". These directors presented them with a list of the "community's" demands and the politician's credibility rose as s/he succeeded in "resolving the community's problems". In most cases, of course, as before, these "solutions" never proceeded beyond mere promises. The design of the projects (if carried out at all) was limited to the bargaining power of the involved *favelados.* They were uncoordinated and limited to temporal cosmetic changes, often reflecting the wishes of the few individuals involved in the bargaining. The projects seldom addressed any structural long-term problems. Popular targets were the *blocos carnavalescos* who received generous donations publicly acknowledged in the press. The Chaguistas' enormous wealth was also clearly a key to their election success. There were no official channels to criticise these clientelistic practices. They were in line with policies of keeping strict control over the shantytowns.

The style of these politicians was charismatic. Their language was populist and non-ideological. Public debates were avoided and they relied instead on performance and action and its correct timing. Grand inauguration ceremonies were carried out since these were opportunities for eloquent speeches and grand promises emphasising particularistic links of confidence and loyalty. The aim was to set up amicable relations with as many groups as possible. Chagas built those diverse links as a large property owner with other business interests (how he enormously increased his wealth through large-scale irregular property dealings was later exposed) and kept amicable relations with the military. Additionally, he owned and dominated the largest local newspapers which evidently facilitated this too. Chagas himself kept a daily column in his newspapers (maintaining personal communication with his readership) and, to capture the widest possible audience, other

Chaguista politicians daily covered the interests of different sectors (e.g. Sandra Salim addressed the middle-classes, Atila Nunes Umbanda practitioners). (For a detailed account of Chagas' career, see Diniz (1982a).)

The building of the Chaguista machine was encouraged by the national context of fear of repression which discouraged ideological debate and criticism of devious political practice. Especially after Institutional Act 5 in 1968 any movement which represented a threat to the regime was eliminated and gradually all potentially challenging leaders within the opposition party disappeared.

Distensão politics clearly represented a change in the government's strategy. As far as housing policies and attitudes towards shantytowns were concerned, the language had also changed. Large-scale forced relocation programmes had become economically and socially inappropriate. From then on the attention given to *favelados* was in the interest of gaining their political support. The focus was on questions of upgrading. Grants became available for small projects and many promises were made for such favours in the future, in the same style as the politicians of the populist governments of the 1950s and 1960s, just before the coup.

Participation remained restricted. Some pressure groups gradually became active again, but participants were swallowed by the co-opting mechanisms of the state to prevent them from any real independent participation. The key to the building of the Chagas machine in Rio de Janeiro was at the time its success in reactivating the personalistic bonds set up in earlier years and its ability to win over new shantytown groups and recruit their leaderships into the machine in similar ways.

Newly available funds and relaxed restrictions to participation encouraged a new type of political activity in the shantytowns. From 1976, we saw the growth of *mutirão* groups in Rocinha. The *mutirão* groups were largely initiated by Church agents.[3] *Mutirões* started up in several areas of Rocinha. On free evenings and

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[3]As seen above, during the earlier repressive years of the regime, the Church was the only legitimate outlet for government questioning and gradually it had become a base for

weekends some volunteers got together to solve the most urgent problems of their neighbourhood. Often on such occasions food for these workers was provided as a form of payment.

The first of their activities in Rocinha was the organisation of a petition, to campaign for the building of a footbridge across the dangerous dual carriage way (built as part of the new tunnel in 1970 at the bottom of Rocinha). At the time it claimed several victims a week (sic) and was everyone's immediate concern. The large turnout for this campaign motivated a handful of organisers into more ambitious projects such as the distribution of a "community newspaper". Its first issue was distributed in August 1976. It already mentions the existence of a youth club, cineclub and theatre group, a small medical centre, a group starting off a daycare centre, a night school, a choir to accompany religious ceremonies, the running of professional courses (sowing, cooking and craft making) and a group which volunteered the reconstruction of the Catholic Chapel (Tagarela no. 1, Aug 1976). Most of these projects were based at the newly built Community Centre or the Chapel and were still in their initial stages, slowly gaining more support during the following year, growing to a handful of supporters for each. The groups had outside administrative and financial support from private institutes with religious links. These supplied information and helped find funding sources and other infrastructural support for the groups (e.g. the journal was printed on a stencil machine belonging to one institute).

Towards the end of 1977, these groups decided to launch a *Campanha da Vala* (Lit: Campaign for Sewage Canals) (ASPA 1982). For a short time they managed to mobilise groups of up to fifty people on Sundays digging rubbish out of canals to prevent them from overflowing in the rains. The Theatre Group performed a piece to attract support and composed songs to accompany the workers. Food was organised by others. Blocked drains were cleared in this way and the *mutirão* campaigns were seen as a success. According to C. (one of the organisers at the time):

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challenging government propaganda in the climate of widespread academic repression and media censoring.

"O mutirão foi o momento grande da comunidade. Todo mundo se interessou na limpeza das valas!"

"The *mutirão* was the great moment of the community. Everybody took an interest in cleaning the drains!"

(Varal:120)

The campaign consisted of different committees each responsible for different aspects of the job (e.g. the organisation of the work teams, plotting the existing drainage system on maps, an educational campaign, pressurising officials responsible for the provision of clean water, the removal of household waste and sewage canals).[4]

Soon, however, the participants began to question their efforts. It was too much hard work on their only days off, the media appeared to film the activities (the possibility of appearing on TV while submerged in sewage put many off) and there was no real response to the groups' demands from government officials.

"Por que a COMLURB [Companhia Municipal de Limpeza Urbana] responde devagar? Foi uma comissão grande na COMLURB ... A COMLURB chegou a fechar as portas com medo de uma invasão de tanta gente da favela ... nunca acontecia nada por parte da municipalidade, da prefeitura."

"Why does COMLURB [the municipal street cleaning service] respond so slowly? A large delegation went to COMLURB ... COMLURB ended up closing its gates, afraid of an invasion of so many people from the *favelas* ... Nothing ever happened on the part of the municipal authorities, the City Hall."

(Varal:121)

Participants became especially discouraged as new loads of household waste appeared in the *valas*, and the strenuous cleaning work began to look like an endless process, fighting against forces which could never be resolved unless something structural changed first.

As the *mutirão* groups learned about these questions, the nature of their work changed.

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[4]Various authors on Urban Social Movements refer to these movements as bringing about notions of "community" among their participants (e.g. Durham 1984, Cardoso 1983, Boschi 1982, Santos 1981).

"Foram muitos os momentos onde a gente começou a aprender como tratar essas repartições. Que a gente tem mesmo direitos, coisas que talvez a gente já tivesse até esquecido ... "

"There were many moments in which people started to understand how to deal with these barriers. That people do have rights, something which we had maybe even forgotten ... "

(Varal:121)

The initial manual collective effort solving short-term urgent problems with large numbers of people turned into a few dedicated people, focussing on long-term planning and acting as a pressure group. Some especially focused on educational and preventive issues. After some of their physical achievements, they now saw their main task to be "consciousness-raising" (*conscientização*) (I will go into more detail on the ideology behind this approach in Chapter 7).

With these changes taking place, it is not surprising that towards the end of the 1970s, the Chaguista machine had lost political support nationally. Geisel's *distensão* politics had let the lid off a lot of criticism and pressure from independent voices. Lei Falcão prohibited public debates about election issues just before the 1976 elections and, together with a new wave of repressive measures, somewhat contained the pressure. Towards the end of 1978, when the crisis became more evident in all sectors, a new attempt at liberalisation was made with the talk of *abertura.* This sparked off the birth of a large number of new pressure groups in all sectors in 1978-1980. Official political channels were subjected to criticism and their "leaderships" were challenged. The government-controlled labour unions and the shantytowns' Residents Associations (both representing large numbers of people) were particular targets of criticism. Since "Community politics" had been essential to the workings of Chaguismo (i.e. its relation to the large poorer suburbial population was critical), it is not surprising that *favelados* were the first to oppose Chaguista leadership openly. They exposed its corrupt practices alleging interference of Chaguista politicians in shantytown organisation which led to serious public disputes (Diniz 1983). This criticism, exposed publicly for the first time, led to widespread distrust and dislike for this government.

In federal politics in Rio de Janeiro, the Chaguista/non-Chaguista crisis became apparent in the 1978 elections for federal posts. The national MDB-line

moved increasingly towards the left, and by 1980, Chaguismo had lost most support there. At state level, it took some time to dismantle the clientelistic network. The state governor who defeated Chagas in 1982 (Leonel Brizola) won the election campaign on the basis of anti-Chaguista slogans (see e.g. the language in his Plano de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social 1983). Political dialogue had clearly changed. Chagas' pragmatic language offering promises of great works changed into ideological debates about individual "rights", demanding "participation" in the political process and the abolition of "corrupt personalistic links".

The Chaguistas' language used in Rocinha had also changed. People, already cynical about the influx of Chaguista politicians promising upgrading projects in return for political support, now publicly challenged them. Rocinha had gone through the experience of large-scale *mutirão* campaigns confronting them with questions about the state's responsibility to carry out basic improvements in their shantytowns, and their rights to basic necessities, or, in Durham's words; the community work had created a space for its members to become aware of collective needs which then turned into a new realisation of the rights of the individual - a new notion of citizenship in relation to the state (Durham 1984). Politicians could now not get away with their naive performances as used during the times when criticism was always threatened with repression. This change of rhetoric is clearly visible in two newspaper articles describing two separate appearances of politicians in Rocinha documented in Varal. The first of these articles is dated 1976. The cynical journalist describes the short visit of a candidate to Rocinha shortly before the elections (JB 16/11/1976). The candidate is described like a caricature: his appearance is anxious and sloppy ("Shirt hanging out of his trousers ... ")[5] and his tour around Rocinha is poorly planned. He spends several "long minutes" on the payphone in Rocinha arranging his next stop and ordering his *cabo eleitoral* to round up an audience. His political "discourse" is largely inaudible ("The noise covered up his voice ... "),[6] and when he resorts to using a megaphone (which

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[5] "*Camisa para fora da calça ...* "

[6] "*O barulho abafou sua voz ...* "

belongs to a local taxi driver), he reveals his real intentions by mistake:

"Um possível eleitor fala com o candidato e sua resposta, certamente por distração, é revelada a todos pelo altofalante: "Pode deixar que o saco de cimento vem aí. Às 5 horas eu vou para casa descansar e você vai comigo buscar o saco de cimento."

"A potential voter talks with the candidate and his response, certainly by mistake, is revealed to all through the megaphone: "Leave it to me, the sack of cement is coming. At five I'm going home and you come with me to collect the sack of cement."

To a group of teenagers he promises:

"O jogo de camisetas está dado. É só ir comigo buscar."

"The set of football shirts is for you. Just come with me to pick them up."

for all to hear. His political naivity and emphasis on personal contacts with the shantytown (to come across as a "friend") is confirmed in his "speech":

"... sou o candidato do povo. Gente que nem a gente ... Volto já. Até logo pessoal, vamos lá, para a urna. Votar para ganhar. Eu volto ... "

" ... I'm the candidate of the people. People like we all are ... I'm coming back soon. Until then, folks, let's go to the polling booths. Voting to win. I'm coming back ... "

This rapid appearance was a non-event, especially since:

"Até o final da tarde, F. não havia cumprido a promessa."

"By the end of the afternoon, F. had not stuck to his promises."

An inauguration of fifteen public fountains by Chaguista politicians shortly before elections six years later (in 1982) was in many ways a similar event. From the details, it is clear, however, that both parties have become more sophisticated.

A well-organised party of:

"mais de 10 deputados federais, estaduais, vereadores e candidatos do PMDB chaguista ... protegidos por dezenas de soldados da PM ... "

"more than 10 federal representatives, state congressmen, councillors and PMDB chaguista candidates ... guarded by dozens of Military Police officers ... "

arrived. Their *cabos* had arrived earlier to distribute election materials, and organised a raised platform from which well-prepared speeches were performed. The intentions were clear: they had come to Rocinha to claim personal responsibility for reinforcing the image of the "caring patrons for a community in need". For better dramatic effect, they had brought along a public personality:

"Uma das atrações principais foi a atriz V. G., mulher do ator e candidato ... J. V., que aproveitava os "santinhos" distribuídos por dezenas de cabos eleitorais para dar autógrafos às crianças."

"One of the highlights was the actress V. G., the wife of the actor and candidate J. V., who took advantage of the "*santinhos*" [Lit: little saints; leaflets with the picture and name of the candidate, named after the religious leaflets with saintly pictures widely distributed in Brazil] distributed by dozens of *cabo-eleitorais* to give out autographs to the children."

The audience, however, is also better equipped to decipher the effort:

"O povo comentava com um ar desconfiado e experiente: "Só quero ver se quando acabar as eleições não vai acabar também a água ... "

"People commented in a suspicious and experienced tone: "I just want to see if when the elections come to an end, the water too will come to an end ... "

(JB 2/8/1982)

Instead of individuals attempting to plead personal favours from the politicians in private (such as the *saco de cimento* and the *jogo de camisetas* pleaded for by the individuals from the audience in the 1976 appearance), the politicians in 1982 were met by Rocinha's organised leadership to receive the speeches with a critical attack and plead for further collective demands.

"Não adianta água na bica da estrada. Queremos a água dentro de casa, na bica da cozinha. Queremos a posse da terra, que reivindicamos há 3 anos, pois ... "

"Water in public street taps doesn't solve any problems. We want water indoors; from kitchen taps. We want land ownership, which we have been claiming for 3 years, and also ... "

(ibid.)

The politicians were quick with their answers. Their language is sophisticated and picks up the points the shantytown people want to hear. For example, one of the politicians responded:

"Eu admiro esse povo que prestigia a inauguração de 3 bicas de água. Mas o favelado não é bicho e não deve se contentar com isso, deve lutar e reivindicar pela água em casa."

"I admire these people who honour the inauguration of 3 public water taps. But the *favelado* is not an animal and should not be content with this, he should struggle and demand water for inside his house."

However, their strategies remained very similar to their predecessors in 1976, as illustrated in the journalist's remark: The Secretaria de Obras, to the demand for water in people's houses promised that:

"estudos estão sendo desenvolvidos ... enquanto os políticos já prometem e pedem votos por essa possibilidade."

"studies are being done ... while politicians already promise and plead for votes for that possibility."

The point is that the aims and methods of the politicians of both occasions were the same: ideological issues were avoided, dramatic methods were used to spread the propaganda, personal contacts were established and promises for future favours were made. Even though criticism of such policies was now publicly expressed in very sophisticated rhetoric, basic practices had not changed. What had changed was the rhetoric in which this was delivered in line with the audience's expectations and challenges.

In this respect one is reminded of Parkin's shift from "plan" to "ideology" in his analysis of the language used by bureaucrats to address a group of Kenyan

farmers (Parkin 1975).[7] The politicians in 1982 make much more extensive use of symbols: they now draw on officialdom (the presence of a large number of people representing different levels of government, backed up by police, and they use a carefully prepared platform and speeches, to persuade the audience of their importance). The presence of the actress shows that they are now selling themselves to a widely divergent audience (even children are present for autographs) rather than ordering people to converge (on the previous occasion the politicians used a much more explicit command). Reference is made to opposing parties ("*o favelado* doesn't have to be content with this ... ") and attempts are made to avoid commitments and direct references ("studies are being done ... "). In summary, the whole event is designed to be more persuasive than that of the previous occasion. In Turner's terminology, the rhetoric makes more extensive use of symbols than of signs (Parkin 1975).

So far, I have discussed and illustrated the change of rhetoric and the practices of the state government that national political developments brought about. What remains to be discussed is the effect of these changes on Rocinha's "leadership", i.e. what the effect was of the influx of Chaguista politicians promoting upgrading projects (and the way they did this in Rocinha) on the latter's power structure.

To recap, the establishment of the political machine in Rocinha happened as follows: politicians approached a handful of individuals in Rocinha (most of these were *cabos* in the early days) with the promise of projects and other personal favours with the aim to win their political support. This meant that the person that responded, enjoyed the politicians' support and established him/herself in charge of these projects. S/he was then challenged by others who demanded a say in the matter, which developed into endless arguments between different individuals claiming to be the "legitimate representative" of Rocinha, and hence claimed the right to decide about the allocation of resources. How this caused immediate problems between particular people is vividly illustrated in Varal:

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[7]Parkin focuses only on the language used in their speeches, something which I regrettably cannot do as my data do not provide this detail.

"Então a Associação passou a funcionar dando licenças ... Por causa disso, até um dia nós tivemos um problema ... Daqui a gente via lá do outro lado uma pessoa cobrindo ... Nós fomos lá e embargamos. Aí o cara disse que era ordem do A. F. ... Nós dissemos a ele que não atendíamos a ordem do A. F.: "Aqui na Rocinha, nós só atendemos ordem do governador do Estado e mais ninguém!" Derrubamos o barracão do cara, ele não teve saída. Sabe que o A. F. fez? Tentou comprar a Associação. Político, né? Ele chamou alguém lá em baixo ... perguntou: "A Associação está em dificuldades?" Aí ele disse: "É de uma máquina de escrever que nós estamos precisando. Então vocês compram a máquina que eu pago."

"So the Association started to issue licences ... Because of this, one day we even had trouble ... From here we saw a person cheating, there on the other side ... We went there and stopped him. So the guy said that it was by permission from A. F. We said to him that we didn't answer to A. F.'s orders: "Here in Rocinha, we only answer to the orders of the State governor and no-one else!" We took down the guy's house, he couldn't escape from that. You know what A. F. did? He tried to bribe the Association. Politics, you know. He called someone down there ... asked: "The Association has any problems?" And then he said: "We need a typewriter? Then, buy a typewriter and I'll pay."

(Varal:87-88)

Another complicating factor in this power game was the police.

"A polícia tinha direito de impedir [obras]. Mas eles não só impediam como autorizavam quando davam dinheiro ... "

"The police had the right to obstruct [works]. But they didn't just do that, they also authorised works if you paid them ... "

(Varal:87)

The case of Cachopa clearly illustrates in detail the chaos it created on a larger scale: the case study illustrates the clever infiltration of politicians into Rocinha, the clever use of rhetoric by all parties to legitimate their claims, and the confusion it created for Rocinha, dividing whole neighbourhoods against each other.

> In 1976, a Protestant minister claimed to have "bought" the land of roughly half of Cachopa, to accommodate members of his congregation and their families, most of whom had already been living in that area for some time. A conflict over land trespassing soon mobilised an opposition to these land claims from the other half of Cachopa's residents. The question of religion was clearly articulated in the conflict. The suggestion for a plan "to disappropriate this area for social inter-

est" (one way in which the question of private land ownership can be solved in shantytowns) attracted hoards of Chaguista politicians into Cachopa to claim personal responsibility for what they called "the only solution" to the area's problems, and eventually for the whole of Rocinha.

As can be expected, this move led to many problems. Claims that Cachopa had been "opened up for the use of the community" encouraged some individuals to distribute plots in Cachopa for "needy families", and issue "building licences" on newly opened plots under the name of the Residents Association enriching themselves enormously in a very short time. In no time Cachopa tripled in size expanding into the forest (which forms part of a protected National Park).

The result was predictable. The new building activities led to a series of serious conflicts between newcomers and original residents, whose neighbourhood was suddenly invaded. Particular antagonism against the members of the minister's congregation, who were labelled as "thieves who stole the land of the people", led to conflicts focusing on religious differences. Endless, often violent, fights developed between different individuals claiming to be the only one that could legitimately issue "building licences" by calling themselves directors of the Residents Association. A series of public campaigns were organised by rivalling "directors" accusing each other of "corruption". Violent conflicts became an everyday event and involved policemen who were instructed to disallow or destroy newly initiated building projects. These police officials collectively received contradictory orders from different governing structures, and individually also made a fortune out of this business.

When the problem had caught the eye of the press, some "directors" grabbed the opportunity to make official complaints about police violence at these scenes. These arguments went back and forth, involving a lot of political manoeuvring on the part of all the parties involved (the state and municipal government, different police forces, and various rivalling "directors"). They led to the replacement of several officials at higher levels of the police and governing structures. Additionally, this expansion and land dealing in Cachopa encouraged some to initiate the same process elsewhere in Rocinha. Parts of Laboriau, Favelinha da Paula Brito, Almir and Vila União were created out of nothing during this same period, causing similar conflicts in those areas.

These problems developed into full-blown conflicts, involving the whole shantytown. In Paula Brito, for example, the directors of the state-run school were black-listed after they voiced protest against the growing *favela* on its neighbouring terrain. Accusations of all kinds against the school's directors were spread around in one faction's abusive leaflets, criticising the school's recruitment policies, teaching methods, etc. They succeeded in creating a lot of hostility against the school and its activities (some of which still prevailed in Rocinha at the time of fieldwork).

In order to defend themselves against rivals in the Association, these "directors" also used another tactic.

"Tivemos a preocupação de criar o que a gente chamava de diretores de áreas. Depois de realizar reuniões em determinadas áreas, os moradores indicavam o nome de uma pessoa pra ser representante. Isso porque se a ação fosse julgada desfavorável pra nós, se a sede caísse nas mãos da [opposed faction], como ela estava pretendendo, nós perderíamos a sede, mas não perderíamos o espaço dentro da comunidade."

"We tried to set up, what we called "area directors". After holding meetings in certain areas, the residents put forward a name of a person to be their representative. This was because if the court case came out against us, if the seat fell into the hands of [opposed faction, identified by the name of a woman], as she had in mind, we would only lose the seat but not our space in the community."

(Varal:113)

The "directors" of these areas thus appeared on the political scene, with an independent voice claiming "local representativity" and competing with other similar "regional directors". This further encouraged the split of Rocinha as a political unit. This strategy also explains how regionality became (and still was at the time of fieldwork) an important issue in these factions' language. (This point confirms my argument in Chapter 3.)

As these individuals launched public campaigns to be able to claim "popular support" in their efforts to present their case over rivalling directors, these tensions led to chaotic alignments of different factions within Rocinha. A handful of opposing factions started distributing their own literature and papers, and leaflets began to circulate regularly. Some of this consisted of single sheets of paper distributed irregularly around times of controversial events such as the letters typed on "*União*"-headed note paper.[8] Some were more professionally done. The development of Tagarela is an example.

It was launched to document the progress and encourage the work of the *mutirões*. Its frequency increased in 1978, the time in which the strength of Ch-

[8]This was the official name of Rocinha's Residents Association.

aguismo began to reach its peak. It explicitly promised more commitment in February 1978 and from March 1978, it became independent, not published by the Youth Club any more. News about the activities of *mutirão* groups still predominated but it catered for a more sophisticated readership. For example, it increasingly mentioned outside political activities such as removal threats in Vidigal (March 1978), the implications of BNH policies (May 1978), the workings and effects of the FGTS system (May 1978),[9] information about the *Pastoral de Favelas* (May 1978), and FAFERJ (Rio's new Federation of Residents Associations) (Dec 1978). The cooking recipes and religious rhymes of earlier issues became less frequent.

These leaflets and journals were highly personalistic; their language was highly emotive. They made abundant use of exclamation marks and provocative headlines (e.g. "Enemies of the People Want to Demolish Rocinha's Shops" (Informativo no. 103, 6/2/1982),[10] "Squatter is Defeated Once Again" (ibid. no. 72, 13/9/1980),[11] "Police Violence in Rocinha" (Circular no. 60, 10/10/1980)).[12] Some used cartoons with caricatures of the targeted "enemies" and referred to their rivals as "enemies of the people", "exploiters of the people", "squatters", "swindlers" (*in-*

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[9]I have mentioned the FGTS in Chapter 5. It was introduced in 1966 as a general move in the direction towards a "social salary" (which, critics have argued, produces an increasingly inegalitarian system in the long run (Malloy 1979)). It was a form of forced savings in which employees paid a percentage of their salaries into this fund, which they could claim back with interest at the end of their employment with the firm. The fund was administered by the BNH. In theory, this was meant to increase house ownership among workers, who could use the fund to finance their mortgage. However, as these projects were increasingly unviable (the reasons for this have been mentioned in Chapter 5), it gradually began to target higher economic sectors of the population. In effect, therefore, the lower economic sectors were subsidising housing projects built for higher income sectors. The introduction of the fund also overrid union agreements about rights of dismissal and thereby seriously affected employment stability. (It was now possible to dismiss workers before they had a chance to build up their credits.) It thus eliminated the unions' bargaining power as employers could (and did) fire anyone who actively participated in their activities (Schwarz 1980).

[10]"*Inimigos do Povo Querem Derrubar Lojas da Rocinha*"

[11]"*Grileiro é Derrotado Mais Uma Vez*"

[12]"*Violências Policiais na Rocinha*"

imigos do povo, *exploradores do povo*, *grileiros*, *pilantras*), and so on. They openly accused each other for committing crimes against "the people" and simplified highly complicated issues. They also frequently denounced some and promoted other government institutions openly.

The dynamics of this tension between the different factions was also clearly illustrated by the occasion of the inauguration of a new footbridge, the first achievement of the *mutirão* groups and therefore a time of extreme symbolic importance.

"No dia da inauguração, a gente tinha teatro, fizemos uma peça sobre as pessoas que morriam na passarela ... Nós fizemos um palco lá perto da pista, celebramos uma missa pelas pessoas que morreram atropeladas. Depois nós fizemos uma procissão, todo mundo cantando ... e dançando. A gente levou umas faixas, tinha bateria, batucada e tudo ... Eu sei que teve gente que até chorou. Aquilo foi uma coisa muito linda! ... No outro dia eles marcaram que era a inauguração do governo. Veio tanta gente! Aquela deputada toda! Era deputado, era vereador ... Aí, foi deputado chegando aqui, se exibindo ... dizendo: "Eu fiz a passarela pro povo da Rocinha! Eu botei a passarela! Eu fiz não sei o quê!" Mas não foi nada disso. Não foi nem aquela Associação, nem deputado. Foi trabalho da comunidade inteira."

"On the day of the inauguration, we had theatre, we composed a piece about the people that died under the footbridge ... We set up a plaque near the road, we celebrated a mass for the people that died run over. After that we marched, everybody singing ... and dancing. We had banners, there was a steel band, rhythmic dancing and everything ... I know that there were even people crying. That was a really beautiful occasion! ... On another day they organised what turned out to be the government's inauguration. So many people came! All these government officials! There were congressmen, there were councillors ... And then there were all these MP's coming here, showing themselves off ... saying: "I organised the footbridge for the people of Rocinha! I arranged the footbridge! I did I don't know what else!" But it wasn't like that at all. It was the work of the whole community."

(Varal:110-111)

Different groups claimed success for the realisation of the footbridge and ended up celebrating its inauguration on different days and in very different ways. One group celebrated on a Thursday night, accompanied by folk cultural events and

with full participation of the Church. The following morning at 9.00 a.m. many government officials were invited by a rival faction.

This faction denounced the *mutirão* campaigns and labelled their organisers as "subversive" (dangerous at that time, when "communists" were being head-hunted). According to the first faction, the latter became a mouthpiece of the government in the shantytown. For them they were the symbol of "government interference" in Rocinha's politics. They spread rumours that one of the rival leaders' brother ran for a political office.

"Acabou que esse troço dessa E. ficou aqui mesmo na Rocinha, catequizando o pessoal com a força dos deputados. Tudo que a comunidade faz, ela corre lá no governo e coloca que foi ela e o beleza do irmão dela que fez. ... Ela chegou até distribuir uma carta dizendo que a gente era comunista. Foi tanta gente chamada pro DOPS, minha filha!"

"It ended with that bigwig E. staying in Rocinha, indoctrinating people with the power of state government officials. Everything the community did, she ran off to the government to claim that it was her and that beauty of a brother of her who had done it ... She even went as far as distributing a letter saying that we were communist. Many people were called up by the DOPS [Intelligence Unit of the Military], oh dear!"

(Varal:112)

It has to be pointed out here, of course, that rumours about the other factions were equally vicious and of the same character: suspected involvement with electoral candidates, appropriation of public funds (see e.g. Informativo).

Looking at the situation globally, Rocinha's power structure was beginning to change as the old-style "leaders" (the electricity, water and landlords) were now challenged from two sides. Firstly, the new influx of politicians made this kind of business available to more such individuals and they became more numerous, although their total number did not exceed a dozen or so. This forced them to compete with each other and had the effect of decreasing the size of their personal gain. (This is especially clear from the Cachopa case study.) In the mean time, Rocinha had grown rapidly and its population had become much more mobile as the rental market increased. Together these factors add up to an impression

that these *donos* were increasingly moving further away from the conventional *patrão*-type and their activities were shifting to a less public sphere.

The second challenge to their leadership came from the emergence of new politically active individuals in the mid-1970s. These openly criticised the *donos*' exploitative practices, their alliances with the party structure and their approval of certain projects to be carried out in Rocinha without collective consultation. Different parties (the competing *donos* and the different kinds of action groups) expressed these tensions in the form of circulating leaflets. The language they used corresponds to the new rhetoric: all appeal to the same ideas circulating nationally (as illustrated in the example of the campaigning Chaguistas).

At first, the action groups were sponsored by the Church and other similar organisations from outside the shantytown. This sponsorship gave these groups some continuity and encouraged their influence in the shantytown's political structure. Later, however, these groups also emerged independently, especially in response to a change in policies in the later *abertura* years (e.g. the creation of the SMDS) (see ahead). At their peak, the total number of these groups must have been around twenty. The battleground of much of this activity was the Residents Association, as it was used by different bodies to gain legitimation for certain types of political activity.

So, as these Church-linked *mutirão* groups became more influential in 1978-1980, they had also become more preoccupied with increasing their political control over the whole of Rocinha. The reactivation of the Residents Association, whose activities had virtually come to a halt ever since the *junta* had taken over after the passing of the decrees in 1968-1970, was their main target.[13] The arrival of *abertura* caused these conflicts to come out into the open. Firstly, because for the first time conventional leaderships were challenged (even with the fear of persecution). And secondly, language had changed and different priorities were emphasised. Since it

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[13]The first issue of the Tagarela, for example, mentioned preparations for an election for a new directorate for the Residents Association and actively promoted a candidate who was closely related to the Sanitation Group (Tagarela no. 1 Aug 1976).

was crucial for each group to present the others as less "representative", parallel organisations were founded at that time challenging the leadership of their predecessors on these terms. So around 1979-1980, the struggle over the Residents Association in Rocinha exploded:

"Pra fazer as eleições, nós criamos o MORA, no sentido de reorganizar a Associação de Moradores da Rocinha. A sigla MORA quer dizer Movimento de Organização e Renovação da Associação. A gente pretendia realizar eleições na Associação dos Moradores porque a diretoria anterior, ... tinha prorrogado o mandato. De três anos passaram para 5 anos ... Tinha lá uma pessoa que não era da comunidade e que estava assessorando a presidente da Associação. Era a que decidia tudo, ... Ela estava levando um movimento de afastar as pessoas da Associação. Alguns moradores foram até desligados do quadro de associados. Tudo manobra política. A gente não podia concordar com isso. Daí preparamos as eleições. Houve até ameaças de prisão feitas para que os moradores não votassem na chapa do MORA."

"To hold elections, we created MORA, with the intention to reorganise the Residents Association of Rocinha. The acronym MORA means Movement for the Organisation and Renovation of the Association. We tried to hold election in the Residents Association because the previous directors ... had extended their mandate. Three years became five years ... There was a person there who was not from the community and who was assisting the president of the Residents Association. It was she who decided on everything, ... She was setting up a movement to drive people out of the Association. Some people were even crossed off the membership list. All political manipulation. We couldn't comply with this. So we prepared elections. There were even threats of imprisonment made so that people wouldn't vote for the MORA ticket."

(Varal:112)

The reference to "political manipulation" refers to claims that these tactics were purposely employed by Chaguistas in power to destabilise these shantytown leaders.[14] And these problems occurred in most shantytowns. According to one of the ex-presidents of the Residents Association at the time:

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[14]This was known as one of the tactics through which the machine established itself. It is clear that the use of this kind of tactic in itself shows the unstable basis on which the machine rested in shantytowns. The ease with which it was demobilised later and the intensity in which dislike for this government was expressed later, was therefore also not surprising.

"Não foi só aqui. Esse tipo de manobra pra dividir e controlar a organização dos moradores das favelas aconteceu em vários lugares. Na própria FAFERJ o pelego J. R. entrou pra valer nas comunidades com o fim de boicotar a FAFERJ legitimamente eleita por nós, criando uma suposta FAFERJ 2. Também foi notória a fraude e a coação nas eleições da favela na Rua do Bispo para garantir uma diretoria controlada pela Leão XIII. Da mesma forma, no morro do Santo Amaro, onde conseguiram impor uma chapa com garotos de 14 anos, quando a gente sabe que até para ser sócio das associações de favela, por estatuto, é preciso ter 18 anos. E assim foi em Bangu, Vila Kennedy, Lagartixa, Cidade de Deus, etc. ... "

"It didn't just happen here. This kind of manipulation to divide and control the organisation of *favelados* happened in various places. In FAFERJ itself the corrupt government-supported J. R. infiltrated into the communities with the aim to boycott FAFERJ, legitimately elected by us, setting up a supposed FAFERJ 2. Also notorious was the fraud and coercion in the elections of Favela Rua do Bispo to guarantee the seat controlled by Leão XIII. In the same way, in *morro* Santo Amaro, where they succeeded in installing a faction with 14 year-old boys, when everyone knows that to qualify for Residents Association membership even, by statute, one has to be 18. And it was the same in Bangu, Vila Kennedy, Lagartixa, Cidade de Deus, etc. ... "

(Varal:112-113)

The arrival of *abertura* was therefore a final phase in the history of the political scene of Rocinha as it was at the time of fieldwork. Changes at the national level were limited. It was clear that some changes had to happen to contain the pressures that were building up. The military government itself showed up a deep internal split which had become increasingly obvious since 1976. A strong core of hardliners (Linha Dura) was operating independently and the infamous Death Squads (also associated with the Linha Dura) were also reemerging on a larger scale during this period. There was also widespread disagreement about who was to follow up president Geisel in 1979. The "transition to democracy", however, was to be done without threatening the basic idea on which the regime's economic development rested. It was limited to the Military's definition of liberalisation. Strikers were violently repressed by government forces, and union leaders were dismissed and imprisoned. 1980 consequently saw fewer strikes, followed by a better organised and strengthened restart of activities. The party reform of 1979 effectively forced the strong rising opposition party (the MDB) to decentralise into 5

smaller parties, left to compete against each other. These tactics guaranteed an overall government party (now PDS) victory in most states. Some (such as Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais), where the "opposition" won, became increasingly subject to clandestine paramilitary resistance. The victory of the PDT in Rio de Janeiro in 1982, for example, sparked off more Linha Dura terrorism there. By 1983, the recession had deepened significantly with high unemployment and a rising inflation rate (now over 150%). Additionally, the drought in the Northeast entered its fifth year, and large scale floods in the Southern states destroyed a large part of the national agricultural crops for export. Austerity measures were called for, as the IMF was approached for loans, and resulting industrial protest was repeatedly violently suppressed in the terrible conventional ways.

In terms of housing policies towards the shantytowns, the rhetoric of *abertura* brought the foundation of the SMDS (Secretaria Municipal de Desenvolvimento Social). Its foundation showed an official commitment to the shantydwellers' rights, in that they had been guaranteed a place in the municipal government's budget. Until now, shantytowns had survived on the favours of the establishment. The SMDS was created to coordinate programmes at municipal levels to serve low-income groups especially *favelados*, and was a final commitment to the end of removal programmes and the beginning of the upgrading of shantytowns. It also provided an institutional link between the shantytowns and the state organisations responsible for the upgrading programmes and thereby facilitated the administrative and other obstacles which had conveniently stood in the way of any significant structural improvements of shantytowns. For example, shortly after its creation the state electricity company (Light) was contracted (largely with foreign money) to carry out large "regularisation" projects for many of the larger shantytowns in Rio de Janeiro's city centre.[15] The creation of the SMDS also marked an important political change in that it increased local decision-making power, since the SMDS (a municipal organisation) transferred the responsibility over low-income

[15]Significantly, Light's director at the time clearly promoted these policies as part of his personal election campaign (personal communication with IPLANRIO).

policies from a state organisation to a municipal level, reversing the trend towards centralisation which had started in 1964 (Malloy 1979, Neto 1984).[16] The language with which the SMDS described its aims and purposes is that of *abertura.* The key words in its plans for Rocinha are "participation of the community" in the upgrading process and the "usage of local resources" (SMDS/UNICEF 1980).

The content of its proposed projects was ambitious. It included proposals for the regularisation of all Rocinha's land titles and proposed the building of a large open sewer to drain excess water with a road to service it, including the resettlement of about 70 families whose houses were located on the proposed site of the project to a location elsewhere in Rocinha (later known as Laboriau). It had various proposals for solving the general problem of household waste in Rocinha. For education, it proposed the training of locals for teaching posts in existing primary school projects, and it suggested the development of a large network of private daycare (SMDS/UNICEF 1980). The first overwhelming reaction of Rocinha's people was scepticism as most just could not see how this time would be any different from previous times (Oliveira (1981), Varal). A second response was fear, since they knew from previous experience that "urbanisation" could mean part removals or could be costly.

In effect, the creation of the SMDS meant that from now on the shantytown groups could by-pass the party structure more easily in their pursuit of funds (Brasileiro et al. 1982). It also meant the realisation of funding for projects which were running on a voluntary basis before, and could establish themselves independently of outside sponsors like the Church. It had the effect of spreading funding more widely; over a larger number and range of groups (with different motiva-

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[16]Since the establishment of the regime in 1964, the state had gradually become responsible for all aspects of the social welfare system. This reversed the changes which happened before the coup, when all issues of social welfare had become politicised making the state less able to change certain policies counter to the interests of certain key groups whose political support was needed to maintain the current regime in power (Malloy 1979). After the coup, all "political" posts in the social security system were substituted with government appointed "technocrats" who responded only to government guidelines.

tions and ways of operating). The payment for services which had previously been carried out virtually voluntarily also had profound effects on the running of these projects. The payment of project workers meant that they increasingly began to see themselves as (badly paid) employees of the state, which affected morale. The control over the funding by the SMDS also meant that effective control over the nature of the work was now taken out of their hands. The next chapter elaborates extensively on how these factors affected the operation of the few groups that remained active.

The projects themselves were also criticised on many points much as they were previously. They were badly administered and managed, and lacked commitment. The payment for salaries and materials had to be renegotiated annually, involving masses of paperwork, endless meetings and many trips to the offices of the funding agencies. Even after they were agreed on, delayed payments (of both salaries and materials) for months, in some cases, caused serious hardship to some action groups and did much to lower the morale of the groups. Funds for one project could be diverted to another, more topical and/or politically important, depriving the workers of a sense of continuity. (E.g. see the stories of the battles for support in Oliveira 1986.) On the whole, funds became increasingly inadequate: the salaries of the agents rapidly diminished in value to well below a national minimum salary level, and the training they were offered did not meet the national teaching standards. The aims of the projects themselves, too, were doubtful. They showed a band-aid approach, rather than solving any real aspects of Rocinha's urgent problems. Despite the emphasis on "community participation" in project proposals, the participants complained widely about the projects arriving readily designed and the absence of opportunities to influence the decision-making at the planning stage. (There is an interesting discussion drawing attention to this problem in Perini 1986.) On top of all this, scandals were revealed about diversion of funds and building materials, especially during the building of Rocinha's big sewer project.

The creation of the SMDS also had an important effect on the relations between different groups. The SMDS put renewed emphasis on the need for the

shantytowns to "organise" themselves (Hoffmann 1984), by which they meant the effective operation of a "representative" body in the shantytowns through whom they could implement their plans. Its policy of just targeting "representative" organisations clearly increased conflicts between different groups over the title of officially recognised organisations such as the Residents Association.

In this chapter, I have traced the difficulties the Residents Association faced in this kind of political situation. The impossibility of resolving such fundamental contradictory interests within an organisation of this kind led to many in the shantytown to complain that outside agents deliberately pursued certain tactics so that conflicts within Rocinha's leadership could be used as an excuse for not going ahead with upgrading programmes.

"Assim, o governo do Estado foi fazendo seu curral nos morros e ainda tirava partido dessas brigas internas pra não encaminhar os projetos de urbanização, as melhorias ... Aí eles não faziam nada."	"In this way, the state government did its round in the *morros* and even took sides in these internal rows so that they wouldn't have to direct upgrading projects, improvements ... In that way they did nothing."

(Varal:113)

Abertura promised to come into full swing with the change of the state government in 1983. The new government lavishly indicated its intentions to implement "democratic" policies by widely criticising the previous pre-*abertura*-style governor. The emphasis was again on "democratic" decision-making involving "the communities" ("seeking a dialogue with all sectors of society"(Plano 1983:5))[17] in an attempt to do away with the "technocratic spirit" ("in accordance with the government's policies, we seek to escape from the technocratic style which traditionally characterised Brazilian planning activity" (Plano 1983:i)).[18] For the shantytown inhabitants, it all looked much the same. Many new projects were started up, especially in the areas indicated in his State Plan (e.g. education)

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[17] "*procurar o diálogo com todos os segmentos da sociedade*"

[18] "*procuramos fugir de acordo com a orientação do Governo, do estilo tecnocrático que caracterizou tradicionalmente a atividade de planejamento no Brasil*"

(Plano 1983). However, funds for these were often redirected from projects initiated by a predecessor. Despite its language, then, the SMDS soon became to be seen as another tool for the recruitment of clientele in the shantytowns (Gay 1988). The creation of numerous Conselhos (Councils) (soon monopolised by certain individuals as another clientelistic link into government funds), was perhaps the only real difference.

The role of the shantytown entrepreneur had become to frequent as many of these meetings as s/he could find, to develop a network of personal contacts to maximise his/her chances to attract funding to the shantytowns. Once successful, a project could be revitalised or expanded, and some personal resources could be generated. The running of a crèche, for example, meant a secure place for the children of relatives, friends and neighbours. It brought in funds to feed employees, their families, some of the children's families and possibly also some needy neighbours. Moreover, it brought the local population into direct contact with the establishment and therefore increased their chances to find new patrons, much like it happened in the days before the SMDS.

The picture we end up with is one of a divided scene. Firstly, there was a handful of old-style *donos* diminished in power after the widening of opportunities for others to establish themselves in similar ways (i.e. through dealings with land, property and other scarce resources), often by means of direct sponsorship of politicians out for electoral support, and discredited by the rhetoric of *abertura.* Secondly, there was a wide range of action groups which emerged in the mid-1970s and added to the former's demise. At first these groups appeared with the sponsorship of outside institutions like the Church. Later, the creation of the SMDS gave them an opportunity to establish themselves more independently of the Church. Their range increased as a result and their total number rose to around fifteen to twenty. Each group, however, still had no more than a handful of active individuals, and many of their members were active in several groups simultaneously. The total number of activists was therefore still small.

The nature of the leadership of these two kinds of groups differed significantly. As rhetoric changed, the basis of the credibility of the old *donos* was eroded, and

this forced them underground. Public association with politicians now became suspicious and a source of criticism. "Autonomy" and "independence" were now key words. For the researcher, it therefore became harder to expose the dynamics of their operations accurately.

A detailed look into the nature of the funding structure also gives us important clues about the character of leadership in Rocinha. Projects were promoted by a variety of bureaucratic and other outside institutions which often remained anonymous to most group members. Many of the projects promoted in Rocinha were short and discontinuous, and often with contradictory aims. There was confusion over who was implementing them and indeed over what it was that was being implemented (opposing parties interpreting them in different ways). As a result, the leadership of these groups shows up as unstable, discontinuous and divisive. In this respect, those sponsored by non-governmental institutions (such as the Catholic Church, the Methodist Church) less subject to political manipulation were in a different position. They were more likely to maintain some kind of continuity. However, even in these last groups, few participants maintained their positions for longer time periods, and If it were not for their non-governmental sponsorship, these groups also fell apart rapidly, like their counterparts. These groups were divided against each other in competition for funds. The almost total absence of collaboration between the different groups and the problems between different leaderships (and the violent conflicts between some of them), partly due to their common involvement in a confrontational historical development, was striking. As far as action groups were concerned, Rocinha was demobilised and divided into rivalling groups, each of temporary nature with unstable leadership, and individually competing against the other for a small channel of irregular and unreliable funds. It was a picture of division and fluctuation, of temporary "leaders" with few committed "followers".

In these last two chapters, I have shown how wider political developments have shaped the developments of Rocinha's political power structure. I traced the developments of Rocinha's main political agents in the context of these political developments and consequent policies aimed at shantytowns, i.e. the repressive

measures and consequent direct intervention in Rocinha's political activities; the development and operation of the state political machine in this context; the effect of the repressive regime on policies (i.e. eradication); the changing rhetoric and the consequent discrediting of clientelistic practices, and the resulting change of policies (from eradication to upgrading); and the creation of different channels of funding for shantytown projects.

In the following chapters I will examine the actual operation of these groups and their interrelations. There, different dimensions of this political activity will be examined which will refine the picture that has emerged so far.

Chapter 7

Leadership and Action Group Activities

The aim of this and the following chapter is to present the political scene of Rocinha. I will identify the general characteristics of the political forms I witnessed and will attempt to deconstruct their complexity to give an insight into questions such as: what kind of leadership existed in this shantytown, on what basis did leaders recruit and maintain their following, how stable were the groups, and what was the character of relations between the few groups that were active? This partly allows us to draw together some of the points made in earlier chapters, and ultimately to comment on other authors' claims about the character of shantytown politics.

There were several "leaders" in Rocinha whose "leadership" was based in a particular locality. There were only a handful of them and most of these were active in several groups simultaneously. They were the same personalities which reappeared over Rocinha's history, yet their leadership did not necessarily originate in their seniority in Rocinha. Often their occupation helped them become central figures. Typically, they centralised important services for the operation of the shantytown around their house for a time, and thereby monopolised communication with external agents (e.g. in Chapter 3 I noted that some of Rocinha's "leaders" had been or were *birosqueiros* or local shopkeepers). A claim over these resources obviously put them at an advantage. However, the first requirement for any substantial "leadership" was a claim over an infrastructural base for their

activities. It was the action groups' buildings which provided them with a sense of continuity. The acquisition of a physical base for one's project was the first major achievement (especially since space was extremely scarce). There were examples of enterprising individuals who failed to get their projects off the ground for lack of a physical base (see, for example, the case of Chica da Rocinha (Oliveira 1986)).

The buildings acted as a centre from which individuals could run a variety of groups. These groups had little stable support, and their most active members were often active in various other groups as well. They were dependent on a core group of individuals who effectively controlled the centre for allowing them space there. Petty arguments over cleaning, noise or electric bills could become determinant factors in the future of a project and hence the future of a potential "leader" (c.f. the case of the Theatre Group, described in Chapter 4). Bringing funds to the centre raised one's claim over it. However, those that succeeded in raising funds were often already part of the core group that controlled it or were closely related to this group: one project in operation generated funding for another one as the individuals running it established connections with patrons in funding agencies. Members of their close network would be the first and most likely ones to receive information about potential funding for new projects, and so were in an advantageous position to qualify for it. As a result, the newly available funding would be passed on to the same group based in the same locality.

To become a leader, one had to establish and maintain one's authority over this space. This explains why we observed the central importance of at least one key personality in each organisation. The buildings were seen as "belonging" to these individuals, a small core group of people who often started the "community centre". They may have been participants in groups of relatives, friends or neighbours who put up the building in their spare time, perhaps during the *tempo do mutirão* (see Chapter 6), or given a grant to have one built from government agencies or other funding bodies through connections with useful patrons. Indeed the groups were often referred to and known by the name of that person (e.g. "*A crèche da M.*" (Lit: M.'s crèche)). When I was introduced to Rocinha's different groups by a social worker, it was noticeable how, at the mention of each new group, he be-

gan by explaining the personality of that central person, arguing when questioned about this, that one could not understand what the group was really like without first clarifying the character and views of that key person. The question is then how these leaders maintained their central position in these groups.

They maintained their central role by monopolising decision-making and controlling and centralising the distribution of resources. The most influential activists often had a say in various groups simultaneously. As far as decision-making was concerned, there were a large number of groups whose activities coincided. Many of these competed with each other for the same resources and they often attended the same meetings which dealt with the way these resources were allocated. During my year of fieldwork attending such meetings took increasingly more of my time, as indeed it did for Rocinha's politicians. As explained in Chapter 6, these individuals spent increasingly more time lobbying funding agencies and administrating their grants, rather than participating in the work, as they had done before. These meetings were the stage for the shantytown's political drama. They showed the way the groups related to each other in public and how they went about handling internal matters.

The bulk of the groups' meetings can be summarised as being anarchic, generally inconclusive and ineffective. As a rule, they started between half an hour and 45 minutes late. The different topics came and went in no particular order so that the meetings were lengthy and confusing and often failed to produce any conclusions. People interrupted each other adding viewpoints on anything that came to mind. Parallel conversations went on around the different corners of the room raising noise levels to such a degree that it made a systematic collective debate impossible. The topic often came back in the same form in the next meeting. Many of the points addressed were therefore seen as old hat and irresolvable and irrelevant or unimportant to the participants. Meetings would run on for two and a half hours, and often ended when participants declared to be fed up and threat-

ened to leave, with the last topics untouched. Periodically, I witnessed meetings ending in fights between individuals.[1]

"Voting" was the standard decision-making procedure. However, in many ways it did not work. There was confusion about who was allowed to vote and what exactly one was voting for. The options were not clearly spelled out, and the consequences of the decisions taken were not clearly discussed (if addressed at all) before the voting took place. Often a full realisation of its implications would reverse the decision after the voting procedure. In fact, meetings were not the place where decisions were made. They only slightly influenced the action taken in the end.

The participants lacked the interest, discipline and perhaps skills required to run meetings: order would be necessary to carry out a debate systematically and to carry through a "democratic" voting procedure. This is partly explained by the fact that these people generally had little decision power over any aspect of their lives. Many lived in total dependence on others in an environment over which they themselves had no control. Any decisions they made were at best short lasting and had to be revised in changed circumstances. At worst they were reversed continually by others on whom they depended. The daily running of the groups reflected a pattern of decision-making appropriate for such circumstances. Members made routine decisions by themselves effectively in on-the-spot situations solving problems which emerged at the time. The idea that someone had to be informed and consulted or the issue had to be discussed in meetings with equals, ran counter to their usual procedure and in some cases offended their sense of self-worth and independence. In these meetings, they often insisted on their own way of doing things, not permitting this way to be discussed, considering the matter closed. Among the visiting social workers, conversation often centered

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[1]One meeting was organised in the Catholic Chapel, for lack of other available space. Some of the participants were reluctant to agree with this idea. When the meeting deteriorated and one member had to be physically restrained from attacking another with a chair, several participants walked out angrily and fearfully. They said that this had been predictable and they knew beforehand that "community meetings should never be allowed to take place in the Church".

around their inability to convince *tias* (Lit: aunt; used as general reference term for mostly indigenous staff of action groups (see also reference in Chapter 2)) of different ways, or the *tias*' refusal to accept certain decisions made "by consensus". It became a standing joke that during a meeting x, y, and z was decided and everyone appeared to agree. After the meeting, *tias* carried on with a, b, and c as before. These observations also go along with a wider point (already mentioned in a Chapter 4), namely, the strong sense of independence and self-defence which individuals expressed was striking.

This was also clear in the practice of the groups. Each was extremely defensive of his/her own "rights".[2] Among the group members, no one was allowed any special privileges or attention by the others. In a crèche whose work I accompanied closely, none of the workers emerged as any sort of "leader" for any length of time in their daily crèche work. The *tias* came across as strong individuals who, during my visits to their homes, confided their grievances against almost every other *tia* in the group to me. Some quarreled over long standing conflicts. Others grouped and regrouped over the years. This made the crèche work difficult for them and the crèche was a stressful place to be. Several times during the year the work was completely paralysed because of impossible work relations in the classrooms (the place where *tias* were most forced to cooperate and rely on each other as a team). It was also no surprise that the rotating coordinator's job did not work in practice (see below for details).

This pattern was true for most of these groups. It showed in the groups' apparent difficulty to organise anything and anyone. Arrangements either fell through by their lack of commitment and loyalty from supposed supporters (e.g. not turning up at meetings or not fulfilling their part in other agreed commitments). When there was a good reason for joining a group (e.g. a potential amount of funding)

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[2]And indeed, this sense of pushing their "rights" can be seen as a result of an awareness of the lack of rights. For them, this was the case in most spheres of their lives.

the group self-destructed in a very short time period. I wonder how any lasting leadership could emerge out of this type of situation.

The chaotic dynamics of these meetings allowed core individuals to manipulate the meetings to their own advantage. The meetings were often led by these central people, who kept control over the information necessary to assess the topic according to their wishes. Tactics were employed to secure the smooth outcome of the decision, such as secrecy over certain issues, the introduction of false or confusing information or gossip outside meetings. The meetings were often more like grand speeches, consisting of meaningless catch phrases, sometimes followed by applause of supporters. They were designed to generate emotional appeal as opposed to systematic discussions in which all had an equal opportunity and time to voice their opinion. Opponents were attacked on personal grounds, and occasionally abused in highly emotive language.

It is clear that these leaders promoted themselves through these public appearances in meetings by manipulative speeching. The importance of just "appearing" in as many meetings as possible was also significant, and they spent a lot of their time literally running from one to the next meeting securing their contacts, setting up new ones and gathering information about potential opportunities. Meetings were arranged in parallel to others or rearranged at short notice, several times in a row so as to divert interest and ability to attend. Long periods were spent in meetings arguing over who had the right to be invited to the following meeting, or in fierce attacks over the exclusion of some parties in the last meeting. At the end of the meetings, endless delays occurred over the timing and the locality (e.g. on whose home ground) of the next meeting, each party ensuring their ability to attend (or not to do so, whichever was more advantageous). It has to be remembered also that since these leaders were often the initiators of the project, they had the personal contacts with patrons and funding agencies and many decisions were typically made in personal meetings with these contacts rather than in these meetings at all.

Besides these tactics a myth existed around these personalities. These were about the details of their attempts to become successful and the suffering they

underwent along this path. For example, they could be stories of how extremely poor they used to be (inadequate family structure (death of parents, runaway husband)), the large number of dependents they had to support (younger siblings or infant offspring), how unsettled they had been geographically (forced migration to strange urban centres), the humiliating occupations they had to take to survive (prostitution, or begging). These stories often incorporated a religious element. God or a particular saint helped them out of their suffering through revelations of certain miraculous happenings (like the appearance out of nowhere of a sympathetic patron). This divine attention accounted for their reason for their genuine commitment to "the community" and to others suffering similar fates as they had in the past. They often contained an elaborate account of the long hard struggle they underwent for the benefit of "the community", and they competed with each other to portray their leader as the worst sufferer. Their current status was justified in their past suffering.

These myths were publicly known and often repeated. (Varal and other "community literature" specialises in such stories.) They were promoted by increasingly sophisticated means. Some had written them up in an autobiographical account (e.g. Chica da Rocinha (Oliveira 1986)), another acted it out in a theatre piece. People criticised these myths, casting doubts on their truth by producing counter versions in which they portrayed each other in a different light.

These myths were not only used for self-promotion, they also centred in personal pleas to prospective patrons. Their portrayal of themselves as sufferers was a means to win the donors' sympathy from which paternalistic help could be drawn. This private approach to patrons contrasted sharply with the rhetoric used in approaching potential donors publicly. They then appeared with a critical attitude of an equal (not a pathetic sufferer) demanding "rights" to certain funds (not favours as a result of sympathy). In these public meetings, they stressed the inadequacy of the contribution and the lack of aid for other groups with equally worthy ambitions and rights instead of gratitude for the special attention received from patrons. (See e.g. the inauguration of the public fountains, described in Chapter 6.)

As decision-making remained centralised in the ways described so far, so did the distribution of resources. The important tasks of the group which were not in the hands of the key person, were delegated to a few others who were often close friends or relatives of the central person. The repeated criticism these groups held against donors from outside was that they were "paternalistic". This criticism could be used to press for aid in the form of cash with no restrictions as to its use. Total independence from donor agencies was, of course, essential to any effective one-person leadership. Paternalism, was one of the main targets of the *abertura* rhetoric and therefore was guaranteed to receive the sympathy from an uninformed audience.[3]

The leaders above described resembled personality cults of the "big man"-type (as described by Strathern (1971), for example). Their aim was to build a small empire in the shantytown and establish their influence. The emphasis was on the quantity instead of the quality of visible works attracted to the shantytown. Some of these leaders were seen to attract large amounts of funding, yet, in many cases, relatively little of these had a lasting beneficial effect on Rocinha as a whole (excluding the personal benefit it brought to friends and relatives closely involved in the enterprise at the time). The label "big man" also fits, because these "leaders" rose and fell in rapid succession. This was partly due to the unreliability of the funding (as explained in previous chapters). Their leadership was based on achievement (not ascribed). They were abandoned and forgotten soon after their utility to a fluctuating clientele diminished. Their clientele was unstable as clients came and went and their relationship with their patrons was largely utilitarian. The Papua New Guinea parallel ends here, as there was one real difference too: that Rocinha's big men were not allowed to exert their influence to the same degree (and many of them were female, too). They tried but could not publicly celebrate their status as the audience would not allow this to happen.

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[3]An extreme version of this was one of those leaders' campaign to promote what was known as her "*pedagogia da favela*", the idea that the *favela* has its own ways and these should not be dictated by outside sources.

When looking at Rocinha as a whole, there was a handful of clusters of groups with key leaders. Physically, these clusters centered around a building, in which project activities took place. When they attracted more funding (and more groups collected around the building and possibly expanded in space), it became to be known as *Centro Comunitário* of the *bairro* in which it was located. In this way Rocinha had a *Centro Comunitário da Rua Um*, *da Rua Dois*, and *da Cachopa* and the clusters were associated with these particular *bairros.* This is how in meetings which united the whole of Rocinha's leadership, the leaders of groups were addressed as "representatives" of a certain *bairro*, not as representatives of their particular project area (e.g. health, education or daycare). Hence, territoriality became a factor used to justify one's claim on resources: that "our *bairro* needs this particular project more than your *bairro*" (e.g. some groups claimed that state aid was unfairly targeted to one *bairro* at the top of the hill in virtue of its poorer appearance). Leaders could thus claim "representativity" over a certain locality, thereby responding to the requirements of the political rhetoric. Members of different clusters accused each other of monopolising resources "for their own people", and of not being "representative of the whole community". A lot of emphasis was put on the uniqueness of each of Rocinha's *bairros.* Rocinha's topographical characteristics and the historical pattern of its population settlement were stressed as reasons for the diverse development of each *bairro*, each confronted with their particular problems. (See, for example, the layout of the different municipal documents on Rocinha according to its *bairros.*)[4]

Indeed, clusters approached different kinds of funding sources. Among the range of official funding agencies available, some had closer contacts with municipal agencies than with the state administration.[5] This led to often repeated

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[4]This further clarifies the argument in Chapter 3.

[5]For example, relations between ASPA leaders (Ação Social Padre Anchieta, one cluster in Rocinha) and LBA (Legião Brasileira de Assistência) and DEC (a federal Education organisation) social workers were plainly hostile in comparison to their relations with the SMDS staff. In contrast, the LBA and DEC social workers had comparatively friendly relations with several other leaders in Rocinha and channeled most of their resources to those groups (at ASPA's expense), and vice versa.

accusations such as "For LBA, Rocinha equals [one particular leader]." What happened at a series of public meetings about the proposed building of a new state schooling complex (a *Brizolão*) in Rocinha, illustrated how these different clusters competed with each other for resources and the mechanics behind this process. The meetings soon became a battleground for the competition for potential jobs and other resources which the building of the *Brizolão* guaranteed to attract to Rocinha. But not all groups competed on an equal basis. The meetings were strongly monopolised by certain groups. These were strongest represented in the meetings, they had personal relations with key representatives in the proposals, and information about its progress was distributed in their groups' meetings to the exclusion of others.

These comments again verify the effectiveness and workings of clientelistic relations with bureaucratic agencies. This, combined with a strong sense of individualism (which allowed certain chaotically competing individuals to rise above others in this environment of fluctuating and unstable support), gives us a picture of the basic political practice that took place in Rocinha. This kind of clientelism, however, only partly explains the dynamics of the political scene. The question arises, for example, why the groups bothered with these meetings (especially in view of their chaotic and unproductive character). The national political rhetoric (the content of which has been developed in Chapter 5 and 6) has to be drawn back into the analysis to understand the picture fully. Partly for illustration of the points made so far, and partly to refine these points and introduce this new dimension, I present a case study of one group which was politically active in Rocinha.

> ASPA Crèche is one of many groups run by the organisation ASPA. It is an example of one of the action groups which emerged in Rocinha under the guidance of the Church, as described in the previous chapter. It was reactivated in 1976 in the spirit of *tempo do mutirão*. Funding for the group at that time came partly from the Church and partly from the work of shantytown and outside volunteers periodically organising parties, jumble sales and the like and setting up personal contacts with donors contributing a little on a day-to-day basis. Gradually state funds became available. At the time of fieldwork, yearly renewable contracts paid for the food, and some other running costs of the crèche

and some financial (albeit small) support for the *tias* who ran the place. Some equipment had also been provided (sowing, washing and typing machines, cupboards). All this was the result of persistent campaigning (petitions, frequent visits to central offices and endless writing of applications). Political activities continued throughout the year to secure the renewal of the contracts at the beginning of each financial year. At the time of fieldwork, a considerable amount of time was spent in these activities.

Although now financially more independent from the Church, ASPA retained close contact with these sponsors (and it was untypical in this respect): its activities were closely accompanied by an organisation called IBRADES (Instituto Brasileiro de Desenvolvimento), a religious research/social work institute which set itself up as an information and resource centre for shantytown leaders. Through its contacts with charities abroad, IBRADES also managed to channel significant resources to Rocinha's groups.[6] It employed various qualified social workers who accompanied projects in some shantytowns. During most of the year of my fieldwork, one visiting social worker employed by IBRADES spent much of her time in Rocinha in the company of ASPA's "coordinator" (see ahead). In the crèche, as in other groups, she adopted a crucial role in the running of the *tias'* weekly meetings, chairing them and providing the key material for discussion. IBRADES also organised workshops with invited speakers for shantytown groups to discuss topical issues such as "The Constitution", "Violence in the Shantytowns", "Race Relations". Apart from general "consciousness-raising", the object of these workshops was to establish communication between different shantytowns and to teach communication skills. Members of IBRADES kept me informed of the "progress" some of their active participants were making in terms of ability to organise, evaluate and articulate. Rocinha's attendance at these meetings was comparatively high. Members of groups other than ASPA also usually appeared.[7]

The aims of ASPA Crèche were to cater for the poorest and most needy in Rocinha (often single parents in irregular employment in the informal market, mainly *diaristas*). The recruitment of new clients was done after home visits by the *tias* who were supposed to take

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[6]With short notice, a member of IBRADES would announce the arrival of foreign representatives who intended to visit Rocinha's groups. Members would be asked to come along to show these visitors around (a job which was taken up reluctantly and jokes were made about these foreigners in question). Groups could put in proposals for financial or other help in a hurry, to be handed in for the IBRADES' secretary to type up and hand on to the visitors on the spot.

[7]Other organisations also organised such workshops (e.g. Fé e Alegria ran one specifically for crèche workers) which some ASPA *tias* also attended. Topics discussed here would be, for example, child sexuality, hygiene or stages in child development.

turns doing this. ASPA also employed one person specifically for home visiting and promoting parents' involvement into the activities of all of ASPA's groups. The recruitment of the *tias* went according to this same procedure. In theory, the day-to-day running of the crèche was such that each of the *tias* had involvement and knowledge of all the jobs associated with the crèche.[8] Administrative work was also supposed to be shared as in theory, every month *tias* rotated to do the office job.

Routine decisions were supposed to be made by consensus in the groups' weekly meetings which were held outside normal work hours. Periodically, meetings were organised with the parents to involve them in issues which concerned them. (e.g. fees, opening times, holiday closures, health problems). The activities were accompanied by a "co-ordinator" employed by ASPA to circulate the activities of all of its groups. It was this person's job ideally to feed an element of education and critical evaluation into the work of the groups. In practice, this person also took on much of the paperwork and all other tasks of the "office job" of the groups.

All *tias* also were supposed to attend meetings of the members of ASPA's board of directors (the *Diretoria*). These were also weekly, and were reserved for dealing with issues which concerned ASPA as a whole (e.g. ASPA's relation to other groups, to funding agencies, the organisation of collective activities (fund-raising parties, holidays)). Each group was to be represented in these meetings. Apart from the usual offices of Treasurer, President, Secretary, the *Diretoria* included one "spiritual" member (who was the local Catholic priest): ASPA was formally linked to the Catholic Church. Members of this board also included office holders of other action groups of Rocinha. At these meetings (as in all meetings) the agenda was supposed to be set at the beginning and all present could vote on each matter. Minute-taking was supposed to rotate among those present. In practice, a few of the most literate members took on this job much more frequently. This was also the place where other groups could approach ASPA, and this meeting also acted as an important vehicle for information exchange (e.g. about meetings called by authorities, notices of potentially available funding, information on political developments at all levels).

ASPA Crèche was thus part of a larger social work movement in Rio de Janeiro, and the assumptions behind its policies stemmed from a group of critical religiously-linked social workers. It was their preoccupation to challenge state paternalism, to remain autonomous so that the groups were not merely a substitute for or a

[8]There was one permanent kitchen staff member and one other *tia* had opted out of classroom work to take charge of the laundry by herself.

supplement to inadequate state services run by individuals who were exploited to the extreme. It was their explicit aim to help the shantytowns organise themselves. The groups which they accompanied were designed to carry out these aims: decision-making was brought to meetings (where, in theory, all could decide) following the assumption that the people who ran the groups were the experts themselves. This way, in theory, each group member was made to feel responsible for the success of the group as a whole. Specialisation of tasks was avoided as much as possible, so that each could be aware of their colleagues' parts. As one key member of IBRADES expressed it:

"Trabalhamos com o povo, não para ou como o povo."	"We strive towards working with the poor, not for them, but also not like them."

The ideals which ASPA as an organisation upheld, and which were defined and redefined in its meetings, therefore, came from this (external) group of Liberation Theologists closely linked to the Catholic Church. The accompanying methods to which they subscribed originated in the works of Paulo Freire (known as the Freire Method among social workers). The ideals of this method were introduced into Rocinha through *abertura* language (I have traced its contents and development in Chapters 5 and 6). They were reflected in the state agencies' changing rhetoric. In this way, Rocinha's people kept close links with developments external to the shantytown and they could be seen as part of an historical paradigm into which Brazilian politics was moving. This rhetoric was for the shantytown population a set of normative values and ideas wrapped in a complex system of jargon and symbolic practices. In order to participate in the political scene, they had to learn to manipulate these; to learn the language and adopt its values and practices to fit into this national paradigm. They took on these values as models for political behaviour and publicly evaluated and criticised each other's behaviour according to them.

In this sense, Liberation Theology, which historically developed hand in hand with *abertura* (since the Church's rhetoric responded to and in turn helped define

the course of development of the national political direction), affected the dynamics of Rocinha's political process and the norms and values used by all groups. A closer look into the workings of these groups will give us an insight into the question of how this rhetoric acted as a normative framework and ultimately how this affected the interaction between different groups in Rocinha. The issues that came up time and again in the *tias*' meetings illustrate the internal contradictions which the groups faced in their daily routine of putting this rhetoric into practice. A closer look at these meetings and the workings of the Crèche shows why and how these contradictions were not resolved effectively and continued to hinder the smooth operation of the Crèche.

> The relation between the *tias* was problematic. Sometimes, it reached the point where emergency meetings were held because work relations between particular *tias* had broken down.[9] Conflicts often centred around certain perks of the job, each *tia* stretching the system as far as it would go to her own advantage, therein closely watched by the others. E.g. *tias* accused each other of "skiving off too much", or "leaving the worst jobs". As one summed it up: "*Tem só ciúme e desunião.*" (Lit: "There is just jealousy and disagreement between us.") Relations with *mães* (Lit: mothers; parents of the children, including some single male parents) were tense, and many disagreements between *tias* centered around questions involving *mães*. They were identified as abusing *tias* (using the crèche for their self-interest) (e.g. accusations of dirty, and sleepy or hungry kids (often the issue of lice came up)), all creating extra work for the *tias* and not obeying the crèche's rules (like providing and marking their children's clothes, delivering their kids or paying fees on time). The times when the two met resulted in considerable tension. The arrival and departure of the kids were chaotic occasions in which contact between the two parties was minimised and there were repeated attempts to formalise it. At meetings between *tias* and *mães*, many *tias* did not turn up. These meetings (occasions in which *mães* voiced their criticism of the *tias*) were even more disorganised than their own weekly meetings and often ended in chaos without any issues resolved or topics debated. Their complaints were typically about the health and well-being of their kids (e.g. worry about hygiene standards, and *tias* were accused of carelessness).

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[9]This again illustrates the strong sense of individuality of the *tias*.

The *tias*' relation to the *mães* was a situation of two warring parties, emerging from a structural clash of interests and in practice was very far removed from the ideal of "community work" as defined in ASPA's rhetoric. Theoretically, the Crèche's weekly meetings were the mechanism in which these problems were to be resolved. However, these could only work with adequate communication channels between group members, which, from what I have described above, were clearly not there. Some issues were discussed in the *Diretoria*'s meetings. In practice, attendance to these meetings was low, and those that did attend, were often the same people: those who held elected offices, and some interested social workers attached to ASPA or IBRADES (and me). Representatives from the groups themselves generally only appeared if a particular issue central to their group was on the agenda. The Crèche could also draw on the social worker attached to IBRADES to work out its problems.

As part of my case study, I will provide extracts of these meetings to illustrate the mechanics of these meetings, and the relations between the different participants.[10]

> ASPA HOLIDAYS. When the topic of holidays was raised in a meeting, *tias* opted overwhelmingly for *férias coletivas*" (Lit: collective holidays, the Crèche would close for one month around Christmas time). The social worker immediately raised the question: "But what about the *mães*?" They would have to pay someone to look after their kids for all that time, or lose their income. They would almost certainly not agree with that decision and it would have to be discussed with them. The alternative was a system of *rodízio* (Lit: rotation), in which each *tia* takes a month off in turn. "Let us vote on the issue." *Tia*: "What if the *Diretoria* says NO?" Others join in: "This happens all the time. We decide one way and when we take the issue there, we get torn to bits. We can't defend ourselves properly there. How then do we persuade the *Diretoria*? I am not going to try either. C. T. and M. [directors] will just tell us to think about *a comunidade* (Lit: the community) and the *mães carentes* (Lit: Poor mothers), *as coitadinhas* (Lit: Those one feels sorry for). We should think of our problems. We

[10]The issue of Crèche opening times came up repeatedly throughout the year in different forms. It is interesting as it challenges the *tias*' commitment to the Crèche (i.e. how much to work), and was a major point of disagreement between the different parties.

need to defend ourselves, have one viewpoint and present it in front of the *Diretoria.*" They decide to vote, and everyone agrees that they are going to close for the whole month of December. Now *tias* again: "I am sure that they will never agree. Last year we closed for 14 days, so why not now? What about working until the 22nd, but not on the following Monday? [Details of pros and cons of other dates discussed.] After a few suggestions, each *tia* presenting her own preferences, *tia* angrily: "I'm going on a journey until the 3rd of January. Full Stop. I'm not working those days." And she gets up to leave. The social worker reminds the others: "We will need to discuss these dates with the *Diretoria.*" And social worker: "When do the *mães* have holidays?" One *tia* tries unconvincingly: "I never worked between Christmas and New Year when I was *diarista.*" Another *tia*: "I always did." Discussion of dates goes on chaotically, some suggesting closure between 23rd and 2nd of January. But several *tias* have left by now and others have started discussing other topics.

In the *Diretoria* meeting the following week several Crèche *tias* are there. (They had agreed to bring up the topic.) Alternatives are presented by the directors. Someone suggests discussing it with the *mães.* One of the *tias* angrily and resigned: "Okay, we will have a meeting with them!" President: "But in front of the *tias*, the *mães* have no defence! I know how they deal with these things!" Social worker: "Apart from these holidays, the Crèche also shuts many other days throughout the year." Secretary: "Should this subject be brought up in front of the *mães* at all?" Director: "Let us go through the reasons that count seriously. What reasons were presented in favour of not closing for one month last year?" They dismiss the reasons which are suggested by the *tias*, such as needing (four!) days for Christmas shopping, or needing travel time ("Not everyone goes on a journey then."). One of the *tias* is by now really fuming and ready to cry. Two others have walked out angrily. Tension, and silences. President: "What to do now? Decide now? Take it to the *mães*?" Then someone from another group points out that several *tias* have already had their holidays by *rodízio* for this year. That closes the subject: It is suggested by several directors that the Crèche will close for Christmas and New Year's day. Work as normal in between, and close to kids on January 2nd and 3rd, for cleaning purposes. "Any objections?" "Nobody?" (There are no more Crèche *tias* there.) Restlessness among the others, but no-one voices it. On to the next subject.

These extracts show firstly, how chaotic and ineffective these *tias*' meetings were. Timing was badly kept, topics and people came and went, decisions were made and then reversed without producing conclusions, and so on, neatly illustrating many of the points made above. Secondly, the extract of the *Diretoria* meeting shows the existence of different interest groups within ASPA with dif-

ferent relative status, and that communication between these parties had broken down. They were "us", *tias* against "them", the *Diretoria.* The *tias* felt strongly that the *Diretoria* always defended the *mães* or "the community" against "us", the *tias.* The *Diretoria*, instead of it being an entity that represented the groups and in whose meetings they decided about their own fate, had become a species of supervisor of clearly higher status. They dictated the tone of the discussion, suggested the topics to be discussed, passed on the word, provided the jargon[11] and discussed the topics among themselves. The layout of the meetings themselves reflected that pattern: the two sides confronted each other at different ends of the table and "they" usually took the meetings' minutes. They also took almost all final decisions while most group members stayed quiet. *Tias* complained about this. They felt that their voices did not count in these meetings. Moreover, their own meetings were perceived as redundant since crucial decisions could be (and were) overruled by *Diretoria* members in a later meeting. They could spend their time better catching up with family obligations.

In practice, ASPA consisted of an elite who was acting as a supervisor over those who worked in the groups. Within the egalitarian framework of the organisation, they had no right to take this role, and they were deeply resented for it. *Tias*' main complaints were similar to those heard in traditional work places: about their low pay and work conditions (e.g. not having a *carteira assinada* (Lit: signed contract); as part of the National Security System). Their work, as in a traditional job, had become something unpleasant which had to be minimised, and the numerous lengthy meetings they had to attend were seen as unpaid overtime. As in conventional work relations, personal relations with those higher up in the system (with the visiting social worker and the coordinator) were formed for unofficial perks. These vertical ties destroyed the basis for cooperation needed to make the Crèche's egalitarian system work.[12]

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[11]They talked of "immediatism", "state paternalism", "pedagogic input", "production centered", and so on, which the *tias* caricatured among themselves.

[12]The most serious complaints that the *tias* had about each other were about these

In the *Diretoria*'s jargon, these complaints were easily dismissed. The *tias*' pay was not a "salary" but merely an "*ajuda*" (Lit: help) to support their "community work". To replace this by a proper salary with *carteira assinada* would be to prop up the inadequate system of state provisions and promote this highly exploitative system. The success of a project was measured not in terms of its material benefit to the workers involved in the project, but of the benefit to "the community" at large. Besides, all could participate in meetings and take it upon themselves to improve the quality and conditions of their work, since each had "equal status" and shared responsibility for all aspects of the project and it was up to the group members to take action against each other's abuses, as a group. These were unlikely to occur in the first place, since the individual would be disadvantaging the whole, of which s/he her/himself was made to feel so much part. When accused of making decisions in the *tias*' absence, the *Diretoria* members were quick to point out that meetings were open for all to attend, and all were free to speak their viewpoints.[13]

So, despite its egalitarian organisational model, in the practice of ASPA's activities, there was a clear informal hierarchy which operated much like the conventional clientelistic practice. There were authorities (the *Diretoria* and members attached to it) which acted much like the traditional *patrão*, with whom the *tias* set up vertical relations in much the same way as they did with bureaucrats in funding agencies. This was one way in which the *tias* extracted personal benefits and also showed acceptance of the conventional clientelistic structure. The patron (in this case the ASPA elite) presented something respectable to their clients. The dynamics of this subordination process works exactly as Paine points out about

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privileges e.g. that the coordinator always took one particular *tia* with her on fun trips or that some could get away with washing their family's laundry in the Crèche during work hours.

[13] *Diretoria* members undertook measures to encourage groups' attendance, by proposing that elected group representatives would attend weekly in turn. However, in practice, most groups simply took no notice of the new proposal, since many felt that weekly attendance was unnecessary since most topics discussed "had no relevance" to their groups anyway.

what constitutes a "patron-client relationship" (Paine 1971). Basic to this relationship is the fact that the patron chooses the values and sets the standards which the client affirms and lives up to and the values at work in this relationship mattered to the clients. They belonged to dominant Brazilian society, the domain of the patron. The ultimate aim of this shantytown population was to fully participate in this domain, to leave the shantytown and establish oneself as one of them (as noted in Chapter 4). ASPA's organisational model confronted this clientelistic practice and tried to replace it with an egalitarian system in which there was room for individuals, where their individualism was recognised and a legitimate topic for discussion. In this sense, it contradicted conventional ways, something which was clearly expressed by the *tias* who repeatedly said: "*Falta homem aqui.*" (Lit: This place lacks a man.), "*Precisa patrão.*" (Lit: We need a boss.), or "*Falta organização.*" (Lit: There is a lack of organisation here.). They expressed exactly that absence of authority which could give them direction.[14] This resulted in the tension articulated so strongly in the Crèche's meetings.

There were other organisations in Rocinha where this was not the case, as these hierarchical relations were institutionalised. The Methodist Church complex ("Methodista"), was a particular example. Although it superficially appeared to operate according to very different rules, it could be seen to be a variant of these same models we have so far highlighted. I will take a close look at one of the Methodista's groups (its crèche), contrasting it with the ASPA Crèche, to illustrate the different workings and show at the same time, its similarity with ASPA.

> The Methodista was another cluster of groups: it ran several different groups in the area of daycare, health, education and leisure, much like the other clusters. Its crèche was situated on the Church's premises. It ran according to a routine in which all members fitted in their own well-defined place and was planned by those higher up in

[14]When a new coordinator set out to take strong initiatives against certain practices in the Crèche (talking of the need for discipline), his style was much criticised privately among the members of the *Diretoria*, who generally saw authoritarianism as a "disease". The *tias*' reaction, however, was positive at first. As time went on, it became clear, though, that his authoritarian role had no structural backing, and the *tias* went ahead as before using the system which best served their own needs.

the hierarchy of the Church: the minister, his wife, and assistant clergy members. The minister's wife was mainly responsible for the running of the crèche. She supervised the *tias*. Unlike the ASPA coordinator, she was a recognised authority, and respected as such. Reference to her carried a term of respect ("Dona N."), whereas the rest of the *tias* were addressed by their first names. The minister and his wife resided outside Rocinha and had a foreign background, which also added to their status in the Church. In her absence, there was an appointed second supervisor. She had a high status within the Church and was addressed with the same reference term. Her age in itself demanded respect. The crèche employed members of staff for particular jobs: there was a cleaner, a number of kitchen staff, a number of *tias* who in pairs looked after particular groups of children, and had the responsibility over this group all year. All were employed with *carteiras assinadas*. Days were rigidly timetabled, and a sheet of Rules for *Tias*' Behaviour and another of Aims and Objectives of the Crèche were distributed to *tias*. These Rules strictly forbade *tias* to use the crèche's resources to their own advantage and thus the perks (over which the ASPA *tias* fell out) were avoided.[15] As far as the type and amount of work was concerned, each *tia* had a well-defined set of responsibilities towards their own group of children, and it was up to them to fulfill these and conform to the standards as laid down in the Aims and Objectives.

Routine decisions were made in *tias*' meetings, which were held weekly before work hours. Kitchen and cleaning staff did not participate in these meetings. The agenda for these meetings was mostly set by the minister's wife, although *tias* were welcomed to suggest additional discussion material to her before the start of the meeting. Topics which involved personal conflicts between *tias* (which took up much time in the ASPA Crèche's meetings) were not allowed to interfere with the progress of the meetings, as they were filtered out in advance. Topics discussed dealt mostly with crèche discipline and organisational matters and were decided on with a voting procedure in which each *tia* present had an equal vote. However, each was aware that decisions were subject to final approval of the minister himself.[16] Formal chairing by the minister's wife avoided the problems noted in ASPA. The meetings went smoothly and were effective: topics were well-timed and discussions were kept to the essential points. Meetings started on time and their length was limited automatically by the ar-

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[15]For example, the sewing machine could only be used outside crèche hours, crèche food could under no circumstances be taken home (left over milk and other perishables were distributed systematically).

[16]The issue of holidays, for example, was therefore barely discussed in the *tias*' meetings: their preferences were taken note of, and passed on to the minister who took the ultimate decision which was accepted as final.

> rival of the children. They were obligatory and the weekly turnout was high. In terms of the crèche's infrastructure, the Methodista *tias* themselves had no responsibilities towards guaranteeing the continuation of their crèche's work; this job was done by those higher up in the Methodist hierarchy. Discussions of political developments of funding agencies came up in the *tias*' meetings, but only as information, rather than demanding the *tias*' urgent action. The *tias*' salaries were fixed and although funds for crèche materials were no more secure than they were for the ASPA Crèche (a lot of it came from the same sources), they were more directly worries for the management than for the *tias*. Relations with the *mães* were formal. The *mães* were seen as "the customer", who had to be satisfied and treated with respect. The two coordinators received and delivered the children formally at the gate, dealing with each *mãe* on an individual basis and much emphasis was put on the importance of this encounter, which provided an opportunity for the *mães* to air their grievances and for the *tias* to remind the *mães* of the crèche's rules. Monthly, the *mães* were invited to attend a Sunday afternoon meeting in which invited speakers lectured on relevant issues (e.g. domestic hygiene, nutrition, child education).

In many ways this crèche operated more smoothly than ASPA Crèche. This was due to the rules which provided the *tias* with a specific task for which they saw themselves responsible. The acceptance of the rules was encouraged by the fact that they were imposed by the Church's hierarchy, made part of the Church's philosophy which strictly emphasised obedience, hard work, and other values which echoed the crèche's objectives. (See for example, Willems 1967.) Most of the *tias* were recruited from the Church's membership and some lived on the premises. The security of their job content and income and the relatively good working conditions further contributed to a sense of commitment of the *tias* (something which was present among the ASPA *tias* to a much smaller extent).

In many ways, the crèches were very similar, though. Both aimed to put into practice the rhetoric of *abertura*. Both employed policies of serving the poorest and most needy (single parents mainly).[17] Both saw it as their task to "educate" their shantytown clients (conversation centred around the emphasis on "*conscien-*

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[17]Even though the Methodist Church's fees were higher than those of ASPA, they recruited children selectively according to need and used a policy of home visiting in much the same way as the ASPA groups.

tização" and the threat of "accommodated paternalism") and much of the political content of their teachings was the same. They differed in their strategies to achieve these aims as the Methodista operated through a hierarchical structure.[18]

The Methodista's organisational model was structurally closer to the clientelistic practice. It recognised an authority like the traditional *patrão* and the "clients" of the Methodista formed vertical relations with this *patrão*. This hierarchical organisation institutionalised these vertical relations. To the clients, the choice was clear: they accepted the rules and exploited the benefits from it, or rejected it. Acceptance of the rules was again partly encouraged by the promise of beneficial returns (as it is in the case of patronage relations) and partly by the fact that the Methodista (preaching domestic order, the work ethic, and so on) was seen as an instrument of social mobility in the ideological sense (see e.g. Caldeira 1984, Willems 1967). Assertive independent individuals were forcefully eliminated from the Methodista's practice.

Apart from the Methodista, there were several other groups in Rocinha which operated according to this type of hierarchical model. Most of these had their own funding sources and did not compete with the other groups. On these grounds they related differently to the other groups. They kept a low profile in meetings which concerned other groups and did not initiate projects which involved others. They had their own particular clientele and their organisers too kept themselves to themselves.[19] All this was true for the Methodista too, and this follows partly from the logic of their organisational model in that their domain was only that covered by their imposed hierarchy.

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[18]ASPA members often commented critically on "the Methodista" although few had any personal knowledge of what took place there. (They queried me about this.) They ridiculed the authoritative role of the minister and his wife and the impact of the "rules" on the *tias*. They dismissed *o pastor* (the minister) with the ultimate sin of "paternalism", as did all other groups in Rocinha. The *tias* of the Methodista Crèche similarly stereotyped ASPA Crèche's practices.

[19]Due to the wider range of available state funding in later years, the Methodista was becoming more visible in Rocinha's collective meetings.

It is clear from the case studies that an analysis which does justice to the complexity of the political process in Rocinha must expose the dynamic between these organisational models. On the one hand, there was the clientelistic model, basic to all political practice in Rocinha. On the other hand, there was the *abertura* rhetoric which set a standard for all public action group behaviour in Rocinha. In ASPA, these values were defined and redefined each week (especially in *Diretoria* meetings). The practices which came with this rhetoric were: holding "democratic" meetings in which "all can voice an opinion", "voting" as the standard decision-making practice, "exchanging experiences" between members within groups as well as between different groups so as to "stimulate collective awareness and responsibility", anti-"technocratic elitism" (which is not appropriate for "community" affairs) and anti-"paternalism". One became respectable by using the rhetoric and practices associated with this model. It can be seen as a political resource used by leaders in Rocinha and became signs of their political respectability. This explains why a public attempt was made by all to impose these practices. It also explained why they all used the same labels to evaluate each other's practices (groups accused each other of being a "*panelinha*" (Lit: small pan; clique of political insiders), of not having the "support of the people", of "exploiting the people", or being "paternalistic", and so on). These terms referred to packages which contained the values and practices belonging to this rhetoric.

An example of the language with which the groups criticised each other is well illustrated by the following transcription from a conversation with one of the groups' leaders criticising another group.

> They always portray themselves as the most deprived area of Rocinha in order to win the sympathy of the LBA and other agencies. Thereby they isolate themselves from the rest of Rocinha. She always wants to do everything herself. Her so-called groups are only her, herself. There are no operating groups. When she approached us in 1979, criticising us for keeping to ourselves and not allowing the whole of Rocinha to benefit from the resources allocated to us, we proposed to lend them two of our night school teachers to work with them. They did not stick it out for long: they clashed with her demands of doing things her way, and besides, she was not interested in our proposals. She just wanted cash. The problem with her is her personality. She manipulates people with her *favelado* language and her extroverted personality. They

> like that. They think it is authentic. The other thing is that she tells everybody all these lies about us. None of them are true. [He refers to a particular incident in which she told O Globo (one of the National newspapers) a version of an incident with which he did not agree.] We do not do that to her! ... In Rocinha there are right wing and left wing groups [*grupos da direita* and *grupos da esquerda*]. She, for example has the language of the left, but she is right wing. She shows that in her action.

The speaker complains of the groups of the other faction being a one-person rule, with all the symptoms there: no effective meetings were held to discuss changes; no ties to spending accepted; a strong personality which dominated all interaction with the groups; a personal myth promoted; secrecy and gossip spread about other groups, reflecting all the points made in a previous section about patronage building by key individuals. This interview is clearly a criticism of the conventional political practice (i.e. of clientelism) by someone who upholds the *abertura* rhetoric. The criticism here was made by a member of the ASPA *Diretoria* about a group from another *bairro*. The argument that "we" have a clear idealistic aim, whereas "they", despite their claims, show that they are merely self-interested entrepreneurs, which makes them different in character, is problematic because the very same criticism was voiced by everybody else, including, for example ASPA. And indeed, a close look at the ASPA case study confirms that this same criticism applied to the practice of the ASPA Crèche.

The point was that all groups in Rocinha followed this rhetoric. It would be hard (given the evidence from the case study of the practices in the ASPA Crèche, for example) to argue that some groups were more "democratic" or "conscientizised" than groups of the other factions. These labels could not be used as analytical tools to characterise organisations, since we were dealing with a situation in which these labels were part of the game itself. People accused each other of these evils, even within organisations. It is therefore confusing to talk about "*grupos da direita*" and "*grupos da esquerda*" as if they actually were more or less right/left wing, democratic, representative or conscientizised.

It is true that ASPA, as a group had close contact with the social workers and pastoral agents (the advocates of the *abertura* and Liberation Theology rhetoric).

These had an active role in the operation of the groups. (ASPA was, in this respect, unusual in comparison with other action groups in Rocinha.) ASPA, in some ways, acted as a leadership training centre, from which the rhetoric spread in Rocinha. The Catholic Church established itself in Rocinha to "organise" its population (Neto 1984), and it aimed to do this through the ASPA action groups. In that sense, ASPA served as an ideological and organisational example for other groups. This is evident from the relations of group members within ASPA (as portrayed in the transcription of the meetings), as well as from the relations between the different groups. One woman, for example, left ASPA in order to set up her own school. (She attracted funding from an international agency whom she convinced to clear a plot to set up a school.) The director of Rua Dois Community Centre, was also trained in ASPA's groups. These groups, and several others like them maintained contact with ASPA (e.g. by attending its *Diretoria* meetings) and there existed other institutional links between these groups. However, this was not automatically the case. Indeed, this reflected the visiting social workers' main worries: the fact that many of the "trained" locals established themselves independently. Inevitably, after links had been severed, these individuals "deteriorated" in the eyes of the social workers. They set themselves up as a local boss in their newly gained empire, in the traditional "exploitative" style. They felt that they were being abused and betrayed by such individuals. They disapproved of their leadership style in the same way as they criticised their own groups. It meant the "waste" of valuable resources, because inevitably these groups would break up and self-destruct, contributing little in the sense of long-term continuous improvements.

However, this does not mean that ASPA as a group was more "conscientizised", or in any sense more "democratic" or "left wing" in practice than any other group. The "ASPA example" refers to values which some members of the *Diretoria* dictated in their weekly meetings, not the actual practices of the ASPA groups. If it were not for the directors' strong influence and the supply of funds, more or less guaranteed by their link to IBRADES, the groups would split up in the same way as the others. Further evidence of this was the fact that during the time that I

accompanied the ASPA groups, there were several crisis meetings with members of the *Diretoria* in which they reevaluated their whole programme threatening the complete dissolution of the groups.

We have a situation where parallel factions have emerged, as explained in the first section of this chapter. The factions were also apparent in the way the groups criticised each other and communication between them was avoided and hostile where it existed. The members of the different factions could not agree it together to collaborate for the common good of Rocinha (if there was such a thing).[20] Each accused the others of the same evils. The language used to disgrace their opponents was language which all used and understood. The members of the one faction had nothing in common other than its opposition to other factions.

This confirms the point about factionalism (as expressed by Barth (1966, 1969), Salisbury & Silverman (1978)), that one cannot analyse factions structurally and that in a discussion of factions, it makes more sense to look at the process of factionalism. We were dealing with groups competing for the same resources. For historical and other reasons (explained in the previous sections) different "leaderships" have emerged each eager to gain more economic and political status. What distinguished these groups were not tangible differences between them, but differences in self-identity in a context of strong competition. Each constructed their own identity in order to draw up boundaries in defence against the others. These identity-markers were phrased in terms of the language of the dominant *abertura* rhetoric.

Why these factions emerged in the first place, has to be answered not by looking at structural differences between the different groups (for example, the approach

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[20]For example, a state agency approached certain groups with the intention of organising a children's holiday camp during the summer break proposing to involve members of each sector of Rocinha to collaborate in the project, so as to "integrate the community as a whole". Yet, the summer camp went ahead with the involvement of only a few groups. According to the one of the leaders of a group that had opted out: "There is no point in trying to collaborate in any project in which those groups are involved." And according to another leader: "There are too many different interest groups at odds with each other now that those groups have started to appear again."

Gay (1988) ultimately ends up taking, yet, he considers the scene in considerable detail) (he attempts to characterise the political activities of a neighbouring *favela* in this way), because upon closer examination, it becomes clear that the groups were much the same as far as the character of their organisations and the content of their dialogue was concerned. Instead, one has to look at the personal relations between the leaders of the different groups. Within the ASPA faction, for example, we can see that the leaders were linked in a close network. They socialised together and moved in and out of each other's circles. They filled in for each other, attended each other's meetings and discussed each other's problems together. Some individuals who joined the groups became part of this network (or, *panelinha* as non-members called it critically) over time. The majority did not. Their behaviour corresponded to what the literature calls "cliques" (e.g. Riches 1977). Factions were held together by the dominating positions of key members of this clique in its member groups.

Thus we have cliques of leaders who each ruled over an infrastructure and attracted funds to set up groups. The membership of these groups was unstable. Some fitted in, many did not. Of the latter, some stayed on despite this because of the beneficial returns (this can be the only explanation for the continuation of the situation in ASPA Crèche, for example). The leaders in the faction had a following, but it was not very stable and they did not enjoy an ideological hegemony. For example, if the ASPA *Diretoria* withdrew, the groups would almost certainly cease to exist with them.[21]

These conclusions are supported by the fact that these factions mutually accused each other of the worst things they could think of: of having links with the drug traffickers, the symbols of disrespectability and marginality. Their opponents were characterised as being the reverse of the respectable politician.

> There is no choice: you are either left wing ["*da esquerda*"] and you don't collaborate with police and bandits, or you are right wing ["*da direita*"] and do. All these other groups do.

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[21]This was the explanation for the apparent stability and continuity of the ASPA faction relative to other factions in Rocinha.

These accusations flew around indiscriminately. They can be seen in a similar spirit as witchcraft accusations in other societies. (This parallel has already been drawn in Chapter 3.) In Rocinha, the important analytical point was not to prove who did or did not maintain links with the gangs (as will be clear in Chapter 8, they all did in some ways, and besides, the exact nature of these connections can never be traced), but the fact that they all accused each other of this, and the implications of these accusations for the relations between the action groups. For the researcher, to divide Rocinha's political groups up into "groups that have links with the gangs" and "groups that do not" (as the interviewee suggested) is to miss the point. These accusations played an important role in group identity; to draw the boundaries between "us" and "them". They kept tensions between groups alive, as over these matters, cards were never laid open on the table. These accusations were never explicitly voiced in the presence of the accused. In almost every meeting in which several factions were represented, the issue of "cooperation with the gangs" came up. Yet, whenever this topic was explicitly addressed, communication broke down and the meetings inevitably ended in chaos. One of the groups' leaders made an attempt to organise a meeting to discuss this issue to which other groups' leaders were to be invited. Reactions towards the attempt to organise the meeting were confrontational. And on no account could other groups be persuaded to participate. According to the police sergeant responsible for Rocinha:

"Imagine! Polícia de um lado, marginal do outro lado, e morador no meio!"	"Imagine! Police on the one side, *marginal* on the other, and *morador* in the middle!"

The reasoning of the groups was automatically that such a meeting could only be motivated by self-interest on the part of the organiser. The sergeant summed this up accurately: "*Ela tem marginal dentro da casa dela!*" (Lit: "She has *marginais* in her own house!"). (Not surprisingly, the proposed meeting never came off.)

In this chapter I have focused on the operation and relations between the various action groups. We have ended up with a picture of competing groups,

small in number, especially if we consider the total population of Rocinha, and with a small overlapping and unstable membership. Each group was geographically clustered around centres associated with particular *bairros.* Additionally, there were other groups, self-sufficient in terms of funding on the periphery of this scene. It is a picture of fluctuation and division; of "leaders" mobilising a small temporary clientele in response to unstable funds.

My analysis covers the action groups but leaves out the Residents Association. Evidence for the Residents Association strengthens the case I argued above. Its official task (assigned by agencies outside Rocinha) was to represent Rocinha as a whole. This covered the territory of the leaderships of the different *bairros.* Possessing an effective Residents Association was politically important (as explained in Chapter 6) because it was recognised by various external agencies officially as the representative body for Rocinha and many government projects targeted Residents Associations exclusively. In theory, the effective functioning of a Residents Association was also important in that any significant infrastructural improvements (e.g. the regularisation of land titles, the organisation of household waste removal) would need one body with the authority and means to act in all areas of Rocinha and coordinate the project. Yet, at the time of fieldwork, the Residents Association of Rocinha was almost wholly inactive.[22] In response to my question of why it was not functioning, directors gave evasive answers (that the *sede* was under construction, that there was a summer break, that someone was ill). When pressed, they admitted that there were fundamental disagreements between different individuals. Although I never found out the exact nature of these "disagreements" one can guess why it did not (and could not) function. Control over this "representative" body was in the personal interest of all groups. As they did not communicate with each other in general, there was no reason to believe that they would in the Residents Association. From Chs. 5 and 6, it is clear that

[22]In the beginning of my year of fieldwork, there were several meetings between certain directors to which permission to attend was denied to me by one of the directors (he claimed that they were "not public"). Soon after that, the organisation was totally paralysed, and I realised that I had missed my chance to get personally involved.

the Association's history was a succession of fights over its presidency which were about monopolising control over Rocinha's scarce resources. A series of directors had been forced to resign after accusations over exploitation of these resources for personal gain and/or to the disadvantage of the rest of the population. The Residents Association had effectively become a battleground for successive factions fighting over the control over Rocinha as a whole.

The exception of Bairro Barcelos, which had its own (active) Residents Association at the time of fieldwork, strengthens my argument. The fact that it was able to function can be explained by the fact that it was the only active group in Bairro Barcelos and faced no challenges from within *bairro*. The other cluster groups similarly had their own territory. Historically, it had split off from the rest of Rocinha, when a key activist argued for Bairro Barcelos to form its own organisation in view of its different land ownership situation. Since that time, this group campaigned independently and successfully for many projects, choosing to dissociate itself from the problematic rest of Rocinha. Conveniently, it made a point of claiming to be part of Rocinha when this was potentially advantageous. This was one of the reasons why Bairro Barcelos was better serviced than other parts of Rocinha. Significantly it was not allowed to act on behalf of Rocinha as a whole.[23]

[23]In the campaigns for an election for posts in a new independent Região Administrativa for Rocinha, the president of the Residents Association of Bairro Barcelos was widely condemned for his claims to representativity over the whole of Rocinha.

Chapter 8

Behind the Public Front

The previous chapter raised further questions which have to be resolved if our analysis is to attain its complexity. How do these action groups accommodate the drug traffickers (whose influence in Rocinha we have seen, for example, in Chapter 3)? And, what about electoral politics (a question raised in Chapter 5 and 6)? There is more to Rocinha's politics than the activities of the action groups which we examined in detail. However, these topics did not come up for discussion in the groups' public meetings. We have seen, for example, how the topics of "violence" and the drug trade were taboo in the action groups' meetings (Chapter 7), and how groups publicly emphasised their autonomy from party politics (Chapters 5 and 6). Yet, it was also clear that operative connections between action groups and these political agents did exist and that these affected their activities significantly. It is my argument, that these belonged to a different political sphere, in which all political agents in Rocinha participated. This was a hidden, private sphere as this material was considered inappropriate for the "front" stage (Goffman 1971). This sphere operated according to a different set of rules. The aim of this chapter is to examine these claims and to explore how this hidden sphere affected the activities of the action groups. First, we have to establish what kind of phenomena we were dealing with, and I will begin with the traffickers.

Reports in newspapers and weeklies confirmed what was generally known - namely the rapid growth and establishment of a drug traffickers' stronghold in Rio de Janeiro during the years immediately preceding my fieldwork. This was

partly due to international developments. Traditionally, the bulk of the drugs they traded (mainly cocaine but also marijuana) or their raw materials (coca paste and leaves) were transported from the producers (mainly in Bolivia, Peru and Columbia) through Central America to the lucrative markets in the USA and Europe. The US presence in Central America and their recent intensive efforts to repress production and distribution of these drugs in the North West of the Latin American continent forced both distribution and production, but also consumption into Brazil to an extent not known before. In the Amazon Region supervision was virtually non-existent. Its vast water network and many small hidden airstrips provided transport to and from many recently built laboratories along the Brazilian border, and centres such as Manaus, where the coca paste was refined and distributed to other centres in Brazil (Recife, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo mainly) or flown straight to international markets. The Amazon also started supplying raw materials for the refinement of coca paste in recent years at more than 30 times the legal market price to neighbouring producing countries where the production of these chemicals was illegal. The region also started growing a variety of the coca plant (*epadu*, indigenous to the forest) whose leaves proved equally effective for the production of cocaine. In attempts to repress the drug trade in recent years, large plantations of *epadu* have been discovered and eradicated (Veja 17/8/1988).

This involvement in production at first instance for foreign markets, caused the stimulation in the demand for drugs (especially for cocaine) in Brazilian urban centres such as Rio de Janeiro, with the help of clever marketing techniques on the part of the bigshots (e.g. at Carnival about 20 years ago, they were said to have allowed the price of cocaine to drop, while raising the price of marijuana, a drug much more commonly used and cheaper at the time (Veja 1/6/1988:24)). However, the presence of the traffickers and their drugs in Rocinha had only recently become so publicly apparent. Visibly armed teenagers were a common sight in Rocinha, something which distressed my informants and they claimed that this was not the case only a few years before. As far as the consumption of drugs in Rocinha was concerned, their market was located mainly outside. With the exception of

the traffickers themselves, whom I witnessed using both cocaine and marijuana commonly, there could not have been a large clientele in Rocinha itself, given the price of these drugs - especially cocaine.[1] If it was consumed by anyone other than the traffickers themselves, it was done strictly in private. (In Chapter 3, I elaborated on pervading attitudes towards these drugs.)

How they actually operated their highly lucrative business and what was known about them to the public is well illustrated in the following case study. It also reveals a lot about the drug traffickers' relations with the establishment and the political party structure in particular.

> ESCADINHA CASE STUDY. On Sunday January 5 1986, one of Brazil's drug traffickers made the British Sunday papers. The Observer reports: "ROBIN HOOD DRUG BARON'S NIGHT FLIGHT FROM JAIL. Escadinha, beloved benefactor of Rio de Janeiro slum dwellers, escaped to prepare for the Carnival - boom time for drug dealers." (Observer 5/1/1986). Escadinha escaped from a Brazilian high-security prison for the third time by organising a helicopter to pick him up from the roof of the prison during visiting hours on New Year's Eve 1985. He continued his journey in a car later found in a garage whose owner was arrested on charges for servicing stolen cars belonging to Escadinha's gang and other charges. The owner of the car was an ex-sergeant in the Military Police (PM) who ran a business of trading "black gold" in the same street (JB 8/1/1986). For the following three months, Escadinha managed to stay out of prison. He was back in business and reports claimed that cocaine supplies were soon back to normal. During that time the press reported his whereabouts. For example: On 10/1 he was reported to have been in the company of his friends (other bigshots) Gordo and Meio Quilo (Lit: The Fat One, and Half a Kilo) in a *favela* where they "ate, drank and smoked" (JB 10/1/1986).
>
> On 18/1 he was reported to have stayed in a village about 150 km from Rio de Janeiro, in one of Gordo's three luxury houses, where frequent meetings and parties with other major bigshots such as Bagulhão (slang to refer to a large lump of hashish), Meio Quilo and others were held. According to the villagers, the mansions were recently bought and had been partly rebuilt (walls were erected and swimming pools dug into their extended gardens). The article reported on the exact whereabouts of Escadinha since his escape, information which

[1]Around Carnival, the price of one gramme of cocaine cost $Cr 300,000 or roughly half of a monthly minimum salary at the time.

was no secret to most villagers (JB 18/1/1986). On 19/1 Escadinha was reported to have dined in a road side *churrascaria* (Brazilian steak house) in the company of about twenty of his friends (JB 19/1/1986). On 18/1 Escadinha's colleague Gordo telephoned into a popular radio programme, and gave a 15-minute life interview in which he claimed that Escadinha was in Bolivia "attending to some financial business", with his friends Meio Quilo and Apache (Lit: Gangster). In this interview he also praised the current state governor: "The traffickers not only voted for Brizola, they also actively campaigned for him. He is the best one around." (JB 19/1/1986).[2] He also appealed for the release of the pilot involved in the escape, who had been arrested.[3] The articles commented each time that: the police arrived on the scene too late, circled the place afterwards, or decided not to intervene at the time. They turned the story into a real-life soap opera glorifying the hero, Escadinha, by stressing his role as a benefactor in Morro do Juramento (his "home" *favela*) where he was reported to give elaborate parties, pay for funerals, weddings, a school, and generally maintain "order".

Escadinha's father, Chileno (Lit: The Chilean) (an 83-year old excentric character, who claimed to have joined a series of revolutionary movements in different countries) also played an important part in the stories. He revealed a series of details to the press about the physical and financial abuse the traffickers suffered in the hands of the police, and he claimed to be finishing a book in which he exposed the worst sides of the authorities' corruption (JB 6/1/1986). He also repeatedly claimed that the activities of his son and colleagues were an important key to the "liberation of the people" and the ultimate overthrow of the authorities (JB 2/4/1986).

Editorial columns expressed outrage about the failure of the penal system to combat organised crime (widespread bribery, political manipulation and physical maltreatment, as a matter of policy, by members of the police force, prison authorities and the penal bureaucracy). Claims by Chileno (that Escadinha and his friends were "too rich to be caught" (JB 22/1/1986)) and the publication of statistics about escaped prisoners (in Rio de Janeiro in 1985 alone more than 540 (JB 19/1/1986)) evidenced these criticisms.[4]

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[2] "*Os traficantes não só votaram no Brizola, como fizeram campanha para ele. É o melhor que há por aí.*"

[3] On 14/3 the pilot was reported to be judged guilty of conspiracy and charged for two years imprisonment (JB 14/3/1986).

[4] These articles also pointed out that the glorification of such bandits as heros could lead to them being increasingly socially accepted and the public interviews in the media with these bandits lately were quoted as evidence that this had already occurred (JB 22/1/1986). Moreover, they accused sociologists for philosophising to justify the

On 10/1 newspapers reported an armed robbery of a licenced weapon store, in whose organisation Escadinha was involved.[5] Days later, a report claimed that the police uncovered a plan for the stolen weapons to be infiltrated into a prison for use in a mass prisoners' escape attempt. Information revealed elsewhere during the episode spoke about Escadinha's role of leadership during his previous 11 months inside the prison. He was said to organise groups who "command, from inside the prison, gangs of bank robbers and drug traffickers, and, not infrequently, [the members of different groups] enter into war, causing deaths and riots throughout the penitentiary system." (JB 23/1/1986).[6] On 23/3 almost three months after his escape, the papers reported the news of his defeat by the police. Different aspects of the event were emphasised. Some stories claimed that the police (informed by Escadinha's enemies) had launched a large-scale operation in Juramento where Escadinha was visiting. After stalking him for three days, the situation escalated into an intense 20-minute shootout, after which the police team withdrew (uncertain of their success) following appeals from panic-stricken *favelados*. A few hours later, Escadinha was delivered at a state hospital nearby by two heavily armed colleagues, camouflaged and with two bullets in his chest. The police (the hero in these stories) promised further operations to capture Meio Quilo in another South Zone *favela* in the near future. Other reports claimed that Escadinha was shot at pointblank range while coming down a shantytown alleyway unarmed. He had spent that day participating in a *mutirão* to clear an area which was destroyed by recent rains and floods and was attending to the organisation of a party for the *favela* which was to take place the following day. One story claimed that it was done by an internal enemy well before the launch of the police operation (JB 25/3/1986). Following Escadinha's capture, newspapers reported daily on the progress of his recovery (e.g. JB 30/3/1986). In the mean time, an enormous security scheme had been erected around

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behaviour of these *marginais* in their Marxist theories of social rebellion (JB 8/1/1986) (only "slightly more sophisticated than Chileno's theories"). They also pointed at the "*mito da chacina*" (Lit: "myth of the bloodbath" (The reason which the authorities often gave to justify their refusal to circle the shantytowns to catch the traffickers was that "it will lead to a bloodbath in which many innocent *moradores* will die".)), and how it served as an excuse for total passivity on the part of the authorities.

[5]More than 200 weapons and significant quantities of ammunition were stolen. Rumours had it that Escadinha was "planning to arm the *favela* against the police".

[6]"*Esses grupos comandam, de dentro da cadeia, quadrilhas de assaltantes de bancos e traficantes de tóxicos e, não raro, entram em guerra, provocando mortes e rebeliões em todo o sistema penitenciário.*"

the hospital, disrupting normal procedures.[7] Chileno featured again in these stories, angrily complaining about the hospital bills he was expected to pay[8] and throwing insults at the security men standing guard around Escadinha.[9] From the start, Chileno maintained that it was a mistake to have handed his son to this hospital. "My son's friends had already drawn up a plan to bring him to some unknown place in case he was shot one day, like it happened ... There are so many hospitals for criminals around. I paid 40,000 Cz for his operation here. With that kind of money, I could buy all the hospitals in Nova Iguaçu." (JB 23/3/1986).[10] The existence of many hospitals "attended by people in hiding from the police for consultations and operations in which the doctors often work under threat [at gun point]" (JB 31/3/1986)[11] was later confirmed by the surgeon who carried out the operations on Escadinha.[12] Chileno's main concerns were clearly about his son's safety and soon an angry debate started about whose responsibility it was to decide about Escadinha's transferral to the Penitentiary Hospital. According to Chileno: "Zequinha[13] can't go to the Penitentiary Hospital because they will kill him there, like they burn archival evidence. He knows a lot about the corruption and dirt

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[7]It caused the paralysis of a primary school for the full duration of Escadinha's stay in that hospital (JB 26/3/1986).

[8]On the night of admission, his two armed colleagues paid out $Cz 8000 (equivalent to about 10 monthly minimum salaries at the time) as a bribe (from the kitty for the party) (JB 25/3/1986).

[9]At one stage: "... he was warned ... that he would be arrested if he insisted on calling the policemen "gorillas". Chileno said to the commander that they could then arrest him because he would not stop speaking in this manner."(JB 28/3/1986).

[10]"*Os amigos de meu filho já haviam montado um esquema para levá-lo a um local ignorado caso ele fosse baleado algum dia, como aconteceu ... Há tanta policlínica de bandido por aí. Paguei 40.000 Cz pela operação dele aqui. Com esse dinheiro, comprava todas as policlínicas de Nova Iguaçu.*"

[11]"*atendem pessoas procuradas pela polícia em consultas e cirurgias nas quais os médicos, muitas vezes, trabalham sob ameaça*"

[12]The surgeon was personally contacted at home by Escadinha's colleagues during the night of the incident (JB 28/3/1986).

[13]This name (or "*Seu* Zequinha" (Lit: Mr. Zequinha), "*Tio* Zequinha" (Lit: Uncle Zequinha)) was the name for Escadinha used by the inhabitants of his home *favela.* "Escadinha" was the name given to him by the police and referred to the steps that led up to one of his *bocas* (Fatos 27/1/1986:51).

> of the Military Police." (O Globo 27/3/1986).[14] When he arrived at the Penitentiary Hospital on 1/4, most of the 80 inmates had formed a queue, bringing him presents; a fan, a portable TV, a radio, and little presents such as drinks, biscuits and fruit (JB 2/4/1986).

The case study reveals a lot about the organisation and scope of the traffickers at the top level of their hierarchy and their relation to the establishment.

The bigshots in the drug trade were involved in many other types of businesses. Among those that appeared in the case study and were of significance to Rocinha are, for example, their involvement in stolen car dealing, which was confirmed in many different sources:[15]

"Denis controla 7 bocas de fumo na Rocinha; tem um grupo especializado em roubar carros na Zona Sul, para trocar por drogas no Paraguai e na Bolívia ... domina várias oficinas mecánicas que trabalham com carros roubados na favela ... "	"Denis [one of the bigshots, based in Rocinha] controls 7 *bocas* in Rocinha; he runs a group specialised in stealing cars in the South Zone, to trade for drugs in Paraguay and Bolivia ... he manages several garages that work on stolen cars in the *favela* ..."

(JB 17/10/1985)

Or:

"da quadrilha de ... Gordo, ligado ao tráfico de cocaína e roubos de carros. Esses carros, segundo a juíza, são roubados no Rio e levados para Campo Grande e Corumbá, onde são trocados por cocaína que abastece o Rio de Janeiro."	"from Gordo's gang ... involved in cocaine traffic and car robbery. Those cars, according to the judge, are stolen in Rio and taken to Campo Grande and Corumbá, where they are traded for cocaine which supplies Rio de Janeiro."

(JB 13/1/1986)

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[14] *"O Zequinha não pode ir para o Hospital Penitentiário porque lá vão matá-lo, como queima de arquivo. Ele sabe muita coisa sobre a corrupção e a lama da Polícia Militar."*

[15] This explained the number of auto-mechanics workshops in Rocinha where vehicle access was barely possible and few households could afford to own one. The majority of those who did own cars were taxi drivers who often serviced their own vehicles.

The importance of independent transport for the traffickers is obvious. Often carrying weapons illegally, they could not travel on public transport, where they risked getting body searched. Effectively, this meant that most *olheiros* (teenagers employed to staff *bocas* where drugs were bought and sold) would have to remain in Rocinha were it not for their own cars.

Property dealing also appeared frequently in these sources. In the case study, Gordo's three mansions in the village illustrates the point. A newspaper report about property ownership in Rocinha mentioned the existence of absentee property sharks who collected rent from large numbers of *kitchenetes* (Lit: bedsits) and *apartamentos* (Lit: apartments, flats) through hired lawyers (JB 24/11/1985). One was said to claim ownership over 2,800 *kitchenetes* accommodated in about 40 large buildings. Another 26 were quoted as owning 300 buildings. The rent charged was extortionate and the quality of the accommodation varied, but the large majority was well below the normally already low standards of accommodation. Officially, letting accommodation in shantytowns was illegal. Even though I have no firm data to assess the extent of the involvement of the traffickers in Rocinha's property market, it would be surprising if they did not do so. Not only was accommodation extremely scarce and dealing in this business therefore extremely profitable, also, influence over property development was crucial for those whose success depended on the possession of strategically located quarters. Informants confirmed rumours that gangs used their influence over the members of the Residents Association to acquire large numbers of strategically located buildings in the past, and there were stories of residents who were forced out of their houses by the traffickers.[16] It was also clear that many of these large property sharks used methods similar to those of the traffickers.

The catering industry was another area in which traffickers were known to have vested interests. Note that Escadinha entertained twenty friends in a public

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[16]The question of control over land ownership and the issuing of building permits played an important role in the development of Rocinha's leadership (as seen in Chapters 5 and 6) and allegations of "irregularities" in these matters led to a series of replacements of members of the leadership of the Residents Association.

restaurant while he was on the run. Hotels, restaurants and discotheques were cited as businesses in which bigshots laundered their money (e.g. Paulinho da Matriz was known to possess luxury hotels in the South of Brazil (Fatos 27/1/1986:50-51)). In Rocinha, *biroscas* and *lanchonetes* (cafés) provided places where members of the gangs socialised did business. Their owners supplied them with their food and drink, sheltered them and communicated with them about local goings on. They were also the only places which stayed open after dark, when the underworld came to life. *Birosca* owners could not select their clientele and some (invaded by "undesirables") were forced out of business for this reason. Others either enjoyed respect or special protection from the traffickers through agreements, or adopted the clientele and their demands, and in a sense became part of their business.

Gambling was also commonly associated with drug trading. Even though it was strictly illegal, many (especially poor) Brazilians took part in a gambling game (*jogo do bicho*).[17] This game was regarded as different from the "serious" gambling that took place in casinos. Its results were publicly discussed (there was talk about them appearing on TV) and women and students were employed to sell tickets for the game openly on street corners. The owners of the game (*bicheiros*) were known to be wealthy and some of them were public personalities. For example, Castor de Andrade, one of Rio's biggest *bicheiros*, was a name with which most *cariocas* were familiar. The *bicheiros*' financial involvement in Rio de Janeiro's Carnival processions was widely publicised. *Bicheiros* had also become politically active in recent years. Their financial support for the PDT candidate in the 1982 elections for state governor and for the municipal elections in 1985, was no secret at the time. The elected governor's proposals emphasised the need to legalise the game, and his government's Plano for 1983-1985 devoted many pages to the development of Rio's tourist industry in which Samba, Carnival and sports played a central role (Plano: 4, 10, 116-121).[18]

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[17]It was similar to a lottery game, where participants put small amounts of money on a particular animal.

[18]Castor de Andrade publicly announced his intentions to develop the amusement

In many ways, *bicheiros* shared interests with the traffickers. As an illegal business with a lot of wealth to protect and invest, they relied on similar methods of operation even though these uglier sides of this business did not draw the same attention of the press. Evidence of their existence, however, was there. For example:

" ... agentes da Polícia Federal descobriram um arsenal de armas na casa de ... "Maninho", filho do banqueiro do jogo do bicho. No caso, a situação surpreendente seria a de um bicheiro que não tivesse armas em casa."	" ... Federal Police officers discovered a range of arms in Maninho's house, son of the *jogo do bicho* banker. As it is, the surprising situation would have been one in which the *bicheiro* did not have weapons in his house."

(Veja 27/7/1988:42)[19]

Like the other mentioned businesses, *bicheiros* did not mix with traffickers publicly. They were concerned with keeping a clean image and the politicians and other authorities seemed happy to collaborate with their business.[20]

In Rocinha, my informants told me that they did not know the answers to many of my questions about the *bicheiros* and they did not publicly express an interest in them in the same way as they did in the traffickers. There were several busy *pontos de bicho* in Rocinha and many of my informants frequently participated in the game. In weekends and evenings, a common sight in Rocinha was also the card and dice games played in front of certain *biroscas* showing stacks of money openly on tables. These games provoked heated arguments between players and

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sector in Brasília with plans to build nightclubs, luxury hotels and a sports complex, and particularly to stimulate the Samba phenomenon there (JB 24/1/1986).

[20]When the Civil Police raided a large number of *pontos de bicho* (places on the street where *bicho* tickets are sold) under the pretext of allegations of their involvement in drug trafficking, *bicheiros* readily received the sympathy of the press and officials, alleging that the operation was politically motivated (a move against the state government whom *bicheiros* politically supported). The Civil Police could not get the cooperation of the Military Police (commanded by the state governor), whom they accused of collaboration and deliberately ignoring the law, nor of some judges, who expressed their loyalty to the state government by refusing to start processes against the *bicheiros* arrested in the incident (JB 10/11, 13/11, 14/11, 27/11, 30/11/1985).

caused passers-by to speed up and look the other way. These latter activities were regarded as serious gambling and fell in a different category.

To protect their stronghold, the traffickers engaged in arms trading, often with individual police members, although some arms were also obtained through robbery (as illustrated in the case study). Police were commonly accused of swapping their weapons for drugs, which they then sold. For example:

" ... segundo Cosme, além de facilitar os negócios dos traficantes, os policiais também se encarregavam de manter o grupo de "Zaca" bem guarnecido em termos de armas e munições - desviando e revendendo inclusive armas de uso restrito das Forças Armadas."

" ... according to Cosme [who was caught in a bust and therefore decided to reveal everything since he had nothing else to lose], as well as facilitating the traffickers' business, police also took it upon themselves to keep "Zaca"'s gang well supplied with arms and ammunition - diverting arms and selling them, including arms restricted for use of the Armed Forces."

(Senhor 8/9/1987:52)

Among the harvest of a raid on Santa Marta (another *morro* in the Zona Sul) detectives found:[21]

"... um precioso troféu: um caderninho em que "Cabeludo" escriturava as quantias em dinheiro e os papelotes de cocaína com que renumerava guarnições da Polícia Militar, em troca da impunidade e do desvio de armamento da corporação."

" ... a precious trophy: a booklet in which "Cabeludo" [Lit: Hairy, obscene] noted the sums of money and cocaine sachets with which he paid the Military Police garrisons, in return for impunity and the diversion of weaponry from the corporation."

(Visão 2/9/1987:33)

In terms of their organisation, it was my impression from the evidence from these diverse sources, that the traffickers operated according to a rigidly hierarchical model at these top levels. At the very top there were a handful of bigshots (like

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[21] These were only two of the numerous references to direct instances of swapping arms for drugs with police that I came across.

Gordo, Meio Quilo, Denis and others who appear in the case study), who managed the supplies of drugs for a particular part of Rio de Janeiro, and spent a lot of their time taking care of financial matters, managing their investments in these other businesses in which we have seen they invested their wealth and/or staked an interest for other reasons. They were known to be extremely wealthy and reputed to be living in luxury mansions situated in affluent suburbial areas of Rio de Janeiro, far away from where the actual drug trading took place. (Denis da Rocinha, known as "*O Chefão*" (Lit: The Big Boss) in Rocinha, was one of those bigshots, allegedly in charge of supplying the majority of lucrative *bocas* in the Zona Sul.)

These bigshots delivered to the "*donos*" (or "*gerentes*") *de bocas* (Lit: owners of the *bocas*) who remained in direct contact with those who staffed the *bocas* and dealt with the clientele. These *donos* were each said to control a handful of such *bocas* and often resided in the shantytowns in which they traded. *Bocas* were staffed by *olheiros* (Lit: overseers) whose job it was to defend the *bocas* from possible threats of enemies. These were the teenagers who sat on my doorstep night and day (as described in Chapter 3). The *olheiros* made use of *aviãozinhos* (Lit: little aeroplanes; who were sometimes very young local children) acting as messengers for them. Positions of *donos* were appointed by the bigshots on whom all depended for supplies and success within the organisation depended on performance. Each *dono* had to build his own *pedaço* (establish and maintain control over a certain area with outlets into the market) with the aim towards expansion, by either conquering *bocas* belonging to other *donos*, or setting up new profitable outlets for their trade, which would pose a similar threat to other *donos* and indirectly to other bigshots. *Donos* were therefore divided against each other, and hence, also the *olheiros* they commanded were divided into gangs whose interests clashed. In these clashes (gang wars) many were eliminated. Alliances were vulnerable, since each gang competed with another gang commercially and alliances at the top could be realigned by attempts at expansion. Given the lucrative nature of the business and the wealth these bigshots appropriated ultimately, their organisation at higher levels must have been rigid. Relations between these bigshots and between them

and certain *donos* were personal and relatively stable. They needed each other to make their business work. This explains their cooperation (illustrated well in the case study). There was a sense of "having made it" if you had reached this level, and Escadinha (doing the jobs associated with being a *dono*) was one of these rising stars.

In order to climb to the top of this hierarchy, one competed with others for promotion at lower levels. Promotion could only happen when rivals were eliminated through external interference of police or competing colleagues, or one could organise a *trambique no Chefão* (Lit: conspiracy, plot to overthrow *o Chefão*). The following article reports on one of these incidents. It illustrates the character of the relations between the traffickers particularly well.

"Há alguns meses, Beto Falcon e seu irmão Ricardo chegaram à Rocinha e procuraram Denis Leandro da Silva para um papo de negócio. Estavam interessados nas bocas redondas de Denis e pretendiam comprá-las. Tinham obtido informações, através das quais estaria disposto a se livrar das bocas que possuía para instalar-se na Cidade de Deus. ... Conversa daquí, conversa dalí, prós e contras, acabaram chegando a um acordo: Beto daria uma entrada das mais gordas e pagaria a quantia de 30 mil cruzados por mês; sempre no último dia. Era pegar ou largar. Denis pegou. Ficou de receber a tal entrada, porém, em determinado dia, apesar de Beto e seu irmão assumirem, a partir daquele instante a direção geral das bocas existentes na favela. ... Verdade que um dos seus gerentes tentou colocar um marimbondo em sua cabeça, no sentido de que ele não deveria ter entregue assim, de bandeja toda as suas bocas sem ver a cor do dinheiro que deveria receber na mão como entrada. ... No prazo estipulado para receber a entrada, Denis foi ao encontro de Beto. Lá chegando, foi recebido a bala. Beto disse que otário não tinha vez e que ele fosse receber noutra freguesia. Tiros. ... Procurou socorros e, fora de perigo, jurou vingança: todos morreriam; Beto Falcon e todos os seus comparsas. Ninguém ficaria vivo para contar a história. Era a guerra ... "

"A few months ago, Beto Falcon and his brother Ricardo came to Rocinha to find Denis Leandro da Silva for some business talk. They were interested in Denis' *bocas* and intended to buy them. They had heard some rumours according to which he was planning to get rid of the *bocas* which would enable him to install himself in Cidade de Deus ... The conversation went this way and that way, the pros and cons, and they ended with reaching an agreement: Beto would make a fat down payment and pay the sum of 30,000 *Cruzados* monthly: each time on the last day. It was paying or nothing. Denis caught on to the idea. He was still to receive that agreed down payment, on a certain day, even though Beto and his brother assumed from that instance the total management of all the *bocas* existent in the *favela* ... Now it happened that one of his *chefes* got him worried about the fact that he should not have handed over all his *bocas* in this way - on a platter- without seeing the colour of money which he had agreed to receive in his hand, as a down payment ... On the agreed day for receiving the down payment, Denis went to his meeting with Beto. Arriving there, he was met with the bullet. Beto said that a wimp like him didn't have a chance, and that he was used to dealing with a different kind of clientele. Shots. ... He went for help and once out of danger, he swore his vengeance: all of them would die: Beto Falcon and all of his mates. No-one would remain alive to tell the story. It was war ... "

(O Dia 24/2/1987)

In less than a week, Denis' gang killed "at least 15" of Beto's gang. The bodies

of some were paraded around Rocinha to show victory and then disposed of in local rubbish dumps. Days after his death, local residents uncovered the mutilated body of Beto himself in Cidade de Deus (a suburb of Rio de Janeiro) only after its smell had become intolerable to neighbours. The incident described involved higher levels of organisation and was an all out gang warfare. Two incidents of this scale happened in my neighbourhood during the year of my stay. Other smaller incidents involving rivaling *olheiros* or unauthorised police officials, happened more frequently during that year. It is obvious from these examples that this kind of gang rivalry worked against stable long-term alliances. The whole structure was motivated by a combination of ruthless individualism and hierarchical dependence in which, at these lower levels especially, only allowed alliances to form in short-term cooperative efforts which were easily reversed. Indeed, this follows from the logic of their organisational structure, as described above.

That the character of these alliances within this hierarchy was more stable and less competitive at higher levels of operation is further demonstrated by the fact that at higher levels the organisation of bigshots allowed them to maintain direct links with developments in the drug business outside even when imprisoned. This meant that when they were released from prison they fitted back into the structure as before. Escadinha's case was an example of this. The release of a prisoner previously active at lower levels often meant the destabilisation of relations and/or a chance for revenge, which exploded into a major realignment of relations. The case study in which Escadinha appears well cared for by an effective cooperative group of peers gives a misleading picture. The collaboration and tight personal network between colleagues at the top cannot be taken as representative of the way their business operated at lower levels. Further evidence for the instability of relations within this hierarchy at lower levels comes from the fact that the turn over rate of *olheiros*, and even *donos* was extremely high and the great majority were eliminated by rivals in their own trade (as illustrated in the above report).[22]

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[22]This also explains why most of them (even the bigshots) were so young.

The links through which the traffickers did their business with others were highly personalistic and apparently quite random and operated with little loyalty and/or permanence. One could never predict whom would in the end back whom. The links varied according to different situations and came about suddenly, often to serve the personal interests of one influential character, to be suddenly abandoned or completely reversed in response to a change of circumstances. In the case study ahead, for example, the links between a gang leader and a political candidate suddenly broke and commitments were reversed due to the gang leader's reevaluation of his personal situation (his brother in prison was perceived to be at risk). In such a situation, each individual involved in the incident could influence the outcome of the event to match his/her own interests. This is facilitated by the secretive manner in which these decisions were made at all levels of this system.

What experience the people had of these traffickers and how their presence in Rocinha affected the activities of the action groups is particularly well illustrated in the following case study.

> NOVEMBER ELECTIONS. Six weeks before the November elections for municipal authorities in 1985, the presidency of the current Residents Association threw a party "to celebrate its first anniversary". The party had been advertised on posters all over Rocinha and on the night, there was an unlimited supply of free drink and a large number of guests were entertained with an elaborate sound system. One of the candidates for the coming elections (Medina, PFL/PS) and his vice-candidate (Nery), and a large number of their *cabos* were at the party. There were also a large number of armed members of Denis' gang (further referred to as *o Chefão*). In protest against what they saw as turning out as a massive election campaign, one opposing faction in the Residents Association distributed leaflets, backing this candidate's main rival (Saturnino, campaigning on the PDT ticket, the party of the state governor in power at the time). They were "invited to leave" the party and failure to do so was understood to be a serious threat to their safety. Taking offence to this, they met the following day to compose an open protest letter to the public and the press. The letter was never circulated in Rocinha, but an interview to a leading newspaper (published soon thereafter) reported the incident at the party (JB 17/10/1985).
>
> During the following two days, several people were hassled by members of *o Chefão*'s gang. Two directors belonging to the opposing faction were visited at home during the night by heavily armed men and were told that "the only candidate for Rocinha" was Medina. They

received warnings about the newspaper report, and were told that *o Chefão* had not liked what had been written about him.[23] They were released with a warning that those active in the counter campaign would be killed if caught again inside Rocinha before the elections. The two fled immediately and stayed in different places outside Rocinha for about two weeks.

Soon after these incidents, three other members of this faction approached *o Chefão* and his gang in an attempt to ensure them of the neutrality of their groups in the election campaign. They failed to contact him. During that week, an employee of a crèche (one of the groups run by this faction) was also hassled in the street by armed gang members for information about the whereabouts of the group's president and at the end of the week (while a party was being prepared for a large number of children in the crèche) a number of men, exhibiting an impressive selection of sophisticated weaponry, appeared outside the crèche, shouting abuse and threats at the *tias* on the patio. This included a message from *o Chefão* ordering all officeholders of this organisation to appear at a meeting that night, warning that those who remained absent risked being killed. The tension in the crèche became intense. As it turned out, they themselves did not appear at the meeting that night. The reasons for their absence became clear later, when it was discovered that the police had circled Rocinha with instructions to capture *o Chefão* later that same day.

In response to this police effort, the presidency of the Residents Association (clearly headed by another faction) lobbied the police headquarters, questioning their motivations for capturing *o Chefão*. A few days later, newspapers reported on "Rocinha's efforts to protect their leader from the police" by organising barricades, stopping police vehicles from entering Rocinha's main roads (O Globo 15/10/1985, O Dia 16/10/1985, JB 16/10/1985). The barricades were constructed in the name of "protest against police violence towards *favelados*". Witnesses at the scene predicted bloodbaths "involving innocent workers" if the police effort were to continue. It emerged later that the newspapers had been informed of the incident by Nery (the candidate for vice-major in Medina's campaign) who reported the police raid as an example of the current state governor's (his rival party) abuse of power since (in his opinion) it represented a politically motivated move against someone who happened to be campaigning for an opposition candidate (O Dia 16/10/1985). The police raid was conducted largely by the Military Police who were said to be commanded by the state governor.

The following day (in search of publicity) this same faction of the Residents Association mobilised a large protest march to the governor's palace, demanding to speak to the state governor himself. The group

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[23]In fact, the report had not mentioned him.

(accompanied by one of Rocinha's (noisy) *blocos*) demanded a stop to the police effort to catch *o Chefão* on grounds that he (as all suspected criminals) had the right to be prosecuted in freedom in front of proper court proceedings. Newspapers of the following day reported the full extent of his police record (eleven homicides, various charges for drug trafficking, and other illegal business, unlicenced weapon possession, etc. (different papers gave quite different details)), and reported the gang's threats to the other groups involved in the election campaign in Rocinha (O Dia 16/10/1985, JB 17/10/1985). The group (led by the president of the Residents Association) was also reported to have come to the governor to negotiate *o Chefão*'s freedom in return for Rocinha's vote (i.e. for his (the state governor's) candidate). They were also reported to have threatened the continued closure of the PDT (his party) election quarters in Rocinha as long as the police presence in Rocinha remained, which would effectively prevent the PDT from campaigning.

A newspaper two days later reported the end of the police operation in Rocinha. It claimed that the raid had largely been unsuccessful, in that only two minor offenders (neither of them linked to *o Chefão*'s gang) had been arrested. The police commander in charge of the operation denied reports that the aim of the operation had been to catch *o Chefão*. Instead, he suggested, the operation had been routine "with the objective to inhibit criminal activity and to infuse a state of security ... Today it was Rocinha. The day before we were on Praia de Botafogo. Every day this operation is done in a different place." (JB 18/10/1985).[24] Rumours in Rocinha suggested that the president of the Residents Association (who apparently had inside information from the police as well) had warned *o Chefão* and his gang of the police intentions the night before the raid took place, thereby frustrating their attempt to catch him by surprise.

By the middle of the following week *o Chefão* made clear his decision to withdraw his support from the Medina campaign and permit public support for the opposition candidate in Rocinha, by flying the PDT flag from one of the buildings known to be among the gang's "headquarters". Latest opinion polls had shown Medina's slim chances of winning the elections. Rumours had it that *o Chefão* had become worried about the safety of his brother who was currently in the hands of the authorities. Moreover, to be backing a losing candidate would not only put at risk his own safety, it also was likely to have adverse consequences for the future success of the Residents Association. The PDT campaign in Rocinha resumed as normal.

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[24] *"com o objetivo de "inibir a atividade criminosa e infundir sensação de segurança" ... Hoje foi na Rocinha. Na véspera estivemos na praia de Botafogo. A cada dia, a operação é feita num lugar diferente."*

The case study illustrates cooperation between action groups (sometimes through the Residents Association) and the gangs. For example, the president of the Residents Association made a move to protect the gang leader by mobilising support which involved the participation of the *bloco* and many others. If we look at the situation structurally, we can see that some sort of dealings were inevitable and to the advantage of both. A priori, the traffickers favoured some sort of agreement with the Association (or any active group that crossed their paths) through which they could influence developments in Rocinha to pursue their business smoothly. From the Association's point of view, the same was true. Part of its job was to act as a peace keeping force. The marginalised shantytown population has no access to state mechanisms which maintain public order. Legal facilities were well outside their financial limits, and other state provisions (such as the police force) did not represent an adequate option. They were not considered impartial, and certainly did not offer protection against the powerful drug traffickers. As I have pointed out above, police were known to take part in their illegal activities and had a large stake in their business. Members of the police force were badly paid (barely higher than the national minimum salaries set for the lowest classes of manual workers) and were said to be barely literate. Their highly ambiguous image was further blackened by their reputation for violence and their associations with the Death Squads, especially active during the dictatorship years of heavy oppression. The Death Squads were said to consist of off-duty police men, operating at night, who assassinated the "undesirables" of society in extremely violent ways (Istoé 1/7/1987, Senhor 8/9/1987). The category of "undesirables" potentially included any member of the marginalised sectors, and by extension anyone who lived in the shantytowns. A particular target was the black adolescent male, who could be seen to be harassed violently (and often for no apparent reason) by police in public (e.g. body searches on buses). Nightly police raids on gangs were more often personally motivated than officially ordered "to restore public order". To Rocinha's people the rule was: "Where the police are, there is trouble."

The Residents Association needed friendly relations with some leaders in the traffickers' hierarchy to be able to approach them in the case of a problematic

situation. My informants recognised the inevitability of such links and in some ways they defended particular directors accused of such links by maintaining that they were decent people before they got mixed up with "this business of the Association". For example, it was widely known that one of the former presidents of the Residents Association was assassinated by a member of a gang (Última Hora 24/1/1985, JB 24/1/1985, O Globo 24/1/1985) and the president in office at the time of fieldwork was murdered under similar circumstances a year and a half after I had left the field (JB 12/11/1987). During my fieldwork too, there were widespread rumours of her active involvement with the traffickers. This was also reflected in the ambiguity which surrounded people's stories about these (two) incidents. According to some sources, the assassinated directors were the only leaders who were prepared to stand up against the gangs (the assassinated presidents were portrayed as heroes), while according to others, they had encouraged the traffickers to find a stronghold in Rocinha in the first place, and died in gang wars.[25] Yet, even though evidence suggests the contrary, public efforts were made to deny allegations of these links by the members of the Association and their supporters (e.g. in front of authorities). We have come across repeated denials of links with gangs from action groups in the previous chapter. In the case study, mobilisation to prevent the arrest of *o Chefão* occurred under a different motto, namely, in the name of "police violence against *favelados*", and in the name of "justice for a suspected criminal".

So, in Rocinha, conflict situations involving the traffickers inevitably emerged. Yet, we have also seen in the previous chapter that these potential conflicts could not be resolved through the standard procedures of public meetings. Whenever the prominent topic of "Violence in Rocinha" was publicly addressed, groups' communication broke down. Any problems that came up with the traffickers had to be resolved at a highly personal level, using key individuals to mediate

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[25]Press coverage at the time also fluctuated between these extremes (see references cited above).

privately between the two interested parties. The incident at the Rua Quatro school illustrates what happened in such a situation.

> RUA QUATRO SCHOOL. Staff at the school became worried about the fact that the gangs had initiated the building of a *boca* next to the school. The children's safety was perceived to be threatened and worried parents were considering the withdrawal of their kids from the school. At first, the teachers called a meeting with the local gang leaders (the *dono* of the *boca*), i.e. using the procedure through which problems were usually resolved in this small group. The gang leaders did not show up and, on the occasion, it was decided that the matter had to be resolved by sending a group member off to speak to the president of the Residents Association. They agreed on who was the most "suitable" person: the one who knew her best through personal connections. She visited the president's house on the spot. The latter promised to deal with the matter as soon as possible.[26]

The standard practices for action groups did not function in their dealings with the gangs. It was also noticeable that, although the members of the group themselves were all involved in the issue and it was very much on their minds, it did not reach the group's meetings. Outside meetings (just before they started, after they had ended and during other activities of the group) members discussed the issue extensively. Instead of discussions in public meetings, the issues were dealt with through personal contacts. Situations in which there was no solution beneficial to both parties which could be agreed on in private, inevitably led to a communication breakdown and (threatened) violence (as was the case in the election campaign incidents). Without personal channels the chance of a breakdown was much higher and this could have dangerous consequences for all parties involved.

Why these procedures had to be used can be explained with reference to the previous chapter. The activities of the action groups obeyed certain rules defined by the national rhetoric of *abertura.* In many ways the traffickers represented the antithesis of these ideals. I have shown in Chapter 3 how the trafficker him/herself

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[26]The matter solved itself temporarily when the *dono* in charge of the *boca* was eliminated in a shootout the following day and the project appeared to be abandoned.

stood in direct opposition to the *morador*. S/he represented the opposite to the values associated with domestic order: that of the work ethic, the family, home, and others which made up social respectability. In this sense, the traffickers stood for the antithesis of "community" which was the focus of the political rhetoric. To be publicly approaching the traffickers therefore damaged one's political credibility.[27]

In the way they operated their business, they similarly represented the antithesis to the practices advocated by the rhetoric. My data on how the gangs actually operated is mainly based on popular newspapers and my own impressions from what I saw and heard through gossip and rumours. For the purpose of this chapter, what counted ultimately was not the exact details of their operation (which is in itself interesting), but how they were perceived to be doing so by the members of the action groups with whom I spent most of my time. It were these perceptions which caused them to dissociate themselves publicly from the gangs.

It is clear from the evidence that their operational structure was highly hierarchical individualistic, idiosyncratic, unstable and secretive. These features were in obvious contradiction with the emphasis on cooperation, collectivity, public consultation, education and information-sharing, long-term planning and egalitarianism promoted by the rhetoric of the public domain. Dealings with these agents could not be accommodated under the rules of the political rhetoric which dominated this public activity, and hence they were relegated to a different political sphere, a "back stage" (Goffman 1971).[28] Although connections existed between the action groups and the political agents of which everyone was aware, these connections could not be publicly activated or even recognised. They belonged to a different private/hidden political sphere.

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[27]They also threatened violence and represented raw power, which caused others to remain at a safe distance.

[28]In view of these comments, the common reference term "organised crime" becomes more descriptively "disorganised crime", especially if one is talking about their lower levels of operation.

For this reason also other authorities publicly dissociated themselves from the traffickers despite the obvious existence of cooperative links. For example, with regard to the police: despite the evidence of arms trading with traffickers which I have already cited, it is obvious from other sources that cooperative links between police and traffickers existed. In the case study, the police readily responded to the efforts of some protesters to protect the gang leader's safety. One could argue that they cooperated with the construction of the barricades set up to prevent a clash between police and gang leaders, after instructions had been given to capture them. And indeed, how else could the traffickers trade so freely in Rocinha? Yet, in public, such allegations were repeatedly denied.

The above argument also explains the absence of influential political agents such as the *donos de água* and *luz*, big property sharks and other big businessmen, such as the *bicheiros* and car dealers, in the public scene in Rocinha. As pointed out in Chapters 5 and 6, these were forced underground during the late 1970s because of the political rhetoric, which focused its criticism on such practices.

In this similar way, electoral politics and reference to party politics was conspicuously absent in public meetings. Chaguismo had been a central target for those who promoted the new rhetoric and it was still fresh in people's minds. A history of co-optation and patronage relations had forced them underground. The electoral process was referred to with the terms "*política*" and "*conversa fiada*", which were derogatory terms, as illustrated in the quotations in Chapters 5 and 6 (Varal:83, 87-88 and 78-79 resp.). Campaigning politicians, were publicly avoided by all groups as the political rhetoric demanded, even though in private, alliances with certain politicians were obvious (as, for example, in the election case study). The rhetoric advocated action group autonomy from party politics and contact with any one political party was regarded as suspicious. One could, in theory, establish "neutral" contact with politicians, in the same way as one could, in theory, organise a workshop which involved traffickers. However, in practice, such attempts were dismissed as suspicious. Contact with specific political parties was publicly denied in a similar way as contact with traffickers was denied. In the case study, for example, the president of the Residents Association denied the allegation

that she had intended the anniversary party to be in support of Medina's election campaign. She maintained that she had invited all the candidates, but only one of them had showed up.[29] Groups mutually accused each other of having such links, in the same way as they accused each other of having links with traffickers, and communication about these matters was difficult and usually broke down, as was the case with the traffickers. For example, one group attempted to organise a public debate a few weeks before the elections, in which "the public" could question candidates from different parties about their political agenda. When planning and careful mediation with several candidates for the event started, other groups insisted on participating, and arguments over the venue, the procedure of the event (the order in which the politicians would speak, the length of time allocated to each, the chairing of the platform) or the date, soon escalated to such a degree that the initiators and with them several politicians pulled out. The event did not take place. This example portrays a similar situation as the one described earlier about the groups' attempt to organise a workshop about "Violence in Rocinha".[30]

The groups' attitude towards party politics may have changed since the time of my fieldwork, in line with a change of rhetoric (which continually changes). Increasingly there was talk on the part of the political parties of "incorporating grassroots organisations", especially by, for example, the Workers Party (PT), who prided itself on this issue. During the time of fieldwork, however, they too (or I should say: they especially) were conspicuously absent in Rocinha. The groups' activists' increasing concern with articulating their demands in more formal ways through the party structure is also reflected in the literature. (See, for example,

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[29]AMABB's to FAFERJ which was publicly acting in cooperation with the PDT (its president was publicly involved in electoral politics on this party's ticket) was strongly disapproved of both by members of the group as well as rivals, and this fact was frequently mentioned to confirm the group's flaws.

[30]Note that also other authorities, such as the police, were negatively regarded if seen to cooperate publicly with party politicians and hence publicly denied any such connections. In the case study, for example, the police commander denied the allegation that his orders to capture *o Chefão* had been politically motivated, claiming that this was just a routine operation.

Levine (1986), Slater (1985) and Cleary's (1985) discussions about the relation of the Church and "Base" groups' organisers vis-à-vis the party structure during the strikes of the metal workers in São Paulo in the early 1980s, and Banck & Doimo's discussion of the role of the PT in the activities of action groups in a shantytown in Vitória (Banck & Doimo 1987).) These authors express the groups' activists' concern about the need to find a suitable relation with the party structure whilst preserving their autonomy. Again, this concern was conspicuously absent from the discussions in the public meetings of the groups in Rocinha. The topic was perceived as too risky. None of the groups' leaders could at that time afford to become involved in "*política*".

To see how exactly these barriers are broken down with a change in rhetoric (if indeed they are, a point which I doubt, given the deep suspicion of these formal structures which existed at the time of fieldwork) would be an interesting question in itself, but is clearly beyond the scope of this thesis. At the time of fieldwork, the party structure was a strong target of criticism. Political parties were disrespectable and mobilisation around such entities was not an option for the leadership. They were therefore of no positive structural importance to the dynamics of the action groups' activities.

Tying together this information about the drug traffickers and electoral politics; what then was the influence of this hidden sphere on the activities of the action groups? The case study establishes the importance of the traffickers on the outcome of political events in Rocinha. It shows their influence over the directors of the Residents Association (motivating them to mobilise against the police in the name of "protest against police violence towards *favelados*"). It shows their influence over other groups (the traffickers managed to intimidate the groups' leaderships enough to cause them to flee from Rocinha). Their success in bringing the political campaign of the opposition candidate to a stand-still alone shows their prominence and ruling hand over all organisations operating in Rocinha. Intimidation on the part of the gangs worked. It had the effect of forcing people into obedience.

Negative comments about the gangs and their activities were usually ignored,

brushed away or silenced.[31] There was an attitude of resignation and feeling of powerlessness in the face of these gangs. The fear of negative repercussions was strong and kept alive by the traffickers' intimidating moves towards "dissidents". There was an acute awareness that Rocinha had a history of leaders assassinated by the gangs following their active support for policies which threatened their domain. The assassination of the former presidents of the Residents Association (mentioned above) produced a sense of shock in Rocinha at the time. Clearly the threat of physical violence alone (the sheer number of weapons they possessed and exhibited) was an important factor.

However, their "rule" over Rocinha had its limits. The case study, for example, shows their failed attempt to dictate people's voting behaviour, among other things. Their presence was positively supported by only a small minority of the population. These could be participants in the drug trade (like the members of the gangs themselves) or people who gained direct benefits from them (such as those involved in related businesses), or people who enjoyed their protection or financial support (e.g. rumours suggested that the *blocos* did), or perhaps relatives and neighbours who had personal links with gang members. These people ultimately acted as mediators between the traffickers and the action groups in situations such as the Rua Quatro case study. Most people positively disapproved of them, but few expressed these views in public. The media accused *favelados* of supporting the traffickers.[32] This accusation was particularly substantiated with and perhaps based on the shantytown populations' apparent refusal to collaborate with police. This allegation gave an impression which did not match my experience. The refusal to collaborate with police was motivated by their experience of these authorities who, on this basis, ranked equally low or lower than the traffickers themselves. The answer to the question of how the drug bosses managed to recruit people into their

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[31]I was surprised to find a total silence about the traffickers even in a workshop about "The Problems in Community Politics" which took place outside Rocinha, with the participation of many Rocinha people.

[32]They attributed to them similar motives as those reflected in Chileno's "theories" of "the People's Revolution".

business in Rocinha, then, must lie in part in the promise of beneficial material returns (the profitability of the drug trade brings immediate returns for the newly recruited dealer), the easy access to drugs for consumption, and the cumulative effects of frequent drug use. Partly the cause must be found in the socio-economic context of this phenomenon (as Blok argues when he tries to account for the existence of the Mafia in Sicily (Blok 1974)). The combined effects of the erosion of the value of the minimum salary, the scarcity of available paid employment and the general decline in living conditions of the worker had brought about a decline in the faith of the work ethic and stimulated general *revolta* against the status quo (Zaluar 1985). It was a conflict situation in which participation in the drug trade momentarily offered an easy way out. I conclude that any claim that the traffickers dictated what ultimately happened in Rocinha was better rephrased negatively. A more accurate description of the situation was that the traffickers would not allow anything to happen which threatened their interests, at all costs. And, only in that sense could they be seen to "rule" Rocinha.

As far as politicians were concerned, in the public domain, groups emphasised their autonomy from party politics, as they were strongly critical of it. This criticism was not only based on memories. Contemporary developments too were blamed on the corruptive nature of party politics. For example, they blamed the recent boom in the drug trade on the policies of the current state governor (whose name, incidentally, was one of the names drug users commonly used to refer to cocaine, a fact which may be significant in itself). This view was frequently echoed in the media (which was predominantly anti-state governor in many respects). The state governor propagated support for the *bicheiros* and many other drug-associated businesses. As I have mentioned above, he proposed to legalise the game and emphasised the development of tourism in Rio de Janeiro (closely linked to the amusement and catering industry). The financial support the current governor enjoyed from *bicheiros* was well publicised and there were also strong rumours that

the traffickers financially supported his campaign for the 1986 elections. (Gordo confirmed this in his radio interview, described in the case study.) [33]

Politicians' corruption was a lively topic of debate which disturbed (not amused) my informants. The appearance of politicians of any party in party broadcast on TV provoked angry reactions. They were deeply suspicious of them and political parties were not respectable enough to allow public association. There is enough evidence to conclude, however, that in private short-term alliances between action groups and politicians were set up. For example, in the case study the Residents Association shows its willingness to use the occasion of its first anniversary as an opportunity to promote an election candidate. Rumours had it that there were personal motivations for this (career prospects for some of its members). As to the nature of these links, this last example illustrates this well again. Partly because of their secretive nature, they were random, idiosyncratic and unstable. They were easily reversed as they were motivated by short-term personal interests of particular individuals (e.g. the personal careers of individuals involved). As such, their overall effect on action group activities was hard to characterise in any other way than by looking at specific examples.

The activities of this hidden sphere were difficult to expose, partly because of the nature of their operation (unsystematic, idiosyncratic, unstable and hence unpredictable), and partly because of their secretive nature (i.e. the fact that they belonged to a hidden, unofficial realm of politics). I have mentioned the problem of collecting accurate data on these activities and hence the difficulty of analysing the overall picture for the researcher in my introductory chapter. This problem is

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[33]The governor who succeeded him in 1986 responded to these claims by staging attempts to combat the traffickers publicly (even to the extreme of allowing a TV crew to film a raid on a shantytown (Veja 1/6/1988, 8/6/1988, 2/9/1987, Visão 2/9/1987)). Criticism on this publicity campaign, however, showed other sides to the story. It showed how ineffective the campaign was (none of the bigshots were caught in these operations), it exposed more details about the real extent of the cooperation between the authorities and the drug traders at other levels (against which no campaigns were launched), and it pointed at one of the seriously damaging effects of these campaigns: namely the way in which it encouraged police corruption and gave them a licence to use deliberate violence against not only those involved in drug traffick but the whole shantytown population.

reflected in the literature. Drug traffickers or other "organised crime" are either totally ignored or mentioned briefly on the side (Zaluar 1985). Some literature on Colombia has recently emerged which is correcting this trend (e.g. Pearce 1990). The real difficulties they pose for researchers, however, should not justify their systematic neglect from analysis. This chapter establishes clearly their crucial importance for the outcome of political events in Rocinha. I have delineated what kind of influence the traffickers had on the activities of the action groups and the complexity and scope of links they established with other political agents. Their importance to the political scene in Rocinha is now beyond doubt.

With regard to the electoral process, a lot has been written which simplifies this hugely complex issue. In this chapter I have delineated only some of the dimensions which come into this question. What my data showed above all, was the complexity of characterising political activities in terms of electoral politics and hence the impossibility of simple forecasting of electoral results and/or prescribing political party strategy aimed at mobilising support in a shantytown such as Rocinha.

The most important conclusion we can draw from the evidence presented in this chapter is that there is participation of all politically active agents in Rocinha, regardless of their public claims, in this hidden political sphere, whose dynamics I have attempted to characterise.

CONCLUSIONS

It was my aim to deconstruct the picture of Rocinha's political organisation. In earlier chapters, I looked at potentially organising principles (kinship, locality, religion, skin colour, economic interests, origin) and to what extent these were effectively operating at local levels. In later chapters, I expanded my analysis to see if these principles were expressed in the organisation of action groups.

As far as kinship was concerned, Rocinha's people expressed clear ideals. In practice, the composition of their households and the roles individuals took on within these were easily changed to suit circumstances. Geographical and social mobility further destabilised and changed the character of the ties that could be formed between *parentes* outside the household. In the face of the extreme shortages of living space, it was often impossible to keep relatives at a distance within which intimate communication could be maintained. The existence of opportunities for social mobility and the resulting increase in economic heterogeneity of Rocinha's population also clearly affected the unity of the family.

This was expressed in the absence of "ruling families" or the relevance of kinship as an organising principle in Rocinha's politics. Kinship, in this context, acted as a bond through which patronage was passed. For example, a woman could be recruited as a coordinator in an action group because she had privileged access to information about the vacant post and was recommended for the job by a relative already active in the group. There were examples of this kind of practice, but it was not widespread. The low incidence of this was a sign of the small role kinship played in individuals' lives, and the limited size of their active kinship network. Additionally, kinship was for this purpose as effective as residence (being a neighbour) and/or friendship. Individuals were not selected or deselected by

virtue of being member of a certain family. In fact, there were examples of relatives who were recruited by competing action groups, a fact which was quite insignificant to my informants.

In terms of people's ties to their neighbourhood, we found that neighbours were in fact deeply divided against each other. Despite the common experiences of neighbours (due to extreme proximity of their living spaces and the hardships they shared (water shortage and the presence of drug traffickers, especially)), communication remained at an impersonal level and was hostile between some. What superficially appeared to act as neighbourhood centres (the *biroscas*) turned out to serve little more than the necessary functional purposes. The concept of *pedaço* could not meaningfully be used as an analytical tool to understand social space. Territoriality expressed at higher levels of organisation (i.e. politically active members of "community centres" made claims to representativity over the *bairros* in which they were based) could be better seen as a result of external factors. The central importance of public space as a base for action groups, and on the other hand, their extreme scarcity in Rocinha, set groups up in competition against each other. This was encouraged further by the rhetoric of *abertura*, which stressed "local representativity" as one of its main criteria for evaluation. Again, geographical mobility and the consequent recent and temporary nature of people's residential arrangements further contributed to the weakness of a sense of belonging to a particular neighbourhood and the expression of this sense in social formations.

It emerged also that Rocinha's people did not express the unity of their "community". In fact, subdivision and the negative values attached to commonly applicable labels were so apparent that it was hard to justify the usage of the label "community" at all. People went out of their way to dissociate themselves with their *morro* as a place of residence. They acted to cover up and/or differentiate their common heritage and their economic characteristics. Poverty, rurality and *morro*-residence were factors to be ashamed of rather than positive assets. On the issue of skin colour, they were divided, but not in such a way as to provide leaders with a common cause around which they could mobilise the different groups. A small minority who expressed "black consciousness" were marginalised. Religious

practice provided little structure for the lives of the majority. Common worship was only practised by small groups who were factionalised around a handful of religious leaders. It failed to provide common symbols that tied Rocinha's population together. I could find no other such symbols which served that purpose. There were no local heroes, no celebration of common festivals (Carnival, as we saw, did not provide this opportunity, as the media claims).

A repeated theme in the early chapters is the weakness of these organising principles. Strong ideals were expressed in people's language and preferences. However, in actual arrangements, little of these was articulated. There was instead a strong sense of individual expression, which was in contradiction with the character needed for the formation of a cohesive community. In accordance with the conclusions from earlier chapters, what emerges in later chapters is the same picture of atomisation, instability and flexibility. There was a lack of clear principles which operated effectively to hold these groups together. For these groups too, ideals clearly existed, but in practice, these were easily rearranged. Partly these arrangements were forced through in response to the need of the moment. Flexibility was thus the result of people's vulnerability which, in turn, was the result of being marginalised by all sectors of society. Partly, flexibility developed as part of a constant strategy for maximisation in this situation of scarce resources. This, in turn, generated individualism: ego-centric and ad hoc decision-making; little willingness to commit oneself wholly or at all, or only in the short term; a willingness to retain independence and keep one's options open. These tendencies run counter to an ethos of collectivity, based on co-operation and consultation from groups of people volunteering to engage in the solving of long-term problems of a notional collective unit.

The flexibility and individuality in these groups was also encouraged by and expressed in people's geographic and economic mobility, which, in turn, had a destabilising effect on social relations. A constant stream of recent arrivals into the shantytown, the difficulty for most to find continuous employment (the temporary nature of the informal labour market) and residence (the lack of space and the particular historical pattern of settlement in Rocinha forced many to rent tem-

porary unsatisfactory accommodation) made any social formation more difficult to continue undisturbed. Most groups had the appearance of being put together recently. Small parties came and went in meetings and activities. Evidently, it was hard to establish leadership over such unstable recruits.

The kind of external support for these groups encouraged this same instability and individuality. The lack of coordinated planning generated contradictory intentions within implemented projects and even reversals in policy, causing confusion and lack of direction for the groups. Their reluctance and incapacity to commit themselves financially resulted in insufficient funding (leading to an impression of a half-hearted effort on the part of the group organisers) and the periodic collapse of on-going projects. Then, there were always the usual obstacles of the bureaucratic process, making funding difficult to get and causing project leaders a lot of work and problems, lowering morale and subsequent commitment on the part of the whole group. These factors added to a general lack of continuity and were disincentives to group cohesion. They also encouraged individuals to initiate and pursue personal projects. This was logistically so. Ad hoc decision-making in bureaucracies requires flexible arrangements for repeated and unexpected visits and personal contacts with key individuals for the approval of funds or other cooperation needed from them. The clientelistic nature of such contacts encouraged this too. They were often the distribution of favours between two interested individuals and required personal contact, in which commitment can be negotiated and manipulated, and idiosyncrasies can be smoothed over in private.

Instability and lack of commitment were also partly the result of a general sense of pessimism which seemed to me the result of a mixture of factors. There was a lot of talk around about "the good old days", when salaries were worth more (as documented in Chapter 1) and jobs were more plentiful (Chapter 1). Economic well-being, as I have argued above, had an effect on people's tendency to operate as a collectivity. The quality of life inside Rocinha itself was also perceived to have deteriorated sharply. Prominent among people's complaints was the question of safety and violence linked to the recent visible emergence and establishment of the traffickers in Rocinha (now openly active in alleyways,

frequently causing havoc during their shootouts and by the public exhibition of the cruel practices against each other). Rocinha was also much less crowded in the old days. Population growth had increased and as a result aggravated problems of cohabitation. Problems between neighbours (e.g. about the position of a window, the draining of waste water, the loss of light, shade, ventilation or rooftop space) were common subjects of discussion. Previously familiar problems such as waste dumping (with the noted increase of insects and other vermin) and water access were now aggravated. A common complaint was also that "people don't even know their neighbours any more". There was a sense of conditions having got so much worse that many talked about moving away, yet they were often unable to do so because of ties to their jobs or residence and general lack of options for establishing themselves elsewhere. Many people communicated a lot of negative feeling towards their place of residence, something not conducive to the "community ethos" advocated by the new rhetoric.

There was also a general lack of faith in any kind of authority. The optimism of the early 1980s (if it was ever there) was gone, both on the part of the shanty-town leadership and group members as well as on the part of the social workers and pastoral agents. Especially damning were their comments on Rocinha's best known characters. These were accused of being corrupt, out to enrich themselves and mixed up with the drug mafia. People repeated stories to justify their condemnation of them. Their attitude reflected a strong sense of scepticism about any initiative and widespread contempt for any official structures. Their experience told them that (any) authorities' promises usually did not come to anything, and time and again their contact with authorities was negative: being ignored, maltreated and/or dismissed by officials in hospitals, schools, banks or voting registers, were common occurrences for most. Political parties, especially, headed their blacklist. Years of grand promises with very little concrete result, smooth-talking politicians' speeches (of any party) with little content, and stories of corruption in these areas had made people sceptical and dismissive of these official structures. Contact with official structures was avoided, and people expressed a strong sense

of being abandoned by the authorities. This was clearly another obstacle to any self-help initiative or community organisation.

People were also remarkably ignorant of the mechanics and availability of these agencies and their services. Neighbours showed an almost total lack of interest in any "community" events or services which were not of direct apparent use to them. This was encouraged by the fact that they did not expect these services to bring them any good: they were dismissed as irrelevant, out of their financial reach, or inadequate somehow even before investigation. Some community services were underused as a result, and events sometimes only attracted a handful of people. Within Rocinha, only a handful of politically active characters were generally known. Most remained unknown to the large majority. As to their dealings with political party structures, even around election times party names were confused. This was not surprising, given that parties frequently merged and split or disappeared altogether (sometimes forced by government as a tactic for confusing the electorate (e.g. the 1979 Party Reform mentioned in Chapter 6)), and the media largely focused on personalities rather than party lines. The clientelistic practice also ensured the playing down of party ideology. Party lines were either non-existent or unknown. Besides, they were highly temporary and easily reversed.[1] Apart from a handful of key characters, politicians (like their parties) were also little known. And again, this was not surprising as their presence was temporary. There were many of them and they came and went in quick succession. They moved between parties and set up their own. People's dealings with these political structures were not very sophisticated. It was also clear to me, however, that there was little to be sophisticated about in most cases.

What emerges constantly from my work is the same theme of instability, fluctuation, and eventually atomisation at every level. This picture is the result of the combination of factors I have argued above: in part, it was undoubtedly people's

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[1]The PT (Workers Party) may be an exception to this rule, as it was closely affiliated to labour unions and the Church-based groups. However, it too had failed to establish itself in Rocinha by the end of my fieldwork. As far as I could see, their politicians were treated and perceived as no different from those of other parties.

response to a situation of poverty and constant marginalisation. It is produced by the need to survive in this kind of environment, as part of a strategy of maximisation, which here required flexibility, diversification, and individualism. In part, it is the result of the nature of their external support. This communicated a general lack of commitment and discontinuity and encouraged division among its clientele. People's attitudes towards any form of authority (a mixture of pessimism, scepticism, ignorance and contempt) furthermore worked against any effort to organise long-term problems of a notional collectivity. Additionally, there was the economic and geographic mobility of this population which gave potential groupings a sense of recency and temporariness in the face of a high turn-over rate and changing composition of its participants. The result is the picture we see in Rocinha: of small temporary groupings mobilising against each other temporarily to defend contradicting interests with attempted leadership rising and falling in quick succession. These were the result of the cognitive and organisational patterns described above and in direct contradiction with the advocated models of strong indigenous leadership which can draw and keep together a loyal following, dedicated towards the collective setting up and running of work groups, campaigns and constructive contact with institutional structures. Attempts on the part of pastoral agents and social workers to make groups work according to this alienating rhetoric, logically resulted in chaotic redundant meetings and badly-run demoralised groups with high staff turn-overs. I do not want to belittle the tireless efforts and indisputable achievements of some individuals. But what is in question here is the character of this political activity and the degree to which the ethos of collectivity and co-operation was there, as the rhetoric led us to believe.

In sum, the later chapters of my thesis show that there was a discontinuity between this rhetoric and the practice of the groups. The point clearly illustrated in my thesis is the coexistence of this collectivist rhetoric and the clientelistic practices it explicitly criticises. My findings allow one to label the groups as "clientelistic", "conservative", "right-wing" (*da direita*), and yet, at the same time, their practices correspond exactly to the criteria emphasised by the rhetoric. They hold "meetings", they use a "voting procedure", they emphasise the "educational

aspect", they "target the most needy", they "aim to remain autonomous" and so on. The evidence presented shows that one cannot assume that community ethos and collectivity exists merely by examining the discourse of the participants. These labels are extremely misleading and are indeed rendered meaningless when one examines the character of political activities in detail and in the context of the reality of the shantytowns in which they take place.

My argument is particularly relevant to recent debates about Urban Social Movements. Urban Social Movements are "popular struggles" which take place at a local residential level, and can appear in a variety of forms, i.e. they can be anything from a temporary mobilisation such as a petition, to a highly organised land invasion or longer-term action groups such as daycare centres, health or education groups (Moser 1983). They are centred around issues involving collective consumption and have been explained as being the consequence of the failure of the State to provide housing, services and infrastructure for low-income populations (e.g. Slater 1985). At more abstract levels, they have been seen as an expression of the contradictions of a particular form of capitalism (Roberts 1978). Their existence is often taken as an indication of the degree of popular involvement in the national political process and their significance and character is often defined by a mixture of related questions such as the level of "popular participation", the groups' "success at challenging government structures", the degree to which they remain "autonomous", the "character" of their discourse (e.g. Boran 1989).

It is my argument that the discontinuity between the rhetoric and practice makes it extremely difficult to attribute the characteristics singled out above. I recognise that there exists a lot of informal political activity which is aimed at pressurising government structures for changes in favour of the urban poor; in support of improvements in service provision such as housing, infrastructure, transport, land rights, health and education centres, to mention but a few. However, counting the number of people "involved" in these activities or looking at the character of their discourse (their "leaders"' claims of "representativity", the "democratic" practices of running their groups, their self-professed "educational emphasis", the degree to which they are "critical" of government practice, and so on) and without

examining these in detail in the setting of the local groups' practices, outside the context of the shantytown's power structure, can be misleading. In this sense, I would be reluctant to call Rocinha's action groups "popular movements", as some of the above mentioned authors would. This would attribute to them a dimension which has implications well beyond what we can witness at local levels. The examination of the discourse alone, does not allow us to draw conclusions about the extent to which collectivity and the community ethos exists in the shantytown in question. My findings allow one to label these groups as "clientelistic", "conservative", or "right wing", yet, at the same time in many ways they correspond exactly to the criteria emphasised by these theorists. And indeed, also to the "activists" themselves, their activities <u>are</u> examples of Urban Social Movements. In order to fully understand them, however, one has to consider the context in which they operate (the power structure of the shantytowns in which they appear and the resource structure on which they depend), and the daily problems which emerge when individuals try to put their ideals into practice (e.g. as Durham (1984), Cardoso (1983) and Santos (1981) have tried to do).

These two aspects of the problem have, in my view, not received appropriate attention in much of the literature. Indeed, very little has been written about the particulars of a shantytown's political structure. This partly reflects the difficulty of gathering this kind of information by means of the research methods most commonly used in this field. As I mentioned above, participant observation in its proper sense is virtually unheard of in studies that investigate the urban poor.

Some recent theorists are increasingly recognising this problem and are themselves moving in this direction. In several ways they have expressed the need for a focus on "social practice". For example, Kowarick's most recent collection, which attempts to summarise and review the work done on Urban Social Movements in

Brazil, features several articles with a specific historical dimension which provide detail on the practices of action groups (Kowarick 1988).[2] He concludes[3]:

> Finally, the interlinkages between micro and macro events would be very limited indeed - I repeat this as often as is necessary - if they remained suspended in structural terms: everything indicates that it is necessary to fill them out with the so-called "cultural reality", symbols, values, norms, discourse, ideals and practices ... (Kowarick 1988:325)

The collection serves as a caveat against high-level theorising and the quest is for data that moves away from its reductionism. This was the purpose of my thesis.

The danger of oversimplification is enhanced because of the current climate of great optimism with regard to the potential of these "movements" and the fact that their significance has been much emphasised. This can partly be explained by the reaction against "marginality" theories in the 1960s and 70s and the subsequent emphasis on the positive characteristics of the social organisation of the urban poor (see for example Lloyd's "slums of hope" (Lloyd 1979)). The crisis in conventional Marxist theories in explaining grassroots activity and the potential of this new framework to deal with these action groups also contributes to this optimism. Apart from this, we are writing at a time when faith has been restored in popular religion and authors emphasise the importance and growth of "consciousness-raising" groups and the impact of Liberation Theology. Simul-

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[2]An example of this is Durham's article which discusses shantytown inhabitants' aspirations and expectations of social mobility (i.e. bringing in the question of the rationale behind such movements) (Durham 1988). Similarly, Abramo focuses on the daily experience (working conditions) of individuals involved in the São Paulo strikes of 1980, which contributed to the erosion of their dignity and resulted in their decision to mobilise (Abramo 1988). Another more recent example is Machado's article, which argues for the understanding of Urban Social Movements in terms of the motivation of the women who participate in them (Machado 1988) and participation in Urban Social Movements can thus be seen as an extension of gender roles, something also argued by Evers (Evers 1982).

[3]"*Finalmente, as interconexões entre micro e macroacontecimentos seriam bastante limitadas - repetimo-lo quantas vezes necessário for - se ficassem penduradas nas determinações estruturais: tudo indica que é preciso recheá-las com o assim chamado 'mundo da cultura', símbolos, valores, normas, discursos, utopias e práticas ...* "

taneously, it is a time of hope for great political changes in Brazil as a military dictatorship has given way to a process of "redemocratisation" or *abertura.*

Several interesting questions still arise concerning my historical findings. For example, what are we to make of the *Tempo do mutirão*, as portrayed by social workers now and the literature at the time, in the face of these conclusions? Did the optimism and the "community spirit" ever exist in Rocinha, as some authors and the social workers in Rocinha had it? The late 1970s were, according to this literature, the great momentum of "the community". Social workers in Rocinha at the time of fieldwork saw themselves devoted to the recreation of the lost "community spirit" of that time.

There is no doubt that rhetoric had changed dramatically at the time (as I have set out in Chapters 5 and 6). This was partly the result of an escalation of contemporary problems to an extent where protest could no longer be contained. Talk of *abertura* ignited a lot of dissatisfaction, some of which translated into action. The character of a lot of this output was negative: it was mobilisation against the governing structures which had suppressed this mood for many years. The outbursts in protest rallies against the rising cost of living and transport costs, for example, have a common denominator: they targeted the same enemy, the state, *o governo.* Events like a price rise in basic foods and bus fares were catalysers for these feelings to be expressed. As Santos perceptively argues, Urban Social Movements do not happen without these catalytic events (Santos 1981). However, from these manifestations, we cannot draw conclusions about the extent to which the "community" existed or the existence and character of social groupings and leadership within shantytowns. A careful reading of Rocinha's literature (e.g. Varal or Oliveira 1986) shows the familiar scepticism and disillusion with authorities at that time. It shows persistent in-fighting, contradictory interests and the familiar contempt and suspicion against politicians and other rising leadership (including indigenous). (I have illustrated these points throughout Chapters 5, 6 and 7.) Some dedicated individuals managed to translate their rhetoric into action effectively. They assembled workteams to solve immediate urgent problems (water shortages or floods, especially). There is no evidence that these efforts lasted or

spread beyond groups of neighbours that were directly involved, however. In fact, what I find remarkable is not so much that these did come off the ground, but that so few of them actually did on such a small scale given the apparent desperate need. These remarks both qualify and support other authors' claims about the creation of "community" through the expression of collective needs (Durham 1984, Santos 1981, Cardoso 1983).

Tempo do mutirão, therefore, was largely the beginnings of the then recent change of rhetoric which resulted from short-term optimism, in turn, a reaction to a perception of changes carefully planned and imposed from above. This rhetoric was necessary, like the periodic rituals of recovery discussed so vividly by Stronach (1990). They are important in that they are seen to address "the problem", and they are effective in that they appeal to basic nostalgic traditional values for a "solution", thereby undertaking spiritual recovery. As for the social workers working in Rocinha at the time of fieldwork, it is not surprising that they upheld the *Tempo do mutirão* "community spirit". Conceivably it was an expression of nostalgia contrasting the "then" with the difficult demoralised mood of the "now", but also therapeutically it was a means to reify their goals. Their goals were exemplified in a concrete instance of the way things were (and therefore could become) and the "then" could therefore be relied on for reference and encouragement. Similar to Kundera's "organised forgetting", the contradictory evidence was easily reworked in their minds (Kundera 1982).

We are still left with the apparent contradiction of people talking according to a certain model (of co-operation and collectivity) and working according to another (of individualism and competition). (How) Did they reconcile this apparent contradiction? I have explained the historical emergence of the new rhetoric. This explains partly why it was adopted in that, to a certain extent, it was enforced upon the individual historically. At a cognitive level, I believe that the answer lies in the operational and effective power of the symbols contained in and created by the rhetoric. An examination into this question could look at the symbolism implicit in its imagery (for example, research such as Banck is undertaking at present (Banck 1990) or the kind of analysis Stronach hints at (Stronach 1990))

and can be illuminated by theological debates such as that between Scannone and Segundo, as set out by Candelaria (1990). This undertaking, however, is material for another thesis project.

As a final task we have to consider the practical consequences of my conclusions. If my findings are correct, what implications do they have for action? In principal, the need for infrastructural improvements in a place like Rocinha is a priority. The human costs of allowing the perpetuation of a situation like Rocinha's are immense. Its residents are left to fight a losing battle against a range of diseases caused by the lack of sanitation, for example. These are the cause of the enormously high infant mortality rate, the low life expectancy rate and significantly incapacitate people throughout their lives. It struck me time and again that the most common topics of conversation were about sickness and health: expressions of ill-being and worry about access to and satisfaction from professional advice,[4] the cost and availability of prescribed medicine, the fear of being unable to carry on working, and worry about others with similar problems.[5] The general attitude to this concern was resignation over the lack of control over these issues expressed by the very commonly heard disturbing expression: "*Se Deus quiser.*" (Lit: If God wants it) used after expressions such as "See you later!" (*Até logo*!). These are the reasons why upgrading programmes often focus on sanitation as a central issue.

If sanitation is to be improved in Rocinha, one has to address the interrelated problem of its extreme population density. Lowering population density is essential to create space for vehicular access, which is the key to the systematic removal of household waste, the building of larger structures which can handle wa-

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[4]When to go? (Can it be put off? How serious is it?) Where to go? There was a range of options. After checking with colleagues, friends, relatives and neighbours, they would approach the local chemist shop. Then they hunted around cheaper but crowded and badly equipped community clinics, perhaps trying an expensive consultation with a recommended spiritual advisor, or as a last resort, taking days out to undertake time-consuming and costly bus journeys to battle with bureaucratic hospitals which brought one back to the local chemist shop.

[5]It is not coincidental that the common expression with a toast is a wish for good health ("*Saúde*!").

ter provision and drainage adequately, and eventually make health care and other services possible on a larger scale. In fact, lowering the density of the population in Rocinha is clearly essential to any upgrading programme, not just sanitation, as there simply is no space to build any larger structures which can resolve the problem of landslides and other social services on a scale which could handle this population.

From my findings it is clear that any attempt at implementing such goals will face immense practical problems, such as the extremely complex property ownership structure, to be tackled in any attempt at reducing the population density in Rocinha. It is also clear that there are many different people with contradictory interests in the status quo which can stand in the way of implementing strategies. For example, creating space for developmental programmes in Rocinha would undoubtedly displace a large number of people who would have to be persuaded to give up what is often their complete livelihood, and would have to be rehoused elsewhere. A large-scale attempt at providing education would threaten the numerous community schools in existence at present.[6] Another particularly problematic example of such contradictory forces within the population of Rocinha are also the all-powerful drug traffickers. Their interests lie in keeping the state out of the shantytown. They rely on Rocinha's maze-like geographical make-up for strategic reasons, and additionally maintain powerful financial interests in the current pattern of property ownership.

These are but a few factors. I have set out the complexity of contradictory interests which occur in a shantytown with this history and size in the chapters above. One could think of numerous objections to potentially any initiative in Rocinha, given the heterogeneity of its population and the corresponding complexity of the contradictory interests existent at all levels. This is clearly not only

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[6]Talk of the Brizolão, for example, was opposed by some, who were fearful of losing their small incomes from community teaching, as official certificates would then be introduced for those teaching in Rocinha in the future, and funding for these smaller projects was likely to stop.

true for Rocinha, but for any shantytown, as the tendency towards stratification is basic to all human social organisation.

At a more general level, there is ultimately also the real danger of the substitution of the poorer population by a richer sector of society, as a direct result of upgrading. This is already happening in Rocinha (e.g. the residents of Bairro Barcelos and Curva do S, the best provisioned sectors of Rocinha, were visibly better off than the average resident of Rocinha) and in other shantytowns (e.g. Vidigal, similar in appearance and location to Rocinha, recently had an influx of middle-class students in its upgraded bottom part). This effect is particularly undesirable as it merely shifts the housing problem to elsewhere. Given this complex structure of contradictory interests within Rocinha, it is not surprising that much mobilisation appeared periodically against potential upgrading programmes, expressing exactly these points.

The difficult dynamics of leadership itself is also a real problem that limits any attempt at implementing an upgrading programme. I have elaborated above on the scepticism and distrust of authority. This reaction is only logical in the context of general marginalisation in every sphere of society. I have illustrated the unwillingness to commit oneself in the long run and the preference for short-term flexible dyadic relations, as opposed to commitment to group co-operation. Again, this was logical as a system which functions according to a patronage model, demands an individualist response and actively encourages division within its clientele. Indeed, the tensions created by the prominence of the armed traffickers at war with each other, the presence of a hostile police force (itself a problem of a different kind), the tensions of the exploitative relations between certain individuals resulting from the particular settlement pattern which guaranteed monopolisation over certain scarce resources without central control, and the material costs of these relations have an effect on the kind of political climate that results.

As far as the present political party structures are concerned, Brazilian politicians had little to offer to their poorer electorate. And again, it is only logical that a patronising, personalistic and constantly changing political scene was met with an unstable individualistic and instrumentalist response on which little of

long-term consequence could be built. If any party were serious about change (for which it had limited options, given the character of its financial ties to the rest of the system (e.g. a political career starts with a hugely expensive electoral campaign)), it would have to confront the poor's deep-rooted contempt and suspicion for authorities, consolidated through decades of negative experience.

I share Berger's scepticism about the need for "consciousness raising" (*conscientização*) as a solution to such problems (currently advocated and emphasised in all developmental approaches). The problematic nature of this concept is expressed well in his "Twenty-five Theses":

> It is, in principle, impossible to "raise the consciousness" of anyone, because all of us are stumbling around on the same level of consciousness - a pretty dim level. (Berger 1974:13, 1977 edition)

And since:

> Every human being knows his own world better than any outsider (including the expert who makes policy) (ibid.),

he concludes that:

> Policies for social change are typically made by cliques of politicians and intellectuals with claims to superior insights. These claims are typically spurious. (ibid.).

In sum, the particular history of settlement, and the consequent formation of extremely complex fundamentally contradictory interests between many different kinds of people in this shantytown; the problematic nature of leadership dynamics in such a context; the mobility of this population and the nature of their aspirations in this context, throw into doubt the question of how and to what extent a social unit (and/or parts thereof) of this kind is capable of acting in unison at all. We can conclude therefore that any notion of mobilisation of the "urban poor" or "popular movements", or any implementation programme which requires this mobilisation to some extent, which fails to take into account the complexity of a shantytown's social structure, can only be based on wishful thinking.

Appendix A

Acronyms

AMABB	Associação de Moradores e Amigos de Bairro Barcelos
ASPA	Ação Social Padre Anchieta
BNH	Banco Nacional de Habitação
CANDE	Associação de Mulheres Democráticas
CEDAE	Companhia Estadual de Águas e Esgotos
CEDES	Conselho de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social
CEE	Comissão Estadual de Energia
CEHAB	Companhia Estadual de Habitação
CHISAM	Coordenação de Habitação de Interesse Social da Área Metropolitana do Grande Rio
CNBB	Conferência Nacional dos Bispos Brasileiros
CODESCO	Companhia de Desenvolvimento de Comunidades
COHAB-GB	Companhia de Habitação Popular da Guanabara
COMLURB	Companhia Municipal de Limpeza Urbana
DOPS	Departamento de Ordem Político e Social
FAFEG	Federação das Associações de Favelas da Guanabara
FAFERJ	Federação das Associações de Favelas do Rio de Janeiro
FEEMA	Fundação Estadual de Engenharia do Meio Ambiente
FGTS	Fundo de Garantia do Tempo de Serviço
IBGE	Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia
IBRADES	Fundação Instituto Brasileiro de Desenvolvimento e Estatística
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INPS	Instituto Nacional de Previdência Social
IPLANRIO	Instituto do Planejamento Municipal
JB	Jornal do Brasil
LBA	Legião Brasileira de Assistência
MDB	Movimento Democrático Brasileiro
MORA	Movimento de Organização e Renovação da Associação
OAB	Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil
PDS	Partido Democrático Social

PDT	Partido Democrático Trabalhista
PM	Polícia Militar
PMDB	Partido Movimento Democrático Brasileiro
PROFACE	Programa de Favelas da CEDAE
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores
SERFHA	Serviço Especial de Recuperação das Favelas e Habitações Anti-Hygiênicas
SMDS	Secretaria Municipal de Desenvolvimento Social
SMP	Secretaria Municipal do Planejamento
SOREG	Sociedade Recreativa e Educacional da Gávea

Appendix B

Glossary

abertura	opening up; redemocratisation of political structures
apartamento	flat, apartment
asfalto	asphalt; paved streets; affluent neighbourhood
bairro	district, neighbourhood
bandido	criminal, bandit
barraco	hut, shack
beco	alleyway
bica pública	public water point
bicheiro	owner of the game *jogo do bicho*
birosca	bar, café; local shop
birosqueiro	owner or manager of a *birosca*
biscateiro	odd-jobber
bloco (carnavalesco)	small samba club
boca	place where drugs are traded
cabo-eleitoral	canvasser
cabo	short for *cabo-eleitoral*
carioca	belonging to Rio de Janeiro
carteira assinada	signed contract, work agreement
casa	house
cearense	belonging to Ceará (a state in the Northeast of Brazil)
Centro Comunitário	Community Centre
O Chefão	The Boss; nickname for drugbaron
chinelo	flip-flop sandal
churrascaria	Brazilian steak house
conscientização	consciousness raising
crente	derogatory term for Protestant
da direita	right wing
da esquerda	left wing
desfile	Carnival parade
diarista	worker for a daily income with no further guarantees
Diretoria	Executive Committee of action group
distensão	relaxation; liberalisation (politics)

dono	owner; political boss
drogas	drugs
família	family, relatives
favela	shantytown
favelado	resident of shantytown
gerente	owner, manager (of drug trading post)
governo	government
grileiro	squatter (term of abuse)
grupo	group, team
guarda	guard, inspector
guarda sanitário	sanitation guard
jogo do bicho	popular gambling game
kitchenete	bedsit
lanchonete	café, lunch bar
lixeiro	skip for the disposal of household waste
macumbeiro	practitioner of Afro-Brazilian religion
marginal	marginal, drop-out; criminal
mineiro	belonging to Minas Gerais (a state in Central Brazil)
morador	resident; decent citizen
morro	hill; vertical shantytown
mutirão	voluntary workteam
nordestino	belonging to the Northeast of Brazil
olheiro	teenager who staffed the *bocas* where drugs are bought and sold
palavrão	bad language
panelinha	clique
paraibano	belonging to Paraíba (a state in the Northeast of Brazil)
parente	relative
parentela	extended family
parque proletário	temporary low-income housing estate
passarela	footbridge
patrão	patron, boss
pedaço	patch of land, turf
pilantra	swindler
pivete	mugger
pobre	poor
política	politics
político	politician
ponto de bicho	place in the street where tickets are sold for the gambling game *jogo do bicho*
quarto	room
revolta	revolt, protest
rico	rich, wealthy
rua	street
salário mínimo	minimum salary
sede	seat; clubhouse

sociedade de água	water society
sociedade de luz	electricity society
Tempo das Enchentes	Time of the Floods
tia	aunt; employee of action group
trabalhador	worker
união	union, cooperation
vagabundo	up to no good, criminal

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