THE MYTH OF MARGINALITY
Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro

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Chapter Six
Political Marginality: Participation and Radicalism

The propositions of marginality theory contend that favelados are not integrated into city and national political life. The favela supposedly lacks internal political organization, resulting in the effective impotence of favelados in relation to external government agencies. Squatters and migrants are thought to have little interest in politics, and little awareness of political events. The ideal type we have derived predicts that favelados rarely participate in electoral politics, avoid direct action politics, and only infrequently attempt to pursue individual goals through administrative channels.

A corollary to the proposition of political non-participation is the contention that favelados are so alienated from the social, cultural, economic, and political structures of the city they represent a potential revolutionary force. Squatters and migrants supposedly channel their frustrations into political aggression, withholding legitimacy from the regime and demanding basic structural changes in the system.

In this chapter we will take a careful look at the propositions and assumptions about favela politics in an attempt to go beyond the surface appearances and examine the reality in its various manifestations. I will examine first the contention that favelas have no internal political organization. Next I will look at the favelados' interest in and awareness of politics and assess their political participation at the city and national level. This examination will provide the background for an analysis of the prospects for radicalism in the favela. Finally, I will test the powerlessness and dependency experienced by favela residents and attempt to relate my findings to the realities of Brazilian politics.

Political and Social Organization Within the Favela

In Chapters Two and Five I described briefly the abundant social, political, and religious associations within the favelas. From both direct observation of the activities of these organizations and statistical analysis of the type of membership, I have concluded that the social and political organizations serve very similar functions and draw upon a similar constituency. Both are of critical importance in understanding the politics of the favela. Both train members in the ritual of election of officers, rules of procedure, formation of charters, constitutions, and by-laws, and the process of collective decision-making. But the critical dimension which determines their political nature is that participation in either type confers broad experience in bargaining for benefits from the outside world.

These associations maintain a wide variety of contacts with public and private institutions—as well as individual "patrons"—to secure individual financial support, permits, authorizations, and documents. The local leaders who serve the brokerage function between their members and outside contacts are a continual source of information on the aspects of city bureaucracy most relevant to the daily lives of the favelados.

Religious organizations, on the other hand, do not serve these same "political" functions, even in the broadest sense of the word. Beyond the obvious fact that they are oriented toward the sacred rather than the secular level of problem-solving, they do not have the form of a politicizing association. Their leaders are appointed, not elected; decisions are made without collective input from the members; and contacts with external agencies are restricted to those within the religious hierarchy. Because they vary so much, from spiritist to Pentecostal to Catholic, it is difficult to generalize about any predisposition they may create toward other sorts of participation, or to predict what might politicize the institutions themselves. For our present purpose, then, we will focus on those organizations that are explicitly or implicitly political in nature.

Of the 68 percent of favelados who belong to some voluntary association, just under half belong solely to a religious group, leaving 35 percent who belong to social or political organizations. Fourteen percent belong to two or more such organizations. As would be expected, among elites the membership rates are substantially higher; 88 percent belong to at least one social or political group and almost half belong to two or more.

The most important political organization in the favela is the Residents’ Association. It typically serves as the official spokesman for the community in dealings with outsiders and has the important job within the favela of handling the extension of urban services to the area. Also, as we have noted, Residents’ Associations often try to provide basic welfare services for their constituents—such as medical and
dental care—and adult literacy courses. Association headquarters frequently serve as meeting and recreation places and are the points of mail delivery for the entire community. Although membership strength varies from area to area, the average in the three areas we investigated was over 15 percent of the adult population.

Electricity commissions were first established by the C.E.E. (State Commission of Energy) as a part of a plan to distribute electric power within the favela. The local commissions organize and run the local cabine or distribution point, charging residents more than what they must pay back to the C.E.E. and “pocketing” the difference. Commission members receive service directly from the cabine at a price higher than that paid by other city residents but generally lower than that for the other alternative—hooking up an extension wire from another individual. The electricity commission’s control over a scarce resource and its ability to accumulate funds makes it a strong political force in every favela where one exists. It is regularly embroiled in struggles over all sorts of issues in the local area, and often is led by a splinter group hostile to the directors of the Residents’ Association. Fourteen percent of our sample said they belonged to such a commission.

Most local social functions within the favela—dances, festivals, picnics, and outings—are organized by recreation clubs. Five percent of our respondents said they belonged to such groups. While wealthier clubs have their own headquarters, less fortunate ones often borrow the facilities of the Residents’ Association. Funds come mainly from dues and admission fees at club-sponsored events.

An elaborate network of sports clubs, mainly soccer teams, also exists in the favela. Members (8 percent of the population) play not only against each other but also in numerous inter-favela matches which are well-attended by the rest of the favela population. Buses are hired to transport teams to competitions around the city. Some sports clubs, because they have outside “patrons” or are unusually successful in competition, have their own local headquarters which members use as a place to talk, drink, play cards, or hold parties on weekends.

The major social event of the year—and one in which the favelados play the principal roles while the rest of the city looks on admiringly—is Carnival. The carnival groups (called escolas de samba, literally, “samba schools”) begin their preparation in late August, at least five months in advance of the event itself. Rehearsals are held weekly at the beginning but increase in frequency (and frenzy) until they take place almost daily with publicly open parties on weekend evenings. Only 5 percent of residents in the eight favelas studied said they belonged to samba schools, but these communities were not among the famous favelas whose dancers and drummers parade down the main avenue of Rio in a blaze of color on the main night of Carnival. In some of Rio’s other favelas, as many as 50 to 85 percent of the residents can be found participating in the activities. Local samba schools are linked with a citywide network tied to the Ministry of Tourism, national beer companies, and many other supra-local governmental and private groups. Many of these institutions contribute to the cost of preparation—the government to underwrite a tourist attraction, others to gain concession rights at the many events.¹

Local favela groups, while based in and drawing membership from the favela proper, have strong ties to the outside. It is these ties that allow the Residents’ Association to bargain for benefits for their community,² and the samba school to finance the elaborate preparations for Carnival. As Pearse has indicated, even sports clubs and social organizations are “closely linked to, and often funded by, patrons interested in building up a political constituency in the favela.”³

It is not only the funding that is important, but also the contacts to be made with “upper-sector” sponsors. Such contacts are often invaluable for finding a better job or getting medical or educational advantages. And more often than not, the relationship is reciprocal: if, for example, the “sponsor” has a friend or relative running for local elective office, he can count on a large ready-made constituency.

The network of sociopolitical organizations in the favelas is clear evidence of an internal political framework in the squatter settlements rather than the presumed atomization and isolation. Contrary to the assumptions of our ideal type, the favelados participate actively in local organizations and seek continually to establish links with the outer society.

LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE FAVELAS

In many squatter settlements in Latin America, local leadership is rigorously dominated by one powerful ruler, the cacique or boss. Often by organizing the “invasion” of land, he obtains de facto power over a neighborhood and rules it thereafter with an unlimited mandate. A retinue of friends, relatives, and dependents who can be called upon for assistance allows the cacique to threaten—and use if necessary—strongarm tactics to get his way.⁴

The pattern of local leadership in Rio’s favelas is considerably
more diffuse than this. Each organization elects not only a president but often a seemingly endless slate of vice-presidents, secretaries, first and second treasurers, and so on. Although memberships often overlap, it is unusual for a person to be an officer in more than one group. All members of an organization are eligible to participate in its elections. Those acquiring office are bound by the rules and duties outlined in the charter or "constitution" which each organization draws up and regards with much pride. In many cases a president and some of his associates will be reelected, but there are usually serious challengers to any incumbent. The openness of favela leadership is further maintained by the absence of appointed party or government officials in the neighborhood, the modal pattern in squatter settlements of Mexico and Venezuela. Furthermore, none of the established political parties court favela support as they did in Chile before the 1973 coup.

Yet in other respects there are many similarities between the situation of favela leaders and that of caciques. Both are local residents, not outsiders; both are concerned with all matters in their areas, not single issues. Although the favela does not have a single leader who has exclusive control over linkages to external authority, a group of leaders does assume the "role of the political broker or middleman standing guard over the crucial junctures or synapses of relationships which connect the local system to the larger whole." As Lisa Peattie found in Cuidad Guayana, this "access to higher levels of authority" often makes a critical difference in defending local interests.

Like the caciques, it is the favela elites who have the contacts with supra-local agencies, the bureaucrats, politicians, architects, lawyers, and other high-status individuals possessing skills or resources relevant to the satisfaction of local needs. While useful, as Adams points out, the "derivative power" flowing from sources outside the domain of the local leader can be "used effectively within the settlement to maintain control and discourage serious challenges to authority." Like the caciques, favela leaders often use their privileged positions in pursuit of personal wealth and prestige and thus have strong vested interests in maintaining the status quo.

If the squatter settlements were to achieve legal rights to their lands and full urban services and facilities, in many cases the usefulness, power, and importance of these leaders would be severely reduced. The control they have over internal resources would be dissolved and their bargaining power deflated. In order to survive, they must persuade residents to be content with token change and slow progress, and to trust that local leadership is doing its best to deal with the difficult problems of infrastructure and tenure. This may sound Machiavellian, but it is generally true. As the Brazilian sociologist Machado explains: "In the case, for example, of the networks of water and electricity and internal commerce, these can only function as resources for the bourgesia favelada [favela bourgeoisie] insofar as the status quo is preserved, and the favela doesn't undergo profound changes which would transform it into a regular working-class neighborhood." 9

**POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT OUTSIDE THE FAVELA**

Theoretically, it might be argued that while the favelados are indeed participants within their own communities, they are nonetheless marginal in terms of their interest and involvement in the wider political sphere outside the favela. It has been assumed, for example, that lack of leisure time and resources conspires against the active involvement of the favelado in city and national politics and to some extent that is true. Their hour-by-hour existence presents them with a nearly unsuperable burden of immediate concerns. Politics attains high salience for them only insofar as it directly touches their lives.

**POLITICAL AWARENESS**

In the pre-test interviews we asked favelados how often they talked about political matters and with whom. Five out of 41 said they discussed political matters occasionally, but not a single person said this was a frequent practice and the vast majority said "never." Political discussion that did occur took place not with family, friends, or neighbors, but with politicians or government functionaries, usually in conjunction with obtaining some political favor. Bonilla found a similar pattern in an earlier study in Rio; only about 12 percent of favelados had discussed politics with a friend over the six-month period prior to his study. 10

The meaning of "talking about politics" as well as the sense of what is political clearly varies from person to person and culture to culture. For the purposes of looking at political interest and awareness in this study, we used the following four criteria: perceived relevance of politics; degree of interest in political matters; level of political information; and degree of opinion-holding about matters at each of three political levels—local, state, and national.

The components of each of these dimensions and the distributions
for men, women, and leaders can be seen in Figure 9. As shown, the closer to home, the more relevant politics appears to the favelados, with leaders recognizing more clearly the relevance at all levels.

Prevailing levels of political awareness among the other favelados seemed inadequate to the leaders, who often complained that their constituents were apáticas, desinteressados, or ignorantes, or that they não querem nada, não se esforçam (apathetic, uninterested, or ignorant, they don’t want to get involved, don’t want to make any effort).  

The same relationships held for political interest and information: levels are relatively low for the favelado in general and substantially higher for leaders. About half of the favelados mentioned a “preferred source” of political information, most often the media, as opposed to local “opinion leaders,” friends, or family; and only 11 percent said they “had ever become so involved (angered or enthused) over some political issue that they really wanted to do something about it.” Leaders, as expected, are more highly politicized: 80 percent expressed a preferred source of political information, and about a third had grown sufficiently involved to want to do something.

As to be expected, degree of interest in politics and perceptions of its relevance co-vary with levels of political information. Data on levels of political information are also presented in Figure 9. The composite scales, however, obscure the important point that levels of political information tend to decrease as events grow distant from the favela.

Finally, contrary to the idea that favelados are too apolitical even to formulate opinions, we found that 92 percent of those interviewed held definite opinions on at least half of a series of eight controversial issues, and almost half held an opinion on all eight.

Comparisons with studies of attitudes in rural areas indicate that the favelado is much more knowledgeable about political affairs than his rural counterpart. Philippe Schmitter found only one-third of people in rural areas able to name the President of Brazil —in comparison with 59 percent of the favelados and 95 percent of their leaders in my study. Further, I had observed during a stay in a Bahian fishing village several years earlier that although everyone knew that “Pedro Alvares Cabral discovered Brazil in 1500,” students and teachers alike were ignorant of the contemporary President of their country.

*It should be noted that knowledge of the President was reduced somewhat by the fact that at the time of the study Costa y Silva was seriously ill and leadership had passed somewhat ambiguously into the hands of a temporary junta.*

The political marginality concept does not do justice to the nuances of political awareness in the favela. The amount of information the favelados have about international politics may not be great, nor is political discussion valued over other topics of conversation. However, the favelados are led by persons who are more keenly aware of politics and its
ramifications than they are, and their attention is astutely selective, focusing on the local arena where their concern is more likely to produce results. It is in the realm of political participation that the degree of awareness and interest can be actualized.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

We measured political involvement in three areas: electoral participation, including voting and working for a candidate in an election; direct-action politics, including demonstrating, petitioning, and attending political meetings; and administrative participation, including the “use of urban agencies” such as governmental bureaus, social welfare institutions, banks, lawyers, employment agencies or labor unions. In an authoritarian regime where many channels of political expression are blocked or available only in symbolic form, “making use of the political process” becomes very important.

Electoral Politics. The degree of participation of the favelados in each of these three realms is shown in Figure 10. Roughly 60 to 70 percent of favelados who are eligible have voted at least once. This figure is a bit misleading, however, because voting is supposed to be compulsory in Brazil. Ironically, a more precise measure of meaningful participation is the act of not voting, that is, casting a blank ballot. This moderate but expressive form of protest was followed by 55 percent of the voters in the November 1970 Guanabara elections.

The second measure of electoral participation, open to anyone regardless of age, literacy, or work status, is working for a political candidate as a cabo eleitoral, a type of local ward heeler. One in ten favelados has canvassed and done publicity work for a candidate in this manner, and 10 percent is a rather high figure for a population that is supposedly nonactive and apathetic. One Brazilian observer describes their role as follows: “While the great topics are being discussed, each voter looks for a personal benefactor and each politico strives to guarantee his constituency. This is where the most important figure in Brazilian elections appears: the cabo eleitoral... He fills the gap between what the candidate proclaims and what he will perform. Politics is thus imbued with a highly demographic content. The candidate presents the voter with a program of action, but to the individual he promises his personal attention. It is this which counts."

The cabo eleitoral is a broker operating between voter and candidate. In return for the votes he delivers, the cabo eleitoral receives promises of favors from the candidate. Sometimes these are collective benefits such as sewer pipes or cement steps; and sometimes the “favors” are last-minute payoffs that can be distributed around to individuals, such as clothes, shoes, or food. Often, the reward is personal. One cabo eleitoral who boasted 2,000 committed votes is said to have held out for a Chevrolet Impala, another for someone who would get the bigamy charges against him cleared. The system takes people with purely local influence and ties them into a larger system of power relations, but always on a pragmatic basis. There is little room for ideology or even loyalty to abstract collectivities.

Direct-Action Politics. Electoral politics is not the only way favelados can express themselves politically. They can work outside these channels altogether—in direct actions such as signing petitions, going to meetings, or demonstrating. Twelve percent of the favelados have signed their name to a petition (abaixo-assinado), usually to support some community-level demand: a local school, legal title to favela land,
or linkage into urban networks of water or electricity. Only 5 percent
said they had attended meetings, although the question may have been
interpreted to exclude the general assemblies of the Residents' Asso-
ciations, and to include only explicitly political meetings. To admit par-
ticipating in meetings organized by a labor union, a political party, or a
specific pressure group outside the favela would be somewhat risky.
Likewise, only 19 percent of the favelados said they had participated in
a demonstration. Those who did mentioned such diverse activities as the
hunger strikes in Caxias, labor union walkouts, sit-ins at the Governor's
Palace, or, in the past, rallies against removal.

In numbers of participants, direct-action politics is clearly the realm
of least involvement. It is interesting to note, however, that these figures
correspond closely to those for participation in direct action by poor people
in the United States. A sample of over 1000 persons in five neighborhoods
(three black, one white, one Chicano), indicated that 14 percent of the
rank and file had complained to a manager and 12 percent to a government
official. Nineteen percent had participated in a picket line; the same
proportion of favelados have participated in demonstrations.

Administrative Politics. Turning from the high-risk activities of direct
action to the low risk, individually oriented arena of administrative
participation, we find impressive increases in involvement. Administrative
participation is by far the most frequent form of political activity
undertaken by favelados. On one component of our scale alone, “going
to a government agency,” we find participation by 28 percent of women,
42 percent of men, and 63 percent of leaders. Not counting the leaders,
54 percent have either gone to a government agency about a problem,
consulted a lawyer, sought out employment counseling, used a bank,
obtained social security, or belonged to a labor union.

Administrative participation is a viable way to make use of the
political process and is a clearly “integrated” form of involvement.
Many of the favelas' problems are played out in the administrative
realm, and the contribution of many local leaders consists primarily in
slogging through endless administrative channels on the community's
behalf. Nevertheless, this is playing the political game by the rules of
the system. If the government creates another agency to be consulted or
another requirement to be met, there is generally no recourse but to
accept the added, and perhaps definitive, delay. At the unsuccessful
end of administrative outcomes is the instance, cited earlier, of Maria
Carolina's humiliating defeat in trying to receive disability compensa-
tion from the government.

On the other end, however, is the astute political gaming that takes
place between favela leaders and politicians or bureaucrats one step up
the ladder. A remark by one favela leader about a call he had received
from the director of an important government agency captures the
intricacies well: "The Director said that he wanted to warn me that 'I was
being used by the Deputy.' ... I responded that no, on the contrary, 'it
was I that was using the Deputy.' The only thing I didn't tell him was
that who was really being used by the Deputy was himself, the
Director."

Political participation by the favela elites is similar in distribution
to that of other favelados, but much higher in overall amount. Eighty
percent have voted; one in three has worked for a political candidate. A
great many indeed have demonstrated (44 percent) and petitioned for
favela causes (37 percent). Again we note that these rates of involve-
ment correspond to those prevailing among leaders in poor neighbor-
hoods of the United States. A study of 630 leaders chosen by the poor in
100 neighborhoods across the country revealed that 47 percent had com-
plained to a government official and the same number to a local proprie-
tor, and that 35 percent had participated in picket lines.

Administrative participation among favela leaders, as among the
rank and file, is the most frequent kind of political involvement. Eighty-
four percent have engaged in one of the forms of it we measured. Access
to administrative contacts is one of the main sources of power they hold
in the squatter settlements and is critical in understanding the politics
of the favela.

We can conclude, from this evidence, that while politics is not the
dominant interest in the lives of favelados, they are far from apathetic
and inactive. They are sensibly concerned with those issues that affect
their lives most directly and wisely participate in ways which disrupt the
system least while still offering hope of advancing their partisan inter-
ests. The leaders take a more active role in all realms of activity but
abide by the same strategy of minimizing risks and maximizing gains.
Given Brazilian political realities, this amounts to the opposite of mar-
ginality—a smooth, non-disruptive integration into the national political
system. Nonetheless, the governing classes' fear of disruption and anti-
social behavior has led to widespread stereotypes regarding radicalism
in the favelas.
Radicalism and Conformism in the Favela

In the years preceding the Brazilian military coup of 1964, there was great fervor on the part of students, intellectuals, journalists, young professionals, and even some labor leaders concerning the inevitability of a social revolution. The Goulart government spoke of structural reforms (reformas de base); the National Student Union (U.N.E.) led a nationwide student strike; Francisco Julião organized peasant leagues (lígases camponesas) in the Northeast, and leftist Miguel Araujo, as Governor of Pernambuco, was instituting a wide range of reforms. The revolution seemed just around the corner. The left presumed that its evaluation of the Brazilian reality (a realidade Brasileira) was widely shared by other segments of the population, particularly the masses (o povo). Surely the favelado, of all Brazilians, would be supportive of movements for radical change. Newspapers chimed in as well with dire predictions of hoards of angry favelados descending from their hillsides upon the city, rioting, looting, and threatening the lives of respectable citizens. On April 1 the “revolution came”—not from the left, but from the right—in the form of a military coup. The favelados did indeed come down from the hills, but in support of the reestablishment of law and order and the sanctioning of “God, family, and private property.” Bearing this experience in mind, it will be useful to put to empirical test the two conflicting theories espoused in Chapter Four—one regarding squatters as radicals, the other regarding them as conformists.

The literature on squatting settlement radicalism raises a series of challenging questions. What is really meant by “radical” in terms of the favelas? How is it possible to determine whether or not favelados are “radical”? The term radical has been used in a very loose and imprecise way in the literature on marginality. It often carries the connotation of alienation or frustration, which supposedly leads the squatters to disruptive acts, riots, and the creation of general social instability. Because of the great differences in living standards between the favelados and the rest of the urban population, many observers on both the right and the left have assumed a basis of resentment and hostility among favelados that would make them receptive to a “radical” ideological perspective. This perspective, in the Brazilian context of the late 1960s, meant such things as a disaffection with the government and the political system, a belief in basic structural change, a degree of class consciousness, and a nationalist, anti-imperialist outlook. It is these four sets of perceptions which many Brazilian social scientists used as indicators of radical ideology, and which I have used to measure its presence or absence. However, before examining the data, it should be pointed out that these indicators do not tell the whole story.

First of all, many of the indicators apply more directly to the ideological perceptions of students or professionals than they do to the relevant features in the lives of favelados. Structural change or nationalism, for example, are abstract concepts which the favelados may never have considered. The threat of favela removal, however, has a great deal of meaning to the favelados and has catalyzed their collective action numerous times in the past, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Furthermore, as with all attitudinal questions, there is no certainty that actions can be predicted by attitudes, or that a change in the objective situation will not completely reverse both the attitudes and the behavior of the people involved.

I will examine the responses of the favelados, then, with a good deal of caution, but also with the recognition that belief in favela radicalism is a strongly held stereotype upon which policy is based. There is something to be learned about how closely the political beliefs of the favelados approximate an ideology, how true the frustration-aggression theory is, and what internal differences exist between leaders and followers, men and women, and the favela sub-classes. Using specific behavioral and attitudinal tests for radicalism, I have attempted to establish how favelados acted and thought at a given time in Brazilian history.

Measures of Radicalism

The first measure of the radicalism to be explored is disaffection with the government and unwillingness to concede its legitimacy. When we asked in our pre-test “Do you think, in general, the present government is good or bad for the country?”, only 3 of 41 responded “bad.” The remaining 80 percent varied in opinion, but all favored the government to some degree. This finding is confirmed by two similar items we wrote for the standardized questionnaire which we felt were less threatening and thus less likely to evoke evasive responses (see Figure 11). When asked if “the people in the government really try to understand and solve your problems,” 60 percent said yes.” On a second item, 82 percent said the government provides the masses (o povo) with the things they need, either in the normal process of things (58 percent) or when the people demand them (44 percent). Only 8 percent said the government doesn’t provide in either case. In this respect, favelados are much less alienated than the American poor. When asked, “How do you think
forms of the same question were used instead. On the first, only 28 percent said they would prefer “profound change going to the root of problems” as opposed to 53 percent who opted for “small modifications” and 18 percent who said they “didn’t know.” When asked later in the interview what kind of changes would be best for the development of Brazil, 59 percent said “big changes,” 22 percent “small changes,” and 9 percent “no changes.” A comparison of the responses to these questions indicates that while a majority of favelados might be in favor of large changes in policy, fewer favor changes in the social order and almost no one favors changes which might involve violence.

Class consciousness appears to be rather low in the favela, despite arguments that “the world view of migrants is characterized by intense hatred of the rich.” To begin testing this notion we asked in the pretest, “In Brazil there are the rich and the poor. How do you explain this?” The responses were exceedingly varied in style, but most revolved around the themes “it is natural because they complement each other,” “since the beginning of the world it has always been that way,” and “that’s just the way it is.” Five of 41 said that being poor depended on the amount of effort a person put into his work and studies—a different answer, but hardly one reflective of a class-based outlook. Seven percent stated that wealth depended on family name and inheritance, but even this response was devoid of a sense of class antagonism, domination, or exploitation.

Soares found that migrants, when they first arrived in the city, continued to call themselves “the poor” (pobre), as they had been known in the country, but that slowly they began to call themselves members of the working class. The most mobilized and class-conscious elements, however, called themselves the proletariat.  

We included a standard measure of perception of class barriers in the final questionnaire. The result: fully half of the population feels “their son and the son of a businessman have the same chance to succeed in life.” Although favelados believe there will always be rich and poor, many feel little frustration, apparently because they have real hopes that their children will succeed in life.

When asked directly what class they belonged to, 10 percent said lower-middle or above, and about one-quarter said “proletariat.” In fact, it is the heartfelt aspiration of many of the favelados to emulate and someday become—perhaps through their children—the middle class. Others take a certain pride in being a favelado, having accomplished the things they did on their own, and through working together. This was
especially true in Nova Brasília. The favelados did aspire to raise the level of their living conditions in the direction of the middle class and to acquire land tenure for their favela, but they were proud to be in the squatter community and wouldn’t have moved out even if economic circumstances permitted.

While the favelados do not have contacts ordinarily through their place of work—since most of them work on their own and in unstable conditions rather than in factories—they do have these contacts through their place of residence. They tend to interact with each other daily in their communities, raising the issue of another kind of group organized on another basis than that of labor. This point came to the fore in the United States with the Alinsky approach to community organizing, and it was, in fact, one of the reasons that the Brazilian government was so interested in breaking up these communities. As in the lower-class U.S. communities, however, the residents were very suspicious of “outside agitators,” and of rhetoric that didn’t lead to tangible results.

The final component of the radicalism measure is nationalism. In Brazil, being nationalistic and anti-imperialistic (especially anti-American) has always been associated with the world-view of the left. When we asked in the pre-test questionnaire, “What is nationalism?”, 33 of 38 had never heard of the word; the remainder thought it was “some sort of national policy.”

Anticipating ignorance of “nationalism” as a concept, we asked several questions about the content of nationalism and national pride in the pre-test. The first was, “In your opinion are there some peoples (nations) who are more capable and intelligent than others?” Fifty percent responded “yes,” but when prodded to say which peoples, almost no one answered “Brazilians.” The overwhelming vote of confidence went instead to Americans. When asked what they felt the most striking characteristics of the Brazilian people were, they said: “happiness, gaiety, kindness, friendliness, and style”—not very “ politicized” answers.

In keeping with the interests of the upper sector, favelados, although not nationalistic, are in fact “patriotic” in the traditional sense. About 75 percent think that national holidays such as Independence Day (September 7) should be commemorated, mostly because “it is an established tradition and should be perpetuated.” Since the time of our study the present regime has undertaken an elaborate publicity campaign of moral and civil education (educação moral e cívica) to encourage exactly these sentiments of patriotism. Aside from compulsory

courses at all levels of the educational system, one of the elements of the campaign is widespread distribution of banners, flags, and bumper stickers saying “Security,” “Brazil, Love It or Leave It,” “Brazil, Love It or Die,” or simply, “You can count on me.” There are also frequent radio, television, and newspaper commercials about the nation’s glory and progress. The most sophisticated media experts from all over the world have been hired to devise these media spots.

For the final questionnaire, two measures of nationalism were used: On the first, “Do you think there is any foreign influence on what happens here in Brazil, and if so, is it good or bad for the country?”, 23 percent produced the nationalistic response—that it existed and was bad for the country. Of those recognizing foreign influence, 70 percent identified the United States as its major source.) Similarly, on a question concerning the purpose of foreign business in Brazil, only 22 percent gave the anti-imperialist response, “to exploit the Brazilian people,” whereas 64 percent said such businesses were there to help the Brazilian people or just to take care of their own affairs.

IDEOLOGICAL SYNDROMES

In addition to examining the individual items, I searched carefully for syndromes of radical ideas. Nothing approaching an ideology, either of the left or the right, could be found. The situation is typical of a general Brazilian political style which tends to be pragmatic, not ideological. As one high-ranking Brazilian politician announced concerning an important problem of the day, “Eu não sou nem a favor, nem contra: muito pelo contrário.” (“I am neither for, nor against; quite the contrary.”)

Table 28 indicates the interrelationships between the measures of radicalism used in this study. Knowing how a person has responded to any one measure is almost no help in predicting how he will respond to any other. Included in Table 28 are all the interrelationships (Rank Order Correlations) between the eight indicators of radicalism reported in Figure 11. Only two of the 28 pairs attain meaningful levels of covariance, these being the two indicators of “nationalism” and the two on “evaluation of the government.” We found, furthermore, no relationship between any of four “composite” indicators (“government evaluation,” “nationalism,” “preference for big changes,” and “class identification”). We decided to include in the table three additional measures concerning attitudes toward popular participation (whether all Brazilians should participate in politics, whether the vote should be given to
table 28
lack of radicalism syndrome, spearman rank order
Correlation Coefficients*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Government tries to understand and solve problems</td>
<td>+ .28</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Government provides</td>
<td>+ .04</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Palliatives preferred</td>
<td>+ .03</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>No change or small change preferred</td>
<td>+ .09</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Favela same chance for success</td>
<td>+ .04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Class identification</td>
<td>+ .11</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Foreign influence good</td>
<td>+ .26</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Foreign business good</td>
<td>+ .02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Politics left in hands of politicians</td>
<td>+ .02</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Illiterate should not have vote</td>
<td>+ .06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Brazilian people lack capacity to vote well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Entries with significance at the .001 level are in bold face.

the illiterate, and whether the Brazilian population has the capacity to vote wisely. Again no relationship existed, either between them, or between them and the other "radicalism" measures.

Even though the numbers of persons giving the radical answers to these questions were few in absolute terms, we could have spoken of them as a group if they were more or less the same people on each item.

It would have made sense to speak of radicalism as a phenomenon, to compare the radical with more conformist groups, and to see what factors conditioned the formation of a radical point of view. This kind of analysis was obviously inappropriate because no syndrome could be found.

One might object, of course, that this failure to find syndromes of radical attitudes and behavior in the favela is due to faulty measurement or analytical technique. However, it was precisely our success in isolating syndromes of political awareness and political participation that encouraged us in our search for a radical ideology. The matrices are shown in Table 29.

second-generation hypothesis
We tested as well the "second generation" hypothesis that radicalism should be expected not among those newly arrived in the city but among those who have lived there longer. Two measures were constructed to measure length of time in the city, one categorizing people from "native of Rio" to "first year in Rio," the other from "native of big
city" to "first year in big city." None of the eight indicators of radicalism in Figure 11 was significantly related to either of the two measures.\(^b\)

**Frustration-Aggression Theory and Radicalism**

Although holding serious reservations about the pseudo-psychological nature of the frustration-aggression approach, I felt that since it is so widely accepted among social scientists studying the urban poor, it would be more useful to test the concept than to ignore it.

Our findings are consistent with the frustration-aggression theory of radicalism in one sense, for if frustration may be seen as contributing to disaffection, then it must be granted as well that satisfaction promotes conformism. Contrary to radical expectation for the squatter settlement, favelados told us they were reasonably satisfied with their lives and prospects for the future. More than eight in ten said they do not want to return to the places they came from, although half had returned at some time for a visit. Four-fifths felt their economic situation was better than that of their friends who had remained home. Nine out of ten mentioned aspects of their present lives in the city they especially liked; and 70 percent said there was as much or more mutual help in the favela as there was in their home areas; and half felt their children had as much of a chance to "make it" in life as the children of the typical businessman. There is little evidence in this picture of the "want-get" disparities or thwarted hopes of the frustration-aggression hypothesis. Despite the favelados' existence in a city which openly invites invidious comparisons of social class, the favelados were comparing themselves with each other or with their rural counterparts and coming out ahead.

We tested the frustration theory further by checking to see if measures of radicalism varied with indicators of frustration and satisfaction, using as measures of frustration: (1) wanting to return to one's home town; (2) feeling one was better off before migrating; (3) believing there was more mutual help in one's home town; (4) having few people to count on; (5) wanting to leave the favela; (6) disliking Rio; (7) preferring to be relocated; (8) being pessimistic about Brazil's and one's own future. These variables cover a wide variety of dissatisfaction and disappointments, but more disappointment or frustration in any of these

\(^b\)The average absolute gamma between "Rio-born" and the eight measures was .03; the average between "city-born" and the eight measures was .06; and the highest single gamma among all was only .13. Not one table was statistically significant, even at the minimal .05 level.

ways was not related to any of the radicalism measures (see Table 30). The result is striking in face of the large body of theoretical literature premised on this relationship.

We also looked closely at two kinds of persons experiencing great disparities of aspiration and attainment in their own lives: those who

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures of Radicalism-Conformant(^a)</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>.069</td>
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<td>.055</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 30**

Radicalism-Conformism and Frustration-Satisfaction (Matrix of Spearman's R's)

\(^a\)The measures of Radicalism-Conformism are:
1. Government not trying to help people like us
2. Government does not provide
3. Want palliative measures
4. Want small or no changes
5. Their son has same chance as businessman's son
6. Vague class identity
7. Foreign influence good
8. Foreign business good.

\(^b\)The measures of Frustration-Satisfaction are:
A. Want to stay in city
B. Better off economically
C. More mutual help in city
D. Can count on people in neighborhood
E. Want to stay in favela
F. Like something special about the city
G. Dislike nothing about city
H. Have good prospects for past and future of both self and Brazil.
would work for better pay under a more demanding boss and still had the lowest level of income, and those especially concerned about the education of their children but whose children had been conspicuously unsuccessful in getting through school. Neither of these two measures of personal frustration was related to radicalism. The frustration-aggression theory, then, is doubly useless in seeking to understand radicalism in the favela. First, no matter how downtrodden and frustrated the favelados appear from the outside, the external view varies with their self-image; and second, what frustration does exist is not channeled into political nonconformism.

LEADERSHIP AND RADICALISM

In any political system the attitudes and orientation of the most active and powerful members are of particular importance. Though a minority, their views weigh heavily on the political scales since they oversee the conversion of attitudes into action. They also receive the majority of communications from the broader political matrix and interpret them to the rest of the population. Finally, they serve as models for the rest of the community. It is important, then, to note that favela leaders, on every available measure, are more conformist and more conservative than the people they represent. Not only are they failing to stir their followers into a "frenzy of radical activity," as many have feared, but they are not even catalyzing the small degree of discontent that does exist. On most measures they are roughly 10 percent more system-supportive than the random sample. In short, it is precisely those elements of favela society that have the most political interest, knowledge, and political participation—those who can assert themselves most effectively in the outer world—that are least likely to challenge that world to change its repressive policies toward the favela. As Machado has pointed out, favela leaders have a high stake in maintaining the system that has brought them relative power and status, and their outlook is correspondingly determined much more by supra-local groups and politicians—all extremely conservative—than by the masses of favelados. 27

It is possible that the favela elites have risen to their positions of power and leadership in part precisely because their own political outlook was more akin to that of the establishment than those of others. As they became active within their local communities and had to deal increasingly with supra-local agencies in bargaining for benefits, many may have developed an increasing stake in maintaining the status quo.

If the favelas were legalized and provided with the full array of urban services, for example, the leaders would be deprived of the political bargains which are presently so lucrative and rewarding for them. 28

WOMEN AND RADICALISM

Exclusion of women from power roles is deeply rooted in the Brazilian political style; it is the political reflection in the mirror of machismo. Consistent with the argument I have been developing, the least powerful favelados—women—turn out to be the least conformist. Only one neighborhood leader in ten is a woman. Women are more likely to be illiterate, jobless, underpaid, and more isolated from urban life than men. They are also lower on all indicators of political awareness and involvement. Correspondingly, according to our measures, they are less conformist than men (see Figure 11). Women are more doubtful that the government is doing its best by the favelado, more skeptical that palliative measures can solve their problems, and more cynical about their children having the same chance for success as businessmen's children. On all these measures they are about 10 percent less conformist than men, which seems to indicate that they perceive the true position of the favela more clearly than men. This follows the notion, turned into a general theory by Gunter Frank, that persons least closely linked to the established order have the greatest likelihood of developing an autonomous sense of self and a clear definition of self-interest. 29

In the specific case of favela women, their relatively lower degree of conformism may result from a combination of factors: they may simply not be as savvy as the men, or the leaders, about the potential dangers of being critical and saying how they really see things; they may have had less exposure to the middle-class myths of "equal opportunity" and "governmental good-will" because of their lower media exposure and more restricted contacts with other groups; and they may be more realistic about their own and their family's position since they are the ones most in touch with the daily problems of survival. It is the women of the favela who most often have to stretch a sub-minimum wage to feed a six-member family or confront the disappointment of their children having to leave school to go to work.

The issue of the "revolutionary" potential of favela women, however, should be approached with caution. To say that women are less conformist does not necessarily mean they are more radical. While their readiness to criticize is greater than that of men or elites, in
absolute terms it is still very low. Women in Latin America are not a very realistic source of radical change. Past experience has shown that as women acquire more political know-how and move from their peripheral location in the society, they will adopt the more acquiescent stands of men and leaders. It would be interesting to compare women leaders with women followers, but the actual number of women leaders—13 out of all 150—is too small to make the analysis meaningful.

CLASS AND RADICALISM

There is an important perspective which unifies many of the observations we have been making so far. Leaders are undeniably the highest status group within the limited-class spectrum of the favela. It is this privileged position that accounts in part for the leaders' greater familiarity with events and personages in the city, and for their self-confidence in assuming initiative on local issues. Concomitantly, the lower socioeconomic position of women in part underwrites their modest political nonconformism.

Some local leaders undoubtedly have the economic means to leave the favela and live elsewhere but remain to enjoy the prerogatives of "big fish in little ponds." This desire for prestige and power, however limited, is the foundation for the contention that leaders do not want to solve the problems of the favela so much as they want to maintain a series of short-term victories which they can work on one at a time, always increasing their own status and wealth.30

A secondary analysis of the present data and two similar studies in other favelas by Cardoso and Martins, confirm these points:

The greatest concentrations of anti-conservative and anti-system attitudes and values tend to occur precisely in the lowest strata on the scale of socioeconomic stratification. . . . The socioeconomic determinants tend to focus the anti-conservative or opposition attitudes in those sectors in which there is the greatest concentration of apathy and political inactivity; and conversely tend to accumulate in the most mobile, informed, and active sectors exactly the attitudes and values which predispose the most conformist forms of intervention in the political process.31

These conclusions were reached after a composite indicator of socioeconomic status was matched against the awareness, participation, and evaluative items we have been discussing.32 In every instance the higher the sub-class of the respondent within the favela, the greater his political awareness, participation, and conformism.

Some would interpret the discovery of a class or quasi-class basis for political alienation as a sign of the revolutionary potential of the most deprived favelado. We should emphasize, along with Cardoso and Martins, however, that although the lower stratum within the favela is numerically the most important, it is probably misleading to conceive of it as a "concentration of revolutionary potential."33 Several factors enter into this judgment. First, the level of alienation among the lowest sectors is high not in absolute terms, but only in comparison with the other favelados. A 10 percent differential from utter acquiescence is a tenuous purchase on revolutionary fervor. Second, the fact that the most frustrated favelados are not the most radical ones discards the postulated dynamic—that increasing deprivation or oppression will lead to increasingly revolutionary activity. Third, since there is no evidence for any radical symptoms, although lower-status persons have a more critical perspective in general, few have linked their ideas into a framework capable of explaining new phenomena or supporting political action. Finally, although there is heightened alienation from government within the lower strata, they are also the least politically efficacious. While one could interpret the lack of involvement in traditional political activities by this group as an expression of disdain for establishment procedures, this explanation does not account for the lack of belief that actions of the federal government affect them, or for their non-involvement in demonstrating and petitioning.

Overall, given the limitations of this type of inquiry and analysis, I would conclude that the favelados showed few signs of rebellion, leftist radicalism, or propensity to disruption. They also did not seem particularly vulnerable to the appeals of "radical rhetoric." Favela residents were very suspicious of izquierdistas (leftists) coming into the favela with their pamphlets. ("These outsiders all have relatives who are lawyers or have connections in the military, so they can afford to take risks, while we have no protection at all.") This shows neither apathy-ignorance nor radicalism—disruptiveness, but a keen understanding of the existing reality. The very recognition of their vulnerability is itself a sign of the favelados' political astuteness and pragmatism. Also, simply trying to survive as favelados has given them experience in collective action, and often positive reinforcement along with it. Favelados give their collective attention and allegiance to those issues and individuals that can bring them material improvement and a degree of security. Under different circumstances, I have no doubt that the favelados would be quite capable of perceiving their self-interest and acting accordingly.
The point is simply that under the circumstances in 1968-1969 they were not about to assume any dead-end risk or harbor any ideological illusions.

**Powerlessness and Dependency**

Having seen that the favelados are not politically marginal—that they participate actively within their own communities and moderately but wisely in the external arena—and that they are neither radical nor disruptive, we can ask in what way they are integrated. Just as socially, culturally, and economically the terms of the favelados' integration were defined by stigma, exclusion, and exploitation, so in the political realm they are marked by manipulation and repression. We will see a clear example of this in the following chapter, and examine in the conclusion how this has been played out throughout Brazilian history. Over time, this has resulted in the feelings of vulnerability discussed above, and in a sense of powerlessness and dependency.

This was clearly shown in the pre-test stage, when we asked several questions from the Almond and Verba study dealing with the feelings of "perceived efficacy." In response to the query, "If the government does something harmful to you is there something you can do about it?", 36 out of 41 said "no," half giving as explanation the idea that "the government is always right," the rest mentioning fear of repressive reactions the government might take. The same high proportion answered negatively to the parallel question, "If you want the government to do something in your interest, is there something you can do?" All but two of the 41 agreed on a third standard item, that "politics and government are so complicated that you really can't understand what is going on." Most revealing of all, however, were the responses to an item stating that "all Brazilian citizens have certain rights," and asking "Which in your opinion are the most important?" The most frequent responses were: "the right to support the government," "the right to respect the authorities," and "the right to obey the laws." The critical distinction between rights and duties, privileges and obligations seems to have no meaning in the experience of this group. Most of these questions were so obviously inappropriate to the Brazilian favela context that they were eliminated in the final version of the questionnaire.

Powerlessness and dependency were important concepts to measure, however, and a number of items regarding them were asked of all respondents. Emerging from Figure 12 is a striking portrait of political reality seen from the favelado's point of view. Only 16 percent of those we interviewed thought they could "do something to influence the government," and only 26 percent thought that they "could really have a say in what the government does." Even on a very local and personal level, lack of perceived political influence was abundant: only 3 percent said that "people often ask their opinions about elections, candidates, or political problems in general," with another 5 percent saying that this occurred sometimes.

Multiple experiences of political impotence have left an even deeper mark on the consciousness of the favelado. We discovered a normative orientation that actually legitimizes this lack of participation in molding one's own destiny. When asked whether "every Brazilian should participate in political life" or whether "politics should be left in the hands of politicians," only 30 percent chose the former. Further evidence comes from two questions dealing with the capacity of people in general, and illiterates in specific, to take a responsible role in political life. Only 31 percent felt strongly that "in general the Brazilian people have the capacity to vote wisely," and only 41 percent were in favor of giving illiterates the vote. This was, incidentally, independent of whether or not one was illiterate oneself, and was still further evidence

**Percentage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>LACK OF INFLUENCE ON GOVERNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>seeing no possibility of doing something to influence government</td>
<td>76.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPOTENCE IN DECISIONS</td>
<td>65.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who are never or hardly have any say in what government does</td>
<td>54.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACK OF LOCAL OPINION INFLUENCE</td>
<td>72.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABDICATION OF POWER TO AUTHORITIES</td>
<td>60.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feeling politics should be left in the hands of the politicians</td>
<td>80.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;DON'T KNOW&quot; RESPONSE</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Political Powerlessness.
of the lack of radicalism, since giving the vote to illiterates was one of the major leftist platforms of the time.

This combination of recognized and sanctioned powerlessness casts light on the evidence presented earlier in this chapter indicating that most favelados agree that "the government provides things when the people need them," and "people in the government try to understand and solve our problems." As Schmitter has stated, in Brazil "expectations are that power will be exercised from without by others for one's benefit but without one's participation."35

A point must be made here, however, about the validity of the concepts "political efficacy," "political modernity," and "civil competence" in the Brazilian context. The favelado who says he "has a voice in government decisions" or can "do something to influence the government" is not more efficacious, more modern, or more competent as a citizen; he is simply more of a fool, more effectively blinded by the rhetoric of the government and less in touch with his own reality. It is a tribute to the favelados' common sense that this group is a tiny minority.

Let us look for a moment at who the most naive elements are, and conversely, which groups seem most aware of their actual situation. Differences in residential district have little relevance. In Catacumba, Nova Brasília, and Caxias, the responses were almost identical. Favelados saying either there was no possibility of doing something to influence the government, or that they "don't know," for example, were 83 percent, 80 percent, and 86 percent in the three communities respectively. Although Catacumba was facing an immediate threat of removal at the time and the legal neighborhoods of Caxias were completely safe in this regard, the message of vulnerability had reached everyone and feelings of powerlessness were equally great in each case.

Differences in perception of powerlessness do occur, however, between the regulars and leaders and between men and women. The same monotonic relationship we observed in terms of awareness, participation, and conformism appear again concerning powerlessness. On every measure, the general population feels more powerless than the elites, and women feel more powerless than men. In relative terms, elites and men are more active, efficacious, and influential within the favela and it is thus natural that this fact should gain expression in their world view. From a perspective taking into account the actual powerlessness of all favelados vis-à-vis the global system, however, these groups must be judged as simply more deluded and more deceived by the occasional symbolic gestures of concession granted favelados. We should remember here the discussion of political conformism in which the elites more than the rank and file, and men more than women, were convinced of the openness of Brazilian society, the beneficence of government, and the benign nature of foreign influence.

Although the leaders show more efficacy than the favelados at large, even in this group, powerlessness is the major sentiment. Forty percent of local leadership feels that politics should be left in the hands of politicians (the professionals), and that Brazilians generally, presumably including themselves, cannot be trusted with it.

**TERMS OF INTEGRATION**

One of the most compelling conclusions that we can make concerning the nature of the favela as a political subculture is how perfectly suited it is for manipulation and exploitation from above. There is an almost perfect congruence between political beliefs and activities in the favela and the needs of the larger system. The profile of the favelados we have drawn in terms of awareness, involvement, conformism, and powerlessness-dependency, portrays a social group readily accessible to control and manipulation from above. Although the favelados do take an interest, and have participated in each political era to the extent demanded of them, they have never wielded any real power or had autonomy over their own lives. The political subculture of the favela cannot be understood outside of the context of political repression.

Perhaps the most striking recent example of this is to be seen in the massive favela removal programs which struck at the very core of the favelados' survival. It is to this program and its effect that we now turn our attention.
Chapter Seven
Favela Removal:
The Eradication of a Life Style

The preceding two chapters have demonstrated that the prevailing stereotypes regarding social, cultural, economic, and political marginality are clearly contradicted by reality. The evidence strongly indicates that the favelados are not marginal but in fact integrated into the society, albeit in a manner detrimental to their own interests. They are certainly not separate from, or on the margin of the system, but are tightly bound into it in a severely asymmetrical form. They contribute their hard work, their high hopes, and their loyalties, but they do not benefit from the goods and services of the system. It is my contention that the favela residents are not economically and politically marginal, but are exploited and repressed; that they are not socially and culturally marginal, but are stigmatized and excluded from a closed social system. Rather than being passively marginal in terms of their own attitudes and behavior, they are being actively marginalized by the system and by public policy.

The data presented here suggest that favela eradication expresses basic and sometimes calculated misunderstandings of the favelados, and is best understood as a specific instance of upper-sector policy carried out at the expense of lower sectors using the ideology of the myths of marginality for justification.

Ironically, the ideology of marginality has been so powerful in Brazil that it has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Favela removal is perversely creating the marginalized population that it was designed to eliminate. Although the favelados were regarded as living outside the middle-class mainstream, they identified very strongly with it. After removal, however, the favelados found themselves literally cast out of the city—rejected and punished for being poor, and geographically isolated from the myriad opportunities of urban life that had initially attracted them. In the city, they had achieved a measure of integration, and had gradually been developing their communities into working-class neighborhoods. Favela removal, motivated by land-use interests and justified by the myths of marginality, in a sense de-integrated the
favelados, stressing many of the symptoms of breakdown that had been previously and erroneously ascribed to them.

Of course, favela removal is not the only reflection of the myths of marginality in practice. It is, however, a clear expression of the general phenomenon of the ideology of marginality, which acts as a material force to diminish the bargaining power of certain popular sectors by isolating them from the rest of the people.

THE FUNCTIONALITY OF THE FAVELA

The possibility of being expelled from their homes and communities fills most favela residents with dread. Their attitude toward removal can only be understood if it is realized that, given the economic constraints under which they operate, the favela is an extremely functional solution to most, if not all, of their major problems. The location of the favela (especially in the South Zone) puts its residents within close range of the best job markets and affords multiple opportunities for biscate in times of unemployment or financial stress. It also places them at the very center of a wide variety of urban services and benefits: free medical clinics, social services, sometimes even schools. It gives them a sense of “being where the action is” (movimento), which figures highly both in their motivations for migration and in their satisfaction with urban life.

The favela provides a community where friends and neighbors can be counted on for mutual favors: there is always someone to leave the children with; an accommodating neighbor with a refrigerator where the baby’s milk can be kept fresh in the summer heat; someone whose washing machine can be borrowed for repair work. Also, food and staples can be purchased on credit from local merchants (albeit at higher prices) and even when there is no income, families can be fed.

This level of sharing may seem trivial, but it is of absolute importance to those living on the margin of subsistence. Lacking government attention, it provides a minimal, community sponsored, social security and family welfare system.

Furthermore, because it is the outcome of many incremental decisions based on human needs, the favela is well-designed. Friends and families live close together; walkways are distributed where the need requires; public spaces emerge and recede according to use; and tacit agreements not to develop certain areas are obeyed. A certain degree of pride is derived from the fact that most of the families built the homes they live in and that most public amenities are the result of communal efforts. Despite the insecurity of tenure on the favela lands, many families have invested in their homes, creating spacious, solid, and well-serviced houses from what were once simple shacks.

Most critical of all, the favela is free. No monthly rents must be taken out of meager family incomes. Although in the older favelas, like Catacumba, residents often have to pay the former tenant for the privilege of succeeding him, once this is paid there are no further expenses. Some purchase price was paid by 55 percent of the present residents of Catacumba, by 50 percent of Nova Brasilia residents, and by 19 percent of Caxias residents. Most of the remainder in each case built their own shacks (barraços). This self-built housing, along with cooperatively built community facilities, represents the creation of significant capital through the use of labor. It was estimated in 1966 that the value of houses, schools, churches, and cooperatively built electricity and water networks in 185 Rio favelas was fifty million dollars.

With all these benefits, it is small wonder the favelados resist efforts to relocate them in government housing projects. Hostility to relocation emerged strongly in our interviews. In spite of the image the authorities give to relocation in the mass media—the advantages of “modern living,” legal home ownership, and a healthy new environment for children—less than a quarter of the favelados saw removal as desirable (see Table 31).

It is interesting to note that the residents of Catacumba, who are more directly threatened with removal than the people in Nova Brasilia and Caxias, seem to have adapted somewhat more to it—or perhaps were more afraid to take a stand against it. Even in Catacumba, however, about twice as many are opposed to removal as are in favor of it. Almost 50 percent (more than in any other place) gave distance from work as the main reason for not wanting to leave. In Caxias, where most residents already work far from their homes, this factor is less important than responsiveness of the community to personal needs and the social factors of proximity to friends and relatives. The figures for Nova Brasilia on these specifics fall in between, but the level of general opposition is greater there than anywhere else.

Among individuals in the favelas, those with housing of relatively high quality (where housing quality is measured by the number of rooms, the quality of construction material, the number of stories, and

aAbout 10 percent rent their barraços but the rates are very low, about $10 per month.
TABLE 31
Attitudes Toward Favela Removal, Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion on Removal</th>
<th>Catacumba (N=200)</th>
<th>Nova Brasilia (N=200)</th>
<th>Caxiasb (N=100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In favor of relocationa</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, because it is urbanized there, the houses are better; and they will be legally ours. Yes, because the atmosphere is better.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total favoring relocation</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it's obligatory you have to go, there's no use having an opinion if it's a government order.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against relocation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, because I've become accustomed to where I am, I have everything here that I like and need including my friends and relatives. No, because it will simply become an urbanized favela worse than this one; and without any of the activity or diversity. No, because you have to pay rent. No, because there are no schools, hospitals, stores, churches, and other conveniences. No, because it's too far from work and transportation is too expensive and inconvenient.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total against relocation</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 32
Relationship Between Housing Quality and Attitude to Relocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Quality</th>
<th>Percent Wanting to Relocate</th>
<th>Percent Not Wanting to Relocate</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 33
Relationship Between Community Integration and Attitude to Relocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Integrationa</th>
<th>Percent Wanting to Relocate</th>
<th>Percent Not Wanting to Relocate</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not integrated</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat integrated</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very integrated</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aIndex of integration includes the location of friends and family, the frequency of visiting them, to whom they go in times of need, and their feelings about the unity of their community.

bAlthough good housing quality and high level of integration correlate with opposition to removal, other potential factors, such as income level and the exact amount of time presently traveled to work, did not show significant relationships.

FAVELA REMOVAL: THE ERADICATION OF A LIFE STYLE

FAVELA REMOVAL: THE ERADICATION OF A LIFE STYLE

Government Policy Toward the Favela

From the government’s point of view, however, the favelas have always been seen as the problem rather than the solution. From the very first appearance of favelas in the 1930s and early 1940s, official policy...
has been ill-disguised repression of migrants, and prevention of favela improvement or expansion.

Motivations underlying these policies are complex and difficult to isolate. Both "do-goodism" and calculating self-interest have been involved. Although the motives of church agencies and real estate brokers are relatively easy to discuss, those of politicians attempting to respond to multiple interests on the matter are inevitably less easily categorized. Some have no doubt believed that the "humanistic" policy was to save the "poor dears" (pobre coitados) from their squalid existence by giving them a chance to live a decent life in a healthy atmosphere. On the other hand, the fight for turf, the crude economic interests, and the desire to preserve the city as the citadel of the privileged—keeping out the "riff-raff" along with their unsightly settlements—undoubtedly played a large role as well.

Even under Vargas, the erstwhile hero of the underclass, there was an official call to eradicate the favelas in the Código de Obras of 1937. The Brazilian "red scare," beginning in 1947 when the National Communist Party won its first big vote, added a new dimension to fear of the favela. An imagined threat to the entire political and social order capped the upper sector's traditional abhorrence of visible poverty and the fundamental affront that squatting represents to the ethic of private property.

In 1947 an official Commission for the Eradication of the Favelas was created. Its intent, according to Mendes de Morais, who helped establish its policies, included "returning favela residents to their states of origin, committing favela residents over the age of 60 to State Institutions, and expelling from the favela all families whose incomes exceeded a set minimum."

The main reason these measures were not fully implemented was lack of sufficient power and resources to do so. Official policy toward the favelas was humanized only briefly, from 1960 to 1962, when José Artur Rios was the Director of Guanabara's Coordinated Social Services. Most of the Residents' Associations were created with strong encouragement from the government during that time—71 new associations in 1961 alone. In 1962 Rios was removed by Carlos Lacerda, then Governor of Guanabara, thus ending the only period of open dialogue between the favelados and the government.

Although official opposition to squatters has existed throughout Brazilian history, only since the military takeover in 1964 has the government had the power, centralization, and resources to implement full-scale eradication. The main body through which the government has channeled this power is the National Housing Bank (BNH). It was created in August 1964 to "direct, discipline, and control the financing of a housing system aimed at promoting home ownership for Brazilian families, especially among low income groups." Financing for the National Housing Bank comes equally from two sources—one forced and one voluntary. The first is the Guaranteed Employment Fund, a form of mandatory savings to which all employers contribute 8 percent of the wages earned by their employees. The accounts may be drawn upon in times of illness, disability, unemployment, or for the purchase of a BNH house. The second is voluntary savings from the sale of housing bonds and from the savings deposited through passbook accounts (cadernetas de poupança) in the savings and loan system. From these sources, BNH has control over assets estimated at approximately $1.5 billion in 1970 and $5.7 billion in 1973, roughly 5 to 6 percent of the gross domestic product. This is expected to double in the period 1974-1976, reaching $10 billion, which will be 25 percent of the total investment in the Brazilian economy. In applying its resources the bank uses, according to its own account, the following list of priorities: (a) the building of housing projects aimed at eradicating shantytowns and other subhuman dwellings; (b) state or municipal projects which through the use of sites already provided with basic facilities could permit the immediate start of construction; (c) cooperative projects and other forms of association aimed at promoting home ownership among its members; (d) private projects that may help solve the housing problem; and (e) home building in rural areas.

The BNH acts through various state agencies to finance housing construction according to the economic level of the housing. The agency concerned with housing low income families (those earning from one to three minimum salaries) is COHAB, which is responsible for the planning, building, and administration of low cost housing. Funds for this are lent by BNH, to be repaid later by the monthly payments of purchasers of COHAB housing. For families in the next income level (three to six minimum salaries) the same function is performed by the cooperatives. For the upper-income brackets, the savings and loan associations perform this function.

In the case of Rio, a special agency, CHISAM, was created in 1968.
specifically to deal with the lack of coordination that existed between the COHABS of the states of Guanabara and Rio. CHISAM was charged with ensuring that there would be “no more people living in the slums of Rio de Janeiro by 1976.” Although CHISAM could choose to upgrade and urbanize favelas or remove them, it concentrated only on removal. With funding from the National Housing Bank, COHAB began a massive building program in Rio which allowed CHISAM to begin eradicating favelas in earnest. It set itself the goal of removing 100 families a day. By the summer of 1973, CHISAM had destroyed a total of 62 favelas or parts of favelas, and moved 35,157 families (comprised of 175,785 people) into public housing projects. According to income level, families were sent to five-story walk up apartment blocks, minimal “core” houses, or—in the poorest cases—into provisional housing, called triagem. Plates 15 and 16 are taken from CHISAM's report.

CHISAM's public rationale for this massive removal effort was that human “recuperation” would follow physical rehabilitation (along the lines of the ecological school of marginality outlined in Chapter Four). One of its major publications states that the slum-dweller is “seen by the community as an outsider because of his barraco.” CHISAM never acknowledged that the threat of favela removal is in itself a strong disincentive for upgrading either housing or infrastructure, or that the lack of services is due at least as much to the refusal of urban authorities to supply them as to the physical and technical difficulties.

Using a simplistic model of environmental determinism, CHISAM and BNH justified removal as integrating the favelado into society: “The first objective is the economic, social, moral, and hygienic reclaiming of the slum families. Likewise, the program aims at changing the slum-dwelling family’s position as squatters on other people’s property with all of the insecurity that goes with it, to that of owners of their own home. These families then become completely integrated in the community, especially in the way that they live and think.”

They also concede that the program benefits the larger society. One frequent justification, for example, is concerned with beauty and rational urban planning. As an American university professor once commented to me upon returning from Rio, “The favelas are like syphilitic sores marting the body of a beautiful woman.” In CHISAM's words,

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*CHISAM stands for Coordenação de Habitação de Interesse Social da Área Metropolitana do Grande Rio (Coordination of Social Interest Housing of the Greater Rio Metropolitan Area).
"The urban landscape, at present marred by conglomerations of sub-dwellings, would be reclaimed by replacing the shacks with worthy housing, public works, and parks."\(^{15}\)

Undoubtedly, however, one of the strongest motivations for favela removal is freeing the valuable inner-city land for more "profitable" uses, such as hotels or high-rise apartment buildings. Also, new housing provides a boost for the private construction industry: legislation founding the National Housing Bank, enacted shortly after the military coup in 1964, stated that one of the major aspects of the new government's housing policy would be "stimulus to the activities of the private sector."

The creation of BNH with its vast sources of funds for the improvement of housing in Brazil was lauded by the United Nations Committee on Housing, Building, and Planning as "the most advanced system of housing finance in Latin America at the present time."\(^{16}\) In the first eight years of its operations, from 1964 until the end of 1972, a total of 875,000 housing units had been financed by the bank throughout Brazil, providing a considerable stimulus to the construction industry, to employment, and hence to Brazil's economic development. The cost of relocation from favelas was $80 to $100 million, and it was estimated that the entire project would cost $350 million. Theoretically, this cost was to have been borne at least in part by the former favelados as they paid off the cost of their new apartments or houses. Thus far, however, the default rates are startlingly high, so the removal has not paid for itself. Worse still, the social-welfare goal of creating housing for low-income groups has not been achieved and a disproportionate share of the resources has been used to benefit others. As Clark Reynolds and Robert Carpenter conclude, "Our study indicates that the majority of funds in the program to date is used to finance middle and upper income housing, other urban construction, and works of infrastructure, rather than subsidizing housing for the poor, and that this trend has been increasing."\(^{17}\)

The first reason for the failure of the bank to create better housing conditions for the low income groups is that the bank is interested in profits to increase the future supply of housing finances. It therefore has a strong disincentive to provide low-interest funding for low-income housing. While it is increasingly becoming a source of funds for middle-income and upper-income housing, BNH draws 80 percent of its capital from the working class through the guaranteed employment fund and from the savings of low-income workers.\(^{18}\) The second reason for the

failure is that the housing which has been financed by BNH for low-income people has been built in such a way that it actually decreases the welfare of those forced to live there after being driven from their homes.

Both BNH and CHISAM have been rather insensitive to the needs of the favelados; they have instead served their own interests as a bank and a removal agency respectively, and have provided benefits mainly to already privileged groups. As expressed by the Leeds: "The creation of CHISAM . . . reflects an institutionalization on a national level of economic and social policies and an ideology operating to intensify control by the elites, to serve their economic and political interests, to concentrate wealth in fewer hands—and to control and repress any agent seeking to prevent these developments. Favela policy is a mirror of all these institutionalizations, operations, control, and repressions; in the Rio area, CHISAM is the agent of the national hierarchy as the BNH is for the country at large."\(^{19}\)

**Resistance to Removal**

With the threat of mass favela eradication and forced removal to housing projects constantly hanging over them, the Residents' Associations in several favelas joined to form FAFEG (the Federation of Favela Associations in Guanabara) in March 1963.\(^{10}\) The aim of FAFEG was to represent the interests of all favelados, to make known their reasons for opposing eradication, to take a strong political stance on the issue, and at the same time to help organize the favela dwellers for mutual aid.\(^{20}\) The first action of FAFEG members to receive public attention was their support of the residents of the Morro do Pasmado favela in resisting removal in 1964. As reported in newspapers at the time, this resistance was met by soldiers armed with machine guns, who forced the residents to abandon their homes.\(^{21}\)

In the following year, 1965, strong political opposition to removal was demonstrated electorally in the gubernatorial race. Lacerda, the Governor of Guanabara until 1965 and a committed supporter of favela eradication, put forward his son-in-law, Flexa Ribeiro, as a candidate. Ribeiro was defeated, largely by the votes of the working-class districts including favelas and relocated favelados. As the Jornal do Brasil reported:

\(^{10}\) Federação das Associações de Favelas do Estado da Guanabara.
At the closing of yesterday’s work (in tallying up the votes) in Maracanaú, the urnas of Vila Kennedy, Aliance, and Jacqueline totaled 4,734 votes for Negrão de Lima and only 408 for Flexa Ribeiro. . . . The population of the three vilas was brutally transferred from Botafogo last year, against the will of the majority of families. [“A Resposta de Vila Kennedy,” April 14, 1965.]

All those who had lived in the favela Pasmado, and had been moved to Vila Kennedy, had to return to vote in urn #128 of the Third Electoral District of Botafogo. It was in this district that Lacerda’s candidate supposedly had the best chance of winning, but he was totally crushed—getting only 12 votes out of the entire urn. . . . Thus, Vila Kennedy is not the golden dream of the favelados. [“Por Que Os Favelados de Vila Kennedy Derrotaram Carlos Lacerda,” April 16, 1965.]

In another issue, an unnamed editor wrote an “Ode to the Vila Kennedy Urn,” recreating in the style of Keats the entire story of the forced displacement of the favelados and how secret elections had given them one chance to reveal their true feelings. The verse powerfully suggests the direction that spontaneous political action would take if it were freed from the shackles of official restraint.

Official restraint continued, however. On May 25, 1966, in Favela Jardim America, the police arrived at 7 a.m. to confront about 2,000 terrified individuals, many of them children, who had received word on the previous day that their homes were to be eradicated. To speed up the process and discourage any possible “protest” or “revolt,” gunshots were fired randomly into the crowd, and those who seemed to resist were beaten.22

Then, in 1968, just after the creation of CHISAM, FAFEG (which by then had about 100 member favelas) held a congress which resolved to forcefully oppose the government’s policy of eradication. The official report of the congress explicitly stated the FAFEG position as the “rejection of any removal, and the condemnation of the human and financial waste and of the social problems resulting from removal.”23 In accordance with their position, FAFEG immediately mobilized to prevent action against the very first favela CHISAM had designated for removal—Ilha das Dragas, on the other side of the lagoon from Calacumba. Almost immediately afterward, the FAFEG leaders were arrested by police, held incommunicado for days, and threatened with severe consequences if there should be any further attempt at opposition.24 From then on, open protest by FAFEG was effectively ended.

The following year, however, the 7,000 residents of Praia do Pinto (a favela situated on a choice piece of level terrain in the middle of the upper-class neighborhood of Leblon as shown in Figure 2) refused—or their own initiative—to evacuate the favela and be relocated. During that night, the favela “accidentally” caught fire, and although many alarmed residents and neighbors called the fire department, orders had evidently been issued that no help was to come. By morning almost everything had been destroyed. Most families were unable to salvage the few meager possessions they had, and the leaders of the “passive resistance” disappeared altogether, leaving their families in desperation (see Plates 17, 18 and 19). Subsidized high-rise housing for the military was constructed in its place (see Plate 20).

This contrasts dramatically with the experiences many favelas had during the pre-coup period. Nova Brasilia, for example, had been threatened with removal in 1962, and had proceeded, through its Residents’ Association, to rent eight buses, pack them with every man, woman, child, chicken, and pig in the favela, and stage a sit-in on the steps of the Governor’s Palace. They also notified the major radio, television, and newspaper reporters and then presented the Governor with a petition demanding that they be allowed to stay on their territory. Since at that time elections were still held, the Governor was unwilling to alienate the hundreds of thousands of squatters in the city and signed the petition.8

With the end of most direct elections after the coup, the squatters lost the major bargaining power they had. The centralization of housing policy and authority through the National Housing Bank, COHAB, and CHISAM included the power to use the armed forces for implementing programs, and changed the situation entirely. The fact that the favelados recognize their increased vulnerability and powerlessness was clearly demonstrated in many ways.

At the time of the initial study in 1968-1969, most of the favelados interviewed had been confronted with threats of removal at one time or another and had struggled and bargained in an attempt to preserve their

8In a similar manner, the squatters were able to use their numbers for bargaining power at election time. When a candidate came around to campaign, the leaders of the Residents’ Association would promise all of the favelas’ votes if he would provide water pipes. Then he would tell the next contender that so-and-so had promised to supply water pipes, but if he would supply water pipes and cement for staircases as well, the favela’s votes would go to him. Furthermore, they were astute enough at this bargaining procedure to say that they distrust politicians’ promises and that they wanted the “goods” delivered before the election.
PLATES 17, 18, AND 19. The Burning of Praia de Pinto, 1969. After residents refused to leave, the favela was burned to the ground. These scenes are from the following morning as people, despairing at the disaster, tried to salvage what they could of their meager possessions or to seek relatives lost in the chaos. Police piled people into garbage trucks and hauled them off to the outskirts of the city.

PLATE 20. Site of Praia do Pinto, 1973. Subsidized high-rises for military personnel covers the site of the 1969 fire. Locally called “selva do pedra” or jungle of stone these buildings clash with the architectural style and diversity of the surrounding area. They are both more dense and more visually obtrusive than the favela had been.

existence. The threat was always more immediate in the South Zone than in the North, and was felt least of all in the Baixada Fluminense, following decreasing land values. In Catacumba, 81 percent of residents were aware that the favela had been threatened with removal, contrasted with only 52 percent in Nova Brasilia and 32 percent in Caxias.

Two parallel, open-ended questions were asked at separate points in the interview, one regarding what was done in response to the past removal incident, the other what would be done in a similar situation today. Table 34 shows the responses for the random samples from Catacumba, Nova Brasilia, the three favelas of Caxias, and for the leaders as
TABLE 34
Past and Present Responses to Removal Threats, in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Response</th>
<th>Catacumba (N=200)</th>
<th>Nova Brasil (N=200)</th>
<th>Favelas of Caxias (N=100)</th>
<th>Combined Leaders (N=150)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Active responses:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got all the residents together and protested, made up a petition, etc.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went to the government and asked for intervention</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solved the problem through the &quot;pull&quot; (pistolão) of an influential friend</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total active</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Passive responses:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did nothing due to lack of access to the government</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborated with the government</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total passive</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Two questions were asked. (1) *Then*: What did the residents do when the favela was threatened with removal in the past? (2) *Now*: What do you think could be done now concerning the problem of removal?

a group. In each case, I have compared the responses to the question about past actions to those about contemplated future action, and divided responses into two general categories—active and passive responses.

While the modal response in each of the three places is a cautious "don’t know," the main, systematic differences between responses refer-

ring to the past and those concerning the future is a general decrease in responses mentioning active, protest measures, especially the use of "pull" (pistolão), and an enormous increase in the proportion saying they would "collaborate with the government." This response did not even appear in the first set of responses, yet in relation to what would be done today it was the answer of 30 percent in Catacumba, and 10 percent in Nova Brasil and Caxias. The intensification of repression is evident in the decrease of active opposition measures and the large increase in the proportions spontaneously indicating they would collaborate were removal to become a reality.

Trends are even more visible among leaders, whose behavior is subject to closer scrutiny from above. Regarding past efforts, leader behavior appears to have been far more active than the residents at large, but all active responses declined substantially in this group from past to present: mobilizing collective protest from 21 percent to 4 percent seeking governmental intervention from 40 percent to 10 percent, and using client-patron relationships from 19 percent to 1 percent. Conversely, all "passive" responses doubled, "don’t knows" tripled, and "collaborate" responses moved from zero to the preferred alternative of fourth of the sample.

RESULTS OF RELOCATION

According to CHISAM, the process of removing a favela is a very smooth operation. The first notification about removal comes via public news media, later followed by official communication with the Residents’ Association. Interviewers arrive in the favela seeking information on family size, income, and location of workplace. This survey forms the basis for the allocation of new housing units. Information about the new housing is made available and the favelados are invited to visit the projects. A few days before being removed, each family is told when it will leave and where it will be taken. On the morning of removal each family loads its possessions onto trucks, leaving behind all building materials, which are to be destroyed rather than risk their re-use in a future favela home. In CHISAM’s words, when the moving trucks arrive “He [the favelado] and his family show joy and confidence. This attitude is on the auspicious start of a new life marks the moving from the slum to the Coordination offices apartment.” CHISAM aimed at moving 100 families each day in order to “empty” the favelas, destroy the houses and infrastructure, and hand over the cleared land as rapidly as possible to be developed for new uses.

When I returned in 1973, evidence indicated that the removal
program had been carried out in an impersonal, arbitrary, and bureaucratic manner which degraded the favelados and helped guarantee the failure of the program. From direct conversations with some of the favelados who had been removed by CHISAM, a very different account of the removal process emerged. Most people complained that although there were several project types available, ranging from houses to apartments and from no bedrooms to three, the choice was made by CHISAM and forced upon the families without consulting them. No preparation was offered, no meetings held, no information was available as to the total cost and time-period involved; those few who were taken to visit new housing projects were disappointed and angry because the places to which they were finally sent were quite inferior to those they had been shown. A notice would arrive a day before removal telling the family to pack its possessions and be ready at dawn the following day for removal to an unspecified destination.

When the families arrived at the project, they were assigned an apartment or house (without regard to location near friends or relatives) and keys were distributed which turned out to be the same for the entire building. With the loss of home and community still fresh in their minds, and with the feeling of having been cheated by the removal agency, favela families began life in their new housing environment and began to experience some of the consequences of their removal. The present case reinforces a growing body of findings from Brazil and other developing countries which have documented widespread dissatisfaction with such relocation efforts and devastating economic, social, cultural, political, and physical repercussions.27

ECONOMIC REPERCUSSIONS

These fall into three categories: those relating to the time and expense of travel to work; those relating to the changed availability of jobs, especially biscate and jobs for women; and those relating to the need to make monthly payments of the mortgage for the housing.

A consistent finding of relocation studies in Brazil and elsewhere is that the time taken by the journey to work for the ex-squatter increases significantly and causes severe hardship. Low-income people, who can ill afford the cost of transportation, generally locate by preference close to their labor market near the city center.28 Relocation areas, however, tend to be placed on the outskirts of the city where land is relatively cheap. The first effect of removal, then, is a long and expensive journey to work on a usually unreliable transportation system. The existing intraurban lines by 1974 were having 700,000 passengers a day in crowded, unreliable, and dangerous coaches.29

In his 1966 study of Vila Kennedy, Salmen found that people travelling to the Center of Rio would have to travel two hours each way and spend about one-third of the minimum salary on fares. Several men reported to him that because of the unreliability of the service, they had lost their jobs for coming to work late.30 The CENPFA study of Cidade Alta and Cidade de Deus in 1970 reported that only about 20 percent of the people took half an hour or less to go to work and that about 50 percent had to travel more than an hour and a half each way.31 Rush found in a 1973 study of 300 people in five Rio conjuntos (housing projects) that before removal, 79 percent of favelados from the South Zone took less than half an hour to reach work and only 4 percent took an hour or more; after removal, fully 65 percent had to travel for over an hour each way. He also found that over half of favela families had to spend one-tenth of their income or more on transportation for the head of the household, and many spent as much as one-fourth.32

Apart from cost in time and in money, the isolation of the conjuntos leads to a feeling of separation from the center of urban life and activities, and to a very acute isolation from the job market. This has seriously affected working women who depend on service jobs for the upper classes such as washing clothes, sewing, or working as babysitters or maids. The pay from these jobs is barely enough to cover transportation costs, and since they can no longer be done at home, arrangements must be made for child care (which is even more difficult with the dissolution of mutual favor networks after removal). Because the conjuntos are generally located in peripheral low-value land far from wealthy families, many women are forced to give up their jobs entirely after removal. Rush found that, whereas 46 percent of women from South Zone favelas and 30 percent of women from North Zone favelas had worked before removal, only 32 percent and 20 percent from the two areas respectively were still able to work after removal.33 And a similar decline is evidenced for children whose odd-jobs after school and on weekends were a welcomed contribution to family incomes.

The Jornal do Brasil, reporting the tenth year of “great failure” of Vila Kennedy, stated: “The first consequence of removal was a severe drop in family income because wives and children are located a long way from their former employment in homes and apartments and doing odd jobs in middle-class areas.”34

For men, there is a strong tendency to continue working at the same
job, and to learn to tolerate the long daily commute. Salmen relates the not uncommon story of men who find the cost and time of the daily commute so burdensome that they arrange for a place to stay in the city, returning to their families only on weekends. Eventually they stop returning home at all, meet other women in the city and begin second families, thus creating the social disintegration and family breakdown they were accused of in the favela.35

In spite of the inconvenience of the traveling, Rush found that even three years after removal, 60 percent of household heads retained their former jobs, and many of those who changed jobs still worked in the section of the city where they had formerly lived and worked. He believes this is caused by the lack of jobs for low-skilled workers throughout Rio, especially in the less populated areas near the conjuntos, and by the tendency of the favelados to develop contacts only in their own section of the city. Over half of the relocated favelados felt that job opportunities were worse for them after removal.36

The possibility of finding lucrative biscate is also reduced by the location of the conjuntos. One man I spoke to, who had found work near his conjunto, said that “in the South Zone I would make twice as much because these people have more money to spend—here, even the rich are poor.” Rush found that the percentage of favelado household heads engaged in doing biscate dropped from 35 percent to 20 percent after removal because they no longer had the time, contacts, or customers they had before.37

One group whose livelihood is critically affected by removal is favela merchants, who are almost universally bankrupted by loss of clientele, costs of new licenses, prohibitions against using part of their new homes for business, or exorbitant rent for new store premises. Sr. Joya, one of the foremost merchants of Catacumba, was one of the hardest hit. On hearing about removal, Sr. Joya united with the other merchants to demand that they be given stores to rent in the new conjuntos with monthly payments of 65 to 95 cruzeiros. Besides not being given any assistance in moving their stores or compensation for trade lost during the process of removal, the merchants were provided stores located at the back of the conjuntos, away from the main thoroughfare, at a cost of 3,000 cruzeiros downpayment and monthly payments of 300 cruzeiros. Nobody took the new stores, which still remain empty. Most of Catacumba’s storekeepers were simply forced out of business. Sr. Joya is still running a store, but in Ramos, not in the conjunto.

Besides the financial cost of transportation, and the income lost because of inaccessibility to jobs, the favelados must accept the loss of all their investment in their favela homes and pay a high proportion of their monthly income as mortgage repayment for their new housing. CHISAM guidelines state that monthly payments should not exceed 25 percent of the family income.38 Considering that favela housing was virtually free and favelados still had to struggle to adequately feed and clothe their children, the demand of one-quarter of the family income is a change of disastrous dimensions. Additional charges must also be met for water, gas, and electricity, and “condominium” (an amount paid for the upkeep of the conjunto), as well as for the bus or train fares, which are indirect housing costs. In many cases, these costs are well above one-quarter of family earnings; often they are 75 to 80 percent of total family income.39

It has been shown in many studies that people who have been moved to projects express resentment over the payments for the new housing because they never wanted to incur the payments, because the cost keeps rising because of adjustments for inflation (monetary correction), and because the length of time for repayment of the loan is continually being extended. While expenses for food, clothes, transportation, and services cannot be delayed, inhabitants of the new housing have defaulted on their mortgages in vast numbers. In 1966, Salmen reported that Villas Kennedy and Esperanca had 60 percent and 40 percent of their families, respectively, behind in payments, and BNH figures four years later show that the same villas have default rates of 74 percent and 85 percent.40 For 1970, BNH figures for eight different conjuntos show an average default rate of 77 percent.41 The Rush study found the average default rate in five conjuntos to be 74 percent, due largely to the residents’ shrunken incomes and to their lack of desire to pay.42

Once in the position of defaulting, the inhabitants of conjuntos worry that they will soon be evicted from their new homes and be given an even less desirable home, or simply be forced to begin life again in some other favela. Some people, finding the situation intolerable, have left the conjuntos of their own accord,43 leaving the vacant apartments and houses prone to invasion, or to takeover by moderate income

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35 To make matters worse, in attempting to be relocated in a better or closer project, many families reported their incomes as higher than they actually were, while others included income from grown children who subsequently moved into their own homes or were relocated elsewhere, and still others were counting on earnings of the wives and younger children, along with the husband’s extra jobs.
families. Others have been forced to move to the "triagem" houses (casa de triagem), long barrack-like buildings with one family per room, located even further from the center of the city. The triagem are, in effect, a type of punishment for poverty, like debtors' prison, in which the indigent is supposed to remain until he mends his ways and becomes affluent enough to move out. However, the triagem provide no opportunity for moving out.

As of September 1973, CHISAM has been dissolved and the state Secretary of Planning and Coordination along with COHAB-Guanabara had devised a new scheme for dealing with the massive defaults. They embarked on a process of escritura (sign-ups) by which inhabitants of the conjuntos had their former debt cancelled and were re-interviewed to assess their actual ability to pay. If the monthly mortgage payments were over 25 percent (later reduced to 18 percent) of their total income, or if they still defaulted, they would be removed immediately to triagem in Paciência—in the Santa Cruz area, in the far western part of the State of Guanabara, as shown in Figure 2, at least twice as far away as any of the former relocation sites (see Plates 21 and 22). Arrangements were underway to construct 250,000 units there to receive both conjunto defaulters and the lower-income families from the remaining favelas as they were removed.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL REPERCUSSIONS

The sociocultural effects of removal can best be understood in relation to the advantages of the favela as a functional community. Because individuals are scattered throughout new districts on the basis of income level rather than on the basis of their social and familial ties, the support structure of the favela does not survive relocation.

In their new setting, the favelados are separated from the urban services on which they had relied in the favelas. Shops are less convenient and more expensive, and do not provide the informal social welfare services of allowing purchases on credit or in very small quantities; and schools and medical services are often inaccessible and of lower quality. Conjunto residents are also cut off from most of the "urban use" factors which enriched their lives, gave them experience with a diverse range of peoples and institutions, and integrated them into the city at large. It was often for just such advantages that people migrated to the city in the first place. Movies, beaches, markets, spectator sports, hang-outs, even newspapers and magazines are all inaccessible, or nearly so, from the new districts. Even religious organizations...
are unavailable as yet in most places. In the words of Jacqueline, a young woman who had been living in a conjunto for three years: "At first I missed the beach, the lagoon, the shops, everything—I still miss them. . . . Here there is nothing to do so I'll have to get married. . . . There's no night life at all so I just watch television."

Suspicion and distrust seem to rise in some of the new districts, as does the crime rate. While this varies from place to place, aspirations remain high for a time but with decreased probabilities for fulfillment, people grow more passive, fatalistic, and resigned. Although there has been little empirical research on these issues, popular opinion is unanimous. People who live in the projects repeatedly say there is more violence there than in the favela, more street fights, more maltreatment of children, and less concern for others. They say they are afraid to go out on the streets at night, and meanwhile the government procrastinates in installing street lights.44

The Jornal do Brasil, for example, reports that the conjunto of Cruzada São Sebastião is "considered to be a center of delinquency" and that some of its residents who think of themselves as upright and moral are resentful of the "marginal element" who also lives there.45 Whether or not the crime rate in conjuntos is actually higher than in the favelas remains to be documented. However, the widespread feeling of residents attests to their own unease in living in that environment, and it seems likely that high unemployment, difficult living circumstances, and lack of recreational outlets contribute to antisocial expressions of inner frustration.

In this atmosphere of distrust and lack of satisfaction with the housing conditions, the organization of communal activities—such as sports associations, youth clubs, samba schools, and even church groups—seems doomed to failure. In the words of a three-year resident of a conjunto: "Here I know my neighbors by name but we are not friends—my old friends are far away. . . . Here we don't have any more outings like taking the ferry to Paquetá, making picnics, or going to the beach. Everyone stays to themselves. There's no youth athletic club, no more soccer teams, no more samba or Carnival here. They once showed two films, and never again. . . . There's no meeting of people together—each one looks on their own."

POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS

The political consequences of removal follow a similar trend. The local favela leaders, who initially formed Residents' Associations for the specific purpose of fighting against removal and coordinating efforts toward favela improvement, were the first to be removed and most have either disappeared or been sent to housing projects distant from one another and their constituencies. Those who have tried to create new Residents' Associations or organizations find apathy and distrust among their neighbors, and such great overall fear and despair that it is impossible even to get people to come to a meeting.

Sr. Souza, founder of SOMAC (the Residents' Association in Catacumba), lived for 22 years in Catacumba until being moved to the Quitongo conjunto in 1970. He admitted that even though nobody wanted to leave the favela, he and other SOMAC leaders eventually were co-opted into helping the government carry out the removal. They distributed evacuation notices and helped with the house-to-house census. He said that SOMAC couldn't fight the state order, and in any case there was always a government agent in the organization. Souza tried to set up an association of residents when he got to Quitongo; he even registered the association and worked out a written constitution for it. However, hardly anyone came to the meetings. Even within his own building, he said, the people wouldn't get together. "We're totally abandoned here—no one has the energy to try to better the situation. Here it's difficult to get together, not like in the favela where everyone was used to working with each other." In addition, there were some misunderstandings within the leadership over whether or not the directors should be paid, and then the people would not join for fear that their money would go into the pockets of the directors.

The one time when the people did join together to protest was over an unprecedented and dramatic rise in their housing installment payments. All the residents of Quitongo signed a petition which a delegation presented at the Governor's Palace. But nothing ever came of it.

The other kinds of political involvement which link the favela to the larger system suffered as well. The process of gerrymandering the new settlements out of independent representation is already under way. Now that the "dangerous elements" are concentrated in isolated districts, all-important local officials are appointed, not elected. Direct-action politics such as petitioning and demonstrating have diminished, partly because of reduced access to authorities and partly because of increased fear of repression. In addition, the implicit threat of violence to the upper classes is less real now with the favelados removed to distant locales. They can no longer play upon the fear of those in the city that they would—if pushed too far—descer do morro (come down from the hills) to loot and riot.

Finally, the most immediately detrimental political consequence of
removal has been the disruption of administrative political activity. In the absence of effective action on the favela's behalf by interest groups, it has always been possible for the favelados to pursue their interests on their own through the labyrinthine bureaucracy of government. Although they have never been highly successful in these efforts, the potential of such action is even further reduced in the relocated settlements. Of major importance is the sheer physical difficulty of getting to agencies in the center of the city. The traditional bureaucratic “run around” is even more devastating when sandwiched between long, expensive trips to and from home.

These factors may have serious effects on the favelados' political orientation. All of our indicators of conformism were positively related to socioeconomic status and power within the system—that is, to the degree of integration. It is reasonable to expect, therefore, that if this integration is seriously disrupted, increasing disaffection from the system might be the result. It is my impression that this is going on. The normally optimistic favelados—perhaps “defensively optimistic in times of stress”—are now voicing strong discontent with their situation, and for the first time their anger is linked directly to actions the government imposed on them. After their experience of removal, it is no longer so easy to see the system as benign.

PHYSICAL REPURCussions

While the economic, social, and political ramifications of removal have tended to be mostly negative, the physical effects of the new housing have been mixed. Water, bathrooms, and sewage services in the conjuntos are major improvements over those in the favelas, and this reportedly results in improved health of children, as well as greater convenience. Electricity services are usually cheaper than in the favelas, and for some people the new housing is more spacious than where they formerly resided. There is also less fear of disastrous consequences from fire or landslide. However, despite potential gains in comfort, the poor quality of construction in the new housing is the subject of numerous complaints. In Quitungo, for instance, after only a few years the apartments are extremely run down, the walls are badly chipped, and there are constant leaks in the plumbing system, leaving all apartments damp except for those on the top floor (see Plate 23). Maintenance by COHAB is blatantly inadequate; for example, Jornal do Brasil reports that the Conjunto de Realango was without water for five months, and had backed up sewage drains and frequent blackouts.

Many complaints are also voiced over the spatial organization of the new apartments and houses. They are often cramped closely together in monotonous, simplistic rows as shown in Plate 15. The buildings themselves are identical, and the favelados miss the variety of their former owner-built houses. In contrast to the favelas, where doors were always open during the day, the doors of the new apartment units are always kept closed. The layout and scale of the housing projects is not conducive to the sense of spatial and social intimacy that is so much a part of favela life.

Finally, while the new units were intended as permanent and secure homes owned by the favelados, the inability or unwillingness of the residents to pay for them has made the people as insecure in the new housing as they were in the old. In the new housing they await the day of eviction to an even less satisfactory environment.
OVERALL OUTCOME

A consistent finding in studies of relocated families is the widespread desire to return to the favela if given the opportunity to do so. Salmen found in Vila Kennedy that 36 percent of the people would like to return to their former homes. Among the women, 49 percent wished to do so. Rush found that 53 percent of his favela sample would like to return to the favelas, and that this figure rose to 70 percent when given the option of returning to an urbanized favela. CHISAM's allocation of favelados to different conjuntos on the basis of family income alone rather than a combination of economic, social, and geographical criteria is the source of many problems. As CHISAM itself recognizes, even allocating dwellings by ensuring that monthly repayments do not exceed 25 percent of the family income is precarious because the income level of favela families is variable in the unstable labor market they occupy. Further, CHISAM adopted the arbitrary figure of 25 percent of income without regard to the income per capita, or the expenditures of the family for education, medical services, or for debts previously incurred. The result is a high level of incompatibility between the needs of the favela family and the home in which it is placed.

Confirmation of the importance of personal choice in housing comes from both the CENPHA study and the Rush study. Each examined conjunto housing of forcibly relocated favelados and families who had sought out the apartments voluntarily. Those who had come voluntarily tended to have higher occupational status and to have higher incomes than the favelados, and were more satisfied with their housing than the favelado group. Rush found that 46 percent of non-favelados kept up with their mortgage repayments, while only 26 percent of favelados were up to date.

While the policy of removal has been ruinous for the favelados, the original aim of BNH to stimulate the construction industry has been partially fulfilled. In addition, the visual scars of the favelas have been removed from the landscape, especially in the elite South section of the city. However, the original intention of reinvesting the monthly mortgage payments into still further housing has had to be altered because of the massive default rates. The aim of providing housing for low-income people has also been shifting slightly as low-income people abandon the new housing because it is too expensive, leaving it open to those in a higher income bracket who are delighted with the low interest terms of BNH. However, as of 1974-1975, many conjuntos had been totally abandoned and others had to be destroyed or totally remodeled to attract any population at all.

The aim of integrating the favelado into middle-class life has not been achieved. Rather, alienation and despair have taken over. As Sr. Joya, the storekeeper, said, many of his friends have actually died for sadness at leaving their homes. “Everyone who had a little sickness got worse and died.” Using misguided notions about the favelados, the government has unwittingly been creating exactly the sort of marginalized, unintegrated people it wrongly presumed to reside in the squatte settlements in the first place.

THE CASE OF CATACUMBA

A clear demonstration of what favela destruction and forced relocation means for the individuals involved can be seen in the case of Catacumba. As of 1973, Catacumba was the only one of the favelas that had studied to have been eradicated, and its story illustrates well the points I have made.

THE PROCESS OF REMOVAL

As early as 1968, Waldevino, the President of the Catacumba Residents’ Association, and his fellow members were so disturbed by rumor of eradication that they drew up a plan for the “urbanization” of the favela on the local site. This is shown in Figure 13.

The plan was presented to various state agencies and it appeared in the September 15, 1969, edition of O Dia, a Rio newspaper, bearing the caption, “The Project of Urbanization presented by the residents of Catacumba and for which they ask the attention of the authorities.” I consisted of two rows of high-rise apartment buildings and a row of two family houses on the top of the hill. The favelados hoped to build it and pay for it themselves if permitted to remain in their locations. In a accompanying article, the residents made a plea for the attention of the authorities: “There isn't a single resident of Catacumba in agreement with the possible forced move to 'Cidade de Deus' or any other place far from the site of our jobs where we work to support our families... This favela can be sanitized and urbanized. We do not want alms, charity, or handouts. With the approval of the public powers, we will construct and pay for our own houses.”

If found that many people I had known and inquired after had suffered fatal illnesses or had been in fatal bus or work accidents; this inordinate rise in fatalities is a well known concomitant of high stress.
WALDEVINO’S PLAN FOR
THE URBANIZATION OF CATACUMBA

13. Residents’ Plan for Urbanizing Catacumba. This plan appeared in the September 15, 1969 edition of O Dia, a Rio newspaper. The caption was “The project of urbanization presented by the residents of Catacumba and for which they ask the attention of the authorities.” It shows two rows of highrise apartment buildings and a row of two family houses on the hilltop. The favelados said they would build it and pay for it themselves if permitted to remain there.

When I interviewed Waldevino in early 1968, he told me, “At the hour of removal everyone suffers, especially the old people, the very poor people, and the owners of shops and bars.” He went on to say that the situation had become increasingly serious in recent times since none of the former resources to action were open. He cited the examples of the Favela de Providência and the Isla das Dragas and the fate of the FAFEG leaders. The Fifth Institutional Act “did not stop at the foot of the favelas,” he said.

Our study confirmed that these threats were felt by people at large. The vast majority of residents said that although they did not want to leave, fear of reprisal would make them cooperate with government orders. Waldevino went to great lengths to describe the disadvantages of

The Fifth Institutional Act, instituted on December 13, 1968, was the turning point in the government’s move toward a hard-line position. It was considered “a revolution within the revolution,” because of the centralization of authority and the ultimate repression of all civil liberties. It closed the National Congress and Legislative Assemblies, authorized the executive to legislate in all matters of national policy and to intervene in the states and in the municipalities, suspended individual political rights, forced many politicians to retire from public office, and mounted a series of investigations which led to imprisonment, torture, and sometimes death.

the government sponsored housing, much of it two and a half hours away. He showed me the urbanization plan for Catacumba, adding regretfully that he no longer hoped to accomplish much, since favelados were generally too apathetic and their leaders too mindful of the risk of “being sent to jail, deprived of their political rights, or even tortured.” He also pointed out the paucity of channels of influence now that FAFEG had been disbanded, direct elections suspended, the state powers removed to the federal level, and the President inaccessible and probably unsympathetic to the favelados.

In August 1969, shortly after the burning of nearby Praia do Pinto and the disappearance of its leaders, the Secretary of Social Services started to organize a house-to-house census in Catacumba. It was evidently next on CHSAM’s removal list. Newspapers were full of stories about plans for eradication, and the people quickly learned that the purpose of the census was to determine who would be sent where: Ability to pay was to be the sole criterion of the decision. Few could believe what was happening. Many told me it would never be carried off: “They’ve threatened us so many times before with this same sort of thing, but we are still here.” “It’s just another rumor to give people something to gossip about.” “There are too many of us; they could never afford to build new houses for so many families.” “Just wait and see—after all this studying and everything is done, nothing will happen.”

Soon, however, the situation grew serious. Groups of friends and families began to take Sunday excursions to Cidade de Deus in Jacarepaguá (two and a half hours away by unreliable public transportation), to Cidade Alta (a district of closely packed apartment buildings, distant but more accessible), and the dismal triagem where those unable to pay are sent. They returned exhausted and discouraged, saying they “didn’t know what to do.” An old woman told us she had never seen any of those places but she was sure she would go crazy if she had to leave Catacumba. When we asked her why she and all the others who agreed with her did not take action, she said, “If we try to defend ourselves they will say we are Communists. . . . I’m not sure what that means, but I know it’s very, very bad and that they will kill me and my children if they think we are that.”

Meanwhile, favela leadership in Catacumba had been completely co-opted. Waldevino, who had drawn up and presented the plan for urbanization of the area just one year before, surrendered the Residents’ Association headquarters to the Social Service agents, donned the uni-
form of a State Guardsman, and assumed leadership of the local vigilante committee mandated to “maintain order in the favela.” He and his fellow association officers, as well as many who had figured prominently in previous battles against removal, were “appointed” to positions of leadership and status by the Social Service Authorities. Leadership was thus completely denatured in a classic example of co-optation. Selznick defines the process as “absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy-determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence.”

The government’s action in renewal was thus legitimized by local leadership, which provided the “vehicle of administrative accessibility” for the removal agencies. By September 1969, Waldevino and other leaders would no longer talk with me, saying they were “too busy with administrative duties.” Indeed, they had been organized into a tight unit of control which had men on duty 24 hours a day making sure that nothing “irregular” happened in the favela. “Through these techniques of anticipatory paternalism and co-optation,” says Schmitter, “newly emergent representative associations have been converted from potentially aggressive promoters of new demands . . . to protectors of already acquired special interest . . . In short, they have been incorporated before they could learn the skills of opposition.”

Some families who wanted to stay together tried to combine households or move furniture between them to give the appearance of being in the same economic bracket. These attempts to *dar jeitinhos* (get around the rules) were generally discovered and controlled—the blessing of communality turning to a curse when local leadership changed sides. These leaders had been told in no uncertain terms that they were to be held personally responsible for any disturbances.

The days of actual removal were dismal ones indeed, according to Margarida (who had been born and raised in Catacumba). People were given less than 24 hours notice as to when they would have to vacate their homes, and they were not told where they would be going. Her family was all worried that it would be separated, and in fact one of her brothers, Manuel, was relocated in Nova Hollandia, while the rest of the family was sent to Quitungo. On the day of removal, she said, it was chilly and pouring rain and all her possessions got soaked while out in the open waiting for the removal trucks. Her precious mattress, for which she had saved many years, was totally destroyed. Some of her things could not be taken down the steep hillside in all the rain, and had to be left behind. Then, too, many of her possessions were cracked and broken as they were carelessly thrown onto the trucks. To Margarida it seemed as though the reason it rained so hard was that “the skies were crying for our sorrow.”

According to the newspapers, the removal of Catacumba was peaceful and orderly.59 As reported by CHISAM:

> The press, not only Brazilian but foreign, noted the change of mentality of the people of this slum; everybody wanted to move, from the oldest inhabitant to the youngest. . . . In general, the dwellers of Catacumba had waited anxiously for the day of their moving. Only some with brick houses in better locations were contrary to leaving the place. A few did not like the idea of leaving the banks of the lagoon to live in another area, even though they knew that the new dwellings would have piped water, light, and human, livable conditions. But, after they went to the new complex, even they accepted the move calmly and praised the housing plan.60

CHISAM reportedly removed 2,158 dwellings from Catacumba. Of these, 1,420 families were sent to the newly completed conjunto of Guaporé-Quitungo, 350 to the older and cheaper housing of Cidade de Deus, 87 to Vila Kennedy, and 350 to triagem.61

Shortly after removal, negative reports began to appear. As the newspaper *Correio da Manhã* reported on January 21, 1971, under the heading “Not Even in Catacumba Did they Have So Many Problems.”

They were 2,230 families occupying 98,000 square meters of the Morro do Catacumba. They did not pay rent, nor condominium, nor fees (various fees, rates and excises for land use and for urban services), nor for water which they transported in big cans on their heads. They did not pay for transportation either. Many had three jobs and still studied at night to be able to improve their lives. Then along came CHISAM and did away with the favela, promising their own homes to those who could pay monthly payments of about 100 cruzeros (now a little over U.S. $20 per month) for 18 years. And in the first three months, the fees would be paid by the state. Now, four months having passed, the majority cannot manage to pay; aside from the monthly installment, there is the 60 cruzeros [about $12] for light; 95 cruzeros [about $18] for fees; 10 cruzeros [about $2] for condominium, water, the promoted shares for building repairs, plus a number of other expenses, not to speak of transportation costs to work. Added up, it is more expensive than the rent of an average apartment located in Ipanema (an elite section of Rio’s South Zone) near the beach. He who cannot pay will have to clear out, and no one can say where to. For those who manage to stay, it will be a lousy deal; the apartments are worth nothing; they lack finishing; there is no area for the children to play. The building at the Guaporé Project was built
hurriedly and is already cracked. For the residents, the only difference between the new building and the old shacks is that they no longer have to carry water. Now they have water galore: when it rains, everything is flooded, and if they wash the floor, the ceiling of the apartment below becomes a showerbath.  

THE HOUSING PROJECTS

When I returned to Rio in 1973, three years after the removal, I visited the projects to which the people of Catacumba had been sent (see locations in Figure 2 above). Guaporé-Quitungo, in the North Zone of the city about an hour away from downtown, consists of 2,880 apartments pressed closely together into 72 blocks. Its location can be found in Figure 2. The streets were unpaved and unlit, the complex lacked recreation areas, had no medical clinic, church, or club and no job training program. There was one elementary school for the whole conjunto, and few shops nearby. The buildings already seemed old and deteriorating and supposed play areas have become muddy dumps.

Cidade de Deus is a mixture of triagem, core houses, and five-story walkups (see Plates 24 and 25). Built over a period of several years from 1965 to 1970, it is located in Jacarepaguá (see Figure 2) even further from the center of Rio than Quitungo, and in the opposite direction so that friends and relatives are separated by almost four hours of uncomfortable bus rides. The triagem area is crowded and demoralized. Even among the residents of Cidade de Deus it is considered to be a dangerous, high-crime area. The apartments are poorly constructed and disliked by some residents for being multi-story. As one woman so poignantly told me: “Ay dona, I was born on the ground, raised from the earth, and lived my life on flat land. How do they expect me to put up with living four stories high in the sky? It just gives me goose-flesh. . . . I have to leave the apartment as much as possible.” The streets of Cidade de Deus are pure mud in the rainy season, and in the dry season the whole area is covered in billowing dust. The shops which opened after many years have small stocks and charge high prices. There is a medical clinic staffed for only a few hours each week, and the one movie theater has ironically been converted into a police station.

Vila Kennedy, one of the first housing projects, was completed in 1964 and now houses 25,000 people. It is located on the extreme outskirts of the city where land is cheap, and it received help in its planning, execution, and financing ($3.5 million) from USAID. 61 The buildings have a boxy sameness, stretching as far as the eye can see on
the flat and barren land. During the first years after construction, it lacked many of the urban services, and the residents suffered from the effects of isolation and poor transportation. However, there has been a considerable change-over in tenancy over the ten-year life of the project, so that many of the current residents are self-selected. Many homes have been improved, painted, and landscaped, and as the city has expanded, the location has become relatively less remote. Nevertheless, on the occasion of its tenth anniversary, the Jornal do Brasil carried a telling article entitled “Vila Kennedy Celebrates Ten Years of Great Failure.”

THE CONSEQUENCES FOR CATACUMBANS

Comparisons between the data from Catacumba in 1968-1969, my own post-removal follow-up, and the Rush study further illuminate the effects of relocation. My original study had shown that the vast majority of Catacumba residents (79 percent) took only a half hour or less to arrive at their jobs. Follow-up studies in the relocation projects found that only 13 percent had this ease of access, while almost three-fourths (71 percent) traveled over an hour each way. Apart from the waste of time, an obvious concomitant to these long journeys is the increased cost: 64 percent of former Catacumbas now pay two cruzeiros or more for transportation each way, and more than half are required to pay 10 percent or more of the total family income on transportation for the head of household alone.

Part of the reason for the increased time and cost of travel is that three years after relocation, 39 percent of the people from Catacumba still work either in Rio’s South Zone or in the city center. They are tied to that area of the labor market where they have lived and developed contacts over many years. Compounding this problem is the general difficulty of finding any job in the competitive Rio economy. BNT and COHAB had assumed an open and flexible job market whereby the favelados could quickly find new jobs nearer to their homes. Quite to the contrary, the 1973 Rush study found that most people believed job opportunities in the new area to be worse than before, and that the number of people doing odd jobs and the number of working wives dropped considerably.

The 1973 study also revealed that for about one-third of the people, the conjunto seemed a less united community than the favela. For example, residents found that they spoke with their neighbors less often. Both Margarida and Geraldo, lifelong Catacumbas, were among those who felt their old community had broken up entirely. “Only the children manage to make new friends,” they said, “while the adults stick with the few people they know from before. People don’t care about the place the way they used to. When a kid breaks something now, it stays broken.”

One of the clearest manifestations of the unsuitability of the conjuntos for the people of Catacumba is the high default rate. Only 20 percent of the people from Catacumba were up to date with their mortgage payments, and at least 40 percent were more than six months behind. Many people, faced with severely reduced incomes and higher expenses caused by the move, had a choice between feeding their families or making their payment. Although they feared reprisal and dreaded being expelled to the triagem, they had no choice but to default.

Margarida said, “I got very angry at the government. . . . I had real hatred and rage for them because of their badness. There are people here who can’t even earn one minimum salary—they can’t even manage to feed themselves. How are they going to pay 300 cruzeiros a month for an apartment? Her husband, Geraldo, was bitter because they were never told how much the apartment would really cost, or how long the payment would continue before they owned it. For the first three months they were paying 140 contos per month. After that, they were informed every few months of an increase in payments, until at the time I saw them they were paying nearly twice the original amount plus payments for water, sewage, electricity, and condominium.

Geraldo said that he wouldn’t mind paying for the apartment at the original price, “If we came here and it was nice, we’d even go hungry to pay the installments.” He was willing to pay the originally quoted price of 140 contos per month for 15 years, but they have now been told they will have to pay a total of 60,000 contos even though they know the apartments only cost half that much. Geraldo has found the current price impossible on his salary, for which he works twelve hours a day. He believes the buildings are constructed so cheaply that they will fall down within 15 years: “They used more sand than cement. If you knock

kAlthough monetary correction is supposed to correct for inflation by keeping pace with rises in the minimum salary, in fact there are significant lags in salary scales, especially at this level. Also, while monetary correction applies to the FGTS and savings and loans, it does not have direct and immediate effects on the conjunto residents (most of whom have no passbook accounts and receive their pensions much later), as opposed to the continual rise in housing payments which affects them both directly and immediately.
hard on the wall, it falls in. The people have to plaster over the walls if they want to preserve them. Also, the plastic water and sewage pipes are always leaking. When they break, each family is taxed to fix them.”

Geraldo estimated that it would cost about 5,000 cruzeros to get the apartment into “decent living condition.” The 1973 study found that 69 percent of the people said their apartments required major repairs. Geraldo also wanted to know what assurance he had that he wouldn’t be removed from his new home—just as he was removed from Cata-

cumba—if land values rose before all his payments were made.

For Felix, a Catacumban relocated in Quitungo, the move was a total economic and personal disaster. The increased cost of transportation and distance from work made it impossible for Felix’s wife to work and take care of the children as well. Felix is trying to compensate for the loss of her income by working the equivalent of two full-time jobs—his regular one at a bakery, and an informal job selling refreshments on the beach. He is home only a few hours a day.

Even with all this effort, Felix’s family faces an impossible financial situation. With a total income of about 700 cruzeros per month (U.S. $120), Felix faces expenses of 500 cruzeros for food, plus substantial transportation, clothing, and home repair costs. He has had little choice but to default on the payments for the apartment, and has paid nothing for the last 18 months. Whatever money Felix can manage to save is now kept for the expected eviction of his family by COHAB, the administrator of the conjunto.

Strong overall dissatisfaction with the conjunto is evident from the response of the people of Catacumba to a question on whether if given the opportunity they would choose to remain in the conjunto or return to their former homes. Sixty-nine percent answered that they would return to the favela. This figure increased to an overwhelming 82 percent for the opportunity to choose between the conjunto and an urbanized favela.

Common opinions expressed by the former Catacumbans were: “I’d go back and build a new shack the same day if they’d let me”; “if I could go to any favela in the South Zone, I would”; “we were fooled—they told us that we’d come to beautiful places with direct and cheap transportation, and that the payments would be minimal”; “they only removed the favelas so that the rich could earn more money.”

The official justifications for the removal of the Catacumbans and the destruction of their homes were put forward in 1972 by the State Secretary of General Planning and Coordination (Secretaria de Planejamento e Coordinação Geral do Estado da Guanabara). The report cited the “unstability of the soil and pollution of the nearby Rodrigo Freitas lagoon.” CHAS further stated that a tunnel through the Catacumba hill was planned to connect the lagoon area with the Botofogo district, facilitating the commute of businessmen to their offices.

The favela’s removal, however, unleashed such bitter legal disputes over land ownership that absolutely no action could be taken to begin any project. As of 1973, the uninhabited hills were overgrown with vegetation. Enormous billboards advertising Kodak cameras, Ben-Gay, automatic dishwasher detergents, and American cosmetics surround the area, bordered with barbed wire to keep out potential squatters (see Plate 26).

For the former residents of Catacumba, this is a source of immense bitterness. They said they would have accepted leaving their homes if the hill had really been put to good use for public benefit. But seeing it deserted and grown over makes them feel like “crying with pain” at the needless loss of their homes and community.

By 1974-1975, building had begun on luxury high-rise apart-

ments which were to sell for as much as $125,000 each, and land values in the area were reportedly up to $300 per square meter.

ALTERNATIVES AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

We have shown that the Rio housing experience, which was the first and most massive housing program in Brazil, has been a disaster in almost every way. By comparison, when I revisited those favelas that had been left to develop on their own, striking dynamism, progress, and good spirits were in evidence. I reexamined the favela of Nova Brasilia and the favelas in Duque de Caxias with particular attention to see how they had changed over the four years since I had conducted my original studies.

Nova Brasilia showed a tremendous amount of improvement. There were many more two-story houses; almost all construction had been transformed into brick; a new school had been built; the central plaza had been leveled and covered with asphalt; the principal internal roads had been paved; concrete steps put in; sewage, water, and electrical services extended to reach almost all the population; medical, dental and optical care was available inside the favela; and internal commerce had quadrupled (see Plates 27-31). There was an impressive feeling of vitality and productivity, mitigated only by the ever present fear and uncertainty about removal.

Unfortunately, unless there is an unexpected change in policy,
Nova Brasilia will soon go the way of Catacumba. From what I could ascertain, it has been slated for removal, since its name did not appear on the list of favelas that were under study for urbanization or already being urbanized.

The favelas of Duque de Caxias had also shown incredible improvement over the intervening four years. There were many more brick houses, several new schools, more stores and services of all sorts, and new public lighting on the streets. The various Residents’ Associations had made plans to pave internal streets and were considering a number of long-term improvement projects. Most of the people I had known were still there. They had no wish to incur rents or be separated from their communities even if they were able to move out, and they were eager to show me all of the improvements they had made. Likewise, the neighborhoods I had studied were gradually becoming more developed and better provided for.

The Codesco Solution. The one group of favelas that had fared even better over the years of my absence was the group that had been legalized and urbanized on the site. This is a major alternative to that of eradication. In Rio itself a number of experimental favela urbanization projects had been tried and were flourishing.

Only a few months before the National Housing Bank set up CHISAM to eradicate Rio's favelas, the state government of Guanabara authorized a group of young architects, planners, economists, and sociologists to form an organization called CODESCO (Companhia de Desenvolvimento de Comunidades). It was charged with the responsibility of deciding how to use USAID (United States Agency for International Development) resources of 250,000 cruzeros which had been earmarked for innovative work on “slum clearance and urban planning.” The guidelines formulated by CODESCO demonstrate a philosophy diametrically opposed to that of CHISAM. Rather than demolishing
the favelas, CODESCO sought to upgrade and legalize them, purchasing the land as a public entity and providing the best possible terms for resale to the favelados. Their philosophy stressed the importance of security of land ownership for the favelados, the necessity of allowing the favelados to stay near their jobs, and the positive value of including the favelados in the improvement of community public services and in the design and building of their own homes.

Three favelas—Brás de Pina and Morro União in the North Zone and Mata Machado in the South Zone—were selected for urbanization programs. These programs included demarcating, paving, and lighting the main streets, installing water, sewers, and electricity, helping to finance the rebuilding of homes by self-help construction (with free technical assistance provided by architecture students and long-term low-interest loans for building materials), and administering the resale of the land to which CODESCO had acquired title. To execute the program CODESCO has received some loans from the National Housing Bank. These are miniscule, however, in comparison with the funds for the eradication and housing project programs of the COHABs. In the CODESCO case, rather than awaiting the evolutionary process of home improvement which the favelas normally undergo over a period of many years, the BNH funds are loaned directly to the favelados for immediate home improvements at low interest rates and with repayments spread over a long term. Economic comparisons between CODESCO and COHAB show that houses financed by the former cost only half that of the latter to construct\(^\text{71}\) and have the additional benefits of utilizing former investment in favela homes, preserving existing survival networks, and avoiding the disruption and trauma of removal.

The CODESCO process of development was based on a detailed preliminary study, which first categorized all the favelas of Rio into “urbanizable,” “semi-urbanizable,” or “non-urbanizable” according to such characteristics as terrain, density, and location. The three favelas that were chosen represented three points on the continuum, one on flat marsh land, one on a rather steep hillside and the third on rolling terrain. They ranged in population from fairly sparse to extremely dense, and they were located at varying distances from downtown.

The next stage of the process involved a careful study of the location and condition of each barraco (favela dwelling). Meanwhile, CODESCO negotiated to acquire not only the land upon which the favelas themselves were located but also adjacent lands. In the areas where the housing was too dense for agreed-upon minimum standards of space per
dwelling, the residents decided among themselves who would move to adjacent land, and who would remain. In addition, those families who were located where paths were to be widened into principal roadways also moved to the new areas.

In some places a "remanagement" process was experimented with to facilitate development by clearing areas to avoid the expense of installing infrastructure around and under standing shacks. An entire subsection of the favela moved together to an area which had already been serviced, thus vacating the area they had occupied to ease the installation of infrastructure there.

As for work on the houses themselves, each family was encouraged to design its own home according to its particular needs and preferences. Members of the CODESCO staff and volunteer architecture students from the university worked with each family individually to insure that the plans were viable, and to help them estimate the type and quantities of building materials needed and the costs involved. Later, after considerable experience with the design, three basic housing plans were posted in the Residents' Association to facilitate the process. Since the building materials were acquired by CODESCO in bulk and distributed as a cooperative, prices were considerably lower than market rates. Credit was made easily and cheaply available on very long-term repayment schedules.

The three pilot projects were quite successful. An evaluation study of Brás de Pina made only two years after the initiation of the project showed that significant upgrading of the houses had already taken place. Many of the houses had been converted from wood to brick, and had doubled in size (thus substantially reducing overcrowding). The people were secure and enthusiastic about their land and their community. 72

When I returned in 1973, the change was even more striking (see Plates 32-34). Much of Brás de Pina had originally been constructed on stilts over muddy, infested swamps. These had all been filled in, and in the worst area a soccer field and open plaza had been constructed with benches and trees around the periphery. The houses were delightful. Each demonstrated a strong individual flair, reflecting the tastes, preferences, and priorities of the family. Some had second stories, some porches or verandas of various design, some little fences or gardens around them. Almost all were of plaster-covered brick, brightly painted and creatively adorned with plants and flowers.

The favela of Morro União was similarly transformed. Located on a hillside, the favela had various physical levels of construction and
activity coordinated from a field center. Commerce was flourishing, a central plaza had been defined and paved, a water tower had been built on the hilltop, services had been extended to reach all areas, and in some sections small-scale multi-family dwellings for higher density and lower cost had been constructed.

Despite the success of these pilot projects, by 1973 CODESCO's funds had been severely reduced and the original director and staff had been replaced by a much less active group. The Mata Machado project had apparently been dropped, and although there was talk of some new projects, none had been undertaken. Clearly the new CODESCO is continuing the organization in name only.

Across the rest of Brazil, BNH has given limited support to a number of experiments in low-income housing. A notable example is their recent approval of an urbanization plan for 90,000 units in the Alagados over the bay in Salvador Bahia (see Plates 35 and 36). The Rio de Janeiro experience I have described was by far the greatest failure, both in terms of meeting the needs of the people and of being economically viable. This occurred partly because the project was done hurriedly and on a massive scale so that it could be used as a "showcase" for national and international prestige.

Despite all of the evidence against favela removal and in favor of on-site urbanization, the government still intends to eliminate the favelas of Rio by the new target date of 1983. Given the facts that the new housing policies have not, thus far, resulted in decreased migration to Rio, that new squatter settlements continue to grow while existing ones expand, and that construction costs are rising daily, it is not at all clear whether this goal will be met. If some of the disastrous consequences of the initial government policy could be attributed to naïve altruism, it now should be evident that favela removal is essentially intended to further improve the condition of the upper sector in Brazil at the expense of the poor. As the government policies persist, it is increasingly difficult to see the startling default rates on public housing as a result only of economic pressures on the poor. Even now, defaulting on payments is partly a political expression of deep frustration and resentment.

Since it seems that the present military regime in Brazil is unlikely to be overthrown from without, or undergo radical changes from within, the poor will doubtless continue to be subjected to policies which sacrifice their own interests in protecting the power, wealth, and privilege of the upper sectors. Although their discontent and bitterness may grow, their position of powerlessness is sufficiently evident that it is unlikely they will take any futile risks.
Chapter Eight
Marginality and Urban Poverty

Marginality is both a myth and a description of social reality. As a myth it supports personal beliefs and social interests, and is anchored in people's minds by roots that will remain unshaken by any theoretical criticism. As a description of social reality, it concerns a set of specific problems that must be treated in an alternative theoretical way in order to be correctly understood.

The purpose of this study so far has been to delineate popular and scholarly stereotypes of the urban poor, to contrast these stereotypes with the existing reality in Rio's favelas, and to show how they continue to mold the policies affecting the lives of this ever-growing sector of the population. By way of conclusion, this chapter will attempt to do several things: (1) assess the overall validity of the myths of marginality, both as a series of propositions and as a set of fundamental assumptions about the nature of society; (2) account for the persistence and appeal of the myths; (3) point out the functions and political implications of the myths; (4) show how objective social conditions account for the persistence of what has been described as marginality; (5) propose an alternative theoretical explanation of marginality, as an expression of conditions of dependency; and (6) show how the favelados as a group perform functions that are accepted and even required by the rest of society.

The Validity of the Myths

The myths of marginality can be evaluated in two ways: according to their degree of accuracy in defining the attitudes and behavior of those populations considered marginal (of whom Rio's favelados are a prime example), and according to the soundness of their underlying assumptions and analytical scheme.

In terms of accuracy of definition, I have found the prevailing wisdom completely wrong: the favelados and suburbanos do not have the attitudes or behavior supposedly associated with marginal groups. Socially, they are well organized and cohesive and make wide use of the urban milieu and its institutions. Culturally, they are highly optimistic and aspire to better education for their children and to improving the condition of their houses. The small piles of bricks purchased one by one and stored in backyards for the day they can be used is eloquent testimony to how favelados strive to fulfill their goals. Economically, they work hard, they consume their share of the products of others (often paying more since they have to buy where they can get credit), and they build—not only their own houses but also much of the overall community and urban infrastructure. They also place a high value on hard work, and take great pride in a job well done. Politically, they are neither apathetic nor radical. They are aware of and keenly involved in those aspects of politics that most directly affect their lives, both within and outside the favela. They are responsive to the changing parameters in which they operate (bargaining with candidates astutely in the populist period and keeping wisely apolitical in the authoritarian period), and they are generally aware of their vulnerable position. As for any signs of radical ideology, or propensity for revolutionary action, these are completely absent. Favelados are generally system-supportive and see the government not as evil but as doing its best to understand and help people like themselves. Though this benign attitude may have changed with their forced relocation to public housing, they remain unwilling to take political risks.

In short, they have the aspirations of the bourgeoisie, the perseverance of pioneers, and the values of patriots. What they do not have is an opportunity to fulfill their aspirations. When they go to public agencies, for example, they are often humiliated and mistreated (as strikingly documented in Maria Carolina's diary, quoted in Chapter Five). And despite their high educational aspirations, their children are zoned or priced out of schools. The closed nature of the Latin American class structure makes it extremely difficult to achieve the social mobility they hope for. Favelados get the worst jobs with the lowest pay, under the most arduous conditions and with the least security. Since many of those born in remote villages do not have birth certificates, they cannot get official work permits and therefore are excluded from all the benefits gained by the past forty years of labor legislation. Because of this lack of protection, they are employed for less than the minimum wage, receive no social security, no illness compensation, no retirement benefits, and no protection under the law. Likewise, they are politically intimidated and manipulated in order to maintain the status quo. When squatters try to organize to defend themselves, as they did attempting to prevent
favela removal, they have been fired upon, jailed, and burned out of their homes.

These conclusions are not limited in their application to the case of Rio de Janeiro, or to the present study alone. All over Latin America where empirical research has been conducted, the data simply do not support the propositions of marginality. Findings from Rio de Janeiro (Leeds), Salvador and Sao Paulo (Berlink), Santiago (Castells, CIDU, Kuznetz), Buenos Aires (Margulis), Lima (Turner), Bogota (Cardona), Mexico City (Munoz, Oliveira, and Stein), and Monterrey (Balan, Browning, and Jelin) all seem to show clearly the opposite. Review articles by Margin and Morse had already started to disprove the prevailing wisdom by the late 1960s, and the more recent research has been quite clear.²

But this is not the only level on which marginality “theory” has been misleading. It is based on a number of fundamental assumptions about the nature of society which are not necessarily true. First of all, its analytical scheme has posited not only a series of ecological, economic, social, cultural, and political characteristics of “marginal” populations, but it has taken as a basic assumption the covariation of each of these dimensions; thus, it has diverted attention from the independence which exists between these spheres. For example, some people choose to live in a squatter settlement as a matter of life style, or as an economic preference, even though they have stable employment as workers in the capitalist sector. A person may also be earning little, yet have quite a sophisticated and urbanized set of cultural values, social practices, and political activites. Many such cases were evident from our research.

The second misleading assumption is that poverty is a consequence of individual characteristics of the poor rather than a condition of society itself. Without looking at the societal institutions which provide the basic parameters of the life of the poor—that is, at labor markets, social class divisions, and the state itself—it is difficult to go beyond a self-determined posture of blaming the poor for their own poverty. As we have seen, this is a fruitless line of reasoning which leads to completely distorted policy recommendations that worsen rather than alleviate the conditions they are attacking.

But perhaps most fundamental of all, the marginality paradigm is based on an equilibrium or integration model of society. Not only are the myths untrue; the model is invalid as well. Marginality theory assumes that in a functioning system the interconnections between sub-portions tend to be mutually satisfactory and beneficial to all. It is perfectly possible, however, to have a stable system which is balanced to the advantage of some precisely through the explicit or implicit exploitation of others. Exploited groups in such a situation are not marginal but very much integrated into the system, functioning as a vital part of it. In short, integration does not necessarily imply reciprocity.

The functionalist or integration model of society is founded on the premise that every functioning social structure is based on a set of shared values among its members. It sees society as an integrated social system defined by a shared set of values which are differently allocated through the different subsystems. Society is a whole, and the question is how the parts are integrated into it. The “marginals” in this case are defined as permanently outside of the society since they do not participate in the shared values which are the definition of society itself. This entire set of assumptions (which can be traced in sociology through Durkheim, Simmel, Merton, and Parsons) can be contrasted with the conflict model, which does not assume shared values or interests and sees every society as based on coercion of some of its members by others.³ In this sense the “marginal” sector is just one of many competing and conflicting groups—specifically, a powerless group subject to a good deal of coercion and doing very little coercing.

Marginality theory seems to assume, whether naively or by calculation, that the adoption of middle-class culture (attitudinal consensus) will be rewarded by access to middle-class privileges. Its proponents do not recognize the fundamental antagonisms between the interests of the privileged and non-privileged in the society, and the inherent asymmetry of the relationship. What they cannot see is precisely what Josê Artur Rios, the one-time Secretary of Social Services for Guanabara State, concluded after many years of working in the favelas: “The favela is a necessity of the Brazilian social structure. It demands relations of economic dependence which result in the temporary or permanent misery of the dependent element for the benefits of the society.”⁴ In such a situation the only consensus can be a forced one, and that is precisely what we observe in Brazil today.

WHY THE MYTHS PERSIST

If the myths of marginality are both empirically false and analytically misleading, why have they gained such wide and continued acceptance? Partial answers lie in the ethnocentrism and class bias of those who make both theory and policy. Misunderstanding and misper-
ception can also be the result of useful perceptual screens, designed to help filter out evidence that contradicts convenient and comfortable belief systems.

We have already mentioned Lisa Peattie’s contention that because Latin American cities have been enclaves of Europeanized culture for so long, their inhabitants have been bound to consider new arrivals as unwanted intruders. This snobbery undoubtedly helps sustain popular images of migrants as bucolic and backward. Moralizing plays a part as well. There is no mistaking the tone of the Fundação Leão XIII’s description of the “moral level” of the favela—its concern, for example, that young girls feel no shame at being pregnant out of wedlock, or its horror that children in the favela witness the sexual act.

Middle-class ethnocentrism is present also. While some middle-class Brazilians look on favelas as barbaric, filthy, and dangerous, and others see them as “unfortunate” places filled with helpless, pitiable folk, all are offended by the favelados’ supposed nonconformism with middle-class norms. For example, they take the favelado to task for the enormous economic frivolity of Carnival costs—the expensive parties, the hundred-dollar costumes, the endless hours “wasted” on preparations. It is the kind of behavior one would expect from people without any motivation, they say, people who would rather dance than plan for the future. Yet listen to the lyrics of the Carnival song in the film Black Orpheus (“A Felicidade” by Vinicius de Moraes):

A gente trabalha o ano inteiro
Por um momento do souff
Para fazer a fantasia
De rei ou de pirata ou jardineira
Pra tudo se acabar na quarta-feira.

“We poor people work the whole year through for a moment of dreaming,” they sing, “to costume ourselves as kings, pirates, and gardeners; and all is over on Wednesday” (Ash Wednesday, the last day of Carnival’s four-day celebration). It is only middle-class bias that fails to see samba schools as the complex social invention they are, or to recognize the careful budgeting behind favela expenditures on Carnival as a pure form of “deferred gratification.”

What we are talking about here is class bias. On the most fundamental level, the myths thrive not because of snobbery, moralizing, or ethnocentrism, but because they fulfill the ideological-political function of preserving the social order which generated them.

Ironically, the myth of marginality is itself a real material force—an ideology which informs the practice of the dominant classes and has deep historic roots in the history of Latin American cities. It is a vehicle for interpreting the social reality in a form which serves the social interests of those in power. A myth is merely a strongly organized and widespread ideology which, to use Karl Mannheim’s definition, develops from the “collective unconscious” of a group or class and is rooted in a class-based interest in maintaining the status quo. It involves a belief system, a systematic distortion of reality reflected in this system, and a specific function for those ideas in serving the interests of a specific group. The myths of marginality fit the definition on all these counts.

This raises the question of the social and political function of theory. When social scientists give academic respectability to a world view which conforms with prevailing prejudices and gives policy makers confidence and legitimacy, it is extremely difficult to introduce a contradictory set of understandings into that closed circle. The correspondence between popular notions and intellectual theories of marginality is no coincidence. Social science theory has always mirrored our social ideology, or what we call “common sense.”

Inequalities in society pre-date by far the specific problems related to hyperurbanization and squatter settlements. Sociology only began to gain popularity as a discipline when the prevailing social order and stability was widely threatened by these inequalities at the beginning of the twentieth century. Marginality theory as such was the social scientists’ way of combining the old ideologies with the new social realities in the period between the world wars, and especially in Latin America after World War II, when the threat of disruption in the cities seemed to take on crisis proportions. The myths of marginality are in part an ideological expression of the sociologists’ concern with the integration of masses of people.

There are three interacting components to be dealt with here. There is a set of existing conditions and social practices, which in this case is the condition of urban poverty in shantytowns; there is the common sense reaction to this reality, in this case the ideology of marginality as a dangerously disruptive condition arising from the lack of certain attributes or characteristics of the individuals in the situation; and there is the intellectual theory, which is both derived from common sense ideology and then verified by it. Thus there is a closed circle.

Like the evil queen in the story of Snow White, the upper sector of Brazilian society looks into the mirror of social theory, which reassures
it of its perfection and beauty, affirming that it is the fault of the marginal population that it does nothing to overcome its marginality. In fact, the mirror of social theory might even imply that the marginal people live in filth and squalor because they prefer it that way. Since this corresponds with the society's own image of itself, the theory is verified and given legitimacy as an excellent theory (a very perceptive mirror indeed), and the common sense stereotypes are given intellectual credibility. The theory reflects not only the ideological expression of society's concern about integration but also the spontaneous reactions of the people. This can be called a "specular" relationship.6

The reasons for the persistence of the myths of marginality can be seen even more clearly in the specific ways they function to preserve the status quo.

**Political Implications and Functions of the Myths**

Five political implications or functions of the marginality myths are immediately apparent.

1. The myths function in such a way as to isolate one fraction of the working class from the rest, so that the two groups fight against each other rather than uniting.

2. Insofar as the myths reinforce the idea of the popular sectors as dependent, isolated, and powerless, they also reinforce the idea that these sectors can be integrated by populist policies, coming either from the state apparatus or from competing political parties. As we contended when discussing the "terms of political integration" in Chapter Six, such populist policies are attempts to gain support through palliative concessions while at the same time avoiding basic changes and avoiding giving any real power or autonomy to the popular groups themselves.

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

4. The myths of marginality facilitate the acceptance of and justify the implementation of any public policy directly or indirectly concerning the popular sectors of urban society. Favela removal was permitted as part of the restructuring of the urban system precisely because the favelados were considered marginal and therefore dispensable. If they had been regarded as "normal" working-class citizens with their own rights, they would have been treated in quite a different manner. Insofar as they were considered "marginal," however, they had no rights or claims on the system and were therefore easier to manipulate.

The specific urban policies flowing from the myths of marginality are only the symptoms of even larger political implications. Urban policy made under the pretext of "integrating" the favelados disregards the extent to which they were already integrated—integrated through their own initiative and efforts and in spite of "social policy." It was the favelados who scrabbled after schooling for their children and hiccato to fill the family purse, not the society which offered the family good schooling or employment. It was the favelados who saved their pennies and trusted that their children would have the same chances for success as do those of a businessman, not the system that offered them good reason to hold on to such hopes. Because of the removal-relocation policies, the few small chances favelados did have to stretch the fabric of society toward their own ends have now been eliminated. The lack of support from other sectors is now starkly evident, and the disproportional effort the favelados contributed to their own integration is clear. They are no longer physically able to actualize their desire for integration. The system, unable to see that the favelados thought they were doing all right, has taken from them even the pretense of participation in society. As if to spite itself, it damned up a spring of seemingly cost-free allegiance and cut the favelados off from their only real hope of advancement—their own enthusiasm and enterprise.

Take, for example, the question of political conformism. All our indicators of political conformism (preference for incremental changes, lack of class consciousness, allegiance to the state, and welcoming of foreign influence) were positively related to socioeconomic status and power within the system—that is, they reflected a degree of integration. It is therefore reasonable to expect that if this integration is seriously disrupted, increasing disaffection with the system will be the result. It is our impression that this is what is happening. The normally optimistic favelados—"defensively optimistic in times of stress"—are now voicing strong discontent with their situation in the relocation communities. On the other hand, the relocated favelados are even more at the mercy of a repressive regime than ever before. Their existence, which is on the periphery of national concern, is now being lived out on the periphery of the city. In some ways Brazilian officials have accomplished their age-old dream of sending the favelados back to the country where they came from. It is easier to exert police control over a distant ghetto, and easier
to treat the needs of the poor in a perfunctory manner when they are no longer a visible part of the urban scene. The completion of one massive public gesture toward the favelado makes it easier to neglect his true needs.

5. Finally, the myths of marginality shape the self-image of those labeled as marginal in a way that is useful for the rest of society. Favelados more often than not absorb and internalize the negative definition ascribed to them, blaming their own ignorance, laziness, or worthlessness for their lack of “success.”

Their real economic and political powerlessness helps reinforce this world view. (It is clear, however, from the case of the campamentos under Allende’s regime in Chile, that any change in the objective situation leads to a rapid and complete alteration of this negative self-image.) This sense of inferiority in turn makes the squatter population even more manipulable and even less able to organize itself in an autonomous manner, either in unions or in political parties.

Since the political left is also influenced to some extent by the myths of marginality, it too is ineffectively in providing alternate channels. In fact, the Fanon-inspired view of “marginals” as revolutionary because they are so “desperate and despairing” merely reinforces their marginality. It is merely the radical version of the populist client-and-leader relationship. In both cases, the political leaders claim to speak for the marginals, deriving their own legitimacy from that role and distributing in return some form of spoils. The same problem needs to be dealt with in both cases—that is, to destroy the view that the “marginals” are a separate entity and begin to see them as part of the same reality as the working class. Ultimately, favelados must be dealt with in terms of all the existing political, social, and economic relationships in the society.

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE SOCIAL REALITY

It is critically important for us to recognize that the objective conditions of the popular sectors persist as tenaciously as the myths of marginality themselves. There is a concrete set of ecological, economic, social, cultural, and political circumstances which continue to exist regardless of any theory of mythology, and which places most residents of squatter settlements at a severe disadvantage in trying to fulfill their own goals and aspirations. While all of these dimensions are combined and labeled “marginal” in the myth, the favelados continue to live out their lives—despite their efforts—at the bottom of the various scales of wealth, power, and prestige.

Having shown that the causes and continuation of this condition are not rooted in the attributes of the individuals concerned, and that their own attitudes, values, and behavior do not comprise a self-defeating and mobility-inhibiting syndrome, we must look to some set of circumstances outside individual control. This logic leads us to examine the structural factors or societal institutions—the nature of labor and capital markets, social stratification and the class system, and the role of the state in modern capitalist societies, as well as the international setting, all of which have a strong bearing on the urban inequalities we have been discussing.

It is precisely along these lines that the recent work on marginality by Latin American scholars has developed. Their critique of the marginality theories, focusing on the historical situation of dependency, as well as on capitalism itself, is of critical importance in taking the next step in our understanding.

MARGINALITY AS A REFLECTION OF DEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT

It is precisely because of the political significance of the marginality statements, and their functionality for the system as discussed above, that such strong criticism has developed among Latin American scholars in recent years. Their basic position recognizes the condition of the reality referred to as “marginal,” but it explains these conditions as expressions of the social structure and the historical process of development and industrialization in Latin America. The critique refutes the idea of covariation of the different dimensions of marginality and seeks rather to examine the specificity of their interaction in each instance. It also refutes the theory of modernization implicit in marginality theory and poses an alternate framework for the analysis of underdevelopment.

According to this critique, the traits defined as characterizing marginality are seen as only the external symptoms, as merely the tip of the iceberg. The key point here is that marginality is not caused by poor housing conditions or by characteristics of individuals or groups, but by a form of society rooted in the historical process of industrialization and economic growth in the developing nations, particularly Latin American nations. “Marginalization” is the consequence of a new model of development (or underdevelopment) that has a basic characteristic the exclusion of vast sectors of the population from its main productive apparatus.
In contrast to the general notion of European and North American experience during the Industrial Revolution, Latin American economic growth has failed to generate a sufficient number of manufacturing jobs to absorb the rapid expansion of the urban labor force. Basically, the factors contributing to this situation are: (1) the centrality of production of raw materials because of the asymmetric international division of labor; (2) unprecedented rates of rural-urban migration coupled with high rates of natural growth in the cities; (3) limited outlet for the labor force in terms of foreign outmigration due to the relative lateness of the modernizing surge with respect to the rest of the world; (4) the diffusion—if not the imposition—of advanced capital-intensive technologies to countries which are labor-rich and capital-poor; (5) the use of locally accumulated capital for both conspicuous consumption by local elites and for investment in central capitalist countries; and (6) the narrow internal market which is unable to provide a self-sustained process of investment in capitalist terms.  

As an early report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America pointed out: “In the previous century, the development of factory industry all over the world was inevitably accompanied by a substantial increase in factory employment. . . . Such no longer is the case. Industrial development in the less developed countries means in large measure the adaptation of advanced techniques. . . . Under these circumstances, the rapid growth of industrial production does not necessarily imply a substantial increase in industrial employment.”

The outcome of this process is a disproportionate number of underemployed people who are not wage-earners, have no particular credentials, no job stability, no social security, no protection of labor legislation, and who live in a state of constant uncertainty.

The issue is not merely one of new terminology, of whether or not the present urban proletariat and sub-proletariat are “poorer” or more “pampered” than that of the classical industrial period. As Aníbal Quijano has stated, “In all modern societies and in every moment there has been observed the existence of a category of persons excluded more or less permanently from the dominant nucleus of work that, by reason of their insufficient incomes, had no access to the consumption of goods and services. . . . But they were isolated individuals, or united into small groups, dispersed, atomized, and disconnected from all the economic sectors of society.”

He points out, however, that today in Latin America “the process compromises vast sectors of the population that, because of this, have ceased to be isolated and dispersed. It is now a problem that concerns the whole of society, and not exclusively the marginals.”

In contrast to the approach characteristic of the early sociological literature—with its emphasis on the individual’s lack of integration in society—the question of marginality now becomes that of the integration of society itself: how certain groups in society are integrated into the productive and distributive spheres.

These problems are severely intensified by the fact that historically the development of Latin America has taken place as part of a wider process of capitalist expansion throughout the world. Whereas the first Industrial Revolution occurred with the new emergence of capitalist forms of market organization, the present industrial surge is taking place in the context of already dominated markets and industrial spheres of influence. The very formation of the social structures within underdevelopment has been conditioned by external dominance, first felt in the colonial ties to the European metropolis. It is this historical reality which makes the theme of dependency central to discussions of Latin American marginalization. As Theotonio dos Santos has pointed out, the productive system under dependent capitalism expands not through the elimination of outmoded or archaic subsistence sectors, but rather through the transference of the surplus generated within it to the modern advanced sectors.

The notion of dependency does not imply simply a situation of economic dominance from one country to another. Although this element is crucial, dependency implies a whole system of social, political, and economic relations, tying together groups of people, or better, entire social classes, across countries as well as within them. As Bodenheimer explains, dependency means that the development alternatives open to the dependent nation “are defined and limited by its integration into and functions within the world market.”

Thus, the difference between development and underdevelopment is not simply one of stages in growth but also of a position and a function in a single dominant international structure of production and distribution. External, or for that matter internal, market forces alone are not sufficient to explain the continuity or direction of development. To quote from Cardoso and Faletto:

In considering the “situation of dependency” in the analysis of Latin American development, what is intended is to show that the mode of interaction between the national economies and the international market produces definite and distinct forms of interrelationships of the social groups
within each country, between countries and with external groups . . . and that, in the extreme cases, the decisions that affect production or consumption in a given economy are taken in function of the interests in the developed economies. 15

Historically, one can delineate at least three major phases or "situations of dependency" in the course of Latin American development since the sixteenth century. The first was colonial domination, characterized by the direct administration of intensive resource extraction and by the political sovereignty of the colonial power that made territorial possession the key point in its expansion. The second was capitalist-commercial domination, which was manifested principally through the terms of trade, purchasing raw materials beneath their value and opening new markets for manufactured products at prices above their value. The third was, and is, imperialist or industrial-financial domination, marked by speculative investment and the creation of industries in the dependent countries that tend to control the movement of import substitution according to a strategy of benefit directed by multinational corporations in the entire world market. 16

These three stages of development are not only historical moments, but also specific forms of economic and social organization which are now combined in each society. They correspond to the three forms of domination exerted during the formation of the capitalist mode of production on a world scale: primitive accumulation, competitive capitalism, and imperialist-monopoly capitalism. 17

Between the second and third stages there was a brief deviation in the dependency structure, linked to the crisis in world capitalism that began in 1929. The national bourgeoisie of the Latin American countries embarked on a policy of import substitution, building industrial equipment and producing goods for their own internal markets which, because of the worldwide depression, were no longer being supplied. This attempt collapsed abruptly in the 1950s, when the new expansion of foreign investment by the central capitalist countries easily overtook the national capital enterprises, absorbing them without resistance. 18

The situation in Latin America today is a new form of dependency within the third stage of world monopoly capitalism. It is characterized by the internationalization of the process of production, of the distribution of products, and of the circulation of capital. Among its effects on the class structure in the dependent countries are the following: (1) The creation of factions within social classes depending on the strength of

their links to the sectors directly involved in the world economy. (2) The existence of a growing part of the labor force whose reproduction is not economically required by the system, which means that their reproduction will be treated through the social and political processes. (3) The instability of class alliances underlying established power relationships, and consequently the growing instability of the entire political system. And (4) the reorganization of the process of division of labor, including some recent attempts at industrialization in peripheral countries which are rapidly changing the traditional class structure, causing breakdown particularly in the handicraft and agricultural sectors. 19

The size and importance of the marginalized sectors, although existing throughout these various stages, only reach massive proportions in the present mode and structure of production. With the pre-eminence of monopolistic forms of organization, large segments of the labor force are excluded from the main process of accumulation and attached to subordinate and archaic forms of production, whether subsistence farming, mercantilistic agriculture, competitive industrial capitalism, or urban services. It is precisely the superimposing of the new hegemonic or dominant forms of production on previously existing archaic economic structures, and the simultaneous coexistence of these, that creates marginalization.

According to Quijano, two types of marginal workers are produced by this final stage of dependency: first, the "marginalized bourgeoisie," which consists of self-employed craftsmen, small independent businessmen, and shop owners or even managers in the now peripheral competitive capitalist sector; and second, the "marginal proletariat," which consists mainly of migrants expelled from agriculture and—if working at all—employees in low-echelon jobs, such as domestic servants or messenger boys. 20

In the first case, certain economic functions lose their significance with respect to the dominant new mode of production. They become inefficient in relation to the new productivity levels (as in the case of the crafts industry), or unnecessary (such as small industrial enterprises), or lose their market (as was traditionally the case in the involution of the export sector during the colonial period). All these activities, and the individuals affected by them, do not disappear; they become marginalized with respect to the dominant forms of production.

The second group is marginalized salaried workers who are mostly landless peasants, expelled from the agricultural sector and unable to
find work within the dynamic sector of production in the city. Thus they are forced to accept temporary work in the marginalized sector of the economy or settle for careers restricted to the very lowest ranges of the modern industrial sector.

The marginal sector does not, however, constitute a new entity with respect to the advanced monopolistic means of production. As we have attempted to demonstrate, the two sectors are the result of a single historical process which gave rise to the poles of Latin American society. Furthermore, an extensive chain of exploitation links marginalized labor to the productive processes in the new dominant sector, and there may even be some movement from one to the other.

One of the questions that arises, then, is what function this large marginal population serves, and whether it is the equivalent of the classical "industrial reserve army" or the relative "surplus population" mentioned in Marxist literature. There is some debate on this among scholars, but many see the marginal population as an overflow beyond the reserve army itself. The reserve army is generally seen as serving the function of keeping wages down and serving capital in its moments of expansion or cyclical recuperation. Its members are typically the last to be hired in periods of expansion and the first to be fired in periods of economic depression. Some argue that the migrants are not even a part of this reserve army but comprise an "excess population" or "superpopulation" which is never hired by the advanced industrial sector, even in its boom periods, and is not even eligible for such employment because of its lack of skills and credentials. In fact, the mode of production of which the large multinational and monopoly corporations are a part requires a highly skilled, educated, and adaptable labor force. Thus these corporations are willing to hire workers at excellent, non-competitive wages, and to train and retrain them if necessary in order to reduce turnover and secure the type of work force needed. This group is not only well paid and well protected but also benefits from selective recruitment into these jobs. The function, then, that the rest of the population serves is to provide services and home-made goods at costs below those that would be incurred if these goods were produced in the dominant sector. In this way, they contribute to the process of capital accumulation by lowering the reproduction cost of labor in the dominant sector.

According to this analysis, the introduction of the multinational corporations leads to a dual or segmented labor market: one part exists among the competitive capitalistic enterprises, established in a previous phase of dependency, and the other applies to the new and hegemonic sphere of monopoly capital. In the words of José Nun:

[There is] a superimposition and combination of two qualitatively distinct processes of accumulation that introduce increasing differences in the labor market and with respect to which the functionality of the surplus population varies. In this manner, the unemployed can be, at the same time, a reserve labor army for the competitive sector and a marginal mass for the monopolistic sector. Furthermore, the redundant labor force can be occupied in the other [competitive] sector . . . In this way, the functionality of the marginal mass will depend on the extent of satellization of the competitive sector that, in many cases, can be working for the large corporations . . . and, in fact, the small and medium enterprises would be contributing to reduce the wage costs of the monopoly sector.  

The coexistence of the monopolistic mode of production and the competitive capitalist one produces an extreme case of marginalization, going even beyond that situation characterized by the coexistence of surviving archaic modes of production in a single market economy.

The question raised by this kind of analysis is whether the structurally permanent unemployment is functional or dysfunctional. In fact, as Cardoso has pointed out, the distinction between the two sides of the unemployed sector of the population—between the marginal group and the reserve army of the hegemonic sector—is dubious insofar as the two are aspects of one and the same process. Because capital accumulation is a contradictory process when it expands at the world scale, it simultaneously produces new profits and new poverty. Thus marginality as a specific characteristic of the relationship between the labor market and the population is not a dysfunctional aspect of the new productive system of dependent capitalist societies. It is simply the inevitable reverse side of new capital accumulation, because multinational monopoly investment is increasingly separating the places where the surplus value is produced and the markets where people are able to absorb products because their income has expanded.

Finally, according to Castells, the specific conditions in the social structure lead to the political use of marginality. To the extent that the nation-states of dependent societies need a new source of legitimization in order to find a particular place in the new chain of dependency being forged at the top level of the system, there is a generally growing trend, especially in Latin America, for the state to expand popular participation. That means mobilizing people to support not their own views but the views of the state apparatus. One of the sectors most needed for this
type of popular support is the "marginal" sector, and one of the chief ways for the state to mobilize its support is to propose reforms concerning "urban issues," since these have immediate appeal and at the same time pose no threat to the overall pattern of dependent economic development. Thus, marginality becomes a political issue not because some people are "outside the system" but because the ruling class is trying to use the absence of organization and consciousness of a particular sector in order to obtain political support for its own objectives, offering in exchange a clientelistic or patronage relationship.  

To summarize, from the structural-historical perspective prevalent in the Latin American literature, the situation of marginality arises from a peculiar form of integration of certain segments of the labor force into the main productive apparatus. Hence the defining characteristic of the marginalized sector is its role in the accumulation process characteristic of dependent nations. It is from this condition that the other expressions of marginality arise, be they ecological manifestations in the emergence of squatter settlements, psychological characteristics of the "marginal" personality, sociocultural characteristics of "marginal" behavior, or political processes characteristic of the relationship between the state and the popular sectors.

**HOW THE FAVELADOS SERVE THE SYSTEM**

Beyond the discussion and criticism of marginality theory lies another fundamental issue. There is a great difference between the uses of the "myths of marginality" and the utility of having a large portion of the population in a "marginalized situation." The popular sectors, in this case the favelados, help in many fundamental ways to perpetuate the system and facilitate its reproduction. It is therefore essential to understand their usefulness to the system in order to comprehend their persistence as a group.

Economically, the favelados accept very low wages for long hours of work, frequently in precisely those jobs that no one else is willing to perform. The cheap labor that they provide in services, crafts, and inputs to the competitive sector serves to lower the reproduction costs of all economic sectors, either directly or indirectly. For example, by doing repair work as part of their odd-jobbing, and by charging substantially less than an "institutionally certified" electrician or plumber, favelados directly lower the living costs of those outside the favela as well as within it. By providing cheap inputs to certain stages of the manufacturing or assembly activities of the competitive capitalist sector—by making buttons or sewing upholstery at home, for example—favelados reduce reproduction costs indirectly as well. Furthermore, whether or not they function as a reserve army in the classical sense of the term, their very presence and numbers puts pressure on the working classes and serves to reduce their economic and political bargaining power.

Also, insofar as favelados purchase goods and services that the rest of society rejects, they prolong their usefulness. For example, they will buy second-hand clothes and furniture, stale bread, or imperfect manufactured products, and they will use the services of outdated professionals, or trainees—such as new doctors, who traditionally learn by experimenting on those unable to choose where they go for their medical care and how they get it. Finally, the favelados serve in the creation of jobs for diverse sorts of professionals and quasi-professionals, especially social workers, social scientists, and urban planners.

The existence of "those at the bottom" is useful on a social level as well. First of all, favelados provide a scapegoat for a wide array of societal problems, legitimating the dominant norms. They can be considered the source of all forms of deviance, perversity, and criminality, and because they lack the means to defend their own actions or image, the self-image of the rest of society can thus be constantly repurified. In addition, favelados provide a measuring rod, or bottom baseline, for the social status of all other groups—especially the working class, which feels privileged in comparison. Culturally, the favelados provide much of the vitality for bourgeois culture even while they are disdained by it. Their slang, their music, their soccer, their sambas—all these become part of the life and entertainment of the middle class.

**Politically**—as well, the functions of the favela population are multiple and system-maintaining. First, its existence allows for the division of the popular sectors, thereby preventing them from being a strongly organized political force. Even internally they are divided, with leaders even more system-supportive than their less-active constituencies. Martins and Cardoso have summed up the point: "The socioeconomic factors within the favela population divide it internally and permit its incorporation into the global system with minimal effort or cost to that system. . . . The favela helps maintain the status quo by immobilizing the less conservative factors and dynamizing the more conservative ones."  

Second, because they are so non-demanding politically, and so willing to leave politics to the professionals, they are accustomed to justifying the general political exclusion of all popular classes in
elements, the growing fear of the oligarchy that populism was getting too “popular,” were both factors in the coup of 1964.

According to Juarez Brandão Lopes, a foremost goal of the military takeover was to get rid of populist leaders—especially those pushing to increase participation of the masses in government—and to “slow down the dissolution of the patriarchal order.” The submissive and acquiescent posture of the favelado is a major legitimizing and stabilizing force for the present military regime. Malori Pompermayer, a Brazilian political scientist, places the present situation in the context of needs of authoritarian regimes in general:

After a certain amount of time in power, the authoritarian regime tends to be characterized by low mobilization of the population. The ordinary citizen expresses little or no enthusiasm for elections and the regime itself hopes for passive acceptance and utilizes apathy to consolidate its power. . . . Depoliticization can be a means of reducing social tensions after intense political participation in the previous regime. To achieve integration, dissidents are suppressed, and the career of politics is discouraged.

How did the military regime gain legitimacy from favelados so easily, given its propensity to ignore the interests of the under-class? In part because the situation of the favelados was not, in fact, much altered by the takeover—they were not deprived of any major mode of political involvement to which they might have grown accustomed. The net result, in Cardoso and Martins’ words, is that “the effective behavior of the less favored classes is characterized without doubt by passive acceptance of the new rules imposed in the play of social forces, and by their adaptive capacity.”

Thus the favelados have played, and are playing, critical roles in the maintenance of the economic, sociocultural, and political system in Brazil. Concomitantly, what happens to them is almost entirely dependent on the global economic and political trends in the country. They can in no sense be regarded as the agents of their own destinies. Their fate depends in great measure on developments in the larger Brazilian society to which they are so closely tied. If they are offered any option permitting them to minimize their risks and maximize their material gains, they will surely embrace it wholeheartedly. But the recent political evolution of the Brazilian regime hardly supports that hope.

Marginality theory, then, can be criticized not only as a false state-