

The production of spatial hegemony as statecraft: an attempted passive revolution in the favelas of Rio

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Abstract

In the past years, Brazil has deployed a military takeover of dozens of favelas. Presenting data collected from 2012 to 2014 in one of the favelas, I argue that the process of ‘pacification’ is an attempt of passive revolution, which depends more on manufacturing spatial hegemony with non-military strategies than on the war of manoeuvre that is currently being undertaken. This is developed through the articulation of the theoretical framework of Gramsci with Lefebvre’s perspective of the production of space, which exposes the failure to overcoming the fragile presence of state in the territory through everyday state formation.

Keywords. state building, favelas, Brazil, Gramsci, Lefebvre, hegemony, passive revolution.

Introduction

The ‘show’ that the government of Rio de Janeiro screened for the world, in which police forces dominated the favelas through the use of heavy military apparatus, hardly goes unnoticed. However, in many ways, being noticed is the idea of the program ‘*UPPs - Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora*’ (Pacifying Police Units), a security policy deployed in nearly forty favelas.¹ This program is a political effort, sponsored jointly by the government and big corporations, which also involves civil society organizations. All these elements, in addition to how favela’s territories are chosen and ‘occupied’, produce an interesting redesign of state relations, which Gramsci² would have called ‘passive revolution’. This revolution is noticeably changing the spaces of favelas, and the multiplicity of organizations acting jointly

to cope with this transformation - NGOs, UPP Social, Army, just to mention a few – reveals its strategic importance.

The territories of favelas are instances of failed or weak states. Since drug dealers and their gangs dominated favelas and established their own jurisdiction in these territories, the discourse produced by the ruling class has defined them as the main source of violence in the city.³ I will analyse here the struggle for hegemony in these territories, as proposed by Antonio Gramsci, for understanding statecraft in favelas. This process can be better comprehended if considered the spatial aspects involved in the construction of hegemony. In effect, the struggle for hegemony is limited to specific territories, in which various economic, political and ideological systems overlap, and the representation of state contradicts its spatial practices. For this reason, the articulation of Lefebvre's production of space is very useful. Other researches have attested the importance of political economy and spatial development for the analysis of the reconstruction of so-called fragile states.⁴ These investigations move beyond the classic Weberian understanding of state and examine the historical processes of state formation as necessarily linked to the social struggles of power.

I argue in this paper that the process of pacification undertaken in Brazilian favelas is an attempt at passive revolution for crafting state, which depends more on manufacturing hegemony using non-military strategies than on the war of manoeuvre that is currently being undertaken. The main concepts related to passive revolution, such as war of manoeuvre/position, were interpreted in terms of their spatial manifestations (representations of space, representational space and spatial practices) to reveal the mechanisms and motivations for which spaces and power relations are being reorganized. The contribution of this paper is two-fold: i) it extends the theoretical articulation of Lefebvre and Gramsci, beyond the focus on the category of hegemony, with the application in a new contemporary

case; ii) It interprets the Brazilian case of favelas pacification using socio-spatial lens that reveal novel aspects of this on-going process, such the ideological struggle in the territory.

In the next section, I set out key concepts of Gramsci and Lefebvre's work, which are used in the methodological design of the research. Next, I highlight the underlying reasons for pacification, depicting life in these communities before the program was deployed and how the ruling class framed their existence. This is followed by a historical account of the process of take-over, structured in different spatial dimensions (representation of space, representational space, and spatial practices), which reveals important elements of passive revolution. Next, I describe what I believe to be the spatial contradictions of this process, and finally summarize how the adopted theoretical approach discloses the interests of the market that drive this integration.

The spatial reading of Gramsci and the struggle for power in favelas

The social space of hegemony

State can be understood as a balance of coercion, fraud/corruption, and active consent, or what Gramsci named "hegemony protected by the armour of coercion".⁵ An important characteristic of Gramsci's work is the subversion of the classical Marxist rule of the determination of the economic base over the ideological superstructure. Unlike what had been taught before, the ideological domain (superstructure) determined by institutions from political and civil societies also establishes the control of production. Coutinho⁶ contends that the rupture with economic determination does not mean a rupture with historical materialism, only that the materiality is no longer restricted to economic spheres. Lefebvre⁷ sponsored an analogous innovation by connecting the embodied dimensions of space as dialectical and inseparable components of the production of social space, and so mobilising the spatial

mechanisms of production of space can open inroads to understanding how superstructure influences the attainment of power.

According to the Gramscian superstructural determination, the working class sustains the power of the state by means of active consent. The *obtained consent* is maintained both by economic domination and *intellectual* and moral leadership, it is achieved through the establishing of hegemony. *Hegemony* is the way the ruling class ensures its control over the state. It is constructed by ideas that are propagated as the *common sense* of a society, tying this society together in a *historical bloc* interpenetrating the economic and ideological spheres.

An historical act can only be performed by “collective man”, and this presupposes the attainment of a “cultural-social” unity through which a multiplicity of dispersed wills, with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim, on the basis of an equal and common conception of the world.⁸

Two forms of control are enacted by the state: *consensual control*, which arises when common sense is voluntarily assimilated; and *coercive control*, manifested through the direct use of force, when hegemonic leadership is not enough. In this perennial dialectic relation between political society (which owns the domination function through coercion) and civil society (which exerts hegemony through consensus), the predominance of one function over the other will depend on the degree of socialization and correlation of forces among the classes. Gramsci was aware that different contexts demand different strategies for revolution. Hence, he differentiates *war of manoeuvre* (frontal attack) from *war of position* (ideological struggle). In both cases, the implementation of one or other strategy acquires social existence to the extent that it produces its space, and territory becomes the arena where war is waged. There are various spatial dimensions involved in this struggle, and thus the perspective of the historical production of space can be insightful in this regard, especially when observed over time.

The history of space is not a chain of dated events or a sequence of structures. It unfolds from the continuous production of this space, which shifts abruptly only when a new mode of production emerges. In other words, every mode of production has its own space, and the social relations of production are continuously leaving their mark on space. Whenever the contradictions avoid this to happen, the balance of power is shifted, and a new mode of production may be installed. Analysing the hegemonic space is thus the key to understand the conditions of revolution and attainment of power, which is related to the voluntary or compulsory subjugation of individuals to state authority.

The idea of *social space* proposed by Lefebvre and the spatial realisation of ideologies was later advanced by more contemporary authors who discuss theoretically⁹ and empirically¹⁰ how intertwined the concepts of space and social justice are when analysing the consummation of urban processes under capitalism. In that sense, favelas – and the criminal gangs that make use of these territories as logistic hubs¹¹ – become the outcome of a dialectical reorganisation of the city that tries to deny these social enclaves from which existence the market cannot preclude. In observing this socio-spatial development, space cannot be seen as a homogeneous construction, and when analysing the crafting of hegemonic spaces one should consider the overlapping and even contradictory relationships that define a complex politico-juridical system:

[...] “each fragment of space subjected to analysis masks not just one social relationship but a host of them that analysis can potentially disclose” (Lefebvre, 1991b, page 88). In this sense, the politico-juridical defined space of the nation-state is one territory among many and not necessarily the hegemonic one.¹²

As a matter of fact, understanding space as inhabited by multiple territorialities is in line with Gramsci’s realization that hegemony is an ever-building project and conjunctures of contradictory opposition are expected to happen, “since no social formation will ever admit that it has been superseded”.¹³ However, a dominant group will usually control the apparatus

of coercion, which in certain contexts can only be achieved with violence. In his seminal work, Lefebvre also comments on the need of violence for the creation of previously spaceless states, and accepts that even the endurance of this new state is subjected to some level of violence toward a space.¹⁴ The actual shifting of power relations will only take place when the new productive forces disrupt the organic production of a given territory and supersede the hegemonic spaces with an effective war of position, i.e. ideological war. When considering the necessary strategy for building the Italian state, Gramsci incorporated the concept of passive revolution as the reorganization of economic, political, and ideological relations. *Passive revolution* is thus a dialectical overcoming of the war of manoeuvre which gives place to the war of position, in a transition marked by political struggle.¹⁵

Considering the perspective explained above, in order to understand how the hegemonic space is produced, it is important to consider their analytical constituents, which represent the necessary zones of interventions to obtain hegemony. Lefebvre suggested a triad of (dialectical) constituent spaces: *representations of space* – where space is designed and conceptualized; *representational space* – space lived and associated to its symbolic apprehension; and *spatial practice* – defining the space of production and reproduction.¹⁶ Again, these three aspects are not detached but rather mutually determine each other, even though they are not coincident. These three dimensions organize the analysis of the passive revolution in Rio.

The territorialisation of power struggle at favelas

Since the end of the nineteenth century, an increasing share of the population of Rio settled in favelas, as a result of different cycles of industrialization which have pushed for the concentration of people in cities but were never able to respond to the associated housing demand¹⁷. For a long time favelas have been socially invisible and from the 1920s dwellers had faced constant threats of eviction, as favelas started being seen as an “aberration” in the

city¹⁸. The first state actions intended to deal with the “problem” of favelas were actions of eviction aimed to eliminate them once for all¹⁹. Delegitimizing and segregating favelas motivated the reinforcement over time of their own social arrangement and social identity. This does not mean that favelas are detached territories, as their social circuits are also intertwined with the formal city and in the past decades investigations also demonstrated the constant exchanges between favelas and the city, in intimate relationships with the global system²⁰. However, in many aspects, the favelas became considerably departed from the hegemonic city, a separation enacted discursively as much as through the differential access to public services²¹.

Since the 1940s, the three different jurisdictional levels of government (municipal, state, federal) have struggled through different initiatives to urbanize favelas. More recently, they have tried also to tackle the issue of criminal gangs that dominated these spaces, (although drug trafficking also occurs in other areas of the city).²² The social segregation and limited access to public services in favelas facilitated the took over of these territories by drug dealers, which I argue establish in each territory a parallel ‘state’ authority, dominated by drug trafficking. This is overlapped with the complex network of criminality in Rio, which connects different favelas, aggregating higher scale organizations of drug traffickers – or “comandos”, as they call it – fighting over territories between themselves, in addition to the dispute with the formal state.²³ This indetermination in the territories of favelas caused by the power struggle in each favela would illustrate what Gramsci called “crisis of authority”²⁴, and which configures in each favela also instances of ‘weak state’.²⁵ In the recent decades, governors of Rio have used various strategies to deal with the drug dealers operating in the favelas: covering up its existence, massive confrontation, negotiation, and finally the military occupation.

The hegemonic spaces of favelas – which as in any hegemonic space presuppose relations of coercion and voluntary consent – were to a great extent controlled by traffickers. As a matter of fact, drug traffickers had a well-established economic, political and ideological system, as could be observed in ethnographic researches developed in favelas dominated by drug trafficking.²⁶ The mechanisms of institutional control used by the drug dealers were vast. Public services, such as social support and healthcare funding, were most of the times provided by the traffickers who would then keep state away. But despite such spatial practices crafting a relationship of dependence and consent, frequent episodes of violence and coercive ruling suggest that the hegemony obtained in the territory by these drug traffickers was an unstable equilibrium highly dependent on their heavy apparatus of coercion.

In order to examine the spatial disputes in the territory, I collected data from one of the pacified favelas, which I will call here “Marabá”. Thousands of people live tightly in this favela, in a space with housing density eight times higher than the city’s average. Starting my incursions in this community in 2009, I had observed the unfolding events of pacification and its implications over a period of three years of informal and eventual contact with the residents of this territory, but not from a formally set up piece of research. In 2012, when participating to a larger research, the implications of UPP were among the striking aspects of the re-organisation of favela space. These were further developed for two weeks in 2013, and more systematically in 2014, when I spent 10 weeks performing participant observations and interviews at the favela. Other than sixteen interviews with local residents, four interviews with representatives of the police and the government were then conducted. During this later period of fieldwork, I worked in two local organisations and attended many events which took place at Marabá. In that moment, the favela was living one of its most agitated periods since the deployment of the UPP unit, with confrontations between the police and drug dealers taking place, and the pacification was then put into question.

Even though the whole primary collected data was not systematically framed as a single piece of research directed to the objectives of the present discussion, my long experience in the favela allowed me to examine closely a longitudinal change in the territory. These data were then revisited with the focus on the question: what do the categories of passive revolution and social space tell us about the reasons for the current instability at the favela? The primary data collected – generated from participant observation diaries and interviews transcriptions – was also complemented with official documents published by governmental institutions and media news collected to illustrate some of the arguments presented in this study. The texts were coded to identify emerging themes on space and statecraft, highlighted in excerpts that discussed the struggle for power in the territory.

Intended take-over: the underlying reasons for pacification

One of the main instruments of drug dealers to establishing its hegemony at Favela Marabá was the authority to control the access to the territory, determining the local spatial practices, and hence the mediators of state power. This was explained to me by Zico²⁷, the president of the residents association:

[...] traffickers wouldn't allow [outsider] social projects, you see... only what they thought was for the good would be allowed to enter, the ones they picked [...] so, traffickers left the favela halted for 30 years, the government could not enter, even if they wished, they couldn't.²⁸

One of the most evident forms of control at the favela was thus the restriction of access. By “social projects”, Zico referred to governmental and NGOs interventions in the favela. The participation of these institutions was limited to the eventual presence of a few representatives, mostly performing social works and philanthropy. By obeying the traffickers' enactment of what was allowed or forbidden, government representatives and NGOs – the

practitioners who initially intended to revert or alleviate such separation²⁹ – ended up reifying the production of a particular space detached from the city.

But many times, obeying was the only choice, and the extent of this control in the residents association for example shows how much the imposition of trafficking regulation impacted mainly dwellers. In an interview with the then vice-president of residents association at Marabá, which I will call Thaisa, she explained to me how she became president of the organisation at the beginning of 2000s. One day she passed casually in their office during the evening and found people scared with the recent news: the then president had been expelled from the favela by the drug boss, and there was a notice for her to go ‘uphill’ and meet him. She called the other 13 directors and went with the group for the meeting. The drug boss told the group that the president had been tossed off from the favela and Thaisa would now assume as the new president. Apparently there were unrevealed businesses between the ex-president and the drug dealers, which had not ended well. Though scared with the shocking news, Thaisa then imposed her conditions: “I will assume, but you don’t mess with my association and I don’t mess with your business”. He responded, “very well, I won’t mess with the association, whatever you do is done”. However, this was not how things went on, as Thaisa explained:

Later on he got crazy and wanted to know all the steps of the association. He expelled many people from the community and the others got afraid and started selling their houses. But for that, the transaction needed to be done at the association, and nobody could sell their properties because he wanted to know why each house was sold and persecuted these people. He would take me from my home to know about one or another guy... that was hell! When he called me, his guys would knock my door ‘he is calling you’, ‘ok, wait a minute that I will change’, ‘no, you will not change, you will come the way you are’. I have been there with my jersey once. The neighbours would see it, close their doors and windows and wait for the parting shot, thinking I was going to be killed. Many times I was saved from such enquiries because the police would turn up, then his

soldiers blew the whistle. Back then they would use whistles to indicate that the police were coming. Then he would say: ‘you go back to your home, we will continue later’.³⁰

For decades, the residents’ association was for the favela what the governmental agencies would be for the formal city. As in many other favelas, they would regulate space and provide services of registration and mediation of transactions, such as a small council. They would also interact with the formal authorities when they needed to request some intervention from the state, i.e. public illumination. This is a collectively enacted power, which was often co-opted though by the local drug barons. Being subjected to the orders of the local drug boss, any decision would be reinforced (and sometimes implemented) by the drug dealers. This strong power held by drug dealers in favelas, which supported also other crimes in the city, helped constructing in society the idea of favelas as “territories of violence”, as though favelas were the only sources of violence and their dwellers conniving with trafficking.³¹ As demonstrated by Pearlman, the stereotypes associated with the idea of favelas, which composes what the author calls the “marginality myth”³², were used to justify policies from the ruling class directed to favelas.

The perception of favelas as the source of criminality in the city had been thus incorporated in the ‘representation of space’³³ of the elite in Rio. Eventually, the city was awarded the hosting of the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games, increasing concerns on the “issue” of favelas. In 2008, a rare confluence of political allies occupied the three offices, allowing a state-level security policy to have the necessary political articulation with federal and municipal levels to launch the UPP program. The idea was to militarily occupy the favelas where drug traffickers had existed for a long time, building police stations (“pacification units”) in these territories. The formal objective of the program is to regain control of the territories terminating the disputes between drug dealers, and in order for that to happen the first stage is the takeover by the elite squad, which arrest, kill or expel local gang

leaders. Therefore, the objective of the program was *not* the end of criminality or drug dealing, but to regain power.³⁴

Marabá received its unit of the UPP program many years ago. That involved the previous intervention in the territory by the elite squad and the later deployment of a permanent unit with nearly 200 cops specifically trained for the purpose of peacefully occupying favelas, a new model of actuation for the police in Rio. The authority over the favela would no more be exercised by drug dealers, but should finally be given to the state. After decades of confrontation between the police and drug dealers, Zico described me when he realised for the first time that that was a different approach carried on by the police:

[...] Then the UPP came [...] I saw that it had come to stay with two hundred-odd men. [...] then after one week the captain went there and told me... Zico, I came here with all this information about you, what I am going to do with you is this: I brought you my telephone number, I would like yours and ... I do not want any information from you, I came from the intelligence service, I know everything that happens here... so it's all set, if you need anything... I saw that he really came to stay...³⁵

Zico told me later that he then understood that the governance at the favela was changing: "I had to decide who I would obey, I told them [traffickers] that now I would only talk to the government". The first stage of the takeover of favelas is not easy. It consists in a war of manoeuvre aimed to overruling powerful apparatus of drug gangs and occupying the territory militarily. The war of manoeuvre is a frontal attack, and was described by Gramsci based on societies where a centralized state had failed to develop a strong hegemony, as the civil society institutions were weaker in relation to a strong state.

However, the determination with which the legal state tried to regain control of many territories was not the same in every informal settlement dominated by trafficking. The surprising aspect is again their spatial distribution, i.e. how they are concentrated on specific regions. The upper left of Figure 1 shows the map of the city of Rio de Janeiro with each

district. The darker shades indicate the higher density of favelas in the area, as accounted by the governmental geography institute in 2010³⁶, which totalled more than one thousand informal settlements all over the city. Virtually all of them were under the control of an armed gang before the beginning of UPPs. However, the chosen places for occupation are pretty much concentrated on specific zones of the city, and the prioritized zones did not even correspond to the higher presence of favelas or the most violent ones.³⁷

--Figure 1 here--

Figure 1 – Map of Rio indicating the density of favelas per territory (top) and UPP units (main map) implemented by the end of 2013 in different rounds of occupation (source: Designed with data from Google Maps; Base Cartográfica IPP/DIC; IBGE)

A different sort of armed force dominates most of the favelas where UPPs have not been implemented, especially in the west side of the city: the *militia*. The militia in Rio are organized groups formed, in general, by police, military firemen or prison guards, which provide security to the local population in exchange of benefits such as charging fees.³⁸ At the first moment, they were not repelled by the state, as they were welcomed for preventing drug traffickers in those territories, which would mean the production of a counter-hegemonic space in relation to the power of drug dealers.³⁹ In order to become a state, innovatory forces have to eliminate oppositionists and win the assent from allies⁴⁰, and the militia at that moment were the allies.

Figure 1 also shows that the places chosen for occupation can be distinguished in different turns in the first five years of implementation: 1) six UPP units were deployed from 11/2008 to 01/2010; 2) twelve UPP units were deployed from 04/2010 to 11/2011; 3) ten UPP units were deployed in 2012; and 4) eight UPP units were deployed in 2013. With few exceptions, this order probably observed the following undisclosed priorities: 1) the

wealthiest area in the city, where the ruling class live, focused in the southeast of the city; 2) the main access routes to the wealthiest area, including the Olympic area, where many Olympic facilities were being built/reformed around the east side; 3) favelas located in the surroundings of the international airport; 4) the most violent places that had not yet been dominated by militia, at the north side. Even though the main objective of the UPP program is related to ending violence, many violent favelas had not had a UPP unit installed for five years, which suggests the program is rather intended to fight a localised violence.⁴¹

This war of manoeuvre occurred at the moment when capitalism needed to work smoothly in the country, and the adaptation of a fragmented system could no longer be postponed, as it also happened in the case of Americanism/Fordism discussed by Gramsci.⁴² In the Brazilian context, the favelas chosen for pacification are the ones that supported the capitalist structuration of the city, and enable the transition from representational spaces of a particular elite to overall representations of space, i.e. the construction of the abstract space of capitalism.⁴³

How the Passive Revolution Takes Place

Representation of space: the use of propaganda

Soon after the pacification of the first favelas, newspapers of Rio were praising the program. The role of mass media in Rio was strong and apparently effective in the accreditation of the success of UPPs. Among the newspaper stories I compiled regarding UPPs, many of them effusively celebrated the program, as can be seen in the headlines: “Benefits way beyond the Hills”⁴⁴; “On Rocinha Occupation, the redemption of São Conrado [area]”⁴⁵; “Pacification in Rio will work as the model for national pledge”⁴⁶. This propaganda was spread over the city, and even residents reinforced this message at times. During an interview that I had done in 2012, I asked a senior resident about the difference between a

wealthy area where he went to work every day, and Marabá. He answered: “The difference does not exist because [...] nowadays people say over there too: here is good, it’s special! The way it is here, as in others [favelas] that have UPP, everything is... calm, you know?”⁴⁷

Much of the interview was dedicated to praising the UPP, even though no direct question was posed on that regard. The informant declared living in a “good” condition, as do residents from other favelas that had been pacified (“over there too”). The only distinction made in the text was the difference between “before” and “nowadays”, marking two different time periods. The former refers to the period without UPP and the latter to the new times, when the predication is “everything is calm”, making it “special”. This sole change – caused by the event of “UPP” – made him indifferent to all the deprivation of basic rights endured by the people who lived where he did (such as poor sanitation, exposure to waste, and abuse of elderly people), even though he later acknowledged how these rights had always been assured to people who lived in the richer area where he worked.

In western societies, where civil society institutions tend to be stronger and more intricate, the war for power should take place as a cultural and ideological struggle. According to Gramsci, organic ideologies can be articulated to change the productive infrastructure through the psychological operation of people’s consciousness, using common sense to organize human masses.⁴⁸ A war of position can only be waged once the apparatus of coercion has been established. Gramsci explained this transition from the war of manoeuvre to the war of position as related to passive revolution, in which “the war of manoeuvre subsists so long as it is a question of winning positions which are not decisive, so that all the resources of the state’s hegemony cannot be mobilized”.⁴⁹ Indeed, the initial confrontation at favelas were expected to create a crisis in the economic system of drug dealers, not necessarily ceasing the drug dealing in the territory but keeping subaltern members passive and separated from their leaders, such as Zico, who revealed he had to decide who to obey.

Controlling the legitimate *representations of space* is the main mechanism for the attainment of hegemony. This usually focuses on two spheres: private organizations and the activities of intellectuals. The former is composed of civil society institutions: church, unions, mass media, political parties, etc., while the intellectuals (broadly understood) create ideologies to educate the people and unify social forces, in order to secure the hegemony of the dominant group. The government of Rio relied initially mainly on the power of propaganda and mass media as an instrument of construction of hegemony and, only after two years started implementing more territorial initiatives, in order to assure the involvement of subaltern leaders in the common representation of space (see next).

Gramsci acknowledged the importance of propaganda as an instrument of the ruling class for obtaining consent⁵⁰ and this discursive production is also the fashioning of new representations of space. The interest of mass media in this passive revolution is embedded in capitalist corporations' objectives, and according to Gramscian theory they are also associated to state: "It is true that conquest of power and achievement of a new productive world are inseparable, and that propaganda for one of them is also propaganda for the other".⁵¹ One of the main roles performed by mass media is thus to reproduce the discursive (and abstract) representation of space⁵² coined by the elite to be absorbed by the general common sense in each every territory. That impacts also in the representational space of favela inhabitants – such as the resident I asked about the difference between the favela and the area where he would work – which can be influenced through the transformation culture.

Representational space: the transformation of culture

Pacified favelas are now the recipient of many government cultural programs and cultural industry's initiatives. In this regard, several 'celebrities' – icons of the cultural industry – have promoted visits to the pacified favelas. The list includes both national – e.g. Gustavo Kuerten, Luciano Huck – and international – Beyoncé, Lady Gaga – personalities, especially in favelas

with consolidated UPP units, like Marabá. But more than infusing a commodified culture, the visits of celebrities help establishing favelas as abstract spaces, legitimizing interventions into their cultures. It was absorbing the culture of favelas that for the first time favelas started being “incorporated to the social life” of the city⁵³, and now it is arguably in absorbing the culture of the city that favelas incorporate the social space of the city.

Traditionally, the culture of favelas is strongly related to ‘funk music’. During my observations at Marabá, in several occasions young people were singing, dancing or just listening (in loud speakers) to funk or rap – which are sometimes indistinguishable styles. Funk and samba are the main musical styles at the Marabá community, and also reckon its role in placing poor black people at the centre.⁵⁴ However, funk music has also been for a long time associated to drug traffickers, and most songs would exalt the power of traffickers and incite violence. Funk fests were then forbidden at communities with UPPs following the pacification, which generated many complaints by inhabitants who faced the prohibition of their traditional funk fests.⁵⁵

During the events of Rio+20 world summit, cultural presentations were organized in favelas to take the ‘spirit’ of the conference to these territories, promoting a particular type of culture. At Marabá, several (dance and music) groups presented themselves in three different sites. Among the fourteen different attractions there were groups of capoeira, samba, *nordestina* culture, hall dancing, poetry and even jazz and classical music (which are very alien to working class communities in Brazil). No funk presentation was invited. The consumption of culture legitimized by the ruling class helps crafting social signification in the reproduction of spontaneous consent⁵⁶, and a suitable culture for hegemony was arguably being crafted in those spaces by excluding the ones considered non-hegemonic.

Culture plays a major role in the construction of hegemony, as demonstrated by the pervading presence of culture in Lefebvre’s articulation between the conscious and

unconscious, which is depicted in the *representational space* (lived space), of symbols and images. In particular, the material culture is the most tangible symbol of the inhabited space. The confluence of different representational spaces at favelas is thus part of the production of the abstract space of capitalism⁵⁷, although performed by other means. The contradiction that the old representational spaces symbolised, linked to the violence against the ruling class, triggered its marginalization and the crafting of alternative spaces of hegemony. And this case not only illustrates the transformation of culture but also reinforces the control of territory and increase of enlarged state, through the modelling of civil society spatial practices.

Spatial practices: the control of territory and enlargement of state

After the take over from the state, public representatives from various secretaries were deployed in Marabá. However, the governmental actions were highly non-coordinated, and many times contradictory. One of the civil servants allocated at the favela to promote initiatives of development, told me she had never been instructed on what she was supposed to do, and decided by herself the strategy of work. In addition, her organisation was part of the Secretary of Human Rights, and whenever there was a meeting at the office in which representatives of the Secretary of Security were present, distinct views on the favela would generate fiery arguments. Such lack of cohesiveness rejects the homogeneous systematization of knowledge through which power would be exerted, and illustrates the role of space as locus of disputes between knowledge and action.⁵⁸

In effect, none of the deployed state actions could be compared to the presence of police force, composed of nearly 200 officers in the territory⁵⁹, which suggested what the dominant spatial practice was. Displacing drug traffickers and taking over the control of the territories was the main idea underpinning the program of “pacification”⁶⁰, this would remove from drug dealers the necessary resource they needed to perform their territorialised practices of criminality.⁶¹ But the focus of the Brazilian state in the control of the territory for achieving

the advertised “pacification” cannot preclude of its enlargement in the Gramscian sense. Thus, controlling the territory should be the condition for the occupation of its social space, which would enable performing their own *spatial practices*. And the spatial practices established by the state in partnership with the civil society at Marabá concentrated in one specific site: the biggest and most spacious building of the favela, a public property. There the state granted public space for the development of various civil society organisations, mostly coming from the outside and in aligned with external hegemony.

However, there were local voices to be heard, and as the police tried to purports a new image to the residents, attempts to strengthening the bonds with the community were made in meetings with the community leaders, i.e. Gramsci’s intellectuals. However, residents needed much more than the state was offering, as described by Victor, another resident of Marabá:

When the UPP got in, they would make an ‘approximation meeting’, which we... every 15 days... we would convey to them all the difficulties we had, and we didn’t want to know if UPP was a public security thing, we would overflow all that shit that happened here... waste collection issues, neighbour quarrels, whatever problem we would get there and complain it all [giggles]. Fuck, the state was absent in a way, we would report to the drug dealers before. But since the state came in with all the social idea and all, we wanted all that shit here that was halted. Because before we would say to the drug dealers ‘there is no water supply here’, and the guy would say ‘there is no water, what can I do? Would you like some money to buy medicines?’.⁶²

As Victor explained, the presence of the police was the first stable and significant official presence of the state in the favela. The kind of approximation the community was expecting then was one that made sense to the role of state; nonetheless whilst the government made a big effort to signify the pacification as the ‘solution’ to the issues of favelas, its actual presence in the territory remained very much linked to the idea of an apparatus of coercion. The Gramscian *state* is a balance between political society – or state in the strict sense of coercion – and *civil society* – composed of the group of organizations that produce and

disseminate ideologies.⁶³ This concept of *enlarged state* should represent, hence, much more than just its managerial and repressive apparatus, including institutions of civil society which function as private hegemonic apparatus acting as much economically as culturally. If the state was willing to meet with civil society leaders, and establish communication with them, it is remarkable that it wouldn't be able to respond to what was being asked.

Machiavelli argued that state becomes material only with the control of a sizeable territory⁶⁴, and this example shows how civil society mediates such materiality. The only organisations which were given conditions for their organising practices were the ones connected to the elite on a higher scale, decreeing the demise of many local initiatives which remained spaceless. As previously explained, the development of the superstructure is based on the civil society functioning as the ideological apparatus of state, aiming at the construction of spatial hegemony, as the practices enacted by civil society organizations could have been practices of state organisation.⁶⁵ This isolation of the local civil society was one of the causes that led to a continuous crisis of authority.

Permanent crisis of authority: contradictions and consequences

During my fieldwork, the police killed a young resident of Marabá, who I will call David. It was not the first time a person had been killed in the favela shot by the police. However, the commotion around this case was particularly intense, because David was a very friendly person and many residents at the favela admired him for his art. Especially the youngest people in the favela demonstrated angry and furious reactions, and Facebook pages were full of comments of the sort "Grieving David. Rest in piece, justice will be made. UPP, fuck you!". Demonstrations were also planned in the following week in solidarity to the artist.

But at the favela, some residents told me in confidence they were not comfortable with echoing a protest with hidden origins and which had propagated so much violence. The day

David was found killed, cars were burned during the demonstration and even local residents suffered the consequences of the revolt. Then, on the day David was buried, traffickers ordered every organisation in the perimeter of the favela to keep the doors closed until 3pm. A few days later, when human rights militants organised a demonstration, drug dealers vetoed in the territory any activity not related to the protest, and I was advised by a local friend not to come to the favela. In a conversation with another resident, whose husband owns a shop in the favela, she explained to me why he shut the doors of his business that day:

- So on Thursday everything was closed, why was that? Did they order to shut the doors?
- They did. Those who can give orders and those who are sensible obey them. They decreed shutting.⁶⁶

Orders of shutting doors were common in favelas dominated by drug dealers, but should not be in pacified favelas. Drug dealers continued to perform their productive spatial practices, i.e. dealing drugs, and unsurprisingly the influence exerted in associated representational spaces was likewise maintained. The demonstrations organised at the community leveraged the dissatisfaction of dwellers with the pacification, and a petition against the UPP was later signed by hundreds of residents. In order to understand what is specific in the context of pacification that upset residents, it is important to understand that the arrival of the UPP at the favela breaks the socially complex dynamic space at the favela by ignoring the cultural codes which were followed by the trafficking and other local organisations. As much as physical violence and safety threats cannot be dismissed – being important and serious consequences of the dispute between rival drug gangs, these quarrels were part of the social space⁶⁷ of the drug dealers before, as illustrated by Victor, who argued the favela was now ‘discovered’ by the state (in their new way of dealing with it), but had always been there. He was talking about the dynamics of dispute against different *comandos*, which would always invade with the support of local dwellers.

A group which invades the community, [...] they are able to know the history of the community: who they should respect, who... who... you know, they have a drug dealing activity, that [killing] is an action inside that [activity], one will only die if is involved in drug dealing. They are able to understand that that lady is very important to the community, she needs to be respected, that the elderly should be respected here, they know the history. They pass over from one generation to the other; they know the history of the community.⁶⁸

As discussed by Victor, even though the violence of drug dealers cannot be dismissed as unimportant, it was incorporated to the social space of the favela. Drug dealers “understand” who should be respected and “know the history” of the community. Because hegemony is realised in space, and space is historically produced, the manipulation of practices and representations are always built over the existent space. Thus, dwellers accommodate in their everyday life the pattern of violence promoted by drug dealers, and organise the tissue of social life according to – or despite of – the conditioning features of trafficking.⁶⁹ In contrast, police officers treat any dweller as a potential suspect – such as the killed youth at Marabá – and their social space is scaled down, rather than negotiated. In the program of pacification thus, the processes of social production of space remained alien to the favelas.

Victor highlighted that with two important aspects of this pacification: first, the police is scaling down interests and logics that are not part of the territory of favela and that breaks the spatial sociability built over the years, and second that from the perspective of the favela there was nothing particular in this period that required the intervention of UPP, i.e. the pattern of violence at favelas disregarded by the state was long-standing in the territory. There should be something external to territory that triggered the program then. As discussed previously, the way in which the state started invading and occupying favelas was also a demonstration of power, proving control to capitalist investors, with the approach of the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016.

The UPPs created a huge new market, composed of both the favelas internal market to be explored by retail businesses and external contractors which would provide services to the new territories, sponsored by the state. The number of companies registered in favelas, for example, increased by 56% in one year in favelas with UPPs, accessing new credit in the market⁷⁰. Even retailers' stock share prices rose thanks to the creation of new favela markets, which included 280,000 new potential consumers.⁷¹ When building state, the new social organisation is likely to preserve the power of plutocracy, and this intra-elite solidarity becomes unsurprising when we learn the extent of mutual collaboration: the initial funding for the UPP program, for example, was donated by a group of private companies (including Coca-Cola and Bradesco Bank)⁷², jointly funding more than USD 10 million/year for the maintenance of UPPs. The market largely benefited thus from the framework of legality brought to favelas by pacification, which prevented the violence outside and opened up the way for a new market in the inside.

The problem remains that whereas the market seems to be satisfied exploring new territories, local residents are now subjected to the coercive forces of both the police and the drug dealers – who continue to operate inside the favela. The moments of turmoil described above show that although the pacification had reached equilibrium with the occupation of the territory, it was an unstable equilibrium. We could say, thus, that the necessary transition from the war of manoeuvre to the war of position was not done accordingly. Instead of crafting the institutions of state with spatial practices that bring public services to the territories of favela, the only real integration that the UPP program is sponsoring is the integration to the market. Thus, favela residents did not become citizens, but consumers.

When interviewing an ex-commander of the pacification program, he demonstrated high confidence that even with heavy armoury, drug dealers cannot match the apparatus of repression of the state and "will never take the territory back"⁷³. But the question is: haven't

they already? The state is certainly using a traditional - and long overcome - perspective of territory control as in physical controlling the access of people and resources. The military control of the territory should have been followed by the suppression of the previous mode of production and transition to war of position. Lefebvre too recognized the role of state violence in the production of the capitalist space, but he emphasized that such violence is part of the production of the total space, which is conditioned to the balance of power between classes⁷⁴.

As Gramsci states, even though for some cases the war of manoeuvre is necessary, “to fix one’s mind on the military model is the mark of a fool: politics, here too, must have priority over its military aspect”.⁷⁵ The passive revolution evolves to a change into the structure of a given society, which as I have demonstrated is the historic process of crafting a new space. It could take a long time to be accomplished, since the first shift would give place to further changes that would be then organically absorbed by the subaltern classes, i.e. “molecular changes which in fact progressively modify the pre-existing composition of forces, and hence become the matrix of new changes”.⁷⁶ But this process presupposes a pre-disposition for the long-run game of statecraft.

Conclusion

The program of pacification represents a unique evolution in the territorial integration of the city, and has been much welcome by many, who still recall recent cases of oppression, threats and homicides. Life under the ruling of criminal groups can lead to arbitrary violence, and stability can be broken by the slightest dispute between factions or police operations. After the UPPs, the annual number of homicides inside favelas decreased by 60 people / 100,000 inhabitants⁷⁷, which means that more than 200 lives are spared every year⁷⁸. Not to mention the benefits of new investments being made in the territory. However, the actions unfolded from this first step are showing that the chosen pathway is not being effective in building state resilience, and the ruling class is sponsoring an actual integration to the market only by means

of a Weberian understanding of state as an organisation that uphold the monopoly over the legitimate use of force.

The analysed case shows that the Gramscian framework has a lot to say about contemporary power struggles, and not only to the European context.⁷⁹ The explored case of Rio is the manifestation of passive revolution, based on the transition from war of manoeuvre to the war of position, with decapitation of the opposing groups and the absorption of leaders from subaltern groups. Several elements reinforce this interpretation, as presented here, such as the avoidance of allied militia areas, the military occupation, and the attempt of transformation of the local culture. This mechanism of passive revolution is still not fully hegemonic, but was nonetheless relatively stable in many aspects. However, illuminated by Lefebvre, a spatial account was also able to reveal in this case that the spatial marks of the previous mode of production were not suppressed and the transition to war of position did not properly occur. The presence of state continued to be largely concentrated on the apparatus of repression, and for most of the program duration, consumption was prioritized over state building, probably expecting that the capitalist market would have produced the consent which the state armoured with coercion. The paradigm of fragile/weak state in the territory is still strong and largely unchallenged by everyday practices of state crafting.

The use of sociospatial functions to read revolutionary processes sheds light on the elements of power and hegemony attainment. The focus on the inhibition of armed conflicts while letting the dominant economic practices of drug dealers in favelas undisturbed – i.e. drug trafficking – is of the highest importance in this case because it increased the contradiction between the ruling groups that dominate legal and illegal market, or in other words, “social relations of production which cannot fail to leave their mark on space and indeed to revolutionize it”.⁸⁰ Whereas UPPs increased the everyday freedom of local residents and alleviated violence in the surrounding areas, the dispute over spatial hegemony in the

territory was considerably neglected. The existence of such contradiction can be tolerated only insofar as these contradictory social spaces don't try to overcome each other, which depends on the maintenance of a fragile equilibrium of fraud, coercion and consent.

Notes

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- ¹ For more information about the program see Cano et al., *Os Donos Do Morro*; and Fleury, "Militarização Do Social como Estratégia de Integração".
 - ² Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*.
 - ³ Lacerda, "Rio de Janeiro and the divided state".
 - ⁴ Morton, "The War on Drugs in Mexico"; Podder, "State Building and the Non-state"; and Menocal, "State Building for Peace".
 - ⁵ Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks*, 532.
 - ⁶ Coutinho, *Gramsci: Estudo Sobre Pensamento*.
 - ⁷ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.
 - ⁸ Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks*, 665.
 - ⁹ See, inter alia, Santos, *A natureza do espaço*; Harvey, *Social justice and the city*; Wacquant, "Territorial Stigmatization".
 - ¹⁰ See, inter alia, Souza, "O tráfico de drogas no Rio de Janeiro"; Silva et al., "Grupos criminosos armados"; and Ballvé, "Everyday state Formation".
 - ¹¹ Souza, "O tráfico de drogas no Rio de Janeiro", 1065.
 - ¹² Ballvé, "Everyday state Formation", 605.
 - ¹³ Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks*, 400.
 - ¹⁴ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 280.
 - ¹⁵ Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks*, 294.
 - ¹⁶ Following the above mentioned development of the theoretical understanding of space as an outcome of social relations, important sociospatial functions which convey specific structuring principles of the urban space were advanced to convey specific features. This includes for example the appropriation of territory through territoriality and the superposition of various levels of spatial scales. Such concepts are inseparable from social space, which is understood in a *totality*. Thus, although Lefebvre refers always to space and not territory, for example, social space refers to a space-process which is socially produced and thus inalienable from its various sociospatial functions.
 - ¹⁷ See Abreu, *A evolução urbana do Rio de Janeiro*; and Burgos, "Dos parques proletários ao Favela-Bairro".
 - ¹⁸ Burgos, "Dos parques proletários ao Favela-Bairro", 27.
 - ¹⁹ Valladares, *A invenção da favela*; Burgos, "Dos parques proletários ao Favela-Bairro".
 - ²⁰ See, inter alia, da Silva, "A política na favela"; Cavalcanti, "Tirroteios, Legibilidade e Espaço Urbano"; Machado da Silva, "Violência, Crime e Polícia".
 - ²¹ Lacerda, "Rio de Janeiro and the divided state".
 - ²² Machado da Silva, *Afinal, qual é a das UPPs*; and Souza, "O tráfico de drogas no Rio de Janeiro".
 - ²³ Souza, "O tráfico de drogas no Rio de Janeiro".
 - ²⁴ Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks*, 210.
 - ²⁵ Call, "The fallacy of the 'Failed state'".
 - ²⁶ Zaluar, *A máquina e a revolta*; and Grillo, *Coisas da vida no crime*.
 - ²⁷ All names were changed to preserve anonymity.
 - ²⁸ Interview with Zico, 26/04/2014.
 - ²⁹ Cavalcanti, "Tirroteios, Legibilidade e Espaço", 44.
 - ³⁰ Interview with Thaisa, 02/05/2014.
 - ³¹ Valladares, *A invenção da favela*, 20.
 - ³² Perlman, *O mito da marginalidade*.
 - ³³ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*.

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- ³⁴ Cano et al., *Os Donos Do Morro*, 19.
- ³⁵ Interview with Zico, 26/04/2014.
- ³⁶ IBGE, *Indicadores Sociais Municipais*.
- ³⁷ *Ibid*, according to IBGE the northwest region of the city is the most violent one.
- ³⁸ Zalar, “Unfinished Democratization”.
- ³⁹ Cano and Duarte, “A Percepção dos Cidadãos que Moram ou Trabalham”.
- ⁴⁰ Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks*, 203.
- ⁴¹ Between 01/2014 and 08/2015, six new UPP units were deployed or in process of installation in the North and West zones. Three of them are located at Maré, which is located on the margin of the main way that connects the city with Rio’s International airport, ‘Linha Vermelha’.
- ⁴² *Ibid*, 558.
- ⁴³ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 314.
- ⁴⁴ O Globo. Benefícios muito além dos morros: UPP agrada também a moradores do asfalto e valoriza imóveis. *O Globo*, 2010, March 13: 26.
- ⁴⁵ Ritto, C., November 8. Na ocupação da Rocinha, a redenção de São Conrado. *Veja*, retrieved from <http://veja.abril.com.br/noticia/brasil/na-ocupacao-da-rocinha-a-redencao-de-sao-conrado>.
- ⁴⁶ Dantas, P. Pacificação no RJ servirá de exemplo para pacto nacional. *Agencia Estado*, 2011, February 23, retrieved from <http://www.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,pacificacao-no-rj-servira-de-exemplo-para-pacto-nacional,683554,0.htm>.
- ⁴⁷ Interview with Mauricio, 23/04/2012.
- ⁴⁸ Buci-glucksmann, *Estado, Classe, Aparelhos de Hegemonia*.
- ⁴⁹ Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks*, 495.
- ⁵⁰ Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks*, 545
- ⁵¹ *Ibid*, 304
- ⁵² Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38
- ⁵³ Burgos, “Dos parques proletários ao Favela-Bairro”.
- ⁵⁴ Medeiros, *Funk Carioca: Crime Ou Cultura?*
- ⁵⁵ Henriques and Ramos, “UPPs Social”.
- ⁵⁶ Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks*, 536
- ⁵⁷ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 306.
- ⁵⁸ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 37.
- ⁵⁹ 18 officers / 1,000 habitants, almost eight times more than the city’s average, cf. Cano, *Os Donos do Morro*, 170.
- ⁶⁰ Beltrame, *Todo dia é segunda-feira*.
- ⁶¹ Silva et al., “Grupos criminosos armados”.
- ⁶² Interview with Victor, 09/05/2015.
- ⁶³ Coutinho, *Gramsci: Um Estudo*, 76.
- ⁶⁴ cited in Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks*, 51.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 145
- ⁶⁶ Field Notes, 26/4/2014.
- ⁶⁷ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.
- ⁶⁸ Interview with Victor, 09/05/2014.
- ⁶⁹ Cavalcanti, “Tirroteios, legibilidade e espaço urbano”.
- ⁷⁰ O Dia, ‘Rio: abertura de empresas sobe 56% em favelas com UPPs’. *O Dia*, 2010, march, 20. Retrieved from <http://media.terra.com.br/imprime/0,,OI4331610-EI5030,00.html>
- ⁷¹ Biller, D., & Petroff, K., Favelas ajudam a puxar desempenho de varejistas na bolsa. *Revista Exame*, 2012, December 3. Retrieved from <http://exame.abril.com.br/mercados/noticias/favelas-ajudam-a-puxar-desempenho-de-varejistas-na-bolsa>.
- ⁷² Lobato, Elvira; Antunes, Claudia, ‘Empresas ajudam a financiar pacificação’. *Folha de São Paulo*, 2010, november, 28. Retrieved from <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/cotidian/ff2811201040.htm>
- ⁷³ Interview with Jobson, 6/6/2014.
- ⁷⁴ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 280–281.
- ⁷⁵ Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks*, 486.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 292.
- ⁷⁷ Cano et al., *Os Donos do Morro*, 45
- ⁷⁸ A more accurate account would have to consider the likely shift of violence from one region to another, a common practice according to the literature on public security, which would reduce the net value of spared

lives. However, the methodological limitations for obtaining these figures should not invalidate the improvement observed. For more detailed notes on the figures and methodology, see See Cano et al., *Os Donos Do Morro*.

⁷⁹ Jessop, "A Neo-Gramscian Approach".

⁸⁰ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 46.

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