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Urban planning in an age of fear

The case of Rio de Janeiro

The aim of this paper is to discuss the challenges for urban planning and management in Rio de Janeiro in the context of the socio-political fragmentation of urban space. First, the paper profiles the recent evolution of Brazil's economy, in order to make sense of the worsening exclusion and violence in Rio de Janeiro since the 1980s. Against this background, the paper analyses recent trends in terms of socio-spatial segregation and social conflict (the formation of enclaves dominated by drug trafficking organisations, and the self-segregation of the elite as a response to the increasing fear of crime and violence), and considers possible paths to the necessary and urgent integration of urban planning and management on the one hand, and public safety policies and strategies on the other.

Rio de Janeiro as an example and a warning

In spite of the stabilisation of inflation at a low level in Brazil since the mid-1990s, the most recent decade does not seem to have been much better in terms of economic and social development than the previous one, which is known across Latin America as the 'lost decade'. The country has experienced 'productive restructuring', characterised by the selective sectoral and geographical introduction of technologies that are typical of the third industrial revolution, along with 'flexible accumulation' and 'flexible working relations', all within the context of the opening up of Brazil's economy to the global market. One of the effects of this transformation has been the increasing productivity of the Brazilian industrial sector. However, as far as the labour force is concerned, this restructuring has had important negative impacts: unemployment (especially in the industrial sector) and increasing informality in the labour market. In addition, one must not forget the institutional aspects, such as the trend towards a reduction in the contribution of the state to social welfare (see Baltar et al., 1997; Cacciamali and Bezerra, 1997; Salm et al., 1997; Portugal and Garcia, 1997). As a result, there is an ongoing gradual process of excluding workers from the formal sector, which has terrible impacts on the quality of life of these workers and their families.

Brazil is a typical semi-peripheral country – that is, it is both socially under-developed and significantly industrialised. In such a country, the working class (in the strict Marxist sense of manual workers, especially in industry, who receive a salary and from whom surplus value is extracted) is quantitatively not very relevant and

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geographically highly concentrated. Furthermore, skilled industrial workers are relatively privileged among the urban poor; often they reach a standard of living almost comparable to that of the Brazilian middle class, thus becoming relatively integrated in the consumerist society of Brazil's cities. In the wake of Brazil's productive restructuring, the productivity of its industrial sector experienced a growth of 60 per cent between the beginning of 1991 and the end of 1996, whereas the level of formal employment in the industrial sector fell by 25 per cent in the same period (Ramos and Reis, 1997, 4–5). In contrast, one can easily see that the importance of informal labour (defined as employees not officially registered and self-employed people not covered by social security) is growing in Brazil. According to Mattoso (1999, 15), who used data from the Pesquisa Mensal de Emprego (PME, a monthly employment survey undertaken by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics in the six biggest cities: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre, Salvador and Recife), the proportion of employees without a work permit in relation to the total number of employees increased from 18.4 per cent in December 1989 to 26.9 per cent in June 1999. In the same period, the percentage of self-employed people increased from 17.7 to 23.5, while the percentage of employees with a work permit decreased from 59.5 to 44.7. In this context, the relative importance of the industrial working class becomes less significant, while informal sector employment, including criminal employment, becomes more and more relevant.

The growing importance of informal labour has several negative implications. For example, an increasing number of employees are excluded from social insurance, unemployment benefits, paid holidays and so on. From a socio-political standpoint, the most remarkable aspect of this evolution is the increasing importance of criminal strategies of survival, especially drug trafficking. It is very difficult to estimate the number of poor people involved with drug trafficking; however, it is not difficult to see that this criminal sector is not irrelevant, particularly in the biggest cities (see Souza, 2000). It is worthwhile quoting the following statement, made more than 20 years ago by William da Silva Lima, the so-called 'Professor', a famous drug dealer who has been in jail since the 1980s:

> I go into the shanty-towns and see determined children, who smoke and sell marijuana. In the future they will be three million teenagers, and they will kill you [the policemen] on the street corners. Do you realise the meaning of that – three million teenagers and ten million unemployed people with weapons in their hands? How many Bangu I, II, III, IV, V will be necessary in order to house this mass? (*apud* Amorim, 1993, 255)[1]

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[1] 'The Professor' is one of the founders of Comando Vermelho ('Red Commando'), one of Rio de Janeiro's most notorious drug trafficking organisations. This statement was recorded by a detective from Rio de Janeiro's Anti-Kidnapping Unit. Bangu I, II, III and IV are penitentiaries on the periphery of Rio de Janeiro.

In contemporary Brazil, Rio de Janeiro and other cities still display great concentrations of wealth, despite the relative deconcentration and interiorisation of industry and urbanisation (Souza, 2000; 2001). However, the deconcentration of activities and the outflow of highly qualified professionals to medium-sized cities make it even clearer that the cities also concentrate poverty and social conflicts. As stressed by Rocha (1995; 2003), urban poverty in Brazil is primarily a metropolitan phenomenon, and it is to a large extent concentrated in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.[2] It must be emphasised that I am *not* suggesting that factors such as poverty and unemployment are directly related to urban violence, in Brazil or anywhere else, since institutional factors (for instance, the degree of efficiency and reliability of the police) as well as culture and cultural change play crucial roles (Souza, 1996, 446–47; 2000, 83–85; Caldeira, 2000, 126–34). Furthermore, there are many different types of violent crime, and while some of them are significantly (even if only indirectly) related to economic problems such as inequality and poverty, others are not (Soares, 1996, 258). However, economic inequalities, mediated by cultural and institutional factors (the dissolution or weakening of traditional values, increasing hedonism and consumerism, the weakness of most urban social movements, endemic corruption in the police, and so on), are the background against which the increasing attraction exerted by drug trafficking on young poor people living in *favelas* can be understood (Soares, 1996, 258; Souza, 2000).

Nowadays, shanty town formation and the proliferation of peripheral, semi-legal settlements, which are the most pervasive spatial symbols of urban poverty in Brazil, are impressive not only by virtue of their size and growth rates,[3] but also because of their complexity and socio-political significance, on account of the drug trafficking. Rio de Janeiro is the best example, partly due to the scale of drug trafficking activity, but also because of the challenge it represents for urban planning and management, especially if one thinks in terms of a progressive, participatory urban policy. Although the municipality of Rio de Janeiro (as with most of the municipalities in Rio's metropolitan region) has been managed in a quite conservative way since the beginning of the 1990s, it is relevant to develop alternative scenarios and speculate about the challenge that increasing violence and the territorial control of segregated areas by criminal groups represent for popular participation in planning and

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2   30.24 per cent of the Brazilian population (that is, 51.3 million people) lived in the nine largest and oldest cities in 2000 (demographic census of 2000, *apud* Rocha, 2003, 130). In 1999, 34.19 per cent of all Brazil's poor people (in terms of absolute poverty) — 11.2 million people — were living in these areas, while 20.41 per cent of the poor people lived in the countryside in the same period (Rocha, 2003, 83). In the same year, 36.74 per cent of all the poor people living in the nine metropolitan regions were in São Paulo, and 16.66 per cent of them were in Rio de Janeiro (Rocha, 2003, 127).

3   Rio de Janeiro is a good example in this respect: according to official data, 1,092,783 people (18.6 per cent of the total population of the city) lived in *favelas* in 2000. Furthermore, the demographic growth rate of the population of the *favelas* is higher than that of the formal city — 2.4 per cent as against 0.38 per cent for the period 1991–2000 (Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, 2002).

management. Indeed, it is relevant to consider Rio's situation not just for its own sake, but because it is important to extract some lessons from its experience, bearing in mind that many other Brazilian cities (as well as cities in other countries) are experiencing similar problems, albeit to a lesser degree. That is precisely the purpose of this paper.

Although this paper examines the tensions between urban planning and popular participation on the one hand and criminality and violence on the other, it does not cover all types of crime; there is a clear focus on violence which is directly or indirectly related to drug trafficking. Urban violence has become a major concern in many societies, not only in the South but also in the USA and Europe. At the beginning of the 1990s, the German essayist Hans Magnus Enzensberger remarked: 'not only in Lima and Johannesburg, in Bombay and Rio, but also in Paris and Berlin, in Detroit and Birmingham, in Milan and Hamburg [a] molecular civil war [is going on]' (Enzensberger, 1993, 18). While I am not suggesting that all violence in this 'molecular civil war' is drug-related, one cannot deny that the importance of drug trafficking and its implications in terms of violence and fear is growing. There are significant differences according to the country and city. For instance, in Johannes-burg – a divided city which is regarded as the crime capital of a country which exhibits 'levels of lawlessness, violence and crime that match or exceed those of Pakistan, Brazil and Venezuela, countries often thought to be at the top of the public-safety blacklist (Beall et al., 2002, 177) – drug trafficking does not seem to be as threatening as in Rio de Janeiro. In some Latin American cities, the crucial role of drug trafficking has been quite evident since the 1980s (see Gouëset, 1992, on Medellin). As far as constraints on the implementation of more democratic and participatory forms of urban planning are concerned, the control of segregated areas by drug traffickers and the negative effects of drug-related violence on the behaviour and lifestyle of the middle and upper classes are of central relevance in Brazil today, even if the socio-political challenge represented by drug trafficking is more evident in Rio than in other cities (even São Paulo, as noted by Mingardi, 1997).

The socio-political fragmentation of Rio de Janeiro's urban space

As far as shanty towns are concerned, the most striking aspect since the 1980s has been the increasing territorial control exercised over them by drug trafficking crews and organisations.[4] *Favelas* have a great logistical significance for drug dealers who

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4   By 'drug trafficking organisation' I do not mean single gangs or criminal crews, which usually control only one or
    a few *favelas*, but the very loose organisations (in fact, criminal mutual-help networks) known as *comandos*. The
    word 'gang' is not completely appropriate, because the smaller criminal crews are better organised and more
    heavily armed than the word 'gang' would suggest (see Souza, 1996; 2000).

operate in various Brazilian cities. Undoubtedly, the excessive highlighting of *favelas* by the media leaves retail drug dealers who are not based in *favelas* in the shadows. For example, there are dealers who sell drugs in various parts of the formal city, such as nightclubs, schools and universities, and middle-class flats, not to mention wholesalers, who operate at a regional, national and even international level and who – it goes without saying – do not live in *favelas*. The drug dealers who are based in segregated spaces are on the lowest rung of a long ladder of agents and interests. However, there are many reasons why *favelas* have suffered more than other types of residential space in terms of territorial control by organised groups of drug traffickers (see Souza, 1995a; 1995b; 1996; 2000; Zaluar, 1994; 2002a; 2002b; 2002c). These include their locations (many *favelas* are located very close to middle-class districts – that is, very close to the main drug consumers), their internal spatial structures (narrow streets and chaotic spatial patterns that make it difficult for the police to take control), and their socio-economic characteristics (an abundance of poor young people to be recruited for different activities).

The case of Rio de Janeiro is particularly grave. The end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s represented, in Rio as well as in other cities, a benchmark in the aforementioned territorialisation process. Understanding this increase in territorialisation, which has contributed to urban fragmentation, requires a consideration of both the 'illegal territories' controlled by parallel powers (i.e., *favelas* controlled by specific groups of drug traffickers) and spaces in the formal city.

My own perception of the process that is unfolding in Rio de Janeiro as a form of fragmentation has its origin in an interview with a leader of a *favela* in the north zone of the city (Souza, 1995a; 1995b; 1996; 1997; 2000; 2001). In this interview, which occurred in 1994, the community leader stated that Rio de Janeiro was experiencing a transformation. The *favelas*, which until the 1980s had been more or less 'open' – that is, people who lived in different *favelas* could visit each other without significant restrictions – became increasingly 'closed', and mobility between two *favelas* controlled by rival drug trafficking organisations became relatively difficult. For the *favela* inhabitant, other *favelas* increasingly became territories that were controlled by drug traffickers who were rivals of those who controlled his or her own community. Rivalry between criminal crews as well as between *comandos* influences the spatial mobility of *favela* inhabitants, who risk hostility when they visit other *favelas*. According to the aforementioned leader, only in his or her own community can a *favela* inhabitant enjoy some safety, since drug dealers usually do not allow ordinary crimes within their territories. This is for the sake of their 'business', as unnecessary violence could lead to social instability as well as to too much public exposure of the community.

It is important to underline that following this interview with the community leader, who demonstrated an interesting perception of a very important aspect of a process which I later termed 'the socio-political fragmentation of the urban space', I

confirmed the clarity of his perception through many other interviews with *favela* leaders in Rio de Janeiro.[5] As far as the restriction of the spatial mobility of shanty town residents is concerned, one good example was given by a community leader of another *favela* (Morro do Adeus) whom I interviewed with my assistants in July 1995. She informed us that it was virtually impossible for her and leaders of neighbouring *favelas* to develop cooperation, since their communities were under the influence of rival drug trafficking organisations which made it very difficult for them to meet. Another example was reported by the press in 2003, when a teenager who lived in a certain *favela* was publicly humiliated by local drug dealers (she was forced to walk naked in the streets of the *favela*), then raped and finally tortured and murdered – because it was discovered that her boyfriend lived in another *favela* under the control of a rival drug organisation.

Several works by the urban anthropologist Alba Zaluar about drug trafficking in Rio's *favelas* offer research results which are in many respects similar and complementary to my own (Zaluar, 1994; 2002a; 2002b; 2002c). While she has concentrated her attention on moral views and patterns of behaviour in the context of the relationship between criminals and other shanty-town inhabitants, my work has basically related to the impacts of drug trafficking on space and spatial practices. Both myself and Zaluar have shown that *favela*-based retail drug trafficking combines a strong hierarchy at the scale of the *favela*, with a decentralised, network-based organisation at the *comandos* scale. In each shanty town, this hierarchy comprises (in descending order): the *dono do morro* ('owner of the hill'), *gerentes* ('managers', those who control the selling places), *soldados* ('soldiers', security staff), *vapores* ('vapours', street sellers) and *aviões* ('aeroplanes', go-between sellers). Each drug trafficking crew or *quadrilha* has its own territory of one or more *favelas*, and while dealers who belong to the same *comando* usually respect each other's territories, bandits belonging to rival

5   Between 1994 and 1997, I coordinated a research project about the socio-spatial impacts of drug trafficking on Brazilian cities. Many people in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Curitiba and Recife were interviewed. The study was funded by the Brazilian Research Council, and the research team included three undergraduate students and one graduate student under my supervision. In Rio de Janeiro in particular, where most people were interviewed, both formal and informal leaders of *favelas* were contacted. There were observations and interviews in 17 *favelas*, and 20 leaders of residents' associations were interviewed. The interviews were structured. Due to the often dangerous situations (only in a very few cases were people interviewed outside *favelas*), a list of 16 questions was memorised (we did not carry written questions with us), and we also tried to memorise as much as possible of the answers given (interviews could usually not be recorded). Details regarding the most important results of this project can be found in Souza, 1996; 2000. Since 2003 I have coordinated a much more specific research project about how drug trafficking and its related violence, fear and territorialisation processes affect urban planning and management (especially participatory urban planning) in Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre (capital city of the most southerly Brazilian state, Rio Grande do Sul). Fieldwork has already been carried out in the form of semi-structured interviews; 14 key people have been interviewed in Rio de Janeiro since mid-2003 (five *favela* leaders, one local government official and six landscape architects who work or worked for Rio's community upgrading programme, Programa Favela-Bairro). This project is also funded by the Brazilian Research Council.

comandos often try to take possession of enemy territories. This results in turf wars over several days or even weeks, usually involving several drug trafficking crews belonging to the same *comando* in the spirit of mutual help. The protection of business as well as other, more symbolic aspects such as demonstrations of power and virility (see Zaluar, 1994; 2002a) has contributed not only to an increasing use of violence among criminal crews, but also to an increasing atmosphere of tyranny for *favela* inhabitants. This has many aspects; for instance:

- Local bosses increasingly control many aspects of *favela* life, such as residents' associations (*associações de moradores*). In many shanty towns drug traffickers have started to influence the elections for residents' associations, putting up candidates who are committed to their interests. Furthermore, leaders of residents' associations who refuse to obey orders (for example, to permit the use of the association's infrastructure) are menaced, often evicted and in some cases murdered (Souza, 2000; Zaluar, 2002b; see also Leeds, 1996).
- During turf wars in which crews invade and take control of shanty towns that had previously been dominated by other crews, members of defeated crews and their relatives and friends are usually evicted as well. Because of this or simply as a consequence of insecurity, around 20 per cent of residents have left their homes in shanty towns, according to the Federation of Dwellers' Associations (Zaluar, 2002a, 149).
- As discussed above, only in their own communities can *favela* residents enjoy safety, since drug dealers do not allow ordinary crimes within their territories. However, the role of drug dealers as guarantors of safety is limited. Although thieves and rapists who carry out crimes against other *favela* inhabitants are usually severely punished by drug dealers, the dealers themselves often behave in a brutal manner towards ordinary *favelados*. While drug traffickers usually condemn rape if it is committed by 'ordinary criminals', even implementing exemplary punishments such as castration and murder, the dealers themselves sometimes take women by force.

In fact, *favela*-based drug dealers are themselves oppressed people who often oppress other oppressed people. Their brutality and interference in dwellers' associations mean that state projects, such as community upgrading, face serious obstacles. In particular, the possibilities for participatory planning and management are severely circumscribed by the intervention of drug bosses. This is especially the case in Rio de Janeiro, where approximately one-third of the population live in shanty towns, almost all of which are controlled by *comandos*. I will turn to this problem in the next section.

Let me now consider the non-segregated spaces, which are also relevant in order to present an integrated picture of the socio-political fragmentation of space in a city such as Rio de Janeiro. The community leader whom I interviewed in 1994 called the

ordinary districts and neighbourhoods in the formal city '*áreas neutras*' ('neutral areas'). This sounds somewhat strange, but his intention was clear: for him these spaces are, from the standpoint of public safety, dangerous areas of no man's land. Their only protection against criminality is the police. Although the state has the legal monopoly on violence, it is steadily challenged by the drug dealers, who have several territorial enclaves in the city. The state is no longer able to offer safety in the streets and other public spaces in the ordinary neighbourhoods.

However, the community leader failed to mention an important element: *condomínios exclusivos* – gated communities, luxury complexes of apartments or houses occupied by the upper-middle class and bourgeoisie. These are the direct opposite of the *favelas*, and should not be regarded as belonging to the neutral areas either. From the standpoint of the urban elite in Rio de Janeiro, self-segregation in *condomínios exclusivos* is a solution to urban violence. The gated communities of Barra da Tijuca (a very large district within Rio de Janeiro) are good examples of such middle-class ghettos (Sennett, 1977).

The wish of Rio de Janeiro's elites for isolation, leaving behind them what is ugly or threatening, constitutes a kind of escapism. It is also hypocritical, because while they reject the working classes as immediate neighbours, they employ them as servants, security agents and so on in the gated community itself (and, of course, as general employees in the city outside its gates and walls). The *condomínios exclusivos* are, in essence, similar to gated communities in other cities and countries, from the USA (Marcuse, 1997) to South Africa (Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002). However, in a country such as Brazil, the hypocrisy and arrogance represented by 'exclusionary enclaves', to employ Marcuse's expression, are particularly remarkable, because in Brazil the poor are not a minority, as they are in the USA: they are a large majority of the urban population (although the middle classes are not so unimportant as one might think, especially in the big and medium-sized cities of the south and southeast).[6]

The escapism of Rio de Janeiro's urban elites is not restricted to *condomínios exclusivos*. Huge, sophisticated, luxury shopping malls are also a part of their typical way of life. They are not so closed to strangers as *condomínios exclusivos*; low-income people can be found in some of them – for instance, young people looking for diversion. The success of these shopping malls among middle- and upper-class people depends on their absolute safety (in contrast to the city in general, and more specifically in contrast to the neutral areas), and since the Brazilian urban middle and

6   For Marcuse, the difference between 'citadels' and 'exclusionary enclaves' is that 'the former serve to dominate and protect bastions of power and influence (such as Trump Tower), and the latter serve simply to protect groups feeling vulnerable, by excluding those different from themselves (such as Beverly Hills)' (Marcuse, 1997, 247). Despite the fact that Rio de Janeiro's *condomínios exclusivos* are closer to his definition of 'exclusionary enclaves' than 'citadels', they seem to be, to some extent, a mixture of both, as I argued in an earlier work (Souza, 2001, 443).

upper classes associate poor people, especially *favelados* and blacks, with crime and unpleasantness, they expect the lower classes to be excluded. It is hardly possible to do this openly, since shopping centres are not private property. Nevertheless, people who are regarded as undesirable are steadily monitored, and sometimes threatened and humiliated by security agents.

In the neutral areas, it is quite clear that civility – defined by Sennett (1977, 264) as 'the activity which protects people from each other and yet allows them to enjoy each other's company' – declines dramatically. In the light of this, even citizenship is undermined. Citizenship is usually understood as a set of formal political rights: being a citizen of a certain country entitles one to specific political rights, such as the right to vote, the right to express one's opinion freely, and the right to freedom of movement inside the boundaries of the country. Some social rights are also related to the privilege of being a citizen: for instance, the right to enjoy healthcare provided by the state. In contrast to, say, ancient Greece, where citizenship was restricted to freemen (excluding slaves, foreigners and women), modern nation-states usually recognise an individual as a citizen if he or she is born there. However, it has been increasingly acknowledged that formal rights are not enough, since concrete income inequalities can undermine the exercise of certain rights. Freedom of movement, for instance, is not independent of financial capacity, which influences a citizen's ability to travel or to access certain places where entry payment is required (entertainment complexes, theatres and so on). Furthermore, it has been noted that the legal contexts of nation-states usually do not provide a satisfactory understanding of rights in relation to the needs of cultural or ethnic minorities, who try to preserve their identities and at the same time enjoy some general citizenship privileges. As a result of this criticism, the typical relationship between territory (and territoriality), identity and citizenship in the framework of modern nation-states is seen as somewhat restrictive (see Smith, 2000).

A further problem arises if some of the opportunities provided by the formal political and social rights of citizenship cannot be taken up, not because of material inequalities or ethnocentrism, but because of violence and fear. The full exercise of basic rights and liberties presupposes a certain amount of room for manoeuvre, which shrinks under circumstances marked by prejudice, fear and violence. In the *favelas*, freedom of movement, for example, can be severely restricted by the fear of being treated as an enemy or a possible spy. The freedom of association is increasingly restricted by most drug dealers who control a large proportion of Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*, threatening and manipulating community leaders and imposing rules on all the residents. In the public spaces outside the segregated areas, the fear of becoming a victim of assault or robbery also restricts the freedom of movement. Of course, the fear of street crime inhibiting free access to public spaces is far from being a problem exclusive to Rio de Janeiro; the surveillance of cities and the problem of safety in

public spaces are major topics in contemporary European and US urban sociology, urban geography and criminology, as Siebel and Wehrheim (2003, 4) note. The particularity of Rio's situation, however, especially in comparison to European cities, is its incredible gravity. Carvalho (2003) pointed out that inequalities restrict citizenship in Brazil to a large extent, since 90 per cent of the population do not enjoy – and quite often do not know about – their social and civil rights. Such rights are often violated by the police. Nevertheless, he saw the history of citizenship in Brazil as a long journey, during which some improvements have been achieved, despite some challenges. One of these challenges is drug trafficking and its socio-political and socio-psychological effects in the cities, although Carvalho did not mention it.

The socio-political fragmentation of the urban space is the synthesis of all these phenomena. It is a process that leads to the proliferation of excluded enclaves at the bottom of the socio-spatial hierarchy; *favelas* become increasingly dominated by drug trafficking organisations. At the same time, self-segregation in *condomínios exclusivos* becomes increasingly common at the top of the hierarchy. Public life and safety decline dramatically, as shown by the transformation of public spaces and 'normal' districts into unsafe 'neutral areas'. As we can see, the socio-political fragmentation of space is not just a new term for residential segregation, but a complex phenomenon which comprises both the transformation of an increasing number of poor, segregated areas into illegal territorial enclaves under the control of drug traffickers, and self-segregation, which is to a large extent a response of privileged residents to growing insecurity in 'normal' districts and neighbourhoods.

This process is well represented in Brazil in both Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, although the territorialisation of *favelas* by criminals is more evident in Rio. Self-segregation has existed in both since the mid-1970s (see Caldeira, 2000 on São Paulo, and Souza, 2000 on Rio and São Paulo). In other Brazilian cities this kind of fragmentation is still incipient (Souza, 2000), but it is becoming increasingly important even in medium-sized cities.

Urban planning, popular participation and criminality: challenges and possible responses

As far as urban planning and management are concerned, the dangers and obstacles are tremendous, especially in relation to the attempt to democratise urban planning and management by empowering civil society and introducing consistent mechanisms of popular participation. There has been a growing literature about participatory urban planning in the last decades, from classic approaches such as that of Sherry Arnstein (1969) to more recent debates such as those on collaborative or communicative planning (Innes, 1995; Healey, 1997) and community planning (Duffy and Hutchinson, 1997), which are typical of the US and European planning environments.

There have also been debates about participatory budgeting, which has been very important in many countries, including Brazil, due to the internationally celebrated experience of Porto Alegre (see Abers, 1996; 2000; Souza, 2003). However, the intensity of the socio-political fragmentation of urban space in Rio de Janeiro has yet to be integrated into the concerns of participatory planning theoreticians.

To begin with the *favelas*: how can *favela* residents be empowered if they are controlled and tyrannised by local drug trafficking bosses? And how can the state apparatus establish co-management schemes and cooperation processes with these people if the state itself is scared of and challenged by drug trafficking organisations, and if it is continuously forced to accept drug bosses' control over *favelas*?

One example of these concerns is offered by Rio de Janeiro's internationally known community-upgrading programme, Programa Favela-Bairro. This programme has been implemented by Rio de Janeiro's administration since 1994 with the help of the Inter-American Development Bank. Its goals include infrastructure provision, land regularisation and support for job creation and income generation. During its first phase, 51 shanty towns benefited, despite two of the goals (land regularisation and state support for local income generation) having been largely neglected (only five shanty towns were regularised: see Pinto et al., 2002, 34). In fact, the Favela-Bairro programme is not a good example of participatory planning, in spite of the administration's claims in this respect. Nevertheless, it is a good example of the problems which can be caused by drug trafficking in relation to state intervention and participatory planning in segregated spaces.

Drug trafficking bosses have prohibited the implementation of some aspects of *favela* upgrading projects in the Favela-Bairro programme, and they have modified specific aspects of the project after its implementation. This kind of interference is often tolerated by the state, thus legitimising the dealers. Drug traffickers do not desire certain types of physical improvements, such as better integration between the small streets of the *favela* and those of surrounding districts, because it could threaten their security. There are other reasons why Favela-Bairro teams have been in trouble with traffickers in several *favelas* since the programme began to be implemented in 1994; sometimes armed dealers simply wish to demonstrate their power on an arbitrary basis. Problems of this nature have been reported by the press (see, for instance, *O Globo*, 17 March 1996; *Jornal do Brasil*, 5 and 6 February 1999; *O Globo*, 3 September 1999; *Folha de São Paulo*, 18 February 2001; *O Globo*, 18 May 2003), and several people interviewed for the two research projects mentioned in note 5 – community leaders, architects working for the municipality, etc. – reported similar problems.

Some concrete examples will illustrate the forms and intensity of drug dealers' direct or indirect interference.

- A young architect who works for a private landscape architecture consultancy office and who has worked for the municipal administration in the context of the

Favela-Bairro programme for several years told my research team (interview, July 2003) that he was asked by the president of a certain dwellers' association to pay a 'security tax' while he and his colleagues were visiting the *favela* to make preliminary studies for a community upgrading project. He said it was astonishing because it was the first time something like that had happened to him. The president of the dwellers' association did not mention drug traffickers, but stressed the risks to which his team would be exposed if he did not make the contribution. Since many (probably most) dwellers' associations are already under the direct or indirect control of drug dealers, it is plain that the 'security tax' was in fact levied by local criminals.

- The same architect mentioned situations in which *favela* upgrading works were interrupted because wars between rival criminal crews were going on. Every interruption of this sort generates a big problem, since the terms agreed in contracts between private firms (consultancy offices, building firms, etc.) can no longer be maintained. A similar problem was mentioned by another landscape architect who was interviewed by a research team under my supervision in September 2003.

- Another landscape architect (interviewed by a member of my research team in September 2003) mentioned cases in which drug traffickers (using the leaders of the local residents' associations as messengers) criticised and even vetoed aspects of upgrading projects, especially aspects related to the opening or widening of streets inside *favelas*. Similar problems were reported several times by the press: *O Globo* (18 May 2003) and *Jornal do Brasil* (5 and 6 February 1999) reported the construction by dealers of physical barriers in streets that had been opened or widened by the upgrading project.

Unfortunately, it would be unrealistic to expect the police to prevent this kind of interference. It is a pervasive symptom of the weakness of the state that both Rio de Janeiro's police force (which is both structurally corrupt – many policemen extort money from drug dealers, as has been often reported by the press – and very ineffective) and the security forces as a whole are no longer able to cope with the challenges represented by well-armed drug traffickers operating inside the *favelas*. The army itself has intervened several times in Rio's *favelas* since the mid-1990s, but even this institution has been challenged by drug traffickers. Ammunition has been stolen from barracks, and in June 2003 an army barracks located in the city of Niterói, in the metropolitan region of Rio de Janeiro, was briefly attacked by criminals.

As far as the gated communities are concerned, the local state in Rio and elsewhere in Brazil has been unable to monitor the implementation of urban law, since many of those communities are simply illegal. The closure of public streets and the denial of access to public spaces (explained by 'security reasons') by means of gates

and private security agents violates Brazil's urban legislation (federal law 6.776/79), meaning that many (but not all) *condomínios exclusivos* are not in accordance with the law. However, local administrations have usually tolerated this, and some lawyers even defend it from a pragmatic viewpoint (e.g., Mukai, 2002, 139, 145–46). Unfortunately, the practice of closing streets is becoming more and more widespread in Rio de Janeiro, even in lower-middle-class districts (that is, outside *condomínios exclusivos*). Fear is winning the battle, at least for now.

The gated communities are very complex in Rio de Janeiro, and even more so in São Paulo. Each is a microcosm with its own shops and leisure complexes, and sometimes even shopping malls, schools, restaurants and private universities. They are a real danger to citizenship building and socio-psychological formation in the long run. Carlos Nelson Ferreira dos Santos made a prophetic criticism of the *condomínios exclusivos* when he said: 'being a success in terms of spatial segregation and urban disintegration, perhaps the *condomínio* is the biggest menace which the Brazilian cities ever had to face' (Santos, 1981, 25). Empirical evidence shows that young people who were born and grew up in these gated communities often behave in antisocial ways (forming *jiu-jitsu* fighter gangs, vandalism, etc.) and show very little commitment to the fate of the city and of society as a whole. These 'children of fear' will probably be an even worse ruling class than their parents and grandparents. In the face of growing social conflicts and different types of criminality (for instance, kidnapping), the *condomínios exclusivos* are not only ineffective as a solution; they are suicidal.

What about the 'neutral areas'? Public spaces have been abandoned because of criminality and violence: in short, because of fear. Risk areas proliferate in the big cities, and Rio is again one of the best examples. Conservative responses to this, as well as to the challenge represented by territorialised *favelas*, seem to be ineffective, and they sometimes cause new problems: increasing levels of police repression can generate more fear on the part of ordinary people (especially poor people in the *favelas*, who for generations have been treated by the police in a rude and racist manner, as if all of them were criminals), while failing to keep drug trafficking under control. Urban regeneration projects intended to revitalise blighted areas are often very expensive for the taxpayers, and their benefits are doubtful. New responses are urgently needed.

New responses to urban problems in a city as socio-politically fragmented as Rio de Janeiro must integrate alternative public safety policies and progressive urban development policies. In terms of public safety policies, community policing is an alternative strategy which has been implemented with some success in other countries (Skolnick and Bayley, 2002). Some criticisms must be taken into account, for instance those related to the danger of reinforcing racism and the building of 'exclusionary communities' (Wehrheim, 2002, 68–71). In terms of progressive urban development, the importance of the Brazilian urban reform (*reforma urbana*) strategy must be

stressed. In contrast to a *reforma urbanística* (that is, an urban design-oriented intervention), which is a mere reshaping of the space, a *reforma urbana* is a kind of structural social reform which encompasses a very strong spatial dimension. Its purpose is the reform of the institutions that regulate the production of space, in order to attain more equity and social justice in the city. The *reforma urbana* combines alternative land policy (by means of different fiscal and zoning instruments, such as the progressive property tax) with community upgrading and other important measures, always in the context of participatory planning (Souza, 2003). It goes far beyond the usual good governance discourse. Unfortunately, only a few Brazilian municipalities have approved and implemented *reforma urbana* masterplans. However, the 2001 federal law for urban development (the Estatuto da Cidade, 'City Statute', law 10.257/2001), which is to a large extent compatible with the spirit of the *reforma urbana*, can influence local urban politics positively in the long run. Complementary to the typical *reforma urbana* agenda and instruments are strategies of income generation and mechanisms of participatory budgeting (*orçamento participativo*). In Rio, however, participatory urban development mechanisms face serious obstacles, as outlined above. This is just speculation, since Rio's conservative local administration has not seriously tried to implement participatory planning and management. Participatory budgeting – which has been discussed and implemented in many Brazilian cities, sometimes in a very consistent manner and with significant results (see Souza, 2002; 2003) – has not found a favourable political environment in Rio, which has been governed in a very technocratic manner since the beginning of the 1990s. Any attempt to implement participatory planning in the future must face the terrible challenge represented by territorialisation processes conducted by drug traffickers. This would be like repairing a car while it is moving. In a city like Rio, public safety and urban development are interdependent. On the one hand, progressive urban policy must be supported by public safety measures; on the other hand, progressive urban policy can decisively contribute to public safety.

In Brazil (and probably in other countries too), urban planners and public safety experts usually do not know each other or talk to each other. Furthermore, due to Brazil's history of dictatorship, policing and public safety policies are regarded with suspicion by left-wing scholars.[7] Of course, since both public safety and urban planning are concerned with 'order', we must take care to achieve a good balance between order and freedom so as to achieve a kind of socio-spatial order that does not undermine socio-spatial justice. Contrary to the beliefs of many left-wing intellectuals, public safety should not be left to the right wing, if only because the police and even some elected politicians behave as though respect for human rights

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7 One exception is the anthropologist and political scientist Luiz Eduardo Soares, a brilliant scholar who implemented an alternative public safety approach in Rio from January 1999 until March 2000, when he was expelled from Rio's state government for political reasons (Soares, 2000).

(especially the rights of the poor people who live in shanty towns) would contradict efficient, effective crime prevention. It is true that in a capitalist society, especially in a semi-peripheral country such as Brazil, the primary function of the police is the defence of the property and privileges of the upper classes, but despite this, liberal scholars and social movements cannot dismiss public safety as irrelevant. Progressive urban planners and public safety experts must talk to each other. Some efforts to incorporate public safety perspectives into urban planning already exist (e.g., the controversial idea of 'defensible space' (Newman, 1996) or its more recent extension, crime prevention through environmental design, which can reinforce segregation, as Wehrheim [2002] noted), and these must be critically evaluated and discussed.

However, I would not like to give the impression that it is possible to overcome the drug trafficking problem within the existing institutional, political and economic framework of a semi-peripheral country alone. Even in European cities, where drug trafficking is in no way as problematic as it is in Rio de Janeiro, and where financial and institutional resources are much more easily available, dealing appropriately with drug trafficking and its impacts is still very difficult. As Dorn et al. (1996, 1–2) pointed out:

> European cities, their political authorities, policing agencies and welfare networks have been learning as they go along, in a series of trial-and-error social experiments, responding to open drug scenes. If there is a way of summarising these histories then we could say that the first response is repressive in the tradition of anti-trafficking policy; the second represents a degree of accommodation to the resilient nature of local drug scenes, coupled with attempts to address the health and welfare issues of users and to reconcile their rights with the rights of non-users; and the third demonstrates the emergence of a new and creative control 'mix' (which remains problematic in its implementation and consequences).

In fact, as far as (semi)-peripheral countries are concerned, the challenge is even bigger than has been suggested by the discussion so far. Local policies (progressive urban planning included) can play an important role in empowering poor people by means of mechanisms aimed at income generation, income redistribution and social inclusion. This can contribute to a weakening of drug trading and a reduction in the drug traffickers' power. However, local public policies alone cannot cope with the magnitude of the problem. Let me mention two obstacles:

- Suppose it were possible, by some miracle, to eliminate drug trafficking in the short term (say, by incarcerating all the drug dealers). What could happen? It is likely that the *favelas*' inhabitants would become desperate, since drug trafficking is now an important source of income for many of them, either directly or indirectly (Souza, 2000). Maybe crime would migrate from the *favelas* to the 'legal city', thus making some conservative nightmares come true ('one day they will come down

from their hills and take over all our houses!'). So, it is necessary to provide attractive economic and social alternatives; more jails and more policemen are not just reactionary solutions, they are pseudo-solutions. How realistic is it to talk of offering good jobs and much better social opportunities to the poor? This depends largely on processes and decisions at the national and even the global level, and it would be unrealistic to expect big changes over the next few years.

• The legal and illegal sides of the economy and society are more and more inter-connected: from the local to the global, from police corruption to money laundering. The powers behind the illegal economy are tremendous. The challenge of imple-menting a consistent solution goes far beyond the possibilities presented by the official state, because some important economic sectors and social groups are becoming increasingly dependent on drug trafficking.

In the light of these challenges, the measures which have been mentioned in this section can probably only contribute, at best, to reducing the problem, rather than eradicating it.

Conclusions

Rio de Janeiro is an increasingly unsafe and problematic space. Although it is still the second most important place in Brazil after São Paulo, its economic and social decline is remarkable, and is increasingly connected to factors such as urban violence and criminality. Alongside expressions of wealth and modernity, various expressions of poverty and conflict (including their modern forms, such as the relatively organised crime that is associated with drug trafficking) can be found there. What is happening in Rio de Janeiro is more than a simple worsening of residential segregation. It is a dramatic socio-political fragmentation of urban space, characterised on the one hand by the proliferation of illegal territorial enclaves controlled by drug trafficking organisations, and on the other by the proliferation of gated communities.

In this context, fear becomes a widespread phenomenon. Urban management and planning are already difficult enough to implement, without the interference of the drug trafficking bosses in the *favelas*. What, then, is to be done if the goal is not just the administration of the status quo, but social change with the help of progressive urban development policies? There is no recipe, but there are inspiring approaches and experiences, as well as some important lessons. As far as Rio de Janeiro is concerned, the first lesson is that we must not wait any longer, since missed opportunities might never be recovered. As far as other Brazilian cities are concerned, the lesson is that every effort must be made to avoid such a dramatic socio-political fragmentation. The cost of reversing the situation, if it is not already too late, will be very high.

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