

This peace comes with a war that never ends:¹

**Favela peace formation amid violent public security processes in
Rio de Janeiro**

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¹A favela activist discussing public security in Rio de Janeiro in Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019.

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Abstract

This thesis offers a new consideration of peace processes that engage with the needs and challenges of marginalized, racialized populations living through urban violence in the expanding peripheries of the postcolonial world. The research draws on the perspectives of favela community leaders, educators and activists on the challenges to their work in reducing violence in their communities, which were gathered during eight months of qualitative fieldwork in and around the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2019-2020. Through a critical lens, the thesis considers Rio de Janeiro as a colonial city where historical and continuous state exclusion, criminalization and murder of favela residents feed a violent cycle of drug-related crime and violence in the favelas. It questions the meaning of peace and top-down public security policies like the Police Pacification Program (UPP) and mega-operations in a city where the favela residents have since slavery been considered a violent people to be pacified and controlled. It thus critiques the militarized state security operations in the favelas as one man's peace, another man's warzone, noting that these pacification attempts effectively conduct urban warfare against the majority-black favelas to increase a sense of security in the whiter, wealthier areas of Rio de Janeiro. The thesis consequently proposes and discusses *favela peace formation* as a concept to describe alternative processes in the favelas working to reduce manifest and structural violence: a nonviolent, favela grassroots, locally legitimate peace process, which navigates various blockages and opportunities within and outside the state in its construction of a future with more social justice and less violence. It finds that through community education and engagement; navigation of the judiciary and occupation of certain positions within politics; and constant work to produce knowledge from the favela to change criminalizing narratives, favela peace formation manages to slowly construct an alternative, but limited peace both outside of and within the state. It concludes that due to enormous challenges of state violence, corruption, racism and criminalization of the favelas and their movements, favela peace formation needs support from partners within the Brazilian state, international institutions and/or solidarity movements in order to fulfil their unique potential to construct an alternative, inclusive politics without violence.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Resumo em português

A presente tese oferece uma nova consideração sobre os processos de paz que examinam as necessidades e desafios das populações marginalizadas e racializadas que vivem em contextos de violência urbana nas periferias do mundo pós-colonial. A pesquisa se baseia nas perspectivas de líderes comunitários, educadores e ativistas de favelas sobre os desafios em seu trabalho pela redução da violência em suas comunidades, reunidos durante oito meses de trabalho de campo qualitativo no Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, de 2019 a 2020. Através de uma perspectiva crítica, a tese considera o Rio de Janeiro como uma cidade colonial onde a histórica e contínua exclusão, a criminalização e o assassinato de moradores de favelas alimentam um ciclo constante de crimes relacionados às drogas e violência nas favelas. Questiona-se também o significado de paz e das políticas de segurança pública como um processo *top-down*, ou seja, de cima para baixo, como as Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora (UPP) e as megaoperações em uma cidade onde os moradores da favela sempre foram considerados uma população violenta a ser pacificada e controlada. Assim, a tese critica as operações policiais militarizadas nas favelas como “a paz de um, a zona de guerra do outro”, observando que essas tentativas de pacificação efetivamente conduzem a uma guerra urbana contra as favelas majoritariamente negras com o objetivo de aumentar a sensação de segurança nas áreas mais brancas e ricas do Rio de Janeiro. A tese, conseqüentemente, propõe e discute *a formação de paz favelada* como um conceito para descrever processos alternativos nas favelas trabalhando para reduzir a violência direta e estrutural: um processo de paz não violento, de base, localmente legítimo, que navega por vários bloqueios e oportunidades dentro e fora do Estado em sua construção de um futuro com mais justiça social e menos violência. A tese indica que por meio da educação e do engajamento da comunidade; ações no Judiciário e ocupação de determinados cargos na política; e construção de conhecimento a partir da favela para mudar as narrativas criminalizadoras, a formação da paz favelada consegue lentamente construir uma paz alternativa dentro quanto fora do aparato estatal. Conclui que, devido aos enormes desafios da violência estatal, corrupção, racismo e criminalização das favelas e seus movimentos, a formação da paz favelada precisa de apoio de parceiros dentro do Estado brasileiro, instituições internacionais e/ou movimentos de solidariedade para cumprir seu potencial único para construir uma política alternativa e inclusiva sem violência.

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Note on translations and interviews

All translations from Portuguese texts, articles and interviews are by the author, and any errors in translation are solely her responsibility.

All interviews are with individuals and organizations that work to reduce violence in various favelas in Zona Sul and Zona Norte in Rio de Janeiro. All their names are anonymized, and their locations are generalized to 'Zona Sul' or 'Zona Norte'. If no location is given, it is because that individual or organization works across several favelas or with wider questions of public security in Rio de Janeiro. Fieldnotes from events on public security and grassroots projects in the favelas are also included. For the sake of anonymity, the date of the interviews and some events are generalized to the month. An overview of the research participants and events attended is attached in the appendix. All data were gathered between June 2019 and March 2020.

~ Introduction ~

Introduction

On Friday February 8th, 2019, Rio Military Police killed thirteen people in the Fallet/Fogueteiro favelas in the deadliest police operation in twelve years (Phillips D. 2019a; Rio on Watch 2019; Soares 2019). The police claimed they shot suspects during a shoot-out, so-called ‘acts of resistance’. However, local witnesses shared that the victims had surrendered before being shot and many of the victims were shot in the back, which is a sign of execution. Further, no police officers were injured in the operation (Rio on Watch 2019; Phillips D. 2019a; Soares 2019). As one resident shared: “There was no shootout. It was a massacre” (Rio on Watch 2019). In 2019, the Brazilian police killed 6357 people, which is “one of the highest rates of police killings in the world” (HRW 2021). Almost 80% of the victims were black and these killings often occur in the country’s low-income, majority-black neighbourhoods, the favelas (HRW 2021). In 2019, Rio de Janeiro state experienced the highest number of deaths in police operations in twenty years, with 1814 people killed (BBC News 2020). Most of these police operations were in the favelas. And reflecting the national numbers, the murders were clearly racially profiled with 78.5% of the victims being black or brown (Rodrigues and Coelho 2020).

For favela residents, these numbers signify an increasingly insecure and violent everyday where they, at any moment, risk being targeted as dangerous drug traffickers and killed, or being killed by ‘lost bullets’ in shootouts. While the favelas in Rio de Janeiro are predominately controlled by drug gangs or militias, very few of the favela residents, an estimate of around 1%, are actually involved in these drug gangs. The militias, as will be further explained below, are made up of ex- and current public security officials (Besser et al 2016; Richardson and Kirsten 2005). While the favelas controlled by militias are mostly left alone by the police, the favelas controlled by drug gangs, which are the main focus of this thesis, experience increasingly militarized and

deadly police operations where police officers display a blatant disrespect for human rights and the life of favela residents.

These high rates of police killings and obvious state violence against the city's poorest and predominant Afro-Brazilian areas are justified as necessary in the war on drugs. This is reflected in the election of President Jair Bolsonaro and Rio governor Wilson Witzel in October 2018, who were both running anti-crime campaigns and continue to encourage police killings (Associated Press 2019; Phillips, T. 2019). Governor Witzel has famously proposed shoot-to-kill policing tactics, and "promised to 'slaughter' criminals by employing helicopter-borne snipers to kill anyone carrying a rifle, even if they were not engaging their weapons" (BBC News 2020; Kaiser 2019). Similarly, Bolsonaro "has repeatedly said that 'a good criminal is a dead criminal' and that "criminals would 'die in the streets like cockroaches'" if his and Witzel's proposed legislation changes were approved (BBC News 2020). Bolsonaro has also openly supported Brazil's former military dictatorship and Witzel has expressed that he would have liked to send a missile to the Cidade de Deus favela to 'solve that problem' (HRW 2019; Associated Press 2019; Phillips, D. 2019a). This open support and encouragement of state violence and police killings of 'suspected criminals', together with widespread police impunity and corruption leave the police as both judge and executioner in their interventions in the favelas. This policy of confrontation results in a state war against the favelas, as the public security forces enter with armoured tanks, high-calibre weapons, and helicopters from which they shoot down into the communities. Favela residents are frequently trapped in these violent conflicts between drug traffickers, militias and state security forces that force schools, health centres and local businesses to close. As Maria*, one of the research participants stated: "Today there's a government that allows for extermination, with the mindset that being in, from the favela, is a disposable life" (September 2019, Zona Sul).

This thesis, rooted in critical peace studies, studies the opportunities for and challenges towards grassroot favela peace formation in this context of urban violence in a violent state. It critically questions how Brazil and Rio de Janeiro's history of colonialism and

slavery influences the state's relationship with the *carioca*² favelas today and argues that in a violent, racist state, the state's 'peace', enacted through public security policies against the favelas, becomes 'peace as a form of war'. In efforts to secure the rest of the city, the state of Rio de Janeiro transforms the favelas, especially the ones outside the city centre, into warzones, without regard for human rights. Thus, targeting favela residents as the 'enemy within' instead of investing in social development in these communities. Under this simultaneous state violence and social abandonment, local activists, social movements and organizations within the favelas work on various fronts to reduce violence in their communities. The thesis is heavily built on conversations and interviews with research participants from these groups in various favelas in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. They include favela activists, public security experts, community workers, youth groups, teachers, educators, artists, journalists, researchers, writers, tour guides, museum leaders, resident association presidents and drug rehabilitation workers, some with connections to black power groups, groups against state violence and the network of mothers who lost their sons to police murders.

Naming it themselves a *luta* (fight, struggle), a *trabalho de formiguinha* (literally: 'ant-work', meaning slow and steady work) and a *trabalho de base* (grassroot work) they work on various fronts to denounce state violence and neglect, end the genocidal police operations in the favelas, provide social and educational services for their communities, ensure new opportunities for their children and youth in order to keep them away from the drug gangs, produce and share knowledge challenging the criminalizing main narratives in society, combat racism and prejudice, debate, discuss, and teach in the favela and the *asfalto*, demand change in the government, strengthen favela culture and memory, empower favela residents to demand more from their citizenship, increase participation in politics, push for security sector reform and much more in order to construct a less violent future. This thesis weaves the conversations I had with these professionals working to reduce violence in the favelas in Rio together with theory and is organized around the themes they deemed most important. Any

² Meaning: "from Rio de Janeiro"

potential errors or misrepresentations are entirely my own, and if so, I apologize and welcome any criticism.

Situating the thesis

The thesis is rooted in critical peace studies where a main focus has been to criticize and find alternatives to the current neoliberal international peacebuilding processes in post-conflict settings around the world. These top-down processes have failed to construct sustainable peace, as they have imposed ready-made technocratic solutions, western norms and empty institutions while largely failing to respond to the real needs and demands at the local level. The neoliberal international peace architecture has therefore increasingly been criticized for being top-down, problem-solving, elitist, insensitive to local needs, illegitimate and neo-colonial (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2009; Taylor 2009; Williams 2009; Newman 2013; Richmond 2013). The liberal peace's failure to listen to the locals tie into its romanticism of the local as "victims or illiberal" and assumption that "interveners have privileged knowledge about peace issues" (Pugh 2013:14). This can be seen in the UNTAET mission in East Timor, where the conventional wisdom in New York and part of the Western media was that East Timor "had nothing – indeed was a *terra nullis* of sorts – a place that had to be created" (Suhrke 2001:13). This paternalistic and neo-colonial stance has prioritized a neoliberalization of the economy and securitization rather than genuine processes of redistribution, social justice and reconciliation at the ground level, leading to the question of whose peace was actually being constructed (Duffield 2001; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013; Pugh 2011; Pugh, Cooper and Turner 2008; Richmond 2009).

Building on post-structuralists, postcolonialists, feminists and various sociological and ethnographic works, critical peace scholars Mac Ginty and Richmond thus pushed for a 'local turn' in peace studies where the perspectives and agency of the subalterns in conflict would be in focus (Bhabha 1990;1994; de Certeau 1984; Foucault 1980; Jabri 2007; Kappler 2014; Mac Ginty 2014; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013; Richmond 2016; Richmond 2020; Sylvester 1994). As Mac Ginty and Richmond note:

...a local perspective of the international (a perspective commonly repeated across both the authors' years of fieldwork) is that it is also endemically dysfunctional, contextually insensitive, disrespectful and distant, unaccountable, interest-based, normatively biased, ideologically fixed, mercenary in its naturalisation of capitalism and unwilling to address inequality or the historical injustices stemming from colonialism. A convergence between local peace agency and internationals who think about the changing possibilities of emancipation across geography, history and societies (rather than disciplinary forms of integration) may be emerging quietly, via this local turn and despite the resistance to its implications from within the more traditional frameworks surrounding peace

(Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013: 772-773).

Correspondingly, peace should be thought of in an emancipatory form that indicates empathy, rights, needs, welfare, custom, identity and justice (Richmond 2008), where a 'politics of peace' includes solidarity and a just social order (Jabri 2007, from Richmond 2020). For critical peace scholars and practitioners, this means embracing an eirenist and subaltern positionality, recognizing the importance of everyday life and local agency in conflict and peace, to understand the structures and discourses of violence in order to open up new paths to an emancipatory, empathetic peace (Lederach 1997, 2005; Mac Ginty 2014; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013; Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 2011; Richmond 2009; 2011; 2016; 2018; 2020; 2021). Recent critical peace studies thus work in various ways to include local, everyday experiences of peace and conflict into the wider peacebuilding narratives and from there attempt to empower local peace efforts in the belief that these have a better chance of producing a more legitimate and sustainable positive peace (Galtung 1989; Lederach 1997; 2005; Mac Ginty 2014; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013; Pugh 2011; Richmond 2016; 2019). This includes a recognition that subaltern and local agency is often marginalized in terms of power, and that a local peace must then receive support from other partners to form a hybrid peace between the bottom-up and top-down processes. The hope is that these peace processes can turn into a positive hybrid peace which would transform structures of violence and thus include social justice, while in

reality the current peace processes barely manage to create negative hybrid peace, more focused on securitization, conflict management and pacification (see Galtung 1989 for positive peace; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2016; Richmond 2015).

A central contribution to this local and critical turn is Richmond's work on peace formation in conflict-affected societies (2016; 2019) and his more recent work on counter-peace forces that oppose these processes (2020; 2021). Inverting state formation literature to present an umbrella concept for bottom-up peace projects, he describes peace formation as:

... a form of subaltern agency or power – a set of practices – which operates cautiously in order to circumvent and negate the direct and structural power of the state, the international geopolitical system and global economy, that may directly or indirectly cause overt violent conflict (militarism, nationalism, inequity, etc.). It may also shape or influence the governmental power of the state, which often maintains predatory statehood. It may also respond to the policy frameworks of the international community, which follows hegemony, meaning its “soft” or “normative” capacity to shape order. Thus, peace formation must be seen as a subaltern and critical form of agency that seeks to engage with direct, structural, or governmental power, which sustain conflict or injustice and structural violence, with varying degrees of success or failure. It is therefore important to recognize the potential and the limits of peace formation in the context of these dynamics of power and violence

(Richmond 2016: 5-6).

With this work, he has found that while often being more locally legitimate and containing greater prospects of sustainable peace, these peace formation efforts never fully manage to be included in the wider political community sufficiently enough to build positive peace on a larger scale (Richmond 2016). As these local peacebuilding projects grow, they tend to be hijacked by hybrid, neoliberal types of peace more focused on security and negative peace than social justice and reconciliation and thus cease to be legitimate at the local level; or lack funding and power to successfully

reform the wider power structures and/or the state. This is not to downplay the importance of peace formation as it has continuously shown to have real, meaningful impacts on local individuals and communities on a small scale. Its limitations do, however, point to a failure in peace and conflict studies to directly consider the structures of power that peace formation faces; what exactly stops peace formation from having large-scale success and implement real change? And how can they navigate around these challenges?

This thesis is an exploratory attempt to bring critical peace studies and the local turn into contexts of urban violence in the expanding peripheries of the growing megacities around the world. Doing so raises the interesting question; what happens to peace formation processes in contexts where the international community is largely absent? Where local agency is not responding to, adapting, reforming or resisting international neoliberal peacebuilding projects, but rather must adapt, respond to, resist, and try to reform the state? If it cannot connect with the liberal international peace institutions for finance and leverage, where does peace formation in contexts of urban violence find support? What are these processes able to achieve? What are their challenges and opportunities for reform within the state? Studying peace formation in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, *favela peace formation*, this thesis explores how peace formation processes work in a context where they are principally marginalized by the state and where the international community is largely absent. It therefore asks the following question:

Research questions:

What are the blockages and opportunities for peace formation in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro?

The thesis seeks to answer the research question by creating a typology of blockages of peace formation in the context of urban violence in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to then consider how peace formers navigate these challenges. The main purpose of this work is to put the spotlight on power; to study structures of violence and power in a field of

peace and conflict studies focused on local agency and thus limited in its consideration of powerful actors, structures and their role in peace formation. The other main motivation and the reason behind Rio de Janeiro as a case is the need to expand peace and conflict studies into the field of urban violence in countries like Brazil where exponential city growth, inequality and crime are causing large numbers of violent deaths and where the state employs military personnel, weapons, tactics and narratives against its own citizens.

A spotlight on power

As ‘local agency’, ‘the everyday’, ‘bottom-up peacebuilding’, ‘empowerment’, ‘ownership’, ‘resistance’ and ‘peace formation’ all have become popular buzzwords in the peace field, the spotlight has remained on local communities and the subaltern in post-conflict societies in the ‘global south’. This work has been influential in including the narratives and perspectives of the ones living through conflict and peacebuilding and who will remain when all foreign actors are gone into the wider peacebuilding narrative and international peacebuilding projects. However, the immense focus on local agency has caused peace and conflict studies to largely ignore what meets these peace formation projects: social structures and structures of power. Does it matter how legitimate and promising peace formation ventures are if the structures and actors of power can easily demolish them as soon as they threaten positions of power? Some scholars have studied spoilers and corruption in post-conflict peacebuilding, but in their role as spoilers of international/neoliberal peacebuilding projects, not peace formation (Cheng and Zaum 2012; Newman et al 2006; Nilson and Kovacs 2011). Thus, while increasing attention has been paid to local and subaltern agency, there is a gap in critical peace and conflict studies when it comes to understanding power and the various methods that are used to block peace formation initiatives, except for the most recent and forthcoming works by Richmond on counter-peace processes (2020; 2021). Are these blockages consciously produced by powerful actors? Or are they simply embedded in structures of violence that do not allow space for this kind of social change? Or are they present as cultural violence within the perceptions, values and narratives of certain powerful actors and groups that normalize the current conflict and structures of inequality and violence? If so, who

are these actors, and what are the dominant narratives blocking peace formation? The thesis seeks to answer these questions and identify the various methods of blockages of peace formation in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, while also considering how peace formation navigates these blockages.

Expanding peace and conflict studies to consider urban violence

Rio de Janeiro is chosen as a case study in order to expand peace and conflict studies to consider the new, urban conflicts and increased militarization of public security within states like Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, South Africa, Honduras and more (Muggah 2014; 2016; Nogueira 2017). In Rio de Janeiro, the conflicts between large, organized drug trafficking gangs, militias and public security forces are increasingly messy and blurred, as the police are known to both be a part of the militias, and to have various corrupt arrangements with different drug gangs (Kaldor 2012; Arias 2006). Despite the high levels of violence experienced in these contexts, often in the urban peripheries or other areas marginalized by the state (Das and Poole 2004), these contexts of urban violence are often overlooked by critical peace scholars as they fall outside the traditional categories of civil wars.

Several scholars have linked these new, urban conflicts to the rise of neoliberalism and the corresponding expansion of large cities and inequality within these (Gledhill 2015; Muggah 2014; 2016; Nogueira 2017). According to them, the cities' inability to properly receive rural (and sometimes international) migrants results in the expansion of informal settlements like slums and favelas where the new arrivals are largely left to fend for themselves and the absence of employment opportunities and state presence make a perfect environment for criminal activities, such as organized drug trafficking gangs. As these areas continue to grow and violence and crime overflow and affect the other citizens in the city, the states increasingly take to military tactics in the war on drugs (thus also a war on the poor) in an effort to reduce crime and provide security for the wealthier parts of the population (Gledhill 2015; Muggah 2016). Bringing peace and conflict studies into the context of these conflicts can therefore not only help us gain a better understanding of the role of criminal actors at play in all conflict-

affected societies but also prepare for the potential exponential problem of violence and insecurity in the expanding peripheries of the growing mega-cities around the world.

This thesis seeks to fill a gap in the peace and conflict studies literature by proposing a new framework for locally legitimate, socially just, grassroots peace processes in contexts of urban violence in a post-colonial society. Initiatives such as the Safe and Inclusive Cities (SAIC) Program and the Igarape Institute in Rio de Janeiro have presented important research on growing urban violence and methods to reduce this violence in the Global South (Salahub, Gottsbacher, de Boer and Zaaroura 2019). Similarly, Hoelscher has studied urban violence reduction in Brazil (Hoelscher and Nussio 2016; Hoelscher 2017). Within peace and conflict studies, Bjorkdahl has offered important scholarship on urban peacebuilding and thus also stressed the need for increased scholarly and policy focus on urban violence and conflict (2013). Latin America scholars like Arias, Goldstein and Pearce have considered the effects of violent democracies and perverse states on violence and Pearce has recently offered a new framework for thinking about a non-violent state formation, a “politics without violence” (Arias and Goldstein 2010; Pearce 2010; 2020). Last, but not least, countless scholars in Rio de Janeiro have studied the state’s public security policies in the favelas, including Alves and Evanson (2011); Arias (2006;2017); Farias (2014); Leite et al. (2018); Misse, Grillo and Neri (2013); Ramos et al. (2005); Silva (2016); Martins (2019); Soares (2000; 2006; 2016) and many more. However, none of these have proposed a new, alternative peace process framework that could have the potential to construct a positive, locally legitimate peace in these contexts. This thesis therefore offers an exploratory study of favela peace formation as an alternative peace process in the context of urban violence in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Focusing on the case of Rio de Janeiro, the thesis combines the lens of violent democracies with subaltern favela agency efforts to reduce violence and build peace. Following the local turn in peace studies, it recognises the importance of subaltern agency and local perspectives in order to build a sustainable, socially just and legitimate peace (Galtung 1989; Lederach 1997; 2005; Mac Ginty 2014; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013; Pugh 2011; Richmond 2016; 2019). Hence, it builds heavily on

Richmond's work on peace formation in order to describe and analyse the subaltern work to build peace within a violent state, and its challenges.

Contributions to knowledge

By bringing the concept of peace formation into the context of urban violence in a (post)colonial state, the thesis seeks to bring a new framework for peace processes in the expanding, marginalized urban pockets in the growing mega-cities of the (post)colonial world. Focusing on the violence of the state and its formation in relation to these areas, the thesis also aims to further the critical discussion of race, class and the expendable in the margins in peace and conflict studies. The thesis thus contributes to existing knowledge in three principal ways:

- Furthers the theoretical knowledge on peace formation and the blockages to peace formation in contexts of urban violence.
- Provides new empirical evidence on the various forms of peace and violence within the favelas of Rio de Janeiro.
- Furthers discussions of racism, colonialism and a violent state in critical peace studies.

This introduction has situated the research in peace and conflict studies and presented the main research question and contributions to knowledge. Situating the thesis at the crossroads of theories of violent democracies in Latin America, public security in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, the local, critical turn in peace and conflict studies and the studies of the state in (post)colonial societies, I propose an exploratory, alternative framework for decolonial, socially just and locally legitimate peace processes in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro; *favela peace formation*. Adapting Richmond's concept of peace formation to a context of state, social and urban violence in marginalized areas of a violent, (post)colonial state also brings in opportunities to further discussions on race, margins and the role of the state in critical peace and conflict studies. This thesis therefore analyses the violent structures of conflict, the role of the state, the role of favela peace formers, as well as challenges and opportunities to their local peace

processes. Overall, the thesis shows the importance of considering the intersectionality of all kinds of violence, from open conflict to violent state orders of necropolitics, marginalization and corruption, to cultural, symbolic and personal violence, in order to critically engage with the possibilities of positive, sustainable peace. Subsequently, it shows favela peace formation's unique ways of recognizing and addressing the intersectionality of these different forms of violence, as well as the continuous blockages and challenges to these grassroots peace processes.

Chapter overview

In order to properly study the opportunities and challenges to peace formation in a context of urban conflict in a violent, racist state, the thesis considers the colonial state formation of Brazil and Rio de Janeiro and its public security policies towards the favelas in Rio de Janeiro state in recent years. Chapter 1 starts with a presentation of Rio de Janeiro as a case study. Next follows a discussion of methodology, including my positionality and the ethics and risks of the research. Then, chapter 2 presents a literature review on the everyday, violence, structure and agency in the state and its margins. Chapter 3 then builds on this literature and presents the contextualized concept of favela peace formation in Rio de Janeiro, as well as its potential blockages. Next, the first case study chapter, chapter 4, discusses how the legacies from slavery and colonialism have constructed a city where deep inequality falls along racial and class lines, and where the favelas are depicted as dangerous, illegal spaces devoid of citizenship and human rights. Chapter 5 then relates this background to the Rio de Janeiro state's own 'peace processes' and pacification attempts in the favelas that in reality provide the greatest threat to favela security. This chapter then discusses what 'peace' means for the different actors in this context. Next, chapter 6 presents favela peace formation as a form of local, legitimate peace processes and looks at how community, social and racial justice groups work on various fronts, through community education projects with youth, navigation and occupation of different sections of the state, and knowledge production to shift criminalizing narratives, to reduce violence in their communities. Chapter 7 then considers the wider challenges and opportunities to peace formation within this context of urban violence in a violent state. The chapter ends with a consideration of how favela peace formation navigates

challenges in order to progress towards constructing a grassroots, locally legitimate, socially and racially just, positive and sustainable peace. Finally, the conclusion considers the wider contributions, weaknesses and implications of this research.

~ Chapter 1 ~

Methodology

Case study: Rio de Janeiro

Favelas, asfalto and the multi-layered conflicts between

Rio de Janeiro is a beautiful and violent city filled with contrasts and extremes. With a population of around 6.7 million, it is Brazil's second-largest city after São Paulo and has a long history of being Brazil's principal harbour and its capital before the capital was moved to Brasilia in 1960 (Perlman 2010). The city is famous for its beautiful, long-stretched, white beaches that are only interrupted by wild, jungle-clad hills rising among them in the south zone of Rio. The city is physically divided into the *asfalto*, literally the asphalt, the middle and upper-class areas nestled between the beaches and hills, and the *favelas*, unofficial settlements built by the city's poor, mostly descendants of slaves and migrants from rural Brazil. Today, favelas represent the poorer neighbourhoods in the city, often distinguished by their creative, irregular constructions and narrow streets, but also by government-built housing projects with straight streets and regular housing (*conjuntos*). These conjuntos were built over the years in the peripheries of Rio to house favela residents removed from their homes as their central favelas in Zona Sul or along important highways were demolished as their locations became more attractive (Perlman 2010). According to the 2010 Census, there are 763 favelas in the city of Rio de Janeiro, housing 22% of the city's population (IGBE 2010). There is a clear racial segregation in the city, with the wealthiest region of Zona Sul being 80% white, compared to the racial profile of the city which is 50% white. Comparatively, the poorest areas of the city, Zona Norte and Zona Oeste, as well as the city's favelas, are majority black and brown (Barbosa de Gusmão, in Clarke 2015; Casa Fluminense 2020:13).

It is very difficult to find a standard definition for Rio's favelas as they all vary in size, population, location, layout, infrastructure and quality of houses, social services, local rulers, security, employment opportunities, visibility of drugs and weapons, involvement of the state and public security forces, and presence of civil society. Perlman distinguishes between the relatively calm, settled (and attractive to tourism) favelas in Rio's south (Zona Sul) and the "so-called Gaza Strip favelas of the north, epicentres of police and gang warfare; the steaming-hot, mosquito-ridden favelas in the reclaimed swamps of the Fluminense Lowlands; [and] the distant West Zone favelas run by militias" (2010:40). In her discussion of favela definitions, she concludes that "perhaps the single persistent distinction between favelas and the rest of the city is the deeply rooted stigma that adheres to them and to those who reside in them" (Perlman 2010:30). While the favelas used to be easily distinguishable from the more developed parts of the city due to their lack of public infrastructure and access to water and electricity, today most of the ones within the city of Rio have solid brick houses, paved main roads, electricity, water, plumbing, internet access, television, and a wide variety of stores and businesses to respond to any need, including pharmacies and local transport. Many of the favela residents within Rio city could be considered middle-class but prefer to stay in their built homes centrally in the favelas over the regular neighbourhoods they could afford far away from the city centre (Perlman 2010).

However, the favelas and their residents continue to be culturally and structurally marginalized from the rest of Rio and from their rights as Brazilian citizens. Despite recent developments, the state's investment in public services like education, health clinics and infrastructure remain inconsistent in the favelas, and often the access to these services are interrupted by police operations (Alves and Evanson 2011; Fahlberg 2018). In addition, "favela residents remain underrepresented in city council, universities, and the formal economy and suffer from higher rates of illiteracy, infant mortality, unemployment, informal living, and negative health outcomes than other city dwellers" (Fahlberg 2018:488). Not to mention that the vast majority of deaths in police operations occur in the favelas, and that 78.5% of the victims are black or brown (Rodrigues and Coelho 2020). A study from Casa Fluminense in 2020 further showed that the average life expectancy in the majority white neighbourhood of Ipanema is 29

years longer than the average life expectancy of its neighbour, Rocinha, a majority brown/black favela (Casa Fluminense 2020:32). The report also shows that the formal and informal white worker in Rio de Janeiro earns 75% more than black and brown workers, and that on average, the black population of Rio dies 10 years earlier than the white population (Casa Fluminense 2020;17,33). The historical marginalization of and arguably limited state control over the favelas have further made these neighbourhoods attractive territories for drug gangs and militias, with criminal actors including corrupt police and politicians benefitting on the invented illegality of these spaces. To provide further clarity to the context, a short overview of the central actors follows below.

Drug gangs

There are today three main drug gangs in Rio de Janeiro: Comando Vermelho (CV, Red Command), Terceiro Comando Puro (TCP, Pure Third Command) and Amigos de Amigos (ADA, Friends of Friends) (Costa and Adorno 2018). The large and very well-organized drug gang that has a monopoly on drug sales in São Paulo, Primeiro Comando Capital (PCC, First Capital Command), has also been reported to increase its presence and alliances in Rio de Janeiro (Martins 2018). CV is by far the largest drug gang in Rio in terms of territory and drug sales and is also the oldest. It was formed during the military dictatorship in 1969 when political prisoners were placed together with common criminals in the prison on Ilha Grande outside of Rio (Perlman 2010, Soares 2015). The gang started in order to ensure prisoner rights, with the motto *Paz, Justiça e Liberdade* (Peace, Justice and Liberty) (Soares 2015). When the cocaine trade entered Rio in the 1980s, CV got involved and moved into the favelas as they provided some protection from the Brazilian security forces. During the years, disputes between leaders of CV led to the start of ADA and TC (later named TCP after a break of a former alliance with ADA) (Martins 2018). The drug gangs largely profit from drug and arms sales and keep the favelas as their home bases and territories to protect them from the state, rival gangs and the militias. The drug gangs often have clear and strict community rules and have been known to provide some social services, new infrastructure, concerts and occasional funk parties to the residents of their territory in order to gain support and legitimacy (Feltran 2020). However, some are

also violent and unpredictable, and favela residents live under a *law of silence*, fearing for their lives if they challenge the rule of the gangs. The presence of gangs in the favela also means a more open sale and use of drugs within the communities, and young children down to 10 years old being recruited to crime and carrying weapons, although this lower age-limit vary. The gangs have also increasingly started charging for local services like water, gas, electricity, internet and transport and as the profit from cocaine is declining, and are increasingly getting involved in arms sales. They are also known to buy corrupt police and politicians, pay low-paid police to look the other way and ensure the votes of the favela residents for politicians willing to support their businesses (Arias 2006;2017; Feltran 2020). While the monopoly of PCC in São Paulo and its arrangements with the state and police have significantly reduced violence and homicides in the favelas in that city, the relationship between the competing gangs and the police in Rio de Janeiro is far more volatile and unpredictable, causing more open conflict, shootouts, police operations and thus also increased rates of violence and homicide (Feltran 2020). One of the channels between the drug gangs and the state in Rio de Janeiro has been the Associação de Moradores (AMs, Resident Associations) that are mentioned below (Arias 2006; 2017).

Militias

The militias started entering Rio in the 1990s and started competing with the drug gangs over favela territories. The militias are rooted in death-squads from the military dictatorship, consist largely of retired/off-duty/on-duty police, soldiers, firefighters and prison guards, and profit through rent-seeking behaviour such as charging for electricity, gas, internet, local transport and protection fees to local shop owners and businesses (Brahler 2014; Gledhill 2015; Perlman 2010; Zaluar and Siqueira Conceição 2007). While the drug gangs are known for organizing parties for the residents and having open drug sales within the favelas, the militias usually frown upon these parties and drug use is widely forbidden. The militias have also been known to implement curfews and fining any resident breaking it. Supposedly started as self-protection vigilante groups against the drug gangs in the favelas, the militias have now grown in influence to reach over 88 favelas in Rio in 2018 and they seem to pose an increasing threat and insecurity to favela residents (Igarape 2018). Recently,

some have also moved into drug trafficking and seem to be making alliances with TC (Igarape 2018). Many of them also seem to have the support and protection of well-positioned politicians, and like the drug gangs, can make deals with the votes of the favela residents they ‘control’ (Arias 2006; 2017; Soares 2015).

Gay critically questions the close ties between police, militias and politicians:

The question is, if the uniformed and on-duty police can get away with killing, on average, one thousand civilians each year, what possibility or mechanism is there for controlling and overseeing what is becoming the extralegal arm of an already deadly public security force? As in other countries of Latin America, there is the strong suspicion that militias operate with the implicit approval, if not the support, of public authorities. After all, the ninety or so neighbourhoods that are currently under the control of militias in Rio are never subject to the type of incursion that is typical of police operations in favelas dominated by the organized gang factions, despite the similarities between them, leading some to suggest that what we are seeing here is a military-inspired campaign to retake and hold, by whatever means necessary, territories that have been lost to the state.

(2009:44-45).

In some of the latest developments in Rio, the militias challenge the drug gangs in terms of territories under their control, the violence they exert, and politicians on their payroll. They are accused of the murder of left-leaning, feminist, LGBT councilwoman Marielle Franco in 2018, who fought against police violence in the favelas and the criminalization of the black and the poor (Phillips 2018a). The militia from Rio das Pedras, the oldest, most violent and powerful militia in Rio and the one suspected of being responsible for Marielle’s murder, has recently been found to have close ties with President Jair Bolsonaro’s son, Flavio Bolsonaro, who is also a state deputy and elected senator for Rio de Janeiro (Otavio and Araújo 2019; Leitão, Barreira and Coelho 2019; CUT 2019; Franco 2019). The recent scandal exposed that the wife and mother of the ex-captain of BOPE (military police special operations

battalion, explained below) and leader of the Rio de Pedras militia have been on the payroll of Flavio Bolsonaro for years (Otavio and Araújo 2019; Leitão, Barreira and Coelho 2019; CUT 2019; Franco 2019). These events hint at far-reaching influence and support of the militias among some of the most powerful right-wing politicians in Rio (and Brazil), meaning that they might pose a greater threat to peace and security in Rio than the drug gangs and might be a tool for corrupt elites to continue to ensure their interests and positions regardless the cost.

Police forces

There are two main police forces in Rio de Janeiro, the Polícia Civil (PCERJ, Civil Police) and the Polícia Militar (PMERJ, Military Police). While the Civil Police “mainly has investigative and judicial functions”, the Military Police is the biggest police force in Rio and is “responsible for normal policing in the streets and for maintaining public order” (Brahler 2014:129;121). Widespread corruption and police impunity seem to be a large part of the problem of the security situation in Rio, with police being known to take bribes from the drug gangs, participate in militias and death squads, and cover up their executions of favela residents as ‘resistance shootings’, arguing that the victims were shot during an exchange of fire when in reality they were shot in the back, or while unarmed, by the police. As Gay describes:

The police in Rio have been involved in almost every conceivable illegal activity, including charging motorists for improper paperwork during blitzes, laundering drug money, robbing apartments, extorting money from tourists, stealing cars, kidnapping civilians, apprehending high-profile drug dealers and then extorting money for their release, drug trafficking, drug dealing, prostitution and the sexual exploitation of minors, providing security for drug traffickers, leaking and selling information about police activities, and training drug gang members in the art of urban warfare. Indeed, the situation has reached the point at which the police often do not tell their own men where and when they are going on an operation until the very last moment (O Globo, 11 April 2005). (...) Furthermore, an estimated 80 per cent of the illegal private

security firms in Rio are in fact controlled if not owned by police (O Globo, 29 May 2005).

(2009:43).

The Brazilian police are widely viewed as “corrupt, disrespectful, and abusive”, killing on average six people per day between 2009 and 2013 (Roth-Gordon 2017:52). The overwhelming majority of victims are black favela residents between the age of 18 and 24, and many activists have due to this described the ongoing violence as a black genocide (Alves and Vargas 2015; C. Smith 2015, in Roth-Gordon 2017:52; Costa Vargas 2008).

In addition to the regular Military Police (PMERJ) that does the standard policing and arrests, there are nine special military police operation units. Most prominent are the Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais (BOPE, Battalion of Special Police Operations) and Batalhão de Polícia de Choque (BPChq, Shock Police Battalion) that are often involved in operations in the favelas (Brahler 2014:122). BOPE is widely known for its use of excessive violence and military warfare tactics in the fight against drug gangs (Brahler 2014). According to Brahler,

BOPE is one of the most experienced urban military police force in the world. This efficiency is mainly due to the fact that the unit is capable of ‘practising war’ on a daily basis, principally in the fight against drug traffickers in the favelas

(2014:124).

This elite unit enjoys admiration among the military police due to its expertise, and widespread fear among the favela residents due to its terror, intimidation tactics and use of excessive force.



FIGURE 1: IMAGE OF BOPE FLAG WITH LOGO (INSTAGRAM: BOPE.OFICIAL)

Their violence is shown in the BOPE-logo; a skull with a knife pierced through it laid on top of two guns in a cross (Alves and Evanson 2011; Brahler 2014). The favela residents often experience BOPE through the *caveirão*, an armoured vehicle resembling a tank, that drives through the main streets of the favelas in the hunt for drug traffickers, often playing abusive messages to the residents through speakers in the vehicle (Alves and Evanson 2011). Part of the fear of the *caveirão* comes from the fact that the BOPE officers within are completely invisible and anonymous, as the vehicle only has small holes through which the police can shoot, but not be seen (Brahler 2014:124). Thus, “civilians are frequently killed by stray bullets yet without being able to identify” their killers (Brahler 2014: 124).

Many of the large-scale public security interventions in the favelas are combined efforts of the Civil Police, Military Police, BOPE, and the Armed Forces (Brahler 2014; Alves and Evanson 2011). While the Civil Police is involved in investigation and observation, the shootouts largely occur between the PMERJ, BOPE, UPP and drug traffickers. Due to the use of heavy military tactics and excessive use of force (like that of the *caveirão*) as well as widespread corruption among the PMERJ and human rights abuses even among the ‘pacifying’ community police UPP, the favela residents have a great mistrust of the Military Police and its various units (Alves and Evanson 2011; Brahler 2014; Perlman 2010). In fact, many residents consider the

Military Police to be the biggest threat to their security and have special warning systems to alert each other of the presence of the police and potential subsequent shootouts in the favelas (apps like Fogo Cruzado, Onde Tem Tiroteio; Brahler 2014). Due to the criminalization of favela residents and deep-seated police impunity, corruption and military nature, the police are thus often experienced as a violent and murderous force that disrespects the human rights of favela residents and disregards the risks of civilians dying in crossfire. There are numerous reports of police executions of favela residents, reported as ‘autos de resistência’ (acts of resistance) where the police report the incident as a death of a suspect during a shootout between the police, while resisting arrest, while, in fact, the evidence point toward summary executions of the victim, like being shot in the back while trying to escape, or shot in the head from above, execution-style (Alves and Evanson 2011; Misse, Grillo and Neri 2013; Moura and Afonso 2009). With this, the police are also known to plant weapons on their unarmed victims to more properly claim acts of resistance, and to have their suspects mysteriously die from their injuries while the police are driving them to the hospital (Alves and Evanson 2011; Soares, Moura and Afonso 2009). The military police increasingly also use helicopters during their interventions, flying over the favelas and shooting indiscriminately with machine guns down into the community (Nossos Mortos Têm Voz 2017; Redes da Maré 2020).

Armed forces

In February 2018, the armed forces were placed in charge of the security situation in Rio de Janeiro following a decree signed by former Brazilian president Michel Temer (the guardian 2018b). This was done in an effort to control the rising insecurity and violence in the state and to once and for all regain control over the favelas controlled by the drug gangs. The need to bring in the army as an extra force against the powerful drug gangs is understandable when taking into consideration the widespread corruption of police officers, the close ties between the police and militias, and the fact that the drug gangs enjoy far more firepower and sophisticated weaponry than the police forces. Having the military intervene in internal affairs is quite extreme and should mean that all other attempts to secure the situation have been exhausted, but in fact, the Brazilian armed forces have continuously intervened in Rio over the years

(Brahler 2014). Article 142 of the 1988 Brazilian constitution states that “The armed forces [...] are intended for the defence of the country, for the guarantee of the constitutional powers, and, on the initiative of any of these, of law and order” (Presidência da República 1988: Art. 142, translated by and quoted in Brahler 2014: 133). According to Brahler, it is the phrase ‘to guarantee law and order’ that allows the military to intervene in internal affairs, in four different possible types of missions: “the preservation of public order, the guarantee of elections, the security of mega-events and the protection of national borders, sea and air space” (2014:133). Indeed, she lists several occasions in which the military has been deployed in Rio (after the military dictatorship ended), “either in the combat of the drug trade [note, in the favelas] or to guarantee the security of mega events” (Brahler 2014: 133-134). For major operations against the drug traffickers in the favelas, the military, civil police and military police enter as a collective force, with one of the largest in 2018 including “3,700 military personnel, 200 military police and ninety civil police officers, supported by armored vehicles, aircraft and engineering equipment” (The Rio Times 2018). Although perhaps understandable in the face of well-armed drug gangs, the deployment of armed forces in apparent warfare against their own citizens is worrisome, especially with Brazil’s recent history of military dictatorship and with the new president having openly expressed support for the dictatorship.

Other actors

So far I have listed the most violent actors (and, as argued by Brahler 2014, security providers) in the conflicts in the *carioca* favelas: the drug gangs (CV, TCP and ADA), militias, police forces (civil and military, with BOPE and UPP) and the armed forces. Some of the other actors in the favelas are the Associações de Moradores (AMs, Residents’ Associations), churches, various community organizations and NGOs. The Residents’ Associations were set up during the 1960s by the City Council of Rio to handle “multiple requests” from the favelas demanding “water, electricity, paving, steps, street lighting, and assurances that they could stay where they were” (Perlman 2010:27). Each favela was to elect one Residents’ Association to represent the interests of the community in the face of the city government, and the various AMs eventually organized into the Federation of Residents’ Associations of the State of Rio

de Janeiro (FAMERJ) (Perlman 2010:27). “These federations enjoyed considerable autonomy and had a fair degree of bargaining power over candidates for positions on City Council (*vereadores*) until the mid-1980s, when the drug lords began to take them over” (Perlman 2010:28). Indeed, when the drug trade and CV entered the favelas in the 1980s, the AMs increasingly started to function as the ‘official’ link between drug traffickers and local politicians, allowing the politicians to buy votes from the favelas without having to directly deal with the drug gangs de-facto ruling the area (Arias 2006). At the time of my fieldwork, the independence of the AMs from the drug gangs or militias varied from favela to favela.

Community organizations, NGOs and churches are also very important actors in the *carioca* favelas as they provide valuable alternatives to youth wanting to escape gang membership and create a sense of community within the conflict. Community organizations and NGOs offer anything from arts, theatre, music, dance, photography to education in journalism, exam-help, human rights training, legal assistance, medical assistance and much more. While some are foreign initiatives, often with a ‘humanitarian angle’, some are national, local, but middle class, and others are grassroot community organizations created and built by the favelas, for the favelas. However, these organizations often have quite low participation rates, while the churches attract a more widespread support from the residents (Perlman 2010). Seeing that many favela residents are quite religious and active in church, the churches might be important to include as peace formation actors or actors who challenge and block the efforts of peace formation. It is worth mentioning that, like the AMs, these organizations are also vulnerable to the control and influence of gangs, militias, or corrupt politicians and are at least under their mercy in terms of being allowed to have a presence within the favelas *at all*.

Methods

The epistemology of this thesis reflects its interdisciplinary nature. Attempting to bring the study of urban conflict and social violence into the field of peace and conflict studies, the thesis naturally weaves together theories and perspectives from political science, international relations, peace studies, sociology, anthropology and more. As the project has progressed, the initial absence of critical race theory and post/decolonial theory has become increasingly palpable and these theories have thus been gradually centralized in the work. This thesis uses ethnographically inspired qualitative research methods to further critical peace studies' understanding of the complexities of everyday, local peace formation and its challenges. Ethnographically-inspired research allows more time in the researched community, which provides the researcher with a deeper insight into the structures, social relations and realities that surround and shape the research, allows the local participants to tell their stories, which again allows the researcher to more accurately 'harness local knowledge' (Bliesenmann de Guevara and Julian 2017; Kappler 2013; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013). 'Ethnographically inspired' is thus used as a term to distinguish the long-term fieldwork of this project and its careful creation of trust networks from other more short-term qualitative research projects where the researcher might have a limited understanding of local language, culture, and limited trust among its participants (Millar 2018).

The research builds on 31 semi-structured interviews with people who, in their professional capacity, work to reduce violence in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, and on participant observation in events and courses on topics relevant to peace formation in the favelas (see details of events and participants below). While limited by university risk protocols to accessing the favelas once a week, I find that my presence in and circulation through other parts of the city of Rio de Janeiro for eight months in 2019-2020, frequent interaction with friends and acquaintances from the favelas or with other experiences from the favelas, as well as frequent attendance of events on topics surrounding security, racism and rights in the favelas, have provided me with a reasonably sophisticated understanding of the context. I chose a mixed epistemology that would provide the benefits of a loose theoretical framework with the important

perspectives gained through grounded theory (Charmaz and Belgrave 2007; Charmaz 2014; Glaser and Strauss 1967; 1999; 2017). By mixing grounded theory with the deductive framework, it has, of course, ceased to be properly 'grounded'. However, by keeping my questions few and open, and by having fairly long, mostly one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, much space was given to the participants to focus on what they found important concerning the challenges and opportunities of peace formation in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro (Dearnley 2005; Fylan 2005).

Research participants and events

Research participants were chosen based on their professional roles in the Rio favelas, which in some form worked to reduce violence in their communities. They include favela activists, public security experts, community workers, youth groups, teachers, educators, artists, journalists, researchers, writers, tour guides, museum leaders, resident association presidents and drug rehabilitation workers, some with connections to black power groups, groups against state violence and the network of mothers who lost their sons to police murders. Using the snowballing method and networking at different academic and civil society events in Rio de Janeiro on issues concerning the favela, I had a total of 31 interviews, out of which two were group interviews with three and four participants. Of a total of 37 participants, 15 work in favelas in Zona Sul, 12 in Zona Norte, 7 work in movements or associations that worked across the state, while 3 are academics based outside the favela involved in the question of public security and human rights in the favelas. Several of the ones working in specific favelas in Zona Sul and Zona Norte are also involved in larger networks that linked different favelas and groups across Rio de Janeiro. With the age spanning from late 20s to 60s, 15 of the 37 participants are women and 22 are men. Data and notes were also gathered from events and a course on public security and favela epistemology consisting of 7 different classes in the favela complexes Complexo da Maré and Complexo do Alemão, whose other members were overwhelmingly favela residents and women. Due to the security of the research participants, all names are anonymized and for research participants based in one favela, the location of their favelas is generalized to Zona Sul or Zona Norte of Rio de Janeiro. One event and the course on public security were not recorded nor open to the public, so the participants' names

have been generalized to the name of the event and the date has been generalized to the nearest month in order to protect their anonymity.

Details of courses and events referenced:

Name of event	Organizer(s)	Date	Location	Description
Segurança Pública e Epistemologia Favelada (Public Security and Favela Epistemology)	Fransérgio Goulart and the Department of International Relations at PUC-Rio	August - October 2019	Complexo da Maré, Complex do Alemão	Seven classes over the course of three months on issues connected to public security and rights in the favela. Not open for public, details anonymised.
Co-creation in the city: rights and culture of favelas and peripheries	Co-Creation Project	June 27th-28th, 2019	PUC-Rio	International conference as part of the project: The Cohesive City: Addressing Stigmatisation in Disadvantaged Urban Neighbourhoods (Co-Creation)/EU
O Extermínio da Juventude Negra (The Extermination of Black Youth)	Núcleo de Estudos de Políticas Públicas em Direitos Humanos (NEPP-DH), UFRJ	August 26th, 2019	UFRJ	Fourth class of the course: Curso de Extensão Mídia, Violência e Direitos Humanos.
Necropolítica e Militarização da Vida (Necropolitics and Militarization of Life)	Núcleo de Estudos de Políticas Públicas em Direitos Humanos (NEPP-DH), UFRJ	August 19th, 2019	UFRJ	First class of the course: Curso de Extensão Mídia, Violência e Direitos Humanos.
Operações policiais no Rio: mais frequentes, mais letais, mais assustadoras (Police operations in Rio de Janeiro: more frequent, more deadly, more scary)	Observatório da Segurança RJ	July 9th, 2019	Universidade Candido Mendes	Launch of a report by the same name by Rede de Observatórios da Segurança, with accompanying panel discussion
“Polícia como classe trabalhadora?” (Police as working class?)	Para Que e Para Quem (For whom and for what is favela research for	October-2019	Centre of Rio de Janeiro.	Not open for public, details anonymised.

TABLE 1: COURSES AND EVENTS

Details of interviews and research participants:

Name* (Pseudonym)	Date of interview	Location of work	Position of research participant
Maria	September-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Leader and tour-guide at a community-based non-governmental organization
Miguel	September-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Leader at a community-based youth project (futsal, barber courses, and more)
Davi	January-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Founder and leader of a community-based NGO focusing on children and youth, especially on helping them leave crime
Ana	March-2020	Not from favela, works across several favelas	Founder and executive director of a Rio de Janeiro-based NGO focusing on sustainable community development and human rights in the favelas
Francisca	August-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Independent community English teacher and tour-guide at a community-based non-governmental organization
Pedro	August-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Community leader and founder of long-standing community-organization focusing on children and youth and the rights and dignity of favela residents
Gabriel	August-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Leader and tour-guide at a community-based non-governmental organization
Grupo Ar	September-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	A new, education and culture-focused youth collective
Antônia	August-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Leader of a civil and philanthropic organization focusing on integral education, basic health care and social assistance to the more challenged families in the favela
Adriana	September-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Founder and leader of a small community-group helping residents write their stories and get published
Bernardo	February-2020	Not from or based in a favela	Anthropologist, political scientist and public security expert
Lucas	August-2019	Works across several favelas	Founder and leader of a network-based project for the cultural and social empowerment of favela youth in favelas across Rio de Janeiro
Matheus	July-2019	Not from or based in a favela	Public security expert at Rio-based think tank
Rafael	September-2019	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Executive coordinator of an organization for racial justice and against state violence
João	January-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Journalist at an independent, collaborative community media channel
Juliana	October-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Leader and tour-guide at a community-based non-governmental organization
Antonio	January-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	President of a favela Resident Association
Marcia	September-2019	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Executive director of a community-based organization focusing on youth through sports and culture
Fernanda	January-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Coordinator at globally-networked organization working with youth in communities affected by inequality and violence
Carlos	July-2019	Not from or based in a favela	Professor in sociology and urban studies
Patrícia	February-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Coordinator of public security area in community-based civil society institution
Paulo	July-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Independent graffiti artist
Emmanuella	March-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Executive coordinator at community-based civil society organization focused on knowledge-production
Jose	February-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Co-founder and reporter at an independent communications collective formed by favela youth activists
Grupo Luz	November-2019	Works across several favelas	An long-standing umbrella organization connected to the Catholic church working primarily against forced removals
Luiz	August-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Youth from the favela, engaged in and known at several of the local community projects
Luíza	November-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Leader and tour-guide at a community-based non-governmental organization
Marcos	January-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	President of a favela Resident Association
Felipe	August-2019	Works across several favelas	Project coordinator at non-profit organization created by European companies in Rio de Janeiro, focusing on providing opportunities to favela youth
Aline	September-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Founder and leader of NGO focusing on education for children and youth
Izabel	January-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Co-director of a community-based civil society institution
Douglas	September-2019	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Artistic coordinator at an NGO working with youth and culture in several spots in Rio de Janeiro

Situating the research and the ‘field’

The politics, positionality and methodology of this thesis are fruits of a continuous internal struggle and process of learning and unlearning. This section presents the hesitancy and intentions behind this thesis, before a later section more closely discusses my positionality. From the very beginning, I have been committed to the importance of the everyday and the local in peace and conflict studies and thus determined to learn from the perspectives of people who have lived through conflict and who in their everyday deal with insecurity and attempt to improve their lives in a conflict or post-conflict context (Bliesemann de Guevara and Julian 2017; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013; Mac Ginty 2014). Being a young, white researcher educated in Western Europe and North America, I have taken this Ph.D. as a journey of listening to other perspectives and an opportunity to learn about the power structures in which I am so privileged. Cox famously argued that “[t]heory is always for someone and for some purpose” (1981:128), while Desmond Tutu said, “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor”. The context of violence and peace in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro is marked by injustice, racism and violence targeting favela residents. Certain that all social research is political, I have therefore chosen to take a conscious stand as an ally for grassroots favela peace formers (Hale 2001; Malejacq & Mukhopadhyay 2016). This thesis is thus written with a desire to amplify the narratives and perspectives of the local actors in peacebuilding that so often have been marginalized in the main international peacebuilding narratives.

In a wish to reduce the distance between myself and my research participants, I decided to research peace in the favelas in Brazil, where my previous experience from working in a favela in São Paulo and Portuguese language skills would allow me to work without translation and research assistants. After some initial research, I decided upon Rio de Janeiro as a fieldwork site, where the *asfalto* and favela are more intertwined and where the surreal police violence and conflicts between drug gangs and militias take more lives each year than in any other Brazilian city, turning the communities of many favela residents effectively into warzones. My first project idea

focused on the everyday navigation of insecurity in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro as I wanted to learn how ‘the locals’ (favela residents) managed or failed to manage these conflicts. However, as the project developed and took form, a myriad of ethical challenges revealed themselves. “‘Researchers, like aid agencies,’ Jonathan Goodhand cautioned, ‘need to be aware of how their inventions may affect the incentive systems and structures driving violent conflict or impact upon coping strategies and safety of communities’” (Goodhand 2000, 12, in Malejacq and Mukhopadhyay (2016p 1012).

How would my research affect the favelas that I chose to research in Rio de Janeiro? What would my research participants gain from me telling them and others how they live? How much risk and potential trauma would I expose them and myself to by imposing on their daily routines and insisting on talking about violence and insecurity? (Gerard 1995; Israel and Hay 2006). And as my Brazilian friends, colleagues and favela activists Dr. Luciane Rocha and Rodrigo Calvet challenged, who would this type of research benefit? Ending up in the hands of the Brazilian public security forces, for example, the ethnographic data on the favela resident’s daily movements and ways to navigate violence and police operations in the favelas could be used as ‘counterinsurgency intelligence’ and end up severely worsening the lives of the residents (Malejacq and Mukhopadhyay 2016). Why did I not use my positionality as a young, white woman to do a study that could benefit the ones trying to form peace in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro? Why did I look at the everyday of people living in violence and insecurity, and not focus on the state, power structures and other factors that might cause this violence? Why did I not study the white middle class and elite in Rio, as brilliantly suggested by Dr. Rocha? Did I want to be yet another white, extractive researcher analysing and describing the everyday of a majority black population, turning the favela into a research zoo (Mitchell 2013)? Who was I to produce any kind of knowledge on a complex favela context that is so far away from my own reality?

A first step in doing research in a postcolonial society where colonial legacies of structural racism and inequality are still strong was thus to analyse my role in the

power structures of research, being a white, Norwegian researcher in majority-black Brazilian neighbourhoods:

To do research in postcolonial contexts, feminists from all social locations but particularly Western feminists who carry a legacy of privilege must maintain vigilance in analyzing the power dynamics of their research process to avoid misrepresenting, exploiting, and endangering their participants. The research should be responsive to the local community and driven by an emancipatory objective that is rooted in dialogue with participants and other community members. A perspective that embraces a combination of feminist standpoint theory and postcolonial theory provides a useful framework with which to conduct postcolonial feminist research, but it must be accompanied by the adaptation of research methods to be culturally sensitive using situated ethics.

(Vanner 2015:9).

Seeking a research project more “responsive to the local community and driven by an emancipatory objective that is rooted in dialogue” I changed my topic and focus from everyday navigation of insecurity to the challenges to peace formation in Rio’s favelas. This allowed me to listen to my colleagues with experience from the favelas and focus on the state, by placing some of the spotlights of research away from the peace formers and towards the various forces and power structures that block and challenge their work. It also allowed me to, as I see it, stand next to my research participants and learn from their perspectives and opinions on the challenges to peace in the favela, instead of merely studying the participants themselves as research objects. To make it a more participatory process and to ensure that my new topic could be useful for my participants and their peace formation practices, I met with some social and youth workers and activists from the favelas in Rio early in the process to ask their opinions on the topic and recommendations on what else I should focus on. Long-term fieldwork and semi-structured interviews also allowed much flexibility for the research and analysis to change based on the stories of the research participants.

My justification for staying with peace formers in the favelas as my research participants for the Ph.D., is a combination of; 1. My need to more deeply and properly understand the situation of peace and conflict in the favelas, 2. The desire to learn this from the ones living through it and working within it, and 3. A plan to use the challenges and blockages to peace identified by these individuals and organizations as the focus of my future research projects. Thus, if the middle class and elite in Rio de Janeiro and their attitudes are identified as challenging to peace in the favelas, my Ph.D. on these challenges can provide an excellent starting point into the deeper complexities, origins and potential solutions to these challenges. This Ph.D. thus forms part of Richmond, Pogodda and other critical peace researchers' new, wider research project on peace formation blockages and counter-peace-formation systems. However, the decision to do research in the favelas as a young, white, Norwegian, middle-class woman brings with it a myriad of ethical risks and political challenges, as well as some advantages. The next section on positionality will further discuss my role as both insider and outsider in different contexts and the consequences for the research.

Positionality: becoming an 'ally' instead of an 'insider'

Being a white, blonde, blue-eyed Norwegian, I am clearly an outsider in the majority-black favelas in Rio de Janeiro, and I thus never attempted to become an "insider" (Mullings 1999; Mac Ginty, Brett and Vogel 2021). Nor did I choose to immerse myself in the favela in order to become completely saturated by the field. My decision to not live in a favela was two-fold: primarily, a hesitation to be another westerner romanticizing the 'adventure of living in a favela' and have my presence be offensive to the local residents, and second, the personal risk of being caught in crossfire between police and gangs or between gangs, and the effect of this insecurity on my mental health. The first month of my fieldwork I lived in the beautiful Santa Teresa neighbourhood. Although I fell in love with Santa Teresa's art, music, beauty and warmth, frequent armed assaults in the streets at night started to make me feel increasingly insecure. After a few weeks, a war started between two gangs in a nearby favela and I woke at 6 am to the sound of machine guns and police helicopters flying over our house several days in a row. My dear friend and *carioca* housemate slept

through this, while to me it was such a reality shock to the severity of the situation, and I became very stressed. After much reflection and discussion, I therefore decided to move to a gated condominium in Flamengo, a middle-class *asfalto* neighbourhood nearby.

I was very disappointed in myself for being so shaken up by the violence in Santa Teresa, and my friend was equally disappointed in my unwillingness to try to live close to the favela when I was writing about the favela. However, I had seen the impact of this insecurity on some friends of mine and I decided to protect my own mental health by living in a place I could feel completely safe. While living in Flamengo made me even more of an outsider to the favela reality, and in fact a part of the *asfalto* community of gated condominiums which I had so much against, it was always a huge sense of relief to come back to this home after a day of interviews in the favelas in Zona Norte which at that time experienced frequent, violent police operations and shootouts. As Wheeler notes, there's a constant risk and fear of violence on behalf of yourself and your research participants when researching violent contexts (2009a). Although living in a favela for my fieldwork undoubtedly would have given me a better understanding of life in that favela, I was worried of the impact the constant fear of shootouts would have on my mental health. In this sense, as Wheeler (2009a) notes, the risk and fear of violence acted as methodological constraints as it stopped me from fully immersing myself in favela everyday life. However, even if I had ignored these risks and fears, I would still be a privileged foreigner who had the chance to leave whenever she wanted, and I could never begin to understand how it is to be a favela resident. Living in a fairly calm favela in Zona Sul could also not have begun to compare to living in the targeted favelas in Zona Norte whose residents lived in what increasingly looked like warzones due to bellicose police operations. Instead of attempting to become an insider, I therefore wanted to become an ally.

An ally, however, is perhaps not something you become, but rather a constant process of action. In an "Allyship and Accountability Glossary" for "Language for Navigating Systems of Oppression", Levana Saxon includes the following definition of an ally:

Ally: An action, not an identity. Members of the advantaged group who recognize their privilege and work in solidarity with oppressed groups to dismantle the systems of oppression(s) from which they derive power, privilege and acceptance. Allied behavior means taking intentional, overt and consistent responsibility for the changes we know are needed in our society, and does so in a way that facilitates the empowerment of persons targeted by oppression. Allies understand that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit in concrete ways. The ally framework also implies that one does not feel directly implicated by the oppression. (Saxon n.d.).

Thus, I work in solidarity with the research participants, recognize my privilege and attempt to use this privilege to further the cause of the favela peace formers. While I would have liked to have a continuous open dialogue with the research participants surrounding the research, the results and analysis of interviews, the translation of text back and forth from Portuguese to English was sadly too time-consuming within the limited time of a Ph.D. I was also hesitant to spend much of people's time which they would not be properly credited for (as I have to be the sole author of my Ph.D.). I have, however, kept the channels of communication open with several research participants, and addressed hesitations on both sides through different conversations back and forth. I hope to include several of the research participants and/or their organizations as co-researchers in projects after the Ph.D. where I hopefully can have more freedom to do so.

My positionality and decision to live in a middle-class neighbourhood outside the favelas made me a clear outsider in relation to my research participants. Having made this decision, I chose to embrace this 'outsider' role while simultaneously trying my best to be humble and open when meeting the research participants. As Perlman found in her research in Rio de Janeiro, being a complete outsider, a foreigner, can in fact be useful as you are less implicated in the complex, local conflict structures (2010). Of course, being white and European I am already implicated in a large system of white privilege, colonialism and racism, but several research participants shared that they had much better experiences with foreigners than their neighbours in the *asfalto* when

it came to questions of the favela. One participant directly complained to me after having met with an *asfalto* researcher inside her favela, as she felt this woman's ignorance constructed a wall between them and hindered them from speaking honestly, in contrast to our conversation where she could be more open:

Foreigners are a lot more open-minded than the *asfalto*. Like the one from [middle-class neighbourhood next to the favela] who was here, she would never know about this NGO if she wasn't doing a project on exactly this [a specialized topic this NGO is known for]! I wanted to talk more with her about this... to tell her that the real people are in the favela. She's only interested in us now because of her project, without this, she would never have entered the favela. You know there are some people I would like to just shake and talk some reality to, like her. The *asfalto* in Zona Sul is alienated. The people created this wall. You know, you can create a wall within you, an invisible wall. Like we're sitting here now, talking, we could have had an invisible wall between us that would stop us from talking openly[...] The *asfalto*, the female researcher from there showed how alienated they are, that she didn't know about the NGO. You know, there are people who want to look like good people all the time, when they are not. There are 37 projects here in the community, right next to where she lives; how come she doesn't know about any of them!

(Juliana*, October 2019, Zona Sul).

Being a foreigner and complete outsider thus benefited me, as instead of being someone who lived right next door and was completely ignorant to the local agency in the favela, I was someone who came from afar in order to learn from favela residents and their perspectives.

In order to express my solidarity with the research participants and gain some of their trust, I was careful to explain at the start of each interview that I believe that peace must be constructed from the bottom-up and include social justice in order to work, and that I therefore wanted to ask them about the challenges to their work in the favela. While this may have influenced the responses, I found it important to establish my

intentions of solidarity and an interest in learning from their expertise and experiences. In an additional attempt to reduce the power inequality of the research and empower the research participants, I let them choose the language of the interviews and 31 out of 33 were conducted in Portuguese. As Vanner describes,

[a] multilingual research project is inevitably characterized by a struggle for the researcher and research participant to understand each other. By using a local language, combined with translation to enhance accurate understanding and representation, the struggle for self-expression falls on the shoulders of the researcher and not the researched.

(Vanner 2015:7).

While the language might have created a small chance of misrepresentation, I do not find that this misrepresentation is much greater than the inevitable misrepresentations of any social research, and as such, the benefits of speaking the local language and not rely on third parties with their own positionality to assist or translate far outweighed the costs.

Although I was a foreign, white researcher and thus clearly an outsider, I was also, in some ways, an ally. Factors that I believe made me into more a potential ally and thus less of a threat, include: Speaking the language, meeting the majority of participants inside the favelas where they work, having open, semi-structured interviews at the time and place chosen by the research participants, volunteering with some of the research participants, being seen at different events around the city and openly expressing my intentions with the research which emphasizes the importance of the research participants' work. However, "[a] researcher's identity is never singular, but composed of various dimensions, interacting with power and domination in complex and situational ways" (Loftsdottir, 2002: 315). My outsider status, my relative ignorance of the favela struggles for racial and social justice, my lack of active activist work in Rio de Janeiro, my whiteness, and my positionality as a white, European, middle-class researcher all made me into a threatening researcher who could potentially exploit the favelas only to strengthen hegemonic social narratives that ultimately justify the state violence and racism towards and criminalization and

marginalization of these communities. Interviewing some people central to the favela struggles for racial and social justice and against state violence, I was obviously an outsider to the struggle and some of these research participants seemed to more carefully calculate my potential as an ally versus my potential as a threat. In a conflict context where race and class are central fault lines and where white imperialism, privilege and racism fuel violence in the favelas, I myself (ironically) became suspicious of white middle-class researchers in the favelas.

Favela research can be and has been, very dangerous for the favelas and their residents. Not only have white social research historically defended slavery, colonialism and oppression through the perceived inferiority and danger of blackness, but much research and media in Brazil have also constructed the idea of the dirty, dangerous, lawless favela that needs to be controlled at any cost (Milner 2007; do Prado Valladares 2016; Roth Gordon 2016). My whiteness has definitely allowed me to ignore much of the effects and permanence of racism, and I therefore have to be even more aware of the politics of my research (Milner 2007). As discussed earlier in this chapter, colleagues as well as research participants tied to the project “To Whom and For What is Favela Research” challenged me to challenge my research (Goulart and Calvet 2017). I had to be careful to construct a project that was responding to local knowledge and perspectives and that could work to support the agenda of the research participants. My whiteness did however, and understandably so, produce some hesitancy among some more activist research participants. While one delayed our conversation for a long time, possibly due to a busy schedule but also possibly to test my commitment, another participant decided to interview me about my background and opinions before I could interview him. A third favela activist also delayed our conversation, until unfortunately my fieldwork was cut short due to Covid-19 and our interview thus was cancelled. The delay by these two participants could have been due to an initial refusal to participate in my research, but that they might have talked to others of their colleagues whom I had interviewed and therefore decided to give me a chance. This is impossible to know, but I suspect that the snowballing method of finding research participants and my relatively long stay in Rio de Janeiro (eight months) helped me gain some access despite being a white middle-class researcher.

Ethics and risks

In any social research, it is expected that the benefits of the research largely outweigh the costs and harm done by the fieldwork (Israel and Hay, 2006). The sections above have addressed my attempts to reduce some of the power inequality between me and my research participants in the construction of the research. I have also briefly discussed my decision not to live in the favela due to the risk of experiencing shootouts and its effect on my mental health. However, social science can inflict harm in many different ways and is “more likely to involve psychological distress, discomfort, social disadvantage, invasion of privacy or infringement of rights than physical injury” (Israel and Hay, 2006: 96). In conflict contexts like some of the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, there was also a potential risk that the interviews about violence and challenges to peace could re-open traumas and cause distress (Bell, 2001; Brouneus, 2011; Kappler, 2013; Clark, 2014). In order to reduce this risk, I only interviewed people who worked to reduce violence in their community in their professional capacity and who therefore might be more accustomed to speaking about violence. While I did not see any clear distress in the interviews, I can of course not assume that my research did not cause any frustration, sadness, hurt, anger or tiredness in the research participants. I can only be grateful for their time and sharing and hope that they themselves felt like they got something out of our conversations. As quite a few of them work to change racist narratives criminalizing the favelas by producing knowledge in the favela and spreading awareness of their situation, the interviews were perhaps seen as a chance to share their voice and to get a new potential ally to their cause.

Due to the sensitivity of the research questions, there was also a risk to the safety of the research participants. One question asked, for example, what roles the police, drug gangs and the church played in increasing or reducing violence in the favelas, and another asked if the research participant believed there exists a network of actors that work directly against their peace formation work. Speaking negatively about the drug gangs and the police could cause obvious problems for the research participants. In order to reduce this risk, I anonymized all names and locations. Instead of recording

the interviews in a tape recorder where their voice could be identified, I took notes of our conversations in empty notebooks with no detail of date, time or place. Each research participant was randomly given a number in order to organize the interviews and was later given a random pseudonym. The research participants could also choose themselves to meet me inside or outside of the favela, and the ones who met me inside the favela might have calculated the risk of the local gangs knowing whom I had visited and talked to. Again, as I interviewed favela community activists and social workers in their professional capacity, most of them were used to receiving researchers and visits, which the gangs seemed to allow and let pass. I did not interview anyone who worked in a favela controlled by militias, which might have posed more of a risk.

Interviewing professionals working to reduce violence in the favelas also ensured my access to and safety in the favelas. The favelas are vigilantly watched by the controlling drug gangs and I often passed both observation posts and *bocas* (drug sale spots). Meeting local organizations and activists whose work is known (and also generally respected) by the local gang thus allowed me to come and go without being stopped (Wheeler 2009b). In one favela which experienced a lot of conflict and police operations during my fieldwork, a research participant connected me with a local uber driver who could more safely drive me around the favela. Known in the community and by the gangs, his car was allowed to freely circulate the favela, while most other uber drivers would refuse to enter this area. Having these local connections was thus incredibly valuable and made me feel safe and secure. The largest threat to security thus became the risk of shootouts, most often caused by police operations. However, the vast majority of these happened in the early morning, which allowed me to check in with my local contacts in the morning before coming in the afternoon. Only once did I postpone my visit due to shootouts. I had other clear rules to reduce my own personal risks, such as only visiting the favelas during the daytime, only visit when I had arranged a meeting with someone inside and not participate in any large-scale demonstrations that could turn violent. On some occasions, I had to personally evaluate the benefits versus the risks of doing an interview far away, in the favela in Zona Norte in the evening, or participate in the demonstration against the death of the little girl Agatha in Complexo do Alemão, which some of the research participants attended. On all of these occasions, I decided to stay home. While I might have missed

out on important ethnographic data, a chance to gain more trust from the research participants and 'give something back' by joining a demonstration in their favour, I deemed these situations too insecure to be worth the risk. I hope that sharing this here can encourage other researchers also to be open and honest in their reflections surrounding their own limits and vulnerabilities.

~ Chapter 2 ~

Everyday violence and agency in the margins of the state

Introduction

The introduction situated this thesis within critical peace studies' local turn and emphasized the importance of local agency in bottom-up, sustainable, positive peace processes (Galtung 1969; Kappler 2014; Lederach 1997; 2005; Mac Ginty 2014; 2017; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013; Richmond 2013; 2016; 2019). However, an overemphasis on the local and the everyday runs the risk of ignoring or downplaying the role of other actors and wider societal structures in facilitating or blocking local peace processes. This thesis therefore studies not only local peace formation in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, but also the various opportunities and blockages to these processes imbedded in the structural and social contexts. Bottom-up favela peace processes, like any social relations, take place within a social web of interrelating forces of power, structure and agency. This chapter therefore takes a closer look at the concepts of the everyday, the state, violence, structure, agency, and various forms of violence and local agency in the margins. The next chapter then builds on these concepts and considers potential blockages and spoilers to local agency in order to present a framework for favela peace formation, its opportunities and challenges within the context of Rio de Janeiro.

The everyday

The everyday has, as noted in the introduction, been central to the local turn in peace and conflict studies and is used to study the shifting and blurry borders between private and public life, informal and formal, family and state, agency and structure, the deep reaches of political and economic power (see for example Calhoun *et al.*, 2007; Mac Ginty 2014; 2017; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013), and as a way to let 'the people

speak for themselves (Charles 1937, in Highmore 2002:145). It has been described and explained as quotidian, daily life, day-to-day, mundane, ordinary, vernacular, informal, private, individual, routine, taken-for-granted (Lefebvre 1971/2002, quoted in Roy 2007:188), the ‘seen-but-unnoticed’ (Featherstone 1992:159, in Kalekin-Fishman 2013), the ‘infra-ordinary’ and ‘endotic’ (Perec 1997, in Highmore 2002: 176), and what ‘receives our daily inattention’ (Batailles in Hollier 1993, in Highmore 2002: 21). The focus is on the individual, how we think, act, navigate, feel, respond to, consume, produce, reproduce, survive, and give meaning to life through our day-to-day actions, routines, and rituals. The everyday happens sometimes consciously, but largely subconsciously, as routines make the everyday pass unnoticed as what is normal: “It is to the everyday that we consign that which no longer holds our attention. Things become ‘everyday’ by becoming invisible, unnoticed, part of the furniture” (Hollier, in Highmore 2002:21). Or as Adair (1993) describes, the everyday is a concept used to: “describe what remains: that which we generally don’t notice, which doesn’t call attention to itself, which is of no importance; what happens when nothing happens what passes when nothing passes, except time, people, cars, and clouds” (Perec, in Adair 1993:104, in Highmore 2002:176).

Scholars in sociology have used the everyday to explain how governmentality and state power reaches into the private sphere of the home by encouraging self-governmentality, where we are taught to self-regulate and self-govern on behalf of structural, ‘outside’ powers (Nadesan 2008; Pylypa 1998). Foucault is at the center of this with his study of biopolitics and biopower; terms he used to explain the power flowing from the state into the very capillaries of everyday life offering “tools for societal *self-government*” (Nadesan 2008:3):

...in thinking of the mechanisms of power, I am thinking rather of the capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives. The eighteenth century invented, so to speak, a synaptic regime of power, a regime of its exercise *within* the social body, rather than from *above* it

(Foucault, 1980:38-39).

Power, in our modern societies, is therefore not only imposed from above, but present in the fabric of our everyday lives. Through technology, Foucault argues, the state has managed to make individuals “voluntarily control themselves by self-imposing conformity to cultural norms through self-surveillance and self-disciplinary practices, especially those of the body such as the self-regulation of hygiene, health, and sexuality” (Pylypa 1998:22). Individual, everyday actions are therefore often tied to larger structures of power, whose wishes are indoctrinated in us and monitored through the state’s many institutions, such as schools, hospitals, prisons and the family (Pylypa 1998:22). In studying the everyday, it becomes important to resist the urge of studying everyday life as a neat, isolated and finite bubble in which life occurs and to be attuned to the presence of both biopower and the connections to wider power relations both locally and globally. Only through understanding these often-hidden influences and consequences one can start to fully understand everyday life in a set space.

Similar to Foucault’s study on biopolitics of the everyday, Lefebvre sees the everyday as a socially produced space that allows for some forms of agency while structurally limiting others, while simultaneously being a product of these actions (Davies and Niemann 2002, see also Lefebvre, no date). “Everyday life takes place in the concrete lived spaces people make for themselves” and consists of the combination of the three elements: Work, leisure, and family (Davies and Niemann 2002: 571). “Everyday life is thus the grind of the job, daily reproduction at home with the family, and the recreational or leisure activities pursued outside of the job and the home” (Davies and Niemann 2002: 571). According to Lefebvre, capitalism inevitably leads to individual alienation and the only escape from this is through a revolution in perception which could occur from individuals recognizing these contradictions between the promised and their actual experienced everyday life. Drawing on Lefebvre’s work, the Situationists International movement remind us of the wider systems of violence at play and the need for social change:

...because everyday life is organized within the limits of scandalous poverty, and above all because there is nothing accidental about this poverty of everyday life: it is a poverty that is constantly imposed by

the coercion and violence of a society divided into classes, a poverty historically organized in line with the evolving requirements of exploitation. The use of everyday life, in the sense of a consumption of lived time, is governed by the reign of scarcity: scarcity of free time and scarcity of possible uses of this free time

(Debord 1961, in Highmore 2002:240).

Both Lefebvre and the Situationists see everyday life as marked by the lack of freedom and capitalist alienation of the individual. However, they also seemed to believe that social change was possible if the people could be made aware, through the close study of the everyday and the ‘loose threads in the fabric of society’, of the gaping differences between their promised and lived life.

De Certeau also looked at the everyday through a Marxist lens but saw everyday life as “a site with opportunities for spontaneity and the potential for diverse outcomes” (Kalekin-Fishman, 2013:717). While Lefebvre was worried about the terror caused by capitalist-induced self-regulation and alienation, de Certeau focused on the centrality of human agency and the possibilities for creativity in everyday life. “While the capitalist classes worked out institutionalized, definitive ‘strategies’ of domination, the subjectively driven every-day actions of the working class should, to his mind, be read as resourceful ‘tactics’, sparks of effective resistance” (Kalekin-Fishman 2013:717). Studying everyday actions like walking and storytelling, de Certeau beautifully explains how these tactics can be unnoticed resistance to the structural confines, exemplified in the two following quotes: “Walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc., the trajectories it “speaks.”” (de Certeau 1984:99; see also Mitchell and Kelly 2011); and “[w]hat the map cuts up, the story cuts across” (de Certeau 1984:129). In the eyes of de Certeau, everyday life is far from fully predetermined by the social institutions, but rather a space where these imposed boundaries are met, challenged and renegotiated by ordinary ‘tactics’.

The everyday in peace and conflict

Studying the everyday in peace and conflict can allow us to see the more hidden undercurrents or structural and cultural forms of violence and power in different conflict contexts. Braudel, for example, sees the everyday as the depths of history, what lies beneath the surface which is most readily apparent and given attention to (1995). Here, he beautifully illustrates how the underlying currents of everyday life only momentarily manifest themselves on the surface as events. By studying the history of events only, he argues that we see

...a strange one-dimensional world, a world of strong passions certainly, blind like any other living world, our own included, and unconscious of the deeper realities of history, of the running waters on which our frail barks are tossed like cockle-shells. A dangerous world, but one whose spells and enchantments we shall have exorcised by making sure first to chart those underlying currents, often noiseless, whose direction can only be discerned by watching them over long periods of time. Resounding events are often only momentary outbursts, surface manifestations of these larger movements and explicable only in terms of them

(Braudel 1995, in Highmore 2002: 49).

How are we supposed to understand the larger events in life and history if we cannot see and understand their underlying causes? A growing number of peace and conflict scholars are now also advocating for the everyday as a space in which a deeper understanding of violence and peace can be found. Lederach was perhaps one of the first to criticize the traditionally simple, superficial and artificial study of peace and advocate for an embrace of the complexities of life:

To explore judgment and explore face and heart value in settings of conflict require a capacity to develop and live with a high degree of ambiguity. On the one hand, we must accept the realness of appearance, the way things appear to be. We must on the other hand explore the realness of lived experience, how perceptions and meaning have emerged

and how they might point to realities of both what is now apparent and the invisible that lies beyond what is presented as conclusive

(Lederach 2005:37).

Just as Braudel, Lederach sees the immense value of the everyday, whether it is the invisible, beneath the surface in the depths, in the center of all, or that which with everything is saturated. What becomes clear in this fog is that the everyday is intangible, elusive, hidden in the unnoticed, but the measure of everything. Any attempt to limit and define the everyday might then be futile, at least if attempting to box it within a certain field: “If as Lefebvre suggests the everyday lies both outside all the different fields of knowledge, while at the same time lying across them, then the everyday is not a field at all, more like a para-field, or a meta-field” (Highmore, 2002:4).

Thrown out of the safety of routine, everyday life in conflict might be a site of constant improvisation, attentiveness and insecurity. However, as Macek says, humans seek new meanings and routines while grasping what remains of pre-war normality (2009). This movement between “some semblance of normality and the eruption of chaos” (Macek 2009:9) is further described by Taussig as a:

doubleness of social being, in which one moves in bursts between somehow accepting the situation as normal, only to be thrown into a panic or shocked into disorientation by an event, a rumor, a sight, something said, or not said- something that even while it requires the normal in order to make its impact, destroys it

(Taussig 1992:18, in Macek 2009:9).

One could argue then that everyday life in conflict becomes the new normal. The alternative would be to argue that perhaps, in conflict, there is no everyday. But as humans strive to find meaning and normality in chaos, I would expect that even in conflict, local actors tend to carve out their everyday space. Although exhausting, unpredictable and inevitably changing, the abnormality of war becomes the new normal, or as Taussig calls it: the “normality of the abnormal (1992:17-18, in Macek

2009:9).

The pursuit of normality and meaning and the human stubbornness in everyday conflict life is shown in Macek's work, where the Sarajevans adapted a coping strategy they called 'imitation of life' in which they "patched together a semblance of existence, living from day to day on terms they could neither finally accept nor directly alter" (Macek, 2009:9). As Lederach phrased it: "They do not allow repeated cycles of violence to kill their passion for life or derail their daily journey. They keep walking the terrain in spite of the violence" (2005:55). The concept of the everyday will be used in this thesis to identify the local actors that build peace in the favelas, as opposed to top-down peace and pacification projects, in order to appreciate and acknowledge the valuable knowledge local peace actors have of a contextualized everyday life in their communities, and how they might build on these understandings in their work to construct a new everyday with less violence. Finally, a study located in the everyday also allows me to identify the undercurrents of violence causing outburst of manifest violence which helps identify the longer lines in conflicts.

The state

In an attempt to reach a closer understanding of peace formation's position, movement possibilities and blockages in power relations in Rio de Janeiro, I choose to include a discussion of the state as a network of avenues for change as well as structures of violence and hindrances. A closer look at the theories of the state will perhaps aid us in further understanding these forces and balances of power. In international relations, the state has traditionally been seen (mostly within realism and liberalism) as a unitary actor. This appears to be largely based on Weber's definition of the state as the "human community which (successfully) lays claim to the *monopoly of legitimate physical violence* within a certain territory, this 'territory' being another of the characteristics of the state" (Weber 1994: 310-311, in Jessop 2016: 25). The state's three elements of administration, territory and population are widely recognized within international law and traditional studies of international relations (Jessop 2016). However, there are countless debates on exactly how far the state reaches; both in its physical and

symbolic boundaries. State territories are, for example, often contested and many states have territories (and populations) outside of their control within their so-called 'state borders'. In many cases, this three-element approach to the state thus becomes too static and strict, as it excludes and thus fails to explain the ways states fall outside these three elements.

Miliband (1969) expanded the concept of the state by listing the elements constituting it. Starting with "[t]he government, the administration, the military and the police, the judicial branch, sub-central -government and parliamentary assemblies" (Miliband 1969: 54), he also added "antisocialist parties, the mass media, educational institutions, trade union leaders, and other forces in civil society as parts of the wider state system" (in Jessop 2016: 24). Here, the state becomes further entangled with the concepts of society and civil society. Wanting to separate the two forms of state, the institutional core from the wider state power and ideas, Althusser (1971) divided the state into the 'repressive state apparatus': the "core of the state (the executive, the legislature, the judiciary, and the police-military apparatus)", and the 'ideological state apparatuses': the "family apparatus, education, organized religion, and the media" (Althusser 1971, in Jessop 2016: 24). Building on these, Jessop offers his own general definition of the state:

The core of the state apparatus comprises a relatively unified ensemble of socially embedded, socially regularized, and strategically selective institutions and organizations [Staatsgewalt] whose socially accepted function is to define and enforce collectively binding decisions on the members of a society [Staatsvolk] in a given territorial area [Staatsgebiet] in the name of the common interest or general will of an imagined political community identified with that territory [Staatsidee]

(adapted from Jessop 1990: 341, in Jessop 2016: 49).

He further recognizes, however, that "Above, around, and below the core of the state ensemble are institutions and organizations whose relation to the core ensemble is uncertain. State systems never achieve complete separation from society and their

institutional boundaries are often contested” (Jessop 2016: 50). Other recent work on state formation has also “‘questioned the validity and usefulness’ of the distinction between ‘state’ and ‘civil society’ (see Foucault 1980; Abrams 1988; Bayart 1991; Mitchell 1999; Alonso 1995; Nugent 1997; Trouillot 2001)” (Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005: 11). In the view of Aretxaga, “The problem is that the separation between society, or civil society, and the state ‘does not exist in reality’” (Aretxaga 2003: 398, in Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005: 12). The modern state must therefore be “understood as produced by a broad and continuously shifting field of power relationships, everyday practices and formations of meaning” (Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005: 12). In fact, “[s]ome of the most interesting current theories of state formation suggest that the line of separation between state and society ‘objectifies what is in fact a mobile demarcation, subject to continual construction and deconstruction’ (Steinmetz 1999: 12)” (Baitenmann 2005:172). It therefore becomes important to move away from the view of the state as a unified actor separated from society, and rather consider it as an intricate network of moving power relationships, from the formal state institutions down to the more intangible idea of the state or imagined political community.

In an attempt to unify all these efforts of conceptualizing the state, Abrams (1988) presented three ways of thematizing the state; as a unitary actor, as institutions and practices, and as an idea:

1. “a reified *account of the state* as a substantial unitary entity, agent, function, or relation that is separated from the rest of society and operates as the essential but hidden structuring mechanism of political life”
2. “the *state system* as the real, palpable nexus of institutions, agencies, and practices that is more or less extensive, more or less connected with economic and other social relations, and, at best, only ever relatively unified”
3. “the *state idea* as an explicit ideological force (*idee-force*) rooted in the collective misrepresentation – masking – of political and economic

domination in capitalist societies in ways that legitimate subjection thereto”

(Abrams 1988 in Jessop 2016: 17-18)

Abrams, Joseph and Nugent challenge the first two simplified views of the state as they both “are still wedded to a notion of the state as a material object that can be studied” (Joseph and Nugent 1994: 19). Indeed;

the state is sometimes discussed as a thing-like instrument, machine, engine, ship (of state), cybernetic or regulatory device – to be used, driven, activated, steered, monitored, or modulated by a given economic class, social stratum, political party, official caste, or other agents, with a view to advancing its own projects, interests, or values. Yet how, if at all, could the state act *as if* it were a unified subject, and what could constitute its unity as a ‘thing’?

(Jessop 2016: 21).

In the study of peace formation blockages, it is thus crucial to move beyond the idea of the state as one unified whole, and this is indeed the trap we time and time again fall into by referring to ‘the state’ as one cohesive agent or a set of clearly defined institutions and social structures. Instead of addressing ‘the state’ then, we should always stretch to refer to the specific social structures, processes, institutions, agents, or ideas, because ‘the state’ itself does not exist (Abrams, in Sayer 1994). “What Abrams suggests instead is that the state is a claim that in its very name appears to give unity, coherence, structure, and intentionality to what are in practice frequently disunited, fragmented attempts at domination (Sayer 1994: 371). As Abrams himself explains it:

We should abandon the state as a material object of study whether concrete or abstract while continuing to take the *idea* of the state extremely seriously ... The state is, then, in every sense of the term a triumph of concealment. It conceals the real history and relations of subjectification behind an a-historical mask of legitimating illusion ... In sum: the state is not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice. It is itself the mask ...

(Abrams [1977] 1988:75, 77, 82, in Joseph and Nugent 1994: 19).

Indeed, even (or especially) when the state presents itself as a unified reality, we should be very careful to accept this at face value and rather probe on the processes and practices behind the ‘mask’. The arguments of Abrams of the state as merely disunited attempts of domination might however be an unfair view of the state. Like any social force, the state has the possibilities for both violence and domination, but also citizen involvement and progressive social change. While the formation of states is entrenched with violence, and thus all states naturally and continually, if unintentionally, maintain structures of violence within them (Arias and Goldstein 2010), some of the processes and institutions within states offer channels of political participation and organization that might facilitate positive social change for the population of that state. Thus, the same ‘state’ that blocks peace formation efforts in Rio de Janeiro, might also contain the social institutions, processes and agents to facilitate and strengthen these efforts.

Jessop presents a more neutral avenue for understanding the state through studying its “changing forms, functions, and effects” (Jessop 2016: 54). This strategic-relation approach (SRA) as he calls it, refuses, like Abrams, to “attempt[s] to capture the ‘essence’ of the state” and rather includes the study of “*state power* as a contingent expression of a changing balance of forces that seek to advance their respective interests inside, through, and against, the state system” (Jessop 2016: 54). If the state does not truly exist, it might indeed be more useful to study the state powers and their effects. Here Jessop provides a more detailed discussion of what he means by state powers:

As an ensemble of power centres and capacities that offer unequal chances to different forces within and outside the state, the state cannot exercise power. In other words, it is not the state as such that exercises power. Instead its powers (plural) are activated by changing sets of politicians and state officials located in specific parts of the state, in specific conjunctures. Although these ‘insiders’ are key players in the exercise of state powers, they always act in relation to a wider balance of forces within and beyond a given state. To talk of state managers,

let alone of the state itself, exercising power makes a complex set of social relations that extend well beyond the state system and its distinctive capacities

(Jessop 2016: 56-57).

Here he draws a great deal on the debates on structure and agency, and accurately argues how both agentic and structural powers can shape and influence state powers. Just like power was discussed earlier, state power can be extremely well concealed, hidden and transferred through complex social structures and agency, with its effects seeping through all layers of society into the homes and bodies of the population, what Foucault coined as biopolitics (Foucault 1980). I find the SRA approach particularly promising as a lens through which to study the blockages of and opportunities for peace formation in Rio de Janeiro, as it combines structure, agency, power, and structural violence in regarding the state as social relations:

In particular, the SRA emphasizes that the biased composition of constraints and opportunities can only be understood in relation to specific strategies pursued by specific forces in order to advance specific interests over a given time horizon in terms of a specific set of other forces, each advancing its interests through specific strategies. This invites consideration of whether – and, if so, how – politically relevant actors (individual or collective) take account of this differential privileging by engaging in ‘strategic context’ analysis when choosing a course of action. In other words, to what extent do they act routinely or habitually, as opposed to evaluating the current situation in terms of the changing ‘art of the possible’ over different spatiotemporal horizons of action?

(Jessop 2016: 55).

This strategic context analysis is particularly interesting in relation to peace formation in contexts of structural violence in Rio de Janeiro. This ‘differential privileging’ is indeed, I suspect, the source of many of the major blockages of peace formation, both through the politics of allocation of public funds, and through more security-centred political reforms. The existence and extent of these blockages, I believe, depend on

how closely peace formation goals correspond with or challenge powerful state projects and visions of the more privileged and powerful actors in the state system. But I also believe that some of the challenges lie in institutional structures themselves which might be hard for even powerful individuals and groups to alter. A further exploration of what these direct and structural challenges might be specifically will be pursued in the next chapter on the development of a theoretical framework of hypothetical favela peace formation opportunities and blockages.

This brief overview of the state has attempted to move beyond the traditional concept of the state as a unitary actor shaped by its state sovereignty and institutions, territory and population. While these are central in the understanding of many states, it is very Eurocentric and proves too static to be able to explain the many varieties of state forms that exist. Further, it artificially separates the state from society and civil society, while many would argue that this boundary does not exist. As Nustad expresses it; "... a state actor's power cannot be explained by some inherent capacity that exists prior to and over and above interaction in the social world occupied by people" (2005:93). I therefore choose to adopt Abrams' and Jessop's ways of moving beyond the traditional idea of the state as a machine, or as an object that has power and can be studied, towards a state *idea* that hides a disarray of moving, overlapping power relations, constructions of meaning and attempts of domination. This way of looking at the state allows for a demystification of the state and encourages me to more directly address the specific agents, structures, institutions, narratives, policies or social relationships within this realm. The state might therefore be better studied through its balances of power and its effects on the everyday lives of the population (Jessop 2016, Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005), as "the state's presence in social life *is* fluid, incoherent and messy" (Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005:12).

Violence

At the forefront of our minds, the obvious signals of violence are acts of crime and terror, civil unrest, international conflict. But we should learn to step back, to disentangle ourselves from the fascinating lure

of this directly, visible ‘subjective’ violence, violence performed by a clearly identifiable agent. We need to perceive the contours of the background which generates such outbursts

(Zizek 2008:1).

To understand the conflict in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, or any other conflict for that matter, it is essential to consider the more hidden forms of violence behind the manifest violence of shootouts, injuries and deaths. Different disciplines focus on different forms of violence, but, as Zizek (2008) and Galtung (1969) both argue, it is essential to consider three different types of violence in order to understand conflict. They both argue that there are two invisible forms of violence behind the direct, visible, subjective violence; structural/systemic and symbolic/cultural violence. For Galtung (1969), *structural violence* is indirect, built into the structures of society in the form of some individuals having greater chances of achieving their life potential than others. Structural violence thus addresses the injustice of inequality, poverty, racism, colonialism and more, which prevent people from the life they could live in a completely just world (Farmer 2004; Galtung 1969). It “refers to the invisible ‘social machinery’ of social inequality and oppression ... that reproduces pathogenic social relations of exclusion and marginalization via ideologies and stigmas attendant on race, class, caste, sex, and other invidious distinctions” (Scheper-Hughes 2004:14).

In contrast to outbursts of direct, subjective or personal violence, “[s]tructural violence is silent, it does not show - it is essentially static, it is the tranquil waters. In a static society, personal violence will be registered, whereas structural violence may be seen as about as natural as the air around us” (Galtung 1969: 163). Very closely related to this, Zizek presents his *objective violence* as inherent in what is ‘normal’. This is how he distinguishes the direct, subjective violence from the objective:

Subjective violence is experienced as such as the background of a non-violent zero level. It is seen as a perturbation of the ‘normal’, peaceful state of things. However, objective violence is precisely the violence inherent to this ‘normal’ state of things. Objective violence is invisible

since it sustains the very zero-level standard against which we perceive something as subjectively violent

(Zizek 2008: 2).

Objective violence is therefore potentially more powerful and dangerous, as it is normalized while in fact presenting the main grievances and causes of direct, subjective violence.

Zizek further divides objective violence into two forms. The first, systemic violence, equals Galtung's structural violence above. The second, symbolic violence, is "embodied in language and its forms... not only in the relations of social domination reproduced in our habitual speech forms", but also as "a more fundamental form of violence still that pertains to language as such, to its imposition of a certain universe of meaning" (Zizek 2008: 1-2). It thus seems to correspond to Galtung's third form of violence, *cultural violence*, in that they both address the use of language and culture to normalize the relations of social domination (Galtung 1990). While structural and systemic violence address the institutional, political and historical inequalities and injustices themselves, cultural and symbolic violence can help explain the ways in which shaping perceptions and narratives successfully naturalize and normalize the existing forms of structural, systemic and direct violence. Chapter 4 will analyse how, in Rio de Janeiro, a mainstream narrative that criminalizes the black and the poor successfully dehumanizes favela residents in the eyes of the middle and upper classes, thus legitimizing and justifying both the vast structural violence of state neglect, inequality, colonial structures and racism and the direct violence of the practical state warfare against these marginalized communities.

However, the meaning of symbolic violence changes slightly when we move from Zizek to anthropology and sociology. Like cultural violence and Zizek's symbolic violence, it dives deeper than structural violence as it "refers to assaults on human dignity, sense of worth, and one's existential groundedness in the world" (Scheper-Hughes, 2004:14). While structural violence unequally deprives the marginalized of their full life-potential and cultural violence normalizes and legitimizes this inequality,

symbolic violence “make the oppressed complicit in their own destruction” (Scheper-Hughes, 2004:14). As Bourdieu describes, symbolic violence is the “embodied form of the relation of domination”, where the dominated evaluate and perceive themselves in the image created by the dominant, causing the relationship between them to appear natural (Bourdieu, 2004:339). Symbolic violence thus becomes useful to understand subordination and domination and how these are naturalized and silenced (Thapar-Björkert et al 2016). Both Scheper-Hughes (2004) and Bourgois (2004)’s research shows how criminalized populations in poor neighbourhoods in North-East Brazil and in US inner-city apartheid internalize the wider society’s criminalization of them and their neighbours and how this may lead to a reproduction of violence in the everyday. The symbolic violence lens could thus help identify some peace formation blockages deriving from within the favelas themselves, in the views of some favela residents that the warfare against them is necessary due to the perceived criminal nature of the favelas.

Violence in the margins of the state and the necropolitics of allowing to die

The favelas in Rio de Janeiro can, due to their historic neglect, marginalization and criminalization by the state, be called margins of the state (Das and Poole 2004). In these margins, local agency might have fewer democratic avenues for furthering their cause through the state system. These ‘margins of the state’, like the favelas in Brazil; described as areas within state boundaries where state power, authority and/or services cannot reach, challenged state legitimacy and encouraged alternative forms of power and justice systems (Das and Poole, 2004). O’Donnell describes these zones as democratic ‘brown zones’: whereas ‘blue zones’ experience democracy as something resembling the northern European democracies, the state presence in ‘brown zones’ is “very low or negligible” both in terms of bureaucracy and legal systems (1993, quoted in Goldstein, 2003:198). Caldeira and Holston argue that the favela residents, being residents of these ‘margins of the state’ or ‘brown zones’ of citizenship, experience a lack of substantive citizenship, where “if formal citizenship refers to membership in the territorial nation-state”, “substantive citizenship” refers “to the array of political, civil, socio-economic, and cultural rights people possess and exercise” (1999:721).

The democratization debate in Latin America considers the democracies as incomplete, as they fail to deliver democratic, substantive citizenship, provide social services and security and protect the human rights of all its citizens (Brahler 2014). These apparent shortcomings of Latin American democracies have been described in the literature as “‘absence of the state’, ‘failure of the state’, ‘limited state’, ‘desencanto democrático’ [disenchantment with democracy], ‘democratic deficit’, and ‘disjunctive citizenship’ (Caldeira and Holston 1999; Koonings and Kruijt 2004; Perlman 2010)” (Brahler 2014: 28).

Other scholars working on violence in Latin American have criticized O’Donnell’s perspectives on the ‘failed/developing’ Latin American democracy. They argue that violence, instead of being an unintended consequence of weak democracy, constitutes a central component of these states:

Instead of viewing violence as indicative of democratic failure, we can, from a violently plural perspective, understand violence as critical to the foundation of Latin American democracies, the maintenance of democratic states, and the political behaviour of democratic citizens. In contemporary Latin American society violence emerges as much more than a social aberration: violence is a mechanism for keeping in place the very institutions and policies that neoliberal democracies have fashioned over the past several decades, as well as an instrument for coping with the myriad problems that neoliberal democracies have generated

(Arias and Goldstein 2010:5).

This view reasons well with the existing social and racial hierarchies in Brazil where the power seems to lie mostly in the hands of white elites while the overwhelming proportion of violence is targeting young, black favela residents. Instead of disregarding the conflict in the favelas as an unintended consequence of an incomplete democratic state, the violently plural perspective allows us to identify the specific ways in which certain state and non-state actors actively engage with and produce this

violence as they in various ways benefit from the current state of affairs (Arias and Goldstein 2010; Arias 2017).

Pearce (2010) focuses on how elites use violence and instability in order to protect their own interests. She argues that instead of striving towards legitimate, monopolized state violence or creating “the conditions for society to live without violence” the Latin American states appear to be

on a perverse track, in which elites have never abandoned the violence that ultimately protects their interests and acquiesce in state security acts which violently target categories of non-citizens. In the process, democracy itself is sacrificed to the demands for hard-line security provisions, which often involve abuse of the poorest people who should be at the heart of a democratic project

(Pearce 2010: 301).

The theories of violent, perverse states might aid a more nuanced consideration of the challenges to and opportunities for peace formation in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. They remind us that the various forms of violence experienced in the margins and peripheries of the state are not necessarily due to a weak state and a state absence in these areas but could also point to a more perverse form of state where the elites have never abandoned the use of violence and rather choose to sacrifice the state’s poor, the residents of these margins, in order to protect their own positions and interests.

Chuengsatiansup defines political marginality as: “the afflicting experience of those whose social existence has been excluded, discounted, dehumanized, and displaced by the dominant political discourse” (2001:32). The excluded, marginalized populations in the margins are often dehumanized as the dangerous ‘others’, and ‘bare beings’(Agamben 1998), which naturalizes forms of rights abuses and violence in these areas as “terror as usual” (Taussig 1989 in Scheper-Hughes 2004:177; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004). As the favelas in Rio de Janeiro are majority black

neighbourhoods, the Brazilian state's relationship with the favelas can be considered what Mbembe defines as a pro-slavery democracy:

A pro-slavery democracy is therefore characterized by its bifurcation. Two orders coexist within it – a *community of fellow creatures* governed, at least in principle, by the law of equality, and a *category of nonfellows*, or even those without part, that is also established by law. A priori, those without part have no right to have rights. They are governed by the law of inequality. This inequality and the law establishing it, and that is its base, is founded on the prejudice of race. The prejudice itself, as much as the law founding it, enabled a practically unbridgeable distance to be upheld between the community of fellow creatures and its others. Pro-slavery democracy, supposing it to be a community, could only be a *community of separation*.

(Mbembe 2019:17).

Building on Foucault's concept of biopower, Mbembe considers how some contemporary states, with Israel's occupation of Palestine as a prime example, are necropolitical in their power not only to kill and use 'othering' to justify violence over the category of nonfellows, but also in their creation of "*death-worlds*, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead* (Mbembe 2003:40). Necropolitics and the creation of death-worlds might thus be useful in the study of the Brazilian state's relationship to the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, where racism and marginalization are used to justify state violence and thus also pose a blockage to peace formation in these communities. In the study of violence in Rio de Janeiro, it becomes crucial not only to recognize that violence is a conscious part of the workings of the state (Pearce 2010; Arias and Goldstein 2010; Arias 2017), but also that race and class are used to separate the population into categories of fellows and non-fellows (Mbembe 2019). Marginalizing certain groups as dangerous others and bare beings, state killing and necropolitics of 'letting die' in these margins are naturalized as terror as usual and perhaps necessary for state domination (Agamben 1998; Mbembe 2003; 2019; Taussig 1989 in Scheper-Hughes 2004:177; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004).

It is important to remember that favela residents also live under violent criminal governance, subject to the rules of either drug gangs or militias (Arias 2006;2017; Feltran 2020). However, these local forms of governance are not completely excluded from state control (and violence), but rather, as Arias argues, mainly have either *divided governance* with the state, meaning that the armed group has consolidated armed control but with relative competitive relations with state actors, or, as many militias, have a *collaborative governance*, where the armed group has consolidated control and operates “in close collaboration with the state” (2017:24-25). Favela residents might thus be exposed to the rules and violence of several competing armed actors, including the state. The many forms of violence against the favelas in Rio de Janeiro brings attention to the intersectionality and reproduction of different forms of violence in these communities. Some of the more hidden, silent forms of violence lie imbedded in the background of visible action and work to reproduce structures of social domination both through shaping narratives and perceptions that justify and normalize the status quo, but also make the subordinated complicit in their own destruction (Scheper-Hughes 2004:14).

In Rio de Janeiro, it becomes clear that the favela residents do not only face one or a few separate forms of violence, but rather that, in their everyday, these forms of violence intersect to create a complex web of insecurity and repression. Pearce argues that violence, in its different forms, is connected and reproduced (2020). She argues that violence might be reproduced and passed through generations, which could be supported by favela children growing up in vulnerable contexts of domestic violence and structural inequality and criminalization choosing to join the drug gangs (2020; Scheper-Hughes 2004a; Bourgois 2004). The state’s use of violence and continuous marginalization of favela residents in attempts to organize and contain violence, thus might, as Pearce argues, only contribute to the continuous intergenerational reproduction of violence in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro (2020). A successful peace project in the favelas would thus not have to work towards order and pacification, but rather seek to address and reduce the complex, interrelated, diverse forms of violence from racism, state marginalization, inequality, social exclusion, domestic violence, open conflict and much more.

Structure and agency

Finally, the structure/agency debate is used here as a lens to further understand the agency of peace formation versus the seemingly mostly structural and cultural blockages it faces. The structure agency debate is at the centre of the social sciences' long-lasting endeavour to explain social behaviour and several of the great thinkers have engaged with the debate surrounding free will and predetermination (like Locke (1978), Durkheim, Bourdieu (1977), Foucault (1980), Marx, Lefebvre, DeCerteau, Giddens (1984), Wendt (1987), Parsons (1976) and many more). While structure is largely fixed, usually seen as something that will remain unchanged for more than a lifetime and whose change is typically so slow that it will only be visible long-term, agency is its free and fluid opposite: the will, capacity and power of people to act within the structures set for them and to resist and/or reinforce these structures (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Lopez & Scott, 2000).

Structure

In social science, structure has been referred to as “those aspects of social behaviour that the investigator considers relatively enduring or persistent” and “sometimes carries with it the implication that the whole in question is greater than the sum of its parts” (Homans, 1976: 53). Social structure can also generally be understood as the external ways in which society “exert social constraint over our actions” (Durkheim, in Giddens, 2006:106) and the parts of social life that are patterned and arranged, “as opposed to that which is ‘random’ or ‘chaotic’” (Lopez and Scott, 2000:3). Put more simply, social structure often refers to the recurrent patterned arrangements which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available to actors (Parsons 1976, in Barnes 2001). It therefore may refer to anything from the capitalist system, marriage, laws, organizations, class, gender, demographic distributions, power relations and hierarchies, to social relationships, cultural patterns, norms, language, and more (Parsons, 1976; Elder-Vass, 2010:77; Bjorkdahl and Selimovic, 2015:170).

One of the earliest significant contributions to the study of social structure came from Emile Durkheim, in what he named 'social facts': "those ways of acting, thinking, and feeling that are general throughout a particular society and that are able to exercise an 'external constraint over its members'" (Durkheim 1895, in Lopez and Scott 2000: 14). He also stressed the importance of time when identifying social facts, as they last much longer than individual lives: "Individuals are born into a world of social facts that pre-exist them and that, in many cases, will persist for long after they have died" (Lopez and Scott 2000:14). Durkheim then moved on to see the social structure of society as consisting of "the particular complex of collective relationships and collective representations, forms of attachment and regulation, that give society its specific characteristics" (in Lopez and Scott 2000: 17). His focus on relations, representations, and regulations still shines through in many of the recent attempts to further define social structure and its various parts.

Lopez and Scott write that social structures can be not only institutional and relational, but also embodied, which is "found in the habits and skills that are inscribed in human bodies and minds and that allow them to produce, reproduce, and transform institutional structures and relational structures" (Lopez and Scott, 2000:4). Scholars like Giddens (1984), Foucault (1980) and Bourdieu (1977) also see individuals' bodies as "the carriers of relational and institutional structures" (Lopez and Scott 2000:98; Elder-Vass 2010:79) which helps explain how some types of agency end up reproducing and reinforcing institutional and relational structures. Furthermore, the idea of embodied structure brings to mind interesting work on symbolic violence perspectives on marginalized communities, where the external marginalization and criminalization (in the case of the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, for example) are internalized and embodied within individual community residents and then (perhaps unconsciously) reinforced through their behaviour. This is just another way of saying that the embodiment of violent, 'external' institutional and relational structures often induce agency that have a reproducing effect on these same violent structures. Social structures then last longer than individuals' lifetimes and expands further than institutional structures through relational and embodied structures that shape culture, perceptions and narratives within communities and individuals themselves and that

closely interplay with the agency of these individuals in contesting and reproducing these structures (Lopez and Scott 2000).

Agency

The concept of agency is known to be an elusive concept intrinsically hard to pin down, due to its vagueness, vast variety and close dependency on structure (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). The concept originates in the early enlightenment period when philosophers of morality and determinism first started discussing the individual and his/her personal will and power to change his/her circumstances (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Wendt 1987). This philosophical individualism, “which, while still grounded in the religious morality of the times, allowed for the subsequent invention of the individual as a ‘free agent’ able to make rational choices for him(self) and society” (Lukes 1973, in Emirbayer and Mische 1998:965). Within this, Locke’s (1978) rejection of tradition and increased focus on the individual experience and the society as grounded in the “social contract between individuals” brought forward a new concept of agency that “affirmed the capacity of human beings to shape the circumstances in which they live” (Emirbayer and Mische 1998: 964-965). The concept of agency is therefore derived from a Western tradition with focus on individual freedom where “individuals are the locus of social action” (Hitlin and Elder 2007: 171) and in its extreme, attributes all social systems and institutions in society to individual actions and behaviour. Recent work on agency has recognized how “apparently free actions lead individuals to (often) unconsciously reproduce their social structural milieu structure (eg. Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984; Layder, 1997)” (Hitlin and Elder Jr., 2007:171). Following this recognition, most recent scholars on structure and agency have also seen the close interdependence and causation between the two and concluded that positing the two against each other in absolute and isolated terms is futile and erroneous (see Campbell 2009; Cockerham 2005; Dunn 1997; Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Hayes 1994; Sewell 1992, many mentioned in Hitlin and Elder 2007).

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) define human agency as:

the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments – the temporal-relational contexts of action – which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgement, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations

(Emirbayer and Mische 1998: 970).

‘The temporal – relational contexts of action’ here refer to a view adopted by these scholars that actors are not atomized individuals, but rather “active respondents within nested and overlapping systems” (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:969), which becomes important in studying the networking and opportunities of peace formers in Rio de Janeiro. Further, Emirbayer and Mische’s (1998) organization of agency in a temporal manner allows for a sophisticated organization of the types of agency, distinguishing the ones who reproduce structure as ones related to the past from the ones challenging it by imagining different realities in the future, and simultaneously seeing the ability of actors to take into account both past experiences and future goals/fears/hopes/desires while making their decisions in the present. My expectation is that most peace formation efforts are, by virtue, looking towards an imagined, improved, more just and peaceful future and therefore attempt to have transformative agency, but might still also unconsciously or unwillingly end up reproducing some of the structures through their work. Finally, agency can both describe “an actor’s ability to initiate and maintain a program of action” *and* “an actor’s ability to act independently of the constraining power of social structure” (Campbell 2009: 407). Distinguishing between these two types of agency might help explain why local peace projects within the exact same structural context (if such occurs) have different degrees of agency: even though the space ‘provided for them’ by structures is the same, they might have differing degrees of their own ability and capacity to act.

What is clear from the considerations of structure and agency above is that they are closely intertwined and interdependent. It therefore becomes impossible to properly study one while ignoring the other. Most modern sociology scholars have thus come to support Giddens (1984) structuration theory which gives “agents and structures equal ontological status” and permits us “to see agents and structures as ‘co-

determined' or 'mutually constituted' entities" (Wendt 1987: 339). Agency can be defined as "the capabilities of human beings and their ability to act" (Healey 2006, in Wali et al 2018:88) and structures as "the recurrent patterned arrangements which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available" (Giddens 1984; Wendt 1987, in Wali et al 2018:88). The relationship between structure and agency is two-ways, as agency shapes, challenges, reproduces and reinforces structure, while structure limits, inspires and influences agency. Engaging with the structure and agency perspective through structuration theory can thus prove very useful in illuminating action, behaviour, social change, social reproductions, structures of violence, peace formation, and the power relations seeping through all of these.

Agency in the margins of the state

Based on the section on life in the margins above, agency in the favelas in Rio might focus more on resistance, survival and local self-government measures in the presence of structurally violent and racist power relations and the absence of a supportive state system (see for example Das et al 2001; Scheper-Hughes 1997; Bourgois 2003; Scott 1990). The common denominator here is agency at the local level in opposition and resistance to wider societal, national, and international structures of violence, insecurity, inequality, marginalization, and/or exclusion. Studying agency at the local and home levels offer opportunities to discover and share the immense strength, creativity, love and resilience of individuals in the toughest life conditions. It is, however, worth noting that not all local agency is 'peace-loving' or community-building, but might also be criminal, violent, exclusive, ignorant, and so on (see Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013; Mac Ginty 2014). Mac Ginty's five types of everyday peace agency, "avoidance, ambiguity, ritualized politeness, telling and blame deferring" (2014:555), also show how local agency might in fact work against sustainable peace as individuals seek primarily to secure their everyday spaces and thus use their agency to manage the conflict rather than risking their lives in the fight for change. These local types of agency might then be reproducing the structures of violence and allow the deeper conflict to persist by prioritizing a negative peace in which less transformative agency occurs (Mac Ginty 2014). This section briefly considers resistance and tactics, self-government, social navigation and international

activist networks as forms of agency in the margins of the state in order to predict what forms favela peace formation might take in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro.

Resistance and tactics

Resistance and tactics have gained a lot of attention in the study of local agency and bottom-up perspectives that are gaining ground in critical peace studies. Originating in their responses and fights against larger, more powerful forces of structural violence and injustice or international peacebuilding ventures in void of local legitimacy, these forms of agency assume a fight from the oppressed against their oppressors. Resistance can be either loud or silent, organized or individualized, public or private (Scott 1990; Richmond 2011; Santos 2008). A famous example is Scott's 'hidden transcript' (1990) where the subordinated have two transcripts, one official, public way of behaving and speaking in the presence of the powerful, and one off-stage, hidden, self-preserving transcript only shared by those in the same, power-less group. This hidden resistance is an interesting form of agency that does not necessarily directly challenge power structures but keeps an internal resistance to the power-relation by keeping some parts hidden from the dominating group. This wall between the two groups can be broken when the hidden transcript suddenly takes stage as subordinated individuals break their silence in open defiance against the powerful (Scott 1990). Resistance can thus include different forms of quiet obedience, public performance in the eyes of the powerful, and open defiance against their rule (Scott 1990).

Perhaps inspired by de Certeau and his optimistic focus on agency through 'tactics' (1984), more recent work within urban studies, sociology, anthropology and peace and conflict studies have studied the everyday experiences of marginalized groups and their agency within situations of conflict and insecurity. Through everyday actions, local individuals can silently and discreetly resist against structures of segregation, violence and injustice. Along the same lines, Smyth and McKnight have studied mothers in a divided Belfast and their everyday, local agency of walking, shopping and playing within and across ethno-nationalist boundaries (Smyth and McKnight,

2013). Mac Ginty (2017) has similarly looked at how Lebanese citizens challenge the rigidity of ethnic boundaries as they through everyday social practices mix, mingle and identify with others across boundaries. Other examples include Roy's study of the 'underground' everyday life of female members of the radical left in Bengal, India (Roy 2007) and Salama et al's study on 'The everyday urban environment of migrant labourers in Gulf cities' (Salama, Azzali, and Wiedmann 2017). Additionally, Jha et al study how the urban poor in Mumbai is, due to their structural circumstances, "forced to operate in peculiar forms of temporality" and that their "everyday life operates in the situation of insecurity, urgency and emergency" (Jha, Shajahan and Vyas, 2013:51). Similarly, Ding's work with the *xiaojies*, female rural-to-urban migrants and prostitutes in the Pearl River Delta, shows how many aspects of these marginalized women's everyday lives are spontaneous as they use tactics to make the best out of their circumstances (Ding, 2017:846). Their everyday space seems less decided by the predetermined and more by their agency within their marginalized space as they strive to create their own identities: Here, "all things are in process and becoming, and so are uncertain" (Ding, 2017:854). While representing very diverse groups, these studies unite in their focus on everyday local agency and resistance in the face of marginalization and violence. These are just a few examples of the various studies that use the concept of everyday tactics and resistance to represent voices that are largely marginalized and silenced.

I find resistance and tactics to be useful concepts in that they allow for a wider consideration of the social forces and structures surrounding individuals and the many ways in which actors can openly and covertly resist the more powerful. The concept of tactics also recognizes the fluid nature of life and how individuals adapt and attune their actions of resistance to the changing reality of their situations. However, resistance and tactics alone are not enough to portray the rich, complex and diverse social mechanisms that people engage whilst navigating uncertain terrains of conflict and marginalization.

Self-government

Quite a few works on local agency, most noteworthy within the field of anthropology of the margins, look at the self-government of people in places where the state has failed them (Caldeira 2000; Das and Poole 2004; Goldstein 2003; Goldstein 2012; Alves and Evanson 2011; Scheper-Hughes 1992). Citizens of the margins of the state are fundamentally neglected by the central powers and thus often see the state more as a negative, coercive presence rather than a provider of social services. Here, agency is directed towards self-government in the state's absence, and often also as resistance to marginalization and/or repressive, violent and unpredictable state-interventions and securitization-attempts. Goldstein (2003) and Scheper-Hughes (1992) have both looked at self-preservation in recurring cycles of violence in the favelas in Brazil, Goldstein (2010) considered local community coping mechanisms by citizens outlawed by the state in the city of Cochabamba in Bolivia, and Bourgois (2003) studied the self-identifying local agency of crack-dealers in the El Bairro neighbourhood in Chicago. These governmentally oriented forms of agency display amazingly creative and innovative resilience in individual and community agency in providing a wide range of services like basic infrastructure, employment, security and justice in the absence of state services (Alves and Evanson 2011; Caldeira 2000; Goldstein 2003; Goldstein 2012).

In the favelas, both gangs and local resident associations have organized to provide social services, work, water, electricity, and security for the residents. In relation to peace studies, agency as self-government is central in that it shows the ways in which people can organize themselves in order to manage conflicts, create reconciliation initiatives, and build peace in the absence of the state or in situations where the state itself is a major perpetrator of violence. In the case of the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, the military police represent a large threat of violence while the communities often lack basic social services from the state, like trash collection, mail services, and health care clinics (Alves and Evanson 2011; Caldeira 2000; Goldstein 2003). In one favela, even the public school was handed over to the favela Residents Association while residents also mobilized to deliver trash and pick up mail for the community in the post-office outside the favela (Alves and Evanson 2011). I suspect these organized

forms of community collaboration and self-governance to be the most eminent ways in which favela residents build towards a more sustainable peace and a politics without violence in their communities (Richmond 2016; Pearce 2020).

Social navigation of conflict

Another useful concept to consider for favela peace formation agency is Vigh's concept of social navigation, as it specifically refers to agency in conflict:

As we seek to move within a turbulent and unstable socio-political environment we are at the same time being moved by currents, shifts and tides, requiring that we constantly have to attune our action and trajectory to the movement of the environment we move through. Social navigation may thus involve detours, unwilling displacement, losing our way and, not least, redrawing trajectories and tactics. Social navigation in this perspective is the tactical movement of agents within a moving element. It is motion within motion

(Vigh 2006:14).

The word navigation itself brings associations to navigating at sea, which reminds us that the landscape in conflict is not stable or predictable, but rather shifting and unstable like the sea. As Vigh describes his informants and their navigation through the war in Guinea-Bissau:

Senses, memory and intellect stretched to the outmost they are trying to draw the right trajectories through the stormy waters of predicted and unpredictable societal turmoil. As shown in the case of Mbuli, they navigate an unstable political landscape where the shifts, tows and underlying dangers require strategy and tactics to be constantly tuned to the movement of the immediate socio-political environment as well as to its future unfolding

(Vigh 2006:10).

Not only does Vigh (2006) see that conflict is unpredictable as events and other individuals constantly change and shift, but he also sees that the terrain of war and the

context in which the individuals move is also changing. As he explains himself, the concept of navigation therefore adds to our understanding of social action in two ways: Firstly, navigation “enables us to see how agents simultaneously navigate the immediate and the imagined” (Vigh 2006:13). Very similar to Emirbayer and Mische’s view that we as agents simultaneously look to the past for lessons learned and imagine the future in order to evaluate our options in their present, Vigh argues that we:

plot trajectories, plan strategy and actually move towards a telos; a distant goal in or beyond the horizon, and we do so both in relation to our current position and the possibilities in a given social environment and in relation to our imagined future position and possibilities of movement (2006:13)

Moving beyond simple coping, survival and resistance to outside forces, navigation thus allows for a more active and conscious agency of individuals in conflict situations that not only act in the moment but also do so in relation to the imagined future contexts and the “possibilities of movement” (Vigh 2006:13). It consequently moves agency from being responses, opposition and resistance towards and against social structure, towards actions and behaviour that are based on our abilities to see ourselves in the current (changing) context, learn from the past, but also imagine our possible future trajectories and thus act accordingly.

Second, navigation also allows for consideration of movement and change. As Vigh describes it, navigation as a concept

is able to encompass the way in which agents act not only in relation to each other, or in relation to larger societal forces, but in relation to the complex interaction between agents, terrain and events, thereby making it possible to encompass social flux and instability, and the way they influence and become ingrained in action, in our understanding of a specific praxis

(2006:14).

It is this inclusion and consideration of social change and the recognition of the socio-political environment in conflicts as changing, unpredictable and unstable that I find

truly unique to the concept of navigation. I find that the view of social navigation as “motion within motion” adds another layer of understanding on the study of local agency in conflict. Not only are individuals themselves changing, but the very context that surrounds them as well, requiring them to constantly adapt to new realities and expected future possibilities.

Navigation thus allows us to consider individuals’ navigation of both current and imagined future contexts and recognize that these contexts are constantly in motion and requiring new responses and new forms of agency. In fact, Vigh argues that the concept of navigation is more than another synonym for agency in that it considers the very intersection of agency and social structures/forces by focusing our attention on “the inseparability of act and environment (Ingold 2000: Chapter 13), knowledge and praxis (Scott 1998: Chapter 9), and – not least – agency and social forces” (Vigh 2006:14). The idea of social navigation therefore has the potential to provide a fuller, more accurate image of the complex and contradictory ways in which individuals respond to violence and insecurity and how their agency is closely intertwined with their surrounding social structures.

International activist networks

Let us not forget that the local level is increasingly connected to both national and international levels through expanding networks facilitated by the internet and social media (Castells 2013; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013). Local agency is therefore not reduced to using the democratic avenues of the state, resistance, self-government or social navigation efforts. Favela peace formers can also, through social navigation, reach out to local, national and international networks of solidarity, funding, influence and support (Castells 2013; Custodio 2016). Although the international community is not present with an official peace process in Rio de Janeiro, several large human rights organizations like Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch are writing about human rights abuses in the city. Furthermore, UNICEF is involved in various projects in the peripheries in Rio de Janeiro, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions have on various counts gathered and

documented cases of police murder in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro (Alston 2009). Keck and Sikkink's named this kind of network the transnational advocacy network, which "includes those actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services" (1999:89; 2004). Using the boomerang effect, favela peace formers can send out information and documentation on issues they are facing and trying to change to these networks, linking to international norms of human rights, and have more powerful, international partners use this information to pressure states to influence the Brazilian state or pressure the Brazilian state directly to address these issues (Keck and Sikkink 1999; 2004). In our increasingly networked society, the use of internet, cell phones and social media allow for instant sharing of events from the local to the international levels, and in Rio de Janeiro many favela peace formers use these online channels to document and denounce violence, to produce and share local knowledge and to gain increasing support abroad by linking to international norms of human rights, democracy, and citizenship (Custodio 2016; Keck and Sikkink 1999; 2004). Within the context of low-intensity citizenship in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, local actors have various alternative ways of achieving their goals, ranging from resistance and self-government projects to navigating the social structures and the state, which also might include reaching out to international actors and networks in order to get increased support for their projects to reduce violence in their communities.

Conclusion

This literature review has considered the concepts of violence, the state, the everyday, structure, agency and violence and agency in the margins in order to reach a deeper understanding of the power balances and blockages facing the work of peace formation in Rio de Janeiro. It has helped identify how individuals and groups use their agency and how this might both transform and reproduce social structures. It also shows how some structures in fact, through cultural and symbolic violence and its narratives and perception-shaping, become embodied in the agents, making them (perhaps unconsciously) reproduce structures that might be harmful to them. The concept of symbolic violence also illuminates the possibility that some of the challenges to peace formation might come from within the favelas themselves as some

residents normalize the mainstream narrative of them as violent criminals that need to be controlled and securitized and therefore support the heavy military police interventions. The study of agency shows that peace formation's success in achieving transformative results not only depend on their independence from, successful navigation around, and/or power over social structures, other agents and relations, but also on their own internal capacity and willingness to get things done. This is further complicated by the notions of symbolic violence, which might suggest that even this seemingly deeply internal and private capacity might be influenced by external narratives that normalize the current systemic, structural violence and makes the suppressed implicit in its own domination. The study of agency as the relative freedom from, navigation around, and/or power over structures also illustrates how peace formation actors might evaluate their current situation before deciding where to direct their main efforts for peace. This relates to Jessop's strategic context analysis, where actors within the state use past experience and future projections to "evaluate[ing] the current situation in terms of the changing 'art of the possible'" (Jessop 2016:55). Emirbayer and Mische's deep analysis of agency and how it changes depending on whether the actor looks towards the past (iteration) or future (projectivity) while making these decisions in the moment further suggests that the success on peace formation might depend on whether they are depending on past habits or are able to imagine new futures.

The study of the everyday helps expose the more hidden and subtle forms of violence, power, governmentality, domination and necropolitics, and how local agency might try to navigate these social structures in order to carve out their own space within the everyday life of insecurity or directly confront the underlying unequal and violent structures which might influence their lives in different ways. This again is all reflected in the studies of the state as a mask of the 'state idea' that (often) successfully hides the more powerful, dangerous, disunited and messy forces of power and social relations that are indeed, the more 'true nature' of the state. Violence, in the margins of the state, is not seen as an unintended consequence of state absence, but rather a conscious tool used by certain parts of the state in order to protect their interests and the order of the status quo. For the study of favela peace formation, it might also be useful to consider the intersectionality and possible reproduction of violence in

different forms, from police violence and racism to domestic violence and poverty, in order to fully understand an immensely intricate context. Finally, agency in the favelas as margins of the state might take the shape of resistance, tactics, self-government and social navigation, and might work through national and international networks to implement change. However, this local agency is not limited to merely coping, survival or resistance, but also includes self-government systems and efforts to navigate and reform the state, and to construct new, alternative political and social realities (Das et al 2001). The next chapter presents a framework for contextual favela peace formation in Rio de Janeiro and its potential challenges.

~ Chapter 3 ~

A framework for favela peace formation

Introduction

This thesis seeks to identify and understand some of the main challenges to and opportunities for peace formation in conflict affected societies in a context of urban violence in Rio de Janeiro. Peace formation is considered by Richmond to contain the potential of sustainable, positive, decolonial and locally legitimate peace, but struggles as it most often lacks resources and power to extend its reach (2016). A study of its blockages has the potential of adding understanding on why these bottom-up processes fail, and how they might better fulfil their potential. But what *are* peace formation blockages? And how does peace formation fit in with other, more top-down peace and/or security processes and existing structures and dynamics of power and violence? Furthermore, how do the blockages of peace formation compare to the more traditional peace spoiling literature? This chapter builds on the fundamentals of structure, agency, the state, the everyday and local agency and presents a tentative framework of peace formation in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro. It then considers the concept of blockages and its connections to the more traditional spoiling literature in peace studies in order to consider how a framework of blockages to peace formation might look like (See also Richmond 2020; 2021 for recent work on counter-peace processes). It argues that since peace formation varies drastically from the other peace processes in its attempts to reduce structural violence and injustice, the existing spoiling literature is not sufficient in itself to explain the various blockages to peace formation and must therefore be combined with a consideration of the different forms of direct, structural and cultural violence imbedded in this context.

A framework for favela peace formation

This section presents an analytical framework of the work of peace formers in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro and the challenges they face. The framework is based on Richmond's work on peace formation (2016; 2019), mixed with lessons learned from the literature review on structure, agency, the state, power, and agency in the margins of the state and adapted to the context of structural and cultural violence, mostly built around inequality, classism and racism in Rio. The framework also draws on the websites of some peace formers in Rio in how they present their aims and strategies for non-violence, mostly Redes da Maré, Catalytic Communities, Observatório de Favelas, Agência de Redes para Juventude, Rio de Paz, and Grupo Cultural AfroReggae. In the conflict context of Rio de Janeiro, peace formers work in the favelas to engage with and navigate structural, cultural and direct violence manifested in politics of exclusion, inequality, racism, criminalization, militarization of security and overt state violence against favela residents. They do so in a pursuit of security and social justice, recognition of their human rights, and the inclusion of favela residents as equal citizens to those who live in the wealthier areas of Rio de Janeiro. The chapter starts with an overview of peace formation and the various types of peace formers we can expect to see in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro. It then presents their main aims, the audiences/target groups they engage with in order to reach these aims, and the specific strategies they use to engage with these different types of audiences.

Favela peace formers in Rio de Janeiro

Richmond identifies a whole range of peace formers:

It [peace formation] may comprise of networks involving many different types of associations, unions, charities, development actors, donors, cultural organizations, or diasporas, regional trade networks, or more formally, international support for civil society, local organizations and NGOs. Religious organizations, village councils, traditional elders, peace councils, entrepreneurs and business groups, issue-oriented committees and self-help groups, women's groups (which are prominent in peace movements all over the world),

political parties, trade unions, cooperatives, private foundations, the media, educational institutions, cultural associations, youth groups, social, and environmental and human rights organizations may all be involved

(2016:37).

Based on the context study of the favelas in Rio de Janeiro and the current direct, cultural and structural conflict, I expect the favelas to have many of the types of peace formers listed by Richmond, inspired by different ideologies and working in different ways in order to reduce violence in their communities. Some key points from the context study might help identify some of the main types of groups and ideologies driving favela peace formation in Rio.

First, the favelas, being the homes of the first free enslaved Afro-Brazilians and their descendants, still have a higher percentage of black and brown residents compared to the rest of Rio. A great deal of agency and peace formation is then naturally organized around the question of race, addressing the deep-rooted and widespread cultural and structural racism in Brazil. Young, black men are by far the main victims in the conflict and have a much higher chance of getting killed (Hilgers and Barbosa 2017; Perlman 2010). I therefore expect many peace formers to take the form of black power movements or to have racial equality and Afro-Brazilian pride as their key incentives. Included in this is a strong connection to Afro-Brazilian culture like samba and capoeira, and the use of these forms of expression in peace formation. The Afro-Brazilian movements in the favelas also include certain type of religious groups, like the worship of Candomble and Umbanda (Rio on Watch 2011) and the rise of evangelist churches (Reuters 2017). These might also work to reduce violence through community building and local empowerment.

Another trait of the favelas in Rio is the tradition of *mutirão*; collective self-help response systems where favela residents come together to respond to various challenges like building favela infrastructure, repair, clean up and donations after flooding and mudslides, watching each other's children, providing food during

shootouts, and many more. These usually involve already established religious groups and NGOs but can also show to the networked nature of peace formation and self-governance in favelas. Besides these, there seems to be quite a few NGOs based on youth, work training, education, and self-empowerment that are either international, or have international partners or funding. Another type of peace formation includes more political groups, either organized around the question of race like those above, or advocating for a general inclusion of favela residents in politics and the wider city. The Resident Associations used to be the official political medium in which favela residents were represented in local politics, but many of them were unfortunately taken over by drug gangs and their independence and legitimacy remain questionable today (Arias 2006; Perlman 2010). However, they might still act as peace formers and channels of representation *if they are still intact*. They are therefore included in this framework. Finally, I would like to include information-sharers as peace formers, like academic groups, journalists, activists and photographers that work to amplify and share favela narratives.

To summarize, I expect to find the following types of peace formers in the favelas in Rio: Black power, Afro-Brazilian groups (political, cultural, and self-empowerment-focused, or all the above combined), other cultural/art groups, youth groups, NGOs (local, national, international), self-help community *mutirão* groups, journalists and photographers, academic institutions, Afro-Brazilian religious groups like Candomble and Umbanda, churches (Evangelist being the most popular one), and possibly the Resident Associations, or other forms of new resident associations, possibly including ‘village elders’. This is by no means an exclusive list.

Favela peace formation aims, target groups and strategies

Aims

According to Richmond, peace formers might deal with a wide range of issues in order to reach the overarching aim of reducing structural and direct violence (2016). For example, the aims might be:

to promote cooperation and accountability, to raise issues, offer new or hidden perspectives, challenge power, resist and co-opt, exchange information and experiences, amplify subaltern power, but most importantly, to negotiate and mediate a local, transversal, and transnational solution to the full range of factors that make up any modern conflict

(Richmond 2016:37)

This list of issues connects quite well with favela peace formation, which promotes accountability of the police and the state, raise issues of human rights, amplify favela perspectives and narratives, resist state violence and exclusion, and negotiate violence and power the best they can in order to solve the conflict. Redes de Maré, for example, addresses all of these issues as well as local empowerment and education, and have organized their projects around five axes essential to the “improvement of quality of life and the guarantee of rights of the population of Maré”: “Art and Culture, Territorial Development, Right to Public Security and Access to Justice, Education, Identities and Memory” (Redes da Maré 2019). Within and across these axes and the projects of other favela peace formers, I expect their aims to be connected to one or more of the favela peace formation aims listed in the table below.

Favela Peace Formation Aims
Improve quality of life
Reduce violence
Guarantee rights of the favela residents
Improve access to art and culture
Improve access to justice
Improve education
Empower favela memory, culture and identity

TABLE 3: FAVELA PEACE FORMATION AIMS

Target groups

The target groups identify the various types of actors that peace formation might engage with in order to achieve their various aims, including the more bureaucratic aims of getting funding and other support in order to more easily reach their violence-reduction aims. The target groups are quite generalized, and I recognize that they each contain a wide variety of actors that the peace formers will choose to engage with in different ways. Some actors might also be in several of the target groups. The first three target groups are largely situated within the favelas, while the last four are outside the favelas.

Favela residents

A great deal of peace formation in the favelas in Rio naturally seems to engage with the local residents in order to empower them to stand up for their own rights and find opportunities away from crime and violence. The favela residents are of course not a homogenous group, but rather quite diverse in terms of age, gender, race, background, employment status, health, religion, interests, education, family, involvement with crime, etc. The geography of many of the favelas might also influence the reach of the peace formers in the favela; as most NGOs for example would have their bases and projects at the bottom of the hilly favelas, the drug gangs would often have their headquarters at the top of the hill (Arias 2006). Peace formers (at least certain kinds, like the internationally recognized NGOs) might therefore only reach the area surrounding their centres, close to the 'border' with the *asfalto*, while being largely unable to reach residents that live at the top of the favela or in more distant corners of the favela that could be under territorial disputes between criminal groups, more deprived and/or more insecure. Not to mention the differences between favelas; some are quite modern, developed and popular among NGOs and other peace formers, while others, often outside the city, have less social projects. It is therefore important to keep in mind the various groups within the favelas, and how some groups are more easily reached than others.

Favela peace formers

The target group of favela peace formers is included mostly to acknowledge the networks or possibility of networks between various peace formers in the favelas. With this, I include other peace actors from the same favela, but also from other favelas or groups that work in a number of different favelas united under specific aims and ideologies. The other favela peace formers can therefore be within the same favela or in other favelas both across Rio and Brazil. They might engage with each other to share ideas and information, join forces in demonstrations, combine projects, apply for funding, amplify their voices and perspectives, etc.

Perpetrators/ powerholders

As mentioned above, the presence of peace formation in the favelas will have to include some sort of engagement with the ones in power in the specific favela. These might be militia groups, drug gangs or state security forces like the UPP or the military during military occupations. I imagine peace formers engaging with these perpetrators/ powerholders for two main reasons: 1. To gain access to the community, be left alone to do their work peacefully and have their participants be left alone. 2. In attempts to reduce violence and attempts at local conflict management and mediation. However, as mentioned above, peace formers might not ever directly engage with these groups, but rather choose non-engagement as a way of showing that they will do their work in the community regardless, and that they will remain impartial.

Non-favela civil society

This group includes peace actors and organizations outside the favelas, including media, academics, larger NGOs, unions, politically oriented groups, etc. Some of these might already be important partners of favela peace formers, while others can work to challenge and block peace formation. The reasons of favela peace formers to engage with this group are therefore very diverse; from engaging with partners and gain funding from some, to try to influence and change the perceptions of others. I would predict that the main reasons for engaging with non-favela civil society are to strengthen partnerships and receive funding, and to amplify the favela perspective and change the image of favela residents.

Non-favela residents

This group includes any Rio de Janeiro residents living outside the favelas (in *the asfalto*; middle class, upper class, and elites). This includes members of non-favela civil society acting as individuals, but extends to individuals and groups that are not normally organized or engaged in questions of peace formation in the favelas. Like the other groups above, I expect the non-favela residents to be a highly diverse group, and includes people having previously lived in favelas, people more sympathetic to favela peace formation, people opposing it and criminalizing favelas, and people being largely ignorant of the conflict overall.

The state

As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis does not see the state as one sensible unitary actor or machine, but as a complex tangle of competing forces and influences each working for their own interests (Jessop 2010). The state target group therefore includes different levels of power and politics, from local, city, to state and federal levels, and includes all the different political parties, as well as bureaucrats, public security officials, members of the judicial system, and powerful, influential individuals that seem to have a great deal of power within the system. This target group therefore includes both supporters and spoilers of peace formation, as well as others that are less involved. However, a focus will be on actors within this that I expect peace former to engage with, specifically political parties fighting to reduce (structural and direct) violence, public security officials, heads of police and military, and powerful local politicians that engage with the question of public security and violence in the favelas (both for and against).

International community

The international community might include powerful allies but also powerful blockers of favela peace formation. Large international organizations and international NGOs interested in building peace locally might (unintentionally) hinder and disrupt peace

formation processes. I imagine that the international community is a target group for favela peace formers mostly in the form of Keck and Sikkink's boomerang effect of the transnational advocacy network, which "includes those actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services" (1999:89; 2004). Favela peace formers might thus reach out to international networks centred around peace, human rights, black power, life at the margins/peripheries, and many more. These advocacy networks might include a certain type of NGO peace former that knows how to shape their discourse to be accepted into these international networks, although social media is democratizing this access (Custodio 2016). The international target group thus increasingly includes a wider international audience reached through social media. Many of the challenges to favela peace formation might be linked to disconnects between discourses, values and legitimacy of the local peace formers and international networks. As Richmond (2016) mentions, some peace formers might lose their local legitimacy if they change their discourse and values too much to fit into international, top-down narratives and networks.

Strategies

Peace formers have a wide variety of strategies they use in order to achieve their different aims, depending on what target group they are engaging with. As mentioned under the aims section, the strategies and specific aims are sometimes grouped into different 'issues', like Richmond's "security, education, health, trade, law and order, travel, social ceremonies" (2016:37), or Redes da Mare's five axes of "Art and Culture, Territorial Development, Right to Public Security and Access to Justice, Education, Identities and Memory" (Redes da Maré 2019). However, there are many different strategies used to achieve the same aims, and there are some strategies, like organizing demonstrations, that are used to achieve many different aims. As the strategies are not confined to one issue nor target group, they are difficult to organize in a particular manner. The list of strategies in the table below are therefore not in any particular order.

Favela Peace Formation Strategies
Education and work training
Information campaigns, demonstrations
Arts and culture schools, projects, lessons and events in the favelas
Conflict mediation and Shootout warning systems like the applications OndeTemTiroteio (Where are there shootouts) and FogoCruzado (Crossfire)
Religious/social/communal ceremonies and community-building events
Health care, childcare and Other self-help systems, <i>mutirão</i> ; providing support for each other within the community in extreme situations like mudslides, flooding and shootouts

TABLE 4: FAVELA PEACE FORMATION STRATEGIES

Mapping all the actors, aims, strategies and challenges of such a wide and diverse community of different groups and individuals working to reduce structural, direct and/or cultural violence is an inherently messy exercise. I expect, for example, that peace formers use the same or very similar strategies to achieve different kinds of aims, and different strategies to achieve the same aims, like providing education to empower the local residents to improve their employment opportunities and keep them out for crime, but also to inform them of their human rights which might empower them to stand up against state abuse. Similarly, seemingly apolitical strategies like arts, culture and music projects and performances within the favelas can be done both within the fairly apolitical aims of providing alternative projects to drug trafficking, local empowerment and community-building, but also form part of a quite political agenda to transform the image of favela residents away from criminals or needy victims of violence to creative, intelligent and productive members of society. I thus find it important to keep in mind that even the strategies that seem the least political can, on purpose or unintentionally, support heavily political aims.

Potential blockages to favela peace formation

When attempting to build a framework of peace formation blockages, it is natural to return to literature on blockages to other top-down, realist and liberal peace processes to see if any forms of blockages are transferrable across the different kinds of peace processes. Blockages to the realist and liberal peace have been studied under the concepts of ‘spoilers’ and ‘spoiling activity’ (Newman and Richmond 2006; Nilsson and Kovacs 2011; Stedman 1997). The wording alone identifies the main difference between the two; while the spoiling literature focus on the actors actively working to spoil the peace processes, the blockages concept presents a much wider framework that includes not only spoiling actors, but also structures, institutions and parallel processes that might intentionally or unintentionally challenge the peace process (Nilsson and Kovacs 2011; Richmond 2016). Thus, while offering good insights into the actors intentionally blocking peace formation, the spoiling literature less considers the blockages to peace that lie inherent within the structures and dynamics of power in each specific conflict context. This could be due to the difference between the realist/liberal top-down peace processes that seek to manage conflict through an agreement between main warring parties to reach a pacified, negative peace, and peace formation, which in its attempts to reduce structural and cultural violence take more form of bottom-up social justice movements rather than structured, elite peace negotiations and agreements (Galtung 1969; Nilsson and Kovacs 2011; Richmond 2016; Stedman 1997). Thus, the blockages they face may vary drastically, but some might also remain similar (like powerful actors actively working to spoil that specific peace process as it threatens their interests).

As part of the normative, critical background to peace formation, identifying the specific dynamics of violence and power that block peace requires a sophisticated study of each case, of which the local peace formers are the experts. The general literature on spoilers to peace must therefore be combined with a study of the intricate, case-specific intersectionality of structural and cultural blockages in each conflict case. Identifying the specific peace formation blockages in each case therefore requires a close collaboration with local peace formers. In this section, I briefly consider the peace spoiling literature before I present a tentative, context-specific

framework of blockages to favela peace formation in Rio de Janeiro. Here, intersectionality is used as a lens to see “the different forms of discrimination and oppression to which an individual is exposed” (Rocha 2012:62; see also Byrne 2015; Crenshaw 2002; Nash 2008).

Peace spoiling literature

Stedman originally defined spoilers as “leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it” (1997:5, in Nilsson and Kovacs 2011:607). According to Nilsson and Kovacs’ review of the spoiling literature, Stedman’s definition is quite conservative in that it only assumes spoiling to occur once a peace agreement or negotiations are already in place, and that the spoilers use violence as the only spoiling technique (2011). Important to note is also that the identification of spoilers is recognized to be highly normative, depending on what is considered as the ‘legitimate’ peace process, often defined as liberal and realist peace processes which favour a negative peace over social justice (Newman and Richmond 2006; Nilsson and Kovacs 2011). The consideration of spoiling and blockages here is thus inevitably equally normative as it considers blockages to peace formation peace processes, and not others.

Written several years later, Newman and Richmond’s book on *Challenges to Peacebuilding* presents a much wider definition of spoiling behaviour as:

the activities of any actors who are opposed to peaceful settlement for whatever reason, from within or (usually) outside the peace process, and who use violence and other means to disrupt the process in pursuit of their aims. Parties that join a peace process but then withdraw and obstruct, or threaten to obstruct, the process may also be termed spoilers. Similarly, there are parties that are a part of the peace process but which are not seriously interested in making compromises or committing to a peaceful endgame. They may be using the peace process as a means of gaining recognition and legitimacy, gaining

time, gaining material benefit, or avoiding sanctions, and thus can be described as having ‘devious objectives’. Finally, spoiling includes actors who are geographically external to the conflict but who support internal spoilers and spoiling tactics: ethnic or national diaspora groups, states, political allies, multinational corporations, or any others who might benefit from violent conflict or holding out

(2006:4).

The main points I draw from both these definitions are that spoilers are often powerful actors whose interests and position are threatened by the peace process, that they might act from within or outside of the peace process, use violent and non-violent means, and might also include actors externally to the conflict but who somehow still gain from the continuation of conflict (Stedman 1997; Newman and Richmond 2006). The spoiling literature thus addresses, among other factors like position, influence and power; the profits that are made on the conflict economy and how this induces spoiling behaviour by the profiteers (Newman and Richmond 2006). In Brazil, for example, there are several drug gangs, militias, (corrupt) politicians, elite land- and business-owners, and international companies that profit from the conflicts in the favelas through drugs and arms sales, increased military budgets and need of prison cells, or the protection, growth or consolidation of position and power (See for example Gledhill 2015). These perspectives on spoiling behaviour thus offer a framework through which to identify the more direct, actively posed blockages to peace formation in Rio de Janeiro by various powerful actors whose interests are threatened by sustainable, positive peace and social justice. This might also be called a counter-peace formation network, as studied by Richmond (2020;2021) and which will be more closely discussed in chapter 7.

The peace spoiling literature also addresses more indirect and subtle peace blockages, like Mac Ginty’s concept of accidental spoiling; acts of inter-communal violence, intra-group feuding and crime, which do not necessarily have as its main purpose to disrupt the elite-led peace process, but still may severely challenge it (Mac Ginty 2006:120). While I would be hesitant to name crime as ‘accidental spoiling’ in Rio de Janeiro, as crime, criminal actors and their profits are closely interlinked with the

nature of the conflict and the Brazilian state, Mac Ginty's concept allows for a wider consideration of indirect acts of peace spoiling, which, as he writes, often are imbedded in societal structures like uneven development and unemployment (2006). Similarly, Aggestam (2006) and Ranstorp (2006) focus on culture as an indirect, but major challenge to peace. While Ranstorp writes that in Israel, Palestine and Cyprus "the role of culture and competing narrative 'myths' drive the underlying conflict dynamics between the parties" (2006:14), Aggestam argues that

accumulated and institutionalized discourses of hatred, prejudice, and animosity... turn into an 'ideology' that supports the prolongation of conflict and serves as an identity marker of who we are and who we are not, and thus tends to be resistant to change. As a consequence, the vicious and self-perpetuating circles of violence are 'normalized' and become central to everyday life

(2006:24).

This brief attention to culture expands beyond Stedman's traditional narrow definition of spoiling and starts moving into the realm of intersectionality of direct, cultural and structural violence that peace formers in Rio de Janeiro are forced to consider.

Comparably, Tocci's observes that the distinction between spoiling and 'normal politics' is a question of degree since it is often hard to distinguish between spoiling and legitimate political action (Tocci 2006; Newman and Richmond 2006). Similar to the discussion of structural violence in the previous chapter, Tocci's reflexion differs from the concept of spoilers as warring parties using violence to spoil the peace processes and alludes to the possibility of some blockages to peace being imbedded in the structures of society and/or the state instead of being actively produced by warring factions and war profiteers. Other observations made in the peace spoiling literature that are worth to keep in mind for the concept of peace formation blockages include Conversi's point that spoiling can occur simultaneously at different levels of the conflict, from the local, state and international level (2006). Finally, Aggestam (2006) argues that spoiling behaviour should be considered as 'situated action' that may change depending on the development of the peace process, which is backed up by

Nasi's (2006) observation that the nature of spoilers in Colombia changed throughout the different types of peace processes. It is therefore incorrect to define any actor as permanently for or against the peace process, and it reminds us that peace processes and their blockages are ever-changing and developing into new forms, with the possibility of actors floating in and out of various roles (Aggestam 2006).

This brief review of peace spoiling literature has first and foremost provided a framework of how to consider the more direct, actively presented blockages to peace formation by powerful actors whose interests and/or power are threatened by the peace process (Stedman 1997; Newman and Richmond 2006; Nilsson and Kovac 2011). Key points from this are that blockages can be both violent and non-violent, and are likely to be posed by actors who profit (either materially or in status and power) by the ongoing conflict. However, the more recent, critical study of peace spoiling have offered several other lessons, including the role of culture and 'normal politics' as posing more indirect challenges to peace, that spoiling/blockages occur at multiple levels of analysis, may be more or less 'accidental', and that the nature and origin of blockages might change depending on the development of the peace process(es) and wider context (Aggestam 2006; Conversi 2006; Mac Ginty 2006; Nasi 2006; Newman and Richmond 2006; Ranstorp 2006; Tocci 2006).

In order to understand the blockages to favela peace formation in the context of urban violence, racism, criminalization and state violence in Rio de Janeiro, the following framework of favela peace formation blockages combines lessons from the literature review on violence, power and the margins of the state with the short review of peace spoiling literature above, while taking into account the violent reality of public security operations in the favelas as described in the introduction of this thesis. It presents a tentative framework of potential favela peace formation blockages, grouped into direct, structural and cultural blockages (building on Galtung's different forms of violence 1969). In addition, I consider how state-led security and top-down 'peace' processes may also pose as blockages. Worth remembering while using this framework is that blockages can occur at local, national and international levels, and that both peace formation and its blockages are continuously moving, developing and adapting

processes that are hard to ‘pin down’ (Aggestam 2006 and Conversi 2006). I expect these various blockages to intersect in an intricate, interrelated and constantly developing network of favela peace formation blockages.

Direct blockages

These are posed by actors that profit from conflict in terms of power or wealth, which is traditionally, as seen above, defined as ‘spoilers’. In Rio de Janeiro, I expect these to include criminal groups (drug gangs, militias), elites (landowners, business owners), politicians, security forces, transnational criminal networks and multinational businesses. These blockages may be manifested through violent means, such as gang/militia violence and intimidation of residents and peace formers; security forces’ violence against favela residents, peace formers, and protests; and death threats towards and assassinations of political activists fighting for favela rights that threaten elite power and/or interests. These direct blockages may also be manifested through non-violent means, such as exclusion of favela residents from political spaces and narratives; delay in political and/or judicial processes that would favour peace formation; implementation of laws and decrees increasing the power and impunity of security forces; and deliberate and targeted cuts in funding towards peace formation projects.

Structural blockages

Inherent in existing power structures, laws and bureaucracy of the Brazilian state, Rio de Janeiro state and Rio de Janeiro municipality that have been formed by a history of colonialism, slavery, military dictatorship and neoliberal policies that have resulted in a ‘perverse state’ interested in preserving the interests of the (majority white) elites (Arias and Goldstein 2010; Pearce 2010). These structural blockages to peace formation may be manifested through:

- Widespread structural racism and inequality manifested through less state services, education and employment opportunities for favela residents (Alves and Evanson 2011; Casa Fluminense 2020; Fahlberg 2018; Perlman 2010).

- Constitutional laws giving military leeway to act in defence of ‘national interests’ (Brahler 2014)
- The militarized nature of the police forces, police impunity and delay of judicial processes, with widespread occurrences and accept of ‘acts of resistance’ shooting where suspected criminals are shot allegedly in self-defence by police (Alves and Evanson 2011; Gay 2009; Misse, Grillo and Neri 2013; Moura and Afonso 2009).
- Public funding towards security/pacification processes and away from social development/ peace formation

Cultural blockages

Racism and criminalization of favelas that are deeply imbedded in narratives and perceptions of the favelas among the *asfalto* originating in Rio de Janeiro’s long history as a colonial city with slavery, and criminalization, dehumanization and exclusion of favela residents (Mbembe 2019; Perlman 2010; Roth-Gordon 2017).

Parallel ‘peace’/security processes and various notions of peace

Finally, I expect that different notions of peace and security may also pose a challenge to peace formation in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro. Realist securitization and pacification narratives might justify state violence in the favelas in the name of stability and peace in the *asfalto*; liberal band-aid policies might distract funding and solidarity away from peace formation; and competition between different peace processes not only over funding, but also over solidarity, attention, media coverage and support from Rio de Janeiro residents and powerful, key players might also challenge peace formation.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an exploratory framework of favela peace formation and its blockages in Rio de Janeiro. The analytical framework has listed and mapped the actors, aims, target groups, strategies and challenges I expect peace formation might have in Rio de Janeiro. It predicts a complex and challenging process of peace formation and near overwhelmingly powerful challenges. However, as Richmond notes, peace formation is a local, subaltern form of agency that works to resist, challenge and circumvent power in order to reduce direct and structural violence (2016). I therefore expect peace formation to be slow, subtle, hidden, and perhaps happening in actors and locations within the favelas not even mentioned in this framework. I thus recognize that this framework is far from a perfect, exhaustive list of all possible peace formers, aims, target groups, strategies and challenges. The chapter has argued that due to peace formation's focus on social justice, positive peace and the importance of grass-root agency and local legitimacy, it is not enough to solely study the traditional peace spoiling literature in order to understand its blockages. Lessons from the peace spoiling literature must therefore (and have, in this framework) be adapted to each conflict's social, political and historical context, which can be done through considering the intersectionality of violence in that specific space in time. Finally, since peace formation does not occur in a vacuum, each process must also be considered in relation to other, simultaneous and parallel peace and security processes that might both support and challenge peace formation in a myriad of different ways. Peace formation thus encounters biased, structural blockages, often being taken advantage of by active peace blockers that use cultural narratives of racism and criminalization to justify their actions that are in reality a pursuit of their own personal interests. Some blockages might, however, simply be random, 'accidental', unconnected legacies of state power, institutional structures and competing interests resulting in unintended challenges to peace formation (Mac Ginty 2006).

The next chapters will tie this framework to findings from eight months of ethnographically inspired fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro. The first findings chapter, chapter 4, provides an overview of the conflict context based on the views of research participants, which investigate the structures of violence, inequality and racism in Rio

de Janeiro that challenge life and positive development in the favelas. Next, chapter 5 considers Rio de Janeiro State's public security policies and projects in the favelas, including the UPPs pacification project and the more recent bellicose police operations, and argues that the state's peace becomes a form of war in the favelas, which thus poses a large threat both to life and favela peace formation in these communities. Chapter 6 then considers three main ways in which favela peace formation operates within this context of violence and marginalization: through work with youth, navigation of the state, and work to change the criminalizing perceptions surrounding the favelas. Finally, chapter 7 considers spoilers and more direct blockages to favela peace formation and how favela peace formation work around these through various networks and alternative, grassroots peace processes.

~ Chapter 4 ~

Rio de Janeiro: humanity, citizenship and death

Introduction

I think it dispensable to evoke once more the vast lands Africans sowed with their sweat, or to remember again the cane fields, cotton fields, coffee fields, gold, diamond and silver mines, and the many other phases or elements in the formation of Brazil, nourished with the martyred blood of slaves. The Black, far from being an upstart or a stranger, is the very body and soul of this country. Yet despite this undeniable historical fact, Africans and their descendants were never treated as equals by the minority white segments that complement the national demographic tableau, nor are they today. This minority has maintained an exclusive grip on all power, welfare, health, education and national income

(Nascimento 1980:149).

This chapter builds on Nascimento's quote and studies how the history of slavery and colonialism has constructed a city where favela residents always have been excluded from the full notions of citizenship and humanity. In the favelas and peripheries of Rio de Janeiro, social inequality, racism and injustice have fuelled the expansion of powerful drug gangs and militias whose crime triggers a violent state response through the war on drugs, leaving favela residents in the crossfire and in a state of war (Alves and Evanson 2011; Arias 2006; Gledhill 2015; Leite et al 2018; Martins 2019; Wacquant 2008). A central component to understanding this urban conflict in the *carioca* favelas is to recognize the impact of colonialism and slavery on the geography of inequality in the city. In this chapter, I argue that Rio de Janeiro can be seen as a colonial city divided in two between a predominantly white elite descendant from the Portuguese colonizers and other European immigrants, and a predominantly brown (*pardo*) and black favela working class, descendant from the colonized indigenous

population, enslaved Africans and later rural workers from the North-East Brazil (Fanon 1963/2004; Perlman 2010; Roth Gordon 2017; Vargas 2005). In Fanon's view of the colonial city, "what divides this world is first and foremost what species, what race one belongs to. In the colonies the economic infrastructure is also a superstructure. The cause is effect: You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich" (Fanon 1963/2004:5).

The testimonies from community activists and social workers in the favelas point to a deeply divided society where the Brazilian state behaves differently in the favelas than in the *asfalto*, and where the marginalization of and state violence towards the favelas are closely connected to and defended by a racist criminalization of these areas. Structural inequality and racism from slavery and colonialism combined with a lack of state development and political representation in the favelas have resulted in a city where race and class are closely intertwined and attached to geographic locations in the city (Nascimento 1980; Vargas 2005; 2008; Villenave 2018). In order to more properly understand this both imagined and very real divide between the favela and *asfalto* in Rio de Janeiro, the next sections consider this inequality in relation to humanity, citizenship and death. The first section starts by addressing the history of slavery and the dehumanization of the black favela resident that works to naturalize the inequality and state neglect in the favelas. The second section then looks at the nature of state presence in the favela, the political disconnect between favela residents and politics and the rise of the far-right Bolsonaro government. Finally, the last section of the chapter considers the state's necropolitical relationship with the favela in the criminalization and dehumanization of blackness and favela residents through the narrative of the 'dangerous other' in the war on drugs, naturalizing the death of black residents and legitimizing state violence in these communities.

Humanity

Brazil emerged unequal. Well, at least with the myth of origin, of course that wasn't the origin, since there were people here already [when the colonizers came]. But it already starts a very unequal civilising pact,

where being human was European, white, and the other inhuman (*deshumano*). When it starts unequal, it has a large chance of continuing like that

(Emmanuella*, March 2020, Zona Norte).

The racist ‘beginnings’

The favelas in Rio stem from the time of slavery and colonialism in Brazil, when runaway slaves settled in the city’s *morros* (hills) and formed their *quilombos* (Afro-Brazilian settlements) in the early nineteenth century (Arias 2006; Gledhill 2015; Perlman 2010; Valladares 2016). The history of slavery and colonialism in Brazil does not only explain the origins of the favelas, but also sheds light on deep-seated racism and social inequality that are still very much relevant in Brazil today. With the years passing, the favelas became home for previous slaves and their descendants, rural workers largely from the northeast of Brazil seeking work in the southern cities and others who could not afford any other lodging in Rio de Janeiro, many of whom were attracted to informal sections of the economy in lack of other work opportunities (Perlman 2010; Roth-Gordon 2017). Being the home for the most marginalized and poorest segments of Rio citizens, the favelas were, from the start and until today, seen as dangerous, black, unwanted, criminal and unhygienic spaces in the rest of the city (Roth-Gordon 2017; Valladares 2016). The history of colonialism and slavery might help explain how racism and classism became mixed in this fear and contempt of the favelas among the upper, whiter classes in the colonial city.

When the Portuguese royal court arrived in Rio in 1808, they brought with them a civilizing mission to upgrade the city to European standards as they saw its current residents as uneducated and ‘uncivilized’ (Roth-Gordon 2017:7). During this time, “one in three inhabitants of Brazil was a slave” as Brazil received the largest number of slaves in the Western Hemisphere (Roth Gordon 2017:7). In fact, “Of the 9.5 million people captured in Africa and brought to the New World between the 16th and 19th century, nearly 4 million landed in Rio, 10 times more than all those sent to the United States” (Bourcier 2012). Being also the last country in America to abolish

slavery in 1888, Brazil depended on slavery to “realize a major part of the labour necessary for its economy based on agricultural production and mining (Klein and Luna 2009)” (Mayer 2017:115-116). The structures of slavery seemed to continue in the working and living patterns of former slaves after abolition, as

the overwhelming majority of the masculine black population continued to work in the fields or moved to urban areas where they generally were incorporated into the informal economy. While the men found employment as non-qualified workers, the main opportunity for black women were domestic work, traditionally associated with the female slave work

(Mayer 2017:115-116).

As former slaves could neither afford housing nor properties in the other areas of Rio, most of them settled on the hills, thus expanding the favelas. The history of slavery thus has direct links to the situation in Rio today, where the majority of the Brazilian population in the informal markets and lower working classes are brown or black and favela residents (Costa Vargas 2008; Nascimento 1980; Villenave 2018).

While the quilombos were perhaps the first favelas, the name *favela* itself came with a community of “homeless federal soldiers” that settled on the Morro da Providencia

after returning from the Canudos War – a conflict in which the Brazilian state put down a messianic popular uprising in the interior of Bahia – in 1897. The government had not paid the veterans, and their presence on the hill constituted a public demand for back pay and compensation promised by the state. The soldiers named their community ‘favela’, after a plant that grows in the interior region of Bahia where they had fought.

(Arias 2006: 22; se also Da Cunha 1984 in Gledhill 2015; Valladares 2016).

Already then, the favelas were negatively perceived as a place for *vagabundos* (vagrants) and criminals, and “[A]lmost from the beginning, the state proposed to

move against favelas and other popular settlements in downtown Rio” as they were illegal settlements on public land (Arias 2006:22-23). A fear of diseases and ‘public health hygiene’ were often used as grounds to justify these state actions to remove favelas from central areas of the city (Chalhoub 1996 in Gledhill 2015; Valladares 2016). Ever since, the favelas have become the common name for these informal settlements on the hill, where working class, majority black and brown Brazilians live. Despite the wide differences among them, the favelas are all viewed as marginal, criminal, black, and dangerous places in the eyes of residents of the *asfalto*. The favelas are

commonly thought of as *o lugar dos negros* (the place of black people; see Sheriff 2001:18), meaning that all who live there, regardless of skin color, bear the stigma of racial association through their contact with darker-skinned people (the descendants of slaves) and their inescapable contact with black spaces. ‘Even those who were not physically black were black in the minds of the social elites because they lived like black people among black people’ (Covin 2006:39)

(Roth-Gordon 2017:23-24).

The favelas have thus become “readily associated with ‘the very concepts that have been usually associated with black people [...]: dirt, promiscuity, aversion to work, violence, irrationality, lawlessness, danger, and subhumanity’” (Costa Vargas 2004:455, in Roth-Gordon 2017:24).

The fear of blackness is shown to originate in colonial times, where the arriving, white Europeans met a largely black population that they considered largely uncivilized, uneducated and lazy (Roth-Gordon 2017). In the late 1800s, Brazilian scholars and politicians were worried “about the country’s lack of whiteness” with over 50 percent of the population being black (Roth-Gordon 2017:15). The solution proposed was an *embranquecimento* (whitening) through European immigration:

European immigrants would bring to the tropics ‘a flow of lively, energetic, and healthy Caucasian blood’ (Joaquim Nabuco, quoted in Skidmore 1974:24) and would allow Brazilians to ‘cleanse themselves

of the backward population' (D.Davis 1999:19). They could then be encouraged to *melhorar a raca* (improve, or 'save,' the race; see D. Davis 1999:18) through marriage and miscegenation with whiter stock

(Roth-Gordon 2017:16).

The centuries of exploitation, social discrimination and racism built a strictly hierarchical Brazilian society with whites dominating the middle and upper classes, and the majority of Brazilians; black, indigenous and mulatto, in the lower working class and favelas. The deep-seated racism followed this economic divide, rooted in a "persistent fear among the middle and upper-class employers from a 'racial pollution', that is, that the '*branquitude*' [whiteness] of their families would be reduced through inter-racial marriage" (Sherriff 2001, in Mayer 2017:117). The prejudice against favelas is thus closely linked to the history of colonialism and slavery and the corresponding belief in white superiority and civility versus black inferiority, backwardness and danger (Roth-Gordon 2017).

Racism today

Sadly, the racist exclusion and prejudice of the favelas are not obsolete structures of a dark past but "exists as a psychological reality of how the making of Brazil began and of how Brazil (unfortunately) continues to be" (Roth-Gordon 2017:8). In recent times, the race-based prejudice seems to have changed from a fear of racial pollution and diseases to one of violence and crime:

Whereas wealthier cariocas of the early twentieth century worried about cross-class and interracial contact due to their fears of contagious diseases (Caldeira 2000; Fisher 2014; Pino 1997), one hundred years later, interactions in mixed public spaces brought about fears of crime and violence. The racial ideologies that explained these fears have not changed. White, disciplined, and upstanding bodies were out at risk by contact with what were understood to be undisciplined and dangerous non-white bodies

(Roth-Gordon 2017: 96).

As the next sections and chapters will show, this underlying cultural violence of racism, which results in a dehumanization, marginalization and criminalization of the favela residents, work both to justify the state's absence in terms of public services in the favelas and its violent presence through deadly public security operations.

The majority of the interviewees identified prejudice and racism as great challenges to the improvement of life and reduction of violence in the favelas as it made the rest of society seemingly unconcerned with the violence and state abuse in their communities and made it difficult for the favela residents to be included in the rest of society (Maria*, September 2019; Fransisca*, August 2019; Pedro*, August 2019; Gabriel*, August 2019; Juliana*, October 2019; Paulo*, July 2019; Luíza*, November 2019; Aline*, September 2019, Zona Sul; Davi*, January 2020; Rafael*, João*, January 2020; Antonio*, January 2020; Marcia*, September 2019; Fernanda*, January 2020; Patrícia*, February 2020; Emmanuella*, March 2020; Jose*, February 2020; Douglas*, September 2019, Zona Norte; Ana*, March 2020; Bernardo*, February 2020; Lucas*, August 2019; Carlos*, July 2019; Felipe*, August 2019; Grupo Luz*, November 2019). Phrases from events such as: “my existence makes society uncomfortable” (Marques, July 2019) “this country is afraid of the black and hate their poor” (Francisco, June 2019) and “anything connected to the black body is persecuted” (Martins, August 2019) show how the fear and criminalization of the black, favela body is intrinsic to Rio society and felt and recognized by the favela residents. The next section briefly addresses how some churches also might legitimize and reproduce these racist narratives even within the favelas themselves.

The white evangelic God and the internalization of racist narratives

The widespread criminalization, prejudice and racism towards the favela residents are, according to some interviews, nurtured and spread through education, organized religion, the media and in wider society and continue to naturalize the colonial city in a system of prejudice and inequality (Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019; Co-creation in the city: rights and culture of favelas and peripheries, June 2019; Ana*, March 2020; Bernardo*, February 2020; Juliana*, October 2019, Zona Sul; Fernanda*,

January 2020; Patrícia*, February 2020; Rafael* Zona Norte). Marcia* shared her view of the how the educational system reproduces prejudice and racism:

It's an education of preconceptions, an educational system that's Jesuit, white, with Christian norms, with the history of indigenous not being seen as humans, as uneducated, bad influences, and the black as property, black women as sexual property. It's a system all of preconception, focused on hatred, class, etc., not rights. This is reproduced within families as well (not just in school).

(Marcia*, September 2019, Zona Norte).

Bernardo* and Emmanuella* further explained how the image of a white, colonial, Christian God causes many favela residents to join the evangelical church so that they, through being closer to this white God, will themselves be closer to the white image of humanity:

The people give everything to this mechanism to be received by God. It has a very strong base. The white ideology created this idea of the prototype human, and that you need to get closer to this humanity. God, Jesus, their image is a white man (Christian image), and who is not, is a vagabond, criminal, someone who doesn't go after opportunities (*corre atras*). "The closer to the 'human' I get, the more I will accomplish". To have the bible under your arm is also seen as a form of protection [in the favela], you can say, "I'm on my way to the church" [when stopped by the police]. In the Baixada there's been a very large attack on the African religions by the militias, they destroy their lands (*terrenos*), and afterwards the Universal Church comes in. You can see it on TV, all hours of the day, there's always a tv channel with the Universal Church. They invite people from African religions to perform exorcism on them, you should turn on the tv at dawn/ in the early morning to see, they demonize them, and these religions. It is no wonder that everyone will be ashamed of being macombeiro, spiritualist, buddhist etc. The favela wants dignity, work, to prove that 'I'm a good person' (*sou do bem*). And with religious racism at work, in the schools, you know you can't get a job wearing white clothes [white clothes are worn by members of the

Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé]. They even have centres of rehabilitation that receive state funding to exist and that are run by evangelical churches. There are people selling things on the bus, saying ‘I’ve been rehabilitated in this centre, I found Jesus’ etc. they use it in terms of ‘health’ discourse.

(Emmanuella*, March 2020, Zona Norte).

Central to this white ideology of what it is to be human is a corresponding colonialist and racist criminalization and demonization of the African-Brazilian religions and culture. Emmanuella*’s quote also shows how the old discourse of diseases and hygiene connected to the favelas still persist in that the people are ‘healed’ from their Afro-Brazilian beliefs.

Other participants further shared that the church seems to capitalize on this fear of favela residents to be demonized and criminalized:

Many of the evangelical churches are used as markets as well. And they demonize everything that is of the people (*do povo*) – samba, afro-culture, descendants of indigenous (...). The church thinks everything that is cultural is from the devil, it puts the blame on the black people: “I believe in Jesus, the others are no good (*não prestam*). We have lots of churches here, why is there not one candomblé centre anymore? Religion is to make people ignorant, to place them against themselves. It is very perverse. You have the pastor full of money, and very faithful residents that come and give money. There are also many churches that do social work, like the Lutheran, Catholic. It’s just that here it turned into a market (*virou mercado*).

(Gabriel*, August 2019, Zona Sul).

They [the church] left what is really God’s word. History repeats itself, the evangelicals segregate the poor, putting poor against poor. In the [police] operations as well, it’s the black killing the black. The churches

do what they can to get richer, to maintain their richness. Like selling holy water for a lot of money, for the orixa. But everyone must believe in something. Brazil is a life in faith.

(João*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

What shines through these quotes is the active criminalization and demonization of Candomblé and other Afro-Brazilian (African) religions, which strengthens the image of the favela residents and their culture as something evil, non-human and dangerous. From these quotes, many favela residents seem to believe this discourse and join church in an attempt to get closer to ‘humanity’ in order to be protected in this image. Going back to the colonial city, this fits well with Fanon’s description of its systems of oppression:

The Church in the colonies is a white man's Church, a foreigners' Church. It does not call the colonized to the ways of God, but to the ways of the white man, to the ways of the master, the ways of the oppressor (...) Sometimes this Manichaeism reaches its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the colonized subject. In plain talk, he is reduced to the state of an animal.

(Fanon 1963/2004:7).

This perceived inequality in humanity naturalizes the structural inequalities and poverty in the favela as many favela residents internalize these narratives that they themselves are to blame for their condition, and thus also legitimizes state murder and abuse in these perceived dangerous, non-human spaces. The cultural violence of racism, prejudice and criminalization has thus morphed into symbolic violence for many favela residents, making “the oppressed complicit in their own destruction” (Scheper-Hughes, 2004:14). As Bourdieu describes, symbolic violence is the “embodied form of the relation of domination”, where the dominated evaluate and perceive themselves in the image created by the dominant, causing the relationship between them to appear natural (Bourdieu, 2004:339). This is reflected in Marcia* and Fernanda*’s phrases: “the prejudice is even among the black themselves” (Marcia*, September 2019, Zona Norte) and “The oppressed also believe in this narrative; To oppress the oppressed” (Fernanda*, January 2020, Zona Norte). The evangelical

church, currently experiencing fast growth in the Rio favelas thus appear to be successfully naturalizing the relationship of domination between the elites and the favelas and the exclusion of the favelas from full citizenship.

This section has attempted to shed some light on how racism continues to be used in the criminalization and dehumanization of favela residents, often with wide public support. The *asfalto's* distancing from the favelas due to the favelas' perceived criminal, threatening, dangerous and subhuman nature allows them to ignore the violence (state and criminal) and violation of human rights that occur in these spaces (Scheper-Hughes 2004b; Villenave 2018). Thus, these “[D]eeply ingrained notions that accord only white people full humanity help structure a widespread societal resignation and denial of full citizenship rights (Alves 2014; Alves and Vargas 2015; C. Smith 2015; Vargas 2011; Vargas and Alves 2010)” (Roth Gordon 2017:23-24). The dehumanization of black favela residents naturalizes and justifies the inequality and racism of this system of white privilege, both in the eyes of the *asfalto*, and in the eyes of many favela residents themselves. The legacies of white supremacy and wealth inequality from the history of slavery and colonialism continue to play a large role in the conflicts between drug factions, police, army and militias in Rio's favelas, both in terms of how poverty and lack of alternatives draw young favela residents into crime, and how race is used by certain politicians, media channels and the security forces to create an enemy image of dangerous, young, black, favela residents. The next sections will look closer at this racist inequality in citizenship and death.

Citizenship

The Brazilian history of colonialism and slavery have, together with the more recent history of military dictatorship (1964-1985) and neoliberalization, significantly shaped the living conditions in the favelas. The lingering structural and cultural racism from slavery as well as a weakened social state and strengthened security state from the military dictatorship have resulted in a violent democracy with highly unequal citizenship (Arias and Goldstein 2010; Brahler 2014). Hilgers and Macdonald studied how neoliberal politics

limited social protection programs and relaxed labour rights, creating a vast subclass of normatively, institutionally and economically marginalized people. Thus, the descendants of the black Africans brought for the slave trade during the colonial and independence era continued to form an immense and disproportionate part of the poor and miserable, the prison population and are the principal targets of the police (Amparo Alves 2014)

(2017:32-33).

According to Arias and Goldstein, a further failure to reform the strong legal structures of military police, police impunity and torture from the military rule along with this neoliberal opening and weakening of the state in Latin America resulted in new, neoliberal democracies that were “based on a limited and circumscribed state whose principal task was to provide a stable and secure field for transnational investment and individual self-realization” rather than a “social welfare state that would provide for the needs of its citizens (Arias and Goldstein 2010:15; Davis 2010). These new, weaker neoliberal states increasingly experienced areas of their territory where they had little to no control. This section further considers the structural marginalization of the favelas in Rio de Janeiro by looking at the state abandonment of the favelas in terms of public services and infrastructure, the political disconnect between favelas and the rest of the state and the *asfalto*, the lack of public security in the favelas and the general presence and absence of the state in these areas.

State abandonment

The Brazilian state has continuously failed to provide proper infrastructure, social services like education, health care and employment opportunities, and security in the favelas. Since the rise in global drug trade with the introduction of cocaine in the 1980's and the corresponding rise in drug gangs like *carioca Comando Vermelho* (CV, Red Command), the majority of favelas have thus been left in the hands of the residents and governed by drug gangs and militias (Brahler 2014; Arias 2006). The lack of proper health care, education and economic opportunities in the favelas in

comparison to the *asfalto* creates a deep inequality in public services and citizenship across the two parts of the city. Goldstein described the distance between the two as:

a distance that is indeed sometimes physical but most often is a symbolic distance rendered into practice through a narrowed access to decent health care and other forms of social services. Whereas for the middle and upper classes, some semblance of a rule of law exists, for the lower classes it has traditionally been denied

(Goldstein, 2003:197).

The lack of public services was mentioned across the interviews as a challenge to life in the favelas. One specific example of this inequality in public services is where the state failed to respond to several landslides over many years in a favela in Zona Sul until a large landslide hit several houses in the *asfalto* at the foot of the favela. As soon as it affected the *asfalto*, the state came into the favela to set up anti-landslide measures within the favela, although the local community groups had been asking the state to do so over several years (Luíza*, November 2019; Gabriel*, August 2019, Zona Sul).

This inequality in state service provision is also clearly shown in the testimonies of two presidents of Resident Associations in two favelas in Zona Norte of Rio de Janeiro:

The primary challenge [to wellbeing in the favela] is that the government doesn't do its part, that it doesn't reconquer the space that it has lost. The state doesn't arrive here (*não chega até aqui*). If the state had invested in public security, education, and healthcare here, the days would be better. If they had done a socio-educational work. But they don't, only in election times; three months of campaigns, where they promise a lot, but nothing is ever fulfilled. State support doesn't exist, we don't have it...

... Due to the abandonment of the state, we need to live side by side with the *tráfico*. But we are not connected to them...

... We survive our daily life together, abandoned by the state. But we hope for better days and a new government, for our children, for our grandchildren...

(Antonio*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

As presidents of resident associations, Antonio* and Marcos* are the official representatives of the *prefeitura* (prefecture, local government/municipality) in their favelas and their views illustrate the severe disconnect between the favela and the state, and the isolation of the favela residents in terms of citizenship:

We are the *prefeitura* here, but there is a big distance between us and the state. We are like a hospital; here only arrives people with problems, we are their channel to the state for them to complain about their problems. We need the state by our side. But they only appear during election times...

(Antonio*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

... The state offers nothing. We are abandoned by the state (*o poder publico*). We need to do everything without their help...

... And we bring demands, suggestions, etc. to the government, they receive it, look at it, but never respond. In the *asfalto* they do, (...) but here there is no investment from the government. They come during the elections, and they manage to win votes...

(Marcos*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

These testimonies point to a deeply unequal society where the favela residents are abandoned by the state (Bernardo*, February 2020; Patrícia*, February 2020; Emmanuella*, March 2020; Zona Norte; Caldeira and Holston 1999; Holston and Appadurai 1999). They also show the contradictory state presence as the state fails to provide socio-educational opportunities but arrives in election times to win votes, which links to the next section on political disconnect and lack of favela representation in the state (Arias 2006; Auyero et al 2014).

Political disconnect

Brazil has mandatory voting, but several social scientists have questioned the election systems in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro. Arias (2006) describes, for example, a structure where “elected officials, resident leaders, businesspeople, police, militias, and drug traffickers collaborate for their own benefit even while they perpetuate crime and prevent formal state institutions from being established (in Alves and Evanson 2011:131). Alves and Evanson add that favela voters in the 2008 local elections were intimidated by both militia and drug gangs to vote for their candidates both for mayor’s office and for city council members, and that the famous drug lord *Nem* of Rocinha for example successfully had his candidate voted into Rio’s city council (2011:131:132). Furthermore, sociologist and militia specialist José Cláudio Souza Alves, shared in an interview with Agência Pública that

Actually, the militias sell the votes of entire communities. Here in the Baixada as a whole and in the West Zone. They sell “packages” of votes. They have control. They have precise control of voter ID, polling stations for each ID, how many votes they will get there. They can identify who didn’t vote for [their candidate]

(Simões, in Agência Pública, translated in Rio on Watch 2019).

Several research participants mentioned how there were few or no candidates from their favela, and how the candidates from the outside only appear during election times to promise several projects for the favela that they then (mostly) fail to keep (Antonio*, January 2020, Zona Norte; Marcos*, January 2020, Zona Norte):

And the politicians are not even here, they have no control. They just use the votes of the community; come to do a project for the community to show that they are ‘bonsinho’ (good) so people will vote for them. It was the periphery that voted for Bolsonaro³. The media puts this in our head, it’s perverse

³ According to Ricci (2020), in the 2018 presidential election, Bolsonaro won the majority votes in 205 favelas in Rio de Janeiro while Haddad won the majority in 11.

(Gabriel*, August 2019, Zona Sul).

The favelas have very few representatives in politics, and the residents are therefore often left to vote for those from the outside who seem to offer good favours for their community, whom the Resident Association, *tráfico* and/or the militia have told them to vote for, or the candidates endorsed by their local church.

There is in recent years a positive trend of growing numbers of political candidates from the favelas in local elections, which will be further discussed in chapter 6 on favela peace formation. However, the assassination of black, gay favela representative Marielle Franco stays as a clear warning to peace formers and favela political representatives to not reach too high or threaten the status quo. The assassins of Marielle Franco have been found to have several close ties to the current president Bolsonaro and his family (Cowie 2019; Greenwald and Pougy 2019). So, one challenge is to get favela representatives elected into politics as the election progress in the favela still surrounds small-project campaigns mostly with outside candidates, and where, in some favelas, residents are told by the *tráfico*, *milicia* or church which candidate to vote for. Another challenge is then the clear threat to personal security posed to the ones who do make it into politics, which is symbolized forever in the death of Marielle Franco who represented so many minority groups based on who she was, her political fight for these groups and how far she had come.

Linked to this political disconnect and distrust in an insecure electoral system is the favela residents' hesitation to vote for 'white' leftist parties that are most likely to vote for policies that would (at least most closely) support peace formation. The current left, due to this lack of clear political representatives, does not originate from the favelas and is therefore considered an *asfalto*, white left that does not represent the interests of the real working class in the favelas. Due to the lack of quality education and the widespread presence of the evangelical church, the favela residents have also more conservative values that are threatened by the white left's liberal discourse. In fact, the *asfalto* left might occupy an important space for favela peace formation, as it claims to

represent the working-class while being so disconnected from the real working-class; the favela residents (Lucas*, August 2019):

She went to a communist political gathering in São Paulo, and there was a question of who is the Brazilian working-class today. The working-class today is black women, faveladas, perifericas, etc. But the left doesn't reach until there, because their working-class is white

(Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019).

The favela thus “stays in limbo between the left and the right” without knowing who their real partners in politics could be (Menezes, June 2019). Several participants critiqued the left of sitting in the *asfalto*, drinking beer and discussing politics while being completely disconnected from the reality of life in the favelas (Luíza*, November 2019, Zona Sul; Marcia*, September 2019, Zona Norte):

...Because the left is disconnected from the favela, they're speaking in Gloria [middle class neighbourhood in *asfalto*] and don't go in the favelas, they don't know how life is there, (there's) no connection. It's the pastors that enter the favelas and win votes, the left is not in the favela/periphery. The people don't live in Copacabana.

(Marcia*, September 2019, Zona Norte).

The political disconnect and lack of political representation in the Rio favelas seem to both be a product of the city's historical structural racism as well as an important factor in the reproduction of this structural violence of inequality along racial lines. In this system of white privilege, even the leftist 'working-class' political parties in the *asfalto* fail to represent the real working class in the favelas and the peripheries. Added to this lack of representation is of course the corrupt election systems in many favelas, and the assassination of and death threats towards favela representatives that do make it into politics.

Thus, while the favela residents do have the right to vote and are not legally deprived of citizenship, their lack of proper political representation, many essential social and

economic rights, as well as a clear lack of rights to public security show the absence of what Caldeira and Holston (1999) define as “substantive citizenship”, which includes the “array of political, civil, socio-economic, and cultural rights people possess and exercise” (1999:721). As Patricia*, a community worker in a favela in the north zone, said; “the little democracy, if we have any democracy at all in Brazil, never reached the favela” (Patrícia*, February 2020, Zona Norte). Arias and Goldstein also mention “democracy’s basic unevenness” and “the inequitable distribution of citizenship rights in Latin American countries”, which directly reflect Patricia*’s description of the *carioca* favelas (2010:25). Similarly, Emmanuella* called Rio de Janeiro a “fractured society, expensive for the people in the peripheries (...) with a clear hierarchy where some lives matter more than others” (March 2020, Zona Norte).

Arbitrary and negative state presence in the favelas

The lack of right to public security in the favelas is another factor that shows the inequality in citizenship and democracy across the colonial city and highlights the arbitrary and negative state presence in these communities (Auyero et al 2004; Arias 2006). While the Brazilian state offers public security in the *asfalto*, the absence of public security for favela residents have let the drug gangs and militias create a parallel, alternative rule of law that often protects favela residents from petty crime, rape, theft, murder, and robberies (Gledhill 2015; Goldstein 2003; Patrícia*, February 2020, Zona Norte). The state, however, largely threatens the security of life and livelihoods in the favelas through forced removals, gentrification and violent public security operations in these communities (Gabriel*, August 2019, Zona Sul; Grupo Luz*, November 2019; Alves and Evanson 2011; Martins 2019; Perlman 2010). Widespread police corruption and abuse in the favelas in Rio have been widely documented and have, together with the empty promises of politicians, lead many favela residents to build a deep distrust of public representatives. During the interviews the state was almost always mentioned as a challenge to the positive development and wellbeing of the favelas; as a threat to life during police operations, as corrupt, uncaring, oppressive and opportunist in the election campaigns (Pedro*, August 2019; Grupo Ar*, September 2019; Paulo*, July 2019; Fransisca*, August 2019; Antônia*, August 2019; Luiz*, August 2019; Aline*, September 2019, Zona

Sul, Rafael*, João*, January 2020; Marcia*, September 2019; Fernanda*, January 2020; Patrícia*, February 2020; Emmanuella*, March 2020; Jose*, February 2020; Marcos*, January 2020; Izabel*, January 2020; Douglas*, September 2019; Antonio*, January 2020, Zona Norte; Ana*, March 2020; Bernardo*, February 2020; Lucas*, August 2019; Grupo Luz*, November 2019). As Emmanuella* phrased it: “... the state acts in a different way inside here. So, the state exists here, but we want a more qualified state presence with a higher valorisation for life, because we are [also] the city” (Emmanuella*, March 2020, Zona Norte).

These views reflect Auyero et al’s (2014) findings of the state presence in urban margins in Buenos Aires as “intermittent, selective, and contradictory” which points to a wider Latin American phenomenon. In Rio de Janeiro, Arias (2006) also found that much of the violence in the favelas was not due to a state absence but rather a negative state presence where state actors such the police often colluded with crime, thus causing a complex network of contradictory state and non-state, criminal and non-criminal actors. Similar to Arias (2006), Brahler further highlights the complex ways in which certain state actors negatively engage with the favelas as they “have a political and/or economic interest in beginning, sustaining and renewing conflict” (2014:19). For the favela residents, the insecurity in their communities is thus coproduced by criminal and state agents (Penglase 2009; Gledhill 2015), where the state agents’ often corrupt, violent and contradictory actions make the local criminals the ‘lesser of two evils’ in the eyes of the residents (Feltran 2010; 2020; Gledhill 2015). These views correspond well with Arias and Goldstein’s argument of a violent state, where violence, instead of being an unintended consequence of weak democracy, constitutes a central component of these states (2010), and Pearce’s perverse states lens where certain elites benefit from this violence while the poor, who should be at the heart of the democratic project, are sacrificed (2010).

In Rio de Janeiro, favela residents are made ‘non-citizens’ and the state funds increasingly militarized security projects used *against* the favelas, instead of social development and peace formation projects *within* them. This is directly reflected in Gabriel’s description of the state presence in his community:

the state is always, in first place, present with the police, while they offer all the other services there in the bottom (*asfalto*)... the resident association and cultural groups always search for money and resources for water systems, schools, kindergartens, etc, but the government does not care...The *tráfico* does not let the favela develop nor does the state develop the favela... There's a politics to attend the elite, if they wanted to end the problem in the favela, they would, put money in and do it

(Gabriel*, August 2019, Zona Sul).

The inequality in the provision of public security and other citizen- and human rights in the favelas can thus remind of Fanon's description of the relationship between the native and the state in the capitalist countries versus the colonial countries:

In the capitalist countries a multitude of moral teachers, counsellors and 'bewilderers' separate the exploited from those in power. In the colonial countries, on the contrary, the policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle-butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; he shows them up and puts them into practice with the clear conscience of an upholder of the peace; yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native

(Fanon 1963:29).

Here, the Brazilian state's treatment of the favela resident resembles the colonial government's treatment of the native: while public services are provided outside the favela, the main contact many favela residents have with the state is through its violent public security operations where the "the agents of government speak the language of pure force". In this context, certain groups of politicians, business owners and public security officials profit from the drug trade and violence in the favelas both in terms of drugs and arms sales and through providing militarized public-security equipment and prison services (Gledhill 2015; Wacquant 2008). One could also assume an elite interest in keeping the favelas relatively undeveloped and uneducated in order to

maintain its residents as a cheap, unqualified workforce (Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul). Rio de Janeiro might then be seen as a *community of separation* or a colonial city, where the favela residents are categorized as *nonfellows* or as the *native*, both of which are “founded on the prejudice of race”, without human rights or the right to a fair social contract of citizenship with the Brazilian state (Mbembe 2019:17; Pearce 2017). The final section builds on this and considers how the racialized evaluation of human life and death in the *carioca* favelas naturalizes state murder and violence in these communities.

The necropolitics of killing and allowing to die

There was a boy who was super rebellious, his whole family was involved [with drugs, crime]. He stayed 10 days in my house. He was super in love with his father (*apaixonado*), and I managed to get his father to come to my house to talk to him. But his dad told him: “I already have my daughter, so I already have the most important thing in my life”. The next day, the son was arrested. This shows the power of words! We managed to get him out. But, 15 days later, his mum called me, saying that they [the police] had killed him, executed him, as the shots were all in the back, in the neck. Eight boys died, they put them into the *caveirão* (armoured police tank) and disappeared. They threw the body somewhere at 3am, it wasn't found before 1pm the next day... This is a great sadness (*tristeza*); to be treated like a piece of paper, a thing. They throw the body as if he were an animal. They take off the clothes, take a hose to clean them, hose them down and even use a broom to clean, like an animal. I carried this guilt with me. I carried it with me. One year passed (*demorou um ano*) and they took his cousin, killed him too

(Davi*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

This quote tells the story about Davi*'s former student who was shot and killed by the police. The description of the treatment of the dead bodies of young favela boys as if they were animals is a glaring example of how favela residents are dehumanized and criminalized by representatives of the Brazilian state. In the main news, it becomes

‘just another criminal dead in shootouts with the police’, while the question of innocence, of human rights, and being arrested instead of being shot dead, hosed down and dropped in the street like an animal is successfully ignored by the main news. This apparent disrespect for and expendability of black lives is reflected in the quote from a popular hip-hop song; “the cheapest meat on the market is the black meat and it is served raw”⁴(BK 2018). As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the Brazilian security forces killed 1814 people in Rio de Janeiro in 2019 (BBC News 2020). In the first half of 2020, 15 children and adolescents were shot and killed by police agents’ ‘lost bullets’ or in “provoked confrontations between the police and armed groups disputing the territory” in favelas and peripheries in Rio de Janeiro state (Jozino 2020). At least nine of these were black, the youngest was only 7 years old, and the 14-year-old boy João Pedro were shot more than 70 times (Jozino 2020; STF 2020). In 2019, the 8-year-old girl Agatha was shot and killed in a minivan in her favela in Complexo do Alemão by military police officers who targeted a suspect on a motorcycle passing the minivan (G1 Rio 2019). During police operations, the police forces shoot indiscriminately when entering the favela, both from the ground and from helicopters, causing many residents to be caught in the crossfire. How are the public security forces allowed to continue these warlike operations filled with human rights abuses in the favelas? How are these legitimized? While the experiences of these public security operations in the favela will be more closely discussed in chapter 4 on the state’s public security and ‘peace’ processes in the favelas, this final section looks at the criminalization of blackness and the expendability of the killable, black favela body in the colonial city.

The increasingly militarized and violent public security operations in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro enjoy widespread support in *carioca* society as they claim to be central to the war on drugs necessary for saving Rio de Janeiro from the drug cartels and violent crime. The dehumanization and criminalization of young, black favela residents depend on the colonial perception of the favela residents as ‘dangerous’, ‘irrational’, ‘unpredictable’, ‘subhuman’, and a ‘latent force that threatens order and stability’ that

⁴ From the song *Exóticos*: “A carne mais barata do mercado é a carne negra e é servida crua” (BK 2018)

therefore needs to be contained, often by violent ‘preventative means’ (Costa Vargas 2005:79; Hilgers and Macdonald 2017: 33-34). The image of Rio de Janeiro as a colonial city is thus strengthened as the mainstream perception of the favela resident resembles that of the colonizer’s view of the ‘native’:

The "native" is declared impervious to ethics, representing not only the absence of values but also the negation of values. He is, dare we say it, the enemy of values. In other words, absolute evil. A corrosive element, destroying everything within his reach, a corrupting element, distorting everything which involves aesthetics or morals, an agent of malevolent powers, an unconscious and incurable instrument of blind forces.

(Fanon 1963/2004:6).

This imagery of evil, dangerous non-humans legitimizes the state’s criminalization of the favelas and their residents which both fuels and legitimizes the violent, militarized public security operations in these spaces in the name of protecting the city from the violent crime of the drug *trafico*.

These cultural perceptions are not only legacies of the past but are continuously reproduced as the “Brazilian police work to produce blackness through acts of humiliation and violence” in the favelas, and the media reinforces these stereotypes by over-reporting on violence while simultaneously reducing deaths in the favelas to the death of ‘yet another criminal’ (Smith 2016, in Roth-Gordon 2017:55). The image of favela residents as “an agent of malevolent powers” fuels the imagined necessity to meet violence with more violence in a war on drugs instead of investing in social development of these communities. Through the war on drugs, the social violence is turned into a “war in which ‘the enemy is racially defined’ (Alexander 2012:98)” (Long 2018:34). Gledhill has criticized the heavily militarized public security war against drug gangs and cartels in the US and Latin America as the new war on the poor (Gledhill 2015). Amparo Alves, writing about police killings in Brazil, has named it Brazil’s “war against the black urban poor” as it overwhelmingly kills young black lives in the urban margins (2015). This war against the black, urban poor can also be seen as the “militarization of marginality” (Auyero et al 2004), where the violence of

the state reduces the “socially vulnerable into expandable non-persons, thus allowing the license – even the duty – to kill...” (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004: 19; Scheper-Hughes 2004:14). In the following paragraphs I want to present a different perspective on the drug crime in the favelas. Challenging the main narrative of the favelas as cradles of crime and violence, the interviews overwhelmingly described the favelas as creative and full of potential, but vulnerable and marginalized communities abandoned by the state and used by high-end drug traffickers and mafia bosses in the *asfalto* to generate profits.

I am not, in any form, attempting to romanticize or ignore the presence of drug gangs in the favelas nor the violence and insecurity they produce within these communities. Due to the exclusion from society and abandonment by the state, drug gangs (*tráfico*) do control many of the favelas in Rio state, and there are several stories of their parallel law systems and extrajudicial punishments, as well as insecurity from shootouts during deadly gang wars and the daily presence of weapons and drugs in the streets (Maria*, September 2019; Fransisca*, August 2019; Grupo Ar*, September 2019; Paulo*, July 2019; Luiz*, August 2019; Aline*, September 2019, Zona Sul). However, gang members make up only 1-10% of favela residents and the ones inside the favelas are, according to some interviews, still low in the drug trade hierarchy (João*, January 2020; Antonio*, January 2020; Patrícia*, February 2020, Zona Norte; Luíza*, November 2019, Zona Sul; Zaluar 2010:20). The vast majority of favela residents are ordinary people, excluded from citizenship and humanity and criminalized by the main media channels and by the state because of the neighbourhood they live in. Many of the interviewees who work to reduce violence in their communities did not mention the gangs themselves as a challenge, saying that they leave their projects alone, that they have learned to live peacefully alongside them, and that it is only during shootouts with the police that the gangs pose a threat to their work (Davi*, January 2020; Antonio*, January 2020; Marcia*, September 2019; Fernanda*, January 2020; Jose*, February 2020; Marcos*, January 2020; Izabel*, January 2020; Douglas*, September 2019; Patricia*, Zona Norte, Pedro*, August 2019; Gabriel*, August 2019; Antônia*, August 2019; Juliana*, October 2019, Zona Sul; Grupo Luz*, November 2019). In opposition to the main narrative of deadly drug-gangs as the main drivers of violence in the favela, I was told that the

real challenge to ‘peace’ in the favela is the heavy state violence during police operations and the lack of educational, social, and employment opportunities for the youth in these communities (Maria*, September 2019; Pedro*, August 2019; Miguel*, September 2019; Luíza, November 2019; Aline*, September 2019, Zona Sul, Davi*, January 2020; Antonio*, January 2020; Marcia*, September 2019; Fernanda*, January 2020; Patrícia*, February 2020; Jose*, February 2020; Marcos*, January 2020; Douglas*, September 2019, Zona Norte). Patrícia* described a learning and unlearning process that we had both gone through in a favela in the north zone:

...the first time I got here, the first thing I thought was; wow, there are a lot of weapons here. Second time I came, I saw that there were boys behind the weapons. Third time I saw that they were people behind this. And the fourth time, I saw one of the boys holding a weapon in one hand, and some diapers in the other hand. This is why it’s important to circulate [for people to visit the favela]: for everyone to see that we have a lot of things here, shops, businesses, etc., and that they [the gang members] are people. To take away this prejudice of the armed violence.

(Patrícia*, February 2020, Zona Norte).

Her story rehumanizes these boys behind the weapons and points to the importance of providing structural change and real opportunities for these youth so that they can find alternative, legal ways in which to provide for their children and their family.

Offering an alternative perspective to the mainstream narrative, several of the research participants questioned the war on drugs and the criminalization of the favelas as the centres for drug trafficking and violence. From an insider perspective, Davi*, wondered:

...where do the criminal (*bandido*) and crime come from? I was 12 years in the *tráfico*, and I never went to the United States, to Canada, these places. So, who are the ones bringing the stuff? It’s not the favela resident. I don’t know who it is, but it is not the resident. Who brings this stuff is a graduated person, who brings it to the community because that

is where the *tráfico* is more successful (*mais carreira*), in the most vulnerable (*carente*) neighbourhoods. (January 2020, Zona Norte).

Davi*'s perspective point to a wider criminal network where the power lies outside of the favela and where the favela is used as a vulnerable space, criminalized and with a lack of oversight, perfect for drug sales. Luíza*, similarly, pointed to the limited life and power of the *tráficoantes* in the favela: “The *tráficoantes* themselves, the bosses, always end up in prison or dead, and they can't even leave the territory, they only stay limited in the territory (favela). While the big boss (*chefão*) lives well (*vive tranquilo*)” (Luíza*, November 2019, Zona Sul). As Maria* shared, she would like to know “who is the boss of the boss of the boss of the *tráfico*?” (Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul). João* offered an answer:

The *tráficoante* is in Barra [rich, elite area of Rio de Janeiro], and Brasilia [the capital, where the congress and the government are seated], you have the militia structures that are growing, they are the ones justifying this corrupt structure. Those who live outside think that there are only bandits who live in the favela. This is historic

(João*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

Finally, Fernanda*, Zona Norte questioned the focus on the favela in the war on drugs when the high-up drug traffickers are left alone:

The government, they don't think about favela citizens, they think of this insane war against drugs, against the *tráfico*. But there is no weapons factory nor drug 'factory' in the favela. The people that work with and/or use drugs here is the minority. It is the deputies, from the *asfalto*; businessmen; a story of [someone famous] that got caught with a helicopter full of cocaine. And here they take boys with a little weed on them. They [the police] stopped messing with the ones they should mess with... it's a question of judging social standards, the social inequality in this country. The oppressed also believe in this *fala* (narrative). To oppress the oppressed

(Fernanda*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

These quotes challenge the main narrative of drugs and crime in the favelas when the focus should be on the big picture, the origin of the drugs and weapons and the profiteers of the drug trafficking and the war on drugs. Instead of going after the ‘big boss’ in the *asfalto* and in congress, the Brazilian state seems to focus on the arrests and executions of young black boys selling drugs in the streets in the favelas. However, as Bourgois found in his study of crack-sales in inner-city Chicago, drug trade is an ‘equal-opportunity’ employment in marginalized communities with few other employment opportunities and is a way for residents to avoid the humiliation of working long hours for very little money outside the neighbourhood (2004). However, instead of seeing it as a social problem, the Brazilian state sees the drugs in the favelas as a security problem, in a marginalization of vulnerability (Auyero et al 2014; Scheper-Hughes 2004a). As Fanon states, “Confronted with a world configured by the colonizer, the colonized subject is always presumed guilty” (1963/2004:16). In the colonized city of Rio de Janeiro, the war on drugs focuses on violent public security operations in the favela while the high-end drug trafficking, corruption and mafia structures in the elite and the government is mostly left alone (Rocha A. 2012).

Due to the clear racial component of the criminalization of the black favela resident in Brazil, several critical Brazilian authors have called out the Brazilian state’s violent relationship with the favelas and its black population as necropolitics, a black genocide, or, as described by Amparo Alves:

A racialized regime of citizenship in which black lives are dehumanized and devalued: black bodies are exploited in low-paid jobs, segregated in favelas, incarcerated, beaten, killed, dismembered, disposed in trash cans, burned and discarded to later resurface as bones ... while state violence in general, and police killing in particular, is obviously an expression of sovereign power’s right over life and death... the specificity of their “spatial practices” (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]) in Brazil’s favelas rely on the uncanny capacity of the state to draw racial lines and inscribe domination over bodies and geographies through and in death while at the same time celebrating racial difference; these necropolitical practices not only produce the very

topographies of violence the state aims to control, but they also illustrate the limits of the rule of Law in dealing with certain zones and bodies seen inherently as outlawed. If Carl Schmitt's (2005:5) definition of the sovereign is correct—"he who decides on the exception"—in Brazil it is in the pained/dead black body that the sovereign exercises its power.

(Alves 2014:324).

The black genocide and the apparent expandability of black lives were reflected in many of the interviews, like in the quotes below:

[it is] a government that allows for extermination, (with the mindset that) from being in, from the favela, it's a disposable life. The police officer too, is seen as a disposable life. All the dead are from the favela, poor, and the majority is black. The policeman, his life is also not valued, and he is also black.

(Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul).

...Then you have the structural racism inherited from slavery in the politics of the state; like the mass imprisonment and the police operations (in the favelas). There are a lot of deaths in these operations, and this is nothing new, it's been a constant over various political regimes, in the dictatorship and after, we've seen this genocide of young, blacks in the peripheries, favelas. This is intensified today with this mayor, this president, who stimulate brutality on the ground level (*em baixo*) through speech, politics, and decisions.

(Bernardo*, February 2020).

The state formation through slavery and the persistent belief in white superiority and black backwardness has built a society where the black, non-white, peripheric person is reduced to a what Agamben (1998) calls a "bare being", a non-human, dirty, dangerous, disposable, whose death is naturalized as 'terror as usual' (Scheper-Hughes 2004b). The various testimonies from community social workers and activists in the *carioca* favela describe a relationship between the favela and the Brazilian state as one that equals the sovereign's relationship with the colony, where the construction

of the enemy other and a permanent state of exception allow for state neglect and violence in these communities. As Mbembe describes,

... the colonies are the location par excellence where the controls and guarantees of judicial order can be suspended – the zone where the violence of the state of exception is deemed to operate in the service of ‘civilization’. That colonies might be ruled over in absolute lawlessness stems from the racial denial of any common bond between the conqueror and the native. In the eyes of the conqueror, *savage life* is just another form of *animal life*, a horrifying experience, something alien beyond imagination or comprehension

(2003:24).

The treatment of the dead favela body as if it were an animal was described in the opening quote by Davi* about the young boy killed by the police and the dumping of his dead body. Grupo Luz* mentioned how the state also treats the alive favela resident as an animal: “We have access to public hospitals, yes, but when we go, we’re treated like an indigent, like an animal (*bixo*). Also in the public transport system we’re stuck together like animals”(November 2019). It becomes clear that the dehumanization of the favela resident is not just historical but a continued devaluation of black life. As formulated by a favela activist; “The formation of the Brazilian state is through racism, the ‘não ser’(non-being), the one without soul, the disposable, the killable” (Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019). According to Villenave, the imperial depiction of the colonies as an “empty space” further corresponds to the state’s necropolitical relationship with the favelas, where “those who live there are not fully subjects, and what happens there is invisible” (Mignolo 2000 in Villenave 2018:37). In Rio de Janeiro, the sovereign, through its military police that often acts as both judge and executioner and through its decisions to finance increasingly militarized public security measures instead of social development and welfare provisions in the favelas, practices both its right to ‘take life, or let live’ *and* ‘to foster life or to disallow it’(Foucault 1978:138).

Mbembe (2003) discusses how necropolitics, as echoed by an activist; “is not just controlling who lives and who dies, but also in what conditions you let people live in”

(Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019). The citizenship section above showed the state neglect of the favela of many basic human rights and the consequent lack of substantive citizenship. Staying in the narrative of the dangerous favela thus does not only legitimize and unproblematize state murder in these communities, but it also absolves the state of the burden of treating its favela citizens as proper citizens and human beings (Pearce 2017). Similarly, the black genocide debate in Brazil does not only focus on the public security forces' murder and executions of young, black favela youth, but also includes a cultural black genocide through the criminalization of favela culture and history such as the closing down of local radio stations, criminalization of funk parties and Afro-Brazilian religions, and the harassment of local journalists and resistance movements (Media, Violence and Human Rights 2019; Co-creation in the city: rights and culture of favelas and peripheries, June 2019; João*, January 2020, Zona Norte). As stated by favela activist Gizele Martins; "It's a politics of control of the body and this place that is called favela. Anything connected to the black body is persecuted" (Martins, August 2019). The Brazilian state thus can be said to have both a necropolitical and genocidal relationship with the favelas both in terms of the obvious violence and murder through the public security operations in these communities, but also through the continuous neglect, oppression and criminalization of the favelas instead of providing social development and public services in order to include the favela as part of the city. Through the racialization and criminalization of the black favela resident, the Brazilian state manages to justify and legitimize its violence in these communities in the war on drugs while the real mafia lives peacefully in the *asfalto*, protected in the system of white privilege.

Conclusion

The conflict and violence facing the favelas in Rio de Janeiro today have a long history of slavery, colonialism, racism, exclusion, marginalization, criminalization and dehumanization of the favelas and their residents. Slavery and colonialism grew deep social roots of structural and cultural racism and classism, naturalizing the current inequality of opportunities in Rio where the upper classes live vastly different lives from their neighbours in the favelas. Further, the military dictatorship normalized the use of state violence and the implementation of a heavily militarized police to govern

the population considered criminal and dangerous in order to protect the rest of the population. A subsequent neoliberal democratization weakened the social state while somehow keeping the military and security forces strengthened, creating a violent, perverse democracy (Arias 2006, Arias and Goldstein 2010; Brahler 2014, Pearce 2010). As the predominately black working class in the favelas and peripheries provides cheap labour to the predominately white business owners, landowners and politicians, Rio de Janeiro can be said to be ruled by *branquitude*⁵, white privilege, where “the wealthy don’t need to do anything in order to stay wealthy, and they want to keep it that way” (Ana*, March 2020). This reflects directly in Fanon’s “The cause is effect: You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich” (Fanon 1963/2004:5). In this system of privilege and racial inequality, the successful peaceful development and democratization of the favelas would threaten the interests of powerful elites whose privilege is built on the largely unqualified favela labour (Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul). This is worth keeping in mind when considering the opportunities for and challenges towards favela peace formation in this context.

This chapter has studied some of the undercurrents of violence and racism in the conflict between public security forces, drug gangs and militias in Rio de Janeiro. Its findings reflect those of other critical anthropological and sociological work on the margins and the state, such as Bourgois and Scheper-Hughes’ collections of studies of “a violence continuum comprised of a multitude of ‘small wars and invisible genocides’” (2004:19), whose “[e]veryday violence encompasses the implicit, legitimate, and routinized forms of violence inherent in particular social, economic, and political formations” (2004:21). Like the collection, this chapter has shown how various forms of violence and exclusion towards the favelas are naturalized and legitimized through a racist dehumanization of favela residents, turning them into bare beings and disposable lives (Agamben 1998; Scheper-Hughes 2004b). It reveals the immense complexity and deep historical roots of the conflict, which indicate the importance of seeking a deeper understanding of each conflict context before

⁵ Discussed by Jose*, February 2020, Zona Norte, as the main challenge for the wellbeing of the favelas

proposing its solutions. This also explains why top-down, one-size-fits-all peace and pacification processes often fail, and why, despite Rio de Janeiro's many attempts to pacify the city, violence and crime persist. A possible solution to this urban violence is further complicated by the vast, intricate web of corrupt relations between police, politicians, drug gangs and militias, which indicates that several powerful actors profit from the conflict (Arias 2006; Gledhill 2015; Rocha A. 2012). As the Brazilian state marginalizes and fails to provide security and welfare in the favelas, the state presence becomes arbitrary and contradictory (Auyero et al 2014; Caldeira 2000; Garmany 2014; Gledhill 2015). The next chapter considers how the public security forces use the racist prejudice against the favelas to legitimize and naturalize their violent, necropolitical interventions and extrajudicial killings of favela residents in the war on drugs, leaving the residents excluded from the state, but simultaneously problematically within (Caldeira 2000; Goldstein 2003; Goldstein 2012; Schepers-Hughes 2004b). It studies how public security forces and right-wing politicians continue to play on the fear in the *asfalto* to gain vast public support for their war in the favelas, which epitomizes the divided city where citizenship, security, human rights and peace are deeply dependent on race, class and location of residence. It thus asks what peace means in this violent, colonial city.

~ Chapter 5 ~

Whose peace? Violent state peace in Rio de Janeiro

It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; he shows them up and puts them into practice with the clear conscience of an upholder of the peace; yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native

(Fanon 1963:29).

Everything comes with a promise of peace. This peace comes with a war that never ends

(Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019).

Introduction

This chapter asks what peace means in situations of urban violence in a colonial city and violent state. Whose peace do mainstream, top-down processes construct and protect, and what does this mean for the groups whose peace it is not? In the context of Rio de Janeiro, the thesis advocates for a new concept of grassroots peace built on Richmond's concept of peace formation, *favela peace formation*, and analyses its opportunities and challenges in reducing violence in urban margins and constructing a politics with inclusion, social justice, and without violence (Richmond 2016; Pearce 2020). Building on chapter 4's discussion on the deep inequality in citizenship, humanity and death in Rio de Janeiro, this chapter analyses some of the state's public

security policies in the favelas in the last decade (2010-2020). The chapter assumes that the state decides its public security policies on behalf of the security of its citizens as part of the social contract and that these policies can thus be seen and considered as the state's top-down peace process for its own population. The chapter therefore evaluates the state's public security policies in the last decade as if they were peace processes, but from the perspective of the favela.

While the Brazilian state has had various public security projects in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro such as the police pacification program (UPP), the armed forces invasions in 2010-2015 and 2018 and countless joint police operations supposedly designed to arrest and root out gang members from these communities, crime and violence persist. In the favelas in the colonial city, whose residents do not appear to be included in the state's notions of citizenship and humanity, these securitization policies have brought more terror and insecurity than they have reduced. What then do 'peace' processes entail in a colonial city? The rejection of 'peace' by many interviewees critically questions the meanings of peace in this context, where state pacification efforts too often translate into state murder and other human rights violations in the favelas in order to guarantee peace and security in the *asfalto* (see also Gledhill 2015). What is top-down 'peace' in a violent state? And what are the alternatives to this peace? The chapter starts by evaluating the UPP, the military interventions and police operations from the perspective of the research participants working to reduce violence in the favela. The chapter finds that public security policies in Rio de Janeiro, legitimized through the war on drugs, work as a project of domination, counterinsurgency and necropolitics rather than a genuine peace project which would include the guarantee of human security, rights and inclusion of the favela residents. Finally, it concludes that 'peace' for the state, the neo-colonial elites and conforming middle-class in the *asfalto* becomes a form of war in the favelas and argues that a genuine, sustainable peace must be constructed from within the favelas themselves (Foucault 1976, in Richmond 2001; Gledhill 2015).

Security policies in Rio de Janeiro 2010-2020: pacification, occupation, militarization

“Pacification”

The last decade saw the expansion and the collapse of the police pacification unit program (Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora, UPP) in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro. Started in Santa Marta and Cidade de Deus in 2008, this new community police program promised to clear out the drug gangs from the favelas and from there maintain control over the territories through a permanent police presence inside the community (Carvalho 2018; Menezes 2018). Inspired by public security reforms in Medellin, Colombia, the UPPs were inserted in the favelas to reduce homicides by gang violence and improve relations between police and favela residents. According to their website, the UPPs were managed under the principles of ‘Police of Proximity’; based on “the partnership between local residents and law enforcement institutions” and guided by “dialogue and respect to the culture and uniqueness of each community” (UPP 2017b). The program had four phases: 1st, the BOPE and the military police would invade the favela and retake the area from the drug gangs; 2nd, these forces would then secure the area and clear it of any remaining criminals; 3rd, they would install the permanent UPP base and a permanent presence of community police, to then; 4th, offer more social and public services in order to integrate the favela into society and full citizenship (Oosterbaan and Van Wijk 2015). The project was thus a huge undertaking that combined military, police, social actors and businesses in order to regain control over these territories and populations, both in a militarized sense through police occupation and in a social sense through projects such as PAC and UPP Social (Carvalho 2018; Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019). Much research has been done on the UPPs both criticizing and praising the program, but its short life span and rapid decline point to a program that was unsustainable and perhaps never meant to last beyond the mega events of the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016 (Leite et al 2018; Gledhill 2015; Hoelscher and Norheim-Martinsen 2014; Livingstone 2014; Oosterbaan and Van Wijk 2015). This section will look at the UPPs in retrospect from the time of my fieldwork in 2019-2020, as the UPPs were at a stage of crisis. A wider study of the time of and after the UPPs shows an increased militarization of

public security in Rio de Janeiro and critics argue that the UPPs were just another way for the state to normalize the militarization of life in the favelas, and yet another civilizing, violent attempt to ‘govern the poor’, control the ‘dangerous classes’ and teach the ‘uncivilized’ how to be proper citizens (Das and Poole 2004; Leite et al. 2018; Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019; Co-creation in the city: rights and culture of favelas and peripheries, June 2019).

The UPPs were installed in order to retake control over favela territories by using a ‘police of proximity’ approach with a permanent base and 24 hours presence within each of the 38 favelas involved (UPP 2017b). In this sense it was the largest and most promising ‘peace’ and pacification project in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas, involving various new social programs and a ‘new’ police force that was meant to respect and build partnerships with local residents (UPP 2017b). Schubert found in his research that many favela residents indeed hoped that the UPP would also be a slow police reform, which would work to pacify the militarized police forces themselves in addition to the favelas (2019). At the height of the project, the UPPs, once installed and settled in many favelas, showed great promise in terms of large reductions in lethal violence and resistance killings (police killings masked as acts of self-defence) (Oosterbaan and Van Wijk 2015). Reflecting this, a few of the research participants did compliment the initial promise of the project and its success in reducing the open use of violence, weapons and drugs in one favela in Zona Sul:

The first seven years [of the UPP] were marvellous. I didn’t see any weapons, the *trafico* never stopped, but there were no weapons or violence, just people buying drugs, using drugs, but more hidden, not [openly] in the streets. There were children saying they wanted to become police, firefighters, etc. The first communities with UPP had a social project, music lessons, sports, school support, psychologists, the first years were great. When I saw and read the plan I fell in love (with the project). With time, corruption destroyed everything; political corruption taking investments from the UPP. The theft of Cabral [previous governor] (...) The UPP lost the conditions to survive, and the weapons returned to the favela, there were more confrontations

(Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul).

Maria*s quote reflects some of Oosterbaan and Van Wijk’s findings that some residents were initially very happy with how the reduction of violence in their favela during the UPP allowed teachers and doctors to more easily enter, thus improving public services in their favela. Maria* also appreciated the lack of weapons and violence, but emphasized that the drug trafficking never went away, and that government corruption ‘destroyed everything’, which caused weapons and confrontations to again return to the favela.

Due to the timing and selective placement of the UPPs, many believe that they were intended to pacify the most central favelas in Rio de Janeiro in order to portray a safe city to the large number of tourists visiting the city during the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016. While the government claimed that the UPPs were implemented in high-risk favelas, many critics have argued that they rather operate in ‘high-value’ favelas in the touristic south zone, along the major highway between the south zone and the international airport, and around the large sports venues (Oosterbaan and Wijk 2015; Hoelscher and Norheim-Martinsen 2014; Livingstone 2014). The UPPs were present in these few, selected favelas (compared to the hundreds of favelas in Rio de Janeiro) and managed indeed to keep a low mortality and crime rate in the period of these mega events (Hoelscher and Norheim-Martinsen 2014; Livingstone 2014; UPP 2017a). The next quote from Gabriel* clearly connects the UPP, its success and its downfall to the international sports events:

When the police circulated there were fewer weapons in the favela, it was absurd, we almost didn’t see any arms. They [the *trafico*] kept selling drugs, but without or with less guns. The favela was surrounded by police. Then the state scrapped (*recou*) this work, the police pulled back (*desabafou*), and the drug *trafico* grew again. We had 5-6 years without shootouts, confrontations, and [the *asfalto*]⁶ grew closer to the favela. But everything in 2011-2016 was because of the games, to show that it was

⁶ The name of the closest *asfalto* neighbourhood is taken out for the sake of anonymity.

safe. It ended afterwards, but they left the police still, without resources, they just stay in their base, pass through the main street in their car, put on a small siren to let the *traficantes* know they're coming, but they don't walk through the community like before.

(Gabriel*, August 2019, Zona Sul).

Both Gabriel* and Maria*'s quotes show the program's temporary success in reducing violence in this favela, but also its failure to stop the drug *tráfico* and its decline due to vast political corruption under governor Sergio Cabral (2007-2014) (BBC 2017). Gabriel* also points to the UPP's temporary success during the time of the mega events. This was also brought up by Bernardo*, an expert in public security in Rio de Janeiro:

The UPP was very good at the start, because it had complete political attention, what we call here '*vitrine*' (showcase), for the English [foreigners] to see, to show Rio de Janeiro to the world. With the world games etc, they wanted to show a safe city, not a violent one. So, in 2008-2009 the UPP had positive results because it had all the attention of the media

(Bernardo*, February 2020).

Here, the UPP program seemed to have been introduced in order to keep the city safe during the games and fell apart as soon as the resources and necessity declined as the world turned its eyes away from Rio de Janeiro (Fransisca*, August 2019; Gabriel*, Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul, Douglas*, September 2019, Zona Norte).

What is also interesting in the quotes above is that despite the UPP's aim to clean the favela of the *tráfico* (through the arrest, murder and expulsion of their members), in Gabriel*'s and Maria*'s favela, the *tráfico* remained and continued their business, just less openly and with less weapons. In fact, interviews paint a complicated picture of the relationship between the UPP and the *tráfico* in this favela. Miguel*, September 2019, Zona Sul, a previous gang member and manager, told of heavy shootouts where he lost many of his friends when the UPP first invaded the community, while Gabriel*

August 2019, described a mutual understanding between the two parts. Maria* explained me the intricate game between the two:

With the UPP, one team stays in the community for 36 hours, so every 36 hours the team changes, there are four teams in total. There were some teams that received bribes, and others that didn't, so conflict would increase. So, we knew that when it was the team of that guy (*do fulano*), there would be shooting, and with the other team, the *tráfico* would walk freely around in the street. With the residents and the *tráfico* it is complicated cause you can't denounce them, because they are someone's son, they're a relative, son of a friend. In the police too, you have this problem: you have the corrupt and not corrupt. It's always about this question of bribe. The police know the worth of the *tráfico*, the quantity of money that circulates in that specific group of *tráfico*. In a big favela, like the Complexo do Alemão, there are various gangs. If the police attacks one, the other gets to make more money, so afterwards, the police go to that one, when they have money

(Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul).

Based on these observations, the UPP program seems to consist of a complex, corrupt arrangement between police and *tráfico* in this specific favela in Zona Sul, which support Arias' view of the state presence in the favelas as a complex negative presence that also often involves criminal activity (2006). Similarly, Gledhill found the police to be selling drugs and firearms they had captured to the very criminals they were supposed to persecute, and Misse has studied the role of the police and soldiers in supplying illegal arms to criminal groups (Gledhill 2015:47; Misse 1997:7). The favela in Zona Sul was very calm at the time of these interviews, but this current 'peace' was attributed more to the UPP's absence rather than their presence:

Now it's calmer, the UPP don't enter into the community anymore. Because they know if they enter, there will be shooting (...) Because they are weak now. The *tráfico* have more weapons (*armas*) than the UPP and the UPP know this. And they know that the *tráfico* don't mess with them if they don't mess with the *tráfico*. So, we have five months without anything now, very calm

(Miguel*, September 2019, Zona Sul).

Maria*, similarly attributed the calm to the centralization of the UPP, where the UPP representative in the favela “is not a commander, he receives direct orders from the outside. And he receives, there’s money given to him (bribes from *tráfico*)” (Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul). According to her, if attacks increase in the nearby asphalt neighbourhood, the civil police notify the military police/UPP, which again tell the *tráfico* to reduce the attacks in the area (Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul). This again points to a complex corrupt relationship between the *tráfico* and the UPP/military police in negotiating the UPP presence in the favela and the *tráfico*’s attacks in the *asfalto*.

Maria*’s quote above also point to the difficulty of the favela resident in balancing between the two violent forces in the community: the drug *tráfico* and the UPP. Although the UPP entered the favelas in order to expel the *tráfico* and take control, the *tráfico* remained in many favelas, thus forcing the favela resident to live, as Menezes (2018) describes, not under the control of one god, but dangerously between two conflicting gods; the boss of the *tráfico* and the UPP commander:

The residents, who were already being monitored by the *tráfico*antes, were now also being monitored by the UPP. (...) In the game of police and *tráfico*ante, the resident is paralyzed (*parado*) like a post (*poste*), with a big fear of being assumed to be involved in either because the other side would get you if they suspected

(Menezes, June 2019).

Menezes argues that although the UPP successfully reduced open shootouts and crossfire in many of the favelas, their presence caused the favela residents to move from living in the ‘crossfire’ to living in a ‘minefield’ where every misstep could be deadly (2018). She therefore argues that before, during and after the UPP, the favela resident continues to live a life ‘under siege’, monitored by *tráfico*, police or both, and often caught in the conflict between.

Other critical voices point to the fact that the Brazilian state's sudden pacification attempt to "bring peace to the favela" and "include the favela in the city" through the UPPs were contradictory to the state's history of violence against the favelas (Carvalho 2018). This was exemplified in the creation of the UPP within the military police department, which has received very little reforms since the military dictatorship. Bernardo* explained that even if UPP was a promising project, it was "never compatible with the military police, which is an organization that acts with a military approach who sees the other as the enemy that should be eliminated. So, there is no way to sustain an increased communitarian police" (Bernardo*, February 2020). The military police were, however, portrayed in the main media, "between 2009 and 2011, as an institution that was actually bringing peace to the city of Rio de Janeiro" (Carvalho 2018:96). This tension of a historically violent and militarized police force suddenly posing as community peacekeepers and builders in the favela obviously created some difficulty with trust and respect from the favela residents. Douglas*, thought the UPP never succeeded due to the history of violence and lack of trust between favela residents and the police:

The UPP went wrong because they wanted to impose their project (*uma coisa deles*). It went wrong because who lives in the favela don't like the police in the community because of the operations, there's always confrontations with residents and innocent people.

(Douglas*, September 2019, Zona Norte).

In this sense, the UPPs can be seen as a temporary interval in a militarized violent policing of the favelas where the same police force (military police) suddenly would turn to not only pacify the area but also to act as social liaisons between the favela residents and the state. As the UPP was still a part of the military police, it is not surprising that a superficial attempt to turn them into a community police force failed considering the violent, combative nature of the military police and its history of violence and abuse in the favelas.

Indeed, widespread torture, human rights abuses, corruption and forced disappearances by the UPP have been documented in several favelas across the city symbolized in the

torture, murder and disappearance of the bricklayer Amarildo de Souza by UPP officers in Rocinha in 2013 (Carneiro 2013a; DHESCA 2017; Gledhill 2015; Oosterbaan and van Wijk 2015; Torres and Werneck 2012). Some research participants stressed that the UPPs further criminalized and prohibited favela *baile funk* parties, closed down many community radio stations and imposed curfews in many favelas (Pedro*, August 2019; Gabriel*, August 2019; Zona Sul; Media, Violence and Human Rights, August 2019; Co-creation in the city: rights and culture of favelas and peripheries, June 2019; Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019; Fleury 2012; Gledhill 2015). In her study on the UPP in Santa Marta, Fleury found that “despite its history of self-organization to secure services and build community projects, Santa Marta was seen as a ‘disordered place’”, which shows the paternalistic nature of the program (2012, in Gledhill 2015: 53). As one community activist shared in an event; “before UPP we were very united, now we’re more individualized because we don’t have the same events, liberty or possibilities. The less communication the better it is for the state”. In a critical perspective, the UPP was thus another state project of control and monitoring of the black favela spaces and bodies, aimed at temporarily reducing the violence in these areas for the sake of tourism and increased safety in the *asfalto* during the mega events in 2014 and 2016. UPP then was not a peace project, but one of domination:

...when the UPP came in/invaded [this favela], they placed their flag at the top of the community, but it wasn’t a white flag for peace, it was the Brazilian flag representing the state, to say, now we dominate. Not peace, but domination and pacification. Historically, there has always been a relation of conflict between them and the police. The favela has always been seen as a space that needs to be controlled, either socially through projects or like now, through police control and pacification.

(Pedro*, August 2019, Zona Sul).

This is further problematized by the fact that in many favelas, during the first phase of the UPP, BOPE forces would ‘reclaim’ the favela and raise “the squad’s flag from a favela rooftop during invasions” (Larkins 2013:569). Larkins argues that “the act signals that the favela is now under BOPE and, by extension, state command” (2013:569). Linking back to Pedro*’s quote above, I would argue that raising the flag

of the highly militarized and violent BOPE over the favelas is an even clearer symbol of militarized domination over the favelas whose ‘dangerous’ populations are not governed by a social state but rather occupied by the highly militarized forces of a penal state that, in a war on drugs, targets the favelas as enemy territories. This will be further discussed below.

Finally, the UPP program’s objectives went far beyond a mere pacification of the favelas in Rio de Janeiro as they were to “prepare ‘the community’ to receive other public and private services. These are fundamental elements in the construction of the ‘peace’ announced through the pacification” (Carvalho 2018:99). This promise to finally offer quality public services in the favelas indeed promised a construction of a sustainable peace in the favelas. However, many favelas never received these promised social projects, and some of the ones that came were heavily criticised by favela grassroot social workers and activists (Fleury 2012). The use of top-down social development projects like PAC, UPP Social and the NGO Viva Rio was criticized by several participants for bringing in social projects that were not needed or wanted in the community (Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul; Matheus*, July 2019; Rafael*, Zona Norte). The projects that UPP Social brought into Cidade de Deus, for example, were already provided by community organizations and the UPP Social ended up taking away the resources from these community organizations (Matheus*, July 2019). Viva Rio was also accused by some interviewees to have “made a lot of money” on social projects in the favelas “but never called in the favela” to participate (Rafael*, Zona Norte). Some even accused them of money laundering, as “there is so much money in play, that they manage...” (Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul):

They earn a lot of money off the favela (*em cima da favela*). What do they do? Where does the money go? I would have liked to see something more palpable. If you go to their office, you don’t see the community working with them, for them, (as part of the team). You only see people from the community/favela as cleaners, etc. They should be hiring, engaging leaders from the community, but like with us, they would never engage us now, because they know we are critical of them

(Juliana*, October 2019, Zona Sul).

Instead of funding and supporting existing grassroots peace projects in the favela, the UPP program, according to Carvalho (2018), entered the favela with a ‘civilizing logic’ meant to discipline and control the ‘dangerous classes’ (2018:107). This argument of the UPP as another way of dominating the dangerous classes is further supported by the violence experienced under the UPP-period in Complexo da Maré and Complexo do Alemão which will be described below.

Pacification or occupation? The cases of Complexo do Alemão and Complexo da Maré

Whereas the UPPs were implemented with the help of police operations in the favelas in Zona Sul, in Complexo do Alemão and Complexo da Maré in Zona Norte, the UPP project started with military occupation (2010-2012 in Alemão and 2014-2015 in Maré) (Rocha 2018). The favela complexes are both located along Linha Vermelha in Zona Norte, the main highway between Zona Sul and the international airport and their pacification was therefore crucial in order to ‘secure’ the city for the World Cup and the Olympics (Martins 2019; Rocha 2018). Severe human rights abuses and an increased militarization of daily life were experienced in both these areas during, and after, the UPP and mega-events, severely questioning the ‘peaceful’ purposes of the state’s pacification program. This section will briefly discuss some of these issues.

Complexo do Alemão consists of 15 different favelas and had a population of around 60 555 residents in 2010, living in 18 226 houses (DHESCA 2017:46). Several UPPs were installed in various favelas in Complexo do Alemão in 2012, but, according to a study by DHESCA, “the violence continues to be one of its largest problems, now aggravated by the militarization of the territory and through the deepening of police violence” (2017:46). One of the participants in the study, Tânia*, shared that “it is after the UPP that the situation turned into hell. The police don’t want to know who is a criminal and who is not” and added that once when she was walking to work in the early morning she was stopped by a police who pointed a gun to her chest and asked where she was going, calling her a ‘*vagabunda*’, forcing her to return home and missing a day of work (DHESCA 2017:47). According to the interviews in this

project, eight people were killed by UPP officers in April and May of 2016, “targeting children, young people and elderly. In this period, the confrontations were almost daily and the situation only improved with the transfer (...) of the general commander of the UPP, known as Zuma, who was also responsible for invasions of resident’s houses in Alemão”(2017:48). The report continues to share the testimonies of two mothers whose sons were both killed by UPP officers. Joana*, a healthcare worker further shared that while before the UPP the police operations would happen at certain times, under the presence of the UPP “the conflicts erupt at any time”, forcing them to find new strategies on how to avoid having their healthcare workers being caught in the crossfire (2017:50). This directly contradicts the initial success of the UPP in reducing violence in favelas in Zona Sul and allowing teachers and healthcare workers to more easily enter these communities, as shared by Oosterbaan and Wijk (2015). Joana* also shared that in 2011, during the implementation of the UPP, police officers started to use the identification vests of the community health agents in order to enter into residents’ houses, which hurt the residents’ confidence in these health care workers (2017:50).

The insecurity brought by the UPP in Alemão also closed down businesses and cultural events in the main cultural square, Praça do Samba, while the police installed an armoured police tower in the square and physically blocked many of the surrounding streets and alleys, severely impacting both local vendors and cultural events. Resident’s houses in the square were also invaded and turned into bunkers, “reinforcing the bellicose logic of militarization and armed conflict and the transfer of the figure of the ‘enemy’ to all the residents of the favela, further accentuating the acute context of violence in these territories” (DHESCA 2017:53). Finally, it is worth mentioning that the delivery of public services in Alemão as part of the UPP project resulted in the construction of a cable car in communities that still have open sewage, which could be seen as a way for tourists to look down on the ‘exotic, dangerous’ favela from a safe distance while the residents themselves would have preferred many other public services (Oosterbaan and van Wijk 2015). As shared by Freeman:

Domestic life of washing, bathing, hanging out clothes, grooming and socializing on the rooftop terraces and in the yards was clearly visible to

the curious visitors passing overhead. Signs in Portuguese, English and Spanish implied an international clientele (...) recent reports indicate the system is underused because the designers did not understand the transportation needs of the communities

(2014:27).

Written a few years later, the DHESCA report shares that the cable car now is closed for the use of the population while the “UPP bases are installed in their immediate vicinity (usually in front of the stations), reflecting the appropriation of these areas by the state security agents (2017: 51). According to these sources, the UPP did thus not at all reduce violence in the Complexo do Alemão, but rather increased violence, insecurity and militarization in these communities, in a state of occupation with widespread reports of human rights abuses and killings by the occupying UPP police forces.

The favela complex Maré consists of sixteen favelas housing close to 140 000 residents (Redes da Maré 2020a). Maré was invaded by the armed forces in the pacification operation named “Operation São Francisco” in April 2014, meant to “prepare the ‘territory’ for the implementation of the Police Pacification Unit, which did not happen. The Maré residents had to coexist (*conviver*) with war tanks and armed soldiers circulating in the streets, in addition to the constant inspections and shootouts, all for one year and five months” (Martins 2019:35). Lieutenant Colonel Abelardo Prisco de Souza Neto confirmed that the operation with 1900 army soldiers, 400 marines and 200 military police was for the sake of the World Cup (Martins 2019: 36). According to Martins and the local NGO Redes da Maré,

(W)hile large parts of the city had fun preparing themselves for the Cup, in Maré there were removals, assassinations, rapes, shootings, curfews, abuses and home invasions. ‘Nine out of every 100 residents had problems with the military forces: with the main ones being the way they were approached (70%), verbal aggressions (46%) and physical aggressions (31%), damage to property (15%) and various home invasions’

(Redes da Maré [online], 2017, in Martins 2019:36-37).

This military occupation showed a much more militarized side of the state's public security policies and pacification projects in the favelas. As described by Redes da Mare;

With the authorisation of the Presidency of the Republic, the Armed Forces had the power of the police and could make immediate arrests (*prisoas em flagrante*), patrolling and inspection. With this, Maré gained the appearance of an actual war territory, with tanks circulating through the streets, soldiers with high calibre weapons, barbed wires, and sandbags as barricades

(2017, in Martins 2019:37).

Here, the state's pacification process for the *asfalto* meant state war in the favela, which, together with an increased militarization of favela everyday life through the UPPs which will be discussed below start to show what the state's notion of 'peace' can mean for the 'pacified' in the colonial city.

The UPP's crisis at the time of my fieldwork (2019-2020) portrayed a failed project that no longer existed in any larger sense than as a form of theatre (Grupo Ar*, September 2019, Zona Sul). At this time, shootouts were returning to some favelas (Pedro*, August 2019; Paulo*, July 2019; Zona Sul) while the cease in violence and police operations in another was attributed to the UPP and other police forces being paid by the *tráfico* to stay out (Maria*, September 2019; Miguel*, September 2019; Aline*, September 2019, Zona Sul). In other favelas, a new, more violent section of Comando Vermelho⁷ from Zona Norte had entered the communities after the UPP had chased away the local *tráfico*, who showed much less respect for the residents compared to the old section (Luiz*, August 2019; Paulo*, July 2019, Zona Sul; Gledhill 2015). The UPP had thus broken the "harmony that had been" between the old *tráfico* and the community and left a vacuum for the more violent *tráfico* to fill

⁷ Red Command, the largest drug trafficking gang in Rio de Janeiro and one of the largest in Brazil

(Paulo*, July 2019, Zona Sul). Finally, the UPPs were only discussed with peace formers who lived in favelas that were experiencing this project. It is important to remember that the UPPs were only installed in ‘relevant’ favelas that were located either in the wealthy touristy region of Zona Sul or among the major highways linking Zona Sul to the international airport. More peripheric favelas did not experience the UPP program but rather continued violent public security operations such as the ones that will be described below.

Militarization

At the time of my fieldwork, Rio de Janeiro experienced the highest number of deaths in police operations in twenty years (Rodrigues and Coelho 2020). In 2019, 1814 people were killed in police operations in Rio de Janeiro, and 1423 (78.5%) of these were black or brown (Rodrigues and Coelho 2020). A study by the Rede de Observatórios da Segurança further showed that in the first six months of 2019, there was a 42% increase in police operations in the favelas compared to 2018, and a 46% increase in deaths during these operations (2019). The report goes on to show how the percentage of deaths caused by state agents in the city of Rio de Janeiro have increased from 25,6% in 2017 and 25,7% in 2018 to 38,3% in 2019 (Rede de Observatórios da Segurança 2019). They also add that the use of helicopters as a shooting platform in these operations is becoming increasingly more common (Rede de Observatórios da Segurança 2019). In 2020, “Rio police, by their own count, killed 606 people” only in the first four months of the year (Muñoz 2020). In April alone they “killed close to six people a day, a 43% increase from the same month last year” and were thus responsible for 35 % of all killings in Rio de Janeiro state that month (Muñoz 2020). In this fieldwork period, the era of ‘pacification’ had been replaced by increasingly violent and militarized public security operations in the favelas as far-right, ‘tough-on-crime’ candidates came to power both locally and nationally.

While one (not all) favela in Zona Sul was still calm, other favelas in Zona Norte were essentially experiencing war as heavily militarized public security forces frequently entered the communities unannounced, almost always in the early morning as children

were going to school and adults to work, causing massive shootouts to erupt in the streets with shots being fired from the ground, from tanks and from helicopters flying above (Redes da Maré 2020a). Maré for example, experienced 39 days (or almost 300 hours) of police operations in 2019, where 17 of these operations lasted more than eight consecutive hours (Redes da Maré 2020a). The operations caused school to be suspended for 24 days, and local health clinics to be closed for 25 days (Redes da Maré 2020a). 45 Maré residents were injured by firearms in 2019, 30 in police operations and 15 in actions by armed groups. 49 people died from firearms in the favela complex in 2019, meaning that “Every 7 days a person died in Maré. This number represents more than double the deaths compared to 2018” (Redes da Maré 2020a:16). 34 of these deaths were due to police actions; “25 deaths in which police officers had interfered with the crime scene, under the statement of ‘helping the victim’⁸” (Redes da Maré 2020a:10). Furthermore, 62% of deaths by interventions by state agents occurred during operations involving helicopters (Redes da Maré 2020a). In the same year, 15 deaths by firearms were due to the action of armed groups (Redes da Maré 2020a).

While perhaps extra high in Maré⁹, the violence of militarized public security operations was experienced in many other favelas in Zona Norte. Consider Fernanda*’s description of daily life in her community in Zona Norte in early 2020:

The biggest challenge is to go to sleep every night wondering when the next police operation will be. There have been so many deaths; children playing, a worker going to work, an old man left his home to go back to work and he was shot by the police in his stairway and died. And they end up being only numbers. There’s also more violence against children, mothers and women here. You never know who will be the next one. My house was hit by stray bullets two times already. My street used to be calm, but today it’s dangerous. We have to hide in the bathroom in the

⁸ See also HRW 2020 on possible tampering with evidence in police killings in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro.

⁹ To compare deaths in police operations, 11% of violent deaths in Brazil in 2018 occurred by intervention of state agents, while 70% of the lethal violence in Maré in 2019 occurred by intervention of state agents (Redes da Maré 2020:18).

house when there are operations. This leaves people sick. I and many others are becoming sick, and the ones we attend to as well. People think fireworks are shootouts. And you have to leave here to go to work when there are operations as well [people can't afford to miss work]. If you don't live here, you won't understand how it is. Life cannot stop, but who will be the next one? It's terrible.

(Fernanda*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

This increased violence and experience of living in a conflict zone was also shared by Marcia*:

At least once a month we have a police operation, sometimes twice a week, depending on the situation (*clima*) (...) It's just the police operations that make things difficult in that way. We are targets, you know (*a gente é alvo, né*), seen as a target (...) you know the 80 bullets the army shot at the musician in his car (...). This was something new; so brutal. The brutality has increased so much recently. It's like in the movies, like from Rambo, so brutal [unreal, absurd]. We're very tense, every time the helicopter passes, we're wondering, do you think it's going to start shooting (*dar tiro*)?

(Marcia*, September 2019; Zona Norte).

The violence experienced in these communities was overwhelming and places the state's so-called pacification programs seeking to 'bring peace to the favela' in a stark perspective. What state, with a racist, colonial history with its favela residents, can pretend to be bringing peace to the favela while effectively conducting warfare in these communities?

As if in a civil war, overwhelmingly many of the research participants from the favelas pointed to the state as the biggest challenge to their work to reduce violence and to life in general in their communities. Marcos*, for example, shared how the police are increasingly violent and disrespectful of human rights in his community, clearly stating that they come to kill and that it is even easier to deal with the drug gangs in the area than the police:

The police operations now are violating the houses of the residents, of workers – they take valuables, the BOPE [special police force] even more. It's difficult to end the daily violence in Rio de Janeiro. I've been in this role for 30 years, today they are too violent; with women, with workers. It's difficult.

(...)

The police come to kill and destroy. (...) The police don't come to arrest, they come to kill. These days it's easier to deal with the *trafico*, the police are very, very violent. When there are operations, we go to the streets; there are residents being violated, tortured, they don't respect us. We denounce them in the public ministry and in the ombudsman office, but it doesn't change anything.

(Marcos*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

At the time, Rio de Janeiro faced a president (Bolsonaro) who supports the military dictatorship calling human rights abuses during the dictatorship 'collateral damage', and a governor (Witzel) who said he would have liked to send a missile to the Cidade de Deus favela to solve that problem, and that you 'aim for the head and shoot' when targeting criminals as a 'good criminal is a dead criminal' (Associated Press 2019; HRW 2019; The Guardian 2019). As Maria* shared, "Today there's a government that allows for extermination, (with the mindset that) being in, from the favela, is a disposable life" (Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul). Comparing this period of militarization and invasion to the pacification period, Rafael* shared: "It's like those days it was social projects in order to control (the favela) and now it's time kill, only killing" (Rafael*, October 2019, Zona Norte). Indeed, the fairly short lifespan and eventual failure of the UPP program and the huge intensification in violent public security operations shortly after have caused many to question whether the UPP was ever meant to promote a genuine 'peace' and inclusion of the favela residents as substantive citizens. Rather, many criticize it as a counter-insurgency project to 'win hearts and minds' and just another public security attempt to 'control a dangerous population' (Gledhill 2015; Leite et al. 2018; Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019). If one considers the heavily militarized invasions in the favelas that served as the first step of the UPP program, including the army's and the UPP's warfare and

human rights abuses in Maré and Alemão, and the militarization of the favela residents' life in forcing them to balance between the *tráfico* and the UPP, 'militarization' seems to be a more accurate and consistent description of these public security policies than 'pacification'. The next section will dive deeper into the discussion and meaning of the war on drugs' narrative and the consequent militarization of public security in Rio de Janeiro.

The war on drugs and the 'enemy within'

This section looks a little deeper into how the state in Rio de Janeiro as well as the national government have embraced the war on drugs as their main public security policy. I argue that this demonstrates an explicit political choice by the governing forces to treat the favela residents as the 'enemy within' and their communities as enemy territory in their embrace of a heavily militarized warfare as well as experimental 'counter-insurgency' projects like the UPPs in these areas instead of treating poverty and crime as a socioeconomic issue and working to truly integrate favela residents with a full set of citizen and human rights. Wacquant names this preference of the 'penal treatment' over the 'social treatment' of poverty in a society marred by racial inequalities a 'chaotic dictatorship over the poor' (2003; 2008). This will be further analysed below.

Instead of seeing the UPP project and the wider state public security policies in the favelas in Rio as policies that would increase human security for the favela residents, many favela activists pointed to a larger security and domination project, where Rio was being used a laboratory for state experiments with different counterinsurgency tactics in the war on drugs (Fernanda*, January 2020, Zona Norte; Miagusko 2018; Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019). The UPPs were indeed adapted from similar projects in Medellin, Colombia, and Brazil participated and had leading roles in the peacekeeping operations UNIFIL in Lebanon and MINUSTAH in Haiti, where in Haiti their role largely concerned handling urban gang warfare (Schuberth 2019). Schuberth argues that the Brazilian Armed Forces brought with them expertise from their operations in Rio de Janeiro and applied these in Port-au-Prince, where they, in

both places, used “a mix of coercive and cooperative measures reminiscent of counterinsurgency (COIN) tactics already employed in French Algeria in the 1840s” (2019:488). According to some of my research participants, the one ‘cooperative measure’ was a “civil-military cooperation, where military forces operate with local security organs, NGOs, (social) projects, private and public businesses (...) Like the NGO Viva Rio acting as an arm (*braço*) of the Brazilian army in Haiti”:

Think about flows of militarization; MINUSTAH in Haiti, UNFIL in Lebanon, UPP in Brazil. Brazil is present in all of these at the same time. Colonialism and militarization are kind of like digestion, like the colon. Militarization starts in one place, and then goes to another place, with experimentation. Like with nutrition in digestion, you take away what works, what you need, and discard the rest. Always, continuously a process of digestion, of experimenting, (but remember it’s with peoples’ lives!)

(Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019).

This view, from a favela activist who has experienced the UPP, PAC and police operations in his community, is a clear critique of the militarization of Brazilian public security. Instead of addressing the structural violence and racism of the exclusion of favela residents, the state is experimenting with various projects of domination, control, pacification and counterinsurgency in the favelas, with the UPP as one of these; combining social projects with military intervention in order to draw attention away from the violence and injustice of the system (Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019; Rafael*, Zona Norte).

In Schubert’s research, one can also see how the idea of favelas (and the Haiti equivalent) as dangerous, criminal places that must be cleansed for the sake of the security for the rest of the city up is reflected in the discourse of Brazilian public security officers both in Haiti and in Rio de Janeiro. The Force Commander of MINUSTAH in Haiti, Brazilian Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos, said in 2007 that “There will be no tolerance for the kidnappings, harassment and terror carried

out by criminal gangs. I will continue to cleanse these areas of the gangs who are robbing the Haitian people of their security". In Brazil,

in the same year, the hard-line commander of a particularly notorious battalion of Rio's Military Police praised his troops as 'best social insecticide', whereas Rio's governor Sérgio Cabral declared that his state was 'at war with criminal elements, a war that could not be won without bloodshed'

(Schuberth 2019:492).

Now consider Fernanda's perspective of being treated as one of these criminal elements because of the community in which she lives:

The governor uses the Rio de Janeiro favela as a laboratory because he wants to become president. In an interview he said that all the deaths [in public security operations] were of people involved with the *tráfico*. It's tense (*tenso*). There is no respect. Even if they were involved with the *tráfico*, you don't have to kill [them], you arrest! The president and the governor they support killing (*matança*). For them, we are all the same. We are all accomplices. We are not. But for them, the favela resident is only this. You leave your house to go to work with your door closed and when you come back, the door is broken, documents, money, food are gone, they've [the police] been in your fridge. The police that is supposed to protect you doesn't exist (*não tem*). The favela resident constantly has his rights violated. In Zona Sul, you don't have these rights violated. But in the favela these rights don't exist. It's not easy. A lot of people want to leave but they don't have the conditions to do so. You resist but you don't know until when. Today, many people know about their rights. The [favela community organization] gives support and orientation and strengthens the daily struggle (*luta*). You have to secure your hand in the hand of the other and walk forward.

(Fernanda*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

Fernanda*'s quote reflect the data and stories shared above in showing the necropolitical nature of a state that criminalizes and dehumanizes the black favela

resident as a criminal in the narrative of the war on drugs, turning them into ‘killable bodies’ and making them expandable in the eyes of the main media and the *asfalto* (Agambem 1998; Alves 2014; Fanon 1963; Leite et al. 2018; Gledhill 2015; Scheper-Hughes 2004; Villenave 2018). Thus, as discussed in chapter 4, by staying in the narrative of the war on drugs as a ‘state of exception’, the necropolitical state unproblematizes state violence and murder in the favelas and draws attention away from the structural inequality and racism of the colonial city and its failure (or unwillingness) to provide genuine social development and public services in these communities (Mbembe 2013; Villenave 2018). As Bourgois describes it: “Nations become hyper-militarized, death squads and paramilitaries technified and human rights abuses legitimized or rendered invisible when the priority becomes the enforcing the new US-led wars on drugs and terror (Carter 2014)” (Bourgois 2015:314).

According to Wacquant, this war on drugs is an explicit political choice to choose a ‘penal treatment of poverty’ over a social treatment of poverty which would focus on long-term economic policies, solidarity and social justice (2003). Similarly, Gledhill has argued that this war on drugs in reality turns into a war on the poor, which in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, become a war against the black poor (2015; Alves 2014). Wacquant further reflects that this

[N]eoliberal penalty is paradoxical in that it purports to deploy ‘more state’ in the realm of police and prisons to remedy the generalized rise of objective and subjective insecurity that is *itself caused* by ‘less state’ on the economic and social front in all the countries of the First World as in those of the Second

(Wacquant 2003:198).

Wacquant further studies the increased militarization of public security in Brazil and argues that this

Strategy of punitive containment favored by political elites as a complement to the deregulation of the economy in the 1990s leads *from the penalization to the militarization of urban marginality*, under which

residents of declining *favelas* are treated as virtual enemies of the nation, the police supplanted by the army, tenuous trust in public institutions undermined, and the spiral of violence accelerated.

(2008:58).

He adds that within this context, the favelas “emerge as both the prime targets and the proving ground whereupon the neoliberal penal state is being erected and experimented”, which is directly supported by the similarities in the use of COIN tactics in Brazilian peacekeeping in Port-au-Prince and the UPPs in Rio de Janeiro (Schubert 2019 more; Wacquant 2008:58-59).

Taking a step back, the insecurity and violence in Rio’s favelas and the state’s violent and militarized security policies in these communities can be seen as results of an explicit political choice to govern and pacify this population just enough to secure the whiter, wealthier areas of the city, especially in periods of mega events where the favelas were increasingly pacified arguably for the international visitors to these events. Here, the favela residents are, as discussed in chapter 4, constructed and reconstructed as the dangerous, violent criminal and the favelas as cradles of crime which effectively become enemy territories in the war on drugs: “Under this approach, urban law-enforcement agencies operate in the manner of border patrols and forces of occupation in poor areas treated as domestic “war zones” harboring an alien population stripped of the normal protections and privileges of the law” (Wacquant 2008:70). In a critical perspective, this explicit choice to exclude the majority-black, working-class favela residents from citizenship and humanity and to use the narratives of the war on drugs to legitimize state warfare in these communities constitute a violent state that has a genocidal, necropolitical relationship with the favelas. Genocidal, in the sense that the overwhelming majority of victims of police murder are young, black, male favela residents, not to mention the large numbers of these youths imprisoned without conviction, the indiscriminate shooting and murder of innocent bystanders during police operations in these areas, and the criminalization of Afro-Brazilian culture, community radios and *Baile funk* parties under the UPP program. As described by one research participant: “This bullet has an address, you know (*né*), it’s not public security, its extermination” (Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019).

Necropolitical, as the lack of public services in the favelas can be seen as a politics of killing and leaving to die, which clearly discriminates between *asfalto* citizens and the killable favela bodies:

“The public power (state) should help us but they want to finish us”

(Davi*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

“The police think they can act how they want, principally in the favelas, with black bodies”

(Malanquini, July 2019).

The law says the police cannot mess (*mexer*) with your phone... But, if you're poor, black, alone in any place, fuck it, you do what they want you to do... A friend asked me, but what if BOPE invades my house, what do I do, how do I defend myself? I answered: If BOPE invades your house, you make them a coffee (*cafezinho*)!

(Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019).

These quotes, and hopefully much of the material presented in this chapter, show how the protections of human rights under the law do not reach the favelas, as the police impunity and the racialization and criminalization of the favela residents have largely unproblematized and normalized state murder in these communities. For the research participants, the state and its security forces become the main violators of rights instead of the ones safeguarding these rights. At the time of my fieldwork, police operations were increasingly militarized and deadly, producing effectively a war in many of the favelas, supported by a far-right president, mayor and governor. As described by Pedro*: “The governor stimulates confrontation which makes the police increasingly kill more people”(August 2019, Zona Sul) and Grupo Luz*: “Today there's a politics of extermination”(November 2019). In this new, hyper violent context; Izabel* shared:

“Today, public security is our greatest need; our security today is zero” (January 2020, Zona Norte). Who then provides security? What is peace in this context?

Conclusion: “I want to make my war against this peace”¹⁰

...The pacification discourse and the concept of peace as well, they just fuck with us. I don't want more peace, not the way it's been put

(Goulart, August 2019).

What is ‘peace’ when it is enacted by a violent, perverse state? What is ‘peace’ in a colonial city, where white colonizers have since their arrival attempted to civilize and pacify the ‘dangerous’, ‘uncivil’ marginalized groups? ‘Peace’, in the perspective of the favela, has the colonial past of controlling the perceived dangerous favela population in order to maintain order in the city. The narrative of war and peace continues to be used by the state as a justification to continue the war-like security operations in the favelas instead of investing in development, social projects and the creation of opportunities in these communities (Pedro*, August 2019, Zona Sul). As Gledhill finds; this “securitization has become a means of holding this kind of world together and diminishing the challenges that its injustices create” (2015:200). In a colonial city, the state’s ‘peace’ thus equals war or a ‘life under siege’ for the criminalized, favela residents in order to secure the white, wealthy areas of the city. For the favelas, “The state, instead of producing this peace, he creates the violence” (Grupo Luz*, November 2019).

Fighting for an alternative narrative, many of the research participants just want a “government that is committed to reducing violence with participation from the favelas themselves” (Bernardo*, February 2020) and that looks at and care about the well-being of the favelas (Antonio*, January 2020; Marcos*, January 2020, Zona Norte). Several, therefore, argued that it was not relevant to talk about peace, as what

¹⁰ (Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019)

was really needed was social development, education and employment opportunities in the favelas (Pedro*, August 2019; Gabriel*, August 2019, Zona Sul; Bernardo*, February 2020):

The Resident Associations and cultural groups always search for money and ask for resources from the government for water systems, schools, kindergartens, etc. But the government doesn't take care of the development of the community, they just stay in the narrative of war. They use conflict as an excuse not to get involved. But when they want to come up [enter the favela], they come....

(Gabriel*, August 2019, Zona Sul).

Pedro* (August 2019, Zona Sul) and Jose* (February 2020, Zona Norte) both philosophized on the various meanings of peace in the *carioca* favela and quoted the famous song by O Rappa: '*paz sem voz, não é paz, é medo*', peace without voice is not peace, it is fear.¹¹ "Peace is something that comes from the outside in, a thing for the elite. When you don't have rights or respect, you don't have peace" (Pedro*, August 2019, Zona Sul). This elite peace corresponds with the state's pacification attempts through the UPPs, where the pause in shootouts did not mean that the favela residents were treated with respect or that their voices were heard. At best, the ceasefire experienced in some favelas under the UPP thus became peace as silence, as fear, a negative peace; an unstable calm, or minefield, without favela participation or social justice (Galtung 1969; Menezes 2018). Aline* explained her hesitancy to the current calm in a favela in Zona Sul:

it's so peaceful here, calmer than in many years, but I'm not sure if it's peaceful... there's hardly any conflict: it's calm, quiet, but you don't know what happened, why it's like this. Is the conflict ongoing, or not? You need trust in order to have peace, you need to be able to trust people and here you don't...

(...)

¹¹ Original phrase: "Paz sem voz não é paz, é medo" – "Peace without voice is not peace, it's fear" (ORappa)

What is peace anyways? I have hope that it will be better. Here, it's peaceful on the surface, not on the deeper layers. But I'm not sure how this peace on a deeper layer is created... We're at a balance now [in the conflict situation]. It's invisible, which makes it hard to plan anything. If conflict suddenly emerges, we can't carry out our projects. They [people here] live in poverty and uncertainty. This affects your brain development, we see it daily in our students on four different levels: lack of focus, memory, association and rationalization. This is very challenging, and all the kids have this. We also have kids that live literally on trash belts in their house, they don't have that in their house; what peace is. So, peace is not in their environment.

(Aline*, September 2019, Zona Sul).

Her description of the favela residents and children growing up in uncertainty shows how superficial, unsustainable and insecure the current negative peace appears to be in this community. As Pedro* put it; "It's impossible to talk about peace when there's a family that doesn't have enough money to buy food for their child. You can live in the most silent, calm place but not have peace. So, what is peace?" (Pedro*, August 2019, Zona Sul). Peace as the silent calm without shootouts in the favela in Zona Sul was, as discussed above, attributed to a payoff between the *trafico* and police rather than a sustainable peace process that would address the underlying poverty and lack of opportunities in the favela. This reflects back to what Wacquant calls the penal instead of the social treatment of poverty, treating the drug issue as a criminal issue and not a health and social one.

Naturally, one favela activist wanted to "make my war against this peace" in his struggle for survival (Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019). As described by another favela activist: "Everything comes with a promise of peace. This peace comes with a war that never ends" (Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019). The rejection of peace by the research participants is understandably a rejection of the violent, negative state war, camouflaged as 'peace' and 'public security', and used to dominate, pacify and civilize the favelas. It is a rejection of the peace that defends and preserves the violent system of *branquitude*, whiteness, in a perverse state where the

elites sit comfortably in their privilege while the public security forces wage war in the favelas. Where is human security, human rights, citizenship, the social contract, responsibility to protect? As Jose* shared: “I must say, I zero believe in the peace discourse, I think it’s meant to leave people calm, when you need revolt/uprising (...) It would need to be our peace, not the peace that is not ours. It would need to be from the grassroot (*de base*)” (Jose*, February 2020, Zona Norte). Seeing Brazil as a perverse democracy (Pearce, 2010) and a necropolitical state (Campbell & Sitze, 2013; Mbembe 2003; 2018), and Rio de Janeiro as a colonial city built on the oppression and exploitation of black and other non-white people, helps explain both the structural inequalities between the favela and the *asfalto* and the widespread racism, prejudice against and criminalization of favela residents. Peace, in this colonial city and violent, necropolitical state, becomes “a form of war, and the state the means of waging it” (Foucault 1976, in Richmond 2001). Peace reflects the powers and nature of the state and remains in this context, like the Brazilian state and its public security forces, intimately linked to their violent history of colonization, slavery and dictatorship where public security and pacification are tools to suppress and dominate the perceived lesser worth favela population and their communities. The struggle to survive, to reduce violence and to construct a better future for the children and grandchildren in the favelas in the presence of this necropolitical state screams for alternative ways to address violence and insecurity and rethink public security.

~ Chapter 6 ~

Three ways of favela peace formation

Introduction

As the previous chapter has shown, the state's 'peace' in Rio de Janeiro often means more violence and militarization of everyday life rather than reduction of violence, genuine inclusion in society and positive development in the favelas. As a response to and in despite of this state violence, individuals, groups and movements within the favelas themselves work to reduce violence in their communities. This chapter considers the work of these favela activists, public security experts, community workers, youth groups, teachers, educators, artists, journalists, researchers, writers, tour guides, museum leaders, resident association presidents and drug rehabilitation workers to reduce violence and construct a legitimate peace in their communities as "favela peace formation". As mentioned in the theoretical framework of this thesis, peace formation is introduced to peace and conflict studies by Richmond to describe localized, networked, bottom-up, non-violent processes that work to construct a peace that includes social justice, local legitimacy and inclusion instead of a mere negative peace through the cease of direct violence (2016; 2019). Contextualizing Richmond's concept of peace formation (2016; 2019) in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, this chapter considers the ways in which peace formation works in a context of social violence in the margins of a violent, racist state. Building on the previous chapter on violent, necropolitical state 'peace as war', this chapter presents some of the ways in which favela peace formers dispute this violence and build their own peace. Introducing the localized concept of favela peace formation, the chapter studies how local actors work to reduce violence both within and in parallel to the state. The chapter analyses how favela peace formers work to empower their communities through education and work with youth in a self-help, parallel fashion, while simultaneously navigating the state through the judiciary and politics in order to fight for change within the system, and

combating prejudice by producing knowledge, networking, and thus shifting narratives. By including reflections by favela peace formers on how to construct a ‘politics without violence’(Pearce 2020), the chapter sets the stage for the next and final analysis chapter which will take a step back and consider the wider potential of favela peace formation, including its opportunities and challenges in Rio de Janeiro.

Richmond’s concept of peace formation is defined to describe grassroots processes in a post-conflict society, often where the international community is involved in traditional, top-down peacebuilding processes (Richmond 2019). The favelas in Rio de Janeiro are neither in post-conflict, as they continue to experience massive social conflict and state warfare, nor have they any significant involvement from the international community, as they are rather challenged by the state’s own necropolitical, deadly public security projects. In a perverse democracy such as Brazil where the state and society are built up on inequality, racism and *branquitude*, the efforts from the favela to change these violent structures and to reduce violence in their community are therefore perhaps even more challenging, as they continue to live in conflict and do not have any significant support from the international community. In many ways, however, the favela struggles for social justice, inclusion, human rights and the reduction of violence perfectly fall under Richmond’s ‘peace formation’:

Peace formation can [thus] be seen as a form of subaltern agency or power – a set of practices – which operates cautiously in order to circumvent and negate the direct and structural power of the state, the international geopolitical system and global economy, that may directly or indirectly cause overt violent conflict (militarism, nationalism, inequity, etc.). It may also shape or influence the governmental power of the state, which often maintains predatory statehood. It may also respond to the policy frameworks of the international community, which follows hegemony, meaning its “soft” or “normative” capacity to shape order. Thus, peace formation must be seen as a subaltern and critical form of agency that seeks to engage with direct, structural, or governmental power, which sustain conflict or injustice and structural violence, with varying degrees of success or failure. It is therefore important to

recognize the potential and the limits of peace formation in the context of these dynamics of power and violence

(Richmond 2016: 5-6).

Naming it themselves a *luta* (fight, struggle), micro-revolutions and *trabalho de formiguinha* (ant-work, literally, meaning slow and steady work) and a *trabalho de base* (grassroot work) the *peace formers* in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro work on various fronts to: denounce state violence and neglect, end the genocidal police operations in the favelas, provide social and educational services for their communities, ensure new opportunities for their children and youth to keep them away from the *tráfico*, produce and share knowledge challenging the criminalizing main narratives in society, combat racism and prejudice, debate, discuss, and teach in the favela and the *asfalto*, demand change in the government and in policies, strengthen favela culture and memory, empower favela residents to demand more from their citizenship, increase participation in politics, push for security sector reform, and many more in order to construct a more socially and racially just, and less violent future.

The aims, actors and methods of favela peace formers in Rio de Janeiro are incredibly diversified, creative and answer to all aspects of favela life. This chapter therefore looks closer at three main themes that were identified by the research participants as essential in their work to improve life and reduce violence in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro: 1. Education and work with children and youth; 2. Navigating the state; and 3. Shifting narratives. Many aims, projects and intended benefactors naturally cross more or all of these themes, as they are all closely interrelated. Education, for example, also works a lot with changing narratives and perceptions, as well as teaching residents their rights as citizens in relation to the state. Much of the work on changing narratives also involves both youth and mediation with state actors. It is therefore worth to keep in mind that their separation here is artificial and purely for the sake of organizing. The first section on education focuses on the efforts to provide other opportunities and motivations for children and youth in order to keep them away from crime, and to help past gang-members leave the life of crime. This section also considers some of the mental health impacts on children growing up in the conflict and sees this work with youth as a form of self-help and parallelism in the absence of a social state. Next, the

second theme consider the various ways in which favela peace formers navigate the state, both through the judiciary in order to reduce violence in police operations in the favelas, and through favela representatives in politics. The third section looks at the work to shift the criminalizing narratives of the favelas towards more nuanced narratives where the favelas are seen as empowered, creative, strong communities whose residents deserve human rights and the same opportunities as the rest of Brazilian citizens.

In parallel to the state: community work with youth

In Rio de Janeiro, children and youth seem to form the axis of both conflict and favela peace formation. Not only are there mostly children and youth who join the drug gangs in the favelas and fight and die in shootouts with other gangs and public security forces, but it is also youth who are some of the main drivers of social change, justice and peace. Many of the research participants therefore identified work with children and youth as central to favela peace formation. By providing education, socio-emotional learning, activities in sports, arts and music, professional courses, and safe spaces to read, play and learn, favela peace formers aim to empower children and youth to find their own paths, away from drug trafficking and crime. While favela youth are marginalized and criminalized by the rest of society and turned into dangerous, killable bodies in the state's narrative of war and security, favela peace formers see them for who they are, children and youth often in need of love, structure, support, and education. Favela peace formers thus explicitly choose the social treatment of poverty and drugs within the insecurity posed by the state's penal treatment of these same issues (Wacquant 2003; 2008). The research participants largely focused on providing new, interesting opportunities to youth in order to provide alternatives to the *tráfico*, and on providing safe spaces and psychological support in order to help the children and youth learn and develop.

The main focus of the research participants was the youth and children at risk of joining the drug gangs and they focused much of their work on keeping these kids away from the streets. It is important to note that many of the research participants

were young themselves, like Miguel* who also has a history as a gang member and has seen the importance of providing other opportunities to the children and youth in his community. I therefore want to emphasize the importance of noticing the heterogeneous and fluid roles of the youth in contrast to the state's criminalization of the entire group. Miguel*, a former *trafico* manager, was now dedicating his life to keeping the children and youth out of the *trafico*:

Our main objective is that the child doesn't enter the *trafico*. Lots of children here see the *traficante* as a hero, so we're trying to make them think differently, to understand that the world is big and that there are other paths; to awaken their curiosity through graffiti, theatre, culture, music... these are our weapons (...) For example, we have 130 children in football (*futsal*), so I manage to have 130 lives away from the community, away from shootouts, away from lost bullets... And there are also many parents who sleep in late in the afternoon, who drink, use drugs... So, we help them (the children), give them support and attention, take care of them

(...)

If I had twenty jobs to offer, I could manage to get twenty of the children on the corner away from the *trafico*, twenty children I can get the weapons out of their hands, twenty children who won't be another son killed, twenty children taken away from confrontations and shootouts with the police

(Miguel*, September 2019, Zona Sul).

This quote also shows Miguel*'s belief that if the children involved in the *trafico* had other employment opportunities, they might leave the *trafico*. Growing up in a community that is simultaneously criminalized, targeted and abandoned by the state and public services, with very poor education in the public schools (that in some favelas are frequently closed due to police operations) and few recreational, educational and employment opportunities, some youth join the *trafico* simply due to a lack of other opportunities in which to sustain themselves and their family (Izabel*, January 2020; Antonio*, January 2020; Davi*, January 2020; Fernanda*, January

2020; Marcos*, January 2020, Zona Norte, Maria*, September 2019; Miguel*, September 2019; Aline*, September 2019, Zona Sul). As João* said about the gang members; “They are kids who need work. The biggest challenge is to pull them out of it...” (January 2020, Zona Norte). He also mentioned that “I already know many who have wanted to leave and left. Even the boss of the favela gave up everything, he’s working for the church now” (Davi*, January 2020, Zona Norte). The emphasis is therefore on helping them leave and providing them with education and employment:

There are many youths who don’t know how to do anything, so the *tráfico* teaches them, they enter because of lack of options. The dream is to have a professional centre that takes this boy, the minor who already committed an offense and needs to be socio-educated. If we could manage a partnership so that after socio-education he could have a place to work, to get him on the right path... Because now we do everything, and we let them go, and they don’t have anywhere to go.

(Izabel*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

This quote also shows the limits of favela peace formation, as Izabel* says they do everything in their power to help the youth within their limits, but that this is still often not enough if the youths have nowhere to go after. Antonio* and Marcos* were both frustrated with the lack of assistance from the government on this matter: “Youths from the *tráfico* come here asking me to help them get a job, because they want to leave that life. But the government doesn’t offer anything. How are we supposed to project a better future?” (Antonio*, January 2020, Zona Norte); “The first challenge is that we don’t have work for the youth, so they get into *tráfico*. The state doesn’t offer anything” (Marcos*, January 2020, Zona Norte). Favela peace formation thus seems to work in the absence of the social state, but limited, as they themselves cannot offer enough employment opportunities. I do not want to romanticize and generalize all children and youth as inherently peace-loving if only given a chance, but many participants emphasized the importance of providing new chances and opportunities for the ones who want to grab them.

In order to provide genuine and attractive opportunities to these children and youth, some research participants mentioned the need to more closely study why they choose to join the drug gangs. Some of the children growing up in violence and/or in families with drug and alcohol abuse and/or domestic violence, search for respect, success, power and/or a sense of brotherhood in the gangs. “They feel powerful with weapons in their hands, they have more girlfriends, you see a boy with a weapon in his hand as powerful. They end up running away from a good future to a bad future” (Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul). In a community where the police are often the main perpetrators of violence and the only representatives of the state in the community, some children also look up to the gang members as they fight the police and sometimes also organize parties and provide services neglected by the state.

The biggest fight is to have something that is more attractive than the *trafico*. The *trafico* is tempting with gold, money, there’s no-one ordering you around, telling you what to do, there are others that like what you like, and there are *traficantes* that they (the kids) like, who have been role models for a while...

(Miguel*, September 2019, Zona Sul).

Some research participants also said the *trafico* could provide a sense of brotherhood and acceptance for children and youth who might not have experienced this in their lives:

We need to study more what brings these boys to the *trafico*. A research showed that it was about money, but also masculinity, power, something they never had before in their lives. As all the spaces that were denied for them, like family, church, school, etc, the *trafico* was the first space where they saw other boys who took care of them. Not even their family would take care of them like that; they would defend each other against the police, etc. A 15-year-old boy said that soon he could enter the *trafico*¹². In his school they said he ‘couldn’t stay in school because he

¹² The minimum age for that gang was 16

was a bad seed'. It's a question of; 'who are you?' you can't be yourself in the family, in church, in school, but in the *trafico*, you can.

(Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019).

These views reflect Bourgois' analysis of street culture in Chicago:

On a subtler level, street culture is more than economic desperation or greediness. It is also a search for dignity and a refusal to accept the marginalization that mainstream society imposes on children who grow up in the inner city [...] it can be understood as a culture of opposition – if not resistance – to economic exploitation and cultural denigration. Concretely, this takes the form of refusing low wages, poor working conditions, and racism, and of celebrating marginalization as a badge of pride – even if it is ultimately self-destructive

(2004:304).

As favela youth are marginalized and criminalized in the public school system and other formal spaces, some of the research participants thus offered alternatives such as gaming and photography courses, sports, more practical work certificates such as barbers and beauticians, and cultural initiatives such as dance, graffiti, music, rap and slam-poetry circles, where the youth can be respected and understood for who they are. Many of these collectives and circles were created by favela youth for favela youth, thus rejecting the more formal educational processes, embracing favela culture and creativity and exposing youth to new, alternative perspectives and opportunities.

Some research participants also focused on the need for psychological support for even younger children as growing up in conflict and violence was affecting their learning and development:

They live in poverty, uncertainty, this affects your brain development (we see it daily in our students) on four different levels, lack of focus, memory, association and rationalization. This is very challenging, and all the kids have this. We also have kids who live literally on trash belts in

their house, they don't have that in their house, what peace is, so peace is not in their environment

(Aline*, September 2019, Zona Sul).

Growing up in social violence and abuse, and with frequent shootouts in a constant "life under siege" (Menezes 2018), many children suffer with mental health issues that affect their learning and development.

We had a six-year-old child who said: 'I'm going to kill you!' to another child. Why? He is reflecting his environment. We have many disturbed/upset (*transtornado*) children, a lot more in 2019 than before, children who want to escape (*fugir*), who want to kill themselves, only six years old... this is as paralysing [impossibly challenging] as the shootouts. This happens once a week. This and the shootouts are both symptoms of a sick society.

(me): Why are the children like this, where do they get it from?

Their family fighting, the father hitting the mother, violence at home, their relatives talking like that in the street, fighting, using violent language, there are families with serious problems. In the school too, the teachers ask us sometimes why this boy pulled a knife on his teacher... They have a lot less affection than they should have, reflecting the world around them. You have to be very strong and equilibrated to be able to help these children. We need to look for support, from friends, in therapy, in the academia, we need a big support network, if not it becomes very heavy

(Marcia*, September 2019, Zona Norte).

It becomes clear that growing up in violence and conflict has a mental toll on many if not all of the children, and that sufficient psychological support and the provision of new opportunities could help break a cycle of violence and conflict. It also shows the danger and destruction of the violent, militarized public security operations in the favelas that only serve to bring more violence and fear to the lives of these children instead of giving them opportunities and safe spaces to grow and develop, or funding to the favela peace formers who already do so.

In the presence of a violent, securitized penal state and in the absence of a social state, peace formers work in a parallel and perhaps also oppositional fashion in order to help these children and youth (Wacquant 2008). Some favela peace formers focused on providing a safe space where the kids could come after school, where they could help them open up their minds and to ‘make them dream’:

Today we work with youth that are directly or indirectly involved with illicit drugs, and prevention, with the goal that the kid will come to dream. There are 16-year-olds, and you ask them what they want, what their dream is, [and] they don’t know, they don’t know how to dream. And when you dream, you wake up to implement, to do the things you need to do. I have three words I always say: I can, I want to, I’m able to. That we also can, not just the rich, and that we’ll do anything to make it happen. So, the involvement with illicit drugs is a question of not dreaming and the treatment in the families (...) Our work is done with love, but it’s very complicated; the public power should help us but they want to finish us. There are people who want to change their lives, and we say; “we’re here!”. We who work here are all from here, to tell the youth that “I made it” [live by example].

(Davi*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

Based on these reflections, I would argue that favela youth joining the drug gangs is simply a response to a violent and unjust context, and a search for belonging in a violent, racist system that has always excluded and criminalized these youth and their ancestors (Bourgois 2004). Favela peace formation therefore works to provide other, alternative spaces where they can be accepted, learn to dream and choose other paths. By providing social work and other opportunities to keep children and youth out of the *trafico*, the peace formers and research participants turn the state’s narrative of war against these ‘dangerous criminals’ on its head and focus on the humanity, individuality and agency of each child. Instead of being seen as dangerous, violent perpetrators, these children are seen as individuals who need love, attention, security, other opportunities and to be given the chance to dream and to follow their dreams (Miguel*, September 2019; Pedro*, August 2019; Grupo Ar*, September 2019;

Antônia*, August 2019; Aline*, September 2019, Zona Sul; Davi*, January 2020; Marcia*, September 2019; Antonio*, January 2020; João*, January 2020; Marcos*, January 2020; Izabel*, January 2020; Douglas*, September 2019, Zona Norte). This work with youth is therefore not only empowering for the youth and the community, but it also challenges the criminalizing narratives of the main media and the executive powers.

The work with education and youth is, as shown briefly in the literature review, only one of many ways in which favela residents self-organize and self-govern in the absence of public and social services. Throughout their history, favela residents have organized to construct houses, roads, sewage and other infrastructure, they respond collectively to landslides and floods, have organized trash collection and mail delivery, and taken over responsibility for health clinics, kindergartens and schools (Alves and Evanson 2011; Caldeira 2000; Goldstein 2003). This section has shown how favela peace formers, in addition to constructing physical infrastructure in their communities, also have a long-term focus on the new generations of favela residents. Many of the interviewees thus prioritized providing educational and recreational opportunities to the youth whose public education is poor and whose opportunities (as provided by the state) are few. The research participants work to empower the youth in order to empower the community, in a slow, but steady *trabalho de formiguinha*; grassroot, everyday efforts to build a less violent society. By educating the youth, favela peace formation also empowers more actors to occupy spaces in the rest of the city, in an effort to be recognized as a part of the city and as citizens with rights. I would argue that the work with youth is threefold: it provides opportunities and services in a form of self-help in a community abandoned by the (social) state; by doing so, it keeps more youth away from the *tráfico* and helps gang members who want to leave crime, thus reducing the number of youths involved in the conflict; and, it empowers more youth to join the favela peace formation efforts both as new teachers for the new generations of youth in the community, and as policy-shapers through their roles in academia, politics, and as active citizens aware of their rights. Responding to the needs of the community, favela peace formers thus construct local self-help solutions to violence, while, as the next section will show, simultaneously fighting actively through the state system for more rights and respect. The third section

will then look at the overarching, unceasing work to change criminalizing and marginalizing narratives.

Navigating the state

Favela mediation with the state is nothing new. Historically, countless individuals, movements, Resident Associations and organizations within the favelas have demanded more public services and opportunities while denouncing state abuse, forced house removals and state murder in these communities (Gay 2009; Perlman 2010). In the 1970s and 1980s, the state favela federation Federação das Associações das Favelas do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (FAFERJ) “began to challenge and transform its relationship with the local state. Instead of supporting politicians in return for what were represented as ‘favours’, a system of political exchange otherwise known as clientelism, the leadership of the *favelas* began to demand things instead as ‘rights’” (Gay 2009:31). These rights included various infrastructure projects, such as water and sewage systems, electricity, but also healthcare and education, and grew so strong “in the early to mid-1980s that most of the candidates for the executive offices of governor and mayor of Rio de Janeiro felt obliged to meet with representatives of the *favela* movement and address their various demands” (Gay 2009:32). Unfortunately, the favela movement weakened with the entry of the drug trafficking in the 1980s as these criminal groups started controlling the Resident Associations (AMs) in many favelas. At the time of my fieldwork, the strength in the favela movement appeared to lie in civil society groups, social movements and activists that seemed to co-exist but not cooperate with the drug trafficking groups. While some Resident Associations were under control of the drug gangs, others seemed to co-exist but not be involved (including the two in this study). Various movements were actively mediating at various levels of government and the judiciary, like the Pastoral de Favelas in cases of house removals, and the network of movements against state violence and the movement of mothers and relatives who lost their children to police violence in difficult processes of procuring justice for these children in the Brazilian justice system where few police officers are held accountable for their actions in the favelas (Farias 2014; Mães de Maio n.d.).

Several research participants agreed that while historically their focus has been to provide and demand infrastructure, water, sewage, electricity, housing, and so on, their greatest need at the time of our interview was public security, as “our security today is zero” (Izabel*, January 2020, also Rafael*, October 2019, Zona Norte). The issue of public security therefore stood central in the favela peace formation mediation with the state, merely in order to survive in a time of increasingly bellicose and deadly public security policies and operations in the favelas. As the state and its public security forces were identified by most research participants as the main threat to security in the favela, mediation was focused on survival and the right to life in many of these communities. Protecting favela residents from state abuse and violence during public security operations is the most direct form for favela peace formation mediation. However, peace formers also push for various cases within the judicial system, such as the networks of mothers who lost their sons to police violence, and the judicial actions of the ACP of Maré and the ADPF 635 which will be discussed below.

The ACP of Maré and the ADPF 635 are both judicial actions constructed to reduce violence and human right violations during police operations in the favelas. This great mobilization for public security in the favelas through the judiciary is quite groundbreaking as the ACP and ADPF 635 represent the first large cases constructed by or in close cooperation with favela peace formers. This section therefore studies each of these in order to see how favela peace formation navigates the judiciary in response to an executive power that only seems to increase its violence against these communities. It is, however, important to remember that many favela peace formers also continuously risk their lives during public security operations in their communities in order to protect their fellow residents and denounce state violence in a hope to save lives and reduce violence in the favelas. The ACP and ADPF are therefore far from the only way in which favela peace formation works, but rather happens simultaneously with thousands of other networked, formal and informal projects, some which include risking their own lives, and should therefore not be forgotten.

The Public Civil Action of Maré (the ACP)

The Public Civil Action of Maré came as a response to increasingly bellicose police operations in the Maré favela complex in 2016 where the police were killing civilians and abusing various other human rights. It was “the first public civil action aimed at public security in a favela in Brazil” and aimed “to ensure that police forces act to preserve life and guarantee the rights of those who live in Maré” (Redes da Maré 2020b). The ACP was run by the “Public Defender’s Office, the Public Ministry, residents and representatives of institutions and organizations active in the favelas of Maré, such as Residents’ Associations and NGOs” (Redes da Maré 2020b). It shows how favela peace formers choose to team up with the Public Defender’s Office and the Public Ministry as sectors of the state in order to target the executive powers of that state (Redes da Maré 2020b). The strength of this collaboration was shown in 2017 when the ACP was won with the following “measures to reduce risks and damage” in police operations:

- Prohibition of police operations to execute warrants at night
- Availability of ambulances in days of police operations
- Gradual installation of video cameras and GPS in the (police) vehicles circulating in Maré
- Elaboration of a harm reduction plan for the violations during days of police operations

(Redes da Maré 2020b).

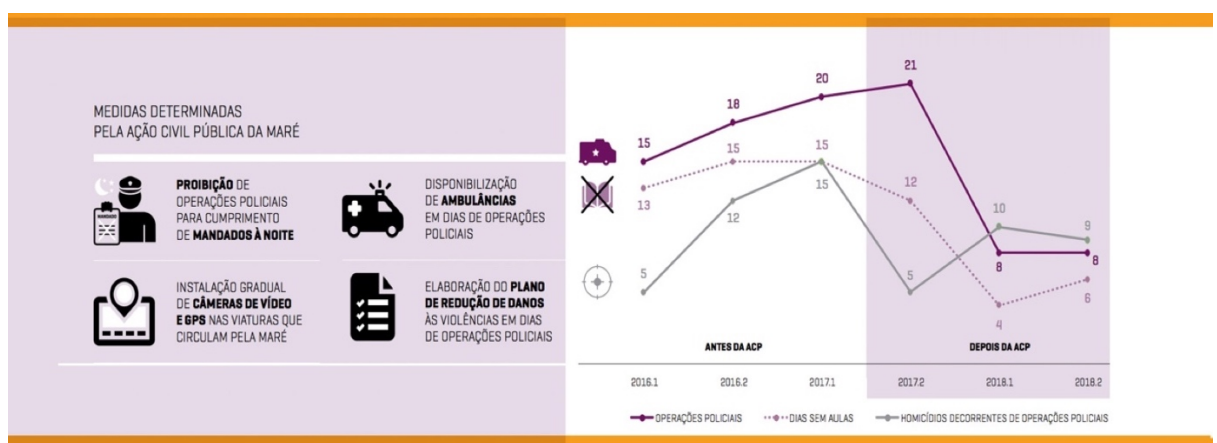


FIGURE 2: "MEASURES DETERMINED BY THE PUBLIC CIVIL ACTION OF MARÉ"(REDES DA MARÉ 2020B)

As the image above shows, the number of (from top to bottom of graph) police operations, days without school lessons, and homicides occurring during police

operations declined after the introduction of the ACP, from 2017 to 2018 (Redes da Maré 2020b).

Although the ACP initially appeared to be successful in reducing violence in the favela, the police operations in Maré and the violation of residents intensified in January 2019 when the new governor, Wilson Witzel, came into power. As written by Eliane Sousa from Redes da Mare:

Unfortunately, since January 2019, we have been surprised by the statements and actions of the governor-elect, Wilson Witzel, which go against this recognition of rights: he has broken any commitment to public security in the name of combating the criminal drug trafficking factions, especially. With this, there has assumed a logic of terror in the favelas, establishing the use of air tanks, for example, as a daily practice, and the absolute liberation of the police to kill anyone who is carrying a rifle or to use missiles to face the drug factions.

(Sousa 2019).

In July 2019, after a bit more than two years of the ACP, a judge suspended the action on the grounds that in the violent city of Rio de Janeiro, only the executive power could decide on issues of public security (Ouchana and Soares 2019; Redes da Maré 2020b). In response to this decision, the Fórum Basta de Violência! Outra Maré é possível (Enough Violence! Another Maré is possible), a network of residents, Residents Associations, NGOs and other institutions in Maré, organized a letter-writing project where more than 1500 children and residents wrote to the judges describing their experience of the police operations. One (below), drew a helicopter shooting down in the streets right by their house, writing: “I don’t like the helicopter because it shoots down and the people die”, with an arrow to “my house” and an added sentence “this is wrong” (G1 Rio 2019; Morais 2019):

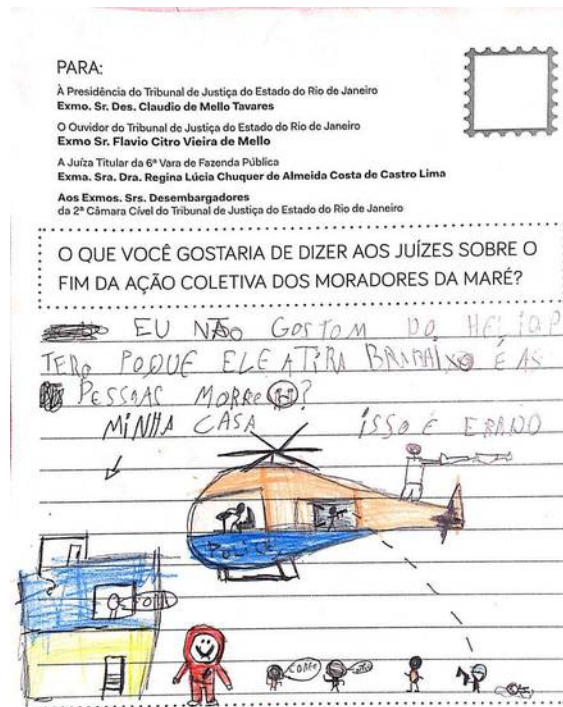


FIGURE 3: LETTER: "WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY TO THE JUDGES ABOUT THE END OF THE COLLECTIVE ACTION OF THE RESIDENTS OF MARÉ?" (G1 RIO 2019; MORAIS 2019)

Some of the other letters wrote:

Dear judges, when you order an operation here in Maré, the police do not even warn us. They enter with helicopter shooting from above down below. It seems like they do not have any education/respect with the residents. When there is an operation, none of the residents stay in the street because they already know that the police will kill them as well, thinking that also we are bandits

(G1 Rio 2019).

When we get to school, it is full of bullet holes [in the walls] and everything [is] turned upside down. I don't like [police] operations because we don't have school.

When there is a shootout, [the police] invade our houses ... One of my cousins was shot in crossfire. She was playing outside with her doll and was killed.

(Canineu 2019).

On August 12th, 2019, Maré residents handed these more than 1500 letters to the Rio de Janeiro Court of Justice, asking for the ACP to be reinstated (Canineu 2019; G1 Rio 2019). After receiving the letters, the Rio de Janeiro appeals court reinstated the ACP, showing the possible power of favela mobilization (Canineu 2019). Governor Witzel, however, questioned the authenticity of the letters and claimed that they had been altered by the drug trafficking gangs (Canineu 2019; Sampaio 2019). The effects of the ACP are thus debatable, as 2020 again saw a rise in violence and police operations in Maré, both during my fieldwork and more recently during the Covid-19 pandemic (Muñoz 2020; Pires and Germano 2020). The ACP shows the power of favela peace formation to construct and win the first public civil action concerning the public security situation in a favela, and the action of the letters from Maré, whose large publicity and local media coverage arguably affected the decision to reinstate the ACP. However, this case also shows the constant threat of the violent, militarized executive powers of Witzel who both disregarded the ACP when coming into power and argued that the letters from children in Maré were altered by the drug *tráfico*. Finally, it shows how favela peace formers choose to collaborate with certain parts of the state, such as the Public Defender's Office and the Public Ministry in order to navigate the judiciary and legally reduce violence and human rights abuses in their communities. While the ACP is a local, territorial civil action and shows the strength of a localized Maré mobilization, the ADPF 635 is on a regional level, and went to the Supreme Court for claims that the State of Rio de Janeiro was violating the Brazilian constitution, and therefore has, as the next section will show, much larger ramifications.

ADPF “das Favelas” 635

The ADPF 635 is an unprecedented step for the favela social groups, movements, activists, and the mothers and families of victims as it is the first time in history that some of them have been invited to be *amici curiae* of the court, allowing them to participate actively in the drafting of the lawsuit. The lawsuit is

proposed by the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB) and jointly drafted by the Public Defender's Office of the State of Rio de Janeiro and the organizations Educafro, Justiça Global, Redes da Maré, Conectas Direitos Humanos, Movimento Negro Unificado, Iser, IDMJR, Coletivo Papo Reto, Coletivo Fala Akari, Rede de Comunidades and Movimento contra a Violência, Mães de Mangueiros – admitted entities as *amicus curiae* –, and also the Observatório de Favelas, Grupo de Estudos dos Novos Ilegalismos (Geni/UFF), Fogo Cruzado, Maré Vive, Instituto Marielle Franco, Conselho Nacional de Direitos Humanos and CESeC.

(ADPF das Favelas 2020).

The action, known as the ADPF of the favelas, is seen as a “major step in the fight against police brutality and racism” as it accuses the State of Rio de Janeiro’s public security policy of violating various human rights, particularly the right to life, and therefore demands several restrictions on the public security operations in the favelas (ADPF das Favelas 2020; Fachin, Supreme Court 2020). The action invoked as fundamental precepts:

the life, dignity of the person, the right to security and inviolability of the home, the right to equality and priority in guaranteeing fundamental rights for the children and adolescents as a duty of the State. It claims that the public security policy of the State of Rio de Janeiro violates the Federal Constitution and the human rights treaties of which is part of the Federative Republic of Brazil, in particular the right to life. It argues that ‘instead of protecting and promoting people’s right to life, statistics show that such a policy encourages the lethality of the security forces, through, e.g., the use of helicopters as shooting platforms and the extinction of the bonus that served as an incentive to reduce police deaths’

(eDOC 1:22, in Fachin, Supreme Court 2020).

Further, it claims that there is “no effective public security” in Rio de Janeiro state as outlined by the constitution, which states that “public security is not a war against the enemy to be exterminated” (eDOC 1:25, in Fachin, Supreme Court 2020). The action goes on to list the violation of the right to privacy, as the walls of the homes of favela residents have been used as places to place firearms, and the violation of equality, as

the security policy harms black people in particular. Data from IPEA and the Brazilian Public Security Forum show in the case that 75.5% of homicide victims in 2017 were black and out of more than 6000 homicides caused by police intervention in Brazil in 2018, 75.4% of the victims were black. It adds;

there is no doubt that the extremely violent performance of the police in Rio de Janeiro in such places [favelas] particularly gravely affects these individuals. After all, there are these people, already marginalized by their socioeconomic condition and the devastating effects of racism, who live daily with shots, stray bullets and caveirões (armoured police tanks) - terrestrial or aerial – who are the ones who personally suffer [sofrem na pele, literally: suffer on their skin] from the ever-increasing brutalisation of that federal entity's security project

(Fachin, Supreme Court 2020:16).

Finally, the action mentions that Brazil has one of the highest youth homicide rates in the world, with, according to a study by Manso and Gonçalves, 635 children and adolescents murdered in the state of Rio de Janeiro in 2017. It adds that for the adolescents, 28.6% of the murders were caused by police intervention (Fachin, Supreme Court 2020:16), and stresses the harmful effects of this violence on the mental health and learning abilities of children and adolescents growing up in these communities.

After a trial of precautionary measures since April 2020, the Supreme Court reached an unanimous decision on August 17th, 2020 “to ban the police from firing guns from armoured helicopters and to restrict police operations around schools and hospitals” (Lopes 2020). According to Lopes and ADPF das Favelas,

The justices also granted other important points to protect the rights of the population of the favelas and reduce violence during police actions.

Among them:

- Prohibition on the use of schools and hospitals as operational bases for the civil and military police;
- Preservation of crime scenes and no undue removal of bodies, under the pretext of providing medical assistance;

- The police forensic bodies should document the forensic evidence and autopsy reports for the purpose of ensuring the possibility of independent reviews;
- The investigations should meet the requirements of the Minnesota Protocol: they should be prompt, effective and thorough, as well as independent, impartial and transparent.

(Lopes 2020).

- Priority should be given to cases where children are victims
- The reduction of homicides committed by police is again valid as a bonus criterion

(ADPF das Favelas 2020).

The favela movements involved in the action issued the following statement in reaction to their win in the Supreme Court:

We, institutions and movements articulated within the scope of ADPF 635, commemorate the decision of the Brazilian Supreme Court, which recognized that favelas are part of the city and that the “slaughter” policy adopted by Governor Wilson Witzel violates fundamental rights and is racist. We continue to be mobilized to monitor and demand compliance with the determinations.

They agreed to kill us, but we agreed not to die!

THE FIGHT GOES ON!

(ADPF das Favelas 2020).

The process and success of the ADPF 635 is thus a historic victory for the favelas, as it is the first time several favela peace-forming movements come together across favelas to demand changes to the public security policies in Rio de Janeiro, and win. It shows that some avenues of the state can indeed be open for favela peace formation

and it shows the strengths of a unification of favela and human rights movements when referring to international human rights treaties and the Brazilian constitution and with a collaboration with selected political parties and the Public Defender's Office.

Emmanuella* noted however, that only recognized political parties and unions can start an ADPF and that these parties need to be careful to include the favela grassroots movements from the very beginning:

(...) But it needs to be done together with the grassroots; not just inviting us after you have filed it. But we understand the urgency of what we are participating in (...) We understand this space as a relevant space (...) We haven't had time yet to design the calculation of being, vs not being friends of the court, but we will support them. We don't believe that the judiciary will be our salvation, but it is one of the elements which can help change. We are in a state of super low (baixissimo) democratic intensity. (So), we need the public ministry and other public agencies to exist, so we support them. We have other activities we do that do the same, or more, of what the judiciary manages (to do). For example, having youth abandoning *tráfico* and photography projects to change the image of the favela. It's a *trabalho de formiguinha*. We believe in the judiciary but not everything we do is within this.

(Emmanuella*, March 2020, Zona Norte).

Emmanuella* displays a restrained confidence in the judiciary but notes the importance in supporting and using these democratic avenues for change in order to strengthen these institutions, even when there are small chances for positive outcomes. Favela peace formation indeed enters and mediates in various democratic spaces within the state to strengthen these spaces, while only moderately believing in these processes and therefore constructing a sort of parallelism, where they work in the grassroots to be self-sustainable and to improve their communities without the assistance of the state. This can also be seen in the ACP in Maré, where favela peace formers simultaneously work with youth involved with drugs, as mediators and human right defenders during police operations in their communities, and in the ACP

demanding the reduction of violence in these communities. Both the ACP and the ADPF thus show how favela peace formation uses one avenue of the state, the judiciary, to demand the reduction of violence of the executive power and its deadly public security policies.

“Occupying” the state: favela representation in politics

A more direct form of navigating the state is for favela peace formers to run for office in local and state elections, something which increasingly many do. Favela representation in politics have increased significantly in recent years, as explained by Ana*; “when I started, it was mostly a discussion about which politician we will support and who had offered favours in election time. Then it developed to who will give favours to us while in office, and now, they think: ‘maybe I’ll run for office’”(March 2020). In the local elections of 2020, 95 favela candidates were running for city council, from leftist, centre-left, centre and right-wing political parties (Lima 2020). In addition, five mayoral candidates and 89 city council candidates signed a letter of commitment¹³ “to the sustainable development of the city’s favelas based on valuing community expertise, thus strengthening ongoing community initiatives”, which contained “21 proposals and 82 sub-proposals regarding laws and other policies to support the sustainability and resilience of favelas in Rio de Janeiro” (Ferraz 2020). Furthermore, the Marielle Franco Institute presented an Elections Anti-Racist Platform, and managed, “in partnership with Educafro, the Black Women Decide Movement (Movimento Mulheres Negras Decidem), and the Black Coalition for Rights (Coalizão Negra por Direitos)” to push forward “requirements for proportional distribution of public campaign funds (the Fundo Especial de Financiamento de Campanha, FEFC) and television ad time for black candidates” which was approved by the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) (Gomes 2020). According to Gomes, “This meant that in this year’s [2020] elections, political parties had to distribute their election resources for TV and radio airtime in an equitable way between white and

¹³ Letter put together by the The Sustainable Favela Network (SFN), *project of the NGO Catalytic Communities (CatComm)*.

black candidates” (2020). Both the favela movement and the black movement are thus increasing their presence and influence in politics; through favela candidates, the Sustainable Favela Network’s work to invite candidates to commit to sustainable favela development, and the requirements for equal airtime for black and white candidates.

The recent years have also seen a stronger unification of the two historically separate favela movements and the black movements in Rio de Janeiro on an expanding common ground. As Rafael* shared, the favela movement that always “fought to guarantee rights in the favelas” and the black movement that always fought against racism “need to be joined [today], because the favela is a black territory. For the last twenty years, the black movement focused on [university] quotas. The favela movement no, they focused on survival. Today there is a space for both to come together”. He further explained how the state’s genocidal public security policies might have brought the two movements closer together:

In the last 10-20 years, after the UPP, the first right that the favela movement is fighting for is the right to life, to be alive. You focus on public security and then you think, ‘but who dies?’ The black people. This is what the black movement also has fought against the last 20 years, that black youths die. They are fighting for a black political project that guarantees life. So, they [the two movements] are coming closer together

(Rafael*, Zona Norte).

This growing collaboration between the black movements and the favela movements in the judiciary cases against the state’s violent public security policies and in the increasing black favela representation in politics, as well as a connection with the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States all point to a potentially very powerful, emerging alternative black political project, as Rafael* shared above, “guarantees life”. This will be more closely discussed in the next chapter and the conclusion.

Black women indeed form a fundamental part of favela peace formation, which is also reflected in the recent elections as more female, black candidates have taken central stage of favela political representation. Black, female favela representatives such as Renata Souza, Dani Monteiro and Monica Francisco, all part of the Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL) were for example elected into the Rio de Janeiro State Legislative Assembly (ALERJ) in 2016, after being advisors to the former city councillor Marielle Franco. Marielle, a black, gay woman from the favela was, as mentioned in the introduction, assassinated on March 14, 2018. Her assassins have been found to have several close ties to militias and the current president Bolsonaro and his family (Cowie 2019; Greenwald and Pougy 2019). Renata Souza from Maré is also closely connected to favela peace formation networks, is the first black woman president of the human rights chambers in ALERJ, and was also running for the mayor's office in 2020 (Lima 2020b).

However, the assassination of Marielle Franco stays as a clear warning to peace formers and favela political representatives to not reach too high or threaten the status quo. In 2020, Talíria Petrone, a black congresswoman from Rio de Janeiro, a friend of Marielle and “one of the new faces of the Brazilian left” had to go into hiding after claims that members of the militias wanted her dead (Phillips and Barretto Briso 2020). The direct occupation of democratic, political positions in the state is therefore filled with risk, as the political mobilization of the favela poses as a threat for certain elite interests in the political system aimed at maintaining the status quo of inequality. These challenges of a network against peace formation will be more closely discussed in the next chapter on favela peace formation blockages. It is perhaps due to these massive challenges of a violent state and death threats from militias that favela peace formation does not limit itself to local politics, but also work with youth and other favela residents in order to empower new individuals and generations to construct new policies, infiltrate and occupy the state in the years to come while also searching for alternatives outside of the state.

By producing knowledge, monitoring and denouncing state violence and human rights abuses and occupying spaces within politics, these favela peace formers actively fight

for a space and a voice in the democratic processes in the state, and for the favela residents to be treated as citizens deserving of equal rights in the Brazilian state system. The fairly recent cases of the ACP and the ADPF show the strength of an increasingly collaborative favela peace formation network which brings together various movements outside and inside the state for the urgent appeal for public security and the right to life. However, as they are so recent, it remains to be seen if it will have any practical effects or if the executive powers will choose to ignore them. Similarly, with favela representatives in politics it is early to tell and there are many risks involved, but the number of representatives and candidates are rising. Perhaps due to the insecurity and slowness of these peace formation efforts through the state, many research participants continued to emphasize their belief in their own grassroots work within the community, and the importance of international solidarity networks and support from international institutions like the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the UN, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty and more, which will be more closely discussed in the next chapter. This networking relies on bottom-up knowledge-construction and narrative-shifting as discussed below.

Shifting narratives

While the work with youth and the navigation of the state show how favela peace formation works both in parallel to and simultaneously through selected avenues of the state in order to reduce violence and construct a more peaceful future, they are far from the only ways in which favela peace formation operates. The constant struggle to change racist, criminalizing narratives about the favelas also permeate the education of favela youth and the navigation of the judiciary. Shifting narratives is a foundational and all-encompassing part of favela peace formation as so much of the conflict is created and sustained by the racism and prejudice against the favelas and their residents. As Patrícia* (February 2020, Zona Norte) shared; “the army, the police, they do what they do in the favelas only with the permission of society. People don’t know how it’s really like, they imagine based on what they see on the television, and for the television, the media, what sells is blood and violence”. This ties back to the criminalization of the favela resident throughout history, as ‘good people’ in the *asfalto* are made implicit in the war against favela residents by believing in the dehumanizing

narratives surrounding the favelas (Scheper-Hughes 2004). The coverage of crime and violence in the mainstream media feeds a fear of the favela among the *asfalto*, which again leads to popular support for highly militarized police operations in these communities. Favela peace formers thus work to change these narratives of crime and violence in an attempt to bridge the vast gap between the favela and *asfalto*, in the hope that the rest of society will see the favela as part of the city, to understand, love and protect these communities, and push for more favela friendly public policies.

Several of the research participants attributed the criminalization of the favelas to a lacking knowledge and understanding of these communities, as they are seen as dangerous ‘no-go zones’ due to the focus on crime and violence in the mainstream media. “This is why [the NGO] opens the community up for the universities and has dialogue with various different places in the city; for them to know the favela, because you only respect what you know, you won’t respect or understand the places that you don’t know” (Pedro*, August 2019, Zona Sul). Opening the community for outsiders was therefore deemed a central part of the efforts to change narratives, although this might be due to the fact that I spoke with individuals who had decided to open up their communities to me, most likely as they believed in the strength of building networks with international researchers. A large focus was placed on producing and sharing knowledge from the favela, collaborating with local, national and international universities, research institutions, media, civil society groups and tourists in order to portray the favelas as creative, sustainable, cultural, hard-working communities (Maria*, September 2019; Pedro*, August 2019; Gabriel*, August 2019; Juliana*, October 2019; Aline*, September 2019, Zona Sul; Marcia*, September 2019; Patrícia*, February 2020; Emmanuella*, March 2020, Zona Norte). Favela peace formation strengthens this positive narrative of the favela by: hosting, receiving and staging artistic, musical and cultural events in the favela with local, regional and international artists; creating cultural spaces like art centres and museums in the favela; welcoming tourists, researchers, volunteers, activists, and others who want to get to know the favela; organizing events, workshops and courses aimed at showing the favela residents themselves the strengths of their community; communicating localized news through community media channels; and monitoring, producing, sharing and debating data and analysis on issues relevant to the community.

These efforts to change narratives also include work to rewrite history and to protect and preserve memory in the favelas. The ways in which the history of marginalized areas is overwritten by practices of the state “suggests that erasure is not achieved simply through inattention but by the production of a different kind of history by specific forms of attention” (in Das and Kleinman 2001:9). In the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, state practices of exclusion, removals and murder, together with the mainstream criminalizing narratives have painted the favelas as dangerous, lawless areas filled with criminals whose lives are worth less (Scheper-Hughes 2004; Villenave 2018; Vargas 2005; 2008; Roth Gordon 2017). In response, mothers whose sons have been killed by public security agents and afterwards criminalized as drug dealers in order to justify their deaths, fight to protect the memory of their sons as children and as human beings (Maes de Maio n.d; Farias 2014). They are painfully aware of how the state overwrites their history with violence and fight back by sharing their stories in increasingly more diversified private and public spheres, thus forming an important part of favela peace formation.

This “social space occupied by scarred populations may enable stories to break through routine cultural codes to express counterdiscourse that assaults and even perhaps undermines the flow of taken-for-granted meanings of things as they are” (Das and Kleinman 2001:21). Favela peace formers’ work to produce and share localized knowledge, history and perspectives can thus be seen as an “oppositional consciousness”, which includes “an understanding of the flaws in mainstream social life, and a shared approach to challenging conventional politics” (Herbst 1994:15, in Chuengsatiansup 2001:63). Fraser calls this a ‘subaltern counterpublics’; “a parallel public arena ‘where oppressed or minority groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs’ (Fraser, cited in Herbst 1994:14)” (Chuengsatiansup 2001:63; Custodio 2016). By doing so, favela peace formers are slowly deconstructing the workings and meanings of the state, its various forms of racism, exclusion, necropolitics and the narratives used to justify and naturalize this violent status quo.

Favela peace formation and nonviolent politics in a violent state

This chapter has shown how favela peace formers act on multiple, interrelated fronts to construct a politics without violence in their communities. This is also reflected in Fahlberg's work with community-based organizations in the Cidade de Deus (CDD) favela in Rio de Janeiro in 2014 and 2017, where she identified three models of activism that together "formed a sphere of nonviolent politics in opposition to and alongside the violent political regime" (2018:494). Below, I compare these to my own research findings on favela peace formation:

1. Transformative *assistencialismo* (comparative to parallelism and education):

"[A] coupling of social services with education that would, they [community-based organizations in CDD] believed, develop healthy, productive, reflective individuals who could address the multiple forms of violence they experienced and make society safe, healthy, and just" (Fahlberg 2018:495). While *assistencialismo* is criticized as a type of "charity-based provision of services [which] prevents the poor from becoming conscious of their constitutional rights, thereby entrenching both dependence on the state and subordinate class status" (2018:495), Fahlberg argues that this service provision is still "critical to sustaining civil society" (2018:495) and is "one of the few forms of collective action available to populations under authoritarian rule" (2018:495-496). She adds that these educational programs also

fostered a political project that was not readily apparent to local drug traffickers. At the most basic level, CBOs hoped to weaken the drug trade by educating young people about nonviolence and offering them alternatives to joining the trade, such as formal employment and higher education (2018:496).

She therefore calls it *transformative assistencialismo*, as it works to slowly transform the community through education. This directly relates to my findings that favela peace formers work in parallel to the state by providing social services and different forms of education in order to sustain everyday life while also empowering favela residents to stay away from the drug trade, which could lead to positive change in the long run. However, while some of my research participants had a similar focus to the CBOs

studied by Fahlberg to educate young people and offer them alternatives to the drug trade, others were more explicitly political as they also educated favela residents about their political and social rights as citizens of the state:

With denunciations etc., we don't want to go on behalf of the residents to the judiciary, our function is that they go themselves, to occupy these spaces [not that we do it for them]. More than offering tutoring and courses, we want the people to be able to be protagonists, to understand the processes of the justice system for example, to occupy. This is in our very origin (*na nossa propria origem*). We want the public apparatus to work, because we do have public apparatus here in the favela; schools, health units, etc. But the state acts in a different way inside here. So, the state exists here, but we want a more qualified state with a higher valuation for life [respecting the value of life, *valorização da vida*], because we are the city.

(Emmanuella*, March 2020, Zona Norte).

The work there [in the organization] is not a revolution, but it reduces the injuries, very timidly. (...) Today we need to do mediations between the residents and the state, this is a micro-revolution. But my hope is that one day we won't have to mediate, to help, that the residents themselves have learned and are able to do this themselves (...) We want a revolution, but we focus on the people, so that they can understand their human rights.

(Patrícia*, February 2020, Zona Norte).

Thus, while Fahlberg's transformative *assistencialismo* seems to mainly focus on service provision and slow transformation through education under a violent gang rule, favela peace formation additionally recognizes the violence of state rule, and therefore both educate youth on alternatives to the drug trade *and* educate residents on their rights and possible demands in relation to the state. In this sense, favela peace formation goes beyond transforming the community, as it is also inserting long-term demands for reform in the state through empowering its citizens. Favela peace formation therefore ties a close link between Fahlberg's transformative *assistencialismo* and community militancy which will be discussed next.

2. Community militancy (comparative to navigating the state)

In contrast to the logic of transformative *assistencialismo*, which promoted individual transformation through social services and readily embraced whatever resources were available, community militancy emphasized the development of the territory: the physical, social, economic, and cultural interests of a geographically bounded space. They did this by demanding *políticas públicas*, or “public policies,” the constellation of programs and actions taken by the government, often in partnership with private actors, to guarantee the permanent fulfillment of particular constitutional rights. They explicitly rejected short-term government grants, such as funding for a three-month computer course or a one-year stipend for a judo class, which gave the sponsoring politician media coverage for supporting the project but resulted in little meaningful change in the neighborhood.

(Fahlberg 2018: 499-500).

According to Fahlberg, community militants on the Residents’ Board of Cidade de Deus on countless occasions “directly confronted the mayor, the governor, city council members, the secretaries (directors) of various branches of state and municipal government, and other public officials to demand that they uphold the law and their obligations to urban development” (2018:500). This directly corresponds to how favela peace formers choose to navigate the state in different ways in order to demand and ensure their rights. However, there is one crucial difference: while the community militancy in Cidade de Deus in 2014 and 2017 seemed to focus on urban development of their community, more political research participants in my research, from various favelas in Zona Norte and Zona Sul, were in 2019-2020 forced to focus on ending the hyper-militarized police operations in their communities as these operations were causing unprecedented levels of violence and death. As the mayor, the governor and the president’s office in 2019 were all occupied by far-right politicians who pushed for increased militarization of public security, favela peace formers were forced to work around these executive powers instead of directly engaging with them as Fahlberg describes. As discussed in the previous chapter, favela social movements started some of the first, large public civil actions in order to reduce violence of public security

operation in the favelas in Rio in 2019, thus pleading the judiciary to limit the violence of the executive powers that were, in fact, violating the Brazilian constitution.

In terms of the provision of public services, many of the participants had given up on receiving any help from the state and rather put their faith in nongovernmental organizations and movements. At the same time, there were increasingly more favela residents graduating from university, and more running for political office and occupying positions in local politics. Thus, while the executive powers were extremely hostile against favela peace formation, favela peace formers sought to the judiciary and ran for office for opposition parties in order to navigate the violent state. This change from Fahlberg's community militants' focus on public services and to the research participants in my own project's main focus on public security and survival shows the evolution of favela peace formation and how it adapts to the changing needs of their communities. However, cultural resistance and work to change criminalizing narratives seem to always be present as it addresses perhaps the core of the violence targeting the favelas.

3. Cultural resistance (comparative to shifting narratives)

As a "third model of activism", Fahlberg mentions "dozens of local artists who used cultural expression as a form of protest and resistance against unjust government policies and practices, as well as discriminatory beliefs about black persons, women, and favela residents generally" (2018:501). This goes back to the rootedness of favela peace formation, where favela peace formers embrace, strengthen and share favela culture, history and memory in order to empower favela residents and reduce prejudice among favela and non-favela residents. And it is working. A record number of favela residents are now attending university, increasing numbers of Brazilians are self-identifying as black, and Afro-Brazilians who before straightened their hair are increasingly embracing their natural hairstyles. The hope is that this consciousness will continue to spread, combating the criminalizing and racist narratives of the evangelical church and the main media. As described above, a new form of favela, subaltern counterpublics is growing and increasingly deconstructing and dismantling the formerly naturalized and 'taken-for-granted' criminalizing and racist state narratives surrounding these communities (See also Custodio 2016).

Conclusion

This chapter has shown, as predicted in the framework, that the work to reduce violence in selected favelas in Rio de Janeiro resembles Richmond's concept of peace formation. Favela peace formation works, as Richmond describes, in cautious, networked ways to navigate, influence and dispute violent power structures, social injustices, and a state which maintains predatory statehood (2019). Favela peace formation might be more marginalized and restricted and face much larger blockages than peace formation in more traditional post-conflict settings, which can rely on the presence on international peacebuilding institutions. However, this chapter has shown that despite near-abandonment by the international community, favela peace formation works in grounded, networked and sophisticated ways to maintain everyday life, empower residents to demand reform in the state while also improving their own lives, build connections with potential allies outside and within a violent state, directly occupy the state, and slowly deconstruct hegemonic criminalizing and racist narratives, thus starting the process of rewriting history from the bottom-up. The next chapter will more closely consider the opportunities and challenges for favela peace formation and consider if and how these processes can lead to alternative, less violent and more just political futures, despite the many challenges they face.

~ Chapter 7 ~

Favela peace formation: blockages and opportunities

Introduction

The previous chapters questioned peace in a colonial city in a violent state and located favela peace formation as a concept that can explain the various networked processes that work towards a reduction of violence and a better life in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro. They showed the violence of the traditional, top-down peace and security processes in the colonial city and the need for an alternative peace focused on social justice and community development from the grassroots; favela peace formation. The various processes in the *carioca* favelas have unique potential to construct a sustainable, just peace and a politics without violence. However, in order to understand the full potential of these processes and find ways in which to support them, we also need to fully understand the challenges they face. This chapter starts with a brief overview of the various challenges and blockages to favela peace formation, including a counter-peace formation network. From there, it considers favela peace formation as rooted, integrative, networked, feminized and decolonial processes which have a unique potential for a slow, long-term, wide construction of a positive, just peace.

Challenges to favela peace formation

As the previous chapters have shown, favela peace formation, being grassroots, subaltern, marginalized processes, face near overwhelmingly powerful structures of inequality and racism in the state and society that counteract and threaten these processes. This section summarizes the various challenges and blockages to favela peace formation based on the research participants' views on the challenges to their work to reduce violence in their community and to the general wellbeing of the favela.

The framework predicted that blockages to favela peace formation would take the following forms: direct blockages such as manifest violence, threats, assassinations of peace formers and conflict; structural blockages such as laws and societal structures that allow and reproduce inequality, police impunity and exclusion of the favelas; cultural blockages such as prejudice, racism and criminalization; and blockages from realist and liberal ‘peace’ processes. While chapter 4 on Rio de Janeiro as a colonial city discussed quite a few of these fundamental cultural and structural challenges of inequality, racism and exclusion, Chapter 5 on Rio de Janeiro’s public security policies in the favelas depicted the massive, direct challenges to favela peace formation as the direct threat to life in the violent police operations. As the challenges of inequality, prejudice, racism and violence have been addressed, this section will focus on the issues of funding, the rise of the political far-right, the expansion of militias, militarized public security structures and a growing counter-peace-formation network. However, I want to stress that the state’s ‘peace’ in form of war in the favelas pose, for many, the largest, most paralyzing blockage and threat to life in the favela. The state genocide of young, black favela boys runs as a red flood through this thesis and cannot be ignored as this violence “makes all the other rights be negated” (João*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

Funding

Lack of sustainable and predictable funding is an obvious and fundamental challenge to favela peace formation projects. The struggle to find stable, sustainable funding was listed as one of the main challenges in the interviews. Limited and selected funding caused difficulties as many of the research participants worked without pay, had to rely on other volunteers to make the projects happen and rely on other sources of income for their own maintenance. This, some argued, challenged the consistency of their work as it was difficult to demand much from people that were volunteering their time and energy. Others received limited funding that was tied to specific projects, thus leaving no funds left to maintain the space, staff and the everyday running of their work. This lack of consistency challenged both the sustainability and the autonomy of some projects and forced interviewees to spend valuable time constantly looking for new funding opportunities and partnerships. Others again managed to continue with

very little to no funding, and managed donations and crowdfunding for special events. The question of having funds to buy food was mentioned as particularly important in the work with youth, as the more vulnerable children and youth would have more incentive to show up when they could be offered food. Both Miguel* and Davi* who work with children and youth to keep them out of the *tráfico* emphasized the importance of food:

If I had people to help me, I would give the kids biscuits (*biscoitos*), lunch and *guaravita* (juice/soft drink)... because you need to have food with kids, it would be more attractive. Kids would say, “let’s go there to the (football project) because at least there they have biscuits”... “Ah, we don’t have any food at home, let’s go there, they have...” but I don’t have resources for this.

(Miguel*, September 2019, Zona Sul).

Here, I need a lot of money. The only lunch the student gets is the one he gets here, or what he gets in school

(Davi*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

Relatively simple things like having enough funds to be able to offer a snack can therefore mean the difference for some of these children who do not have much at home.

Many linked the lack of funding to the backlash of the current far-right government that has implemented cuts in social, educational and cultural funds. As Marcia* described:

one challenge of doing social work is doing solidarity work in a society that’s turning more and more individualistic. The cuts in funding, like the ministry cut the rule of 1% of taxes going to social work. The last eight months saw a new way of government, and it’s not one of construction. So social work needs to reinvent itself, to justify that it is necessary. We need to end this meritocracy. People from the favela and periphery feel

like they're not good enough, we need to give strength to deconstruct the myth of meritocracy. We've already lost sponsorships due to meritocracy, in this climate of lacking solidarity [...] before, as a company, you 'had to' show you were socially responsible. Now with this climate you don't need to be responsible anymore, now its every man for himself (*tudo um por si*)

(Marcia*, September 2019, Zona Norte).

Increasingly many were therefore relying on international support, or starting to expand their search for funding internationally, in countries such as Sweden, Italy, France, the USA and Norway. Some also mentioned new and recent projects with UNICEF as an avenue for new partnerships and funding opportunities.

The funding difficulties show both the strengths and weaknesses of favela peace formation. It shows the weakness in the limited reach of these projects as they can only reach a certain number of participants due to the lack of resources, and many mentioned the need for a bigger space, for funds to buy food and snacks to provide to participants and the wish to be able to be paid and/or to pay their volunteers. It also shows, however, the strength of these individual peace formers, NGOs and collectives, as they continue despite hardship and manage to continue their projects with children, youth and others with little to no funding. Miguel*, for example, managed to offer various sports classes and even barber lessons to the kids in his community without any funding, except for the free use of space and individual donations. For the barber lessons, he told me they managed a sort of micro volunteer-economy, as favela residents could come and get a haircut by the students and pay with a bag of rice or beans, which then would be given to those in need of it in the community. Likewise, João* mentioned a similar attempt in the exchange of favours within his community, but said it was too difficult to find sufficient funds this way: "We also use the page to make partnerships with local businesses, exchanging publicity with free dentist appointment etc, or at least a discount. But in reality, it's not possible to do, there's a lack, there was always a lack of money" (João*, January 2020, Zona Norte).

However, despite the recent lack of funds, these research participants were still there, offering projects in various capacities, but always continuing: “It [previous funding] was all organic, from donations etc. There’s no money for this. So now we diminished, we’re few but we’re still here” (João*, January 2020, Zona Norte). This is what makes favela peace formation so incredibly relevant and powerful. Closely rooted in the community, favela peace formation will always exist, in various scales, forms and levels of influence, while other, top-down projects may come and go according to the political and economic climate. Rafael* mentioned how various previous projects had come and gone, and large organizations like Viva Rio that made a lot of money on the favela without properly engaging with the communities now have closed while the grassroots favela peace formation collectives and movements carry on. As he phrased it; “Nothing exists without us; blacks, *favelados*”, and:

If you think that is just a paid work, you won’t be part of the team. You need to have a political project. We would do it without any money. But it’s the capitalist logic. They say for example, ‘his work as a militant is paid’, it’s not that ‘militancy pays (well)’, it doesn’t! A social movement is a social movement, an NGO is an NGO. An ideological project will maintain itself with or without money.

(Rafael*, Zona Norte).

Similarly, Davi* criticized other top-down social projects that were too concerned with making money and stated that his work with youth is not easy, but that “Love needs to surpass everything. The philosophy is that love needs to be in front, first, in everything you do” (January 2020, Zona Norte).

The rise of the far-right

Another clear challenge to favela peace formation is the rise of far-right politicians in Rio de Janeiro and Brazil, like former governor Witzel and President Bolsonaro, who have run an aggressive and deadly war against the favelas (Associated Press 2019; BBC News 2020; HRW 2019; Kaiser 2019; Phillips, D. 2019a). This section therefore considers the role of a disconnected white left, fake news and the evangelic church in the rise of Bolsonaro’s far-right:

...But you know, it was the residents of the favelas and peripheries who massively voted for Bolsonaro¹⁴. It's a fight over hearts and minds. This is also the question of the formation of the evangelicals (...) this discourse that Bolsonaro represents; to disclaim politics and the whole political system as dirty. He represents the anti-system fascism, the far right. (...) with the liberal developments these days, it's a huge storm and everything is confusing, unpredictable; 'What is a woman, a man, what is a family, what are the rules of the game, who are we?' And in this chaos, who seeks other answers needs these anchors in their lives on the level of being, as stabilizing references: 'This is a man, this is a woman, this is a marriage'; defined forever. This is the conservative discourse offered to the world. Bolsonaro and the evangelical church, this universe, offers: 1. Liberation (from the state/system), 2. In this insecurity, it facilitates the super-simple, crass. If we (the left) are not going to see this, we will not understand anything (...) The dispute over consciousness has been going on for 30 years.

(Bernardo*, February 2020).

As discussed in chapter 4, the white, *asfalto* left is very disconnected from the favelas. As noted by one activist; "[t]he left is asking why the favela voted for Bolsonaro; The favela is not at fault. The left seen from the favela is still very far to the right! Because this left is a protected left" (Santiago, August 2019). The failure of the left in reaching the real working class in the favela, together with the state's negative presence and absence of public service in the favelas, has, arguably left a space for a conservatist, moralist discourse to take root in these communities. The liberal discourse on sexual education, abortion, legalization of marijuana and gay rights does not correspond with the discourse of the church which is, as discussed in chapter 4, perceived by many to be a way of coming closer to the white image of humanity, of 'good citizens' deserving of both human and citizen rights (Perlman 2017).

¹⁴ See Ricci (2020).

In the presidential elections in 2018, the left disconnect and growth of the evangelical church in the favelas were further combined with fake news surrounding the political left. Fake news and conspiracy theories like ‘sexual education in school is a secret scheme to make the children gay’, ‘the ones in favour of the legalization of drugs all smoke marijuana’, ‘there is a communist conspiracy to take over the whole of Latin America’, combined with the corruption trials against former PT presidents Dilma and Lula, arguably caused many Brazilians to vote against the left rather than for the right: “The politicians play on the fear factor. People are more afraid of the left, and liberals, than of the right. Between Freixo [PSOL, left] and Crivella [Republicanos, also Evangelical pastor and mayor 2017-2020], people vote for Crivella because they are scared of Freixo as an abortionist, (and) that he is against the police” (Jose*, February 2020, Zona Norte). Similarly, Luíza* shared her concerns of this liberal left when I asked her about the rise in leftist and black power movements after the death of Marielle:

I think it’s very sad when a famous black person dies. It was even disgusting, they talked about her every day when every day black people die. Even more in the northeast. We die every day. I think there are some movements that are quite profiteer (...) the LGBT movements (...) they victimize themselves and connected their fight with the black fight. I’m not homophobic but when you mess with nature you create an imbalance (...) On the tv, in Globo, there’s always an approach to the gay question – which makes the people not see the real problems. The LGBT movement is very aggressive. They also suffer prejudice, but they turned into sensationalism. They say that LGBT was a factor, a reason why they killed her (Marielle). The people want to romanticize that they killed her because she was the minority, black, woman. But we don’t know why they killed her, but every day others die, né?

(...)

They attack Bolsonaro for being moralist, but this is a false modernization. They are not seeing the truth, they are anesthetized with LGBT, beer, party, Flamengo games [the largest football team in Rio], etc (...) When you don’t have the history of your ancestry you end up

believing everything they say on the TV. And we stay in a position as their slaves, of who serves and who's being served. They are manipulators, like with the gay, there will be fewer black people as people have less children. It's natural to be gay, but why do they have to insist on this, why do they have to impose it? Why do they have to teach it to my son? It's just one of their strategies

(Luíza*, November 2019, Zona Sul).

Luíza* offers a great example of the fear of the LGBTQ movements and the belief in the fake news that sexual education in school will make your child gay. Her frustration with the mobilization after the assassination of Marielle also shows the disconnect between the left and some black favela residents; even though Marielle herself was both a black favela resident and a leftist politician, her sexual orientation, the mobilization of the LGBTQ movements and/or perhaps her political engagement caused a clear distance between her and Luíza*, who works with favela history and memory. While Marielle has become an important symbol uniting many in the fight for social justice and inclusion for minority groups, especially black power movements, Luíza* found it “disgusting” how her death got so much attention “when everyday black people die” (Luíza*, November 2019, Zona Sul).

In light of the context of a colonial city, with its structural and cultural racism, political disconnect, growth of the evangelical church, corruption scandals and fake news, in addition to high levels of crime and violence, it becomes perhaps easier to understand why so many favela residents voted for Bolsonaro, Witzel, Crivella and other far-right politicians, as they posed to be ‘anti-system’, ‘anti-corruption’, and ‘tough-on-crime’ candidates that defend Christian ‘family-values’ and the ‘good citizens’ from ‘criminals’(Ricci 2020). Together with the moralist discourse from the church, the right created quite popular sayings such as ‘a good criminal is a dead criminal’ (bandido bom é bandido morto) and ‘to defend human rights it to defend criminals’ (defender direitos humanos é defender bandido) that effectively worked to defend violent police operations and challenged the credibility of everyone working with human rights (see also Caldeira in Scheper-Hughes 2004b:181-182).

We are in a moment of suffocation, of reaction, reoperation. So, what do we do to reach out to everyone, through rap, through funk, poetry, etc., through other pathways? Bolsonaro won in the favelas because he said he will kill criminals and protect the good citizens, and the people in favelas think, “hey, I’m a good citizen and there is a lot of violence around, sounds good”, but they don’t know that when the elite speaks, these ‘good citizens’ don’t include people inside the favela, on the other side of this invisible border.

(Santiago, August 2019).

This quote shows the exclusion of the favelas in a racist and unequal society and political system where the political left is unable to represent the real working-class favela residents, the political right excludes the favela residents from the category of ‘good citizens’, and favela peace formation actors themselves struggle to reach out to favela residents voting for Bolsonaro and his allies (Santiago, August 2019).

While the political left is in the *asfalto*, disconnected from the favela, and some favela human rights activists and black university graduates themselves struggle to reconnect with their family and other favela residents, the church is always present and very much connected in the favelas (Marcia*, September 2019; Patrícia*, February 2020; Jose*, February 2020, Zona Norte). The evangelical church was described by some participants to do amazing grassroot work among the weakest in society (Patrícia*, February 2020; Jose*, February 2020, Zona Norte; Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019) and quite a few agreed that the growth of the evangelical church can be seen as a market connected to far-right actors in politics that take advantage of the most vulnerable in society in order to increase their own power through votes and donations from favela residents (Maria*, September 2019; Gabriel*, August 2019; Zona Sul; Bernardo*, February 2020; Rafael*, João*, January 2020; Patrícia*, February 2020; Emmanuella*, March 2020; Jose*, February 2020; Douglas*, September 2019, Zona Norte).

The big leaders of the church understand that politics is a place to make a lot of money; that the gold is the population; who counts (matters, *conta*), who gives money, who votes. So, you have the domination/command (*dominio*) over a population. The churches are

super rich (*riquissimas*), they [the believers] are obedient to the leader, and the leader says: “you will vote in this candidate” and the people vote without knowing if he is good or bad. Bolsonaro has the support of the evangelical church. It’s a terrible problem, the people end up going to church because they need everything, health services, psychologist, they are more sick, more depressed, they have more problems, so they seek to the church (*busca a igreja*) for more comfort, and they [the church] end up charging [money] for a good word/comfort (*palavra boa*). When the person gets better, he/she pays 100 reais every month [to the church]. The universal church tells them: “go sell sweets, chewing gum, cakes, and give the money to the church”

(Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul).

This points to a larger political project, where the church seemingly is paid to provide votes for certain political candidates:

(Jose*): [the evangelical church] voted into power the president, the governor, decided the congress, [it is] organized crime, the police, supported by deputies, congressmen, senators...

(...)

(me): What are the links between the evangelic church and politics?

(Jose*): It’s a moralist discourse, in the same cult. They choose who they should vote in. They criminalize and demonize PT and PSOL as the devil, with LGBT, marijuana, it’s very easy. The church knows how to take advantage of and use the morality culture.

(Jose*, February 2020, Zona Norte).

These quotes by peace formers serve as important grassroot testimonies on how the evangelic church operates in the favelas and how their command over these territories make them important allies for actors high up in the political system. By sharing these views of favela peace formers on the political disconnect, the evangelical church and the far-right, I hope to have brought some more nuance to the vast and various structures of violence in this context. The violent legacies from colonialism, slavery

and dictatorship not only block favela peace formation and development through the lack of state support and negative state presence, but also through a white, disconnected '*asfalto*' left. This left, by being both too far right and simultaneously too liberal to get the support of the majority of favela residents, has lost to the rise of the moralist, fascist, far-right government of Bolsonaro, with the assistance of the evangelical church.

These votes for tough-on-crime, militarized candidates might be explained by Pearce's concept of authoritarian citizenship (2017). She argues that, due to the violent state formation in Latin America, citizens have more experience with a repressive state than an "effective and egalitarian rule of law", and thus prefer states "underpinned by violence and violence-protection mechanisms", that seek to deny the "rights to certain groups, particularly those deemed responsible for acts of violence and crime" (2017:241). This is supported by the findings of this thesis, how criminalizing and racist narratives successfully dehumanize and negate the rights of favela residents, legitimize the state genocide in these neighbourhoods, and naturalize the vast social inequality and injustices of the status quo. Pearce adds that this 'need' to vote for more state violence and suppression

arise variously from the daily insecurities of the poor, from the middle-class anxieties about social disorder, and from the impulse to protect wealth and power at whatever cost amongst the few who possess such goods in abundance

(Pearce 2017:240).

Based on a politics of fear, the concept of authoritarian citizenship thus might explain why many Rio de Janeiro residents, from different social classes, vote on the basis of being protected from violence (and for the elite to protect their power) instead of voting for social justice and equality which might, in the long run, break these cycles of violence. However, politics in Rio de Janeiro and the votes in many favelas are also undeniably linked to the expansion of militias and mafia, as will be discussed below (Arias 2006; 2017). Before, however, I briefly consider Rio de Janeiro's militarized public security forces as another main challenge to favela peace formation.

Militarized public security structures

The militarized and violent structure of the police forces were identified as one of the main challenges to peace and wellbeing in the favelas by many of the interviewees (Pedro*, August 2019; Grupo Ar*, September 2019; Paulo*, July 2019, Zona Sul; Rafael*, João*, January 2020; Marcia*, September 2019; Fernanda*, January 2020; Patrícia*, February 2020; Emmanuella*, March 2020; Jose*, February 2020; Marcos*, January 2020; Izabel*, January 2020, Zona Norte; Ana*, March 2020; Bernardo*, February 2020; Lucas*, August 2019; Grupo Luz*, November 2019). The violence in militarized security operations can be largely attributed to a lack of civilian oversight in old, militarized public security structures. Ana explained how the police force is an archaic, 200-year-old force “created to protect property and quench slave rebellions, and they’re doing the same today. How do you reform something (within this)? (Ana*, March 2020). Similarly, Bernardo* explained how the “working policemen that are exploited [with low salaries and high-risk work within the military police] are an adaptation of [the] violent, racist structures from slavery”. He added that the state also “never broke from the dictatorship in the area of public security. In the other areas, yes, but never in public security” (Bernardo*, February 2020). Indeed, Alves and Evanson describe how during the military dictatorship,

The main tasks of the police were to discourage and suppress opposition and to protect the regime rather than to safeguard the people. For many years after 1988, only sporadic efforts, at best, were made at police reform and to replace the national security state ideology of the military dictatorship with respect for the rule of law and the protection of citizens’ rights. Instead, the older mentality and practices continued to the extent that the police were encouraged to view drug traffickers as a new incarnation of the ‘internal enemy’

(Alves and Evanson 2011:118-119).

A thorough security sector reform is thus clearly needed to break the ties with slavery and the military dictatorship and this image of drug traffickers (and criminalized favela residents) as the internal enemy.

Several research participants also stressed that it is not the working policeman that is the problem, but rather, as Bernardo* shared above, the violence of a public security system that has not been reformed since the military dictatorship (Bernardo*, February 2020; João*, January 2020, Zona Norte; Luíza*, November 2019, Zona Sul). “What about the racism in the system? It’s the system, not just the police (...) in the end it’s the police who has the finger on the trigger/who will pull the trigger, but it is the system. In the capitalist system, the question is of who will die less” (Rafael* Zona Norte). There was an ongoing discussion in the more critical circles on whether the policeman could therefore be defined as working class, as they are also majority, black, poor, *favelado*¹⁵, searching for stable employment with pension benefits (Bernardo*, February 2020; João*, January 2020, Zona Norte; Luíza*, November 2019, Zona Sul; Para Que e Para Quem, October 2019). However, this was met by much criticism from several experiencing police violence, saying that they lost their right to be working class when they started killing people (Para Que e Para Quem, October 2019).

The discussion also compared the police to the *tráfico*; both as threats to the security in the favela, and both forms of employment that offer some benefits for the poor, black, *favelado* with few other opportunities. João* observed: “In the operations as well, it’s the black killing the black” (João*, January 2020, Zona Norte). Pointing to the violence of the system and a mafia behind the scenes benefitting from this system, Luíza* and Maria*, Zona Sul explained:

The police are as much victims as we are. Who comes to exchange shots are also from poor families, someone who wanted to make a change, and maybe got corrupted. The policeman is a black man, from the favela, and poor. It continues to be black people dying. They make very little, and very often end up with hate against the favela, and the favela against the police. Poor hating the poor. It’s a mafia, the evangelical church, catholic church, *tráfico*, police, all to serve a minority.

¹⁵ Another word for favela resident. Used as a discriminatory term but recently reclaimed by the favela residents themselves as an empowering term

(Luíza*, November 2019, Zona Sul).

Today there's a government that allows for extermination, (with the view that) being in, from the favela, it's a disposable life. The police officer too, is seen as a disposable life. All the dead are from the favela, poor, and the majority is black. The policeman- his life is also not valued, and he is also black. The UPP, a lot of them are drug users. Out of 50, I got to know two, I saw them buy drugs from the *traficante*. The police are in a system without support, without psychologists, therapists. It's a life that also doesn't matter. They come from poor places too.

(Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul).

Also addressing the violence of the system, a member of the course on public security and favela epistemology questioned ideas to 'solve' Rio de Janeiro's public security problems by cleaning the police force of corrupt police officers:

The idea of cleaning the police of those individuals who act wrong is perverse, because they put something that is systemic on individuals, and the individual policemen are black, *favelados*... The problem is that the military police is hierarchical, you would never look at the top of the chain, and the state is at the top. The police force was the first public space that was opened for black people, why?

(Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019).

In Brazil, it is the state governors who sit at the top of the chain in terms of having the power to implement new public security policies in their state. According to Alves and Evanson, "no Rio de Janeiro governor in the democratic period since 1988 has carried through a comprehensive plan for police reform, though there was at least a brief attempt in 1999-2000 to do just that" (2011:123). How could this be? Alves and Evanson suggest: "Had the Brazilian elite found that a corrupt police reduced their liberty or threatened their property, they would have imposed the necessary reforms long ago" (2011:122). The focus should therefore be placed on the upper strata of the police and the elites that apparently benefit from the violence of the current public security policies in Rio de Janeiro.

So why has there not been a public security sector reform (SSR)? Alves and Evanson found in their interviews in 2008, under the government of President Lula from the PT Workers Party, an interest at the national level to implement SSRs that respect human and citizen rights. Like the National Program of Public Security with Citizenship (PRONASCI) which funds police educational programs and trainings, and whose coordinating civil police officer Oliveira Vianna recognized the challenges in Rio de Janeiro state: “Today in Rio de Janeiro, there is a very strong connection between public employment, politics, and organized crime” (Alves and Evanson 2011:147). This national government also invited Philip Alston, the United Nations Rapporteur for Extrajudicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions to do an independent report, who, according to then Minister and Special Secretary for Human Rights, visited several major cities in Brazil and only had trouble in Rio de Janeiro with then Secretary of Security in Rio de Janeiro, Beltrame, who gave him a toy *caveirão*¹⁶ (Alves and Evanson 2011:199). From these and other important interviews in Alves and Evanson’s book, it seems that even under a more favela-friendly national government in 2008, key officials like Governor Sergio Cabral and Secretary of Security José Beltrame in Rio de Janeiro state remained militarist in their public security policies. This suggests the weakness of the federal government in supporting crucial favela peace formation reforms in local public security, and the immense importance of local politics in Rio de Janeiro.

Sadly, it also shows how Rio de Janeiro residents continue to vote for hard-line, militarist politicians in local elections. According to Bernardo*, “...the level of manipulation is so high, that the population doesn’t want to see the end of the military police. The majority will say that the police need to be more brutal! The world alimnts itself with discourse. If only the population would have a critical sense...” (Bernardo*, February 2020). According to Bernardo*, the lack of SSR is also closely connected to efforts by various elites to preserve the status quo, as “the upper strata of the police (...) make threats, they have dinners with politicians, and pass to the media what represents their institutions. The military policeman is shut up/silent and oppressed”.

¹⁶ Military police tank

When I asked him why there had not been a SSR breaking ties with the dictatorship to demilitarize the police, he answered:

1. You have the military men saying: ‘no-one messes with this’. The validity of this militarized police already expired with the dictatorship, but now it came back [referring to Bolsonaro’s rise, his open support for the dictatorship and the many military men entering positions of power under his presidency].
2. Corporations that profit on this [warfare, violent security policies] are lobbying politicians
3. There were no alternative proposals to public security nor any popular mobilization. – which is also linked to the media. There is a lack of definition [of public security] from the left, if we had a clear definition, we would have a chance. (...) The left parties until today never proposed a change in public security, never proposed any alternatives, never said, ‘let’s make a coalition to propose changes...’

(Bernardo*, February 2020).

What is difficult is that you need “popular consent” “from the bottom-up (...) to cause the top-down change of demilitarization of the police” (Bernardo*, February 2020), but the majority of the population buys into the war narrative and thus supports the heavy militarized police (Pearce 2017). The challenge of public security reform thus also links back to the political disconnect, authoritarian citizenship and a deep political corruption, the lack of sufficient favela representatives in politics, the criminalizing narratives still circulating the favela, reinforced within the favelas through the evangelical church, and the importance of favela peace formation community projects to continue to empower and educate the favela residents in order to increase their circulation and presence in society and in politics. Simultaneously, when turning the spotlight upwards towards the top of the social, economic and political hierarchies, evangelist leaders, certain politicians and military elites seem to form various networks that work against favela peace formation in order to protect an unjust status quo that protects their interests, which will be more closely discussed below as a counter-peace-

formation network. Borrowing part of the conclusion of Alves and Evanson on public security reform:

It seems clear that security reform cannot be expected to emerge out of the politics of Rio de Janeiro. The civil rights of citizens who reside in favelas still find no support strong enough to prevail against the coercion and intimidation practiced by criminal groups such as drug gangs and militia acting with the complicity of local leaders. A structure of informal power has been in place too long. It may even be growing in strength. Too many powerful groups benefit – among them, political parties and individual candidates running for office, including the offices of mayor of Rio de Janeiro and governor of the state. Such a system is unlikely to be self-correcting. [...] the countervailing weight of parallel power long in place in favelas that has benefited political parties and elected local and state officials – and criminal groups – has proved too strong to break even in the midst of reports of violence, the killing of innocent people, and widespread violation of citizen rights (Alves and Evanson 2011:132).

The findings of this thesis and of Alves and Evanson's book reflect previous research on Latin American democracies and Brazil that have identified a complex, corrupt criminal network within the state, between elected officials, police, drug gangs, and the militias, showing that violence in the favelas in Rio is not due to an absence of the state, but in fact due to the criminal presence of a deeply corrupt, violent and perverse state (Alves and Evanson 2011; Arias 2006; Arias and Goldstein 2010; Brahler 2014; Gledhill 2015; Pearce 2010). As will be shown below, militias can also be considered an illegal arm of this same state.

Militias and the state

The militias, due to their fast expansion, hidden violence and involvement in politics, were identified as a growing threat to favela peace formation and to the Rio de Janeiro democracy in general. As presented in chapter 1, the militias surged out of the former extermination groups used by the state during the military dictatorship in the 1990s and are made up of retired off-duty and on-duty policemen, soldiers and firefighters

(ALERJ 2008; Gledhill 2015). These groups now control large territories in a ‘parallel state’ order like the *trafico*, although, being largely made up of public security officials, these groups rarely face the heavy public security operations that the favelas controlled by the *trafico* face. In this sense the militias are part of the state, at least a product of the state. In the paragraph below, a professor specialized in the study of militias in Rio explained the close connections between the state and the militias, especially in the Baixada in the north of Rio de Janeiro state where the militias control enormous territories:

...the state is legal and illegal at the same time, the militias were already created through the police [being mostly made up of ex and current police, army and firemen]. There is a practice of extermination within the police, but there is no data on it, it is an occult, invisible reality. The militias are extreme right-wing, and social movements don’t know how to deal with this, next year will be worse. [We’ve had] five decades of the militias always being part of/within the state, gaining on the criminalization of drugs, and a market of militias with super exploration of the favelas and the peripheries. The *traficante* (drug dealer) will die or be imprisoned [seen as their destiny here], but the militia won’t. They cannot lose; they make money on drugs and on the privatization of prisons. In Duque de Caxias, the *prefeitura* (local government, prefecture) politicians are side by side with militia [politicians from the MPB party], and they both gain from it. There is no data to show the extermination, and the social movements are only able to survive, not do anything beyond this. Structural solutions are: 1. Rethink drug policies 2. Dismount the military structure in the police force. Militia is not the absence of the state, it’s the presence of a certain form of the state

(Co-creation in the city: rights and culture of favelas and peripheries, June 2019).

Similarly, Rafael*, Zona Norte explained the growth of the militia in Rio de Janeiro state, especially in Zona Norte:

In the Baixada, in the legislative chambers, you have many people connected to the militias, also in the judiciary; it is the state. Today they

say that there is a militiazation of the state, but in Baixada it's been for 20 years! Why is it just now that they are saying this? 80% of the territory of Rio de Janeiro state is controlled by militias. It is the state! There exist different fractions of militias as well, like the different fractions in the *tráfico*. What we need to know is which fractions of militia that Witzel wants to have around. (...) There's no way to see this [state] as a tool in the fight [for human rights, peace formation]. In the Baixada there already is a full presence of the militia, the project of militiazation that the rest of Rio de Janeiro is experimenting already passed here (*já era*). Every city councilman, and judge has connection to *tráfico* or militia. The TC (Terceiro Comando, drug gang) is now militia. The CV (Comando Vermelho, oldest and largest drug gang in Rio) has historically been heavily armed and been responded to with heavy arms by the state. Why doesn't the state respond more to the militias? If this was different, in normal times, this growth of militias would cause the state to close down the city, stop it all. Why are they not doing this? It's a way of producing knowledge.

(Rafael*, Zona Norte).

Why does the state not respond to the militias the same way they would respond to the CV? Why do police operations in Baixada only occur in areas controlled by the CV? Why did none of the areas controlled by the militia in Rio de Janeiro state experience police operations in 2019? (Goulart, July 2019). Why were police operations in CV-controlled favelas in Baixada followed by militia invasions of those favelas? (Goulart, July 2019). It can be answered by this statement from a member of the public security course I attended: "The militia is a project of the state, it's their way of acting outside of the law" (Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019). Consider the excerpts from an Agência Pública interview with militia expert and sociologist José Cláudio Souza Alves:

[Interviewer Mariana Simões:] Did the militias emerge in Rio de Janeiro due to the government's absence?

[José Cláudio Souza Alves:] The government is consistent. Assassins get elected. Militia members get elected. They have direct relationships with

the government. They are government agents. They are the government. So don't tell me that the government is absent. It is the government that determines who is going to operate the militarized control and security in the area. Because they, themselves, are government agents. Assassins and militia members are also representatives and city council members. A militia member is the Environment Secretary.

As I always say: it's not a parallel power, so don't use this term. It's the power of the government itself.

I'm talking about a government that is becoming involved in illegal operations—becoming more powerful in illicit activities than it is in the legal sphere. This way, it can rule over your life in a totalitarian way. And you can't oppose that.

[...] The militia is a network—a very big network—so for each person arrested, you have one hundred others to fill their spot. Because if you keep the structure working, it will be perpetuated economically and politically.

Nobody touches these guys. Usually, they only bother the drug traffickers. And traffickers aren't the most powerful. Militias have more power than traffickers. Militia members get elected, traffickers don't. The militia's economic base is expanding—it hasn't been touched. The surface hasn't even been scratched. This isn't the case with drug traffickers—they are always killing and being killed. The militia is the government.

Yet more, you look at the faces of arrested militia members and there is a tendency for all of them to be white. There's going to be one or another who is brown, but they don't tend to be black. And they aren't skinny—they're well fed. I'm sure that the class to which militia members belong is different from that of the drug trafficking gangs. They aren't as poor. They aren't as black. They aren't as peripheral.

(Souza Alves, in Simões 2019).

The militias are thus expanding their influence in the state of Rio de Janeiro. In October 2020, the Fluminense Network for Research on Violence, Security and Rights, published a study which found that militias control 57% of the territorial area of Rio de Janeiro, while the main drug gangs Comando Vermelho, Terceiro Comando and ADA control comparably 11,6%, 3,7% and 0,3% of this area, respectively (Justino 2020). What is notable here is the relatively small domain of the supposed main ‘enemies of the state’, the drug gangs, in comparison to the militias that can indeed be considered as part of the state itself. This shows perhaps a new, gruesome level of Pearce’s (2010), Arias and Goldstein’s (2010) ‘perverse states’ and ‘violent democracies’. From these quotes, it becomes clear that the militias are the state, and that the growth of their influence in territory and in politics in Rio de Janeiro is a massive challenge to favela peace formation. In fact, if they continue to grow, they have the power to threaten all favela peace formation and grassroots democracy movements in Rio de Janeiro.

Counter-peace formation

As seen in the sections above, some church leaders, militias, high-ranking public security officials and politicians can be seen to be part of a growing, corrupt network that pose various challenges to favela peace formation. Due to the specific blockages posed by these actors, like the increased militarization of public security operations in the favelas and the assassination of and death-threats against favela peace formers and political representatives, I would also call this a counter-peace formation network (Richmond 2020). Further, I asked the research participants if they thought that there exists a network or group of actors that work against their work and the wellbeing of their communities. With this rather open-ended question, I hoped that they would identify groups independent of my expectations and prejudice. The responses overwhelmingly supported the violent, perverse, corrupt state theory with quotes like “The network against is very clear: the governor, the president, they work against development” (Paulo*, July 2019, Zona Sul); “Today there is an anti-democratic conspiracy” (Emmanuella*, March 2020, Zona Norte); and “It’s a mafia, the evangelical church, catholic church, *tráfico*, police, all to serve a minority” (Luíza*, November 2019, Zona Sul).

Several participants pointed to connections between the evangelical church, certain drug gangs, militias and politicians, all which alluded towards a larger mafia in Rio de Janeiro. Luíza*, further described their linkages:

There's a link between *tráfico* and the evangelical church, which happens in prison. They give access to evangelical pastors, who meet the imprisoned in a weak moment. And these people often turn into managers in the *tráfico* when they are freed. The *tráfico* is very lucrative, but they are not the bosses of anything. Who really gains is not inside the favela. The evangelicals are linked to a mafia, the mafia is much more than what our eyes are able to see. It's a way of manipulation, it's a mafia. The *tráfico* themselves, the bosses, always end up in prison or dead, and they can't even leave the territory, they only stay limited in the territory (favela). While the big boss (*chefão*) lives well/peacefully (*vive tranquilo*)

(Luíza*, November 2019, Zona Sul).

Rafael* also told me that the Terceiro Commando drug gang now works with the militias, and that 90% of the attacks on Candomblé, Afro-Brazilian lands in Rio were done by this group, after which the evangelical church entered the space (Rafael* Zona Norte).

The Universal Church is a form of control; capillarity of public security, there is very little research done on this. We need a research project on the state and the Neo-Pentecostal church to understand the dynamics between the two. The state is very occupied by these groups [the *tráfico*, militia, and Neo-Pentecostal church according to the context of the conversation]. It's a process of the state. How is it articulated? [It] is done based on interests, and the church and militia consolidated it. But there is a diversity of churches as well. The territory (of the favela, periphery) is powerful (*potente*), but also for oppression

(Rafael*, Zona Norte).

These quotes reflect several sections throughout this thesis on challenges to favela peace formation, including the evangelical church's role in reinforcing racist, criminalizing narratives, demonizing Afro-Brazilian culture and religions and influencing favela residents to vote for tough-on-crime politicians. They also hint towards their involvement with the *tráfico*, enforcing the findings of corrupt arrangements between various different parties in local favela elections, and how all this then becomes a process of the state as the state becomes increasingly 'occupied by these groups'.

Jose*, Zona Norte directly named the current far-right government and the far-right group in politics, the *bancada BBB*, as actors that work against peace formation in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro. This far-right group which in 2019 had many representatives in the government, including President Bolsonaro, former Rio Governor Witzel and former Rio Mayor Crivella, is called the *bancada BBB* by many as they have been found to have very close ties to the evangelic church (Biblia/bible), large cattle rangers and landowners (Boi/bull) and the arms manufacturer Taurus (Bala/bullet) (Jose*, February 2020, Zona Norte; Public Security and Favela Epistemology 2019). There has recently been exposed a clear connection between the Bolsonaro family and the Rio militias, mafia as well as involvement in a "criminal fake news racket" (The Guardian 2020). These and many other events point to a larger, criminal political project, using fake news in order to gain local positions as well as the presidency and shows the urgency in addressing the links between the Brazilian state, the church, the militias and the wider mafia, if not many of these groups indeed prove to be part of the same organism.

As there was given amnesty to all after the military dictatorship and as there has been no clear break in Brazil's public security policies since (Ana*, March 2020; Bernardo*, February 2020; Emmanuella*, March 2020, Zona Norte), it also makes sense that these militias have links to a network of actors high up in the police and army structures, business men and politicians that use these illegal militias to solidify their positions, perhaps more widely connected to a 'mafia' as Luíza*, Zona Sul, called it above, or as gangsters, described by public security expert Bernardo* below:

There are many networks of gangsters who live on the exploitation of workers. They don't need to walk hand in hand with Bolsonaro, but they can help, with money for political campaigns, fund certain media channels, etc, if these politics reflect/defend their interests. But there is not a direct link like there is between the Bolsonaro family with the militia. And the profits of the big banks, for example, beat all records, and they are never questioned in the media. No-one speaks about it. There is/was a huge discussion on the calculation of costs of retirement, for example, but when you look at the numbers, these don't arrive even until 10% of the numbers of the banks...(…) And the more open politicians are realists as well. They will think [about demilitarizing the police, for eg]; that it is not the popular demand, and “the upper strata will give me problems, they will threaten me, cause problems” ... So, it's better to do nothing, it's not worth it.

(Bernardo*, February 2020).

These last quotes paint a dark picture of the state in today's Rio de Janeiro, where these groups work to protect their interests and thus work against favela peace formation which may threaten these interests with their demands for social and racial justice.

Several of the research participants also identified the general elites as part of the network against favela peace formation, as these, each time older and whiter, (Emanuella*, Zona Norte), are terrified that increasingly educated black favela residents will result in the loss of cheap, unqualified labour from the favela (Maria*, September 2019, Zona Sul). According to some interviews, they are also afraid that favela residents' increased education and circulation in society and politics will threaten the elite's position at the top of a traditionally strict Brazilian economic, social and racial hierarchy (Ana*, March 2020; Emmanuella*, March 2020; Davi*, January 2020, Zona Norte). As Davi* described it: “It is the fear (of the high society) that the favela youth ‘will be better than my son, that he will be the boss of my son’” (January 2020, Zona Norte). While perhaps not directly involved in a corrupt mafia network, many other elites may thus support this network against favela peace formation by deciding to remain ignorant of these issues and continue to criminalize the favelas and

their residents as they threaten the violent status quo which protects their privilege. Of course, it is hard to prove and cite the existence of the mafia, the complete reach and influence of the militias and connections between these actors if they cannot, in fact, be identified as the same organism, but the quotes by peace formers in the favelas and public security experts serve as important testimonies of the ways in which these groups within or connected to the state; public security agents, elected officials, militias, drug gangs, the evangelical church, and businessmen, provide blockages to favela peace formation and successfully continue a war against the favelas and the city's poor while the elites remain seated in their privilege (Gledhill 2015).

Favela peace formation's strengths and opportunities

These key challenges of violence, funding difficulties, inequality, criminalization and the growth of militias show how even self-help and parallelism projects of favela peace formation are still very reliant on and determined by the context outside the favela itself. Favela peace formers can help and assist only to a certain extent before needing more support or wider structural change in society, in terms of more funding opportunities, a reduction of violence in the state's public security policies, deeper structural changes of redistribution of land, wealth, or the provision of quality public services, including quality education. Since the current government poses the largest threat to life in the favela instead of implementing these favela-friendly policy changes, favela peace formers increasingly see the need to expand their networks and build partnerships with the international community. Be it international solidarity and activist networks, INGOs, IGOs or even other governments in order to receive more sustainable, stable funding and to get help in placing pressure on the state of Rio de Janeiro (and Brazil) to change their policies and implement structural changes, as discussed in the previous chapter on favela peace formation.

What are the chances for peace formation in the *carioca* favelas in this context in a genocidal state? From the interviews and fieldwork notes, the space and opportunities for favela peace formation seem to vary greatly between different favelas, different areas and different time periods in Rio de Janeiro. The quotes about militias from

Baixada show that social movements in this context are only able to survive, not do anything beyond this. However, this could also point to the flexibility of favela peace formation and the key to their survival; their ability to retreat and go underground when the threat against them is too great. Simultaneously, other favela activists, movements and organizations in Rio de Janeiro continue to fight for violence reduction and human rights. By recognizing that many of these are directly or indirectly linked to the ones forced underground, one can see favela peace formation as a deep, far stretched and flexible network whose different parts push and retreat in response to threats and opportunities across Rio de Janeiro (and arguably Brazil). I argue in this final section that favela peace formation, by being rooted, integrative, networked, feminized and decolonial, constructs a form of nonviolent favela counterpublics opposed to the violent regime which slowly deepens democracy across the favelas, whose empowerment has the potential to push for deep reforms of the Brazilian state in order to construct a less violent future (See Custodio 2016 for favela counterpublics). Below I go through each of these characteristics before concluding with a closer look at favela counterpublics, deep democracy and the slow, everyday evolution of favela peace formation in Rio de Janeiro.

Rooted

Grassroot peace initiatives' main strength is their close connection to the subaltern, here meaning those who are subject to the violence and insecurity of conflict in their everyday lives. In contrast to neoliberal peace projects that are inserted from the top-down, often in a problem-solving 'one size fits all' mode which largely ignores local needs and demands, grassroot peace formation originates from these needs and demands and thus often enjoys local legitimacy (Richmond 2016). Favela peace formation, as I have listed throughout this thesis, consist of activists, social workers, teachers, journalists, artists, social movements, NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) and many more who are from the favelas or have in many years been deeply involved in the favelas, and who work to reduce the many forms of violence in these communities in a nonviolent manner. Historically, favela social movements have included abolitionist movements in the time of slavery, pro-democracy movements under the military dictatorship, labour movements,

movements against house removals, movements for public services and infrastructure, capoeira groups, samba schools, hip hop, funk and many more (Custodio 2016; Fahlberg 2016; Perlman 2010). Favela peace formation is thus nothing new, but builds on a long history of cultural, social, political engagement fighting against various forms of state violence (racism, removals, negligence, police violence and more), against authoritarian regimes, be that drug gangs or the state, and against dominant narratives that criminalize the favelas and their residents.

Aware of the views of the main criminalizing narratives depicting the favelas as cradles of crime and dangerous, lawless no-go zones, many favela peace formers focus on the protection and strengthening of favela culture, history and memory. This may entail everything from Afro-Brazilian culture, history and religion to traditions and culture from the north-eastern Brazil, and to protecting the memory of young boys who the police have killed and attempted to reduce to drug traffickers who deserved to die (Farias 2014; Mães de Maio n.d.). Favela peace formation is therefore not only rooted in the sense that it has a long history of social engagement in, development and protection of the favelas and thus enjoy much more local legitimacy than top-down, outside projects in these same areas, but it also often works to empower favela residents to be proud of their history, culture and colour, and to show the strengths and culture in the favelas to outsiders in order to change the main criminalizing narratives in society. This is already producing results, with more and more favela residents self-identifying as black, wearing their natural hair, embracing Afro-Brazilian culture and embracing and empowering the previously negatively loaded word *favelado/a* (meaning from the favela). Being rooted in the needs, history and culture of the favelas, favela peace formation also has the unique potential to construct alternative, nonviolent and decolonial policies and ways of living. If anyone would be able to think outside the logic of capitalism and the state, it would be favela residents who have a long history of various forms of self-governance and development at the margins of this state.

However, some of the research participants also face the challenge of becoming disconnected from the grassroots in the favelas. As more and more black youth are

graduating university due to an affirmative action law approved in 2012 (BBC News 2012; Bernardo*, February 2020; Carneiro 2013b; Mendonça 2019), some students struggle to reconnect with their family values:

As they enter university, get to know new places, people, ways of thinking, to analyse, develop critical thinking, it becomes very difficult for many to relate to their roots, their family. On the contrary, they become excluded and reproduce the difficulties of relation to the *base* (grassroots), with their ideologies, doctrines, religions. It's a total abyss.

(Bernardo*, February 2020).

Jose*, Zona Norte also mentioned this challenge, that they as human rights activists in their community had become arrogant; that they thought they were connected with the community, but then the majority of residents voted in Bolsonaro: "Militancy also often brings arrogance. You learn a lot and you dislocate from your spot, your place, you stop being a resident (*morador*). This is very dangerous, to become separated from the working life (*trabalhadora*)" (Jose*, February 2020, Zona Norte). Similarly, Marcia* said "With 20 years of break [under the PT government], we got too comfortable and lost the hearts and minds because it was calm, we didn't have this big force acting against us. Now, this force is strong, and we need to go back to war, to win hearts and minds" (Marcia*, September 2019, Zona Norte). This risk of disconnect between favela residents and favela peace formers might point to the importance of a slow empowerment and education of the entire favela, which combine favela roots with positive development instead of the faster empowerment of a few who then risk becoming disconnected from their roots. However, these few that risk becoming disconnected can, as Marcia* and Jose* above, recognize their disconnect and work to diminish it. As it stands, favela peace formation seems to be the only viable alternative to combat the Bolsonaro-friendly, far-right, and militarized narratives that have taken a stronghold in the favelas through neoliberalization, fake news and the spread of the evangelic church.

Integrative

Another main strength of favela peace formation is that it is integrative; it consists of countless projects that cover different needs of the favela residents and the community, looking beyond the mere reduction of manifest violence in order to construct a less violent and more just future. This multifaceted focus of favela peace formation, which recognizes the importance of education, health, employment opportunities, the environment, music, arts, culture and more in addition to public security in the construction of a positive, sustainable peace, is also reflected in two large NGOs that work in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro. Redes de Maré divides its work into four main axes: 1. Art, memory, culture and identity; 2. Territorial development; 3. Right to public security and access to justice; and 4. Education (Redes da Maré 2019). Comparatively, Catalytic Communities identify four roots of their work: 1. Roots and belonging; 2. Community control and autonomy; 3. Direct channels to government; and 4. Fair and nuanced media representation (Catalytic Communities 2021). My findings reflect the interdisciplinary and wide-encompassing nature of these different categories where favela peace formers focus on the development and empowerment of their communities in parallel to or despite the state, while simultaneously demanding their rights to justice, representation and human rights through the state system, and more widely work to shift criminalizing narratives through arts, culture, media and more. These multiple forms of activism show the integral nature of favela peace formation, which constructs sideways in a multidisciplinary manner, thus slowly forming a wide, solid foundation for the construction of nonviolent politics and positive peace (Pearce 2020; Richmond 2016).

Networked

A third important characteristic of favela peace formation is that it is networked. By becoming increasingly networked within and across the favelas, in wider civil society, the state, and internationally with human right NGOs, the UN, academic institutions and activist movements, favela peace formation is slowly increasing its chances for support, grassroots social change within the favela, policy reforms and norms shifts locally, nationally and internationally. While some research participants found it a challenge to peace in the favelas that activists and organizations in different favelas

had little contact with each-other, there also seemed to be increasingly more connections made across the favelas, both online and through physical meetings. Because of its history, parts of favela peace formation are also still connected to black power and leftist anti-dictatorship/pro-democracy movements. This was shown in the previous chapter with increased favela representation in leftist political parties like the socialist PSOL, and what seems to be a reunification of anti-racism and favela struggles in a wider fight for racial and social justice and human rights (Rafael*, Zona Norte). Other favela peace formers more critical to the state seemed to construct their own networks of solidarity across international borders, some with activist networks like the Black Lives Matter movement in the USA and others in Palestine and South-Africa. Others again mentioned collaboration with international institutions like UNICEF, the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on subjects such as lethal violence and police killings in Rio de Janeiro (CEJIL 2017; Emmanuella*, March 2020, Zona Norte). Favela peace formation thus appear to be increasingly forming, expanding and strengthening various networks at various levels: across the favelas to join their struggles and strengthen the positive, sustainable favela image; with new partners in the *asfalto* to combat the criminalizing image of the favelas that still persist in Rio de Janeiro; with national networks from favelas, quilombos, indigenous groups and the *asfalto* interested in the question of minorities, periphery and margins, and with several international networks in order to gain support from international peace, development and justice institutions, strengthen transnational activist-networks and to invite new groups and individuals to gain a deeper understanding of the communities.

The rise in popularity and use of the internet, social media and mobile phone applications (ICTs) globally and in the favelas in Rio have made it a lot easier for favela activists, communicators and social movements to reach a global audience and to connect with donors, activist networks, NGOs and other networks both nationally and internationally that could help put pressure on the Brazilian government, fund projects and exchange experiences and knowledge (Castells 2013; Custodio 2016; Keck and Sikkink 1999; 2004). Custodio discusses how these networks slowly increase the discursive and normative powers of favela counterpublics. He reviews Fraser's definition of counterpublics:

For her [Fraser], subaltern counterpublics do not eliminate the hegemonic public sphere, but their proliferation widens the discursive space creating conditions for “widening discursive contestation” (p. 124). Thus, subaltern counterpublics are emancipatory, even if not revolutionary, because they serve as spheres for the formation and enactment of identities, collective organization and training for actions toward wider publics (p. 124). Consequently, subaltern counterpublics are able “to offset, although not wholly to eradicate, the unjust participatory privileges enjoyed by members of dominant social groups in stratified societies” (p. 124)

(Custodio 2016:106).

In this sense, the growing networking of favela peace formers across the favelas, in local, national and global civil society, and within parts of the state, together with the wider spread of favela perspectives through ICTs, increasingly contest and challenge the hegemonic discourses of prejudice against the favelas. This directly reflects Richmond’s description that peace formation processes “raise expectations relating to the need for a positive and emancipatory form of peace; slowly insert contextual modes of politics into institution-building processes and legal and constitutional frameworks; and influence donors and other international actors” (2016:175).

Building on favela history, culture and experience of self-developing in the absence of a social state and presence of a militarized necropolitical state, favela peace formation can thus be seen to create their own peace epistemology and search “for a new and alternative vocabulary”:

Peace formation enables an epistemology of peace to emerge gradually from within a historical and cultural society to infuse its institutions, and through a range of networks builds bridges with others as well as with international actors. It does so carefully because such ‘peace work’ entails costs, risks, and sanctions aimed at those who take part

(Richmond 2019:88).

Favela peace formation processes face grave risks, like the criminalization of the peace formers themselves and their networks, death threats and assassinations like the case of Marielle and Talíria Petrone. Rafael* also mentioned how he and his partners are very careful with whom they network and collaborate, as there is a huge risk of co-optation either by research that ends up sustaining the criminalizing narratives of the favelas or by public officials presenting insufficient and non-revolutionary policies that on the surface appear to answer to favela peace formation but in the end legitimizes and reinforces the status quo (Zona Norte). It is therefore essential that favela peace formation stands strong to produce localized knowledge in order to combat prejudice and racism, to propose alternative, non-violent policies and political projects, and to document and denounce violence and injustice. With the expansion of their networks, some favela peace formation processes also appeal to liberal norms like the defence of human rights and democratic citizenship in order to gain more support and further challenge the violent Brazilian state, while also working to maintain their roots.

Feminized and decolonial

There are also strong gendered and racial aspects to favela peace formation and favela representations in politics. The majority of the participants in events and in interviews in my fieldwork were black women, and black, female candidates have taken central stage of favela representation in politics. What favela peace formation brings forward, which is not yet properly discussed within peace formation, is the intersectionality of race, class and gender. In a racist, patriarchal and deeply unequal Brazilian state, much of the genuine struggle towards a more socially just and less violent future is fought by black, favela women. This struggle to unite and combine the issues of race, class and gender, and the various movements connected to each, is very challenging as these have historically been quite separate. However, the increased favela representation in politics and the fight for a less deadly public security have started to unite the favela movement and the black movement. As Rafael* argued, it is the favela youth movement and the movement of mothers who lost their sons to police violence that are the strongest movements in the favelas today, as “[t]hey are fighting for a black political project that guarantees life” (Rafael*, Zona Norte).

Similarly, Fahlberg found that

In contrast to the violent political regime, the activists' sphere of power was founded on (1) a feminized political sphere, led mostly by women and focused on care work, social development, and culture; (2) a rejection of clientelism, which has become equated with violence in both practice and the collective imaginary of the neighborhood; and (3) a commitment to democratic engagement with the state based on transparency, accountability, and equality

(2018: 487).

She adds that “the feminized countersphere of politics in the City of God was itself a local regime of power, establishing new political spaces and networks, expanding the availability of resources and services, and offering an alternative set of social practices that emphasized nonviolence” (2018:504). Richmond also argues that women’s groups “are the foundation for peace formation processes”, which include demands not only for negative peace “but also for more positive forms aimed at the inclusion of public services – health, education, and basic needs” (2016: 34). The focus on nonviolence and social provisions are seen in this research in the priority of the maintenance of everyday life and education as discussed in the previous chapter. This includes work to decriminalize favela youth and treat gang membership as a social issue instead of a criminal one. This rehumanization and decriminalization of the gang members is a key example of how favela peace processes challenge hegemonic violent discourses and policies with nonviolent actions focusing on service provision and education. The movement of mothers and relatives of victims to police violence are central actors in the fight for justice, human rights and against state violence across Brazil, which are almost exclusively run by mothers who have lost their sons to state violence (See Farias 2014; Mães de Maio n.d.). According to Rafael*, it is exactly these black women in the favelas who have the chance to create new, nonviolent, nonracist and nonpatriarchal policies in a violent, racist, patriarchal Brazil.

Conclusion: *trabalho de formiguinha* and everyday evolution

If anything shines through these findings it is that favela peace formation processes are very diverse, pluralistic, creative and flexible. While this makes favela peace

formation incredibly challenging to theorize and analyse, it is also how peace formation navigates the many violent power regimes above and around them. While some peace formers keep on with community projects almost habitually, becoming a constant help in a community where the state's presence is arbitrary and unpredictable, other, more activist groups and movements can be said to do what Jessop calls a 'strategic context analysis', "evaluating the current situation in terms of the changing 'art of the possible' over different spatiotemporal horizons of action" (Jessop 2016:55). As discussed in the framework chapter, Vigh (2006) defines this as social navigation; the "tactical movement of agents within a moving element. It is motion within motion" (Vigh 2006:14). In this lens, the seemingly habitually community work might also indeed be a form of social navigation, as peace formers find it more feasible to focus on seemingly non-political development projects in an extremely oppressive and violent context. As Fahlberg found in Cidade de Deus;

The variety of nonviolent political practices and visions in the City of God survived because their convergence was not possible: their consolidation into a single, visible institutionalized movement with clear leaders, demands, and practices would have been threatening to local drug lords, and their leaders would likely have been threatened, killed, or co-opted. Consequently, organizations and groups were small and fragmented, so that each one, on its own, could remain largely under the radar of violent actors (2018: 506).

Based on the findings of this research, I cannot say if this fragmentation applies to wider favela peace formation processes across Rio de Janeiro. While some research participants complained of a lack of social coherence within and across the favelas, others focused on the union of favela movements with black power movements in response to the increased police violence and murders in the favelas, and the expansion of networks through social media.

The immense challenges to favela peace formation are clear: the continuous targeted state warfare in favelas, prejudice, racism, a deep political divide and growing militia and mafia structures in Rio de Janeiro. More than anything, the violence of a deeply corrupt, illegal elite in the state, connected to the evangelical church, militias, drug

gangs and still influenced by persisting autocratic influences from the military dictatorship, stands as an immense blockage to favela peace formation. Due to these challenges, favela peace formers seemed to focus on the everyday successes, counting small forms of progress and the fact that they are still alive, as proof that their work is helping:

We are not able to think or do outside of the state. But I think we can do outside of the state. The history shows that what we manage to do are crumbs/fractions/scraps (*migalha*), but it can be very powerful, like the quota system [in universities], which is one of the most revolutionary and emancipatory policies. But at the same time as the state introduced the quotas, the same state militarized the favela. The state will continue to function like this, give and take, always have a counterweight to ‘progress’. I will [continue to] disturb the public ministry because we will manage to change something small, tiny successes. But it is not this state that is going to have the solution. [But] we don’t longer know what to put in the place of capitalism. The structures of racism and patriarchy are so powerful that we can’t even manage to think outside of this logic

(Rafael*, Zona Norte).

As change through the state system is slow, risky and only allows ‘scraps’ of progress, favela peace formation primarily focuses on the power of the communities themselves: “If the favelas and peripheries are not going to wake up, we’re not going anywhere. We need a focus on favela sustainability, venture, favela empowerment. If we’re going to wait for the government, nothing is going to happen” (Luíza*, November 2019, Zona Sul); “We are the solution. Here lies the solution to the big problem. I believe; it’s an everyday fight for a democratic process” (Emmanuella*, March 2020, Zona Norte).

This is why many peace formers focus on education, children and youth in order empower individuals while also hoping for a butterfly-effect; that this person will go on to positively influence others. This is also reflected in the use of the term *trabalho de formiguinha*, (ant work) to describe favela peace formation, as it is a slow, but

steady, cooperative process of construction. In this everyday perspective, Patrícia* described her organization's work as a set of micro-revolutions:

(me): How do you think the situation can change?

Patrícia*: Revolution. I think the revolution will come from us, in this favela. When you put another youth from here in university, it's a micro-revolution. What Renata Souza is doing, making it into politics, representing as a city councillor, is a micro-revolution. The story of the boy who got rehabilitated [after being shot by the police], is a micro-revolution. Renata told us that the congressmen, there, they are not able to see, they don't understand our situation. So, we have to have people from here present in all parts of the city, to guarantee human rights and access to all these places in the city, this is how we expand, how they occupy spaces in the city. And also [to show] that here [the favela] is for everyone. I believe in the power of the 'the problems here are the problems of the city'. That favelas are the city. That their problems are the city. (February 2020, Zona Norte).

Similarly, Rafael* called his and his partners' work that of 'everyday revolutions', or 'evolution', where they push for progress through the state while also producing new, alternative discourses:

(me): Do you believe in a revolution?

(Rafael*): I would like one, but it is far. It is sleeping. But we can have everyday revolutions. The movements are producing discourses that no-one made before. There is potential. It will take a long time, but it will happen. You need to dream; I dream a lot. Even how bad it is, how much we struggle now, it would have been a lot worse had we not been doing anything. We constructed, created so much, so many things that didn't exist 20 years ago. Evolution is every day

(Rafael*, Zona Norte).

These reflections correspond with Richmond's argument that "Peace formation seems to be a slow and quiet process of reform, reconciliation, respect and institutional development, rather than a revolutionary process of state or international re-

structuring” (Richmond 2019:93). Similarly, Fahlberg found that “because favela mobilization could not grow upward, it had grown sideways”, making Cidade de Deus into a space of “‘deep democracy,’ in which activist residents drew on place-specific practices and strengths, as well as ties to urban and transnational networks, to advocate for their interests” (2018:506). Finally, the focus on helping marginalized and criminalized favela youth, and other micro-revolutions of reducing violence in the local community, goes to the heart of a construction of a politics without violence as this social and emotional treatment of violence work to break the reproduction of violence in society, thus slowly working to de-signify violence and search for non-violent social and political alternatives (Pearce 2020).

Between deep political and social divides, inequality and lack of opportunities, financial difficulties, war-like police operations and death threats, I find it impressive that the favela struggle continues to fight, to survive, and to achieve everyday micro-revolutions. As Richmond argues, “In everyday terms, one might say that for as long as they survive, a successful peace process already exists” (Richmond 2019:94). As João* mentioned, before they were more, now they are diminished, but they are still here (January 2020, Zona Norte). And while many other, top-down projects have come and gone, failing to connect with the communities and eventually running out of funding and thus closing their doors, these grassroots favela movements persist, to smaller or larger degrees, supporting each-other and often dedicating their lives to the fight for social and racial justice and a positive peace in their communities. This again reflects Richmond’s research on peace formation (2016; 2019) as marginalized processes, challenged by the majority and often by a violent state, that regardless of these challenges continue to exist, implementing small successes of change. Similarly, Custodio notes that “one cannot expect immediate outcomes from the actions of subaltern counterpublics in society; it is necessary instead to observe and notice the gradual changes these movements generate” (Custodio 2016:112-113). A long-term study is therefore needed in order to more fully understand the successes of favela peace formation in constructing norms and narrative shifts in wider society, nationally and internationally. In Rio de Janeiro, favela peace formers work to influence five youths who can again influence five more, to keep twenty students off the street, away from drugs, guns, away from being killed by the police, slowly empowering more and

more residents to use their voice and demand proper human rights, citizenship and justice from their government, while the peace formers still navigate the violent state on the favela residents' behalf. It's a *trabalho de formiguinha*, slow but consistent, steady, and long-term.

~ Conclusion ~

Introduction

This thesis is a pursuit of a deeper understanding of alternative, subaltern forms of peace formation in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro. Gradually, this search for a grassroots, just, locally legitimate and decolonial peace has morphed into a critique of the violences of the wider political system and society and how these are experienced by the largely marginalized and criminalized favela residents. Chapter 4 examined how today's Rio de Janeiro is built on colonialism, slavery and continuous exploitation and simultaneous exclusion of the poorest, most dark-skinned parts of the population, and how racist narratives of criminalization and marginalization continue to justify and naturalize an immensely unjust status quo. The chapter exposed a necropolitical state in which white privilege protects the interests of majority white elites while black life is devalued, criminalized and made disposable, and where favelas are reduced to zones of exception where state violence and neglect are unproblematicized (Agambem 1998; Mbembe 2003; 2019; Scheper-Hughes 2004b; Villenave 2018). This critical reading of the status quo starts to deconstruct hegemonic narratives that place the favelas and favela residents as the main drivers and perpetrators of the urban conflicts between criminal groups and the state. By exposing the state's historical violent presence and absence in these communities, it shares a different, subaltern story of state murder, neglect, abuse, racism, a constant lack of educational and employment opportunities and wide-spread corruption within the security forces and political networks.

In chapter 5, the state shows its necropolitical nature in its war on drugs in the favelas by turning the marginalized 'other' into a killable internal enemy of the state instead of providing public services, inclusion and positive development (Gledhill 2015; Mbembe 2003; Wacquant 2008). It is arguably easier for the state to choose this violent penal treatment of poverty, where increasingly militarized public security operations are justified by securitization narratives that exaggerate the constructed image of

favelas as violent cradles of crime, than to impose meaningful social reforms that would allow for the positive development of these communities but simultaneously threaten the interests of the current elites (Gledhill 2015; Pearce 2020; Wacquant 2008). Gledhill showed how this rhetoric of securitization can “be deployed in ways that deflect attention from wrongdoing at the highest level by making crime seem external to the world of elites and focusing on its immediate perpetrators rather than intellectual authors” (2015:214). Rather than following the money in organized crime, which would expose who truly profits from the drug crime and violence in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro (Gledhill 2015), the state continues to kill young, black, favela boys drawn to crime in a life of few other opportunities. The chapter showed how the state’s security-centred, top-down notion of ‘peace’ becomes war in the favelas, and that a genuine peace for the favelas would have to be constructed from within the favelas themselves.

Chapter 6 showed some element of this local peace; how favela peace formation works to deconstruct and criticize the violences of the state and the current political system through denunciations, cases in the judiciary and participation in politics, while simultaneously working to empower vulnerable (often young) favela residents and changing negative, criminalizing hegemonic narratives in a slowly forming subaltern counter-publics (Custodio 2016). Chapter 7 then discussed how, despite vast challenges of inequality, racism, the war on drugs, the violent Bolsonaro government, funding difficulties and growing networks of militias and mafia across Rio de Janeiro, favela peace formation has unique chances of slowly constructing deep democracy and a positive peace through a gradual evolution in the everyday and its own growing networks. Through community work with youth and other favela residents, favela peace formation expands horizontally, with an empowering butterfly effect from favela resident to favela resident. Through its growing networks locally, nationally and internationally, it constructs and connects with state and non-state actors, thus also expanding vertically in search for wider support, collaboration and solidarity. The thesis finds that favela peace formation, by being rooted, integrative, networked, feminized and decolonial, is able to navigate various challenges and slowly construct a positive, decolonial peace as it challenges the patriarchal and colonial structures and cultures of the violent state. The following sections will revisit the framework of favela

peace formation from chapter 3 and discuss this study of favela peace formation’s contribution to knowledge.

Favela peace formation

Building on the preliminary framework for peace formation in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro as listed in chapter 3, I present a working framework for favela peace formation and its blockages below. It shows how favela peace formation fills in the roles of more traditional peace processes (crisis response, mediation, documentation and reporting, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), (transitional) justice, reconciliation, peace education and security sector reform (SSR))¹⁷, while simultaneously maintaining everyday life, navigating a violent, racist state, and actively fighting for social justice and the construction of new futures within and outside of the state system. The information in the table is a synthesis of the data gathered during fieldwork and the information presented in this thesis.

Favela peace formation’s additions to traditional peace processes

Traditional peace process	Favela peace formation roles/actions
Crisis response	<p>Providing support for each other within the community in extreme situations like mudslides, flooding and shootouts.</p> <p>Providing food parcels for families in crisis/need.</p> <p>Organizing shootout warning systems like the applications OndeTemTiroteio (Where are there shootouts) and FogoCruzado (Crossfire), and widespread information-sharing in social media during police operations.</p>
Mediation	<p>Being present in the street during police operations to protect favela residents from police abuse and death</p> <p>Mediation with drug gangs for access to vulnerable areas</p>

¹⁷ See for example Joshi, Lee and Mac Ginty (2014); Richmond (2009:559).

Documentation, reporting, denouncing abuses	<p>Documenting, sharing and denouncing cases of violence and abuse by public security forces in the ombudsman office and in the judicial cases of the ACP of Maré and the ADPF 635.</p> <p>Organizing of demonstrations and social media information-sharing campaigns to denounce state violence.</p>
Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR)	<p>While the research participants do not engage in active disarmament, many of them work with demobilization and reintegration of youth at risk of or already participating in the drug gangs. As described in chapter 6, there is a large focus on providing youth with alternatives to crime, drugs and violence.</p>
(Transitional) justice	<p>The presence of favela peace formers in the court cases of the ACP of Maré and the ADPF 635.</p> <p>Free legal advice, training and support given to favela residents on the subjects of human rights and right to public security, how to be heard, get involved in politics, and support during trials.</p> <p>Support for mothers who lost their sons to police murder during their trials.</p>
Reconciliation	<p>Organize workshops for favela residents and outsiders inside the favelas and outside in order to increase knowledge about these communities and combat prejudice</p> <p>Arts and culture projects, courses and events in the favelas bringing together the community but also inviting outsiders in.</p> <p>Work with youth who are at risk of being involved in crime.</p>
Peace education	<p>Work training, pre-university exam assistance and courses, English courses, homework assistance, computer training, human rights training, conflict mediation training, journalism classes, etc, in order to provide youth with a better future, and inform residents of their rights in meetings with the state.</p>

Public security reform (SSR)	<p>Engaging in local politics, demonstrations, information campaigns and participation in the ACP and ADPF 635 in order to push for state-led security sector reform.</p> <p>Push to rethink, reconstruct public security from the bottom-up through socio-educational work with youth (more details below).</p>
Additions to peace framework by favela peace formation	
Maintaining everyday life in abandonment of a social state	Health care, childcare, educational, environmental and sustainability projects and other self-help systems that work to provide services in a setting largely abandoned by the social state.
Changing narratives: knowledge production	Work to change the image of favela residents from criminals to human beings deserving human rights, and the favela from a criminal, dangerous, destitute place to a place of knowledge, expertise and critical perspectives. This is done through knowledge production in favelas: journalistic reporting, academic institutes, books, articles, academic/political events, social media information-sharing and social media campaigns
Changing narratives: culture production and dissemination	Arts and culture schools, projects and events in the favelas bringing together the community but also inviting outsiders in to present the favela as a place of culture, history, and creation.
Rethinking violence	Grassroot socio-educational work with children and youth, recognizing the cyclical and intergenerational nature of violence; that violence only fosters more violence, and thus the cycle must be broken with care (Pearce 2020). Thus, in contrast to the state’s violent response to drug crime, favela peace formation focuses on love, education, safe spaces and growth for favela children and youth, in order to help them dream and find nonviolent opportunities for themselves. Focus on a butterfly-effect from resident to resident.
Rethinking peace and security	Favela peace formation offers a widespread critique of peace as order and violent, imposed attempts at control instead of genuine positive development and social justice in the favelas.

	<p>It includes projects to rethink and reconstruct public security (and peace) on nonviolent premises, in contrast to the state's violent, necropolitical securitization and pacification projects. Focus on deepening democracy, care, embracing plural perspectives and constructing an 'nonexcludent house' rather than imposing a violent order on life (Vargas 2008, more below).</p>
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TABLE 5: FAVELA PEACE FORMATION ADDITIONS TO TRADITIONAL PEACE PROCESSES

The findings of this thesis suggests that favela peace formation processes, in a context of urban violence in a violent, (post)colonial state, not only fill the traditional roles of peace processes such as mediation, DDR, SSR, reconciliation and peace education, but that they also continuously work to maintain everyday life in their communities. Forced to navigate a violent, racist state without much support from the international community, favela peace formation also contributes to our idea of peace processes in three principal ways: 1., It demonstrates the immense power of the dehumanizing, criminalizing, racist and marginalizing narratives surrounding favela residents, and the importance of changing these narratives in order to progress towards a more sustainable peace. Without a dissection and combat of cultural and symbolic violence of prejudice and dehumanization, counter-peace formation actors and networks remain free to actively use these narratives for their own purposes. 2., By recognizing the intergenerational nature of violence and the state's violent public security policies' role in reproducing this violence, favela peace formation de-signifies the meaning of violence and treats violence with care instead of more violence in order to break the cycle (Pearce 2020; Scheper-Hughes 2004a). 3., Linking this to peace, it shows the importance of embracing pluralist, caring, inclusive and democratic options for violence reduction and sustainable development instead of the more traditional peace as order and control. Peace, then, becomes inclusion and care and the construction of a new, 'nonexcludent house', which will be further addressed below (Vargas 2008). As shared by Jose*, "it would need to be our peace, not the peace that is not ours. It would need to be from the grassroot (*de base*)" (Jose*, February 2020, Zona Norte).

The question remains whether deep, meaningful reform to build a politics without violence is possible within the current state system. The thesis has shown how while some favela activists dream of constructing something outside of the state, they struggle to think outside a state-centred and capitalist logic, and they are continuously forced to confront and engage with violent state presence in their communities. The favela movements are still too marginalized and powerless to start a full revolution and too dependent on the state and the *asfalto* surrounding them to construct fully autonomous political alternatives. Yet, as Vargas eloquently describes this struggle among the black community in the United States and in Brazil:

At once in and against the confines of the here and now, in and against the juridical and concrete manifestations of state- and society-sanctioned genocidal practices, and in and beyond the immediately known, felt, lost, and won. Such bipolarity speaks of the ways in which Afrodescended communities have strategically operated with and within the master narratives, utilized the master's tools to make sense of difference, time, space, and society, while they have sought worlds yet to be known or imagined, and attempted to free our imagination of its colonial, hierarchical, and destructive limitations

(Vargas 2008:23).

What is central here is the strategic operation within the master's house, while searching for worlds 'yet to be known or imagined'. Favela peace formers and activists struggle to liberate themselves from the state and the hegemonic narratives in society, *but* they also actively use their experiences, history and knowledge to slowly construct a radical, inclusive favela counterpublics which combines ideas of self-sufficiency and community development with international, national and local solidarity-networks and a growing demand for proper inclusion in a more radical Brazilian democracy:

In parallel to the politics of bricolage—to the politics done with the master's tools in the master's house—sometimes feeding from it, sometimes influencing it, there is another, less perceptible but nevertheless crucial mode of politics that aims more drastically at the construction of an ethical, just future. This sometimes quieter, more plastic—fragile even—and not so obvious yet radical politics wants to

construct a new polity: a new vocabulary, new modes of sociability, new cognitive tools, new ways of understanding our racialized world. This mode of politics is not as dependent on the already given, and it projects a future whose content it refuses to define (...) This politics of transfiguration struggles for the construction of a new, nonexcludent house, a new set of societal principles, a new political culture that, while recognizing the abuses and uses of race, will continually strive to deconstruct and reconstruct our subjectivities, sociabilities, our dreams, and our desires for justice

(Vargas 2008:148).

Navigating the art of the possible, favela peace formers continue to build on non-violent political alternatives and use new discourses, networks and favela empowerment to slowly transform the state and wider society towards a radical democracy, a politics without violence, a sustainable, positive peace (Conway 2012; Pearce 2020; Richmond 2017; Vargas 2008).

Blockages/challenges to favela peace formation

Direct blockages	
posed by actors that profit from conflict in terms of power or wealth	
Origins:	Manifested through:
Criminals (drug gangs, militias), elites (landowners, business owners), politicians, security forces, transnational criminal networks and multinational businesses.	Violent means: gang and militia violence and intimidation of residents and peace formers, security forces' violence against residents, peace formers, and demonstrations, death threats towards and assassinations of political activists fighting for favela rights
	Non-violent means: exclusion from political spaces and narratives, delay in political and/or judicial processes that would favour favela peace formation, implementation of laws and decrees increasing the power and

	impunity of security forces, deliberate and targeted cuts in funding towards peace formation projects
Structural blockages	
Origins:	Manifested through:
Inherent in existing power structures, laws and bureaucracy of the Brazilian state, Rio de Janeiro state and municipality that have been formed by a history of colonialism, slavery, military dictatorship and neoliberal policies that have resulted in a ‘perverse state’ interested in preserving the interests of the (majority white) elites (Arias and Goldstein 2010; Pearce 2010).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Widespread structural racism and inequality manifested through less state services, education and employment opportunities for favela residents, inequality in citizenship, basic human rights, including housing, clean water, sanitation and security. ○ Constitutional laws giving military leeway to act in defence of ‘national interests’ (Brahler 2014) ○ The militarized nature of the police forces, police impunity and delay of judicial processes, with widespread occurrences and accept of ‘acts of resistance’ shooting where suspected criminals are shot allegedly in self-defence by police. ○ Public funding towards security/pacification processes and away from social development/ peace formation
Cultural blockages	
Racism and criminalization of favelas that are deeply imbedded in narratives and perceptions of the favelas among the <i>asfalto</i> .	
Origins:	Manifested through:

<p>Rio de Janeiro's long history as a colonial city, slavery, criminalization and exclusion of favela residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Racism ○ Criminalization of the poor, black, favelas residents ○ Myths and narratives concerning favelas as dangerous, criminal, dirty, black spaces. ○ Resulting dehumanization of favela residents makes it hard to find solidarity for their cause outside the favelas ○ Role of mainstream media in promoting these narratives ○ Internalization of these narratives by many favela residents ○ Authoritarian citizenship, where Rio residents support state violence in order to be protected from insecurity (working class), from social unrest (middle class) and to protect their wealth and power (elite), instead of supporting social development and equality in the favelas (Pearce 2017:240).
<p>Parallel 'peace'/security processes and various notions of peace</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Realist securitization and pacification narratives justifying state violence in the favelas in the name of stability and peace in the <i>asfalto</i> ○ Public funding being invested in increased militarization and securitization policies and taken away from social development projects ○ Funder's expectations of quantitative, fast results making it increasingly harder for peace formers to prove the effects of their work and be able to compete with other, more liberal NGOs' quantifiable, easy-fix results. ○ Different narratives and perspectives on peace and solutions creating a vast gap between peace formers and other peace networks in Rio de Janeiro, funders, local authorities and the Brazilian state ○ Competition between different peace processes not only over funding, but also over solidarity, attention, media coverage and support from Rio de Janeiro residents and powerful, key players 	

TABLE 6: BLOCKAGES TO FAVELA PEACE FORMATION

The findings of this thesis suggest that blockages to favela peace formation are not simple nor straightforward, but rather present as a complex, intersectional web of structural, cultural and direct blockages both inherent in unjust state structures and racist narratives surrounding the favelas and their residents, and in how these consciously are used by powerful networks interested in maintaining the violent, unjust status quo.

This thesis has shown the immense challenges to favela peace formation, which includes overwhelming state violence and exclusion and everyday challenges of funding difficulties and prejudice. It has also shown some avenues of potential allies of favela peace formation within the state, both through leftist political parties and the judiciary, as well as growing international networks focused on social and racial justice like the Black Lives Matter movement. Overall, the thesis finds that favela peace formation is already constructing alternative non-violent politics where love and the protection of vulnerability is in focus, and that this has immense potential to grow into a wider and deeper project which could slowly transform both Brazilian democracy and wider global society. In the struggle for a better everyday life and a future with less violence and more justice, favela peace formation is slowly transforming society on non-violent premises, in what Sen describes as “a historic deepening and widening of democratisation of local and national societies and of global society that is being undertaken not by civil societies but by the incivil of the world” (Sen 2007:59-60). However, favela peace formation is also threatened by an expanding criminal network in Rio de Janeiro, a violent executive power led by President Bolsonaro and funding difficulties. Thus, in order to support favela peace formation, the international society, activist groups, researchers and institutions can focus on exposing and criticizing the violences of the executive powers in the state and the hidden criminal actors resting at the top of society; provide solidarity and protection networks for favela peace formers; open up space for subaltern voices and presence in politics, academic conferences and policy circles, and last but not least; provide stable and more flexible sources of funding for these various grassroots projects.

Contributions to knowledge

This thesis has presented an exploratory framework of favela peace formation as alternative, nonviolent and emancipatory peace processes in contexts of urban violence in a (post)colonial state. It builds on Richmond's concept of peace formation and has explored the challenges and opportunities of these kinds of processes in a conflict context where international peace processes are absent and where the state's public security processes threaten rather than protect the human security of favela residents. It thus provides an exploratory framework for grassroots peace in the urban conflicts in the expanding peripheries of the world's growing mega cities. Through longer-term, ethnographically inspired research in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, the thesis adds depth and nuance to Richmond's concept of peace formation, especially in terms of critical race theory and perspectives from the margins of the state. This study of favela peace formation contributes to peace and conflict studies in three main ways: racism and necropolitics as blockages to peace; de-signifying violence; and decolonizing peace from the margins.

Racism and necropolitics as blockages to peace formation

The thesis has shown the extreme violence of top-down 'peace' as pacification and securitization processes, where a war on drugs, order and domination is central in the state's colonial relationship with the favelas in Rio de Janeiro. The case exposes the violence behind an incessant colonial need to dominate and control the perceived criminal, dangerous category of non-humans and irrational 'natives' in the peripheries and margins of the state. The thesis thus links colonialism and racism to the different structures of violence and counter-peace formation networks and processes in Rio de Janeiro, which adds sophisticated analysis of how race and racism continues to be used to block peace formation processes, justify state murder in these areas, naturalize a violent, unjust status quo and even make marginalized populations implicit in their own destruction, like favela residents voting for Bolsonaro and other far-right militarized politicians. The thesis thus furthers the discussion of race in critical peace studies, while also emphasizing the importance of placing the spotlight on power, on criticizing the various forms of violence in the state and the upper levels of society in

order to better understand the opportunities and challenges to local agency in conflict contexts.

De-signifying violence

This thesis is not meant to romanticize the drug gangs nor underestimate the violence and insecurity they bring to the favelas, but rather shift the focus on how to deal with violence. Instead of meeting violence with violence, favela peace formation teaches us that we can focus on vulnerable children and youth and help them choose non-violence (Pearce 2020; Scheper-Hughes 2004a). By addressing this vulnerability of excluded children and youth with love and inclusion, like favela peace formers already do, we can slowly work to ‘de-signify’ and ‘de-sanction’ violence over time (Pearce 2020:254). In contrast, the state marginalization of vulnerability exposes the violence of a state system that always contains an excluded ‘others’ at the margins, whose citizenship and humanity are negotiable and whose lives are disposable for the sake of elite interests and the preservation of an unjust status quo (Das and Poole 2004; Pearce 2017; Scheper-Hughes 2004a; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004). As Pearce argues, in order to de-sanction violence over time, we must also continue to identify, expose and criticize the violences of the current system, which includes exposing the corrupt individuals in the higher levels of politics, financial system and public security services that work against favela peace formation, as well as the various structures and cultures of violence used to legitimize and naturalize their actions and inactions (Pearce 2020; Gledhill 2015).

Decolonizing peace from the margins

The thesis has critically questioned the meaning of the concept ‘peace’, as it was seen by some research participants as a thing of the white elites in order to control the black, poor in the favelas. In lack of a better word, I have kept the concept of favela peace formation while I continue to search for a better, decolonial alternative. The study of favela peace formation, however, can aid us in shifting perspectives on what peace is and what causes violence. Favela peace formation exposes the extreme violences of the current state (and international) system, and the violences produced in the state

attempts to dominate and impose an unjust order on the marginalized, black part of the population. As Richmond notes in one of his more recent works, we must move away from the concept of peace as order, due to the inherent violence of this concept. Rather, we shall seek to embrace subaltern, decolonial, creative processes to end violence:

Peace may well offer a set of fluid and variable positions which seek to end open violence, structural and cultural violence, and expand further through relational, hybrid, and networked, interlocking forms into new conceptual areas. This cannot be achieved through system of multi-laterally connected territorially sovereign states. Multilateralism or global governance also finds their limits here (Richmond 2020: 191).

Similarly, Pearce encourages us to consider what if “chaos did not imply violence, but rather a creative non-violent opportunity to rethink our categorizing and ranking itself, alongside embedded injustices and inequalities”? (2020:316). As Vargas describes in the previous section, favela peace formation’s quest to construct a new polity and “new ways of understanding our racialized world” is “not dependent on the already given, and it projects a future whose content it refuses to define” (Vargas 2008:148). This ties back to a central critical peace scholar, Lederach’s concept of the moral imagination:

Far from being paralyzed by complexity, paradoxical curiosity as a quality of the moral imagination relies on complexity as a friend not an enemy, for from complexity emerges untold new angles, opportunities, and unexpected potentialities that surpass, replace, and break the shackles of historic and current relational patterns of violence (Lederach 2005:37).

Favela peace formation is thus already working to challenge and deconstruct the binaries of human/non-human, good/evil, citizen/non-citizen, worker/criminal, peace/war, and creatively seek to think outside of the state and the capitalist system. The focus on providing love to criminalized favela youth, to treat them as humans, as citizens, as children, with empathy and acceptance of difference, is a clear way in which favela peace formation challenges the binaries and violence of hegemonic narratives, and provides a decolonial peace that focuses on care, empathy, tolerance and justice (see Alan and Keller 2006 in Richmond 2020:269 for more on ‘care’). As Davi* described: “Love needs to surpass everything. The philosophy is that love needs

to be in front, first, in everything you do” (Zona Norte). Favela peace formation (and this study of it) thus offers a unique opportunity to rethink and construct a new, inclusive, decolonial concept of peace, of constructing a nonexcludent house, embracing non-violent chaos, plurality, and the complexity of peace (Lederach 2005; Pearce 2020; Richmond 2020; Shilliam 2020; Vargas 2008). Rather than attempting to impose a violent order on life, favela peace formation adapts to the shifting needs of the communities, continues to construct and expand networks of solidarity, empathy, and subaltern claims to justice locally and globally, while simultaneously constructing new modes of sociability, new cognitive tools and constructing a nonexcludent house (Vargas 2008:148).

Methodological reflections

The thesis might also offer some nuance and provoke some self-reflection in terms of methodology and critical engagement with peace researcher positionality. It shows how prior understanding of the local context and language and a longer-term fieldwork including participant observation and semi-structured interviews can provide incredibly rich data and more sophisticated nuances of a conflict, in comparison to short-term fieldwork with structured interviews and questionnaires. Especially in the study of such complex and constantly evolving processes like peace formation it becomes crucial to continue a long-term, ethnographically inspired study in order to have the slightest chance of gaining a solid understanding on the matter. I am impatient to continue this process of learning and unlearning and accompanying the evolution of favela peace formation. The thesis has critically reflected on my positionality as a white, European researcher in the majority black favelas, where the conflict builds on and is sustained by white privilege and a historical marginalization, exclusion and criminalization of the black body. I hope that my open discussion on this can inspire other researchers to check their privilege, study the power imbalances present in research and actively work to level the playing field by forming research questions together with their research participants and critically question for whom and for what their research is for (Goulart and Calvet 2017; Goulart 2019; Giordani 2020). As Calvet, Goulart and Conway all share, we should work towards a pluriverse of knowledge, where diverse, pluralistic, interdisciplinary knowledges and perspectives

from all levels and corners of society are included (Calvet and Goulart 2017; 2019; Conway 2012; Giordani 2020). I recognize my privilege in the historically more exclusive university and I will continue to build on the lessons I have learned in this research process to construct new, participatory research projects together with favela peace formers, if they will have me.

Limitations and possibilities for further research

As mentioned above, a long-term qualitative study is necessary in order to fully understand the challenges and opportunities for favela peace formation in Rio de Janeiro, which would preferably study the successes, failures, blockages and networks of these movements over several decades. This research was also limited to a few favelas in Zona Sul and Zona Norte, whereas with more time I could have interviewed favela peace formers in many other favelas including ones with few or no organized movements and NGOs. Including favela peace formers in communities with few recognized social projects might bring further understanding of community leadership and/or activism in the absence of these projects.

The qualitative nature of this research has provided unique insights into the perspective of peace, violence, security, democracy, human rights and the war on drugs from different favela peace formers. However, it would also be interesting to do a wider, quantitative survey of favela residents in order to map how many of them and which groups support the various peace formation organizations and movements. This could prove or disprove the local legitimacy and support of the favela peace formers. It would also be interesting to map opinions on peace, security, drugs, democracy, politics and the future among favela residents in order to see how these correspond with favela peace formation values, and if these change over time (which would support or refute the finding that favela peace formation constructs wide, deep democracy through community work and education).

Another weakness is the thesis' focus on the favelas themselves while the main drivers of conflict lie outside the favela. While I have been careful to turn a spotlight on power and the various forms of structural and direct violence in the state's and wider society's relation to the favelas, it is necessary to do a closer study on the rather vaguely identified counter-favela peace formation networks. The actors of these growing mafia networks must be identified and made responsible for their actions, and I believe that important research on this is already on the way. Of course, directly researching violence-prone powerholders involves much risk, and proper security-measures would have to be implemented. For a final project, it would also be interesting to map out the opinions surrounding favelas, favela residents and Rio de Janeiro's public security policies among the upper-middle class and elites in Rio de Janeiro. This research could then bring further understanding to why these groups in the *asfalto* predominantly support the massive state violence in the favelas. What forms of prejudice and racism are still prevalent in these circles, have their opinions regarding the favelas changed over the last decade, and how could one generate more empathy and solidarity with the favelas in these groups? How do they see the favela? I find this research proposal very fascinating and feasible and would like to further develop it in future research.

Finally, as a white, middle-class Norwegian researcher, I have a limited understanding of life in the favelas in Rio de Janeiro. A researcher from the favela would possibly have been able to ask questions and draw connections that I was not able to identify, and perhaps gain more trust and open answers from the research participants. My Portuguese may also have caused some minor misunderstandings, which could have been avoided with a local researcher. However, as discussed in the introduction, being an outsider might also have its benefits, as I might have been perceived as more neutral and naïve, which allowed me to ask quite direct questions about the conflict (see also Perlman 2010). In further research, I would like to collaborate more closely with different researchers and peace formers from the favelas to construct new ethically just and grounded research projects.

What is next?

As I am writing these final pages, there have been 655,359 Covid-related deaths in Brazil and Doctors Without Borders has called the country's failed Covid-19 response a "humanitarian catastrophe" (NYTimes 2022; WHO 2021; BBC News 2021). A report by the Getulio Vargas Foundation found that the number of Brazilians living in extreme poverty have tripled in the six months between August 2020 and February 2021, from 9.5 to 27 million (Jornal Nacional 2021; Stefansen 2021). Despite this state of crisis, the state violence in the favelas continued. On May 6th, 2021, at least 24 people were shot and killed by the police in Jacarezinho in Zona Norte, in the largest police massacre in Rio de Janeiro's history (Bachega 2021; Phillips 2021). This was a direct violation of the Supreme Court decree to stop police operations during the Covid-19 pandemic and the UN Human Rights Office has asked for an independent investigation of the case (Agence France-Presse 2021). According to Trevisan, the police action turned into an operation of revenge after a civil police officer was killed in the beginning of the operation (2021). In February 2019, 13 favela residents were killed in a police operation in Fallet/Fogueteiro in the deadliest police operation in 12 years (Rio on Watch 2019; Soares 2019). Now this record has been broken. The state murder has thus in a grotesque way come full circle, which also confirms the continuous relevance of the violence described throughout this work. Favela peace formers continue to fight against this violence to safeguard the lives and human rights of favela residents. They have been at the forefront of food distribution in their communities in the Covid-19 pandemic while the state continues to kill.

The forthcoming presidential elections in 2022 will be critical for Brazil and the world as Bolsonaro's murderous politics and blatant disregard for the environment and Covid-19 threaten not only the subaltern groups in Brazil and Brazilians in general, but also the world as the Amazon burns. However, Bolsonaro is increasingly losing popular support over his mishandling of the Covid-19 pandemic. An investigation into his handling of the pandemic has further suggested that Bolsonaro "committed crimes against life" (AlJazeera 2021a; Brito 2021; Milhorance 2021). Bolsonaro is also facing other corruption accusations and has recently, in a desperate attempt to undermine next year's elections which he is projected to lose to former PT president Lula, claimed

that the Brazilian electoral system is fraudulent. His failure to provide any evidence for his case has further resulted in a new investigation of him for attacks on democracy (AlJazeera 2021b; AlJazeera 2021c; Marcello 2021). While these provide some hope that Bolsonaro might face impeachment or loose in the next election, his attempts to undermine this election also remind of the attacks on the US Capitol on January 6th, 2021, and we should not underestimate the potential power and violence of his most ardent supporters, including militias and larger criminal networks that Bolsonaro has been found to have close connections with (Cowie 2019; Greenwald and Pougy 2019). Lula, if he wins, faces an enormous challenge of uniting an intensely polarized Brazil. The wider political polarization and growth of the far-right in Brazil, the United States and Europe only highlight the current crisis of legitimacy in neoliberal democracies, which begs for new, more inclusive, non-violent political alternatives like those being constantly developed by favela peace formers and other subaltern non-violent processes. It is time to support these processes.

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Appendix: Interviews and Events

References:

Francisco, Monica (2019), at Panel 3: “O protagonismo da mulher negra e da mulher indígena na favela e periferia: racismos e desafios” (The protagonism of the black woman and of the indigenous woman in the favela and periphery: racisms and challenges), Coordinated by Sarah S. Telles (Department of Social Science/PUC-Rio) and Gianne Neves (PPGCIS/PUC-Rio). At conference: “Co-creation in the city: rights and culture of favelas and peripheries” June 28th, 2019.

Goulart, Fransérgio (2019), in “Necropolítica e Militarização da Vida” (Necropolitics and Militarization of Life). First class of the course: *Curso de Extensão Mídia, Violência e Direitos Humanos (Media, Violence and Human Rights)* by Núcleo de Estudos de Políticas Públicas em Direitos Humanos (NEPP-DH), UFRJ, August 19th 2019.

Malanquini, Lidiane (July 2019), in “Operações policiais no Rio: mais frequentes, mais letais, mais assustadoras” (Police operations in Rio de Janeiro: more frequent, more deadly, more scary). Event by *Observatório da Segurança RJ*, at University Candido Mendes, July 9th, 2019.

Marques, Jota (2019), in “Operações policiais no Rio: mais frequentes, mais letais, mais assustadoras” (Police operations in Rio de Janeiro: more frequent, more deadly, more scary). Event by *Observatório da Segurança RJ*, at University Candido Mendes, July 9th, 2019.

Martins, Gizele (2019), in “O Extermínio da Juventude Negra” (The Extermination of Black Youth). Fourth class of the course: *Curso de Extensão Mídia, Violência e Direitos Humanos (Media, Violence and Human Rights)* by Núcleo de Estudos de Políticas Públicas em Direitos Humanos (NEPP-DH), UFRJ, August 26th 2019.

Menezes, Palloma (2019), at Panel 2: “Os direitos e a violência nos espaços estigmatizados: desafios” (Rights and violence in stigmatized spaces: challenges), Coordinated by Marcelo Burgos (Department of Social Science/PUC-Rio). At conference: “Co-creation in the city: rights and culture of favelas and peripheries” June 27th, 2019.

Para Que e Para Quem (For whom and for what is favela research for) (October 2019). Event: “Polícia como classe trabalhadora?” (Police as working class?). Not open for public, details anonymised. Location: Centre of Rio de Janeiro.

Public Security and Favela Epistemology (Segurança Publica e Espistemologia Favelada) (August – October 2019). Course organized by Fransérgio Goulart in collaboration with the Department of International Relations at PUC-Rio. The course had seven classes in locations in Complexo da Maré and Complexo do Alemão over three months. The course was not recorded nor open to the public, so the speakers are generalised to the name of the course and details are omitted.

Santiago, Raul (2019), in “O Extermínio da Juventude Negra” (The Extermination of Black Youth). Fourth class of the course: *Curso de Extensão Mídia, Violência e Direitos Humanos (Media, Violence and Human Rights)* by Núcleo de Estudos de Políticas Públicas em Direitos Humanos (NEPP-DH), UFRJ, August 26th 2019.

Events:

Name of event	Organizer(s)	Date	Location	Description
Segurança Pública e Epistemologia Favelada (Public Security and Favela Epistemology)	Fransérgio Goulart and the Department of International Relations at PUC-Rio	August - October 2019	Complexo da Maré, Complex do Alemão	Seven classes over the course of three months on issues connected to public security and rights in the favela. Not open for public, details anonymised.
Co-creation in the city: rights and culture of favelas and peripheries	Co-Creation Project	June 27th-28th, 2019	PUC-Rio	International conference as part of the project: The Cohesive City: Addressing Stigmatisation in Disadvantaged Urban Neighbourhoods (Co-Creation)/EU
O Extermínio da Juventude Negra (The Extermination of Black Youth)	Núcleo de Estudos de Políticas Públicas em Direitos Humanos (NEPP-DH), UFRJ	August 26th, 2019	UFRJ	Fourth class of the course: Curso de Extensão Mídia, Violência e Direitos Humanos.
Necropolítica e Militarização da Vida (Necropolitics and Militarization of Life)	Núcleo de Estudos de Políticas Públicas em Direitos Humanos (NEPP-DH), UFRJ	August 19th, 2019	UFRJ	First class of the course: Curso de Extensão Mídia, Violência e Direitos Humanos.
Operações policiais no Rio: mais frequentes, mais letais, mais assustadoras (Police operations in Rio de Janeiro: more frequent, more deadly, more scary)	Observatório da Segurança RJ	July 9th, 2019	Universidade Candido Mendes	Launch of a report by the same name by Rede de Observatórios da Segurança, with accompanying panel discussion
“Polícia como classe trabalhadora?” (Police as working class?)	Para Que e Para Quem (For whom and for what is favela research for	October-2019	Centre of Rio de Janeiro.	Not open for public, details anonymised.

Interviews:

Name* (Pseudonym)	Date of interview	Location of work	Position of research participant
Maria	September-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Leader and tour-guide at a community-based non-governmental organization
Miguel	September-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Leader at a community-based youth project (futsal, barber courses, and more)
Davi	January-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Founder and leader of a community-based NGO focusing on children and youth, especially on helping them leave crime
Ana	March-2020	Not from favela, works across several favelas	Founder and executive director of a Rio de Janeiro-based NGO focusing on sustainable community development and human rights in the favelas
Francisca	August-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Independent community English teacher and tour-guide at a community-based non-governmental organization
Pedro	August-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Community leader and founder of long-standing community-organization focusing on children and youth and the rights and dignity of favela residents
Gabriel	August-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Leader and tour-guide at a community-based non-governmental organization
Grupo Ar	September-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	A new, education and culture-focused youth collective
Antônia	August-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Leader of a civil and philanthropic organization focusing on integral education, basic health care and social assistance to the more challenged families in the favela
Adriana	September-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Founder and leader of a small community-group helping residents write their stories and get published
Bernardo	February-2020	Not from or based in a favela	Anthropologist, political scientist and public security expert
Lucas	August-2019	Works across several favelas	Founder and leader of a network-based project for the cultural and social empowerment of favela youth in favelas across Rio de Janeiro
Matheus	July-2019	Not from or based in a favela	Public security expert at Rio-based think tank
Rafael	September-2019	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Executive coordinator of an organization for racial justice and against state violence
João	January-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Journalist at an independent, collaborative community media channel
Juliana	October-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Leader and tour-guide at a community-based non-governmental organization
Antonio	January-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	President of a favela Resident Association
Marcia	September-2019	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Executive director of a community-based organization focusing on youth through sports and culture
Fernanda	January-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Coordinator at globally-networked organization working with youth in communities affected by inequality and violence
Carlos	July-2019	Not from or based in a favela	Professor in sociology and urban studies
Patrícia	February-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Coordinator of public security area in community-based civil society institution
Paulo	July-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Independent graffiti artist
Emmanuella	March-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Executive coordinator at community-based civil society organization focused on knowledge-production
Jose	February-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Co-founder and reporter at an independent communications collective formed by favela youth activists
Grupo Luz	November-2019	Works across several favelas	An long-standing umbrella organization connected to the Catholic church working primarily against forced removals
Luiz	August-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Youth from the favela, engaged in and known at several of the local community projects
Luíza	November-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Leader and tour-guide at a community-based non-governmental organization
Marcos	January-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	President of a favela Resident Association
Felipe	August-2019	Works across several favelas	Project coordinator at non-profit organization created by European companies in Rio de Janeiro, focusing on providing opportunities to favela youth
Aline	September-2019	Zona Sul (South Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Founder and leader of NGO focusing on education for children and youth
Izabel	January-2020	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Co-director of a community-based civil society institution
Douglas	September-2019	Zona Norte (North Zone of Rio de Janeiro)	Artistic coordinator at an NGO working with youth and culture in several spots in Rio de Janeiro