



Slums or the Socio-Spatial Discipline of Class Struggles?

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“Conversely, not all dispossessed and dilapidated urban districts are ghettos. Declining white neighborhoods in the deindustrializing cities of the U.S. Midwest and British Midlands, depressed rural towns of the former East Germany and Southern Italy, and the disreputable *villa miserias* of the greater Buenos Aires at the close of the twentieth century are territories of working-class demotion and decomposition, not ethnic containers dedicated to maintaining an outcast group in a relationship of seclusive subordination. They are not ghettos other than in a metaphorical sense, no matter how impoverished—if extreme rates of poverty sufficed to make a ghetto, then large chunks of the former Soviet Union and most third-world cities would be gargantuan ghettos. The *favelas* of the Brazilian metropolis often portrayed as segregated dens of dereliction and disorganization turn out to be working-class wards with finely stratified webs of ties to industry and to the wealthy districts for which they supply household service labor. As in the *ranchos* of Venezuela and the *poblaciones* of Chile, the families that dwell in these squatter settlements span the color continuum and have extensive genealogical bonds to higher-income households.”

Loïc Wacquant (2005) *Guettos Everywhere? Rethinking urban poverty and segregation in European societies*

“Unless nation states and cities make a new social contract with the poor who service their needs, build their cities and homes and produce/consume their products, the pattern of stunted development, missed opportunities, wasteful resource use and mismanaged governance—i.e., non-sustainability—will be self-replication and self-fulfilling. No country or city can afford to neglect/ignore the intellectual capital, creative potential, productive capacity or purchasing power of 30 to 40 per cent of its population, the average portion of urban population currently living in slums. (...) Inequality is the fundamental impediment to upward mobility, economic growth, poverty alleviation and reduction of violence. What is needed is a direct challenge to the comfortable culture of privilege that perpetuates itself at the expense of the common good.”

Janice E. Perlman (2007) *Globalization and the urban poor*

Recently I was invited to comment on an interesting documentary about the favelas (also known in English as slums, shanty towns, squatter or informal settlements) in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil): *As forças das favelas. Grassroots solutions from Rio de Janeiro* (Rebecca Sweetman 2013 <http://www.theparadigmshiftproject.org/favelas.html>). The presentation of the film points to a clear stance of its aims:

“Nearly one billion people alive today— one in every six human beings— are slum dwellers, and that number is likely to double by 2030, according to UN-HABITAT. The death rate for children under 5 years old who live in slums is in some areas as much as double that of children who live in other urban areas. Defined by insecure land tenure and a lack of access to infrastructure and services such as water and sanitation, education, health care, electricity, and solid waste collection, the urban poor living in slum settlements are arguably the most disadvantaged communities in the world.

In Paradigm Shift Project’s latest project, we reveal a different side of informal settlements, one of hope and inspiration, and one that motivates individuals to take action to empower local communities and organizations to take their programming to the next level. Focusing on solutions for a sustainable urban future, PSP documented the work of over 20 NGOs in Brazil and the stories of communities who have seen the difference these programs make.”

UN statistics tend to emphasise that in the 21st Century most of the world population live in “urban areas” while, at the same time, a big proportion of that population does not enjoy basic urban services or decent housing. As Mike Davis explicitly stated in the title of one of his books, we live

more in a “planet of slums”. Many present urban areas have their origin in past informal settlements which were cleared, redeveloped or transformed. However, the increasing number of slums all over the world and, in particular, in the poorest countries, indicates that this situation will remain or worsen as a structural dimension of a global urban society.

Rebecca Sweetman’s documentary has very positive values. She shows how some aspects of the daily life in the favelas of Rio have been improved in the last decade. The changing attitude of the State authorities has contributed to that, but the film emphasises how different NGOs work hand by hand with the residents and develop all sort of low-scale projects in the areas of education, health, sports, environment, communication and employment. The words and reflections of these activists who, sometimes, were born or are currently living in the same neighbourhoods where they work, offer a wide and profound approach to some of the problems experienced by the 1,100,000 inhabitants of the 752 favelas in the municipality of Rio, the largest favela population of any Brazilian city (around the 18% of the population) (Perlman 2007). All the efforts of these community projects seek to strengthen the bonds of the informal and the formal city, so that their spoke persons usually stress their goals in terms of “integration”, “recognition” and “normalisation”. As one of the interviewees tells, “it’s about making [new] urban centres” and “to find ways to include those who are excluded into the mainstream.” Other very powerful activists’ insights reject the stigma of marginality and claim for the citizen rights that this population deserves due to their contribution to the history and expansion of the city, both in physical and economic terms. Indeed, after many decades of hidden or neglected existence by the local authorities, many dwellers of the favelas improved collectively their houses, streets or infrastructures so the overall chaotic informality became self-organised, stabilised and structured in very creative ways, although not necessarily efficient or satisfactory for all. Notwithstanding, the absence of the State in the provision of sanitation, water supply, waste management or public transportation, is still remarkable and reinforces the label of these areas as “slums”.

Hence the representation of the favelas opposes intentionally the dramatic imaginaries promoted by fiction films such as *City of God* (Fernando Meirelles 2002), *Elite Squad* (José Padilha 2007) or *White Elephant* (Pablo Trapero 2012). In the latter ones the main roles are those of armed gangs, drug dealers, corrupted policemen and authorities, and religious priests as community leaders. In Sweetman’s documentary these and other extremely violent situations are also mentioned during the interviews, but the emphasis is given to the strengths, examples and lessons we can learn from the community involvement. “The favela has culture to teach us”, due to its low carbon emissions and the urban agriculture “it could be a model of sustainability”, and all the achievements until now depend on collective actions -“if we don’t come together, there are no possibilities [of success].” By means of ballet, jiu-jitsu, boxing, video and music creation, recycling, gardening or educational programmes, the residents of these squatted settlements may obtain access to ways of expression, services and labour opportunities. In parallel, there are also references to the active presence of a special police body (UPPs, *Unidades de Policia Pacificadora*) who recently have helped to “pacify” the ostensible possession and utilisation of weapons, although the drug trafficking remains as a major economic activity for many, specially for the early drop-outs from the school system. However, low wages and income, hunger, child exploitation, gender violence, rapes, murders, small and deficient houses, and evictions, are still the persistent realities that most want to escape from, and that some of the NGOs directly confront with their limited resources.

I am aware that we cannot expect from a documentary the same demand of scientific rigour and theoretical criticism that should be adopted by an academic paper. For example, in terms of accounting the significant historical evolution of a particular settlement or a set of them in a city, or metropolitan area. The social composition and the urban integration or segregation of the squatted areas may vary enormously. The intensity of their social conflicts and the social initiatives in reaction to them may differ as well. Some specific events and public policies can be crucial in order to

understand slight changes in the slums. These basic guidelines may help to conduct a more in-depth research, but I also would highlight that the stories told in films such this, contribute to understand the political motivations behind those doing a constructive community work. For instance, as another interviewee remarked, her engagement starts with the feeling and consciousness of “outrage” facing the human rights violations she sees around. That outrage is what enabled her and others to mobilise their energy, people and resources, and to get people united in order to change their current situation. Other activists simply put clear that they aim to get the same “rights to the city” that citizens from other areas enjoy, which entails a direct confrontation with many barriers and heritages not so easy to remove.

Beyond these dimensions, I consider the documentary hides other ones which are crucial to understand the social complexity of the slums.

First, the term “grassroots” may mislead the audience because NGOs and community groups are not always the best representatives of collective initiatives bottom-up. While some projects arise from tight links with the local residents, other reach the slum from outside, as part of international networks and organisations, usually highly professionalised. The political ties with other city groups and political powers are also quite conclusive in order to understand their alliances, opportunities, goals and constraints. Another significant distinction should be made between those initiatives which are autonomous-ridden and those which are very much dependent on alien interests, including those of social workers and project managers to preserve their jobs, and funds. As another documentary film shows, *The Miracle of Candeal* (Fernando Trueba 2011), the music schools promoted by a former favela-dweller and later famous musician, Carlinhos Brown, deal more with a blurred landscape of interactions between both sides. The often liberal discourse underlying the strong beliefs in the power of education, in opening life opportunities and getting some sort of integration in the mainstream, tends to avoid less institutionalised voices against concrete inequalities and oppressions, and specific proposals to overcome them. The same may be said about the discourse of “police pacification” and the way it facilitates the work of NGOs instead of tackling some of the main security problems experienced by different groups of people.

“The barriers to improved livelihoods/upward mobility included:

i) economic obstacles such as labour market conditions, extreme inequality, and stigma as an impediment to being hired; ii) political obstacles such as less bargaining power, lack of state accountability or protection under the rule of law (symptoms of cronyism and corruption that militate against fair play; and iii) social obstacles including deepening exclusion, reduced social capital and the high toll of living in a state of fear of violence.

This suggests that even as progress is being made at the material and educational levels, the goal of breaking out of poverty to become gente (a respectable person) is a moving target that is always out of reach. Even significant educational and economic achievements are not sufficient to erase the lingering marginalization, exclusion and stigma associated with ‘urban informality’” (Perlman 2007: 21-22)

Second, there are is also a lack of reflection about how gender (including here related conflicts such as prostitution or trans-homophobia) and race inequalities interact with the mechanisms that reproduce poverty and the underclass condition. Other key sources of inequalities regarding the people’s situation in the housing market and the land rights, would deserve a careful attention. Real-estate speculation with land and already built houses, for rental or property purposes, involve social groups from both inside and outside the slums.

Third, the State action in terms of policies and negotiations with the relevant actors of the slums may explain their recent evolution, if any, or their everlasting stagnation. Some municipalities do not

have the resources to deal with the issue of the slums, apart from the tools of urban planning. Thus, central or regional State policies, specially in the provision of public housing, infrastructures or direct subsidies, can make a difference when combined with the municipal ones. Negotiations, on the other side, are long, slow and very demanding processes that use to fall behind the lights of the cameras.

According to different scholars, after many decades of research and policies facing the question of slums, it seems clear that the persistence of such settlements is a structural condition of the city growth. That is to say, slums are not only the places where those excluded from the formal housing market remains to live, but both the historical origin of many consolidated areas and the enclave that provides the city with most of the worst paid, housed, educated and respected work force. Forced evictions, displacements to the further peripheries, unsatisfactory relocation in public housing or homelessness constitute, at the same, a very well experimented and failed policy on the other side of the mirror.

“The prevailing wisdom was that since the favela shacks (barracos) were made of scraps and discarded material from construction sites and appeared to be precarious piles of garbage perched on the hillsides, the people who lived in them were dirty discards as well, and should be disposed of to “sanitize the city.” The massive removals coincided with the height of the dictatorship’s power and with the new construction technologies that made it possible to build luxury condominiums on the now-valuable slopes rising above the city in Rio’s South Zone. In the period from 1970 to 1973, over 101,000 people were forcibly removed from favelas in Rio and relocated into public housing projects, generally several hours and costly bus rides away from the previous sites of life and work.” (Perlman 2005: 13)

Furthermore, every slum evolved according to different circumstances given the intensity of the conflicts that experienced, the strategic actions of the actors involved and the kind of interactions and integrations with the urban fabric and the global economy at large.

“The case study of the urban poor in Rio de Janeiro has shown evidence of positive and negative patterns co-existing in the lives of favela residents between the preglobalization era and the current globally-integrated era. Conditions have improved rather than deteriorated in many areas, but not all. The favela communities have become physically more integrated into the urban fabric as the city has expanded around them and transportation improvements have shortened commuting time. Infrastructure, services, domestic goods and educational levels have improved. Although unemployment rates have risen, for those who are working, they are more likely to be in ‘routine non-manual’ jobs, considered more respectable than construction work or domestic service, although the pay is often lower and the hours longer. The gap in living conditions between the study sites and the rest of the city has narrowed not widened on several quality of life indicators. This apparent ‘catching up’ of the informal city with the formal cities appears to contradict the logic of globalization—that the poor become poorer, wealth concentrates upward and inequality increases. Nonetheless we cannot infer the opposite causal relationship by imputing the gains of the urban poor to the globalization process. There are many missing links in the chain. The new migrants, who are now the poorest, do not share in the urban amenities accrued over 40 years (or more) of urban life and are now living in the same conditions of poverty that was found in the study sites in the late 1960s. (...) On the other hand, the negative changes observed over time are equally dramatic. Unemployment rose, income gains did not fully reflect educational advances, and only a handful entered professional jobs or moved into desirable neighbourhoods. The cumulative improvements were not sufficient to make the favela residents feel accepted as part of the urban citizenry.” (Perlman 2007: 21)

“The majority of favela residents who said that globalization did not make a difference in their lives may have made an important point. There are many intervening variables at the national, state, local

and community levels that have a more proximate and direct impact on the lives of the poor than international trade agreements. Local level differences such as proximity to upscale neighbourhoods and job markets, levels of violence and security, access to government or NGO programmes, good schools, health clinics, recreational facilities, computer and arts mentors, and the relationships of the ruling drug faction with the political party in power, all have immediate- and long-term effects. Any unexpected crisis affects the marginalized population disproportionately as they have no safety net to fall back on. Anything from a flood or fire to a factory closing, to prolonged illness or death of the principal breadwinner, can consume the savings of a lifetime, and leave an entire family destitute, globalization or not.” (Perlman 2007: 22)

Perlman (2005: 17-19), in particular, since the mid 1970s argued that the “marginality paradigm” that only saw deprivation, violence and social problems in the slums, was the best ally to reinforce the stereotypes and stigmas that backed the eradication programmes top-down oriented. Instead, she and others, as well as Sweetman’s documentary, insisted in the slums’ internal rationality and strengths.

Mumford (1962) embraced slum clearance because of the improved features brought about with the relocation of their dwellers in terms of sunlight, air, open views, bathrooms, hot water, etc. However, he also criticised the “slummier quarters” of the high-rise (10 to 20 stories high) relocation for their social segregation, unaffordable rents, the misuse of public facilities, the absence of shops and services close by, criminality, etc. Furthermore, he conceived the slums, founded in the industrial times, in functional terms to preserve low wages, not very different from the Marxist definition of the “reserve army of labour”.

“By the seventeenth century destitution had been accepted as the normal lot in life for a considerable part of the population. Without the spur of poverty and famine, they could not be expected to work for starvation wages. Misery at the bottom was the foundation for the luxury at the top. As much as a quarter of the urban population in the bigger cities, it has been estimated, consisted of casuals and beggars: it was this surplus that made for what was considered, by classic capitalism, to be a healthy labor market, in which the capitalist hired labor on his own terms, or dismissed workers at will, without notice, without bothering as to what happened to either the worker or the city under such inhuman conditions.” (Mumford 1961: 432-433)

Wacquant (2005) showed that slums are spreading again in the US and Europe (by following different patterns) because there has been an emergence of a new “regime of urban marginality”. Slums and ghettos are not “a residue of the past” but the consequence of specific State policies, class structures, ethnic relationships and spatial occupations. Ghettos (and slums) are not natural and inevitable outcomes of the evolutions of cities due to migration (as some Chicago school members argued), but

*“a highly peculiar form of urbanization warped by asymmetric relations of power between ethnoracial groupings: a special form of collective violence concretized in urban space. That ghettoization is not an “uncontrolled and undesigned” process, as Robert E. Park asserted in his preface to *The Ghetto* (Wirth 1928: viii), was especially visible after World War II when the black American ghetto was reconstructed from the top down through state policies of public housing, urban renewal, and suburban economic development intended to bolster the rigid separation of blacks from whites. (...) Recognizing that it is a product and instrument of group power makes it possible to appreciate that, in its full-fledged form, the ghetto is a Janus-faced institution as it serves opposite functions for the two collectives it binds in a relation of asymmetric dependency. 1-For the dominant category, its rationale is to confine and control, which translates into what Max Weber calls the “exclusionary closure” of the dominated category. 2-For the latter, however, it is an integrative and protective device insofar as it relieves its members from constant contact with the dominant and fosters consociation and community building within the constricted sphere of*

intercourse it creates. Enforced isolation from the outside leads to the intensification of social exchange and cultural sharing inside. Ghettos are the product of a mobile and tensionful dialectic of external hostility and internal affinity that expresses itself as ambivalence at the level of collective consciousness. (...) Given that not all ghettos are poor and not all poor areas are ghettos, one cannot collapse and confound the analysis of ghettoization with the study of slums and lower-class districts in the city.” (Wacquant 2005: 8-9)

The second crucial point in Wacquant’s argument is that the combination of segregation, stigma, spatial confinement and poverty that characterise slums-like areas is due to the variable influence of the “social” and the “penal” state in their dwellers. Imprisonment of the poor is just a continuation of similar spatial constraints that slum residents experience under police control and the absence of sufficient, if any, welfare policies addressing their need.

“In their effort to tackle emergent forms of urban relegation, nation-states face a three pronged alternative. The first, middle-ground, option consists in patching up the existing programs of the welfare state. Clearly, this is not doing the job, or the problems posed by advanced marginality would not be so pressing today. One might even argue that such piecemeal and increasingly local responses to the disruptions caused by urban polarization help perpetuate the latter insofar as they fuel bureaucratic cacophony and inefficiency. The second, regressive and repressive, solution is to criminalize poverty via the punitive containment of the poor in increasingly isolated and stigmatized neighborhoods, on the one hand, and in jails and prisons, on the other. This is the route taken by the United States following the ghetto riots of the sixties (Rothman 1995). It is no happen stance if the stupendous expansion of the carceral sector of the American state — the imprisoned population has quadrupled in twenty-five years and corrections departments risen to the rank of third largest employer of the country even as crime levels remained grosso modo constant over that period — has taken place just as casual (under)employment spread and public assistance waned before being “reformed” into a system of forced employment. For the atrophy of the social state and the hypertrophy of the penal state are two correlative and complementary transformations that partake of the institution of a new government of misery whose function is precisely to impose desocialized wage labor as a norm of citizenship while providing a functional substitute for the ghetto as a mechanism of racial control. (...) The third, progressive, response to urban polarization from below points to a fundamental reconstruction of the welfare state that would put its structure and policies in accord with the emerging economic and social conditions. Radical innovations, such as the institution of a citizen’s wage (or unconditional income grant) that would sever subsistence from work, expand access to education through the lifecourse, and effectively guarantee universal access to essential public goods such as housing, health, and transportation, are needed to expand social rights and check the deleterious effects of the mutation of wage-labor (Van Parijs, 1996). In the end, this third option is the only viable response to the challenge that advanced marginality poses to democratic societies as they prepare to cross the threshold of the new millenium.” (Wacquant 2005: 16)

Specific analysis of slums in cities such as Mumbay (India) indicates that the persistence of slums for more than six decades became a structural feature of urban expansion, contention of poverty and labour force, and partisan local politics, without a significant improvement of the living conditions for the residents of these informal, or even legalised, settlements (Patel 2010).

“Bombay is now a city of extreme contrasts. More than half of the city’s population of fewer than 12 million inhabitants lives in slums and on pavements or under bridges and near railway tracks. A large number of them do not have legal tenure over the land that they occupy. In 1971 the slum population was about 1.25 million. Data collected in 1985 suggest that they constituted more than half of the city’s population, though they occupied only 2,525 of its 43,000 hectares of land. Today, more than a decade later, 6% of Bombay’s land houses more than 50% of its population. (...) The concentration of

ownership and the price of property, reinforce inequities in land and housing. These also make for fictitious scarcity, speculation and capital accumulation through rent. (...) Most of these slums are built on encroached land of private landlords (50%), state government land (25%), and municipal corporation land, and the rest on central government land. Additionally, nearly 1 million live on pavements and 2 million live in old rundown building structures known as chawls. Living quarters in slums are overcrowded and lacking in proper ventilation. Given the extremely skewed distribution of space, it is possible to find many different strata of income groups living in slums and utilizing various building materials locally available, including saris and other cloth. In some slums, as Swaminathan (2003) shows, the space available is four feet by five feet -just enough to seat four to five members of a household. Even access to sanitation remains unequal. Again, Swaminathan draws our attention to a survey noting that in 174 of the 169 documented slums, there were no public toilets. (...) Half or less than half of Bombay's slum dwellers fall below the poverty line. (...) The slums being organized in terms of clusters of regional, ethnic, and religious groups. (...) The slum population is presently treated as a ready-made constituency for garnering votes. Politicians allow new settlements to arise and then protest against an increase of the city's population, suggesting a cutoff date for legalizing slums. Whenever there has been a protest against eviction, politicians have legalized illegal settlements. This has guaranteed rights of stay for people, but not better housing or better services." Patel (2010: 77)

For Davis (2006) present slums can be conceived as the "new war fronts in the cities". Slums are the only affordable places for the poor because, usually, are far away from the city centre and are dangerous. Even there, an informal market of selling and renting land and houses occurs. On the other side, the job market, either formal or informal, offers few opportunities for most of the urban residents. Even the worst jobs remain under the control of communities according to ethnic, language or other criteria of identity, belonging and loyalty. The evolution of slums and poor workers has been very different in places like Zimbabwe and India, where inter-ethnic and religious tensions arise after the industrial crisis and the diminishing power of the workers' organisations; as a contrast, the *piqueteros* of some *villas miseria* in Argentina were able to self-organise themselves according to class consciousness, while achieving high degrees of mobilisation and negotiation of State subsidies. Slum dwellers, in the end, hold the capacity to block the cities. This a threat that obliges the State to take control and keep the order, although stability seems difficult to achieve in the slums due to the internal conflicts (gangs) and to the potential disruptive power of the slum dwellers.

To summarise, the following aspects should be taken into account for an in-depth research about slums:

* Definition

► Distinctions needed from ghettos and poor but consolidated neighbourhoods, while taking into account historical formation, patterns of segregation, social identities involved, institutional policies implemented, interactions with the formal city, etc.

"Favela is the Brazilian term for informal settlements or shantytowns. Typically, migrants to the city, lacking the means to rent or buy housing, invade unused land and build their homes there, gradually forming communities as people from their families or hometowns come to join them in the city. These vacant lands, which are generally ignored by their public or private owner, are found in undesirable locations such as hillsides too rocky or steep to build on, marshlands prone to flooding, landfill made from garbage dumping or narrow parcels alongside roads, water basins or riverbeds." (Perlman 2007: 4)

► Similarities and differences with refugee camps, travelers, rural communities, etc.

* Why do slums emerge?

- ▶ Housing not affordable (lack of public housing policies, land and urban speculation, low wages, etc.).
- ▶ Migration to urban areas (due to violence and/or poverty in rural areas, policies or absence of policies ending in the concentration of economic activities in cities, etc.), although second and third generations (the offspring of original dwellers) may continue living there.
- ▶ Social networks available (relatives, friends, work colleagues, local and ethnic communities, etc.).
- ▶ Land, materials and basic investments available (although often in bad, insecure and volatile condition).

* How are slums reproduced?

- ▶ Internal strengths (“convenient” location, local businesses and informal economy, defence of private and collective investments -commons-, mafias-gangs, mutual support and solidarity, etc.).
- ▶ External conditions (dangerous locations not attractive for upgraded developments, failure of housing/redevelopment and social/welfare policies, lack of real-estate expectations of investment and profit, ghetto-style police or military control, etc.).

* Consequences? What right to the city?

- ▶ Socio-spatial segregation: lack of public infrastructures, deprivation of legal rights to administrative registration and property of tenure, distance from city centre and from work places, difficult access to roads, schools, hospitals, etc.
- ▶ Social stigma and labelling process that jeopardises their social, cultural, political and economic opportunities for upward mobility and for enjoying higher degrees of social equality.
- ▶ Dwellers subject to high degrees of violence coming from various sides: internal triads, informal gangs paid by future developers if any, police raids, forced evictions, institutional racism and discrimination, abuse by employers, etc.
- ▶ Risks of eviction and damages due to natural catastrophes.
- ▶ Lack of rational urban planning while the city expands.
- ▶ Dangerous constructions without meeting safety measures and regulations.
- ▶ Sense of community and place attachment: mutual aid, self-construction skills, collective work for the provision of commons and public goods/spaces, self-organisation of local affairs, etc.
- ▶ Power to negotiate evictions, relocations, compensations, legalisations, etc.
- ▶ Migration to the city brings into it farther local cultures and produces new mixtures.

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Further materials

* Squatters in Hong Kong: Shek Kip Mei fire in 1953 (and museum at the Mei Ho House), Pok Fu Lam village...

* Evictions in La Cañada Real (Madrid) [undocumented migrants, internal and external speculators, drug dealers, different municipalities and standards of houses, etc.]

* Song: "Eu sou favela" (Seu Jorge, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGKVGSOHMuk#t=175>)

A favela, nunca foi reduto de marginal

Ela só tem gente humilde marginalizada e essa verdade não sai no jornal

A favela é, um problema social

Sim mas eu sou favela Posso falar de cadeira Minha gente é trabalhadeira Nunca teve assistência social Ela só vive lá Porque para o pobre, não tem outro jeito Apenas só tem o direito A salário de fome e uma vida normal.

Yes, but the favela was never the refuge of the marginal There are only humble people, marginalized And this truth does not appear in the newspaper The favela is a social problem

And what's more, I am the favela My people are workers I never had social assistance But I can live only there Because for the poor there is no other way We don't even have the right to a salary of hunger Or a normal life The favela is a social problem.

Eu Sou Favela, Noca da Portela and Sergio Mosca, 1994

Photo: Olmo Calvo