

**Spaces of Negotiation:
Community, governance, and pacification in Rio de
Janeiro**

**by
Scott Garoupa**

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Approval

Name: **Scott Garoupa**

Degree: **Master of Arts**

Title: ***Spaces of Negotiation: Community, governance,
and pacification in Rio de Janeiro***

Examining Committee: **Chair:** Lindsey Freeman
Assistant Professor

Kathleen Millar
Senior Supervisor
Assistant Professor

Michael Hathaway
Supervisor
Associate Professor

Ilka Thiessen
External Examiner
Professor
Department of Anthropology
Vancouver Island University

Date Defended/Approved: August 3, 2017

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Abstract

Brazil's enactment of the pacification program in 2008 marked the state's ostensible attempt to integrate the informal favelas of Rio de Janeiro into the formal frameworks of the city. For residents of favelas where the pacification program has been implemented, the processes associated with the program have been marked by violence, uncertainty, and disconnection. This thesis employs spatial theory in combination with ethnographic research to explore how pacification has come to be experienced in the favela of Vidigal. The materiality of space has become a critical nexus in the dialectical relationship between community residents and the Brazilian state. I argue that the pacification program in Vidigal is now primarily a spatial practice; the policies and practices associated with pacification in Vidigal seek to manipulate the use of space, and the residents of Vidigal now largely experience the effects of pacification through the spaces of their community.

Keywords: pacification; space; community; governance; the state

For my parents

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List of Acronyms

ADA	Amigo dos Amigos (Friends of Friends) gang
AMVV	Associação de Moradores do Vila Vidigal, (Residents Association of Vidigal)
BOPE	Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais (Batallion of Special Police Operations)
GTM	Grounded Theory Methodology
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics police squads
UPP	Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora, (Police Pacification Unit)
ZEIS	Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social, (Special Zones of Social Interest)

Chapter 1.

Introduction

I am so tired. I get into the taxi at the airport after nearly 24 hours of travel. I have to repeat “Vidigal” several times to the driver before he believes that I actually want him to drop me off at the favela. “Not Leblon?” He questions me one last time before shaking his head and starting the car. We eventually reach the entrance to the favela, a street lined with shops on one side and a broad public square on the other; the peak of Dois Irmãos rises out of the background to tower above all the buildings. I get out of the taxi. I am hit by the heat of the sun and the noise of Vidigal’s entrance – cars, people, motorcycles. I grab my heavy backpack, glance at the UPP officers standing close by, and hesitantly make my way towards the line-up for moto-taxis. I have read that this is the best way to get to the area of the favela where I will be staying, but I am not entirely sure of the correct way to flag one down. I am obviously a gringo, and just as obviously confused, because before I can reach the line-up a young moto-taxi driver approaches me and hands me a helmet. Before I am even fully seated on the motorcycle the driver accelerates and I am nearly thrown from the bike. As we blast through the narrow streets, dodging cars, people, and dogs, I am confronted by the verticality of Vidigal; it is impossible not to appreciate how steep the streets are when you are on the back of a speeding motorcycle, the weight of your heavy backpack threatening to drag you off. At times I swear we are driving up the face of a cliff. We reach my destination. I get off the bike, standing on legs that are shaking so badly they can barely take my weight. I hand some cash to the driver, who grins at me. “Welcome to Vidigal.” He speeds back to the base of the hill to pick up another customer.

Vidigal is a community defined by its geography. Located in Rio de Janeiro’s South Zone, immediately beside the wealthy communities of Ipanema and Leblon, Vidigal climbs a steep hillside that forms the base of Dois Irmãos, the Two Brothers

mountain and a popular hike and lookout for cariocas¹. Vidigal features prominently in the background of many images taken on the famous beaches of Rio; the verticality of an iconic favela hung above the sparkling waves. Vidigal has its own community beach, and to reach it one only has to cross a thoroughfare, walk a few hundred yards to the steep, treacherous, concrete staircase that plummets the 100 feet to the small sandy cove of *Praia do Vidigal*². Like many aspects of Vidigal, its beach is also a symbol of the relationship between the wealthy and the residents of the favela. A luxury Sheraton hotel looms over the shore, with its own orderly staircase that leads to a cordoned area where tourists tan themselves on reclined beach chairs and sip drinks that are delivered to them by young men dressed in full livery.

I use the term “favela” throughout this thesis. At various times, and in various pieces of literature, the word favela has often been associated with abject poverty and misery; images of squalor are those that have, historically, been connected to the favelas of Rio. However, the people in Vidigal also used the term favela, but with an entirely different range of connotations attached to it. When they spoke of the “favela” they indicated everything from the strength of the relationships that they saw within the community to the satisfaction that they had in their homes that they had built themselves. I was often asked if I knew where the term favela came from, and was told with pride that it referred to a hardy, thorny plant that grew on the hills where the first favelas were built. “We are like this plant,” I was told, “we will not be easy to remove. We are here to stay.”

The main entrance to Vidigal stems off of Avenida Niemeyer, a thoroughfare that connects Rio’s wealthy South Zone to the up-and-coming communities of the Rio’s South West. The entrance is bordered on one side by a small plaza, just beyond which sits the permanent presence of the UPP³ tent, and the UPP officers that constantly staff it. Although they are called community police, when I first see these officers their dress reminds me of the kind of tactical gear worn by North American SWAT teams: military boots, cargo pants, bullet-proof vests, gloves, and un-holstered guns make for a

¹ *Carioca* is a term used to denote a resident of Rio de Janeiro.

² Literally translated as “Beach of Vidigal”.

³ Known formally as the *Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora* (UPP) program, which translates as the Police Pacification Unit program, it is informally called the pacification program. These terms will be used interchangeably in this paper.

particularly tough image of “social policing”. I travelled to Vidigal at the end of August 2015 in order to achieve a better understanding of these officers, or more specifically the pacification program that they actively represent and enforce.

The Global Studies major of my undergraduate degree focused on the policies and practices of international development, and I increasingly found myself reading about Brazil’s pacification program – a program which was held up by the World Bank and others as a new standard of urban development. My interest was immediately piqued. “Pacification” seemed like a term that was entirely unsuited to any kind of development practice that I imagined at the time; I was at a loss as to how “pacify” and “aid” could be seen as synonymous with one another. Anthropologists, as I will discuss in more detail later, had similar questions. What were the lived experiences of people living in the favelas that were undergoing pacification? What were the felt effects of a siege-like state mentality? How did this program change or shape communities that had faced a long history of neglect from the Brazilian state?

As I gained more knowledge about the pacification program, my general interest in the UPP became focused on the ways in which it represented a key axis in the relationship between the Brazilian state and the communities that had been pacified. What did pacification have to say about the state and its view of the favelas? I was interested in how the residents of these communities experienced the pacification program: what was their understanding of a program touted as an international development success story? More specifically I began to question how the pacification program “fit” into a Brazilian history of development, and if this genealogy would allow the UPP to be seen in a new light.

The Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora

The favelas of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, have become critical sites of analysis for researchers interested in social inequality, urban development, and movements of popular resistance. Rio’s favelas – urban communities which are often depicted as slums or shantytowns – number well over 1000 and are home to over two million of the metropolitan area’s 12 million residents (Perlman 2010). Within the past three decades

these communities have been increasingly associated with drug-trafficking and gang-related violence. While it is true that drugs and violence are a contemporary reality in many favelas, the majority of community members have no direct involvement in the drug trade (Alves and Evanson 2011). And despite the various realities faced by these differing neighbourhoods and their residents, the favelas have been largely perceived as sources of illegality and violent crime by the “elite” of Brazilian society; the dominant stereotype of “the violent favela” allows for little recognition of variation between and within communities. This perception facilitated the emergence of Rio’s pacification program in 2008: a program that its designers have described as a way to integrate the favelas back into the city of Rio and which has so far “pacified” 36 favelas. It operates through two distinct processes: an initial invasion of a favela by militarized police troops, and then the establishment of a permanent police force in the newly pacified community. The police troops can be seen to exist as three distinct squadrons: BOPE, *Tropa de Choque*⁴, and UPP. BOPE troops, those with the motto and logo of *Faca na Caveira*⁵, handle the initial invasion of the favela, while Choque troops handle situations that would be analogous to those faced by SWAT troops in North America. The UPP officers are those that become permanently stationed in neighbourhoods that have been pacified; the UPP are the community police that interact with favela residents on a daily basis. Despite facing heavy criticism from within scholarly circles (for example, see Alves and Evanson 2011) this program has won international acclaim, both from popular media sources (see Mehta 2013) and from organizations such as the World Bank, as an especially promising form of urban development.

However, both the criticisms and commendations of the program have tended to overlook the historical context from which pacification emerged. This is not to suggest that other scholars have not looked at historical forms of state intervention in Rio’s favelas, but only that there is a paucity of research that connects pacification to this lineage. The UPP program only exists as the most recent form of state intervention in the favelas; from their very inception these communities have been targeted by various state strategies and programs. Past interventions have included everything from campaigns of forced removal to attempts at improving the infrastructure of favelas. These changing forms often reflect how the Brazilian state has perceived these

⁴ “Shock Troops”

⁵ Translates as “Knife in the Skull”, and is an apt description of the squadron’s logo.

neighbourhoods through time: perceived as the remnants of rural backwaters they have been forcibly “modernized”; seen as havens of unhygienic persons and practices they have been “cleaned” and “educated”; and seen as a den of violent criminals, they are now being “pacified” (see Fischer 2008; 2014). This has resulted in the construction of spaces in which residents must continually navigate, challenge, and engage the various mechanisms of control employed by the state.

An Iterative Research Process

My interests, and the gaps that I perceived in the literature, led me to a project that sought to analyze two related processes in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro: the collective history of state interventions in these communities; and the ways in which community residents have negotiated these policies and programs. I hoped to understand the lines of descent and relationships of power that shape and are enmeshed within this emergent development policy. That is, I wanted to critically interrogate “pacification” by reflecting upon the ways in which the government policies and practices of the past affect the composition of the present. Similarly to the work of Arturo Escobar (2012), who suggests that development is a “historical construct that provides a space in which poor countries are known, specified, and intervened upon” (45), I aimed to uncover the historical continuities and ruptures that fashioned the “favela” as a space in need of intervention, and the “*favelado*”⁶ as someone incapable of helping themselves.

To address these aims, I began my project with the intent of conducting my research through three related methods: first, and forming the foundation of my project, I wanted to conduct in-depth archival research to uncover a range of historical state policies that targeted the favelas of Rio; second, I planned on conducting a number of semi-structured interviews with residents of Vidigal to see how the “official” histories of the state intersected with the lived histories of favela residents; and finally, I intended to conduct participant-observation at various locations in Vidigal to try and understand the cumulative effects of these historical state policies. I had hoped that these methods

⁶ A term indicating a favela resident that is often used derogatorily.

would facilitate the construction of a genealogy of state intervention in Vidigal, which could then in turn be used to help facilitate a greater understanding of the pacification program.

I was initially planning on conducting research in a community called the Complexo do Alemão, a group of favelas in Rio de Janeiro's North Zone. I had found a small, community-based research centre that hosted international graduate students, and planned on staying there for the course of my project. Two or three months before my departure for Rio, the levels of violence in Alemão rose sharply. The community was experiencing daily shootings, and I made the decision that I would need to choose another location for my research project. Not having any other clear connections to Rio de Janeiro, I turned to Air BnB to see if I could find accommodations in a favela. I eventually decided upon Vidigal because of its location close to Rio's famous downtown areas, and its reputation as a community that has a history of welcoming foreign tourists. I rented a room in a house that was owned by a woman named Kita, who worked as a tour guide in Rio. The three months that I stayed in Rio were a relatively slow period for tourism in the city, and as such Kita was glad show me around Vidigal. Kita was well known, and well liked, in the favela and she introduced me to many of the people and spaces that my project would eventually revolve around. She acted as my translator, transcriber, and came to be a key informant and good friend during my time in Vidigal.

Within the first month of my research in Vidigal, two significant complications arose which shifted the focus of both my research topic and the project's methods. The first complication surrounded my intention to have archival research act as the foundation of the project. I made multiple trips to the National Archives of Brazil, the State Archives of Rio de Janeiro, the Municipal Archives, and the archives at the National Library and the Historical and Geographic Institute of Brazil. I spoke to numerous archivists at each institution, and it quickly became clear to me that I was going to have an incredibly difficult time finding relevant documents within the three-month timespan of my fieldwork. First, there was simply an immense amount of documents at each archive, and there were numerous collections within each archive that could potentially hold documents relevant to my project. I lacked the time that I would have needed to comb through the hundreds of boxes that archivists indicated may hold information that I would be interested in. Secondly, and more significantly, I was frequently directed towards storerooms that housed thousands upon thousands of

unsorted materials; these were the places in which archivists thought that I would find the most pertinent data. Much of the data concerning favelas had not yet been organized, and archivists simply had a “best guess” approach to finding the data I needed. It was when I found myself standing in an unmarked room, looking at the dozens of floor-to-ceiling stacks of unmarked, unsorted boxes bulging with papers, that I realized I would need to re-orient my research methodology. Archival research became unfeasible.

The second complication arose at the time that I was beginning to realize the impossibility of archival research. I have called it a complication, but in reality it was much more of a realization that emerged from the data I was collecting through interviews. Simply put, people in Vidigal had no interest in talking about the history of the Brazilian state. It was not that they lacked knowledge of that history, or that community members did not understand how an abstract entity like “the state” manifested itself within their localities of everyday experience. Rather, every person I spoke to stressed the importance of *comunidade*⁷. It was not the history of the state that was important, I was told, it was the history of community; it was not the work of the state that was important, but the work of the community; it was not the state that I should focus on, but the community. It was not, I realized, that the residents saw my research topic as being unimportant; they were suggesting a change in the perspective from which I viewed the relationship between the Brazilian state and the favela. Instead of focusing on the changing state, they told me, I needed to focus on the changing community. This was, I believe, a conscious act through which the residents of Vidigal asserted their own political agency. My initial focus privileged the position of the state; concentrating first on the actions of the state inadvertently situated community action as purely reactionary. By shifting my focus to the spaces of community I was able to gain a much more nuanced understanding of the relationships between the residents of Vidigal and the Brazilian state.

With these complications came a corresponding change in my methods: I was forced to abandon my plan of having archival research form the foundation of my research, and instead refocused on interviews with community residents. I conducted dozens of informal interviews during my fieldwork and 12 formal, semi-structured

⁷ Translated as “community”, it was used both as a reference to the neighbourhoods in Vidigal and the relationships that exist within those neighbourhoods.

interviews⁸. Formal interview participants ranged in age from 24 to 75, were equally split in terms of gender identity (6 men and 6 women), and economic income ranged from very little per month to what would be considered middle-class. I incorporated a notion of representation for these formal and informal interviews from Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM). Within GTM, representative sampling is ensured through finding a saturation point for the research topic. This “saturation point” is typically decided by the recognition that extra interviews are producing so little new information that additional interviews would be “a waste of time” (Bryant and Charmaz 2007, 161). With “community” having become a central topic within my project, the final interviews saw the re-iteration of themes that had emerged repeatedly throughout the process.

The second methodological cornerstone of my research project was composed of the many hours of participant-observation that I conducted in Vidigal. I recorded my observations, experiences, and interpretations within a number of field journals that I filled with field notes over the course of the three months I spent in the favela. On any typical day I would wake up and spend 3 to 4 hours at various locations throughout the community. During my time in the field I used a form of scratch notes to aid with data collection. These notes sought to incorporate a wide variety of details including the date and time of observations, observations of space, and the direct quotes of any dialogue that I found particularly interesting or illuminating. My mood, the body language of people around me, weather, and anything else that I thought of as noteworthy would be written down. Using scratch notes allowed me to feel less intrusive while simultaneously allowing me to retain the necessary observational details for data collection. After three to four hours of observation, I would return home and write a more complete journal entry that was based on my scratch notes. In the evening I would usually go out for another 3 to 4 hours of observation, and repeat the process of taking down scratch notes and then complete another journal entry at night⁹.

⁸ The interview schedule for these semi-structured interviews can be found in Appendix A.

⁹Refer to Appendix B for an example of a typical journal entry.

Ethical Considerations

This research project was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the Simon Fraser University Research Ethics Board. All efforts were made to minimize risk to research participants. All names used within this thesis are pseudonyms, and all major identifiers have been removed and/or changed in order to maintain anonymity. Furthermore, the nature of this project dealt with a topic that held in itself the potential for ethical difficulties; the pacification program is connected to very real dangers for residents of the favelas. To ensure that the ethical requirements of minimal risk were maintained no participants were ever asked to speak directly on the pacification program, the police, or the drug gangs.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

Categorization of Literature

In order to locate my project within the broad discussions occurring across the social sciences I have split my literature review into three distinct, yet interrelated, sections: 1) the anthropology of space and place, 2) the anthropology of the state, and 3) research that has focused on Brazil, and on Rio de Janeiro's favelas specifically. While I focus on anthropological research, this literature review spans multiple disciplines. Sociologists, cultural geographers, and political scientists, amongst others, have all looked to the relationships that exist between a governing state and the people and communities under its control.

The principal analysis in this study revolves around the ways in which space comes to act as a critical site in the dialectical relationship between a state and its margins. More specifically, this project seeks to uncover the multiple ways that the creation, use, and interpretation of space in Vidigal signal an ongoing dialogue of contestation and engagement between the residents of the favela and the Brazilian state. This analysis builds upon several approaches to the relationship of space, place, and the state found in anthropological literature. In fact, space can be seen to play a foundational role in the very beginnings of anthropology; from Malinowski's (1922) *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, to Radcliffe-Brown's (1922) *Andaman Islanders*, to Mead's (1930) *Coming of Age in Samoa*, space played a prominent, if static and simplistic, role in the birth of the discipline. For anthropologists such as Mead and Malinowski, "the field" represented a clearly delineated site that researchers would enter, leave, and return to; early anthropology saw "spaces" as distinct territories in which locally rooted cultures could be discovered and defined.

More recently, anthropologists like Appadurai (1988) called into question anthropology's "problem of place": the unquestioning assumption of fixed landscapes, within which was found the "involuntarily localized 'Other'" (Appadurai 1988, 16; see also Escobar 2001). While early anthropological research engaged with space only as

specific, culturally-defined locations, anthropologists during the last two decades of the 20th century began to look towards the ways that culture could be seen to emerge from, and interact with, spatiality (Low and Lawrence- Zuniga 2003). Since the 1980s, anthropology has shifted away from the perception of culture as a contained characteristic of a constrained space to an investigation of the relationship between space and society. Now there are a variety of concentrations within the anthropology of space, each looking at a different aspect of the ways in which culture and space interact (Low and Lawrence- Zuniga 2003).

The Anthropology of Space and Place

Anthropological investigations of space often begin with the work of Bourdieu (1977; 1984), who explores the ways in which behaviour is shaped and informed by peoples engagement with space. Bourdieu's work advises us to understand the interconnections between spatial meaning and spatial practice. Bourdieu (1977) argues that any understanding of space must include the human practice that establishes it; "habitus" establishes and is established by people's movement through space. De Certeau (1984) makes a comparable argument when he describes space as something that "is composed of intersections of mobile elements" (117). De Certeau would seek to understand the spaces of Vidigal through the various relationships that constitute them; these spaces are composed of people who walk through the streets, build their houses, and dance in the clubs. For de Certeau (1984), "space is a practiced place" (117). Similarly to how Bourdieu's and de Certeau's analyses emphasize the construction of spatial meaning through social practice, anthropologists have begun to investigate how people's creation, use, and discursive interpretations of space come to form its multiple meanings.

Anthropologists look to social, political, and economic processes that help create the meanings that become attached to space and place. But this does not mean that all anthropologists agree on common definitions of space, place, or the relationship between the two. Arturo Escobar (2001) assesses these debates within anthropology and asserts that space and place were conceptually disconnected with the beginnings of Western science; space is generally conceived to be more abstract and universal than

place. What starts as homogeneous space becomes place as it is enmeshed with experience and entangled with meaning (see also Tuan 1977). Escobar describes numerous uses of place within anthropology, including the complexities of place-making through the intentional processes of work (see Wade 1999), and the ways that power, place and identity can become intertwined (see Gupta & Ferguson, 1997). However anthropologists might look to understand space, place, or the relationship between the two, the discipline is “uniquely anchored in fieldwork” (Gieseeking et al. 2014, xxiii) in ways that make it especially useful for the study of these topics.

Anthropological research often relies upon narrative to prompt understandings of people’s perceptions of place and to construct “local theories of dwelling” (Feld and Basso 1996). Narrative lies at the heart of ethnographic research, and anthropologists such as Feld and Basso (1996) argue that meanings attached to and imbued in space can be best understood by speaking to locals. This kind of anthropological viewpoint allows for dynamic, person-based understandings of space, in comparison to the static, geographically-bounded perspectives found in classical ethnographies. Listening to the residents of Vidigal – such as when they told me to focus upon the spaces of their community – becomes especially significant when located alongside the importance of narrative within ethnographic research. Particularly essential to the dynamism found in contemporary ethnographic explorations of space is the concept of embodiment and embodied space. Analyses of the body integrate discourse and language alongside habits and behavior; they are grounded in specific localities while remaining connected to translocal and transnational processes.

Embodied Space

Embodiment can be understood as an “indeterminate methodological field defined by perceptual experience and mode of presence and engagement with the world” (Csordas 1994, 12). That is, embodiment is a site where it is possible to analyse how sensory and interpretive experience becomes interconnected with the materiality of the environment. The body is seen as the center of lived experience, which then becomes foundational in understanding how place is created. The body exists in a given space, and the awareness and understanding of that space shifts in relation to such

things as a person's sense of self, their social relationships, and their economic standing. Embodied space offers a framework that allows for the analysis of how place comes to be constructed through such processes as language and movement (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003).

Richardson (1982) looks at how bodily experience and awareness can affect the physical environment by considering how space is transformed through processes that connect objects and understanding. In his work, embodied space is "being-in-the-world" – that is, the experiential realities of place: the sounds, sights, and smells that constitute the senses. Richardson's (1982) work represents an early phenomenological approach to understanding how cultural modalities become embedded in and articulated through the materiality of space; he investigates how people integrate the materiality of their surroundings into specific social situations. This approach was made more complex by researchers such as Nancy Munn (1996), who drew upon Lefebvre's "field of action" to conceptualize a "mobile spatial field". This spatial field can be understood "as a symbolic nexus of relations produced out of interactions between bodily actors and terrestrial spaces" (Munn 1996, 449). Munn's research adds complexity to Richardson's by fashioning people as truly embodied spaces, in which the body is conceived as a mobile connective point between meaning and materiality.

The concept of embodied space now incorporates a range of discussions and topics. Scholars such as Alessandro Duranti (1992; 1997) have looked at the ways that language, bodily movement, and space are connected. Language is seen as a crucial area in which our being-in-the-world is disclosed to others; it is simultaneously representational of and referential to experience. Other scholars, like Michelle Rosaldo (1980), have articulated assertions of the linkages between gender and space. Rosaldo (1980) specifically looked at the connections between women's subordination to men and their relegation to the "domestic" sphere. Now scholars such as Alison Rooke (2010) have furthered this type of gendered spatial analysis to look at the relationships between sexual identity and embodied space. Rooke explores these themes by attempting to understand the ways in which lesbian and bisexual women come to understand the meaning of their sexuality in relation to queer space; her analysis emphasizes the complex interconnections that can exist between identity and space. These and other topics that engage with the concept of embodied space serve to connect the body, and sensory experience, to the spaces that it comes to occupy. For my own project, an

understanding of embodied space helps to underscore the connections that exist between the residents of Vidigal and the spaces they inhabit and help to define: the neighbourhood information hub that resides within the owner of a bar and manifests in her conversations, or the vision of community that is expressed through the bodies of a communal work party.

Inscribed Space

The notion of “inscribed space” is especially important for anthropological research as it refers to the ways that people “write” their presence on their environments. That is, analyses of inscribed spaces look to the significance that people ascribe to space, the connections that people form with their surroundings, and seek to comprehend how people turn “space” into “place”. Early analyses of inscribed spaces imagined the relationship between people and space as fundamentally dialectical; personal identity is seen to both shape and be shaped by the environment one lives in (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003). James Fernandez (1977) was one of the first anthropologists to look at what he terms “architectonic space”. Architectonic space is seen to be the material manifestations – in the design of buildings, roads, plazas, and pathways – of the constitutive elements of personal, political, and social identities. Contemporary discussions of “inscribed space” have expanded in the last decade of the 20th century to look at the connections between place and voice, and to insist on the importance of narrative in relation to the analysis of space.

The concept of inscribed space, and its concern with the writing of identity in space, fostered a discussion regarding the role of the anthropologist in turning fieldwork conversations into ethnography (Appadurai 1988). This discussion, which critiqued the reductionism found in historical anthropology’s use of place, was refined by Margaret Rodman’s (1992) argument for the inclusion of “multilocality” in ethnographic analyses. Multilocality is a concept that emphasizes the social construction of place, stressing that the meanings of place are “politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple” (Rodman 1992: 641). Places are defined by the people who inhabit them, and the meanings that are attached to and inscribed into these spaces are generated both individually and relationally. These meanings may be shared amongst a group or

community, and multilocality allows for the competing views and interpretations of place that researchers often find in practice.

Within Rodman's (1992) argument, and emerging from other investigations of inscribed space, is an emphasis on the use of narrative in ethnographic explorations of place and space. This emphasis on narrative (see Feld and Basso 1996), and on narrative connections to the creation of place, attempts to address the concerns of place and voice articulated by Appadurai (1988) and Rodman (1992). Narrative is used to incorporate the voices of those that inhabit and shape the places that anthropologists explore; the connections articulated between voice and place recognize the myriad ways that people construct meaningful relationships with their surroundings. The multiple and competing definitions of place inherent to these analyses not only allow for the complex constructions of local inhabitants, but simultaneously allow for the ways in which places come to be shaped and defined by pressures and processes linked to outside forces.

Contested Spaces

Contested spaces have been defined as sites "where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion, and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power" (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003, 18). Anthropological investigations of contested space thus emphasize how conflicts can focus on the meanings and interpretations of space, who helps to define spatial meaning, and the ways in which these interpretations are shaped by spatial practices (McDonogh 1992; Park 2014). Furthermore, contested spaces are seen as material articulations of the political, economic, and social frameworks that structure human practices. In analyses of contested space both the materiality of space and its attendant meanings are seen as fertile grounds over which a confluence of forces can be seen to meet. Within my work, the concept of contested space is not only useful in analysing the relationship between the state and community – such as restricting the use of space through the enforcement of informal curfews – but also in deepening our understanding of the often conflictual relationships that exist between residents themselves.

Space and place are contested as they often express crucial ideological and social frameworks that shape and inform human practice. Power, in the forms of affluence and governance, patterns the construction of space; power dynamics permit or prohibit access to space, and can therefore come to frame personal experience and enterprise. Anthropologists such as Steven Gregory (1998) looked to contested sites as critical sites of analysis and began to investigate the ways in which place and power became crucially entangled within processes that construct identity. Gregory's (1998) work sought to understand how dominant discourse about black identity in the United States linked beliefs of welfare dependency and criminal activity to place. Gregory found that these connections disadvantaged local residents of the New York housing complex in which he was conducting research; the social construction of negative identities, especially those linked to criminality and drug use, inhibited the ability of residents to participate in neighbourhood planning processes. In response, the housing complex residents organized clean-up campaigns to counter negative stereotypes, and formed community networks that acted as alternative political spaces in which to find avenues for participation (see also Blokland 2008). Gregory's work has clear parallels to themes that were emphasized by participants in my research: the popular image of the Brazilian favela is often connected to negative stereotypes, which are reinforced by aspects of the pacification program, and residents of Vidigal emphasized community spaces as those which they felt served to deconstruct those negative stereotypes.

Contested space is often rooted in the battles of a local community against the dominant ideologies of the state. Space becomes a crucial site in these battles because of its ability to concretize popularized images propagated by the powerful; the apparent filth of a slum or ghetto is often connected to the supposed identities of those who inhabit them. These connections are then used as justification for re-zoning, re-development, or removal of the community. In this sense it becomes important not only to understand the complexities of place, but the state which so often attempts to define it.

The Anthropology of the State

For much of the 20th century the discipline of anthropology took the state to exist as a kind of “unanalysed given” (Nagengast 1994) or a stage in the evolution of political and cultural organization (Trouillot 2001). That is, the state was seen to either exist beyond or outside of culture, with little significance to anthropological research. This scholarly conception can be seen to stem from some of the earliest anthropological musings on what, exactly, constituted “the state”. In his preface to *African Political Systems* (1940), Radcliffe-Brown proposed that the idea of the state should be eliminated from social analysis altogether; that, instead, the concepts of government, political organization, and political system were all that was needed for political anthropology. “The State in this sense does not exist in the phenomenal world; it is a fiction of the philosophers ... There is no such thing as the power of the State” (Radcliffe-Brown 1940: xxiii). For Radcliffe-Brown, the state cannot be observed and thus becomes unimportant within anthropological study. The state, in the opinion of Radcliffe-Brown, became an unanalyzable and inscrutable non-entity, a philosophical conjecture without empirical validity. Anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2001) argues that this assessment of the state amounted to a kind of “death by conceptualization inasmuch as [it] conceptualized the state into oblivion” (126). Radcliffe-Brown’s view of the state left no room for it within anthropology. However, while Trouillot asserts that Radcliffe-Brown was wrong to claim the state’s irrelevancy for social research, he is careful to emphasize the important ways in which Radcliffe-Brown’s argument, and those like it, shaped concerns that continue to guide contemporary research: for if, as Radcliffe-Brown emphasized, the monolithic “state” does not exist as an empirical given, then how does anthropology come to encounter it? This question rose to prominence within anthropology in the last two decades of the 20th century, and would merge with poststructuralist critiques of the state that were simultaneously gaining traction in the discipline.

Sociologist Philip Abrams (1988) resuscitates some of Radcliffe-Brown’s ideas surrounding the difficulty of studying the state. Abrams delivers a refined argument that rejects the existence of the state as an empirical entity and advances significant uncertainties about the analytical hold of the state concept. He writes:

The state ... is not an object akin to the human ear. Nor is it even an object akin to human marriage. It is a third-order object, an ideological project. It is first and foremost an exercise in legitimation ... The state, in sum, is a bid to elicit support for or tolerance of the insupportable and intolerable by presenting them as something other than themselves, namely, legitimate, disinterested domination. (Abrams 1988: 76)

Diverging from Radcliffe-Brown's argument, however, Abrams proposes a purpose for state studies: the practices and mechanisms that legitimize the wielding of power and that simultaneously manufacture the image of a purportedly "disinterested" entity. For Abrams this is a decidedly difficult undertaking, as we must somehow break free from the legitimizing discourses of the state in order to fully understand them. This belief echoes similar sentiments found in the theories of poststructuralists who were writing around the same time as Abrams. For instance, Bourdieu (1994) asserts that charting state power is both a central question and a central difficulty in studying the state. Bourdieu contends that we must first escape the "thought of the state" before we can begin to comprehend its machinations. To do this we must realize that one of the state's foremost capabilities is to produce and impose categories of thought that are implicitly accepted and applied extemporaneously to all things of the social world – including the state itself. This knowledge helps us "to subject the state and the thought of the state to a sort of *hyperbolic doubt*" (Bourdieu 1994, 1, emphasis in original). That is, this framework is dichotomous with those that assume the state to exist as an unanalysed given; it insists upon a rigorous questioning of what, exactly, constitutes the state.

What both Abrams and Bourdieu propose is an unmasking, non-reifying approach to studying the state. This is a fundamental position that is shared by a multitude of other anthropologists, social scientists and cultural theorists. Such an approach emphasizes that the state should not be treated as a something that exists naturally, but as an entity that becomes constituted through social processes (for example Comaroff 1998; Coronil 1997; Das and Poole 2004; Scott 1998). Largely under the influences of Gramsci (1971) and Foucault (1979; 1980; 1991), these frameworks seek to uncover the entangled relationship between hegemony and resistance, and they raise questions of how the state rules, what kinds of methods and techniques of power it employs, and how state effects are produced (Yang 2005). Many of the studies resulting

from these theoretical perspectives have explored these questions via a top-down approach, examinations that begin at a macro level of analysis. Anthropology, by comparison, while still largely concerned with the same theoretical questions, has sought to answer these questions by examining the lived experiences of people and communities who are interconnected in the constellations of the state.

The Imagined State

Akhil Gupta's (1995) article on the "imagined state" represents a seminal moment in anthropological research that aimed to demystify the state. Gupta sought to uncover the mechanisms that made it possible for people to imagine the state. How, he asked, is the state constructed "in the imagination and everyday practices of everyday people" (Gupta 1995: 390)? Gupta's exploration of the multiple ways in which the state is conceived, constructed, and talked about in India led to several important considerations for further studies of the state. First, unitary descriptions of "the state" tend to reify an institution that is, more often than not, experienced as a set of disaggregated and decentralized agencies, organizations, officials, and agendas. Second, these mechanisms for imagining the state are often found in the discursive constructions of those who experience the effects of the state in their everyday lives. Gupta's analysis stressed the importance to look at phenomena whose boundaries do not neatly coincide with those of the state. Third, and most important for my own research, Gupta's article emphasized the dialectal relationships that can exist between "the state" and other social groupings – communities, coalitions, trade organizations, and so on. Gupta stresses that just as "the state" should not be reified as a unitary entity, nor should there be assumed to exist a unitary entity such as "civil society" that stands apart from and in opposition to the state. However, keeping the complex nature of the state in mind, Gupta emphasizes that the same processes which enable the imagining of the state also help people to imagine these other social groupings; constructions of "community" are often connected to the same mechanisms and modalities that produce "the state". In Vidigal, for example, I was often presented with a space or practice that ostensibly represented the community: a community work party that was constructing a path, a space where people gathered and danced to samba music, or a neighbourhood bar. However, while each of these spaces was presented to me as a kind of unified whole, they often encompassed a

number of fragmentary interconnections between people, their ideals, their goals, and, critically, their various relationships to the state.

The Margins of the State

Following Gupta (1995), anthropologists have asked how the practices and politics of quotidian experience shape the political and regulatory processes that compose “the state”. Das and Poole’s (2004) foundational anthology helped to shift the anthropological gaze towards the “margins”, arguing that these spaces are “a necessary entailment of the state, much as the exception is a necessary component of the rule” (2004: 4). In this light boundaries, both practical and theoretical, provide clarity for the concept that is being defined; the margins of a state not only signal its territorial borders, but the limits of its social, economic, and philosophical jurisdictions as well. Anthropologists, among other social science researchers, now look to the ostensible peripheries in order to uncover important insights into a state’s motivations, ambitions, and ideals.

Social scientists such as Javier Auyero (2012; 2015), Clara Han (2012), and Daniel Goldstein (2012; 2016) take this “peripheral” approach within various contexts of Latin America; they look to the margins to better understand the lives of those who reside there and the states that are defined by them. Auyero’s work has tended to focus on the dynamics and complexities that exist in the urban margins of Argentina. His latest research (2012; 2015) has looked to metropolitan areas in Buenos Aires to analyse various forms of violence that shape the lives of residents and shape their relationships with the Argentine state. Han (2012) traces the entangled relationships that exist between the Chilean state and those that exist in its peripheries by exploring the varied modes and meanings of “debt” in a poverty-stricken neighbourhood in Santiago. Similar to both Auyero’s and Han’s long-time work within a particular Latin American context, Goldstein (2012; 2016) has spent over two decades conducting research in the peripheral neighbourhoods of Cochabamba, Bolivia. Goldstein’s research has touched upon the themes of performative violence, the role of anthropological fieldwork, and the nuances of informality and insecurity in a globalized world.

Scholarship on the Brazilian State and the Favelas

Brazil and its favelas have proven particularly fertile grounds for social science research that seeks to understand the state and its margins. From observing the “traditional folk custom” of the *mutirão*¹⁰ (Marcondes 1948), to analysing the connections between housing policy and urban poverty in the favelas (Portes 1979), researchers have long sought to understand the processes and practices that constitute the favelas. Janice Perlman (1976) is widely recognized as an early voice attempting to distinguish these peripheral regions from their perceived marginality. The favelas of Rio, Perlman argued, were not backwaters of tradition acting against a modernizing city. Instead, Perlman convincingly underscored the importance of the drive and resourcefulness of the auto-constructed communities (see also Holston 2009); not only did residents of Rio’s favelas often serve as the maids, cooks, and construction workers of Rio, but the self-built infrastructure of these communities added to the economic viability of the entire city.

Since the late 1970s, and Perlman’s seminal work, a plethora of social scientific research has focused upon the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Scholars such as Teresa Meade (1997), Brodwyn Fischer (2008), and Bryan McCann (2014) have looked to the complicated and often contradictory relationships between the Brazilian state and the residents of Rio’s favelas. Meade’s (1999) work sought to understand the repercussions of the “civilization” campaign enacted by the city in the late 19th century; Fischer (2008) explored the differential access to citizenship experienced by the poor as Brazilian law experienced sweeping changes in the mid-20th century; and McCann (2014) examined the political mobilization that emerged from Rio’s favelas in the 1970s and the ways in which that mobilization has changed, faltered, and continued to shape favela politics into the 21st century.

The academic gaze upon Rio’s favelas intensified with the intensification of the drug trade in the 1980s and further with the commencement of the Pacification program in 2008. While the program may have officially begun in 2008, there are lines of historical continuity that connect the UPP program to previous official policies. For example, Operation Rio – which was implemented in 1994 – clearly articulates a

¹⁰ *Mutirão* is a term commonly used to define a collective work party, where a mix of community members, neighbours, and family and friends will donate their labour for free.

similarly militaristic approach to pacification, while Favela Bairro – begun in 1996 – implemented similar spatial policies that targeted Rio’s favelas (see McCann 2014). Violence, surrounding both the drug trade and the state’s response to the drug trade, has become a central concern for researchers working the favelas. Academics such as Enrique Desmond Arias (2006) have looked to the interconnections and interrelationships between criminal activity and public policy (see also Livingstone 2014). Others, such as Alves and Evanson (2011), have looked to the violence incurred and enacted by the Brazilian state through its attempts to “pacify” Rio’s favelas (see also Penglase 2014; Larkins 2015; Zaluar 2016). Another critical connection being explored is that between the initiation of the pacification program and Rio’s desire to host international mega-events such as the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup. Scholars such as Rekow (2016) and Penglase (2016) have sought to understand the confluence between Rio’s desire to be seen as a safe, cosmopolitan city worthy of hosting mega-events, and the beginnings of the pacification program.

This rich myriad of work focusing upon Rio’s favelas has provided a multitude of perspectives on the histories and intricacies of those who live in these communities. However, the rise of drug trafficking and the initiation of pacification has led to a preponderance of research focusing upon violence. This is not to suggest that this focus is unnecessary, unilinear, or uncomplicated; while much of the anthropological research of the past decade has, in one way or another, focused upon violence, it has still produced several incredibly nuanced analyses. An excellent example of this kind of complex research is that done by Penglase (2014), who deliberately turns away from the “spectacular” violence often associated with the favelas, and instead focuses upon indeterminate and mundane experiences of uncertainty and insecurity. Penglase’s work reveals the complex nature of the relationships that exist between the gangs of the favelas and the police that patrol them, and breaks apart the simplistic dichotomy that is often construed as existing between the two groups. The nuance of Penglase’s work, and his decision to analyse more elusive forms of violence, has emphasized the importance of looking for other lenses with which to understand the pacification program in Rio. Pacification has indeed been imbued with violence, but its effects are felt in forms that often range far beyond the overt violence of the state and the violence of the gangs.

The topics explored in my research do not fall neatly within the scope of much of the current literature on Rio’s favelas. The spectacle of violence that is often associated

with the pacification program is not of central concern to my project, nor was it of central concern to the participants that my research revolves around. Instead this project seeks to understand the peripheral processes and policies that have been enacted in the wake of Vidigal's pacification. Space is invoked as a dynamic site where a multitude of relationships emerge and take shape between the state and the residents of Vidigal; not only does spatial analysis lead to a deepened understanding of the pacification program, it also allows for a more nuanced understanding of the ways that residents of Vidigal relate to each other and to the community in which they live. Violence, in this case, becomes secondary to the constructions of community inscribed in space and juxtaposed against the state; the focus moves away from the spectacular violence of pacification and towards the effects it has produced within Vidigal.

Chapter 3.

The Creation of Community

Disbelieving smiles quickly spread on the faces of those that I passed on my way to the worksite. “Do you see that gringo?” was a question that I heard repeatedly as I walked with the fifty pound, half-filled bag of cement slung over my shoulder. I was one of a handful of men that were making repeated trips from the drop-off spot along the main road in Vidigal to the small network of paths that a group of residents were in the process of paving, and the neighbourhood was clearly aware of my status as a foreigner. The 40-degree weather, along with the incredibly steep incline of the path, ensured that the five-minute walk was one of foot-pounding agony. When I reached the worksite, where other men and women were preparing the dirt paths for their new concrete coats, I dropped the bag beside the battered wheelbarrow in which the concrete was being mixed. I arched my arms out to the sides and above my head, feeling the sweat pour down my back, when a large arm was slung across my shoulders and I was confronted with the grinning face of Marcio, the man who was acting as the informal leader of this mutirão. “It is difficult, no?” There was a slight note of concern in Marcio’s voice as he took in my face, undoubtedly dusty and sweat-streaked like the other faces of the men who were hauling the bags of cement to the worksite. I had been vociferous in my assertion that I could help carry the cement, and Marcio was still obviously unsure that a “gringo” would be able to handle the physically demanding job. I just grinned and shrugged my shoulders, attempting indifference to the punishment of carrying heavy loads down a steep street, and Marcio let out a knowing chuckle. “But you know,” he went on, “this is real favela life; it can be difficult here, and to succeed you need to work hard, but we always work together and that is how we improve.”

A recurrent theme that emerged throughout my research was the ways in which a sense of community came to be constituted through Vidigal residents’ use, creation, and interpretation of space. The processes and practices that marked this constitution were not always complementary; visions for the “correct” use of space often came into competition and conflict with each other, and memories associated with spaces in the

community often acted as representations of an idealized past. Much like Marcio's assertion that the residents of Vidigal had "always" worked together to create a better future, romanticized declarations can help to locate these spaces within networks of contestation and help to emphasize the idealized values held by certain groups within the community.

Community, or *comunidade*, was a word that would frequently be evoked in conversations that I had with residents of Vidigal. It was used both to refer to the collection of neighbourhoods in Vidigal, or *bairros*, and to the network of connections between those who lived there. In this sense *comunidade* signalled the physical spaces that collectively encompassed Vidigal while simultaneously signalling the relationships of those who lived and worked there.

To aid in my analysis of the politics of space in Vidigal I have adopted a framework from Setha M. Low's (2000) research of public plazas in Latin America. Low's work is fundamentally about how culture can be understood spatially and, relatedly, what "spatialization" tells us about culture. Low's research emphasizes that social and economic relations produce space; to think of the built environment as space rather than a collection of objects is useful because its parts become enmeshed within a system of relationships. These relationships exist between the economy, society, and culture on the one hand, and the urban environment on the other. Low's (2000) analytical framework stresses the critical examination of social and spatial arrangements that are presumed to be given and fixed, and therefore considered "natural" and "transparent", which in turn yields insights into unacknowledged biases, prejudices, and inequalities.

In her work, Low (2000) distinguishes between the physical and symbolic aspects of urban space by defining the *social production of space* in contrast to the *social construction of space*. The social production of space refers to the practices accountable for the physical manufacture of space as they combine social, economic, ideological, and technological factors, while the social construction of space defines the experience of space through which "peoples' social exchanges, memories, images and daily use of the material setting" transform it and give it meaning (Low 2000, 128). These interconnected frameworks – which for Low signify the idea of "spatializing culture" – not only allow for a greater appreciation of the connections that exist between the materiality of a space and its social experience, but they can also help to emphasize how a politics

of space is shaped by the multiple voices that constitute it. There are often competing and contradictory definitions of space and place, and Low's framework allows for a multiplicity of meanings to be held and analyzed simultaneously.

While I found this theoretical model to be useful, I also found it to be limited by its two-dimensional structure; Low's spaces are surprisingly bereft of the people who inhabit them and who give them meaning. I attempt to move beyond this model in two key ways: first by incorporating the person as a kind of mobile spatial field – a presence that imbues space with social relations, conferring meaning, structure, and through the impression of quotidian activities, ultimately produces place (see Munn 1996). In Vidigal this can be seen in the labouring bodies of the *mutirão* workers, in the movements and sounds of the musicians in the samba school, and in the daily congregations that form in neighbourhood bars. Secondly, following Low's (2014) own additions to her framework, I focus upon the discourses that surround the conceptualization of space and examine how speech itself acts to transform the meaning of practices and spaces (see also Duranti 1992); Marcio's vision of community becomes embedded within the space that he helps to construct. The concept of spatializing culture employed in my analysis therefore encompasses these multiple processes – social production, social construction, and discursive practices – to develop an ethnographic analysis of the assemblage that is "community".

This chapter situates these processes around three key spatial sites and practices found within Vidigal: the community tradition of *mutirões*; the monthly hosting of the Vidigal samba school and the rise of "guerilla" baile funk¹¹ parties; and the multitude of neighbourhood bars that are scattered throughout the community. Each of these sites reflects varying degrees of both the social production and the social construction of space, and their analyses help to locate the multiple ways in which "community" comes to be constituted through both the materiality of space and its attendant meanings. A spatial analysis lends crucial complexity to understanding the formation of community; economic, social, political, and material processes become rooted in and enacted through space. Recognizing these multiple processes not only allows for a deeper comprehension of the dynamic and fluid nature of community, but we

¹¹ Baile funk is a genre of music that has risen to popular prominence amongst Brazilian youth in the past decade, and has largely developed in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro.

can come to see the community and its interrelationship with space as a critical site of contestation.

The Neighbourhood Bar

Marlena's Bar is full this night; 4 people are standing inside the small shop buying beer, cigarettes, and snacks from Carlinho, while Dona Marlena sits in her usual spot at the side of the storefront where she's afforded a view of the store, the street, and the television. Dona Marlena, aged 72, has occupied a matriarchal position at the store since she and her husband moved to Rio 50 years ago. In the intervening years Marlena's has grown to be a three-storey tall, sprawling building, with enough room to house Dona Marlena, her husband, their 5 children (the oldest is Carlinho), their children's partners, and their numerous grandchildren. I sat outside, at one of the 5 small tables bolted into the ground on the edge of the narrow street where the bar is located. The tables are surrounded by cheap plastic chairs, beer bottles, cigarette butts, and close to two-dozen people. There is a mix of men, women, and children, and people's ages range from the very young – Carlinho's adorable 2-year old son is constantly passed around – to the very elderly. At the moment, everyone is engaged in a discussion about the half-wild dogs that roam the streets of Vidigal; one of the elderly men had been bitten by a dog in the morning, and there is a debate over whether there should be some sort of cull initiated. The argument is centered on the man who had been bitten and a woman who works as a veterinarian in Vidigal, with other people occasionally chiming in their own support/arguments. Claudio, a lifelong resident of Vidigal and one of the people who I came to meet, is affectionately petting one of those half-feral dogs at the moment. He looks over at me with a large grin on his face – "this," he says, "is so favela. This is why I love Vidigal."

The Neighbourhood Bar as a Space of Care

There are an incredible number of these small bars/stores scattered throughout Vidigal. One or two can be found on almost every block, meaning that there are dozens of them within the favela. Individually they occupy, for the most part, a very small spatial

footprint – the interiors of the three which I frequented the most have an average size of 100 square feet. There is just enough room for one or two people to squeeze up to the counter, which is often crowded with various types of goods for sale. At Dona Marlena's, the counter is covered by small bags of salty snacks while its glass front is used to show the rare kinds of beers that are offered for sale. Behind the counter are two long wooden shelves, covered by nearly 30 different kinds of cachaça – a type of liquor that is distilled from sugarcane juice. At Dona Marlena's there is a small area off to the side, behind the counter and just out of sight, where Carlinho prepares the deep-fried food that is a favourite of most customers. Each bar, however, does not conform to the same business model. Vicente's Bar, for instance, is known for its baked desserts, and cakes, custards, and tarts fill the glass display cases that cover the counter. Dona Elizabeth's, the closest to the house where I'm staying and the bar with which I become the most familiar, acts as a kind of small convenience store in addition to the beer which flows into and through its neighbourhood regulars. The shelves at Dona Elizabeth's are filled with household cleaners, cooking "staples" such as oil and manioc flour, and kites that are bought and flown by the children of Vidigal.

The variety of goods found within and between these stores signifies a key strategy on part of businesses that have existed in Vidigal for decades. Dona Marlena's has been operating for 50 years, while Dona Elizabeth has owned and operated her store for 35 years, and Vicente's celebrated its 20th anniversary in October 2015. This key strategy can be seen as the ability to manage the thousands of small interactions that occur on a daily basis in a way that communicates care. This sense of care is expressed in several ways: through the owner's willingness to stock a variety of items that are requested by customers; through the affability and openness of the owners; and through the extension of lines of credit to regular customers. As Dona Elizabeth told me:

I try to be the mother of [this neighbourhood]. People come here with their problems and I help them as much as I can. If someone needs something, and they can't afford to buy it at the grocery store, I order it and then they can buy it on credit. They pay me back when they can. I think that this is important for the community – it lets people keep going.

The idea that Dona Elizabeth, and other bar owners like her, can act as a “mother” of the neighbourhood aligns with how many of the customers themselves view these establishments. These are spaces which are often viewed as extensions of the customers’ homes – because of the ways that owners like Dona Elizabeth attempt to accommodate their customers, these are spaces that feel welcoming and comfortable to many of the residents who frequent them. Neighbourhood bars are spaces which people visit in order to socialize with neighbours, to relax after a day’s work, and, in the words of an elderly regular, “to be taken care of”. Dona Elizabeth’s positioning as a mother of the neighbourhood suggests that the neighbourhood bar acts as a space that speaks of comfort and care, and in so doing spans the boundary between public and private realms (see Pine 2015).

There are, however, those who do not feel as welcomed into these networks of care that are manifested through the Dona’s bar: residents and customers that do not repay their credit can be barred from future service. Dona Elizabeth sets arbitrary timelines for the customers she lends money to; “good” customers – those that she has established friendships with – are given longer grace periods than those that she views as unreliable. Further, those who lose the favour of Dona Elizabeth are often marked as untrustworthy by other residents of the neighbourhood. I was often told to “stay away” from various people in the neighbourhood, and when I would inquire why I was often told that they were “liars” or “good-for-nothings¹²”. When questioned further I found that these designations were usually linked to unpaid lines of credit at Dona Elizabeth’s. The space of Dona’s bar then becomes a physical representation of certain fractures and contestations that exist within the neighbourhood; the networks of care modify and are modified by the conflicts within community relationships.

The “mothering” of the Dona, and the blurring of the public and private, can also be seen in the ways that these owners, and the spaces that they occupy, act as central hubs of information within the neighbourhood. Their customers come to them with complaints, arguments, rumours, and news; the owners can act as mediators in disputes, but more often than not they function as connective nodes in the communication networks of Vidigal. Regular customers are often greeted with the latest

¹² This is translated from the word “*vagabundo*”, which is used to describe someone who is lazy or averse to hard work. I was told that this term is generally used to describe individuals who were viewed as “lower quality”.

news, and it is not unusual to see the owner standing outside his/her shop talking about the latest birth in the neighbourhood, or the most recent couple to get married or divorced.

The Neighbourhood Bar as a Space of Authenticity

I am sitting inside, reading. It is late, around 10 PM. The door to the apartment is wide open, letting as much of the cool night air into the room as possible. The day had been muggy and hot, and the crisp evening air is a welcome change. Two of the young men who are part of the construction crew working nearby suddenly appear in the door opening. Their faces are tense. "You should shut the door," one of them says. "It is not safe tonight." He is serious. He looks at me to make sure I understand. "Shut the door."

The last month of my research witnessed a flare-up of tension between the UPP and the ADA¹³. The UPP had attempted to arrest one of the leaders of the ADA when they spotted him in Vidigal. In his escape, the gang member shot at, and wounded, a police officer. The following day Dona Elizabeth's was as busy as I had ever witnessed; the entire neighbourhood was abuzz with rumours, and everyone had converged at the Dona's in order to understand what had happened. Not only did they see the bar as a space where information could be gathered, but they saw the Dona as having a more "authentic" version of events. As one resident said to me:

Dona Elizabeth knows the truth because everyone comes here to tell her what happened. The news, they just say that another criminal [*bandido*] killed a police officer in the slums. No one was killed, but they say it so that everyone will think Vidigal is still a dangerous place. Really, it is the police and the news that are corrupt! They are corrupt, but Dona Elizabeth knows the truth.

The importance of this statement lies in the positioning of Dona Elizabeth's as a space of authenticity that is contrasted against the supposed inauthenticity of both the state and of institutions that are seen to align with the objectives of the state. Produced by its central location within Vidigal's communicative network, the neighbourhood bar

¹³ *Amigos dos Amigos*, Friends of Friends, is the gang that currently "controls" Vidigal.

becomes a space where favela residents can come to find “the truth” and to resist the messages of an ostensibly corrupt state. A sense of “community” is fashioned not only through the shared interactions of the customers and the owners, but through the establishment of spaces of legitimacy.

Materiality That Spans Public and Private

I find myself sitting again at a table outside Dona Marlina’s. Tonight there is a band playing in the street. The music, reggae, drifts into the air and blends with the smoke from a barbeque that has been erected nearby. I am with a group of friends, and we talk about the day, about the weather, about the latest football match and our plans for the weekend. Our talk is small, and it makes me homesick. A person comes around with a platter of meat, fresh from the barbeque, and we each take a small slice and say our thanks. It is delicious. There is an air of conviviality and friendliness – more people have begun to gather at this impromptu neighbourhood party. Carlinho appears out from the back of the shop, hands me his young son, and disappears back into the shop. The boy rests his head on my shoulder; the music is quiet enough that he is soon fast asleep. Dona Marlina’s sister appears from the door that leads to the apartments above the bar. She spots Carlinho’s son, smiles, and asks if she can hold him. He does not wake as she takes him. I look out to the streets, which have filled up with people and another barbeque has been erected. Someone else brings more food that is cooked and handed out to the crowd free of charge. This is not an unusual event: people begin by sitting at the tables outside of Dona Marlina’s bar; these groups attract friends and family who are passing by, and soon the street is filled.

Another way that neighbourhood bars act to span the boundary between public and private, and in so doing create a shared sense of community, are the ways in which the material structures of these spaces straddle and connect the two realms. While most bars will have some small interior space where customers can make their orders, almost all of them include spaces outside of the bar where customers can sit, relax, eat, and drink. Some, like Dona Marlina’s, have semi-permanent tables that are bolted into the ground, while others, such as Vincente’s, simply have a scattering of plastic chairs near

their entrance. These exterior spaces are not clearly defined, and they are not strictly demarcated from the sidewalks and streets on which they are built. Tables, chairs, and customers are constantly negotiating this shared space with pedestrians, motorcycles, and automobiles. These are the “spaces of social action and public encounter” (Harms 2009, 187) that become crucial in understanding how the bars act in the social construction and production of space.

Dona Marlina’s, and the neighbourhood festivities that often arose outside her bar, offers an excellent example of the ways that the materiality of these spaces act to blur the boundary between public and private. The public nature of the street and the private nature of the bar become blurred through the positioning of the tables. Furthermore, the residents who live nearby use this space as a daily meeting ground; the tables outside of the Dona’s bar have become a type of extended living room where friends and family can gather. The tables are at once clearly a part of the bar, and yet simultaneously act as important public spaces within the community.

Whether the neighbourhood bar is seen as an extension of home, as a space of authenticity, or as a site of vital neighbourhood gossip, the meaning is most often routed through the relationships that are established between its owner and its customers. Dona Elizabeth was seen as a kindly mother by one customer, and cursed as a “cheap old woman” by another; she lent certain customers lines of credit while also refusing to help those she did not like. The neighbourhood bar’s multiple meanings are materialized in the relationships that revolve around its proprietor. In this sense, Vidigal’s neighbourhood bars invite us to merge Low’s (2000) “social production of space” with analyses of embodiment. The complicated network of social relationships within Vidigal finds nodes of common expression within these spaces and, in turn, these spaces become defined by the relationships that emerge within and around them.

The regular presence of men, women, and children, the variety of goods available within these bars, and the straddling of public and private space, makes sense in a neighbourhood with a history of minimal open space or community resources. In fact, the active construction of a diverse and regular social network is a key to commercial success for these neighbourhood bars which, in turn, situate themselves as crucial sites within the construction of Vidigal “community”. These bars, and their owners, serve a multitude of purposes within their neighbourhoods: they act as speciality

shops in the supplying of a variety of goods; as informal financial institutions through the extension of credit; as sites of connection, caring, and celebration; and as crucial sources of information and news in the favela. For some, like the resident who spoke to me about the authenticity of Dona Elizabeth's information, the community is seen as an amalgamation that stands opposed to the state; Dona Elizabeth's serves to solidify this definition when it acts as a space where residents gather and vent their frustrations about pacification. Others definition of community revolves around the networks of support that become manifest in the lines of credit extended by certain bars; for those denied credit this sense of community becomes fragmented and contested. For regulars then, these bars become living-rooms, mailboxes, playgrounds, social clubs, and media outlets; the myriad meanings attached to these shifting interpretations of space inform and shape the definitions of "community" that are invoked by its residents.

The Samba School and the Baile-Funk Party

The Samba School and a Collective History

The sharp staccato of the drums reverberates off of the corrugated tin walls that enclose this space where the Vidigal Samba School practices once per month. It is 2 in the morning and there are probably two or three hundred people squeezed dancing within these tin walls, spilling out of the small doorway and into the streets beyond. The samba school began their practice at 11 PM, and people tell me that it will continue well into the early morning – probably ending around 5 or 6 AM. At 2 there are still small children to be seen dotted here and there amongst the crowd. Some are sleeping in the arms of adults, others attempt to emulate the dancers, and others just race around, weaving in and out of the knots of people. The smells of barbequed meat and cigarette smoke interlace with each other before spilling out of the wire mesh that extends the height of the walls to where it meets the ceiling. This is the end of my first week in Vidigal, and I was told that I absolutely had to see the samba school's practice. "It is amazing," my new friend tells me, "usually it is just a space where kids play soccer. But once a month it transforms – it becomes the pride of Vidigal."

Crucial to an understanding of the relationship between the performances of the samba school and the construction of “community” in Vidigal is the idea of “imagined space” (Kao and Do Rozario 2008). This is a space that exists simultaneously in the “real world” and within a collective imaginary; it is a space that distorts the distinctions between Appadurai’s (1990) “realistic” and “fictional” landscapes. While Kao and Do Rozario (2008) employ this idea in their exploration of Bollywood and the Indian diaspora, the connections that they uncover between “imagined space” and “community” are extremely useful for understanding the centrality of the samba school in Vidigal. Similar to those in the Indian diaspora, many in Vidigal feel dislocated from the state and establish communal solidarity through shared cultural practices. The monthly samba school exists as this kind of shared practice from which “community” can be seen to emerge.

The music is so loud that both myself and my unofficial guide have to crane our necks to listen to the group of young adults that are talking to us. I’ve asked them why they think the samba school is important, and one young woman tells me that “it’s a place where we stay connected to our community.” I ask why it’s important to stay connected to the community and in the following discussion the same young woman tells me that they believed the “government was only for the wealthy. They make laws to kick the poor people off of land that has become valuable, but here we remember our past and remember that this is our community”.

This interaction is not meant to be demonstrative of a unified belief held by everyone in attendance at the samba school practice. Rather, it is representative of a general theme of dissociation that was expressed to me throughout discussions with Vidigal residents. They feel as though they are being forced from their neighbourhoods by new zoning laws, restricted in their use of space through the enforcement of nightly curfews, marginalized through the clear lack of government spending on infrastructure, and simply ignored by the politicians. For many, the samba school offered a space that

reinforced a sense of connection that stood in stark relief against the disconnection experienced with the Brazilian state.

Samba is a rhythmic dance music that developed in Brazil in the early 20th century, and which mixes the sounds of its African and European roots. The earliest forms of the samba were love songs or accounts of nocturnal city life, based on the anti-establishment figure of the *malandro*, a kind of hustler figure, which acted to directly challenge the work ethic of the government of the day (Shaw 1998). In the 1930s, however, the hillside favelas of Rio witnessed an “evolution” in this musical form (McGowan and Pessanha 2009). This “new” style of samba came to be known as *samba de morro*¹⁴ and was closely associated with black, mainly working class communities and its lyrics came to reflect their concerns. Early political protest against poverty and marginalisation was articulated through and converted into the samba, and the lyrics began to reflect the lived experiences of those who resided in favelas, for example in Sinho’s *A favela vai Abaixo*¹⁵. Beginning in the 1940s, when civic opinions of the favelas were powerfully unfavorable, samba songs that focused on political protests were vigorously censored by the Rio authorities (Barke, Escasany & O’Hare 2001). This history, closely associated with the favelas and with the activism of the working class, is something that is a point of pride for Vidigal residents. As Jorge, a retired schoolteacher who lives in Vidigal, said to me:

Our school is not allowed in Carnaval – we are too small. But our history is just as big. Samba is a music of the favela, it was made in the favelas and it was made for the favelas. Many people like samba today, but it is still special for us here. The songs remind us to keep fighting, because we are still fighting to be heard. This is our history, this is our community, this is our samba.

The monthly practices of the Vidigal Samba School, and the attendance of hundreds of Vidigal residents, create a space in which this history is creatively re-imagined, re-interpreted, and re-fashioned. Within this imagined space, the struggles of

¹⁴ Literally translated as “samba of the hill”.

¹⁵ The Favela is Being Destroyed, 1928.

contemporary Vidigal residents are collectively connected to the struggles of the past and the pride of “being favela” is enunciated through music and dance.

Baile Funk

The house that I am in is very small, and the repetitive beat that is so distinctive to baile-funk blasts out of the speakers rattling the windows and party-goers alike. The house is packed with young Brazilians; with ages seeming to range from the late-teens to 20-somethings, I am probably the oldest person in the house. I am standing on a makeshift stage with the DJ to my left, surrounded by a hodgepodge pile of assorted speakers. This is one of the “underground” baile-funk parties that occurs weekly in Vidigal. It is considered an “underground” party because the organizer, Bruninho, has not gone through the processes of achieving the necessary permits in order to host such a gathering. The fact that this is unlicensed nags at the back of my mind, and worry must show on my face. “Relax,” Bruninho says, “[the police] are not working tonight.”

Brazilian funk emerged from the favelas of Rio in the 1980s, and quickly became enormously popular with young people who resided there. Looked at superficially, this music can be misleadingly repetitive and simple, but baile funk is as multifaceted and complex as the communities from which it has emerged. From its early development, baile funk has been popularly connected to acts of violence and an explicit sexuality which has made it one of Brazil’s most controversial contemporary musical genres (Sneed 2007; 2008).

In the past two decades the baile funk parties of Rio’s favelas have become closely associated to the conflict between the Brazilian state and the drug cartels. Ever increasing numbers of these parties were found to be sponsored and paid for by Rio’s criminal factions; they became places which reproduced both the identities of gangsters and the idealized relationship of gangs to the favela communities (Sneed 2007). In

particular a sub-genre called *proibidão*¹⁶ has come to be prominent, in which the actions and influence of gangs are celebrated. The lyrics of these songs “contain complex images and codes that have arisen through the ideological processes that support the governance and power of criminal factions” (Sneed 2007: 222). These songs emphasize not only the wealth and power of the gangs, but also the ways that their histories intersect with governance in the favelas. Although their social governance may be considerably more limited than is often assumed, and certainly far less than is portrayed in *proibidão* songs, the gangs have occasionally engaged in some forms of “police” work, charitable activity, decision making, and conflict resolution within their communities (see Arias 2004).

This, then, is the imagined space of the baile-funk party; it is a space that attempts to connect its current fetishization of criminality to an ostensible history of social activism. But, not all baile-funk songs are *proibidão*, just as all baile-funk parties are not all organized by drug gangs. Therefore, the imagined spaces of baile-funk parties are not solely defined by their apparent connections to criminality. For many of the young party attendees, baile-funk represents the newest form of favela culture which actively challenges the negative stereotypes that are often found in Brazilian popular culture. Bruninho, a 24-year-old resident of Vidigal who often hosts these parties, told me:

I don't want baile to be associated with the guys¹⁷. I think that baile-funk is music that creates a community for young people. It is music that is from the favela, and it is music that is about the favela. Even *proibidão*, it gives us something to be proud of. We are not lazy or ignorant – we love the favela, and we want to make it better.

Both the Vidigal samba school practices and the baile-funk parties come to act as imagined spaces that construct a sense of favela community. They are “imagined” in that a collective history of oppression and resistance is fashioned through which people become connected by the commonality of their struggles. Not only are people connected to each other through the “favela” nature of each genre, but they are connected to the

¹⁶ Literally translated as “strongly prohibited”.

¹⁷ “The guys” was often used to reference the members of the gangs. Nobody in the favela ever referred to gang members as criminals or drug traffickers.

unique histories out of which these cultural forms emerged. The spaces which house the samba school and baile-funk parties become transformed by the performances that fill them; the meanings and connotations attached to these forms of collective music become instilled into the materiality of their spaces. An empty concrete field, and random neighbourhood houses, become constructed into communal spaces representative of how people view the communities of Vidigal. Both samba and baile-funk are imagined to be uniquely favela, and in their most “authentic” presentations are seen to be representative of the challenges that favela residents collectively face.

The Mutirão

The term “*mutirão*” holds within it a multitude of meanings. Contemporary explorations of *mutirões* tend to define the practice as “an opportunity to work toward a common goal” (Harrison, Huchzermeyer, & Mayekiso 2004: 281), while early definitions situated it as a rural “folk tradition” of mutual aid (Marcondes 1948). This communal practice, however defined, is a well-established tradition in Brazil, with a history that stems back to the early 20th century and connections to Brazil’s rural Northeast (Marcondes 1948). Its changing definition is connected with this history and an associated evolution as the *mutirão* transformed from a largely rural practice to a major component of Brazilian urban communities. In Vidigal, it was defined to me variously as a meeting place, a network of support, a work party organized in pursuit of a common purpose, and a space to talk and debate the ways to reach common goals. Thus, the term *mutirão* itself becomes representative of the practices and processes that I seek to uncover in this analysis; a *mutirão* can be understood as a physical space, a process through which material space is constructed, and a network of relationships that become embodied through those processes of construction. More, in defining it as “a space to talk and debate the way to reach common goals”, we can see an acknowledgement of the contestation that occurs alongside and within numerous *mutirões*. Many *mutirões* claim the furtherance of a “common dream” that is, in reality, challenged and contested by other members of the neighbourhood.

I participated in two *mutirões*, one in which a group of Vidigal residents paved a small network of paths and one in which the Castella family, along with some of their

neighbours, constructed a *laje*¹⁸ for their house. Each project consisted of a small group of people, whose numbers fluctuated depending on the time of day, who worked towards the creation of a material space within Vidigal. But although each project was considered a *mutirão* by its participants, there were distinct differences between the two. The atmosphere of each project was slightly different, and the connotations of “community” that were attached to each differed accordingly.

The night before the start of the mutirão a brief but incredibly powerful rainstorm had battered Vidigal. I met Marcio, the chief organizer of this mutirão, at the beginning of the series of paths that were going to get paved, and he pointed to the many areas where the steep banks had begun to wash away in last night’s downpour. “You see,” he said, pointing to the washouts, “these areas are so dangerous when it rains. More dangerous than shootouts, even. Without this type of work, our community would disappear in the rain.”

Constructing Community

Vidigal, like many of Rio’s iconic favelas, is suspended above the ocean’s shores on a steep hillside. Its main road, Avenida Presidente João Goulart, carves and curves its way up the hillside in a succession of switchbacks. While all of Avenida Goulart is paved, as are many of the side roads that branch off of it, there are numerous areas in Vidigal which remain connected only by a series of precipitous, narrow dirt paths. These paths are usually no more than 3-4 feet wide, and are often cut out of the incredibly steep slope of the hill. When it rains heavily, as it did the night before the *mutirão* began, sections of the slopes that have been undercut in order to create the path can wash away, destabilizing the homes that are built above it.

There were, on average, between 10-15 people who volunteered their services throughout the 3 days that it took to pave roughly a half-kilometer stretch of paths. This

¹⁸ A *laje* is a term that refers to a new level of a house, often in the form of a rooftop terrace or a room.

number would fluctuate depending on the time of day and the type of work that needed to be done. There was a group of men that would carry those bags of cement and sand to the worksite, and a smaller group of men that would manually mix the sand and cement in a wheelbarrow in order to create the concrete which was used to pave the path. Working slightly ahead was a small number of men and women who would prepare the path ahead of the paving crew; they would rake the path clear, shovel dirt to make it more uniform, and then spread a thin layer of sand over top of it. These groups were made up not only of those who lived alongside the path, but also their family members (some driving or taking public transportation from other parts of Rio in order to participate), and members of the Vidigal Residents Association (AMVV¹⁹).

Participation in the *mutirão* was not limited to direct involvement in the paving of the paths. In fact, many of the people who were seen to play centrally important roles in the work-party did not, in fact, work on the path itself. Instead, this group, which was comprised almost entirely of women, tasked themselves with the work of feeding the rest of the participants. Each morning we would enjoy small, steaming cups of *cafezinho*²⁰, at noon we were provided with *feijoada*²¹, and when we stopped work – at 6 or 7 in the evening – there would be barbecued meats and cold beers for everyone. This work was undertaken collectively by the women of the houses closest to the path, and this group would change as the work progressed each day.

It is important to note that while the paving of the paths was presented to me as an activity that symbolized the collective conviviality of Vidigal, not every resident of the community was involved nor was every resident entirely pleased about the decision to pave them. “Why are they bothering with this,” an elderly woman I spoke to asked, “when half of Vidigal still doesn’t have water?” She was referring to the fact that large portions of the favela would regularly lose their access to the main water lines as pipes burst, dried up, or were purposely diverted. Another man approached me and told me in hushed tones that Marcio, the leader of the *mutirão*, had familial ties to many of the residents living near the path. This, he explained was the reason why these paths in

¹⁹ AMVV stands for the *Associação de Moradores do Vila Vidigal*

²⁰ Small amounts of very dark, very strong coffee that was liberally infused with sugar.

²¹ A stew of beans and various cuts of pork, usually served with fried manioc flour and rice. *Feijoada* is eaten several times a week by residents of Vidigal. It is a relatively inexpensive, healthy, and filling meal.

particular had been chosen for paving. These expressions of displeasure are representative of the manifold views and voices that constitute a community; while many viewed the paving *mutirão* positively, there were those that were critical of its purpose. I was told that the funding for the path came from the AMVV, and part of the frustration expressed to me resulted from feeling excluded from the decision of what infrastructure-improvement that funding should have been spent on.

Despite the few people who voiced criticisms, the path-paving was undertaken in a general spirit of open pleasantness, with participants pulled in from many areas of Vidigal and heavy participation from the residents in closest proximity to the paths. In slight but significant contrast to this, the *laje*-raising was conducted within an air of noticeable tension as several of the closest neighbours resented the construction of the building's new floor. Not only did these neighbours dislike the addition, which would obscure the views afforded by their own terraces, but many were suspicious of how the Castella family could achieve the necessary building permits. It was common knowledge within Vidigal that a recent bylaw prohibited residents from constructing additional floors onto their private residences; most new construction in the neighbourhood was in the form of new hotels, restaurants, and stores. And yet in the face of this the Castella family, inexplicably to many, built their new *laje*.

Construction and the Confrontation of Community

Rebar twisted up and through bricks at impossible angles; scaffolding was composed of thin, brittle-seeming planks of wood and supported by poles that looked in eminent danger of collapse; clouds of choking dust billowed from the place where young boys were using a gas-powered saw to cut through bricks, shirtless and barefoot. The laje worksite filled me with awe and with sheer terror; I had never seen such ingenuity and I had never seen construction practices that seemed, to me, so unsafe. Enete Castella, the patriarch of the Castella family, stood proudly beside me. He was gesticulating wildly with his hands as he outlined the plans for his new house. I looked up and spotted some of the Castella's neighbours glaring at the construction.

The Castella family had moved to Vidigal at the beginning of the new millennium, in 2001. Enete liked to tell me that they had braved the violence for the beautiful views; their house sat on a hillside that overlooked the entirety of Leblon and Ipanema, and was afforded some of the most breathtaking scenery I saw during my time in Rio. Enete's sister Maria was planning on moving to Rio from somewhere in Northeast Brazil, and so they had decided to build an extra floor so that she and her husband could move to Vidigal. "No problem," Enete responded when I asked how he got a permit, "I have a friend who owed me a favour."

This "favor", for Enete, was a part of the *mutirão*. He insisted that there was no difference between the friend who got him the building permit and the friends who helped to carry the loads of cement to his house. "I cannot get a permit, just like I cannot carry cement. Without my friends, without my family, I could not build this. The people that are jealous, they are jealous of my relationships." The suspicions of people represented a contradictory and complex entanglement with the state: on one hand people were upset to see someone from the community colluding with an apparatus of the state that many saw as malicious, on the other hand people were agitated because of the way that Enete had subverted the "right" way of obtaining a permit. Enete's neighbours were agitated both by his connection to the state and their lack of connection.

The *mutirão* is representative of both the production and the construction of space simultaneously. As a communal work process it produces the materiality of space while also instilling it with the many meanings of those who are connected to it. A paved neighbourhood path is by its very nature a communal space; built in a collective fashion it becomes a space that is assembled with the cooperative spirit of the builders and the contentious spirit of those who opposed it. Similarly, Enete's *laje* is both a space of community and a space of controversy. For Enete, his new *laje* is permeated by the networks of friendship that allowed for its creation, and also by the familial networks that are expanding with its existence. For others in the community the new *laje* symbolizes a corrupt state and a corrupted state practice; only the wealthy and the well-connected are allowed access to building permits. These intricate webs of meaning become rooted in the material world through the production and use of these places.

Each of these three sites – the *mutirão*, the samba school and baile funk parties, and the neighbourhood bars – adds significantly to the discursive constructions of *comunidade* in Vidigal. Understanding how these discursive systems are both embedded in and emerging from space allows us to see the multifaceted and fragmentary definitions of “community” that exist in the favela. Furthermore, while there is no single unifying concept of community, it is important to note that each site often projected a romanticized or idealized version of what it thought *comunidade* to be: the authenticity of the Dona’s bar, the collective conviviality of the *mutirão*, or the communal connections and historical roots of the samba school. Even more importantly, each of these idealized representations was often described in opposition to the changes wrought by the state through the pacification program. The authenticity of the bar was juxtaposed against the ostensible inauthenticity of the (state) police; the collective work of the *mutirão* was conducted in spite of an uncaring or unsupportive (state) bureaucracy; and the connections established and sustained at the samba school were portrayed against the disconnect they felt with the Brazilian government. Part of the reason behind this emphasis on an idealized version of community was to bring these state effects into sharp relief; the residents of Vidigal were signaling their discontent with changes that they associated with the pacification program. For the residents of Vidigal a sense of community was intimately connected to the physical spaces of their neighbourhoods, and the pacification program was subtly but significantly altering the ways that they could use, interact, and engage with them.

Chapter 4.

Spatiality and the State

I am sitting on one of the ledges of the square that marks the entrance to Vidigal. In front of me, on Avenida Niemeyer, traffic hurtles from Rio's South Zone to its quickly developing West. It is hot, hovering near 40 degrees Celsius, and humid. To my side there are three kiosks that get set up during the day: one woman sells clothing that she dyes by hand, one woman sells sunglasses, and a man has a small food cart that sells fried bread-and-cheese snacks that I have come to love. Fabricio returns back with our açai smoothies; it is his last day in Vidigal and he has insisted on buying me a treat. I am thankful for the cold cup and the frozen, blended berries. He sits next to me, and we are both quiet for a few minutes, taking in the bustle of people returning from a day's work. It is close to 5 PM. To our right is the UPP tent, with a UPP truck underneath and two UPP officers standing in its shade. Beyond it is the small complex of shops and restaurants that has just finished its latest round of renovations. Its polished stone façade gleams in the sun; a brand new Hortifruti store is the complex's most recent addition. Fabricio makes a sound of disgust. New stores are a sore subject for him, as they are related to why he has decided, or been forced to, move away from Vidigal. Fabricio abruptly launches into speech, attempting to explain his understanding of the changes that are occurring in Vidigal:

The problem that Vidigal has to overcome is the absence of thinking collectively. The way of thinking here has become much more individualistic than in the past. In my mind, this is a huge change. If your neighbor needs something, he is not going to buy it in Vidigal; he is going to go somewhere else to buy it because he thinks that Vidigal has become more expensive than it used to be! We must blame the government for these price increases, it's inflation, not the business owners! There is no desire to grow together and to work on the hill, and that is new here.

Analytical Framework

This chapter will address the multiple ways that state processes associated with the pacification program have come to affect the sense of “community” that is felt and interpreted by residents of Vidigal. This forced re-interpretation has occurred largely through state practices that have modified the social relationships rooted in and expressed through the spaces of the favela. The peripheral processes associated with pacification are reconfiguring the creation, use, and embedded meanings of space in Vidigal. Thus, a critical analysis of “space” becomes crucial in understanding the dialectical relationships that exist between the Brazilian state and the residents of Vidigal – the relationships that exist between the Brazilian state and those that have been historically understood to exist on its margins. In a general sense, this analysis leads to a more nuanced understanding of the ways that those who live on the margins of a state experience changes spatially as the borders of state influence are purposefully reconfigured.

To gain a more nuanced understanding of these relationships and processes I will be drawing heavily from Das and Poole’s (2004) impressions of the “imagined state” and Lefebvre’s (1991) analysis of the connections that exist between the state and “abstract space”. As the title of their seminal anthology indicates, Das and Poole’s (2004) work emphasized the importance of focusing upon the margins in the study of states. “[M]argins,” they suggest, “are a necessary entailment of the state, much as the exception is a necessary component of the rule” (Das and Poole 2004, 4). Just as we can gain greater insights into the workings of a rule by looking at its exceptions, so too can we gain a deeper appreciation of the workings of a state by looking at what lies on its borders: its political borders, potentially, but also its social and economic borders as well. And these border zones, as stressed by Das and Poole, are neither necessarily static nor geographically bounded; the economic margins of a state, for example, can shift as various populations and neighbourhoods experience change. The margins of a state can be found within it, as much as they can be found surrounding it. These concepts are incredibly important for my research in Vidigal, as they suggest that a favela can exist on the ostensible margins of the Brazilian state without being marginal (see also Perlman 1976). More importantly, Das and Poole’s framework allows for an

understanding of the fluidity of state borders and the pacification program becomes a vehicle through which this fluidity is expressed.

While Das and Poole's framework provides a strong foundation for my own analysis, it is limited in its treatment of the spatiality of the margins. Das and Poole, and the other authors within their edited volume, focus upon notions of peripherality, issues of legibility and illegibility, and the ways that biopolitics and border-zones are connected. While each of these approaches to state margins touch upon the concept of "space", none of them directly address the ways in which life on the margins is shaped by the materiality of its spaces. I employ the work of Henri Lefebvre (1991), and specifically his concepts of "abstract" and "social" space, to bridge this gap between the state, the margins of the state, and the spaces that connect the two.

For Lefebvre (1991), "abstract space" is indelibly connected to both the state and its margins. It is a space that revolves around "centres of wealth and power, [and] endeavours to mould the spaces it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces), and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there" (49). Abstract space, in Lefebvre's analysis, is neither transparent nor reducible to a logic or to a strategy. This space becomes abstract through an "illusory transparency" which hides within it "the real 'subject', namely state (political) power" (ibid: 51). Abstract space disguises the force and arbitrariness of state power amidst seemingly benign symbols and surfaces; for Lefebvre, the apparently mundane materiality of space is what makes state power so insidious. The state becomes implicated within the myriad relationships that constitute space, but in ways that are not immediately obvious or straightforward.

In my analysis, Lefebvre's "abstract space" provides a critical link between the pacification program and some of the effects experienced by the residents of Vidigal. Through the lens provided by Lefebvre, the places that my project focuses upon become sites where state power is channeled through the materiality of their spaces. Lefebvre's theory helps illuminate the interrelationships of power by emphasizing how spaces are constructed through social exchange; social being and space are dialectically connected and each one helps to shape the other. The street signs, zoning bylaws, construction permits, and myriad other forms of state presence that are appearing in Vidigal are not only shaping the physical spaces of the community, but the ways in which Vidigal residents interact with these spaces and with each other. This is the "illusory

transparency” of which Lefebvre was concerned with – the seemingly mundane spatial practices of the state that come to affect quotidian experience in deeply personal and complex ways.

In this sense, abstract space forms another connection to the importance of state margins emphasized by Das and Poole (2004). Part of Das and Poole’s (2004) anthology focuses on the legibility and illegibility of state practices in its margins; through which the state is “continually both experienced and undone through the *illegibility* of its own practices, documents, and words” (10, emphasis in original). Just as permits, property taxes, and other forms of spatial documentation render certain portions of the margins legible to the state, these policies simultaneously act to obscure and obfuscate the state from its residents. At the same time that the residents of Vidigal encounter the state, they also encounter the complexities, biases, and bureaucracies that render it illegible to many of them. The mundanity of a permit application, combined with its bureaucratic tangles, obscures its power while insuring that it remains inaccessible to many. Lefebvre looks to the materiality of space, along with its attendant meanings and connections to power, to understand this relationship between the state and the populations that it governs.

An understanding of the relationships between a state and its citizens also grants us an insight into the particular type of citizen a state wishes to cultivate. Lefebvre’s emphasis on the illusory transparency of state practice allows us to see how various populations are profoundly affected by state spatialities; permits and bylaws render the state illegible to some while remaining legible to others. Spatial policy can ensure that certain spaces are porous for those with the means to navigate the labyrinthine tangle of bureaucratic regulation; the accessibility of space becomes managed by state praxis. This effectively shapes the kind of community idealized and supported by the state. In Vidigal this has meant that many residents of the favela have effectively lost the ability to engage with their own neighbourhood space.

This chapter will use this analytical framework to understand two interrelated processes that have altered residents’ creation, use, and interpretations of space in Vidigal. These processes are: the permitting of the creation of space and the permitting and policing of the use of space. Each of these developments has occurred on the periphery of the pacification program; the establishment of a permanent police force and

the diminishment of gang control have allowed other state policies to be enacted and enforced within the favela. And just as Das and Poole (2004) look to the margins to more fully understand the state, this project turns to the peripheries of pacification to more fully understand its effects. Finally, this chapter will attempt to answer the question of how the spatiality of the state relates to and intermingles with the senses of community that are rooted in and expressed through the materiality of Vidigal. I address this question by employing the analytical theory of de Certeau (1984) to create a bridge between the spatial praxis of the state and the spatial praxis of community residents.

Permitting the Production of Space

The view is stunning; it is close to 8 PM and I can see the entire stretch of Leblon, Ipanema, and the point where the Ipanema and Copacabana beaches meet. The soft lights from Rio's South Zone merge with fading light in the sky. I am close to the top of Vidigal, and I am afforded one of the best panoramas in Rio de Janeiro. I am also surrounded by the noises of construction: the hum of generators which are powering floodlights; the intermittent screams of power saws cutting through concrete block; and the pounding of hammers. At first glance Vidigal would seem to be a thriving community in the midst of an economic boom; signs of new building and new businesses litter the top of the hillside favela. I am impressed by the modern architecture of the newly-built structures: clean lines and large windows. Victor, my "guide" for the evening, feels differently. Victor has lived in Vidigal for the entirety of his 40-year life; his parents moved to the favela in the 1970s, looking for the prosperity they associated with Rio's urban centre. Victor is a teacher at a school in Vidigal, he lives in his own home with his wife and two young daughters. Or rather, three young daughters. Victor and his wife just had their third child, and were hoping to expand their home to accommodate their expanding family. However, the municipality has forbidden the construction of additional storeys. Residents are no longer allowed to partake in a tradition that has existed since the founding of Vidigal. Victor asks a rhetorical question of me, that I cannot answer. "Why," he asks, "is the construction work of residents restricted and the building of hotels permitted?"

Since it underwent pacification in 2012, Vidigal has seen the implementation of a multitude of subsequent state policies. Chief amongst them has been a related set of processes that fall under a land regularisation program called *Nossa Terra*²² (see Deagle 2015). Since its implementation in 2012, *Nossa Terra* has resulted in the legalisation – meaning the achievement of legal title – of hundreds of properties in Vidigal. This has been done under the premise that legalised property acts as a vehicle for economic advancement (de Soto 2001). Aside from the legalisation of property, *Nossa Terra* has come to affect the rights to construction previously held by residents in the newly defined “areas” of Vidigal.

The lands of Vidigal exist within three separate legal designations: public land, private land, and an area that is considered a formal part of the municipality and has had that status since the middle of the 20th century. Only in the formalised area have residents historically paid property taxes and received the infrastructural benefits associated with them (Deagle 2015). The formalised area, located largely at the base of the hill, contains wide tarmacked roads, proper paving, and waste that is collected regularly from specific waste bins outside each individual property. The private land is that which has seen the historical creation of residences, and the public land is that which remains “undeveloped”. The combination of public and private land in Vidigal, and its “official” recognition of these two areas through *Nossa Terra*, has resulted in much of Vidigal being labelled a ZEIS²³, in which it is forbidden by law to add vertical or horizontal extensions onto existing properties without the granting of a municipal construction permit (Deagle 2015).

The zoning and land designation processes in Vidigal are excellent examples that help to illustrate the connections between Lefebvre’s “abstract” space, shot through with state power, and the lived illegibility of state practices discussed by Das and Poole. For Lefebvre (1991), “[t]he state and each of its constituent institutions call for spaces – but spaces which they can then organize according to their specific requirements” (85). In Vidigal, the declaration of land as a ZEIS suggests the state’s desire to control the organization of space. However, this desire is masked behind a façade of ostensible legibility and bureaucratic reasoning; a process is implemented through which it

²² *Nossa Terra* translates as “Our Land”.

²³ *Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (Special Zones of Social Interest).

becomes potentially possible – but practically improbable – for residents to achieve construction permits. The state contends that land in Vidigal is a social good, and as such implements a policy which acts to protect it. However, this practice of state legibility turns into one of illegibility and ineligibility for many residents of Vidigal. As Victor points out to me:

It is only wealthy foreigners who get to build in Vidigal now. The only construction you see is for new hotels, new hostels, new restaurants. I tried to get a permit, but the office is only open from 12 – 3, and only on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. I work every day, how am I supposed to get there? Plus, you need to have legal title of the land and you need to prove a need for the building. When my wife told them we needed space for the family, they just laughed. Need means safety to them. Or you need to have money.

In his discussions with me, Victor emphasized both the difficulties in navigating the bureaucracy of construction permits, but also what he perceived as systemic biases that prevented “people like [him]” from building a better future for their families. Not only was the permit office only open during times when many community residents were at work, but to be granted a construction permit you needed to have documentation proving that you held legal title for the land. This, in Victor’s view, was the largest obstacle facing the residents of Vidigal. “I bought the house. It is mine. But I did not receive any papers that prove it is mine. None of my friends can prove it this way. How do I now prove that? It is impossible.” For Victor, the bureaucratic tangle of paperwork, meetings, and other legalities necessary to achieve legal title seemed an insurmountable challenge.

Even more frustrating for Victor were the ways that the permitting system seemed to favour some people while disenfranchising others. “If you have money, or you know the right people, these problems just disappear. Now the only people who build in Vidigal are foreigners, the rich, and the corrupt.” The processes through which construction permits are achieved in Vidigal not only seemed illegible for residents like Victor, but he perceived them to be ineligible as well through their favoring of those with money. This transformation, what Victor perceived as a kind of economic disenfranchisement, can be further understood within the analytical framework provided by Lefebvre. For Lefebvre (1991), space is not just an inert platform on which life

unfolds, but signifies an essential component of social life itself. In his analysis, social relations and space become connected in everyday life; constructing space, and particularly urban space, inevitably involves replicating the social relations that are enmeshed within it. The implementation of construction bylaws in Vidigal can therefore be seen as a way of producing a certain type of community deemed desirable by the municipality; economic status becomes a key signifier for those wanting to create space. While the option of obtaining a construction permit is theoretically available to anyone, in practice only those able to afford the time and money necessary can gain the required permissions.

The Permitting of the Use of Space

The driving percussive beat blasts through the air and reverberates through the mass of dancing bodies that crowd under the shelter of the tin roof. During most days this space, a small paved square enclosed by a mesh fence and covered by a roof, acts as a soccer field for the children of this part of Vidigal. Once a month, occasionally twice, this space transforms into the practice grounds for the Vidigal Samba School. In the evening the crowds begin to gather outside of the space, and the band gets ready inside setting up their instruments, smoking cigarettes, and joking with each other. At about 10 PM the first samba song fills the air, and by midnight the place is packed with people who spill out of the entrance and into the neighbourhood square that is nearby. Inside is filled with dancing people, and outside people cluster in groups and chat. Friends and family meet, hug, and sit at one of the many shops nearby. People enjoy drinks, and baked snacks, from Vincente's; small children run freely amongst the older teens and adults. There is an incredibly warm and welcoming feeling amongst the crowd. I even see people joking with the police officers who dot the edges of the crowd, hands on weapons.

As was previously discussed in Chapter 3, samba has a long and intimate connection with Rio's favelas. Samba's earliest roots began to form in the early 20th

century on the *morros*, or hills, where many of Rio's poorest citizens lived. From these early roots, samba can be seen to have diverged into two distinct musical forms: one associated with more affluent, largely white, suburban musicians, and another associated with Rio's poorer neighbourhoods, its favelas (McGowan and Pessanha 1991: 35). This second style became known as *samba de morro* and was closely associated with black, mostly working class communities and the songs and their lyrics reflected the concerns of these neighbourhoods. Early objections against poverty and marginalisation were articulated through and transformed into the samba. The lyrics were entwined closely with life in the favelas; the themes found in these songs were concerned with life in the favela, lack of infrastructural services and the collective suffering of those living in these informal areas (Barke, Escasany, O'Hare 2001).

This history – the interconnections between community activism, political resistance, and the samba – was proudly articulated to me on many occasions. While their samba school isn't large enough to be included in the famous Carnival celebrations, Vidigal residents are nonetheless extremely proud of the tradition of samba that has existed in their community for decades. Renata, a teacher and member of the Vidigal Resident's Association, told me that the samba school often acted as a rallying point for community activism.

Samba in Vidigal is not always serious. It does not always speak about the difficulties that we face here. There are many samba songs about love. But the Vidigal Samba School also has many songs about life in the favela; there are songs about the lack of water, songs about poverty, poor housing. The community has come together in the past to fight for these issues because of the samba school. The songs bring people together, they tell people: "We need to do something about this. This is important. Let's work together."

Renata did not believe that the samba school alone was the source of all community activism in Vidigal. Rather, she saw the school as a significant nexus point acting within a larger network of community engagement. Importantly, Renata saw the space itself as an essential component which allowed the samba school to harness this activist spirit. "This square doesn't look impressive," she told me, "but this is where we came every week, sometimes twice a week, to listen to samba and build a community."

Renata, and others, stressed to me the importance of having a communal space in which to gather. “Without this space,” another resident told me, “there would be no school. No samba. The school is this space, and this space is the school”. This was a common refrain that I heard from the residents of Vidigal that equated the rehearsal space with the school itself; many people continually referred to the rehearsal space as the school. “Let’s meet at the [samba] school,” I would be told, or “We’re going to hang out near the school later, do you want to meet us there?” The association between the space and the school was so strong that the space took on qualities that were associated with the school and with samba. “This [space] is essential to Vidigal,” Renata said as she gestured around the enclosed area, “here we dance, we meet, we become community [*tornamos comunidade*]. But this is changing, the school is closed all the time now. [The police] have made this very difficult for us.”

It is 11 PM and I am returning home from an evening interview at Dona Marlina’s. I pass by an occasional person, but the streets are mostly quiet and most of the shops have closed on this Tuesday night. I slow as I see a group of police up ahead who are surrounding a young, black, male teenager. They are yelling at him; his arms are spread and he is leaning up against the wall. They begin to frisk him. I pass by without making eye contact – I try to radiate an aura of passivity. There is no need; the police know who I am by now, they are not interested in me.

In 2014, the police in Vidigal instituted an “unofficial” curfew in the community: while residents are still technically allowed out in the streets at any time, they are strongly suggested to stay in their homes after midnight. Teenagers and large groups are especially targeted by the police; I witnessed several instances of young people being told to immediately return home or face arrest. When asked, residents told me that the explanation of this unofficial curfew lay in the apparent desire to suppress drug trafficking: the police saw teenage residents of Vidigal as potential drug runners, carrying drugs from the dealers to their clients. However, it is important to note that this curfew seems to be enforced only amongst those with darker skin and shabbier clothing. I, an

obvious foreigner, was never hassled, and neither are the wealthy visitors who flock to Vidigal on the weekends to party at one of the hostels near the top of the community.

“They only stop young black people. Or poor people. Or, if they know that you live here and you are with a group of your friends. Then they will ask you ‘What are you doing out so late? Why aren’t you at home? Are you a dealer?’” Renata voiced a common refrain I heard from residents of Vidigal. This curfew has had an especially significant impact on the samba school; whereas they used to meet once a week, sometimes twice a week, the police have limited their performances to once a month. A friend of mine tells me that every weekend, before the curfew, the samba performance would draw huge crowds to the *largo* – the square next to the performance structure – which would spill out into all the streets below. On weekends, he tells me, the streets in Vidigal would be packed all night; friends and families gathering together and partying well into the morning. While he may have added some embellishment to make the story more impressive, there can be no doubt that people feel a significant difference between the periods pre- and post-curfew.

“We do this because we have to!” At least, that’s what I think Bruninho says to me. It is hard to tell over the deafeningly-loud music pumping from the speakers. I wonder how it is that his baile funk party hasn’t been reported by the neighbours, or shut down by the police. I wonder how it is that Bruninho knows that the police aren’t working tonight, how he apparently knows the schedule of the entire police force stationed in Vidigal. I wonder at all the logistics of putting together an “underground” baile funk party, and think how incredible it is that anyone is able to organize such an event. I wonder at how complex the processes must be, or how huge the obstacles must be, to prevent Bruninho from obtaining the permits necessary to organize a legal party.

As discussed in Chapter 3, baile funk has, in many ways, arisen in the favelas of Rio as a contemporary version of samba. While the musical styles themselves may be different, organizers like Bruninho connect the activist histories of samba to certain current forms of baile funk. Specifically, Bruninho sees baile funk songs as representative of a favela youth culture that is being actively oppressed by the Brazilian

middle- and upper-classes. “These songs represent our reality,” Bruninho told me, “yes they deal with sex, with drugs, with violence. But there is also a lot of joy in funk, a lot of creativity. There is resistance to police violence, and messages to fight against poverty. This is what kids in the favelas see every day. And this is the message that the elite don’t want in the public.” When I asked Bruninho about the baile funk songs that clearly glorify gang violence, or the songs that were clearly misogynistic, he responded with a question of his own. “Are there hip-hop songs that glorify violence? Are there also hip-hop songs that want to counter that violence? Baile funk is like hip-hop, and cannot be judged by its worst.”

Freire Filho and Herschmann (2011) wrote that baile funk “constructs a set of cultural codes ... that offer the possibility of elaborating a critical or plural view of the social” (238). Freire Filho and Herschmann’s analysis asserts that it is the fluid and dynamic nature of baile funk parties that can act as a challenge towards social edifices of inequality. In this light, not only can the content of baile funk songs provide this type of societal critique, but the ways in which the parties exist both within and outside of legal structures come to act as a type of resistance bound to spatiality. For Bruninho, and others that I spoke to at baile funk parties, there was a clear recognition of the importance that space played in their gatherings. “The police shut us down even if we have the permits,” I was told, “and without a place to play our music there is no party. Without this [place] there is no baile funk.” This statement holds significant and obvious connections to the ways that residents spoke to me about the samba school. Space, practice, and meaning become indelibly connected for those that attend both the baile funk parties and samba school performances.

In 2000, a law was passed which outlined a number of restrictions on funk parties in Rio de Janeiro. The law requires coordinators to provide written notification to the fire department, military, and civil police, and the public safety secretariat of any funk party. This notification must be received by each of these departments more than a week in advance. Further, each of these municipal departments must then provide their written approval of the party, and the police must agree to maintain a constant presence. The law also specifies that the police can shut down parties if they are seen to celebrate violence, overt sexuality, or criminality. The obstacles erected by this law have severely restricted the ability of organizers like Bruninho to host legal baile funk parties. Even if organizers are able to overcome all the bureaucratic tangles and notify all of the

necessary departments, it is up to each division to individually approve the party. This has effectively insured that the vast majority of baile funk parties take place illegally.

In contrast to the constructed illegality of baile funk, Vidigal continues to witness weekly legal parties held at the top of the hillside community. These parties are flooded with foreign tourists and wealthy Rio residents. Whenever one of these parties was held, usually at one of the foreign-owned hostels, it was not unusual to see convoys of luxury vehicles making their way up the narrow streets of Vidigal. With entrance fees reaching as high as 300 *reais*²⁴, these parties were far out of reach for the majority of Vidigal residents. Similarly to how construction permits can be seen to signal the state's desire for a particular type of community growth, so too can these parties be read as a state effect that produces (dis)enfranchisement within the favela. Just as the organizers of these parties seem to be able to completely bypass the bureaucratic tangles that entrap baile funk promoters, so too do they evade the curfew restrictions imposed by the police. The strobe lights and sonorous bass that accompanied these weekly parties would continue permeating Vidigal well into the early hours of the morning, and it was not unusual to see foreigners walking around the streets of Vidigal while residents of Vidigal were forced to stay inside. Bruninho saw this double-standard as a direct attack on the residents of the community. "They [the state] want us out of here. If we can't enjoy our community, how are we supposed to live here?"

The Governance of Space and Community

This project has examined the constellation of connections that exist between the material spaces of Vidigal, the ways that these spaces come to be used, manipulated, and interpreted, and the state's strategies that are changing how residents interact with spaces in the favela. Community, *comunidade*, was an integral concept linking both the significance that residents placed on certain spaces and the impacts they experienced through the policies and practices associated with pacification. For many of the residents of Vidigal, spatial practices were especially important for engendering a sense of

²⁴ In 2015, during the period of my research in Vidigal, 300 *reais* was the equivalent of around 130 Canadian dollars.

community. In communal efforts of construction, such as the mutirão, residents are literally and figuratively building the communities that they live in. The physical spaces that they inhabit become imbued with impressions of collectivity and common purpose. This is not to suggest that these efforts, and these impressions of collectivity, are entirely unitary and homogenous in nature. Rather, these processes allow for competing and contradictory definitions of community to exist simultaneously in the experiential aspects of Vidigal's spaces. People experience practices such as the mutirão differently in different contexts, and these dissimilar experiences become essential aspects of the meanings that are attached to and enmeshed in space.

Relatedly, the residents of Vidigal are encountering many of the profound effects of pacification through the spaces of their community. Not only are these spaces changing physically, through the introduction of new businesses and infrastructure, but the experiential nature of space in Vidigal is transforming as an increasing number of state policies are implemented. These policies, both official and unofficial, are shaping the ways that residents of Vidigal interact and engage with the materiality of their community: curfews restrict access to space, permits influence the kinds of people who are allowed to build new spaces, and other policies influence how people use space, and who are allowed access to those spaces. In Vidigal, spatiality has become a critical nexus connecting the members of the community and the Brazilian state; space, its materiality and attendant meanings, is crucial to understanding pacification in Vidigal and the ways that residents have come to interact with the program.

Theoretically, my project has engaged with Low (2000) to help analyse the ways in which a sense of community is generated through people's interactions with space. Low's theory on the dialectical relationship between the production and construction of space allows for a deeper understanding of the interconnections that exist between a space's materiality and its associated meanings. Through Low, my analysis was able to emphasize the centrality of space in Vidigal, and the multiple ways that ideas of community are formed through residents' manipulation and engagement of neighbourhood spaces. My project has also used Lefebvre's theory of abstract space to help explain the Brazilian state's connections to space in Vidigal, or at least those connections experienced through the processes associated with pacification. For Lefebvre, abstract space is the result of a series of social, economic, technological, and cultural developments that are crucially entangled with political processes (see Stanek

2011). Importantly, Lefebvre's (1991) analysis of abstract space emphasizes the ways in which space is "subject to quantitative manipulations" (352), particularly those manipulations that are made intentionally and unintentionally by the state. In order to more clearly connect these two theoretical frameworks, and to make this project's analysis more cohesive, I will now turn to de Certeau, and the frameworks found within *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), to complete my theoretical arguments.

De Certeau and "Spatial Tactics"

In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) Michel de Certeau investigates quotidian experience and contends that within the everyday there are spheres of independent action and self-determination that implicitly resist mechanisms of power. De Certeau's work endeavours to provide a framework that explains how, within individuals' navigation of everything from city streets to literary texts, everyday action acts to counter power and bring changes to existing rules and practices. De Certeau contends that the production of space within the dominant cultural economy is necessarily usurped through its utilization; that the "consumption" of space occurs imperceptibly everywhere to bring "innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy" (de Certeau 1984, xiv). Within this framework then, the everyday construction and production of space, the materiality and embedded meanings of space, act to transform and resist the state's dominance that is enacted through space.

De Certeau utilizes the figure of the *flaneur*²⁵ to illuminate the multiform practices that can reshape space. "Walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc., the trajectories it 'speaks' ... These enunciatory operations are of an unlimited diversity. They therefore cannot be reduced to their graphic trail" (De Certeau 1984, 99). The practice of walking the city, for De Certeau, escapes and transforms the parameters that seek to govern it; there are an endless number of paths and experiences available to the *flaneur*. This infinite nature, by definition, cannot therefore be contained by the

²⁵ The *flaneur* is representative of a particular type of person: a person who strolls through the city, a person of ease and opportunity, a kind of urban adventurer. The *flaneur* is a figure who featured prominently in Walter Benjamin's work, who himself was drawing from Charles Baudelaire (Shaya 2004).

finite definitions given to space by the state. *Flaneurs*, in this light, are seen to be “unrecognized producers, poets of their own acts, silent discoverers of their own paths” who transform space governed in “the jungle of functionalist rationality” (De Certeau 1984, xviii). The everyday act of walking becomes a quiet and profound act of resistance. Similarly to de Certeau’s *flaneur*, the *mutirão* worker, the samba school dancers, and the baile funk partiers also manage to simultaneously become entangled in the state’s machinations as they transform, re-shape, and escape them.

Resistance is a critical aspect of *The Practice of Everyday Life*. De Certeau continually emphasizes the need of the dominant cultural economy to have its products consumed, or in other words, to have its spaces and use of spaces become socially accepted. His argument balances on the idea that everyday people distill and imbue ways of resisting from the spaces that they inhabit each day. The everyday consumption of a product, or the everyday usage of a space, breaks apart the nets of discipline that encase it. People cannot completely elude the dominant cultural economy, but they can adjust it to their own needs; someone may not necessarily be able to escape the street that they are on, but they can walk it in their own manner.

In this argument there are important connections between de Certeau’s theories and Lefebvre’s. De Certeau, similarly to Lefebvre, delineates a clear separation between the quotidian and the mechanisms of power that seek to govern it. Lefebvre’s theory, however, leaves little room for the agency of everyday people; instead, Lefebvre (1991) views people, generally, as victims “manipulated in ways ... damaging to their spaces and their daily life” (4). This is not to suggest that there isn’t the possibility of resistance in his work: Lefebvre’s (1991) discussions of “counter space” as spaces that act “against power and the arrogance of power, against the endless expansion of the ‘private’ and industrial profitability; and against specialized spaces and a narrow localization of function” (381-382) certainly evoke a sense of resistance. However, Lefebvre (1991) ultimately refers to these spaces as “utopian alternative[s]” (349), and generally dismisses such spaces as unattainable and unrealizable. Within the work of De Certeau there is a much greater sense of possibility and potential within his discussions of resistance, especially in his distinction between spatial “tactics” and spatial “strategies”.

According to de Certeau, everyday people arm themselves with weapons that he terms tactics. “Tactics” are “the weapons of the weak [used] against the established

order” (de Certeau 1984, 24); they are the “last resort” of the ordinary used to displace prevailing policies of the powerful. De Certeau defines spatial tactics as “action[s] determined by the absence of a proper locus [that become] ... the space of the other” (1984, 34). These are the infinite ways of engaging with space that escape the controls of the powerful and re-shape space to the user’s own ends. De Certeau contrasts “tactics” with “strategies”: those calculations and manipulations of space that are related to power and visibility. To relate this concept back to Das and Poole (2004), de Certeau’s strategies can be seen as processes of legibility-making; strategies serve to demarcate one’s place in a given space. Be it military, political, or scientific, a strategy is a particular type of knowledge supported and determined by the power that attempts to define a place. And, for de Certeau, “tactics” play on the institutional topographies of strategies; tactics juxtapose a multiplicity of elements onto space through the everyday practices of everyday people.

Clearly, the comparison that de Certeau makes between tactics and strategies characterizes tactics as a kind of implicit resistance that emerges through everyday practice. However, this contrast between the two concepts can create an overly simplified version of de Certeau’s theory; when viewed as a binary opposition the two ideas become fixed in a kind of perpetual stasis. A strategy is seen to be constructed by those in power, while tactics are viewed as the practices of everyday life that then challenge and resist these structures. This type of understanding can lead to the construction of a dichotomy between power and resistance, or structure and agency, where the two concepts are locked in continuous, and static, opposition.

The construction of this kind of dichotomy is problematic for two reasons. First, the static nature of space inherent to a binary reading of de Certeau goes against the very core of his arguments in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (see Massey 2005). De Certeau sought to challenge and criticize views that held space to be static; he explored the multitude of dynamic practices that bring meaning and shape to spaces in the city. A dualistic view of de Certeau’s framework implicitly suggests a fixed relationship and thus relegates the nature of space to something inert and unchanging as well. Secondly, and related to the first, constructing an oppositional dichotomy between the tactics of the weak and the strategies of the powerful precludes any kind of dialogue from occurring between the two; if “tactics” are interpreted only as the resistance of the everyday, and “strategies” only as mechanisms of control by the powerful, the two can never be seen to

meaningfully engage with one another. If we are to extract more complexity from de Certeau we need to move beyond this binary reading and explore the intricacies that exist within his theories of space.

I argue, therefore, that the spatial tactics of de Certeau should not be read strictly as a form of resistance. Instead, I suggest that tactics are actually forms of negotiation in which everyday people engage with mechanisms of power. I do not mean to imply that resistance cannot be a part of these practices and processes, but rather that there are myriad potentials for how everyday people engage with spaces that are shaped by the powerful. De Certeau (1984) himself signals this kind of rationale when he writes that everyday practice “actualizes only a few of the possibilities fixed by the constructed order ... [while also] increasing the number of possibilities and prohibitions” (98). That is, everyday practices cannot help but to engage, at least partially, with the structures of power that attempt to govern them; the actual use of a space may not fully align with its intended use, but there will be some unavoidable association between the two. The walker on the street may break all of the laws while still being constrained by the physical materiality of the space. Through this lens we see that there are, in fact, multiple dialogues that occur between everyday practices, mechanisms of power, and spaces themselves. This analytical framework allows for a much more dynamic understanding of the relationships that exist between the “weak” and the “powerful”, their everyday practices and the institutions that attempt to structure them.

The Spatial Tactics of the Favela

For my project, de Certeau’s (1984) framework allows us to connect the abstract space of Lefebvre (1991) to Low’s (2000; 2014) construction of community. We can see how the state’s engagement and manipulation of space enters into a kind of dialogue with the residents own manipulations; the changes that the pacification program brings to Vidigal are transgressed, resisted, tried out, and affirmed by the people that live there. The *mutirão* constructs a pathway that is not sanctioned by the municipality, but adds to the municipal infrastructure; the baile funk parties are undertaken in open illegality, but the baile funk genre draws wealthy visitors into the foreign hostels and fuels their

construction; long-time residents are restricted from new construction in favour of commercial development, but this new development provides jobs for those who live in Vidigal. Just as there is not a homogenous response to the pacification program in Vidigal, there is not a wholly unified response to the spatial changes that are occurring because of it. In light of this complexity, the concept of spatial tactics put forward by de Certeau is an excellent lens with which to view the multiple spatial experiences that were expressed to me in the community. The *mutirões*, the baile funk parties, the space of the samba school, and the neighbourhood bars – they all relate a sense of community that was articulated in relation to the changes felt as a result of pacification. “Community”, in this sense, becomes a symbol which describes the kinds of spatial negotiation that residents participate in. Crucially, it is space through which these negotiations take place; impressions of community are engendered through space just as the changes associated with pacification are sensed most keenly through the spaces of the favela.

Chapter 5.

Conclusion

It has been nearly a month, and I'm beginning to get frustrated with one of the main aspects of this project: research at the archives is not progressing nearly as quickly as it needs to. While archive staff has been helpful I am finding that there are simply too many documents and not enough time. I am sitting with my friend Renata, eating dinner and trying to communicate these frustrations, and her confusion sparks a crucial realization. "Why," she asks, "if you want to understand Vidigal, do you leave every day? To know the story of Vidigal, talk to the people in Vidigal. You won't learn anything down there on the asphalt."

As my project progressed, it became clear that my attempt to understand the pacification program would need to focus on the present instead of looking to the past. Not only did the archival research turn out to be much more difficult than I had anticipated, but the residents of Vidigal continually insisted that I look at what was happening presently in the favela. I was told repeatedly to study the changes occurring in the community that residents recognized as resulting from the pacification program. This insistence did not signal a misunderstanding of my research topic, but rather emphasized a necessary re-orientation of focus; the answers to my questions, residents explained, were not to be found within the archives of Rio, but in the streets and spaces of Vidigal instead. Not only did this shift in focus align with pieces of my theoretical framework²⁶, but it anchored the project in the interests and concerns of the community.

The central implication of my analysis places space at an essential nexus between the Brazilian state and the residents of Vidigal. This follows in the work of anthropologists such as Holston (2008) who argues that space has become crucially

²⁶ Ethnographic research relies upon narrative, and Feld and Basso's (1996) emphasis on "local theories of dwelling" stresses the importance of truly listening to research participants.

important in the favelas as a result of their auto-constructed histories. That is, space is often central to the existence of favela residents because of the multitude of connections it holds in their lives: they have literally built their communities from the ground up, pouring a multiplicity of meanings into the materiality of their surroundings. What my project does is situate this centrality in relation to the pacification program. I strove to understand *how* the pacification program is currently being experienced by the residents of Vidigal; I listened to community members when they insisted that I look at the spaces of Vidigal to answer my questions. The state policies and practices associated with pacification are felt most acutely through the spaces of Vidigal, and the responses from residents are also most clearly articulated through space. My research emphasizes that a focus on space can lead to a deeper appreciation of the workings of pacification and the relationships that exist between the Brazilian state and residents of a favela.

Fundamentally, I am arguing that pacification can be best understood in Vidigal as a spatial practice. This is in contrast to those who see the program as primarily militaristic (Alves and Evanson 2011), economic (Mendes 2014), or developmental (Hendee 2013; Oosterbaan and van Wijk 2015). While my argument does not necessarily preclude any of these other analyses; this project does emphasize the spatialities associated with each of these associated processes. Military action, economic decisions, and developmental theory all hold strong connections to space. My thesis underscores the centrality of spatial practice in Vidigal, and by doing so focuses attention on the role that space plays in other communities that have undergone pacification.

Pacification is expressed and experienced in manifold ways throughout the communities it has been enacted in. In Vidigal, and residents clearly articulated that their strongest connections to pacification were felt through the spaces of their community. This has several implications for the analysis, interpretation and understanding of the state program. First, it points to political objectives of the program that have been remarked upon but remain under-analysed in its relation to spatiality: primarily that the official purpose of pacification is to “integrate” the favelas into the formal city (Governo do Rio de Janeiro 2013). This goal is supposed to occur through the improvement of social and economic opportunities for favela residents, but my research indicates that the integration of Vidigal is occurring predominantly on a spatial level. While the spatial policies and programs of the Brazilian state certainly have connections to social and

economic activity, appreciating integration as primarily spatial helps to explain the feelings of disconnect that are experienced by many of the inhabitants of Vidigal; building permits and curfews have re-shaped and restricted the ways that favela residents engage with their spaces. Through the processes of integration the spatial praxis of the state has, in many instances, severed the connections that Vidigal residents hold to their community.

Through prioritizing spatial analysis, this project also contributes to theoretical considerations of state/citizen interactions. In looking to the periphery of the state I have found especially productive grounds for theoretical engagement; the spatiality of the state is of crucial importance in regions where state boundaries are experiencing some form of dynamic movement. In Vidigal, the state's desire to integrate the favela into the formal city has meant that community spaces have become critical meeting grounds for those the state seeks to govern. As the Brazilian state seeks to extend its social and economic boundaries to formally include Vidigal within the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, residents find themselves amidst a multitude of changes that have altered the ways that they interact with community spaces. Not only does an analysis of space lead to a greater understanding of the relationship between the state and community residents, but between the residents themselves. The changes wrought by pacification, and experienced through space, disadvantage certain residents while benefiting others: Victor's inability to build is contrasted against Enete's newly constructed *Iaje*; Bruninho's illegal parties stand in stark opposition to the flashy festivities held in hostels at the top of the hill; residents that gain jobs in newly built businesses are juxtaposed against those that have to leave Vidigal because of the rising costs of rent. Social relationships find expression in and through the use of space; as the state changes the spatialities of the community, the relationships between residents transform as well.

Constructing a theoretical framework that helps to dissect these relationships is itself a significant contribution of this project. Relating the work of Low (2000) to Lefebvre (1991) and de Certeau (1984) grants a unique perspective into the network of connections that exist between space, the state, and "community": we move from the creation of "community" to the webs of power that are enmeshed in space, and from there we are able to look to the "tactics" used by both sides to navigate these relationships. Using this framework to analyse the changes occurring in Vidigal has allowed for an expanded definition of de Certeau's "spatial tactics": we move beyond a

strict reading of tactics as resistance and instead see spatial tactics as a form of ongoing negotiation between the state and the residents of the favela. Tactics as resistance leads to a strictly oppositional, reactionary view of the relationship between a state and the communities that it governs; the “weak” are dichotomously opposed against the “powerful” and acts of resistance become reactionary actions lacking complexity. Such a view strips agency and intricacy from the lived modalities of community residents; not all engagement with the state is reactionary and conflictual. Organizations such as the AMVV actively seek state funding to improve their community; residents that find work at newly opened businesses welcome the opportunity for employment; and the reduction of violence associated with pacification is applauded. Repositioning spatial tactics as a form of negotiation grants more nuance to analyses that seek to understand the multitude of ways that residents engage with and react to the spatial practices of the state.

My project’s emphasis on space also paves the path for a potential host of future research questions. What effects does the pacification program have on the economies of the communities it is instituted in, and how is this expressed and perceived through space? How will new housing policy impact the residents of these communities, and what will their responses be? What are some of the other ways in which residents of Vidigal consciously engage with space to construct a stronger sense of community? Jones and Fantozzi (2017) documented the efforts of artists in Vidigal that are creating murals “to preserve memory ... and to give residents a sense of identity and build community pride” (2). How are efforts like these received by the community, and how do they become entangled with the state? While these are but a small sampling of potential questions for future research, the significance of my research lies in situating space as a crucial analytical lens for research that looks to understand both the favelas and the pacification program.

The people I met in Vidigal, and the friends I made, were all insistent that I search for answers amongst the spaces of their community. Within Vidigal, the common thread linking people’s diverse experiences of pacification was that these experiences were rooted in, and experienced through, space. While the pacification program is experienced differently between communities, and its effects within each community are multidimensional and complex, this project suggests a new lens with which to analyse these complexities. While the spatiality of the state will undoubtedly take different forms

in different communities, a space-based framework allows for an additional viewpoint of pacification and a new way with which to view the changes it has wrought and the changes it still seeks to achieve.

As I leave Vidigal for the last time, I am struck again by the material presence of the favela; the steeply winding streets, the seeming precarity of the buildings perched atop its hills, and the incredible ingenuity apparent in their construction. I pass by the samba school, and then Dona Marlena's and Dona Elizabeth's. I wave to the people I have come to know and befriend. I reach the base of the hill, the flashing red lights of the UPP reflected in the windows of the taxi, and drive away from the favela.

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Appendix A.

Interview Schedule

This interview schedule was translated into Portuguese with the help of a translator to ensure that the essence of the question remained the same.

1) Biographical Questions

- a. What is your name?
- b. Where and when were you born?
- c. Where did you grow up?
- d. Where have you lived?
- e. How long have you lived in Vidigal?

2) Local History and Community Life

- a. Describe the place where you grew up.
 - i. What was it like?
 - ii. How has it changed over the years?
 - iii. What brought about these changes?
 - iv. What did people do for a living, and what do they do now?
- b. What are some places of Vidigal that stand out most in your mind, and why?
- c. What kinds of local gatherings and events are there?
- d. What community traditions are celebrated today?
 - i. What are they like?
 - ii. How long have they been going on?
 - iii. How have they changed?
 - iv. Why are they important to the community?
- e. How have historical events affected your family and community?

3) Political Programs and Policies

- a. What government programs are you familiar with?
 - i. Why/how are you familiar with them?
 - ii. What did you think the programs' goals were?
- b. How have government programs affected life in Vidigal?
 - i. What kind of changes did it make to the neighbourhood?
 - ii. What did you think of those changes?
- c. Were you or your family able to participate in the program(s) and how so?
 - i. Did it affect your life in any way?

Appendix B.

Journal Entry Sample

Journal Entry – Evening (7 PM – 2AM) – September 23-24, 2015

(This entry has been edited for length)

What a night! I am very tired, but I have to get this written down while my memories of it are still fresh.

At 7PM I left the house and walked up the steep trail to the road. The path still takes a toll on my legs – it is incredible how steep the stairs are, and by the time I make it to the road I'm usually out of breath and the muscles in my legs are burning. I'm also still a little amazed by the "road" itself – to call it a road is to understand some of the differences of life between here and back home in Canada. As I detailed earlier in this journal the road is little more than 6 feet across. At points it is less than this as I can touch the walls of buildings on either side. At these points you are pressed to the side, flat against the concrete walls of the buildings, when a moped passes. Or when the UPP pass – it was immediately clear to me that you never want to get in their way.

The weather tonight was beautiful – warm, but with a hint of a breeze that washes away the humidity of most other nights. There was a noticeable level of excitement in the neighbourhood: kids were running around, groups of people were gathered around small BBQs along the sides of the trail and along the side of the road, and there were more people in the streets than I had seen before. It was obvious that something was going to occur tonight. Even if I had not been told about the samba school practice beforehand, I would have been able to guess that something out of the ordinary was about to take place.

After 5 minutes, or thereabout, I reached Vincente's. Vincente's is located just across from the entrance to the area where the samba practice will happen. At the moment the door to the practice area is still, I assume, closed to the public. It

occasionally opens and closes to admit some person, carrying some form of musical equipment, but no one else is entering yet.

The small neighbourhood bar was busy – every table was full, and there was a small line-up of people waiting to buy beers, cachaça, or treats. I entered the line of people and saw Renata sitting at one of the tables near the wide entrance. She smiled, waved, and I went to join her after I bought a pop and a small baked cake.

We chatted for a few minutes. She asked me if I was excited for the night's performance, and I replied that I was and that it seemed like a lot of other people were as well.

“This is nothing. When the music starts this square will be full of people, the bars will be full of people, everywhere will be full. All of Vidigal will be here.”

It is 11:05 when the music starts. I was admitted into the performance space by a large man with dreadlocks who smiled at me, and welcomed me in, and gave me the gringo price of 15 reais. It is free admittance for Vidigal residents, but visitors and foreigners have to pay. It seems more than fair to me.

The music is loud. The sounds of the drum are sharp, and deep, and reverberate through my chest, down into my legs, and pour out into the floor. You simply cannot help but dance, at least a little, to this music. The volume, the beat, the intensity – it forcibly propels your body into motion.

The performance space is packed with people. It is a large space, maybe 5 or 6 thousand square feet (I will have to measure it later, if possible). People are literally shoulder-to-shoulder in most of it. Only in the farthest reaches, next to the corrugated tin walls, is there space to walk. Or breathe. I decided I need to step outside after 20 or 30 minutes to see the square, take some notes, and regroup.

It is midnight. The square is packed. For the first time since I arrived here the three UPP officers on the street actually seem like they fit the role of social policing. Their weapons are holstered – the first time I've seen that – and they are smiling and

chatting amicably with the people in the crowd. From what I observe the people there are also fine with the police presence. There is nothing that I can see from body posture or speech that would indicate otherwise, although of course I cannot tell what people are thinking. I ask Renata, who has also come outside for a break and a cigarette:

“Everyone is happy on samba nights. They [gestures at the UPP officers] know better than to stir trouble now. They have already taken away a lot. They are here to make sure there isn’t anything funny [emphasizes word, definitely referring to drug use] happening here. The guys [dealers] just move to other parts of Vidigal. Here, now, we are all happy.”
