

The entangled city



Manchester University Press

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Crime as urban fabric in São Paulo

Gabriel Feltran

Manchester University Press

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Published by Manchester University Press
Altrincham Street, Manchester M1 7JA
www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 5261 3824 8 hardback

First published 2020

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Typeset by Servis Filmsetting Ltd, Stockport, Cheshire
Printed in Great Britain by TJ International Ltd, Padstow

For Deb, Iaiá and Léo

We are not outlaws, 'cause the law we make by ourselves. (M.C. Orelha, 'Faixa de Gaza' (Gaza Strip), a 'forbidden Funk', Rio de Janeiro, 2009)

Contents

<i>Foreword by Brodwyn Fischer</i>	viii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xv
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xviii
Introduction	i
1 Boundaries of difference: on essence <i>and</i> deconstruction	39
2 Legitimacy in dispute: the boundaries of the ‘world of crime’ in São Paulo	68
3 Coexistence	99
4 Crime and punishment in the city: repertoires of justice and homicides in São Paulo	126
5 Violence and its management	149
6 Government produces crime, crime produces government: São Paulo’s apparatus for homicide management	176
Conclusion	202
Notes	230
<i>References</i>	242
<i>Index</i>	257

Foreword

Brodwyn Fischer

The most important deliberative bodies in São Paulo's contemporary body of crime have a funny name: *sintonias*. Like so much else involving the Primeiro Comando do Capital (PCC), the term is odd, unexpected, opaque. If we want to understand it, we need to move from the inside out.

Since its origins in a high-security prison in the early 1990s, the PCC has grown from a tight group of prisoners determined to curb carceral abuse and fratricidal violence to a transnational brotherhood responsible for the normative regulation of neighbourhoods and economies, from the organisation's native São Paulo to the peripheries of cities throughout Brazil and points of criminal economic activity across the globe. A good part of that rise, Gabriel Feltran argues, can be explained by the PCC's radically decentralised, anti-hierarchical and deliberative structure. No leader defines the PCC, and its ultimate aim is not to profit, but rather to create the conditions through which its 'brothers' in crime might do so – to foment 'peace, justice liberty, equality and union' among thieves. Those conditions are not commanded from high by a powerful mastermind, but created in practice through deliberation within cell-like groupings of 'brothers' who earn their status through action and should never be held above the collective notion of what is 'right' and tolerable in the world of crime. Each of those 'independent nuclei', functioning without full knowledge

Foreword

of one another or even of the PCC's operational map, is called a *sintonia*. When I recently had the chance to talk with Gabriel Feltran about his extraordinary research on the PCC, it occurred to me to ask: why?

The word could be rendered in English as 'synchronicity' or 'harmony'. But Feltran honed in instead on the evocative power of concrete mechanics. *Sintonia*'s most powerful definition, he told me, is 'tuning'. It denotes that magical moment when one's clumsy fiddling with an old-fashioned radio dial or television antennae yields clear reception; the wavelengths are synchronised, the sound is plain. Those men in the Taubaté prison who founded the PCC in the 1990s – for the most part children of Brazil's poor peripheries in the economically disastrous 1980s – had probably messed with their share of rickety televisions and radios. They knew the intricate, tactile delicacy required for every successful tuning. And thus their deliberative bodies became *sintonias*, those intangible spaces where the clash of static becomes lucid sound.

In translating portions of Feltran's remarkable *Irmãos: Uma história do PCC* (2018), *Entangled City* illuminates the logic of the PCC's *sintonias*, allowing English-language readers to peer beyond the veil of bravado and drama that renders the rise of Brazil's criminal organisations as an exotic triumph of uncontrolled violence, straight out of *City of God*. But *Entangled City* is not a straight translation. It is, instead, a synthesis of Feltran's quarter century of intensive ethnographic research in São Paulo's vast peripheries, a crystallisation of forms of understanding that have emerged through the granular accumulation of everyday experiences: bus rides through dusty self-built neighbourhoods in which bodies, houses and commercial outposts gradually incorporate the trappings of global consumerism; everyday conversations in cramped homes where a crack addict and drug dealer is also a son taking a shower; decades of confessional tête-à-têtes with a single mother whose past of domestic abuse and family subsistence on fish-head gruel gradually becomes a present in which material stability and

Foreword

community integration coexist with wrenchingly violent loss. In juxtaposing these histories of granular everyday transformation with the parallel evolution of academic, political and media discussions of ‘democracy’, ‘citizenship’, ‘urban violence’, and ‘crime’, Feltran achieves a *sintonia* of his own, opening a space of clarity where strangers can apprehend the synchronicities and dissonances that order and disorder the urban world as it is experienced from the peripheries.

Gabriel Feltran began publishing his research about São Paulo in the early 2000s. In three major monographs, several edited volumes, and dozens of articles, book chapters and works of public scholarship, he has worked as both a translator and an intellectual, illuminating for outsiders dynamics that are so obvious as to seem banal to residents of São Paulo’s periphery, but also shedding brilliant light on the significance of those dynamics within broader historical, urban, economic and cultural contexts. Feltran has written about peripheral social movements and regulatory regimes, about the music of crime and young people’s encounters with the state and the law, about the structure of illegal economies and the dynamics of urban violence. These projects are layered, not linear, each building on intensive immersion in São Paulo’s southeast periphery but focused on the threads of connection that link those peripheral cityscapes to economies, structures of governance, conceptual aesthetics and moral logics to greater São Paulo, greater Brazil, and alternate urban and civic orders stretching from Paraguay to Berlin. This book assembles fragments of all of those projects, but it is more fusion than collage, an extended meditation on the meaning that all of those disparate strands take on when they are entangled in our own historical moment, and apprehended from disparate and distant global contexts.

In that spirit, one conceptual and argumentative thread from *The Entangled City* stands in especially sharp relief. It emerges from the deceptively simple notion that ‘specific stories’ shape the worldviews of peripheral urbanites. In theoretical terms, Feltran’s

Foreword

commitment harkens back to multiple sociological and ethnographic traditions, and especially to those inspired by the theory of action, as expressed in the notion that ‘the social’ is structured ‘through everyday life ... and it is in pragmatic action ... that the plausible is constituted (p. 31)’; ‘the everyday plays a decisive role in the objectification of the categories of difference (p. 41).’ Feltran’s ethnographic method is built on the notion that the periphery’s multiple and shifting realities can only be understood through the accrual of experience. The peripheral world he portrays is one in which it makes no sense to think through important questions in the absence of specific narratives – real people, real things, real and infinitely varied interactions. It is more meaningful to say that ‘Bianca has a new refrigerator’ than it is to say that ‘more money is circulating’ (p. 7); you convey far more by describing the deaths of actual people – Fernando, Anísio – than you do by analysing the causes and meaning of ‘urban violence’. And the emphasis on narrative is a moral logic as well as a discursive technique; one of the reasons that the PCC’s justice enjoys broad legitimacy is that it is based on the interplay of moral principle and situational nuance, told by the actors themselves and debated by ‘brothers’ with little patience for abstraction or technicality. This is justice based on ‘principles put to the test on a situational basis’ (p. 221), not on an opaque and impenetrable legal infrastructure that’s actions regularly belie its theoretical commitments.

Feltran’s take on PCC justice is but one facet of a broader set of arguments about the nature of urban order-making, and in particular the ways in which contemporary cities are shaped by overlapping, contradictory, competitive and interdependent normative regimes. There is nothing especially novel about the notion that liberalism, citizenship and democracy coexist with their antitheses. In Brazil, these paradoxes inhabit the core of national self-reflection, preoccupying thinkers as varied as Joaquim Nabuco, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda and Roberto Schwarz. The fact that Brazil’s post-1988 democratic expansion

Foreword

has been paradoxically entwined with the rise of illicit economies, police violence and criminal governance has undergirded some of the most insightful analyses of contemporary urban Brazil, from Luiz Antônio Machado da Silva and Michel Misse to Teresa Caldeira and James Holston. Feltran pushes those insights a step further, with especially penetrating everyday logic. The issue in São Paulo is not only that there are competing notions of how to achieve a normative state that we might define as the rule of law or liberal democracy. It is, rather, that São Paulo's commitment to those principles – understood not through rhetoric or legal forms, but through the concrete workings of everyday life – is so aleatory and incomplete, especially on the peripheries, that progressive institutional inclusion and citizenship cannot operate as hegemonic ideals. The question in São Paulo's peripheries is not whether democratic governance can be best achieved by law-and-order crackdowns or through radical expansions of civil rights and formal equality; it is, rather, whether democracy and liberal governance are even relevant as ordering concepts. The PCC understands this, and has in response created – with violence, but also methodically and consistently – ‘alternative and co-existent regimes of publicness’ (p. 13). Like so many relational and informal orders that have historically co-governed cities in Brazil and around the globe, these operate not in opposition to laws and institutions, but in conjunction with them, becoming part of a repertoire of operative scripts that everyone calls upon on a situational basis. The PCC has grown not as a force of violent chaos, bent on disordering urban society, or as a militarised business hierarchy, bent on profit at all costs. It has emerged instead as an intricate pact capable of organising and protecting bodies, relationships, spaces and economies, that the liberal order has systematically failed to recognise or fully incorporate.

Feltran grapples frequently in these pages with the new meanings his insights have taken on in Brazil's current context of violent historical rupture. He reflects, as many have, on the ways in which

Foreword

elite imaginaries have shifted from paradigms of economic and civic integration to those of management, control and defence. He delves far more deeply, with sparser company, into the ways in which more than thirty years of democratisation and liberal economic reform have been experienced on the peripheries as ‘a series of crises; formal employment, in Catholic religiosity, of the promise of social mobility for the working family, of social movements and their representativeness’ (p. 69). By the new millennium, these crises were so endemic that they had become for young people ‘a constitutive element of their being in the world’; their parents’ ways of understanding progress, moral behavior, and societal pacts of protection and responsibility had fractured beyond recognition (p. 70). In their place, consumerism and ‘old-fashioned religious morality’ emerged as the only social logics capable of integrating peripheral and privileged spheres that no longer shared common understandings of the present or the future. Money connected illegal and legal economies and governing bodies, eye-for-an-eye morality and faith in divine jurisdiction linked ‘citizens’ and ‘bandits’ who no longer invested much faith in institutional jurisdiction. Seen in this context, Jair Bolsonaro’s political rise doesn’t seem like an aberration; it might be better understood as the lifting of a veil, the moment when ‘the conflict that plagued the favelas ... finally became a part of national politics ... Police repression, religious fundamentalism, and radical liberalism, everything that was thought to be backwards in the era of building democracy, was now in the vanguard of a new national project (23).’

There is nothing remotely utopian about the urban periphery that Feltran describes. Since the early 2000s, Ivete – Feltran’s most intimate informant, the person who helps him understand how normative regimes intersect to sustain family life – has seen two sons die violent deaths. A third is beaten to a pulp and sent to exile in the Northeast, one of her daughters is an addict, in and out of prison. The world of crime provided Ivete with day-to-day security

Foreword

when she arrived in the periphery, and gave both the material resources and the local legitimacy she and her straighter-arrow children needed to forge a more sustainable life. But the PCC also decreed her son's exile and forced his brother to participate in his brutal beating; the organisation facilitates the sale of the drugs that devastate her daughter, and cannot protect two of her sons from dying young, at least one from a police bullet. All of this during years when São Paulo's homicide rates were plummeting and the economy was booming, the golden age of both PCC and democratic governance.

At a broader level, there is no guarantee that the ethical strain that Feltran identifies within the tangle of PCC governance – its radical commitment to deliberative methods and to the principles of peace, justice, liberty, equality and unity – will be even as enduringly present as the ethical strains within liberalism and institutional democracy, especially as the organisation competes for dominance with other normative regimes and expands nationally and globally in a context of rising authoritarianism. Without that strain, criminal governance – like liberal governance – becomes simply the violent forging of an order suitable to those who hold the reins of power. As anyone who has ever manually tuned a radio knows, *sintonia* is ephemeral and sometimes impossible. *Entangled City* does not open our eyes to an urban order most people would choose if they had a better option. But it does allow us a brief moment of synchronicity, within which tangles become patterns and the peripheral worldview makes absolute sense. In allowing us to see the disjuncture of the liberal and democratic discourses emanating from the so-called centre, *Entangled City* lays the basis for a frank, honest conversation about the lived experience and moral underpinnings of contemporary urbanity.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Patrick Le Galès, Talja Blokland, Caroline Knowles and Angelo Martins Jr for their enthusiasm for this book. Marta Arretche, Eduardo Marques and Adrian Laval, as well as my colleagues at the Centro de Estudos da Metrópole, have been incredibly supportive over the last fifteen years. Evelina Dagnino and Daniel Cefaï trusted my fieldwork from the very beginning and helped me in every step of my research. I am also grateful to Valter Silvério, Jacob Lima, Rodrigo Constante and all my colleagues at the Sociology Department and the Sociology Graduate Programme of the Federal University of São Carlos. Our shared struggle for academic excellence and commitment to democracy in Brazil is still alive.

Luiz Antonio Machado da Silva, the late Maria Celia Paoli and Michel Misse were sources of inspiration for the research trajectory that I followed. I feel part of a collaborative network of urban ethnographers inspired by their way of doing social sciences in Brazil: Neiva Vieira, Heitor Frúgoli, Taniele Rui, Adriana Vianna, Mariana Cavalcanti, Patrícia Birman, Carly Machado, Vera Telles and Márcia Leite; and also Mariana Côrtes, Claudia Fonseca, Adriana Piscitelli, Natália Padovani, Jussara Freire, Alexandre Werneck, Marcella Araujo, Andrea Guerra and Robert Cabanes. The NaMargem – Núcleo de Estudos Urbanos, coordinated by Luana Motta, and the Núcleo de Etnografias

Acknowledgements

Urbanas of CEBRAP, coordinated by Ronaldo Almeida, are also important nodes of this network. Daniel Hirata and Willian Neves have been my closest intellectual partners during these years, and have always been references for my studies about cities, crime and PCC (Primeiro Comando da Capital) in Brazil, as also have been Karina Biondi, Reginaldo Nasser, Camila Dias, Leonardo Sá, Bruno Manso, Fernando Rodrigues, Marcelo Campos, Ben Lessing, Graham Willis, Fabio Candotti and Sacha Darke.

I developed part of the arguments presented here during periods spent as a visiting scholar at the University of Oxford, the Goldsmiths College, University of London, the Humboldt University in Berlin, the Sciences Po in Paris and the CIESAS Golfo in Xalapa. Thanks to Andreza Santos, Caroline Knowles, Bill Schwarcz and Les Back, to Patrick Le Galès and Tommaso Vitale, as well as to Ernesto Isunza, and most especially to Talja Blokand her and team, for the invitations and close partnership. I wish also to thank Salvador Maldonado, Marie Morelle, Sebastien Jacquot, Jerome Tadie, Brodie Fischer, Gabriel Kessler, Sergio Costa, Natália Bermudez, Derek Pardue and Frida Gregersen for our discussions over these years. Mitch Duneier, Teresa Caldeira, Bibia Gregori, Paulo Arantes and John Gledhill urged me to go ahead when we met, and that was important to me. The Liebman family gave us a hospitable home in London and I have no words to thank Maggie, Sam and Tatiana for their continual generous support for this book. Matt Richmond worked with great enthusiasm and competence on the translation of most of the chapters.

The Comunidades do Parque Santa Madalena, Jardim Elba, Jardim Planalto, Pró-morar e Juta are part of my existential community and I am grateful for their hosting and friendship over the last decades. I thank Valdenia Paulino in the name of all those people who helped me so patiently during my fieldwork. I have been learning continually in Sapopemba, more than in any other place I have been. Our research team at the Centro de Estudos da Metrópole (CEM) project on illegal markets was very important

Acknowledgements

for this book: thanks to Deborah Fromm, Luana Motta, Janaína Maldonado, Isabela Vianna, André de Pieri, Gregório Diniz, Lucas Alves and Evandro Cruz. I wish I could thank properly Deb, Iaiá, Léo, Lulu, Paulo, Renata and my parents for their love and our beautiful moments together. I hope that our everyday life shows just how it is important to me.

I am profoundly grateful to FAPESP (Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo – processo 2013/07616-7), the CNPq (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico) and the Kosmos Fellowship Program (Humboldt University) for their financial support for my research projects over the years. Tom Dark has been a splendid editor. Some material in this book has previously appeared in the following publications: O legítimo em disputa: as fronteiras do ‘mundo do crime’ nas periferias de São Paulo. *Dilemas Revista de Estudos de Conflito e Controle Social*, v. 1, n. 1, pp. 93–126, 2011; *Fronteiras de tensão: política e violência nas periferias de São Paulo*. São Paulo: Editora da Unesp/CEM, 2011; Governo que produz crime, crime que produz governo: o dispositivo de gestão do homicídio em São Paulo (1992–2012). *Revista Brasileira de Segurança Pública*, v. 6 n. 2, São Paulo ago/set 2012; The management of violence on the periphery of São Paulo: a normative apparatus repertoire in the PCC era. *Vibrant*, Florianópolis, v. 7, n. 2, 2010; (I)llicit Economies in Brazil: An Ethnographic Perspective. *Journal of Illicit Economies and Development*, v. 2, 2019; A categoria como intervalo: a diferença entre essência e desconstrução. *Cadernos Pagu*, Unicamp, Campinas, n. 50, 2017.

Abbreviations

CEDECA	Centro de Defesa dos Direitos de Crianças e Adolescentes 'Mônica Paião Trevisan' (Centre for the Defence of the Rights of Children and Adolescents)
CEM	Centro de Estudos da Metrópole (Centre for Metropolitan Studies)
FEBEM	Secure Centres for Young Offenders
MST	Landless Rural Workers' Movement
Nasce	Núcleo Assistencial Cantinho da Esperança (Corner of Hope Care Unit)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
PCC	Primeiro Comando da Capital (First Command of the Capital)
PT	Workers' Party
R\$	Brazilian real
RDD	Differentiated Disciplinary Regime
UAI	Unidade de Atendimento Inicial, the unit for first-time offenders at FEBEM

3 September 2001, 9:40 a.m.

It's early and there's already loud music on the high street, and people talking loudly. The avenues of the periphery are noisy. Men on different sides of the street greet each other from a distance with shouts and jokes. Two passing young women try to ignore them, but become their focus. Crowded buses take maids, porters, security guards, cleaners to work. The noise of diesel engines is only surpassed by the pollution they produce. Old cars carry white builders, black electricians. Already long queues are waiting for the agencies to open so they can fill out forms in search of employment. Queues also form at the doors of banks and lottery stores, which serve many neighbourhoods. Street vendors set up their stalls, and many small shops raise their shutters. The day is beginning. I am in Mateo Bei avenue, in the East Zone of São Paulo, and it reminds me a lot of the main avenue of Carapicuíba, in the far west of the metropolis. Everything is similar. The graffiti decorating the shop fronts add some colour to an environment with so few trees, so grey with the cement and asbestos tiling, opaque orange with the Bahian bricks. Here and there, small bakeries and bars serve buttered toast, and an evangelical church between the 'Casas do Norte' sells products to migrants. (Field notes, handwritten)

24 May 2006, 6:40 p.m.

I'm on the bus back from Sapopemba, going to Ibirapuera. From the window, I see a sea of self-built homes. I feel like I've just been delivered a blow. Bianca filled me in on what was happening in her life; I met up with Clarice and Ivonete again. 'Fuck the police', graffitied on walls, in squares, in schools. 'Paulo Fiorilo', painted on the wall, is a councillor from the PT (Workers' Party). A woman with a child, an old man and a dog on a roof. A heavy home-security gate with a car on the inside. Another windy road, the bus is noisy, another PT star (party symbol) on the wall. Bianca cares

The entangled city

for her three children and five younger brothers and sisters, she is 23 years old. We circle the Jardim Elbe favela. She was sexually abused by her stepfather aged 13 to 15. Her mother blamed her. A man selling brooms. Jehovah, a store selling religious goods. Casa de Carnes Serena, a butcher. Cleaning products in Coca-Cola bottles and a pool bar, interspersed with gated homes. Another mother holding her daughter's hand. Ivonete's son is called Vitor, he's 12 years old and has already had to repeat two years of school: 'There are times when there is only class once a week.' It's just favela, favela and more favela now, on the left side of the bus. Then a supermarket, which is a reference point in Parque Santa Madalena, the Nagumo. A business centre. Vitor does not go out with his uncles who are 'from the crime'; 'only with workers'. A beetle car, completely dismantled. More arcades and pool tables. Four teenagers on the corner, a small bar. Houses with small entrances and up to three floors. Clarice studied psychology at PUC (the Pontifical Catholic University), she passionately recounted a case she was dealing with at work. An 18-year-old boy, addicted to crack, who was sentenced to death, but had not yet died. Another woman with a child on her lap. Another bus stop and a notice advertising repairs for ovens, pans. Another staircase. Lots of favela now, well consolidated, and two more boys on bikes on the corner. A worker arriving home, a payphone in the grocery store, a health centre. (Field notes, dictated to voice recorder)

13 January 2019, 5:20 p.m.

We just had lunch at Ivonete's house in Santa Madalena Park. Matt, Ana Paula and Valeria accompanied me. We ate sitting on the bed where Ivete, her mother, sleeps in front of a huge, flat-screen television. There is much affection between us and we exchange news; we had not seen each other for months. Ivete's grandchildren surround us, messing with cell phones. I told her that my children are studying in France this year, and I miss them.

The entangled city

Ivete agreed it was hard to be away from the little ones, and then fell silent. I wanted to apologise, but I kept quiet. Ivete lost two children, murdered; she misses them painfully. Now she's worried about her grandchildren. Vitor is now 25, he was shot in the back running from the police in 2017, and went to jail for nine months. He is out now, is still involved in crime; he's has had a daughter, Ivete's first great-granddaughter. He bought a new apartment, he's got money. Ivete seemed drowsy; I asked her what medication she's been taking. There were seven pills a day. We talked about psychiatric care, about the Church, about her other children and grandchildren, about the refurbishment of her house, and then it was time to go. We continued walking from the favela to the station of the newly opened *monotrilho* (a suspended trainline, similar to London's Dockland Light Railway). The favela has been integrated into the metro network for the first time, and the journey to the city centre is now forty minutes quicker. We spoke about how the landscape had changed with the arrival of the train. The avenue, once full of informal businesses selling used and stolen cars and car parts, now has the air of a metropolitan avenue, with a bicycle lane painted red along the central strip between the gigantic concrete pillars of the *monotrilho*. I take photos of the landscape with my cell phone. Land and rental prices will rise here. On the way to the station, the sole of Ana Paula's shoe broke. She, who had lived so many years on the streets, threw the shoe away and kept walking barefoot, with no apparent problem. Upon entering the modern station, she felt embarrassed but kept going. Once you are on the suspended train, the landscape is once again a sea of self-constructed homes. I remembered 1997, when I noticed for the first time that the peripheries of São Paulo stretch out as far as the eye can see. The landscape had changed, cell phones and televisions had arrived, the *monotrilho*; the PCC, born in the *quebrada* (slang for poor neighbourhood), is now transnational. I'm feeling I understand it far better than before. But still not much. (Field notes, dictated to cell phone)

Introduction

The research for this book began in 1997, when Brazil's elites still hoped to achieve the integration of the country into a modern global order, and of the urban poor into a prosperous nation. Both integration projects placed their hopes in the city of São Paulo. The largest metropolis in South America, it was at the centre of the national economy and the drive for modernisation; it had the country's largest industrial sector and received millions of rural migrants from the 1950s to the 1980s. Within the space of thirty years, the population of the metropolitan region grew from 2.6 to 12.5 million. This demographic explosion manifested in the rapid expansion of poor, self-built peripheries. Favelas, clandestine subdivisions, *grilagem*,¹ working-class neighbourhoods. The peripheries became the primary spaces occupied by white workers, blacks and Northeasterners (Durham, 1973; Cabanes, 2003). Besides migration, the chief underpinnings for the occupation of these territories, until the 1980s, were factory work, the family and Catholic religiosity (Kowarick, 1979; Sader, 1988; Holston, 2007; Feltran, 2011; Machado da Silva, 2016).

These pillars of peripheral life have shifted radically since urbanisation. Rural-to-urban migration was slowed by the economic crisis of the 1980s, and followed by economic restructuring (Lima, 2016); there was a dramatic transition in popular religious practices (Almeida, 2018) with the aggressive expansion of the

Table 1 Population growth in the municipality and metropolitan region of São Paulo (absolute numbers)

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1991	2000	2010	2018
São Paulo	2,151,313	3,667,899	5,924,615	8,493,226	9,646,185	10,434,252	11,253,593	12,176,866
Metropolitan region	2,653,860	4,739,406	8,139,730	12,588,725	15,444,941	17,878,703	19,683,975	21,571,281

Source: IBGE census and bulletins – compiled by Prefeitura Municipal de São Paulo 1950–2010.

Introduction

Pentecostal churches from the 1980s onwards (Almeida, 2004, 2019b; Birman, 2012; Birman and Machado, 2012). The large extended family, characteristic of the rural world, also contracted rapidly in the city: average fecundity plummeted from 7.1 to 1.4 children per woman over just forty years (Oliveira, Vieira and Marcondes, 2015). Since then, two generations have been born and grown up in an urban world radically different from that in which their parents and grandparents lived. However, it is nonetheless still marked by what they lived through. The inhabitants of the peripheries today are no longer migrants, nor do they expect to be protected workers; their family arrangements, life trajectories and forms of insertion into the productive economy are far less stable than those of the previous generation. Schooling, access to key services and urban infrastructure, although still precarious, have all grown considerably. However, it is the expansion of the ‘world of crime’ – a social universe and form of everyday authority established around illegal markets like drug trafficking, the trade in stolen vehicles and other types of crime, especially robbery – that has most radically transformed the social dynamics of the peripheries.

In this book I tell the story of the emergence and expansion of the ‘world of crime’ – or simply ‘crime’ – in São Paulo and its consequences for urban life. This expansion is connected, on the one hand, to structural changes to everyday life in urban peripheries (Ferguson, 1999; Robinson, 2006) and, on the other hand, to the expansion of the Primeiro Comando da Capital (First Command of the Capital, PCC). By 2019 this faction, founded in 1993 in a single prison in São Paulo, had grown to become the main criminal organisation in Brazil, if not in Latin America, and a key issue in the national political debate. My focus on the ‘world of crime’ and the PCC is not an arbitrary choice, given that there has been a surprising lack of academic attention to the subject over two decades (as well as major misunderstandings of the issue in public debates). The focus on violence and the PCC was also, effectively,

The entangled city

imposed on me as an ethnographer who was close to people who were being murdered on a massive scale around the turn of the century, as well as to others from the middle and elite classes who had no idea what was happening and, in any case, cared little. This ethnographic study is the result of an experiment conducted at this frontier, of searching for the parameters of São Paulo's contemporary urban order. I argue here, at the outset, in favour of understanding São Paulo's urban conflict through the formal notion of normative regimes – in contrast to the view, dominant in the academic literature, which still presents 'urban violence' as the opposite of the 'modern order' or 'democracy'. Historically – and the metropolis of São Paulo is exemplary in this regard – these notions have been intrinsically related (Tilly, 1985).

Expectations of modernity²

When this ethnographic study began in 1997, international investors were only beginning to view our markets, recently opened up following the end of the dictatorship, as 'emerging'. The economy had recovered from the hyperinflation of the 1980s, thanks to the 1994 Real Plan, which led to Fernando Henrique Cardoso's election to the presidency that same year. However, the economic restructuring still underway was generating growing unemployment, reaching 16% in the São Paulo Metropolitan Region.³ The government claimed that the country was modernising in every area and that education had become universalised for the first time. The opposition denounced the massive privatisations, which they argued had benefited banks and foreign capital. Jurists took pride in the 1988 Federal Constitution, a 'first world' normative framework, as they moved into gated communities. In the universities, democracy and neoliberalism, globalisation and popular participation were all being vigorously debated. Newly created non-governmental organisations (NGOs), focusing on peripheries, talked about citizenship and corporate social responsibility. Social

Introduction

democracy, liberalism, left, right. Everyone was sure that Brazil was the country of the future; the debate was about which path should be taken to get there.

But the favelas were not part of this ‘everyone’. The conversations happening there were quite different. ‘Do you know that boy they killed in the football field last Saturday? He was the son of Dona Aurora, the brother of Jefferson, that boy who studied with Renan, remember?’ The main topic of conversation in the favelas in 1997 was violence. ‘He told me that Jefferson’s brother was involved. Lord almighty!’ By the early 1990s, cocaine trafficked from Colombia via the Amazon on an industrial scale had reached the peripheries of São Paulo. Marijuana came from the Northeast of the country, later from Paraguay. Cocaine paste came from Bolivia, and, with it, a few years later, crack. Multiple routes. In all cases, spectacular profits were to be made from retail, and favelados (residents of favelas) came to occupy the front line of this distribution chain, dealing directly with the consumer. ‘Money is one thing; a lot of money is something else,’ said Tim Maia, a musician celebrated in the peripheries. For the first time in Brazilian history, black and poor people were able to earn a lot of money.

The conflict to manage the accumulation of so much money was horrific. ‘Poor people killing poor people, black people killing black people’, as I used to hear. Weapons arrived to equip this conflict, illegally bought from the police, trafficked from Paraguay, diverted from the armed forces. The homicide rates of black youths exploded (Santos Silva, 2014). Between 1960 and 1995 they rose from 9.6 to 186.7 per 100,000 inhabitants, an increase of 1,800% (Manso, 2012, p. 28). Passing the bodies of young people murdered in the street, whether by the police or by traffickers, seemed to have become routine everywhere I went. It was the personal impact of this that led me to study violence.

In the ‘hood’ (‘quebrada’), no one spoke about neoliberalism or democracy, but about concrete issues of everyday life, especially

The entangled city

the violence that pervaded it. In the favelas, people tend not to speak in generic but, rather, in narrative terms. You need to tell a specific story, not a general story. ‘Who was the cop?’, not how the police act in general. ‘Each case is a case,’ people often say. Still, the ‘quebrada’ has its concepts, its tools of analysis. The 1990s, which are commonly regarded in the press as the period of the consolidation of democracy in Brazil, are remembered in the favelas as the ‘time of wars’.

The soundtrack of the peripheries of São Paulo in 1997 was that of Racionais MCs, a quartet of young black men, ‘represented’ in every car, every set of earphones, every bar. A soundtrack punctuated by samples of urban sounds: police sirens, dogs barking, cars screeching, alarm clocks, gun shots. ‘Sobrevivendo no Inferno’ – Surviving Hell, not democracy – was the name of their latest album. A cross and Psalm 23 of the Old Testament appeared on the cover: ‘Restore my soul and guide me on the path to justice.’ The most played song in the favelas was ‘A Fórmula Mágica da Paz’ (The Magic Formula of Peace), which a black boy showed me, among the tapes kept in his father’s car, in answer to my question: ‘Do you think the favelas are better now than before?’ In 1997 the song already spoke of the PCC offering hope of order and peace in the ghettos. As an outsider – despite being born in São Paulo – I did not understand what the boy was trying to say. It took many more years before I understood.

The ‘Lula era’

The 2000s arrived, and with them the ‘Lula era’ in Brazilian politics. The minimum wage saw a real increase of 30% over the course of the decade, and popular forms of credit were made available. Global consumption reached the peripheries – the result of a bottom-up economic growth strategy. By 2010, unemployment in the São Paulo Metropolitan Region had fallen to 8%.⁴ Big global brands of cell phones and televisions, as well as myriad Chinese

Introduction

and counterfeit products, became part of everyday life. There was talk of a new 'C Class', or even a 'new middle class', that had escaped from poverty (Richmond, 2019a and 2019b). This brief outbreak of prosperity brought new people to São Paulo, now from outside the country. On the metro it became more common to hear Bolivian Spanish, English with a Nigerian accent and Portuguese from Angola. These workers did not enter the formal market, instead joining the base of the Brazilian labour pyramid, dominated by informal and illegal activities.

Nothing seemed to deter Brazil, nor the poor, in their project of integration into the modern world via the market. The broad presidential coalition during the Lula and Dilma Rouseff governments lasted more than a decade and seemed to have created a consensus. Both the old landowners of the rural Northeast and the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST) supported the government. So did the large real estate developers and homeless movements; the agribusiness lobby and environmentalists; financial capital and the solidarity economy. This new-found political consensus clearly had economic foundations. There were massive resources for the richest political groups, and far fewer for the poorer ones, but in the latter case this was still much more than ever before.

Even so, the rampant profits of the banks and brokerage firms combined, somewhat counter-intuitively, with low unemployment and the expansion of core public services in the peripheries: electricity, water, housing, healthcare, social assistance (Arretche, 2015). By the end of the last decade, the urban peripheries were firmly on the economists' maps. Similarly, Brazil had become an attractive location for international investors, becoming more deeply integrated into global markets. In this favourable context, and thanks also to his own personal charisma, Lula finished his second term in 2010 with almost 80% of popular approval.

In the favelas, a lot of money circulated. Bianca had a new refrigerator and was expecting to soon move into a new apartment

The entangled city

through the *Minha Casa, Minha Vida* (My House, My Life) federal social housing programme. She bought a new cell phone in instalments, and even thought about getting a motorbike. She went to the hairdresser more often. But, with more money in the economy, illegal markets also expanded. More money in people's pockets, more drug use, more guns, more stolen goods. Demand heats up the economy, bottom-up growth. With a more globalised economy, consumer markets also became transnational. Thieves and drug dealers talked about Dior, Lacoste, farms on the border with Paraguay, a yacht on the São Paulo coast. The world opened up for entrepreneurs, less so for workers.

By this time, the PCC, first created in 1993, had already been around for almost twenty years. Having emerged in the São Paulo prison system during its expansion, the faction ultimately ended the wars in the peripheries. The PCC slogan, 'peace between us, war on the system', echoed through the *'quebrada'*. The chapters of this book tell that story. 'Brothers' of the faction were already active in almost all the favelas of the state of São Paulo, which has more than 44 million inhabitants. In each neighbourhood, the Command negotiated with existing groups, securing a monopoly on the legitimate use of force in exchange for providing justice and protection. The regulation of retail drug pricing completed the arrangement. It worked.

One of the main effects of the PCC's hegemony in São Paulo was a radical reduction in homicides in the favela: the 'magic formula of peace' that had been sung for years. Official statistics have shown that homicides in the state of São Paulo fell precipitously over the decade 2000–10: a fall of more than 70% across the state (Manso, 2012; Waiselfisz, 2015). In peripheral districts, murders in 2010 had fallen to one-tenth of those registered in 2000 (PRO-AIM, 2012). How did this happen? In the universities, in government, in the press, the debate was intense (Feltran, 2012). But not in the favelas, where everything was already clear. In the public debate, the process was poorly understood, and remains

Introduction

so today, despite the solid recent body of literature produced on the faction (Biondi, 2016; Feltran, 2018; Hirata, 2018; Manso and Dias, 2018). By the time we'd started to understand what was going on, the PCC itself was already in another phase. It was no longer restricted to São Paulo, having expanded to practically every state of the federation.

In 2013 the largest popular demonstrations in Brazilian history took 'the population' to the streets. Middle classes banging pots, elites wearing yellow and green, trade unionists dressed in red, students and organised social movements all vied for space in the streets. The feeling of not being represented in politics was the only thing the protesters, of right and left, had in common. The peripheries, with the exception of the traditional workers' movements, were conspicuously absent from the protests. They had a different understanding of the world, one less connected to politics and more to markets.

In 2015 Racionais MCs no longer spoke of death, but of containers of cocaine sent to Belgium from the port of Santos; of R\$400,000 in gross sales earned by a single cocaine trafficker, in a single deal. Growth opportunities in illegal international trade, in the financial market, between the legal and illegal spheres, were open to entrepreneurs. For those who had the inclination, competence and courage, money would follow. Money was at the heart of attempts to mediate the social and urban conflict in the peripheries.

Outlining the argument

The argument presented here, that urban order in São Paulo is maintained by normative, plural and coexisting regimes of action, is built upon direct dialogue, in a long tradition of Brazilian authors working on urban conflict and violence (Machado da Silva, 1993, 1999, 2004, 2011, 2016; Misse, 2006a, 2018; Feltran, 2010a, 2012; Hirata, 2018; Grillo, 2013; Cabanes, 2014; Machado,

The entangled city

2017). For these authors, crucial to thinking about urban conflict is the hypothesis that it occurs between subjects who do not share the same plausible parameters of action and, by extension, do not occupy different positions as subjects in a common urban order. Different analytical traditions discuss the same empirical issues in political terms. Concepts such as sovereignty, state authority, security and hybrid orders or governscapes are mobilised to account for empirical challenges to modern states,⁵ but also for our interpretations in contexts of extreme violence (Mbembe, 2003; Das, 2006a; Stepputat, 2013, 2015, 2018; Willis, 2015; Arias and Barnes, 2017; Lessing, 2017; Darke, 2018).

Jacques Rancière, in his classic work *La mésentente* (1995), pursues a related conceptual argument. For the philosopher, the key conflict that helps us to understand contemporary politics does not occur when one says white and another says black. Following this tradition, we realise that the black versus white dispute is only a secondary, sequential and managerial dimension – what Rancière calls the ‘police’ – of the original, essential conflict that occurs when one says white and another says also white, but they do not understand one another. Because between these subjects there is a radical mutual incomprehension about the criteria (Rancière, 1995), the many plausible meanings (Wittgenstein, 2009; Cavell, 2006) and the pragmatic effects of whiteness as they are understood by each actant (Boltanski and Thevenot, 1991; Thevenot, 2006; Werneck, 2012).

Let us take an example. Three subjects in São Paulo, or in Paris, desire security and offer normative arguments about the form and content of the kind of security they seek. For the first, security means living his/her life far from the threat of crime in São Paulo, or from the threat of terror in Paris. For the second, security means the ability to arm oneself against the threat of crime, or the existence of active state repression of terrorist threats. So far, the disagreement is at the level of content and there are sequential, secondary themes such as access to arms, life in gated

Introduction

condominiums or repressive state action that can be discussed in common. How to achieve 'security' would mean different, or even opposite, content for the two subjects' arguments, but they share the fundamental belief that crime and terror cause insecurity. Such differences between subjects divide, for instance, left and right along the democratic political spectrum. In São Paulo, the former might defend disarmament, the latter the right of upstanding citizens to own guns. In Paris, the former would advocate active anti-terrorism security measures, but without linking terrorism to any specific culture, while the latter advocates active state surveillance and anti-immigrant laws, as she/he connects immigration to terrorism. In this way, whether under democracy or authoritarianism, things may unfold on such a rational and administrative plane. One says white, another says black, but both recognise the other as a plausible even if a horrible interlocutor, and recognise that white and black are categories of the same nature.

The fundamental problem arises when a third subject, radically different from the first two, enters into the conversation. This subject believes that in São Paulo it is the 'world of crime' that offers them security, or in Paris that terrorism itself represents the very struggle for security, justice and liberation. This third subject does not share the fundamental belief that crime and terror produce insecurity. This subject finds himself/herself on the side of the PCC or of the 'terrorist'. Her/his normative assumptions change the very nature of the conflict about the meaning of 'security'.

For residents of cities like São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro who experience the relationship between the police and criminal factions empirically, citizenship, democracy and the rule of law are not plausible frames of explanation. By contrast, anyone who studies social policies would have no problem seeing them as such. The conflict in these territories is situated and specific, rather than generic. The homogeneous profile of homicide victims in Brazil is indisputable in this regard: young, unskilled operators of

The entangled city

transnational illegal economies, living in favelas, of whom 94.6% are men, 72% are black, 71% are shot by gunfire, 53% are between fifteen and twenty-nine years old (IPEA/FBSP, 2018). For a long time, generic or normative notions have failed to offer an effective conceptual framework for Brazil's plural and disjunctive social conflict. They cannot encompass the mosaic of regimes of practice and plural urban orders, coexisting in time and space, that are needed to explain norms, deviations and actions in each specific situation.

The fundamental problem with much of the literature on the urban conflicts in São Paulo does not have to do with their formulations, which in themselves are productive for debate (Caldeira, 2000; Holston, 2007). The problem is that they treat the normative framework of one of the conflicting sides as a naturalised set of assumptions; that is to say, that of the state, which, explicitly or implicitly, presupposes democracy, citizenship and the public sphere as universals to be reached. This construction renders invisible the alternatives to this normative framework that, empirically, have emerged in the urban peripheries of São Paulo and other cities in recent decades as an implausible discourse or moral economy (Cabanes, 2014). This implausibility 'sabotages our reasoning', as Mano Brown has sung and Teresa Caldeira has understood (Caldeira, 2006). As an ethnographer, and years after these seminal works were published, I can more easily identify the role of the aforementioned third subject that, pragmatically, even if unintentionally, disruptively modifies the plausible limits of the world and who is able to join it. To understand those 'violent subjects' who were not supposed to exist or be part of the world, and their implausible actions, we must look far beyond frameworks centred on categories such as state policies, democracy and citizenship.

This third subject introduces an epistemological fracture into the problematic of the urban order and the modern state, because the first two do not consider the third's claim to be plausible, and therefore there can be no negotiation between them. Therefore,

Introduction

no universalism. The practical consequences of this fracture are hugely significant. It invalidates the entire conversation of the so-called public sphere, because it destroys the common ground that the three had occupied or should occupy (Arendt, 1951, 1959, 1977). All could be good if they were forever distant, but the empirical relations between the three subjects continue to exist, despite the lack of mutual comprehension, in cosmopolitan cities or in a global world. However high the walls of gated condominiums, they still share the same city, state, country or world.

The third subject does not continue the ordered debate between constituted actors occupying the same normative space. It forces a rupture of the entire debate assumptions and, in this way, opens the possibility for a double movement. On the one hand, there are increasingly fierce clashes between actors who misunderstand one another. On the other hand, the first two subjects will discuss their differences between them, while the third subject will cease to engage with them and will engage only with its peers. As time passes and conversation is restricted only to those who share the same basis of understanding, the distinct and internally coherent regime of thought tends to become autonomous.

The rupture produced by such dissensus causes not only a radical departure of all the subjects from the public scene, but also their arrival at another place. They will probably misunderstand that the PCC is not the absence of the state but the positive representation of 'crime', understood as a world or a powerful instance for regulating a community. This 'exit' from scene of which Hirschman (1970) speaks, and which Hannah Arendt (1959, 1977) recognises as the destruction of the modern public sphere, is pragmatically productive, and not a question of counter-publics who tend to move towards a synthesis of presuppositions (Fraser, 1992; Habermas, 1992). This rupture instead produces alternative and coexistent regimes of publicness, without the possibility of synthesis, because there can be no plausible communication between them (Machado da Silva, 1993).

The entangled city

With the common ground between the three subjects fractured, with two on one side and one on the other, we not only witness the withdrawal of one subject from the public sphere, which nonetheless continues without her. In cases of fierce conflict we also witness the emergence of other normative regimes, which coexist with the first, as people still share common physical spaces in the city without there being any rational, deliberative communication between them. What remains as the main relation between them is violence. When a possible negotiated exit from the urban conflict can no longer be resolved administratively, the city of São Paulo, like other Brazilian and Latin American cities (Arias and Goldstein, 2010; Arias, 2017), enters into a spiral of accumulating urban conflict in the form violence, understood as the use of force or threat that produces a similar effect (Misse, 2006b, 2018; Stepputat, 2013, 2015, 2018).

The representatives of the paulista middle and upper classes are then left in a ‘democratic space’, the actually existing government or public sphere, discussing among themselves what to do with, or rather, to the criminals. Whoever thinks criminals do not do the same is fooling themselves. The claims of the government – we are working for everyone’s security – and that of the third element – crime is a means to social mobility – cannot be heard side by side. Crime threatens the country’s security, period, says the government. ‘Crime’ is the only route to security in the favelas, period, says the PCC. It is precisely at this limit of the acceptable, the plausible, that Michael Taussig’s terror – pure violence – becomes the fundamental relationship between the parts, separated by an unbridgeable divide.

More than 63,000 people were killed in Brazil in 2017. The vast majority of them were young black men from favelas, low-wage workers in huge, transnational markets based in large cities, such as drug trafficking and car theft. Prisons keep filling up, armoured cars multiply and armed robberies nonetheless continue and grow. Not only in São Paulo, but, with different levels of intensity, such

Introduction

contemporary dynamics emerged between Nazis and Jews, Israel and Palestine, Tutsis and Hutus, Al-Qaeda and the United States (US), and there are many other examples. Assumptions are no longer negotiated, and this produces a fracture between distinct and self-contained sets of irreconcilable regimes of action and understanding about what constitutes the common good; about what the world is and how it should be.

These self-contained terrains, understood as formal structures of thought and action filled situationally with different content (Simmel, 2009), are what I have called normative regimes (Feltran, 2010b, 2013a). Empirical action and social forms are something else and come later. Normative regimes function as a plausible set of orientations for the empirical action of subjects. This makes such action convenient, which is to say, formally expected by peers (Thevenot, 1990). Action that is convenient for peers will be incomprehensible, because it is implausible, on the other side of the fracture. On that side, it is not even believed that such subjects exist, let alone that they might be able to speak meaningfully (Cavell, 2006). This essential political fracture has been in place in São Paulo ever since the promise of integration of the migrant into the modern city was – with rare exceptions – frustrated. It became deeper, therefore, as urban wage labour declined and hopes of social integration, and of the comprehensive provision of public services that would enable this, retreated ever further into the horizon (Misse, 2006a; Machado da Silva, 2016). Over time, the limits of the plausible, on each side of the fracture, concretised. A thief is a thief. A worker is a worker. Crime is crime, the law is the law.

This fracture poses problems for analysts, though not as serious as for those who are positioned close to the edges of the divide. Describing precisely (how the city is) requires moving across different categorical boundaries, which is a far from easy task. But thinking about the normative problem (of how the city should be) means addressing profound mutual incomprehension and the

The entangled city

risk of violence. In São Paulo, for journalists, lawyers, doctors, the middle classes and even many working people from the peripheries, security means maintaining a safe distance from thieves, *bandidos* and the PCC, in gated condominiums. These days, violent forms of interaction are very plausible where the need for such distance is not taken seriously. Meanwhile, in the favelas, for at least three decades it is precisely thieves and *bandidos* who have seemed to offer security. ‘Thief’ is thus an offensive word within the state regime of action, but a celebration of intelligence and insight within the criminal regime. Thief thus has essential, closed, defined content in each of these terrains. However, formally, or analytically, the word thief becomes a polysemic notion, endowed with various meanings, capable of being filled with different content.

These theoretical and practical dilemmas are hardly new: Georg Simmel was already grappling with them in 1900. Neither are they problems unique to São Paulo. For decades modern cities saw republicanism and multiculturalism as successful alternatives to these fierce conflicts. Today these are clearly understood as insufficient solutions, even though we may not be able to find anything better.

The countries to whom the modern global order was promised, all from the ‘Global South’, and the subjects that have never even been part of their ‘nation states’ (indigenous, black and favela-dwelling residents of São Paulo are just one example), face the same theoretical-political problem: that of understanding what order allows them to exist, in a scenario of profound misunderstanding about who they are on different sides of the structural fracture. The ethnographer has a role to play in this drama, as she should be committed to avoiding ethnocentrism – that is, to avoid allowing the structural fracture to function as an epistemological one.

This book tells specific stories about the urban conflict in São Paulo, a conflict that is often lethal. Through these stories it traces the recent history of the not always peaceful coexistence between

Introduction

the normative regimes of the state and crime; a coexistence mediated by religion and by money, which enable state and criminal actors to regulate the urban order in São Paulo also in liberal and Christian terms, not just in democratic or violent ones. My main goal is to offer an ethnographic account of transformations in São Paulo's peripheries and the emergence of the 'world of crime' through the frequently violent tensions between what the fractured urban order is and, especially, what it should be.

This book dives into a long-standing theoretical tradition in sociology, especially the sociology of action, that has long emphasised the intrinsic relationship between order and violence (Weber, 1967; Goffman, 2003, 2005; Cefaï and Gardella, 2012). In doing so it engages directly with other contemporary urban ethnographers (Bourgois, 1995; Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009; Blokland, 2003, 2008, 2017; Das, 2006b; Cefaï, 2010; Hobbs, 2011, 2013; Duneier, Kasinitz and Murphy, 2014; Goffman, 2014; Rodgers and Baird, 2015;), all recognised as broadly working within or inspired by the ethnographic tradition of the Chicago School since Anderson (1923) and Whyte (2005 [1943]).

Unlike the Thevenot's *regimes d'engagement*, Goffman's *frames* and Bourdieu's *fields*, and updating Machado da Silva's (1993) proposed 'coexistence of orders', the formal notion of a normative regime implies a specific relation to violence. A normative regime is guaranteed not solely, but ultimately, by the capacity of its actors to resort to force to internally order social relations, thereby giving plausibility to individual and collective action in pursuit of values and projects, as well as interests. Max Weber (1967) and Norbert Elias (1978) have long demonstrated how social relations of civility and citizenship, often regarded as the opposite of violence, are guaranteed both by the legitimacy of governments, representing deeply rooted customs and values, and, as a last resort, by the state's capacity for coercion.

Charles Tilly (1985) has demonstrated how war-making and state-making are directly related to the notion of 'organised crime'

The entangled city

as it is today understood. It takes material resources to sustain any kind of state or urban order, and the violence of pillage, but also of security, is fundamental to obtaining these resources. The formula that underpins the state regime with regard to violence is clear: without legitimacy there is no government and without police there is no order, but without armed forces there is no state. Bureaucracy may appear as a modern mode of governing without the need for explicit violence, but it persists only when recourse to the potential violence of the police, the prison system and the armed forces lie behind it. Still, it is not enough.⁶

‘The crime’, which functions like a government that coexists more than competes with the state in the favelas of São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro, regulates illegal markets, advocates community values, depends on being viewed as legitimate by a significant portion of those it governs. But it would not exist without arms. The greater the consensus and government hegemony, the less the need for violent coercion. In Rio de Janeiro there are different factions and militias openly armed and at war with each other; legitimacy among favela residents has been eroded by years of war, and explicit violence is used to maintain order (Grillo, 2013; Lyra, 2013; Arias, 2017). In São Paulo, especially during the 2000s, the strong legitimacy of the PCC in the ‘*quebradas*’ made recourse to violence unnecessary. Dealers at drug sale points stopped carrying arms fifteen years ago (Feltran, 2011; Willis, 2015; Hirata, 2018). Police officers can enter any favela in São Paulo without the need to shoot.

In the ethnographic situations that I have encountered over two decades, when someone in the drug trade decides that he will no longer pay the police to leave him in peace, violent conflict erupts. The conflict between the criminal and state regimes in the favelas of São Paulo, unlike in those of Rio, is largely mediated by money rather than violence. In Rio de Janeiro, although there are payments, violence is more explicit. This book develops the argument about the role of money in mediating the urban conflict in Brazilian cities.

Introduction

But another fundamental way in which this conflict is now mediated involves the evangelical world, especially in its more Old Testament variety. Ethnographic work clearly demonstrates the pervasiveness of such forms of Christian religiosity, whose central moral code is that of ‘an eye for an eye, a tooth for tooth’ (Côrtes, 2007; Marques, 2015). Thieves and police, workers, rulers and ruled have flocked to evangelical churches, which have expanded precipitously since the late 1980s and show no signs of stopping. Pentecostal expansion took place first in the favelas, then across the urban peripheries and finally among the middle classes and within the political system (Almeida, 2017; Côrtes, 2018).⁷ In Pentecostal churches in the peripheries of any major Brazilian, African, Latin American or European city one can hear the testimonies of ex-thieves, ex-prostitutes, ex-killers and ex-drug traffickers now converted to Jesus (Côrtes, 2007; Teixeira, 2011).

At the same time, the same religious tendencies have expanded among the military and civilian police in Brazil and are now also heavily represented in the legislative and executive branches of government at municipal, state and federal levels. In 2018 this group was one of the influences, if not the decisive force, in the election of the first president of the Republic who was both a former serviceman and an evangelical, Jair Bolsonaro.

Money and God: from Lula to Bolsonaro

The 2010s did not deliver what the previous decade had promised, even if unemployment had fallen to 6% in Brazil by 2013 and remained low in the metropolis of São Paulo. Full employment had made the workforce more expensive. The middle classes and the productive sector were resentful, while bank profits hit record highs. The crisis was also moral: after so much change the younger generations were no longer living like the older ones. Government corruption scandals during the pre-electoral period began to weaken the consensus around lulismo and the ruling coalition.

The entangled city

The party that had been Dilma Rouseff's main partner became an opponent in the Congress. The press promoted the anti-corruption investigation Operation Lava Jato, inspired by Italy's Mani Pulite, and judge Sérgio Moro became a national hero.

In just a few years the mesdames of Jardins, an elite neighbourhood in São Paulo, who had once been able to employ three full-time uniformed servants in their homes, now had only one or two. The middle-class families of Pinheiros, who had had a live-in maid cooking, cleaning and clothing their children until the 2000s, now only had a maid coming three times a week. The lower middle-class families of Osasco had stopped paying for a cleaner to come once a week and gone back to washing their own clothes. Sapopemba's cleaners, who had washed their own clothes and those of others, were beginning to think about buying their own cars. That left a lot of people unhappy, and there was reaction.

While whites and blacks were simply naturalised as different in Brazil, it was not difficult to identify the social position of each. It was plain to see, and perceived as existential. Some blacks in the favelas and peripheries had begun to make a lot of money since the 1990s, but they became thieves and drug dealers, populating prisons and homicide statistics, until they realised that it was better to act quietly and not show off their wealth, as the PCC advises. But the natural difference between blacks and whites was truly shaken only around 2013, when it was realised that the entry of the poor into the world of consumption could mean a genuine flattening of inequalities between the middle and peripheral classes.

The cleaner felt that life was getting better, and her son was thinking about going to college. Meanwhile, the mistress who employed her felt that her life was getting worse and that she was paying for that change. After all, she was still the mistress. When the possibility of equality is felt, even distantly, those who stand to lose by it feel compelled to react, to reinforce the existing, unequal order (Arendt, 1997 [1958]). The 'June Days' of 2013, in which the middle and elite classes took to the streets to demonstrate against

Introduction

the government in the main cities of Brazil, were the first clear sign of this reaction. A similar outburst, in terms of both form and content, would appear in Paris a few years later in the form of the *gilets jaunes* movement. A spark which spread on the internet mobilised millions of people without a clear agenda but who were clearly dissatisfied with what was happening in their daily lives: they did not feel represented in institutional politics. However, the programme always arrives, after the mobilisation. And it was an agenda that was reactionary in its content, but even more so in the homogenising form in which it manifested. ‘Against corruption’, ‘for more decency and security’, in Brazil. Against corruption, immigration, generically expressed, elsewhere.

Corruption, violence and unemployment are then represented as novelties, and a general impulse asserts itself, demanding the restoration of an alleged previous order, of earlier values that had been lost with recent changes. In the Brazilian case, and even more so in São Paulo, it was easy to identify the causes of the problems in 2013. They were the corrupt politicians, and the thieves of the peripheries. Both were crooks. The impulse for order finds its most refined mechanism in criminalisation. Unlike in other contexts, but very similar to what happens in non-modern nations, the criminal in Brazil is not seen as belonging to the same community of human citizens. He is a radically immoral being who must be eliminated for the sake of the community. Mary Douglas’s (1976) interpretation of purity and danger, written long ago and in a markedly different context, offers extremely relevant insights into what happened next in Brazil’s political scene. Different ‘pure’ elements became ‘impure’ through mixing.

From 2014, with the narrow re-election of Dilma Rouseff, public life became polarised. The actors embodying social change, previously viewed as harmless to the general public when they remained separate, became impure once they mixed. The poor criminals came from the same place as the black cleaners, who had always been treated with suspicion, and were now buying cars; in

The entangled city

the universities students from the peripheries mixed with people of the left, who supported human rights for criminals, and with LGBT groups who were already walking hand in hand without shame. 'I don't mind, but kissing like that is disrespectful, there are children looking ...'. The same 'decline in values' that undermined the family produced corruption. Everything came to be connected in a unity of meanings, now understood as coherent and impure. In conversations with family and old friends, it was as though rats had crept out of the sewer. Order had to be restored, quickly and radically, no matter what the cost. The Workers' Party, especially after the impeachment of President Dilma Rouseff in 2016, came to embody the pole of impurity against which elites rallied. Jair Bolsonaro, a Christian and former army captain, mobilising a radical anti-corruption discourse, represented the order that they wanted to see restored. In 2018 he became president.

In São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, just three of Brazil's twenty-seven states, but concentrating 40% of its population, the governors elected in 2018 were all outsiders who had risen rapidly in the polls in the final days, at the point when they adopted the same discourse as Bolsonaro. Not only Bolsonaro, but also these governors, who play a crucial role in determining direction of Brazil's security agenda, were elected with impressive vote totals. Voting maps are clear in terms of distribution by social class, skin colour and religion: Bolsonaro won by far among the elites and middle classes, but also among the evangelical poor and some precarious workers. He lost by far in the Northeast, narrowly among Catholics and the poorest (Almeida, 2019a).

Paradoxically, the election of Bolsonaro put an end to the mismatch between the national public sphere and the peripheries. The conflict that was plaguing the favelas in 1997, when my research began, finally became part of national politics. A centripetal force seemed to flow from the peripheries to the centre over the course of two decades, to form a new political logic. Police repression, religious fundamentalism and radical liberalism,

Introduction

everything that was thought to be backwards in the era of building democracy, was now in the vanguard of a new national project: a project that was no longer modern, but Christian; no longer democratic, but military; no longer distributive, but ultraliberal.

Churches appear as a solution, offering *bandidos* who are under threat, unemployed or repentant a way out of crime. At the same time they provide police officers with divine justification for action that is 'righteous', even if it is completely against the law. Churches also facilitate the political legitimization of religious discourse within state institutions. On the one hand, the expanding, popular evangelical world reinforces the narratives of Christian popular autonomy vis-à-vis the secular state – also present in the struggle of the 'world of crime' against the 'system', commonly expressed in the peripheral slang of 'us for ourselves'. On the other hand, this same evangelical world instrumentalises the notion of 'religious freedom' to subvert democratic institutions, promoting the project of a 'Christian nation' (Fromm, 2016; Côrtes, 2018) at the centre of state political power. It is not surprising, in this mediating grammar between the two main regimes of the contemporary urban order, that on the one hand thieves and traffickers, and on other police and politicians, from low to high rank, convert to Pentecostalism (Machado, 2016, 2017).

Conceptually, I do not consider the Brazilian evangelical world as a normative regime, because its subjects cannot (yet) autonomously control legitimate violence in cases of strong conflict. Their intention to do so, however, is clear. Evangelical penetration of both the police and 'crime', in addition to their control of significant financial resources and means of communication, can effectively establish a system of mediation between the irreconcilable state and criminal regimes. The regulation of state and criminal violence, both framed in Pentecostal terms, is put forward as a synthesis, not yet accomplished but already plausible, between the fractured epistemological frameworks of the state and criminal regimes. If this project were to be consolidated in

The entangled city

practice and become dominant, religious fundamentalism would replace secularism and religious authoritarianism would replace the institutional ‘democracy’ of the green and yellow homeland, transforming it into a Christian homeland. Violence between state and criminal regimes would fall. Markets do not seem to fear this possibility. Contemporary liberalism is just as able to coexist with fundamentalist and authoritarian regimes as with Western-style democracy.

Meanwhile, the brothers of the PCC, who had safeguarded daily order in the favelas, who used to live on the corner, are today in Mato Grosso, in Fortaleza, in Foz do Iguaçu and many other places. The faction operates at the borders, the ports, the airports. Big business. The PCC started to attract the attention of the US Drug Enforcement Administration, the CIA and the anti-terrorism groups of the Federal Police. Evangelical pastors have gained influence in the new administrations. A lot of money involved, in both cases. The story of this book begins in 1997 and runs up to 2019, in São Paulo. But the transition that it points to in the urban history of the peripheries of São Paulo, in the metropolis and in the country, has not yet ended. Different promises about what Brazil should be in the world, and how the poor should be integrated into the nation, have not yet been settled. The metropolis of São Paulo, the heart of the military and evangelical parts of the new project, but also the country’s main financial market, remains central to all of them.

Method: from impact to interpretation

Marcela was pregnant, lying on the couch half naked, almost unconscious, and had defecated in the living room. When I came in with her sister, she said that what she needed was affection, repeating the phrase three times. Her crack addiction had reached a serious stage, her body could no longer handle it, but she seemed reflective, as she always seemed, ever since our first conversation. Soon after, Marcela was arrested again, and her son was born in

Introduction

prison. Her fourth son, like two of the others, has been raised by Ivete. She was to be released by March 2019 if she did not commit any disciplinary offences.

Naldinho showed me his right arm, which had been deformed by a high-voltage electric shock that he received when trying to steal a huge transformer from the top of a post. He said he had been high. His arm was atrophied and curved backwards, arched in the opposite direction of the normal elbow flexion. The skin was covered in severe burn scars, keloids, the hand practically removed by the shock, disproportionately small and similarly deformed on its back. The image of this bent arm with its mummified look, and the way Naldinho told me what happened, laughing, stayed with me for days.

Israel showed me the scars from the four shots he received in the head when a policeman caught him and threw him to the ground after a robbery. Four bullet marks, two on each side of the head. The hair no longer grew there, leaving scars that were always on display. He grabbed me by the shirt, at the neck, showing me how the officer had pointed his gun, at point-blank range, directly at his face. At the time of the shots Israel had bled and passed out, but he had a 'deliverance', he tells me. The term is Pentecostal; it means that God saved his life.

Bianca was sexually molested by her stepfather at the age of thirteen and was kicked out of the house by her mother, who blamed her. She took care of her little brothers, and a few years later of her own children, all together. One night her mother, drunk, set fire to the house with everyone inside. Fortunately, they managed to escape through a window. Bianca tells me that when she was receiving psychological treatment she had heard that it was not a sin not to love her mother. It was a moment of liberation for her; the most important moment she remembered in her life.

Ana Paula lived for fourteen years in institutions for orphans, then spent eight years in the street, around the Praça da Sé, in the centre of São Paulo. She was raped dozens of times by thieves

The entangled city

and police officers, and regrets having beaten her son when he was a child. She has always welcomed me in the favela, she's a very fun person, and over the years she has become not only my friend but a friend of my whole family. A photo of her holding her granddaughter in her lap, very carefully, appeared one day on the screen of my cell phone, and thrilled me. Another photo of her in an air vent in the Praça da Sé metro, now aged forty-three, also struck me.

Maria lost two teenage children, murdered at the turn of the 2000s. A third was imprisoned for many years. In 2017, police killed one of two nephews who lived with her, who had been accused of stealing a cell phone. I went to visit her. She was very sad, and kept her composure as best she could. We made lunch together, we ate, we talked. While we were eating, the brother of the murdered boy arrived from the street and entered the house. Locked in the bedroom, he wept uncontrollably, and sometimes cried out and bellowed in pain, revulsion, despair. I had never seen such suffering. Maria told me that's what it is like when something like that happens.

João, now an old friend, tells me that there was a guy who worked in the hair salon we were passing in Jardim Planalto who had killed two people a few years ago. He recounted the story of the homicide in detail. Very cruel, I thought to myself. Coincidentally, a block further on the guy was standing on the corner, and João stopped to greet him. They quickly updated one another on their news and we said goodbye. As he said goodbye, the guy held me by both shoulders, looked me straight in the eye and said: 'Go with God, my brother. May God light all your paths.' For the rest of the day, I felt shivers run through my body as I remembered this scene. Even today I cannot describe what I felt, but it was something close to fear.

During these years of fieldwork, scenes of this intensity were repeated. Hundreds of times. Over many years, the physical and emotional impact, mediated by the work of keeping a research

Introduction

diary and discussions with many interlocutors, has been filtered into interpretations (Das, 2006b; Feltran, 2007). Translation still seems to me to be a relevant category for thinking about what ethnographers do. As is probably clear, the favelas seemed to me to be chaotic and immersed in violence. This ethnography involved verifying the existence of other orders unknown to me. They operated on an everyday basis and were bounded by this violence, producing a double movement that I did not notice at the beginning: that of making both the urban order, pragmatically, and also our categories for understanding it. What looked like chaos, remade through these two movements, gained greater intelligibility.

Urban peripheries have been the object of intense academic study in Brazil. The public agenda has followed behind. Since the late 1980s contemporary debates about these territories and populations have been marked by a preoccupation with urban violence, which has also become the focus of our studies. Every day, favelas are discussed in newspapers, television programmes and cinemas. Homicides, drug trafficking, robberies, police occupations and wars, and armed adolescents are thematised in direct association with peripheries and favelas, which are depicted as territories in conflagration.

Based on such representations, middle-class guys cross the street when they see a black boy in a baseball cap and shorts approaching, and surveillance systems in gated condominiums become ever more sophisticated. At another scale, both reformist and populist discourses develop, both social assistance programmes and the prison population expand. In any of these projects, however, it doesn't make much difference if we're talking about São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Belo Horizonte or any other large city in Latin America. The characters of the peripheries are understood as internally homogeneous, everywhere and always representing the same problem: violence.

On the one hand, the literature has suggested a focus on walls

The entangled city

(Caldeira, 2000) and, on the other, on the connection between the social and political worlds (Zaluar, 2004; Telles and Cabanes, 2006). In São Paulo, it really is not difficult to notice either the walls and gates, or these connections. The entertainment industry, cell phones, the third sector, domestic and industrial jobs, television, construction, electoral and religious markets, drug trafficking, informal markets, the recycling industry, arms trafficking, among many other circuits, have clearly become embedded in the urban peripheries. However, none of these circuits and markets is restricted to these territories. On the contrary, they extend far beyond the peripheries, in some cases to the centre of political and economic power.

It was necessary, therefore, to qualify, in empirical and analytical terms, the mediations between the peripheries and those spaces that, looking from the outside, view them as peripheries. My proposal was to conduct an ethnography of the fracture, and the boundaries, that today regulate the relationship between the peripheries of São Paulo and the public world.⁸ The category of ‘boundary’ is mobilised to preserve the sense of division and demarcation, while being also, above all, a mechanism that regulates the flows crossing it, simultaneously connecting what it divides. Boundaries are established precisely to regulate the channels of contact between social groups which are separated but necessarily related. Where there is a boundary, there is separation and communication – of a kind that is both unequal and controlled. If there is a boundary, it is precisely to control communication between the parties. Where there is a boundary there is also conflict, even if it is latent. If the boundary can be disputed, it is common, especially in very hierarchical societies, that latency gives way to violence. Analysing these boundaries therefore requires discussion of the relations between normative regimes and violence (Willis, 2015; Arias, 2017; Feltran, 2019; Richmond, 2019b).

These two categories, which appear in the title of this book, were arrived at via very different paths. Violence, understood here

Introduction

simply as the use of force, or the threat of using it that produces a similar effect, imposed itself upon the analysis over the course of the field research. It explicitly marked the trajectories of individuals, families and forms of collective action encountered in the field. Regulatory regimes came much later. This was not by mere chance, of course: norms and violence are themes that have been discussed together not only in the urban peripheries, but in different ways throughout modern history and social thought. From Weber and Clausewitz to Hannah Arendt and Foucault, the relationship between norms and the use of force is central to the analysis of modernity; nothing less than debates over the notion of power itself articulates them. Even ethnology has placed non-state regimes and violence as fundamental dimensions of the emergence of community (Clastres, 2003, 2004). Analyses such as those of Mandani (2001) on East Africa, and works such as Kessler (2004, 2007) and Auyero (2000, 2003) on contemporary Argentina demonstrate the urgency of comprehensive approaches to understanding violence.

In specific studies on urban peripheries and the popular sectors in São Paulo, however, norms and violence have remained largely disconnected. After the 1970s, in the wake of the critique of structuralist economism, most analysts of politics turned their attention to the peripheries and the ‘politicisation of everyday life’. Popular movements had emerged and were reopening debates about where power lay, including within the state. These new ‘political subjects’ brought with them the promise of expanding citizenship (Sader, 1988; Doimo, 1995; Feltran, 2005). But then the scenario reversed. The social movements of the peripheries became institutionalised alongside the growth of the PT, as expected; three decades of institutional democracy have passed and, since 1985, it is raw violence, both police and criminal, that has drawn the attention of analysts to the urban peripheries (Caldeira, 2000; Telles and Cabanes, 2006; Holston, 2007; Telles and Hirata, 2007; Willis, 2015; Biondi, 2016).

The entangled city

The course of empirical work

Not all the significant experience that has shaped this book took place in the favelas studied. And not even in Sapopemba. This ethnography was produced in transit between the different favelas I visited in São Paulo and wherever my home was, both because I would dictate my reflections into a tape recorder while I was driving, on planes or in metro stations, and because, symbolically, my transit between the favelas and other urban spaces provoked so many reflections. At the same time as I was studying different neighbourhoods in the peripheries of São Paulo, and even within Sapopemba, the research was also informed by my daily, unsystematic experiences in the five other cities that I lived in during this period: São Carlos, Paris, Xalapa, Berlin and London. I was not familiar, but a stranger to four of them (Martins Junior, 2014; Hall and Schwarz, 2017). On the one hand, I realise clearly that I can say far more about Sapopemba or São Paulo, which I studied methodically, than about those places where I only lived, such as São Carlos or Paris, where I did not produce systematic notes or immerse myself in the relevant literature. On the other hand, through the contrasts they offered, each of these ordinary cities (Robinson, 2006) helped me to formulate the questions and themes I present here. This book is about the peripheries of São Paulo, based on the district of Sapopemba. But it would not have been written in the same way if I had not left that place. In each of these cities, I experienced ‘the field’ of differentiation in different ways.

Sapopemba, one of the ninety-six districts of the municipality of São Paulo, is a very heterogeneous territory, with a population of slightly under 300,000 in 2019. The landscape has also changed dramatically over the last few decades: the desolation of large, dusty, vacant lands at the frontier of the growing city in the 1970s gave way to a consolidated form of urbanisation, initiated by self-built subdivisions and later by housing projects, public facilities

Introduction

and favelas. The distribution of urban infrastructure, commerce and services follows a similarly heterogeneous logic. The transition from the political regime of this period also contributed to a significant change in local forms of associativism, as the emphasis on trade unions, social movements and leftist parties was gradually replaced by a myriad of professionalised local associations that establish agreements with different spheres of government, as well as NGOs, foundations and businesses.

In Sapopemba, but also in every other city I lived in, I had the opportunity not only to discuss my work in the peripheries of São Paulo with students, researchers, teachers and favela residents but also to experience the everyday life of these spaces. It is through routine that what is deemed plausible is established, placing limits on what is expected and can be tolerated. It is therefore observable in every context. For authors dedicated to the theory of action, it is through everyday life that the social is structured (Das, 2006a; Bayat, 2013; Machado, 2016; Blokland, 2017; Simone, 2018), and it is in pragmatic action, which is always framed, that the plausible is constituted. The last chapter of this book is devoted to this theoretical debate. Dislocations between different urban settings, which interfere directly with personal routines and everyday action, were – without my knowledge at the time – the trigger for the analyses that are presented in this book.

The fieldwork itself, over these more than twenty years, has passed through different phases, some of them overlapping with one another. Between 1997 and 2003 I frequented the Residencial 1° de Maio, a former housing cooperative in Carapicuíba, a municipality in the west of the São Paulo metropolitan region. Also at that time, I first went to the favela of Vila Prudente, in the city's East Zone, and, later, Sapopemba, which would later become the main focus of my empirical work. Fieldnotes, but especially dozens of transcribed interviews, hearing the life stories of the generation that had built these neighbourhoods and of some members of the younger generation, as well as activists, religious

The entangled city

leaders and public sector professionals, constituted my initial material from the field.

Between 1999 and 2001 I had the opportunity to visit dozens of favelas, social movement branches and community centres across the São Paulo metropolitan region, working full time in the area of children's policy. Circulating through the peripheries almost every day, but without stopping for long in any one place, I noticed that the situation that had impressed itself on me in Carapicuíba, of young people being murdered with alarming frequency, was similar all over the metropolis. It was the period in which São Paulo's homicide rates peaked. I became interested in the statistics, but especially in the stories being told to me of the circumstances surrounding the murders. They seemed to throw into relief the radical nature of the urban conflict I was now observing, but which was simply ignored by the middle and elite classes. But the stories of these deaths also crossed analytical lines that, at that time, seemed to me to be separate: urban segregation, armed violence, security, justice, religion, work, illegal markets. There was much for me to try to understand.

Between 2005 and 2009 I had my first intense period of fieldwork in the district of Sapopemba, in the East Zone of São Paulo, when the experiences that gave rise to the initial chapters of this book mainly occurred. We will encounter the neighbourhoods and the characters that inhabit them later. Apart from the one-year interval during which I lived in northeastern Paris, these were years in which I would spend at least one week per month walking around Sapopemba. At some points, I had longer periods of fieldwork, at others they were more spaced out. The years 2005, 2007 and 2009 were especially intense. Field notes and in-depth interviews – almost always focused on life stories – were my main research material. Diverse documents and analytical timelines were used to complete a more general picture of these changes. Over time, they began to form into stories that were not only of individuals but also of families and neighbourhood institutions,

Introduction

as well as of transformations of the peripheries as a whole and of the PCC. Analytically, this period was primarily focused on understanding the multidimensionality of transformations in the peripheries, and how these transformations interacted with the expansion of the ‘world of crime’, which had already become a legitimate power for many favela residents.

Between 2009 and 2017 my fieldwork gained new dimensions and became much more collective. I followed the same group of interlocutors, families and institutions that I already knew well, with periodic visits to the neighbourhoods of Parque Santa Madalena and Jardim Elbe in Sapopemba. But I started to supervise a series of students at different levels (especially Liniker Batista, Matthew Richmond, Gregório Zambon, Valéria Oliveira, Moisés Kopper and Janaína Maldonado), who also carried out ethnographic research, focused on different themes, in Sapopemba. I was able to share my fieldwork, my contacts and my experiences with each of them. This has brought a wealth of information and reflections that were unavailable to me as an individual researcher.

My proximity to these researchers kept me even more closely connected to these neighbourhoods, and even when I was not there news constantly flowed to me. This was also the period in which I visited numerous other favelas, in São Paulo and many other cities, at the invitation of students, activists and fellow researchers. Periods as a visiting professor in Mexico, Germany and the United Kingdom have added to these unsystematic, comparative experiences. New, systematic research efforts also got underway. Two new collective research projects have helped me to develop the arguments presented here. Between 2010 and 2018 I supervised more than forty students at NaMargem, a research centre that I coordinate, between *Universidade Federal de São Carlos* and CEM. The vast majority of these students have developed individual research on different forms of urban marginality. This group has allowed me to gain empirical knowledge not only of many other ‘quebradas’ in many cities, but also of homeless people and crack

The entangled city

users, prisons and youth offender units, clinics and therapeutic communities, contexts of prostitution, urban art collectives and a lot of peripheral music.

In addition, between 2015 and 2019 I have conducted systematic field research with a team of eight other researchers, at different stages of formation, that I coordinate at CEM. We investigate the theme of illicit economies by following the destinations of cars stolen in São Paulo. To summarise, we have conducted fieldwork in scrapyards, auctioneers, insurers, we have been to the border regions between Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay, and through this research I have also learned a lot more about transformations in peripheries, and in Brazilian politics. Above all, for the first time, we have been able to gain insight into the dimensions of the illegal economies and the regulatory capacities of governments, market actors and criminal factions in São Paulo today.

Organisation of chapters

This book's narrative starts from some very small interactions extracted from ordinary life with the intention to give an account of how meaningful those are. Then, I describe individual and family stories lived in the city of São Paulo's favelas in the boundaries of 'crime' which led to broadening the interpretation of the city's parameters, as well as of its institutions' practices related to managing urban order and violence. As the will see, violence permeates the whole ethnographic experience described throughout this book.

What I experienced during fieldwork is that different life stories and moral thoughts were impacted upon by what is 'the crime' and the PCC represented in those settings. The so-called organised crime emerged from people's everyday experiences, produced by the inescapable way they experience life, and not the other way around. Other central categories to understand urban order, such as the state, the territory, the productive restructuring, race

Introduction

and gender, emerged in the same way. Throughout the book, fragments of everyday life have combined to compose a *bricolage* of São Paulo's regimes of urban order and violence, as well as its mediations.

The first chapter puts together empirical and theoretical thoughts to present the book's analytical framework. Here I analyse three micro-scenes of interaction, arguing that everyday life plays a critical role in the objectification of *differentiation*. Paying special attention to the third situation, which involves the representation of peripheries and the 'world of crime' in São Paulo, I debate how difference operates when the marginals appear to be getting closer to the established middle classes. Native categories and analytical concepts are both understood here as intervals of plausible meanings, a formal structure where contents are always *mutually situated and constructed* within the normative ideal boundaries established by routine use. The ethnographic reflection upon these three empirical situations gives rise to a broader interpretation of how the recent authoritarian wave in Brazil is based on the categorical construction of ideals. The authoritarians rely on how gender and state, as well as of *race, religion, family, class, sexuality* and *crime* are entangled to serve their national project. I do not discuss all of these categories in detail during this chapter, as my aim is to debate how the contemporary social life-flows intertwine the production of those ideals simultaneously. In other words, I reflect upon how the *aesthetic* of their emergence in the quotidian impacts the construction of the general public spheres.

Chapter 2 leads us to Pedro's trajectory, which goes back and forth to the boundaries that circumscribe São Paulo's 'world of crime'. The young man describes violent persecutions, shootings and what he ought to do in many different situations, experiencing both sides of these boundaries. 'Crime' appears as a set of normative codes and social practices established primarily at the local level, around markets such as illegal drug trafficking, robbery and theft, yet equally established through family relations,

The entangled city

gendered status and through courage and respect. Based on São Paulo's peripheries' transformations and Pedro's narrative, I argue an interpretation of the expansion of 'crime' boundaries in recent decades, as well as the patterns of coexistence between crime and other normative legitimacies in the outskirts of the city.

The third chapter focuses on a family story. Ivete's family life guides us through a world where migration from Salvador meets hunger and struggle for protection and social mobility in São Paulo. After following her family for the last fourteen years, I show how disjunctive patterns of understanding 'crime' and 'work' differ within the family as time has passed. Second and third generations split the family into two different social ascension projects: one where children work legally, and other where the 'world of crime' is seen as a possibility. Capoeira (an Afro-Brazilian martial art), hairdressing and private security meet drug trafficking, robbery and incarceration at home. Money and violent deaths appear after some years of clash and assemblage between brothers and sisters. The chapter is entitled 'Coexistence'.

My ethnography then moves to a broader scenario. São Paulo's urban violence has several unique features. During the 1990s, while Ivete struggled with her eight kids in a 'time of wars', São Paulo became the first Brazilian state to implement mass incarceration policies. By consequence, it was also the first state to witness the strengthening of a single hegemonic criminal faction, the Primeiro Comando da Capital, or PCC. In a recent work I have argued that PCC's organisational framework is a brotherhood formally similar to that of Freemasonry; organised since the 2000s across the entire Brazilian territory, for the last twenty-five years it has been acting in a coordinated way both inside and outside the prison system (Feltran, 2018). This criminal group is deeply related, as we shall see, to the most striking aspect of São Paulo's urban order, which is the dramatic fall in the homicide rate that occurred between 2000 and 2010, amounting to around 70%.

In chapter 4 an ethnography of the PCC justice system will

Introduction

describe the modus operandi of the ‘crime courts’ employed by criminals in the outskirts of São Paulo. I argue that the spread of this way of doing justice by the commons, completely ‘institutionalised’ in the studied territories, became possible only after ‘the crime’ ascended to the position of a legitimate normative regime among a minor but relevant part of the residents of the city outskirts. Mapping these ‘courts’ on three different levels, including a ‘debate’ via cell phone conference in seven of São Paulo’s prisons, I argue that these mechanisms are central factors in explaining the drop in homicide rates in São Paulo. Recognised publicly by the state’s government and its military police, these courts themselves became important sources of legitimacy for PCC’s expansion in Brazil.

Chapter 5 argues that violence, and especially lethal violence, is strictly managed on the periphery of São Paulo. I argue against the idea of banalisation of violence in favelas, as my thesis is that there is a strict control of the use of force in favelas and neighbourhoods of the peripheries of São Paulo. To support my thesis, I present three ethnographic situations of the ‘PCC era’ in which members of the ‘crime world’ interact in a particular way with police officers and lawyers. The diverse normative repertoire of PCC’s practices is analysed vis-à-vis the state’s violence management tools as I verified that they coexist in the peripheral zones of São Paulo in 2010. Thus, four dimensions are specifically analysed in this chapter, namely: (i) state justice; (ii) the court-room justice of ‘crime’; (iii) the selective justice of the police; and (iv) divine justice. My ethnography shows how this repertoire divides different projects of regulation of violence in the city, which gave birth to the different normative regimes analysed in this book.

Chapter 6 shows how the management of homicides in the state of São Paulo since the 1990s was already carried out by at least two coexistent regimes of justice and security policies. As these regimes can be understood only in their constitutive relation, I recover the general lines of two decades of their development, from which

The entangled city

have emerged the fundamental elements of São Paulo's contemporary urban order. I argue that state policies have offered the best conditions for the current hegemony of PCC policies in the regulation of both homicides and illegal markets, both inside prisons and in favelas. Many ethnographic situations exemplify the argument of São Paulo as an entangled city, where urban conflict could be much better understood if it were theoretically reframed.

Lastly, in the conclusion I argue that in the 2010s the Brazilian urban peripheries have two dichotomous public façades: on the one hand, they are the cause of 'urban violence' that calls for more repression; and, on the other hand, they are the focus of the 'nation development' project which would turn poor people into middle-class individuals – where I again refer back to the ideas of the expectations of modernity. The idea of urban violence, as commonly known, has displaced the core of the contemporary social question from 'the worker' to the 'marginal people'. As a side-effect, tensions between 'crime' and 'state' regimes have increased and the two have found a common basis for their relationship in monetised markets. Money seems to mediate the relationship between forms of life which, from other perspectives – legal or moral – would be in radically different from one another. Consumption emerges as a common way of life and mercantile expansion, above all connecting legal and illegal markets and fostering urban violence that otherwise would have been under control, had those territories seen economic development. Religion, and especially Pentecostalism, emerges as a plausible source of mediation between the regimes.