



Social Representation and Planning in Favelas: A Historical Approach of the Formal/Informal

Maria Lais Pereira DA SILVA, Lecturer
Federal Fluminense University, Brazil
mlais@openlink.com.br

João Paulo Oliveira HUGUENIN, Researcher
Federal Fluminense University, Brazil
jpohuguenin@yahoo.com.br

This paper deals with urban and social representations in the favelas of the city of Rio de Janeiro. It is part of a research that is being developed at the Universidade Federal Fluminense. The main hypothesis is that, during decades, and even in our days, the favelas were(are) viewed as completely "informal" and detached from the urban/legal/formal processes of the city, and this view has, in some ways, helped eviction processes, even with violence. But what rises from the history of the favelas, especially during the first decades of the XXth century is that, contrary to those beliefs, there were a good number of favelas involved in "formal" and even legal links and processes that explains, in some aspects, their complexity and real integration with the city. On the other hand, researchers and people involved in planning and projects in these areas have found an "invisible order" that rises from tradition, from local culture, from social memory, and that in some ways could explain the social and the spatial relations that have developed since then. These are complex relations, in part because they are a mixture of collective memory of past practices-sometimes within the law and sometimes illegal-and in part because they produced concepts and representations of ownership, rent and other concepts which guide this "invisible urban order". So that history has become very important, in order to understand some social and cultural representations within these areas, specially in regard of innovative planning programs aiming to promote legal property for favela residents. These programs are based in law concepts, regarding the legal production of space but in reality they are dealing with a complexity emerging from an historical representation.

In order to discuss these matters, we worked with two different sources: a research in the history of Rio de Janeiro's favelas, specially from 1930 to 1960, to identify some processes and links that could be observed between squatter settlements and aspects of Rio's real estate market during those years, considered "transition years": the importance of rental links (and then their gradual reduction) the authorized and priced occupation of private and public land and so on. In the second place, we worked in the favelas of Rocinha and Maré (two important areas in the city) identifying representations by the favelas residents of ownership, rent and other concepts, trying to register their main aspects and complexities.

KEY WORDS: Social representation in favelas, formal and informal production, favelas in Rio de Janeiro