



Norwegian University  
of Life Sciences

**Master's Thesis 2023 30 ECTS**

Faculty of Landscape and Society

# **Security narratives in Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro**

**The Activist, the Philosopher and the Young professional**

**Tore Øvstebø Næss**

Master International Relations

The Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Noragric, is the international gateway for the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). Eight departments associated research institutions, and the Norwegian College of Veterinary Medicine in Oslo. Established in 1986, Noragric's contribution to international development lies in the interface between research, education (Bachelor, Master, and PhD programmes), and assignments.

The Noragric Master theses are the final theses submitted by students in order to fulfill the requirements under the Noragric Master programme 'International Environmental Studies', 'International Development Studies' and 'International Relations'.

The findings in this thesis do not necessarily reflect the views of Noragric. Extracts from this publication may only be reproduced after prior consultation with the author and on the condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation contact Noragric.

© Tore Øvstebø Næss, January 2023

Tore.ovstebo.nass@gmail.com

Noragric, Department of International Environment and Development Studies

The Faculty of Landscape and Society

P.O. Box 5003 N-1432 Ås, Norway

Tel.: +47 67 23 00 00

Internet: <http://www.nmbu.no/noragric>

## Declaration

I, Tore Øvstebø Næss, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for the award of any type of academic degree.

Signature *Tore Øvstebø Næss* ..... Date: January 15, 2023

## **Acknowledgments**

First, I would like to thank the research participants who trusted me and kindly shared their local knowledge, experiences and reflections with me. A special thanks to my local contact in Rocinha who also helped me to find research participants. Without their contributions, this thesis would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank my two supervisors, Kirsti Stuvøy and Einar Braathen for their patience, guidance and valuable feedback throughout this journey.

A big thank you to Celina M. Sørbøe and Vinícius Cruz Campos for freeing up time to talk with me about my thesis even though you hardly know me. I will remember this when/if other master students ask for my input in the future.

Thanks to Habitat-Norway for supporting my research project with a master thesis travel grant, but also with a forum to discuss urban questions across disciplines, generations and regions. A special thanks to Inger Lise Syversen, Erik Berg and Marcin Sliwa.

In Rio de Janeiro, I would also like to thank Leonardo, Gabriel and Matheus for hosting me during the first half of my stay. And thank you to Gabriel and Ginza who hosted me for the second part.

In Norway, I would like to thank my family, Tygo and Ingmar for listening attentively, supporting me and asking questions that helped to clarify my thoughts. I would also like to thank my study peers, Merethe, Henrik, Elina, Anja and Tora.

Any errors and shortcomings in this study are mine alone.

## **Abstract**

This master thesis explores and examines security narratives from Rocinha, the largest favela in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It employs a narrative approach to security in International Relations, mixing analytical insights and theoretical perspectives from human security research, feminist security studies and urban studies. It aims to provide an empirical contribution to the security debate in the city, foregrounding residents in Rocinha's security concerns, which vulnerabilities they express and strategies they employ to navigate insecurity in the city. It aims to get a broader understanding of the security dynamics in the city and multiple (in)securities beyond the traditional security perspective, concerning police and organized crime.

For this thesis, I travelled to Rio de Janeiro for a nine-week long field trip from April to June 2022. I interviewed seventeen research participants, mainly residents in Rocinha and a few participants who lived outside the neighbourhood. I found that residents were more concerned with everyday insecurities than shootouts between the police and groups of organized crime. I further found that residents longed to be included in the city's social fabric where they could take part in the city and enjoy access to the same rights, resources, opportunities and freedom as other privileged citizens do. Lastly, I found that residents employed various strategies to deal with territorial stigmatization and navigate insecurity in the city.

Based on these findings, there is no quick fix for urban challenges such as social inequality, poverty and organized crime in Brazil and beyond. However, this thesis's findings have argued it is necessary for academics and policymakers to talk, listen and cooperate much more with people "on the ground". Security may mean something different depending on whom you are talking to.

**Keywords:** *International relations, feminist security studies, human security, urban studies, narrative analysis, exclusion, territorial stigmatization, systematic injustices, coping strategies, Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro*

## **Abbreviations**

HDR – Human Development Report

IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics)

IR – International Relations

NGO – Non-governmental organization

NMBU – Norwegian University of Life Sciences

PAC – Programa de aceleração do Crescimento (Growth Acceleration Program)

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UPP – Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora (Pacifying Police Unit)

I also use the terms favela, neighbourhood and community interchangeably.

## **List of figures**

Figure 1 – My photo of Rocinha

Figure 2 – Map over Rio de Janeiro

## Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 <i>Re-entering Rocinha through an International Relations lens</i> .....	2
1.2 <i>Research questions</i> .....	4
1.3 <i>Thesis outline</i> .....	4
2. A narrative approach to security in International Relations .....	5
2.1 <i>Opening security studies in international relations</i> .....	5
2.2 <i>Insights from feminist security studies in developing a narrative approach to security</i> ..	7
2.3 <i>Looking outside international relations: Urban studies</i> .....	8
3. Methodological considerations: Research design, quality of data and ethics.....	11
3.1 <i>Research design</i> .....	11
3.2 <i>Creating security texts with fieldwork</i> .....	11
3.3 <i>Analysing security texts</i> .....	16
3.4 <i>Reflexivity and ethics</i> .....	18
3.5 <i>Quality of data: Trustworthiness</i> .....	20
4. Security Narratives from Rocinha .....	22
4.1 <i>Background</i> .....	22
4.1.1 <i>Security, urban development and favela politics in Rio de Janeiro</i> .....	22
4.1.2 <i>Rio de Janeiro: Urban militarism, segregation and everyday security concerns</i> ...	23
4.1.3 <i>Introducing the research site: Rocinha</i> .....	26
4.2 <i>Narratives of security</i> .....	28
4.2.1 <i>The activist: Rocinha's security concerns and grievances</i> .....	28
4.2.2 <i>The philosopher: Systematic injustices, structural dimensions and insecurity</i> .....	33
4.2.3 <i>The young professional: Territorial stigmatization and navigational strategies</i> ....	36
4.3 <i>Analysis: The narratives interpreted from a different security perspective</i> .....	40
4.3.1 <i>Rocinha's security concerns and grievances</i> .....	41
4.3.2 <i>Systematic injustices, insecurity and frustration</i> .....	43
4.3.3 <i>Strategies to navigate territorial stigmatization and insecurity</i> .....	46
4.4 <i>What are these security narratives telling us?</i> .....	49
5. Conclusion .....	52
5.1 <i>Three security narratives</i> .....	52
5.2 <i>Methodological and theoretical reflections</i> .....	54
6. Bibliography .....	56
7. Appendices.....	62



<i>7.1 Table of research participants</i> .....	62
<i>7.2 Research invitation letter (English and Portuguese)</i> .....	64
<i>7.3 Interview guide (English and Portuguese)</i> .....	66

# 1. Introduction

In March 2011, I travelled for the first time to Brazil. I flew to Belém via Rio de Janeiro. After spending a week in the Amazon river's outlet installing computer and satellite equipment on a Norwegian bulk carrier, I requested a one-night stopover in Rio de Janeiro on my way back home to get a glimpse of the world-famous city. I had heard stories and seen footage of a city of white sandy beaches, football, samba and carnival and deadly military operations. I recall checking into Rio Othon Palace, a hotel located in the South Zone at Copacabana's beachfront. It felt like being in a movie with a grand, well-decorated reception. The front staff warned me immediately not to walk more than four blocks away from the hotel during the day and six blocks at night. I did not question it since I already knew how dangerous the city and the favelas were. That night, I ate a burger in my hotel room overlooking Copacabana beach at night. The next morning, I participated in a group tour arranged by the hotel with mostly elderly pensioners and one newly married couple. We visited the city's most iconic tourist sites by a minibus and accompanied by a tour guide. In the evening, I flew home to Bergen.

Four years later, I had been made redundant in the oil and gas industry and had spent the last couple of months backpacking through Central America. After a while, it got boring seeing only touristic sites and interacting mostly with other tourists. Therefore, I decided to go back to Rio de Janeiro to volunteer in one of the city's many favelas to see if it was as bad as my former Brazilian colleagues had told me about when we worked together offshore around the world.

Before going to Rocinha, which is a favela in Rio de Janeiro I will introduce more below, I visited *Receita Federal* in Florianópolis in Southern Brazil to get my CPF number (social security number or personal number). The clerk was astonished when I reported my residential address to be registered: Rua Trampolim 44, Rocinha, RJ. My Brazilian friend and the clerk joked about it in Portuguese, and I could not understand what they were saying. If I remember correctly, they were thinking I was mad going to live in a favela in Rio de Janeiro.

When I arrived at Santos Dumont airport in Rio de Janeiro in 2015, I remember the sense of distress when the taxi driver the non-governmental organization (NGO) had arranged, did not show up to pick me up. Luckily, he was just one hour late. As we drove through the city, I remember being excited and scared about what was to come. Eventually, we drove through *Túnel Zuzu Angel*, a tunnel connecting Gávea, a privileged neighbourhood, and Rocinha,

which is Brazil's largest favela. As we drove up Via Apia, Rocinha's high street, I remember my heart rate was increasing. Horrible things could probably happen at any moment.

However, nothing happened. I volunteered for approximately three-to-four months at a local NGO, where I taught mathematics and English to children and adolescents in the neighbourhood. During my stay, Rocinha was relatively peaceful. I invited several Brazilian friends to come and see the place for themselves, to learn it neither was as bad nor as violent and dangerous as they had told me. Some of them said they would come, but they never came. They seemed to be experts on the favela but had never been there while growing up in the same city. I was both puzzled and troubled by this; why they would not come and see for themselves. The main takeaway from my volunteering experience was that most residents of Rocinha were hardworking citizens, neither criminal nor feral or dangerous. Most residents that I had met were kind and generous with what they had. I may have encountered drug traffickers, but not knowingly. Schoolchildren were very eager to learn but were not given sufficient access or resources to education, which limits their possibilities to develop, participate in the city and exercise their civil rights. Ultimately, this affected their life opportunities.

I also learnt the hard way not to over-romanticize my favela experience as I think many foreigners may do. It was, for instance, hard to wash my clothes in a bucket, only to have cold showers and no air conditioning with twenty-eight degrees Celsius at night. When it rained, most of the streets turned into small rivers, causing immediate hazards as well as the risk of getting sick. When I could not keep up with doing my laundry in the bucket, I had the painful experience of using one-to-two hours on the bus to get to Ipanema to wash my clothes. This was before the metro station opened the following year. The last thing I remember from my first encounter with Rocinha was that I turned around when I met the police and took alternative routes.

### *1.1 Re-entering Rocinha through an International Relations lens*

When I started my studies in International Relations (IR) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) in peaceful Ås, I had no idea that my master's thesis would be about security and violence in Rocinha. However, I learned that IR has recently become interested in cities and urban spaces (Curtis, 2014, 2016). I decided to again explore my "Rio-love", with new analytical lenses. Questions of security, uneven (urban) development and more inclusive forms of citizenship are all addressed empirically in Rio de Janeiro (Braathen, 2020; Fahlberg, 2018a, 2018b; Fahlberg & Vicino, 2015; Sørboe, 2021a).

There is extensive research on Rio. I focused on topics such as military operations in the city and discovered insightful research exploring how residents perceived the city's so-called pacifying police unit (Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora – UPP) instalments in many favelas before, during and after the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games 2016 (Åsedotter, 2016; Braathen, 2020; Corrêa et al., 2016; Fahlberg, 2018a; Håndlykken-Luz, 2020; Passos, 2018; Rocha, 2012; Sørbye, 2013). Inspired by these studies, I worked out an interview guide that included questions about the police but also other security issues I found important. Once I arrived, I had to adapt quickly and respond to field realities.

I re-entered the field in Rocinha in 2022 and was quickly reminded that *public security* as it is often called in Brazil, was not a popular topic among community activists. This was a term “coming from the city,” implying the city's privileged neighbourhoods and reflecting the security concerns of the elite. I was told in Rocinha the interest was in *human security*, meaning their community's security concerns and needs. This security concept was much more than what the state proposed and offered. Residents in Rocinha were concerned with issues of labour rights, fairer salaries, working conditions, culture and basic sanitary infrastructure. However, this does not mean that police operations and brutality are irrelevant in Rio de Janeiro. In 2019, agents of the state (police and military personnel) killed 1804 persons in the state of Rio de Janeiro or 726 persons in the City of Rio de Janeiro (Instituto de Segurança Pública, 2021, p. 15). This is on average two persons per day in a given year. According to Stockholm's Peace Research Institute, this could be classified as a region with a high-intensity conflict or civil war (Davis, 2019, pp. 33-36).

Apart from police brutality, studies find that one-fifth of Rio's inhabitants live in favelas (IBGE, 2010). Only two per cent of the population in the favela have a tertiary university education, whereas twenty-four per cent of the citizens living outside the favelas have attended university (Fahlberg, 2018b, p. 176). One study by Casa Fluminense found an over twenty years difference in life expectancy between Rocinha and São Conrado/Ipanema (Braga et al., 2020, p. 33). Another study in 2007 found that residents in Rocinha earned ten times less than residents neighbouring Gávea (Leitão, 2007 cited in Sørbye, 2021a, p. 16).

While these quantitative numbers give us an indication of the immense security challenges and social inequality in the city, less seems to be known about how residents experience urban divides, segregation and which vulnerabilities they express (Fahlberg & Vicino, 2015, p. 16). In this thesis, I argue Rocinha offers a good opportunity to explore this because it is

the largest favela in the city, located in the city's privileged South Zone and perceived to be a more peaceful favela than other favelas in the city.

## *1.2 Research questions*

In this thesis, I ask: What are security narratives in Rocinha?

The question is open and exploratory, which has the advantage that field realities come to shape what is to be discovered and interpreted. It provides agency to research participants in explaining their experiences and perceptions of everyday securities (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, pp. 26-27). To systematically organise my explorative study, I have two empirical questions as a guide to the research:

- How do residents in Rocinha experience and reflect on security?
- Which strategies do residents employ to navigate territorial stigmatization and insecurity in the city?

## *1.3 Thesis outline*

To answer the research questions, I have divided this thesis into five chapters. In the next chapter, I introduce the narrative approach to security. The security theory debate in international relations is extensive and I explain in this chapter my choice to draw on and combine insights from human security and feminist security studies in international relations. To do this, I add a discussion of urban security, drawing on the work of geography and urban studies scholars to build an interdisciplinary narrative approach to security. In the third chapter, I discuss my methodological considerations and research design. I also explain how I prepared, collected and analysed this thesis' data material, including reflections on my presence in the field, ethical considerations and which steps I took to ensure transparency and trustworthiness. In the fourth chapter, I familiarise myself with processes of uneven urban development and (re)production of insecurity in the city, moving from a national level to a city level before zooming in on Rocinha. In this chapter I also present, analyse and discuss my empirical data findings with my narrative approach to security in the city. In the last chapter, I summarise this thesis' empirical findings and provide some methodological and theoretical reflections.

## 2. A narrative approach to security in International Relations

Creating an analytical approach to security in the city with an international relations lens is messy. It feels like patching together a quilt work – drawing on various analytical concepts and methodological approaches. In this chapter, I briefly review the evolution of security studies, emphasising developments after the end of the Cold War. In this period, there has been a broadening of issues, a deepening in terms of interconnecting global with local and now also urban scales, and an opening to new methodologies, agencies, and more. I argue it is relevant to work interdisciplinary and draw also on insights from urban studies and geography in the study of security and violence in the city. The narrative approach to security, a key concern in feminist security studies, enables the integration of multiple security perspectives and concerns with security in the city. In this chapter, I explain my international relations approach to security in Rocinha.

### *2.1 Opening security studies in international relations*

In the study of international relations, realism, liberalism and marxism have been among the three dominant theoretical perspectives or lenses through which we can see and make sense of world politics. In the period after the First World War in 1919, international relations primarily focused on relations between states and security was a main concern (Williams & McDonald, 2018, p. 3). After the second world war, and throughout the cold war-period, state security, military power/force and the overhanging threat of nuclear weapons were key areas of concern. This led to security issues concerning people's security or human security being mostly overshadowed and hibernating in the margins of security studies (ibid). However, in the early 1980s, Barry Buzan made the first attempt to open security studies beyond state security in his book *People, States, and Fear* (ibid). Yet, it was not until Buzan's second edition in the early 1990s that things really started to move within IR and security studies, with the demise of the cold war that facilitated an appreciation of thinking about security in other contexts, e.g., “political, societal, economic, and environmental context[s]” (ibid).

Simultaneously in the 1980s, many critical security scholars started redefining security beyond nation-states and their survival, and feminists were in the driver's seat of this development (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013, pp. 186-187). For example, Tickner and Sjoberg, urged to “define security in terms of threats to human well-being and survival–security of the individual and their environment, as well as the state” (p. 187). Security was understood more broadly to include a variety of security threats – ranging from “domestic violence, rape,

poverty, subordination, ecological degradation, as well as war (...) [and] economic insecurities” (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013, pp. 187-188).

This widening of security issues resonated with the security concept developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) at the end of the Cold War. In the 1994 Human Development Report, UNDP argued that “the concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly” (p. 22). The report further argued that ordinary people’s security concerns have been forgotten, and it is necessary to emphasise the need for multiple securities – for “economic, food, health, environmental security, personal community and political security” (ibid). The UNDP report draws attention to people’s everyday worries and fears, such as “unemployment, disease, localized discrimination and violence, and crime” (p. 223).

Together with critical and feminist approaches to security, other security issues beyond the state gained more attention among academics, policymakers and NGOs in the period after the Cold War. Gjørsv (2018) further argued the human security concept can be useful because it “draws attention to security dynamics at the level of civilians or non-state actors. It concentrates on understanding the security needs and capacities of persons (...)” (2018, p. 227). Critical security scholar Edward Newman (2016) has also argued for using the human security concept to question “structural dimensions” and aspects that cause insecurity for people (p. 1179). Gjørsv (2018) has argued that human security opened security research “to various other methodological and analytical approaches” (p. 232). By opening it, Gjørsv sees a potential “ally” in research on human security issues with feminist scholarship and a narrative approach (p. 232; see also Hoogensen & Stuvøy, 2006). This is because the latter two attune to people’s everyday experiences of insecurity, what they fear, how they express vulnerabilities and provide security for themselves (ibid).

For this thesis, feminism is relevant because “feminists not only broaden what *security means*, but also *who is guaranteed security*” and “most of their analyses of security starts at the bottom, with the individuals or the community, rather than with the state or the international system” (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013, p. 187). Attuned to people’s everyday experiences, feminists are curious about the stories people have to tell about security, violence, war, peace and more (Wibben, 2011, pp. 1-2, 5; See also Enloe, 1990). In the next step, I review the narrative approach to security as a novel approach reflecting human and feminist security perspectives.

## *2.2 Insights from feminist security studies in developing a narrative approach to security*

In this section, I focus on the contributions of Annick T.R. Wibben, Maria Stern and Carolyn Nordstrom. I develop a narrative approach to security.

In her book *Feminist Security Studies: A narrative approach*, Annick T.R. Wibben (2011) seeks to open “security studies that would allow the narratives of feminists (and others) to be recognized and taken seriously” (p. 7). The author explains why IR feminism and personal narratives are valuable when studying security, war, peace and violence (p. 5). She argues that there is always more than one story to be told, and privileging singular narratives is “itself a form of violence” (p. 2). As an example, Wibben demonstrates how personal stories of African American mothers were very different from the dominant U.S. narrative when the 9/11 attacks occurred (pp. 1-3). These women talked about other daily challenges than what was at risk or occurred to the nation (ibid). Their challenges and security needs were influenced by intersecting identity markers, like gender, class and race (p. 3). Wibben has further argued, “these narratives of security, told from the outsiders’ standpoints, offer a very different account of security than the dominant-state-centred security narrative” (p. 100). This demonstrates the value of employing a feminist narrative approach to security.

Focusing on everyday experiences and personal narratives is the approach chosen by Maria Stern (1998; 2005) and Carolyn Nordstrom (1997) to study people’s narratives. Maria Stern (1998, pp. 55-57) asks a classic feminist question: Where are (Mayan) women in global politics? By drawing on partial life stories of eighteen politically, active Mayan women, Stern demonstrates how their fears and the threats they are exposed to, are “clearly relevant thinking about security and insecurity in terms of global politics” (1998, p. 57). This is particularly relevant for marginalised groups and individuals, who do not necessarily “feel represented or protected by the state, or people whose political identities reside elsewhere” (ibid). The narrative approach allows for their voices to be included.

In Nordstrom’s (1997) work, the focus is on the everyday life experiences of soldiers, thieves and ordinary people during Mozambique’s civil war (Nordstrom cited in Wibben, 2011, pp. 95-97). With an ethnographic approach, Nordstrom collected first-hand accounts of war, violence and peace, and developed an account of how “people and communities recreate their worlds amidst ongoing violence” (Nordstrom, 1997, pp. xviii, cited in Wibben, 2011, p. 95). In one of Nordstrom’s interviews, she finds that although physical violence is important – it



only constitutes parts of the picture, and thus one story. One of her research participants explained to her,

“... but do you know what I think is the worst thing about this war? It is sleeping in the bush at night. ... these bandidos, they take away our humanity, our dignity, they make us like animals [...] This is the worst violence you can subject someone to (Nordstrom, 1997, p. 125, cited in Wibben, 2011, p. 96).

The quote shows that rather than being concerned with major violence, security is connected to something else, something as ordinary and frightening as laying in the bush in the dark and fearing what might happen. Learning about people and their lifeworld is therefore an approach that can provide insight into contextual dimensions of security. With a narrative approach, it is possible to deepen the understanding of security. Narratives are personal, contextual and vary concerning people’s various markers of identity, e.g., class, “race” and gender (Wibben, 2011, pp. 2, 85-87). They require a close reading, and Stern developed a method of reading (in)security as a textual practice based on people’s life stories (pp. 56, 60-61, 64). In this thesis, the narrative approach to security is focused on city life, and specifically on a marginalized urban space. In the next step, I therefore develop my research strategy by reviewing literature on security from geography and urban studies, thus, moving outside international relations to develop my approach to security in this thesis.

### *2.3 Looking outside international relations: Urban studies*

Mustafa Dikeç’s (2017b) book *Urban Rage: The Revolt of The Excluded* offers insights to anyone interested in security, violence and systematic injustices in cities. In the book, Dikeç suggests moving from the pathological perspective to the political perspective (pp. 6-7). The first perspective is concerned with how marginalized segments of the population are labelled and referred to as feral, polluting and other condescending terms (ibid). The second perspective aims to go on a deeper level, to question social and physical structures in the city that are excluding and oppressive (ibid). In my analysis, I am inspired by Dikeç and I move indeed from the pathological perspective to the political perspective by questioning physical and social structures in the city (ibid).

To understand the sources of urban rage, Dikeç looks at exclusion in this way,

“Exclusion as I use the term here, does not imply the actual exclusion of some groups from society, but their exclusion from enjoying the rights, opportunities, and privileges within it as much as others do” (Dikeç, 2017a, p. 5).

Dikeç has further argued that “urban uprisings are political ... [and] they expose patterns, dynamics and structures of exclusion and oppression that have become routine and normalized” (p. 7). These structures of exclusion and oppression are created and maintained by those who possess and exercise power in the city (ibid). Hence, they are political, and a form of violence that locks disadvantaged citizens in a status quo where they do not enjoy the same rights, opportunities and privileges as others do for social mobility, human development and ultimately their personal security and human well-being. Dikeç sees urban rage and uprising as, “... not random or one-off occurrences, but a part of systemic injustices ... with interrelated economic, social and political causes” (pp. 8-9). The focus on security in the city that characterises Dikeç’s work, incorporates multiple dimensions of security that are significant to people’s everyday lives. Dikeç’s perspective stands out with its emphasis on the political in the development of urban (in)security. The politics of it is in Dikeç’s analysis connected to structural dimensions that create systematic injustices, insecurity and rage or frustration.

In geography, territorial stigmatization is a term used to express the effects that systematic injustices have on people’s identity. Slater explains territorial stigmatisation<sup>1</sup> as concerned with,

“how people are discredited, devalued, and poorly treated because of the places with which they are associated” (Slater, 2021b, p. 137)

Territorial stigmatization is a way to understand marginality from below (Slater, 2021b, p. 142). It draws attention to the challenges of coming from marginal neighbourhoods, which are not only material but also immaterial challenges. A place is a marker of someone’s identity and can affect residents in most parts of life (Slater, 2021b, pp. 143-144). Slater in this way challenges our thinking and analytical capacity to see the disadvantaged neighbourhoods as the “expressions of the problems to be addressed” rather than seeing marginal city districts as the problem in the city (p. 162).

The role of a place is in the work of these two urban studies scholars, Dikeç and Slater, illustrating two important dimensions of (urban) security. Dikeç draws attention to how people’s experiences are shaped by systemic features and underscores the importance of

---

<sup>1</sup> Tom Slater has worked together with Loïc Wacquant (2008) who coined the concept. Wacquant has drawn inspiration from Pierre Bourdieu’s (1991) work on symbolic power and Erving Goffman’s (1963) work on stigma.

structural analysis in the context of working with people's experiences. Slater contributes with an important reflection on identity and place. While Stern underscored the connection between identity markers and security, Slater supplemented this approach with a concern for place with the concept of territorial stigmatisation. This informs my approach; *an interdisciplinary*, narrative approach to security in international relations.

### 3. Methodological considerations: Research design, quality of data and ethics

In this chapter, I will justify why I have chosen a qualitative research strategy with an interpretive research design, including some methodological considerations regarding data collection and analysis of the narratives. I will also discuss some of the challenges I encountered and how I responded to them. Lastly, I will point out some ethical considerations I made and which steps I took to ensure transparency in the research process and data quality.

#### *3.1 Research design*

To answer the thesis' research questions, I have chosen a qualitative research strategy because it focuses on words rather than numbers as the quantitative research tradition does (Bryman, 2016, p. 375). A qualitative research strategy is also considered better suited because of its epistemological and ontological orientations (Bryman, 2016, pp. 32-33). Epistemology is concerned with the “knowing ability” or how can we know (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 4). To know, I study my research participant's experiences, perspectives and reflections by combining unstructured and semi-structured qualitative interviews (ibid). Ontology is concerned with “the reality status of the ‘thing’ being studied” (ibid) or “what phenomena do we think make up the social world” (Williams & McDonald, 2018, p. 6).

In this thesis, I believe there are multiple, perceived and experienced realities among the research participants and not one single truth (ibid). To explore which security narratives exist in Rocinha, I rely on the research participant's local knowledge that I interpret (ibid, pp. 4-5). In this sense, I work abductively to understand my research participants' worldview to craft security narratives (Bryman, 2016, p. 394; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, pp. 4-6). This characterises interpretivist research. It also aligns with the feminist narrative approach to security, which I have adopted to understand residents in Rocinha's experiences of everyday insecurity.

#### *3.2 Creating security texts with fieldwork*

Before I travelled to Rocinha in late April 2022, I tried to get an overview of which security narratives existed in the city district. I decided to primarily focus on literature that was not older than five years. However, some publications went back to 2013. On Web of Science, I used the following search words: security, Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro, violence, inequality, narratives, international relations, favela, among others. Rocinha and security only gave two results. Rocinha alone gave forty hits. I considered many of the results not to be relevant for

my thesis and research focus and question. Hence, I also used google and searched known websites, such as RioOnWatch and checked publications from other scholars I knew who has written extensively on Rio de Janeiro, favelas and security in the city. I did not limit my search inquiries to Rocinha only because many of the city's favelas are affected by the same police pacification program and urban development program.

Based on initial background research, I have divided the existing narratives into groups: the official state narrative, the NGO narrative and the academic narrative. The state narrative is mainly concerned with the “war on drugs” narrative, fighting groups of organized crime to “regain territorial sovereignty and control” in the favelas. The NGO narratives, which are difficult to limit since there are so many of them, are mainly concerned with “genocide” typically in favelas in Rio de Janeiro's North Zone, and what they call “criminalization of poverty” (Besser et al., 2016; Lima, 2021; RioOnWatch, 2019). In the academic world, the narratives appeared to be mainly concerned with the state's recent public security interventions (such as community policing program and slum-upgrading) by examining and critiquing them (Braathen, 2020; Fahlberg, 2018a; Fahlberg & Vicino, 2015; Fahlberg et al., 2020; Sørbøe, 2013; Sørbøe, 2021a).

I arrived in Rio on April 25. I used the first two weeks to prepare the interview guide, re-familiarize myself with the city and the research site, and get up to speed with my Portuguese language skills since I had not been to Brazil since August 2019 (I lived in Brazil from January 2018, until August 2019). I interviewed the first participant on May 10 and the last on June 15. I travelled back to Norway on June 27. Total time I spent in the field was nine weeks.

### *Interview guide*

Preliminary background research on security in Rio de Janeiro (academic and non-academic literature) informed the first drafts of my interview guide. I decided to divide the interview guide into eight parts. In the first part, I explained what my research is about, which themes we would talk about and if the participants had any questions before we started. In the second part, I prepared questions about the participants' background to get an overview of whom I talked to, before asking them about their everyday lives; what a typical day looked like for them, if they encountered any sources of insecurity, and what they did to stay safe. Since most of the earlier literature (2010-2016) on security and development in the city was concerned with the UPP (pacification police unit) and PAC (urban development programs), I

noted down questions about security after 2016 for two reasons; first, it would be “fresher” in participants memory; and two, I hoped it would bring new insights not already covered in previous research. I also added questions about the pandemic, and how it affected the community since these experiences and reflections are not covered in previous research and are fresh in the participants’ memories. In part six, I constructed questions about the police, security in the community and perceptions of the police. In the last three parts, I constructed different “security” questions. These questions were not directly about security, but indirect questions about security; asking the participants about perceptions of the city’s South Zone (advantaged neighbourhoods), media outlets and social media, and which actors they believed could improve the security in the community. In the final part of the interview guide, I prepared questions if the interviewees had anything to add, and whom I should talk to next and thanked them for their participation.

I recognize this interview guide is very broad. However, it allowed me to come prepared to the field and respond to field realities as they emerged during the interviews and attune the interview guide on the fly. I did not update it. Instead, I sat down and reflected before and after each interview to prepare myself for the next interviews. I also checked in with my two supervisors while designing the interview guide to get initial feedback on it.

#### *Mapping, selecting and recruiting research participants*

Before travelling to Rio de Janeiro, I attempted to predict whom I would talk to in order to collect narratives of security and violence. Initially, I wanted to talk to “ordinary people” in Rocinha who have not had much contact with other researchers because I felt it was important to get their voices and stories in the open. However, my list became rather short with only three people that I knew from 2015. It was suggested that I might want to talk to community activists since they have different experiences, mixing personal/professional insights, related to the themes (security and violence) I was interested in.

After I had arrived in Rio de Janeiro, I reached out to my co-supervisor and another experienced researcher in Rocinha and asked for advice and if they could think about potential research participants that I could interview after having briefly explained my research focus. I got a list of approximately six potential people to interview, of whom only one was willing to participate. This research participant was crucial to my data collection and in the recruitment of additional participants through the “snowball sampling approach”

(Bryman, 2016, pp. 415-416). This way, I managed to recruit other participants I would not otherwise have been able to gain access to.

I also reached out to one of my previous contacts in Rocinha that I had not spoken to in seven years. The person was crucial to mapping additional participants since she was well-connected within the community, working in Rocinha for the municipality, with a focus on social development and adolescents. I explained my research focus, showed her my research invitation letter and told her whom I would like to interview and why. She worked out a list of potential research participants, mixed between ordinary residents in Rocinha and community activists as well as people who did not live in Rocinha, but acted in the community in their professional capacity. She contacted the potential participants first and asked they if agreed to participate. She would then forward their contact details to me so we could find a suitable time, date and place.

The selection and recruitment of research participants were done mostly pragmatically. It was determined by whom I could gain access to, followed by an evaluation and reflection of why the participant was interesting and what I hoped to learn from the interviews. It was therefore difficult to have some sort of “sampling criteria” since I had so little control over the process and whom I would be able to talk to. For a more detailed description of the research participants, including my own reflections on why I chose to interview them, I refer to appendices 7.1 Table of research participants.

#### *Introducing the research participants*

During my fieldwork in Rocinha, I interviewed seventeen research participants. The majority of the research participants (elven) had been born and raised in Rocinha. Two of the research participants had moved to Rocinha in their adulthood from the Northeast and had lived there for decades. Three research participants were also born and raised in the community, but had moved out and continued to work as professionals (psychologists and nurses) in the health sector in Rocinha. Another three research participants have never lived in Rocinha, but worked in relation to Rocinha in their professional capacity; in higher governmental and municipal positions (education, civil defence, public ministry). The last participant is not native to Rocinha but lives in Leblon, which is close to Rocinha.

The participants in Rocinha were mixed between ordinary people and community activists. Some of them are university students, whereas others are not. Some of them work in the

service sector, whereas others work in corporate companies. Their age span stretches from twenty-five to well into their seventies. Among them, ten were men and seven were women.

### *Interviewing and responding to field realities*

In the interviews, I briefly introduced myself and greeted all the participants. I reiterated what my research was concerned with, listed all the themes I would like to cover in the interview and asked if I could start the audio recorder. Some participants got either bored because I was steering the agenda for the interviews too strictly, whereas others got unsure and/or tried to respond to what they thought I wanted to know. Therefore, I decided to switch my interviewing strategy. I focused more on introducing myself, that I had lived and volunteered in Rocinha seven years ago and that I was now in the neighbourhood as a Norwegian student, writing a master's thesis on people's security in cities. I mentioned that I was particularly interested in their experiences and reflections on security in the city and asked them to tell me a bit more about themselves and their daily activities. In some interviews, I followed the interview guide more strictly, whereas in other interviews I used it more loosely or did not look at it at all. It depended on my learning curve as a researcher and situational understanding, the participant's personality, position in the community, life experience, age and sex since that influenced how they reflected on security based on what they had been exposed to.

Reflecting on this six months after the interviews were conducted, I think these two changes were necessary to foster a dialogical process and co-production between the researcher and researcher in the thesis data material (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012; Wibben, 2011). I also think the participants trusted me more since it was not my first time in the neighbourhood, I spoke the local language and created a friendlier interview environment for both parties (Riessman, 1993, p. 54). However, this resulted in the thesis' data material becoming very rich, dense and complex to analyse post-fieldwork. It was also challenging to construct the three security narratives in the next chapter.

In addition to interviewing, I also spoke to other residents inside and outside Rocinha about my research topic and interest. Further, I attended a historical walking tour given by an NGO in Rocinha and participated in two community meetings concerned with community security and youth development. In the first meeting, I adopted a passive listening role, whereas in the other, I spoke with youths about Norway, Brazil, the democratic welfare state and education. I noted down insights from these activities in my field log.



### *3.3 Analysing security texts*

The research participants seldom speak in terms of the analytical categories that I have outlined in chapter two, e.g., the various human security categories, or Dikeç's (2017b, p. 5) definition of exclusion and Slater's territorial stigmatization. Therefore, similar to Stern's experiences, my research participants did not feel particularly insecure in Rocinha when I asked them about threats, sources of insecurities and what they did to stay safe (Stern, 2005, pp. 64-65). By reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, it eventually became clearer that participants' security concerns, apart from infrastructural concerns and fire exchanges between the police and groups of organized crime, were concerns with discrimination (ibid). To get to this point, I will now describe how I organized, treated and analysed my data material.

#### *Transcribing and preliminary analysis*

All interviews were tape-recorded. Whilst in the field, I practised field notes and post-interview reflections. Twelve out of seventeen interviews were transcribed post-field work. Due to a large amount of audio-recorded material (twenty-five hours), I got help from two friends who are fluent in Brazilian Portuguese with the transcribing process. Most interviews were transcribed in August, two months after the fieldwork had ended. In some interviews, I used Microsoft Word's dictation function, whereas in others I manually transcribed them. In the end, I had over five-hundred pages of transcribed text.

After having transcribed all the interviews, I listened to the interviews, wrote down notes in a handbook and started to colour-code parts of the transcripts I found interesting and found relevant to my research questions. Then I translated the parts I had found interesting in the interviews into English because I read quicker in English than I do in Portuguese, and this thesis is written in English. However, later I dropped this approach because it was too time-consuming. It was also far from obvious which parts of the transcripts I would later use when writing up the thesis. Riessman (1993, p. 60) has described this as a common challenge in narrative analysis. There are several ways to deal with this challenge: themes, coding and reduction to core narratives. Although it was time-consuming, I had to do both to finally identify three security narratives, which are presented in the next chapter.

#### *Themes, coding and its problems*

In qualitative research, thematic analysis of the data material is a common strategy to make sense of large amounts of data material (Bryman, 2016, p. 584). In the second phase of my

data analysis, I attempted to make sense of the data by going through the transcripts and looking for reoccurring and common themes among the research participants. I made three core themes: 1) living among drug traffickers and the police, 2) ignorance and negligence, and 3) urban frustration and dribbling of territorial stigmatization. Within these core themes, I also developed various sub-themes, which related to what the participants told me. Once I had gotten a reasonably well overview of the data material, and organized it into themes and codes, I wrote down a first draft that included nine out of seventeen participants' insights and contributions.

However, there were at least two problems with the thesis's first draft. First, it appeared as if it was patched together by many different cloth pieces into one rag. Second, it did not convey three narratives as I intended to. Qualitative researchers have discussed this as the “problems with coding” in qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2016, p. 583). Bryman has pointed out that “plucking chunks of text out of the context within which they appeared ... the social setting can be lost.” (ibid). Similarly, Coffey and Atkinson (1996) have argued the data may become fragmented, losing track of what research participants said. As narrative analyst Riessman observed,

“.. some individuals knitted together several themes into long accounts that had coherence and sequence, defying easy categorization ... There seemed to be a common structure beneath the talk about a variety of topics” (Riessman, 1993, p. vi).

This became clear when I wrote the thesis' first draft. Sorting my data material into themes and codes was not an ideal strategy to analyse my data, especially after having changed my interview strategy in the field. However, organizing and coding my data material was useful because it gave me a good comprehension of what the participants had narrated six months earlier. I discussed this with my supervisors, and it was suggested that I approach my data material differently; create three core narratives that are somehow linked together. In the narrative analysis literature, this is described as the “reduction to core narratives” (Riessman, 1993, p. 60).

From nine participants and the previous themes and categories I had developed, I went down to five participants and three core narratives. I spent days thinking, reflecting and figuring out how and why these three security narratives are hanging together, and are narratives of security.

The solution I found to the “problem of coding” and doing narrative analysis is simple; pack away all thematic categories on various papers, lists of quotes from participants, transcripts and field notes. I explained the different narratives to a friend while walking in the forest and this is when I realised this could be a potential way of telling the security narratives from the field in a text. The narratives are presented in section 4.2 Narratives of security.

### *3.4 Reflexivity and ethics*

In interpretive research designs, it is common practice to reflect on one’s positionality concerning the research because researchers bring with them “specific histories, capacities and characteristics”(Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 67). Although I briefly outlined this in the introduction chapter, I would like to reflect further on it to be aware of what I brought into this thesis, and how it influences what I observe. I also believe this may be beneficial for potential readers of this thesis so they can make their own assessment of what I brought into this thesis and why. Feminist researchers, for example, argue acknowledging their own’s subjectivity can enhance the research’s objectivity, whereas other branches of social sciences believe it contaminates the research (Tickner, 2005, pp. 8-9).

I am a white male in my early thirties from an ordinary, Norwegian family. I am privileged in life and particularly through my opportunities to undertake university studies which I believe should be available to everybody if they wish so. Although it does not hold absolute power for social mobility, it determines much of one’s future in today’s society. If I had been born elsewhere, I am not sure I would be writing this thesis. Thus, this thesis is normative and has an emancipatory aspiration and goal for a more social and equitable world. This is visible in this thesis, and I have questioned justice and equity in the neighbourhood from an early age.

Specific histories and capacities that are relevant to this thesis are my decade-long on-and-off relationship with Brazil. My volunteering experience in Rocinha (2015) certainly influenced me in writing this thesis. I also volunteered for another NGO, Techo, in Brazil during my exchange studies (2018) which have influenced this thesis and its trajectory. Techo works towards creating “a just, egalitarian, integrated and poverty-free society in which all people can fully exercise their rights and duties, and have the opportunity to develop their capabilities” (Techo, 2022). I share this emancipatory goal and it aligns with feminists’ concerns of “eradicating violence and a commitment to social and economic justice” (Wibben, 2011, p. 4) which I argue is ultimately security and safety, too. Lastly, my language skills in Brazilian Portuguese were crucial to access the research site and talking to the participants in their local language. However, I stress I am not a native speaker; I took 50

ECTS in Brazilian Portuguese during my undergraduate studies in Europe. I spent one year on exchange in Southern Brazil, where all classes were in Portuguese. I lived in Rocinha for four months in 2015 and worked in Rio de Janeiro for six months in 2019. I believe this gave me some societal and cultural understanding, and sufficient language proficiency to conduct and be a co-producer in the interviews.

I further believe it is difficult to be completely “neutral” during the interviews and not influence research participants because of the themes and topics we discussed (violence, injustice and feelings). They exposed vulnerabilities and sometimes tough experiences. I therefore spoke with them as a friend and ally. This affected the data material coming out of the interviews. It is value-laden and normative. Wacquant (2011, pp. 87-88) has encouraged researchers to go native, but native-armed, and come back as social scientists. I understand this as going into the field with my what I have read in advance and coming back to the writing desk as an IR master student when I analyse the data material and write it up (ibid). Reflecting on this in hindsight, I am almost certain I would not have gained access to the research participants and their trust if I had acted more “neutral.”

### *Ethics*

In social science, researchers have “an ethical obligation to their colleagues, their study population, and larger society” (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 43). I have therefore made various ethical considerations and taken necessary steps to “ensure the rights, privacy, and welfare of people” (ibid). In this context, people are the research participants I have talked to and interviewed during my fieldwork. I provided all the research participants, who agreed to take part in the research, with an informed consent (7.2 Research invitation letter) explaining who I am, the study’s aims, how I will treat the data and ensure their privacy. I have given all participants fictitious names and minimal detail about their profession/occupation/NGO-connections to ensure they cannot be identified while giving readers of this thesis an understanding of who I have spoken to.

All data, field notes, logs and audio recordings were stored on NMBU’s OneDrive, protected by two-factor authentication. In the field, audio recordings were uploaded in the same evening and erased from the phone before re-entering the field. I also got written consent from those who helped me to transcribe some of the data and agreed that the content is confidential and to be deleted after transcribed files had been sent back to me. This research project is also registered with the Norwegian Centre for Research data.

Before every interview, I told the participants that they could withdraw at any time without any problem. In some interviews, I found it challenging yet rewarding when research participants asked me about Norway and what life was like there. It is a very different reality, and I did not want to lie. Sometimes I gave a short explanation of how Norway and Norwegian society has evolved, whereas other times we discussed the democratic welfare state. My intention is not to say Norway is perfect because it is not, but rather to be honest and responsive to their curiosity. Several research participants were grateful and found it inspiring. One of them expressed explicitly that what he dreamt of seemed to exist somewhere far away; a democratic welfare state where the state facilitates for human development for its citizens.

### *3.5 Quality of data: Trustworthiness*

Validity and trustworthiness are different ways of assessing a study's quality and integrity. Quantitative researchers tend to prefer validity, reliability and replicability when assessing their studies. These three logics of assessing one's study are not fit for my data material, research question and design (Riessman, 1993, pp. 64-66; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, pp. 92-94). For instance, how does one measure reliability and validity in a participant's narratives? If the interviews were held again, the same content would not be produced.

I decided to follow narrative scholar Riessman's suggestion,

“But we can provide information that will make it possible for others to determine the trustworthiness of our work by (a) describing how our interpretations were produced, (b) making visible what we did, (c) specifying how we accomplished successive transformations ... and (d) making primary data available to other researchers (Riessman, 1993, p. 68)

Riessman's suggestion also communicates with Schwartz-Shea's and Yanow's recommendation for a trustworthy research design in interpretivist research (2012, pp. 99-106). However, the latter two authors also recommend being explicit, reflexive and open about one's positionality. Therefore, I reflected on how my identity and presence have affected this research project from the start till its end.

I built up this chapter by discussing and arguing why I went for a qualitative strategy with an interpretivist research design to answer the main research question I set out to investigate. I then explained how I mapped and recruited participants and how they offered multiple perspectives due to their various backgrounds, collected and co-produced this thesis data

material, and how it was analysed and written up. During fieldwork, I did not make raw primary data available, but wrote a diary and kept my two supervisors updated during the interview process, summarising my findings, challenges and doubts. Although this research diary was mostly for me, I think it has provided transparency in the data collection process and improved some of the data I collected since I was able to ask for advice and recommendation when I felt stuck. Primary data, including recordings, transcripts and notes are only stored until graduation.

## 4. Security Narratives from Rocinha

The purpose of this chapter is to answer this thesis' research questions. It is organized into four parts. In the first section, I provide a brief historical overview of urban development in Rio de Janeiro in the twentieth century, moving from a national to a city level before zooming in on Rocinha. On the national level, I have identified relevant trends and factors that have contributed to Rio de Janeiro's uneven making and structures present today. On the city level, I draw inspiration from a Brazilian scholar (based in the U.S.) who has written extensively on Rio de Janeiro's security debate as an inspirational source for my empirical study in Rocinha. Then, I introduce the research site to get on a community level. In the second section, I present the identified security narratives to answer this thesis' first explorative question. In the third section, I dive deeper into these narratives and interpret them from a different security perspective, reflecting human, feminist security and urban studies perspectives to provide the basis to answer this thesis' two empirical questions. In the fourth section, I reflect on what these narratives are telling us.

### *4.1 Background*

To understand Rio de Janeiro's security landscape and the situation in Rio de Janeiro today, it is necessary with a brief, historical background of the city's urban evolution and main trends since that has and continues to contribute to the (re)production of insecurity in the city. I move from a national perspective to a city perspective and then to a community perspective, introducing the research site: Rocinha.

#### *4.1.1 Security, urban development and favela politics in Rio de Janeiro*

Brazil's colonial and imperial legacies are important to understand both the social and physical structures of the city (Fausto & Fausto, 2014). With Brazil's abolition of slavery in 1888, former Afro-Brazilian slaves were pushed from the plantations and pulled to cities to look for work in order to survive (Braathen, 2020, p. 147; Fahlberg, 2018b, p. 175). Once they arrived in the city, the city's elite seemed to have few plans to include them in the city as equal citizens (Fahlberg, 2018b, p. 175). Most of the disadvantaged citizens ended up with precarious jobs and living conditions and settled in many of the city's hilltops. The urban poor who lived in working-class apartments in the city centre suffered evictions and demolition of their tenements in the 1930s (Hidalgo et al., 2021, p. 174). In the late 1940s and until today, rural migrants from Brazil's Northeast started to arrive in Rio de Janeiro (Marques, 2021, pp. 21-23). Many of them took part in construction work and other service-

based professions. Since the housing situation was already precarious, they too built their homes on the city's hillsides (Fahlberg, 2018b, p. 175). At the same time, Rio de Janeiro lost its capital status to Brasília and shortly after, Brazil was under military rule until the mid-1980s (ibid). During this time, state-led violence intensified with several wars against political opponents and the urban poor with further evictions and demolitions (Braathen, 2020, p. 147). Cocaine also entered the city in the 1980s contributing to what is today known as the "war on drugs" and the militarization of Rio de Janeiro's streets (ibid; Hidalgo et al., 2021, p. 174). After a long period of state neglect, there were rudimentary efforts to improve the social and living conditions for favela residents, when Brazil transitioned to democracy (Braathen et al., 2013, p. 137; Fausto & Fausto, 2014, pp. 324-325). However, many of these urban development projects were top-down and did little to improve the security and living conditions of the urban poor (Braathen, 2020, pp. 145, 152-153; Braathen et al., 2013, p. 137). Perhaps most significant were several social policies and programs implemented in the early 1990s and during Lula's first presidential periods (2003-2011) (Fahlberg, 2018b, p. 173). Most recent security and development programs (2006 until today), the police pacification unit program (UPP) and large-scale city-wide urban development (PAC), have to some extent contributed to some security for the urban poor while simultaneously entrenching it (Braathen, 2020, pp. 145-146; Marques, 2021, pp. 29, 31; Sørbøe, 2018). Ultimately, while some favela residents have gained improved purchase power and material conditions, access to rights, resources, opportunities and privileges appears to remain unjust and exclusive to more privileged citizens (Dikeç, 2017a, pp. 5, 9; Fahlberg et al., 2020, p. 9; Sørbøe, 2018, pp. 107, 119).

#### *4.1.2 Rio de Janeiro: Urban militarism, segregation and everyday security concerns*

There is a vast body of literature focusing on security, development and state interaction with the city's favelas. Common themes are security, poverty, exclusion, segregation and inclusive citizenship. In the last twenty years, much of the literature has focused on and used the city's two most recent public security programs, which are the city's pacification police unit (UPP) and large-scale city-wide urban development programs (PAC), and used them as lenses to explore a variety of security issues, urban development and urbanization, human rights violations and many other research interests. This research focus has contributed extensively to scientific knowledge production in a variety of scholarly fields and disciplines, and the academic security and development debate in the city. I am inspired by this for my empirical study.



One of many authors who have written extensively on security, segregation and development in Rio de Janeiro in the last decade, is sociologist Anjuli N. Fahlberg. The author has researched Rio de Janeiro's security challenges from different perspectives, employing qualitative and quantitative research methods, combining interviews, surveys and participatory action-based research designs (Fahlberg, 2018a; Fahlberg & Vicino, 2015; Fahlberg et al., 2020). Her contributions have been important to both the academic security debate in the city, and to residents in the communities. While Fahlberg's research has focused on the city district Cidade de Deus (a favela in Western Rio), my research focuses on Rocinha. Although these are two different disadvantaged neighbourhoods, I argue they – as well as other favelas in the city – are affected by the same state's public security policies in the city (the UPP and PAC). Therefore, her research can be used as an inspirational source for my empirical study. I do recognize and acknowledge there has been extensive research on Rocinha also (see for example Sørbye, 2021a), but I have chosen to delimit the academic narrative to Fahlberg's contributions because of how the author has framed and investigated security in the city.

In *Breaking the city: Militarization and segregation in Rio de Janeiro*, Fahlberg et al. (2015, pp. 10-11, 15-16) have explored how global forces together with local policies can create and institutionalize duality in the city. Local politics under scrutiny in Rio de Janeiro in this sense is the city's community policing program (the UPP), whereas global forces are, however broadly or narrowly understood, the effects of capitalism's pursuit for growth – influenced by a mixture of global and local interests. By questioning the consequences and effects of the state's attempt to "deliver" security through a tough military approach, occupying the favelas with pacification units, the authors argue the program on the one hand has brought somewhat security to the neighbourhood, whereas on the other hand, it has also contributed to the narrative of the favela as a problematic territory, housing many of the city's internal enemies (drug traffickers) that requires a confronting approach to ensure security and order in the city (pp. 14-15). Viewed differently, bringing security and order to the city as a whole, is possibly better achieved through local politics that favour social and human development that target inequality, poverty, and education with a focus on social mobility and inclusion (pp. 15-16). Research on how residents in marginalized neighbourhoods perceive urban divides, segregation and marginality is needed (ibid). This has inspired me – particularly how residents experience and reflect on security in the city, and how they navigate the territorial stigmatization they face in a divided city.

From a different people-centred perspective, Fahlberg has investigated residents' of Cidade de Deus perceptions of local security politics in Rio de Janeiro, focusing on the city's police pacifying unit and militarization of urban spaces. In her article "*It was totally different than what we had before*": *Perceptions of urban militarism and Rio de Janeiro*, Fahlberg's (2018a) point of departure was that security in Cidade de Deus had deteriorated after Rio de Janeiro hosted the Olympic Games in 2016, which had resulted in the decline of the UPP and return to urban warfare between rival drug gangs and the military police (pp. 312-313, 315-316). In her findings, the author suggests residents' experiences with the pacifying police units are more diverse (and positive) than what earlier research had suggested (pp. 303, 320). Additional research is suggested in two divergent directions: more research on urban military interventions and how they affect marginalized city districts and their residents, but also considering the other security concerns and vulnerabilities of residents in marginalized city – such as "economic vulnerability, discrimination, and exclusion from the political and cultural fabric of the city" (p. 320). The latter suggestion has inspired me more than the former, and is more in line with this thesis' aims, research questions and its analytical framework.

Fahlberg has written two articles on security in Rio de Janeiro by using the pacifying police unit as an entry point to make sense of the city's duality and complex security landscape. Both articles have focused on the consequences, effects and perceptions of urban militarism in Rio de Janeiro. It has been suggested twice that other security concerns, such as social inequality, poverty, segregation and discrimination are worth looking into as well (Fahlberg, 2018a; Fahlberg & Vicino, 2015). In *Confronting chronic shocks: Social resilience in Rio de Janeiro's poor neighborhoods*, Fahlberg et al. (2020) do this with a participant action-based research approach, emphasising which security concerns residents identify that affect their security, well-being and survival in Rio de Janeiro with voices from Cidade de Deus (Fahlberg et al., 2020, pp. 1, 9). This research focus and approach capturing residents' security concerns, which vulnerabilities they expressed and which survival strategies they employed is indeed interesting since it attempts to move beyond the focus on urban militarism and pacifying police units in the security debate in the city. In a survey questionnaire, residents noted access to basic goods, public services (health care, public transport and education), housing and infrastructure challenges as concerns to their well-being and survival (Fahlberg et al., 2020, pp. 4-6). Regarding strategies to improve their living conditions, which I read as security, respondents pointed out education and employment as imperative and took part in civil society through community activism to

improve their well-being, security and survival. These findings expressed an alternative naming of security concerns in the city – particularly in marginalized city districts. Similar to Dikeç (2017a, p. 5), Fahlberg et al., (2020) argue do that the urban poor not merely want to survive, they would like to be given “the same rights, resources, and privileges of other urban citizens” (p. 9).

This has inspired me to explore what are security narratives in Rocinha, which security concerns they have, which vulnerabilities they express, and which strategies they employ to navigate territorial stigmatization and insecurity in the city.

#### *4.1.3 Introducing the research site: Rocinha*



Figure 1: My photo was taken from the mountain Dois irmãos. On left side is São Conrado. On the right side is Rocinha. This photo only includes approximately two-thirds of Rocinha.

In the city of Rio de Janeiro, there are over 700 hundred favelas (IBGE, 2010). I have chosen to zoom in on Rocinha for this empirical study since I have volunteered and lived there before, which has given me a network of contacts. I would like to give a brief introduction to the research site based on what research participants have told me about the neighbourhood.

Rocinha is often referred to as Brazil’s and Rio de Janeiro’s largest favela. It is located on a hillside between some of the richest, and most privileged neighbourhoods in the city. The neighbourhood’s history goes back to the early twentieth century when tales have it that a small number of farmers lived there, raised animals and grew vegetables which they sold to wealthy neighbourhoods on the other side of the hilltop, in Gávea. Today, Rocinha has

approximately 150.000 inhabitants, and its neighbourhood's demography is heavily influenced by rural migrants coming from Brazil's North-East region.<sup>2</sup> Rocinha's city near location has benefitted the community and privileged neighbourhoods in its vicinity. Residents in Rocinha have always contributed significantly to the city's economy – typically in the service sector, construction and domestic services. Further, Rocinha is often perceived as a more peaceful favela, with fewer police operations than other favelas. Nevertheless, the neighbourhood has many other security concerns.

Although Rocinha is often discursively talked about as an anonymous city, it seems to be equally dependent on the formal city for its existence and livelihood – and vice versa. However, as briefly mentioned in the introduction, there are vast differences among residents in Rocinha and many of their neighbours in advantaged neighbourhoods: average income, life expectancy and percentage of residents with completed tertiary education are according to various studies much lower (Braga et al., 2020, p. 33; Fahlberg, 2018b, p. 176; Sørbøe, 2021a, p. 16). Yet, many residents in the neighborhood are proud of their place and identity, while simultaneously being frustrated because they are not fully accepted, respected and integrated into the city's social fabric on fairer terms like other privileged citizens (Fahlberg et al., 2020; Sørbøe, 2018).

**Figure 2:** Map of Rio de Janeiro (Source: Glenny, 2016).



<sup>2</sup> IBGE (2010) census suggests Rocinha has 70.000 inhabitants, whereas many of the residents I spoke with suggest these findings are wrong and has estimated between 100-250.000 residents live in the community. Many residents mention they are either from Brazil's North-East, or their parents or grandparents migrated to Rio de Janeiro in previous decades. One resident suggested that approximately seventy percent of the inhabitants in Rocinha had North-eastern roots/heritage.

## *4.2 Narratives of security*

In this section, I will answer this thesis' first explorative question by presenting the three security narratives I have identified in the data material from Rocinha. Based on seventeen interviews, I have constructed three security narratives that reflect multiple residents' experiences. In some of the narratives, some research participants are more present than others. I draw primarily on five research participants. The first narrative is elaborated on the basis of interviews with mainly two activists in the neighbourhood. The second narrative is similarly mainly informed by one older resident's experiences and reflections on security in Rocinha, but with insights gained from other residents. The last narrative is mostly informed by two younger professionals. However, this narrative also resonates with other residents since they are affected by the same structural dimensions that cause insecurity and territorial stigmatization because of the place they are from.

I have chosen to present the narratives in this order, first to illustrate which security concerns and grievances are heard from the community. Then, I dive deeper into the participants' experiences and reflections on structural dimensions of security to provide the basis for the first empirical question. With the last narrative, I provide the basis to answer the second empirical question, that is which strategies they employ to navigate the consequences of territorial stigmatization and provide security for themselves in the city. In section 4.3, I interpreted the identified security narratives, reflecting human, feminist and urban studies' security perspectives.

### *4.2.1 The activist: Rocinha's security concerns and grievances*

Gilberto and Alison are two very dedicated community activists in Rocinha. Both have decades of experience striving to improve Rocinha's security concerns and infrastructural deficits by mobilization and negotiating with city officials. Gilberto came to Rocinha in the 1970s, like many other rural migrants from Brazil's Northeast looking for better employment and life opportunities. However, once he arrived, he realised the situation and social conditions were worse than he had anticipated. There was a scarcity of employment opportunities and places to live, and he settled in Rocinha. In addition to having various jobs in the service sector, he also strived for community development, focusing on infrastructural needs. In the beginning, he focused on securing access to running water. Later, he focused on obtaining an enclosed sewage system, which still is a core issue for him and the neighbourhood. Gilberto is also a proponent of a more egalitarian and democratic society, where marginalized citizens have their rights guaranteed and respected, with equitable access

to the city's resources and opportunities and the same privileges as other citizens in privileged neighbourhoods.

Alison is similar to Gilberto in many ways. He is also from Brazil's Northeast, but came to Rocinha approximately thirty years later, and is engaged in community activism in Rocinha and other favelas in the city. He holds an undergraduate degree from a university elsewhere in Brazil and has worked in the formal city. Currently, he is undertaking postgraduate degree studies in Rio de Janeiro and is committed to striving for a more democratic and socially just city and society. He is disturbed by the focus on public security and has argued this is a security the state tries to provide, through community policing. In addition to community policing, the state interacts with Rocinha and attempts to bring urban development to the community, but does not seem to address their security concerns and grievances satisfactorily. This includes issues such as an enclosed sewage system, but perhaps more importantly, inclusive citizenship. Based on Gilberto's and Alison's narratives, I have crafted a security narrative as seen from Rocinha, which can in many ways be contrasted with the dominant state's security narrative.

To understand Rocinha's security narrative(s), it is necessary to sketch out the broader and most recent security interventions provided by state authorities and city officials in the last decade and a half in the neighbourhood. Seeing (in)security from the elite/privilege and the state's perspective, drug trafficking and the war on drugs is omnipresent in the public discourse, social imaginary and state policies.

Since the 1980s, drug trafficking has been a problem in the city of Rio de Janeiro and still is. In Rocinha, there have been various drug bosses and rivalries in the last four decades. The drug bosses are either liked or disliked by Rocinha's residents. They are liked by some because they provide social assistance and help where the state is absent – and they are disliked by others because the favela is used as a hideout, where drug traffickers run their business operations from. This affects ordinary, hardworking residents' security who have little possibility of living elsewhere. Parents are worried about their children getting involved in drug trafficking and organized crime. Adolescents run the risk of getting involved in such activities since other educational and employment opportunities are scarce.

The formal city, represented by elite and more privileged citizens, often perceives the favela as a place of crime, violence and decay. Public security interventions are launched to expel drug traffickers and regain state sovereignty and territorial control in the favelas so the state

can claim to have provided security and order for the formal city as well as for residents in the favela. This is an alleged precondition before public services and urban development, or slum-upgrading if you will, can finally come to the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In Rocinha, special police forces and branches of the military invaded the community in late 2011, before installing a permanent community policing unit (UPP) by 2012 – two years before the FIFA World Cup (2014) and four years before the Olympic Games (2016).

In the beginning, as Gilberto pointed out, the UPP unit seemed like a good contribution to the neighbourhood's security since residents met with the local UPP commander to discuss security in the favela. However, Gilberto and other residents' perception of the new community police unit quickly deteriorated only one year after its inauguration. Amarildo de Souza, a resident, father of six children and a bricklayer, was tortured and killed during a police integration (Watts, 2013). Consequently, many residents in Rocinha lost trust, respect and belief in the new security arrangement, which they had been sceptical of in the first place.

A decade later, many of the residents I spoke to, did not understand what the police were doing in Rocinha. They described the police as just hanging around, doing random *blitz* (searches) along Estrada de Gávea (the main street running through Rocinha). They were generally perceived as a repulsive and oppressive force that was not meant for them or their security. Instead, the police were perceived to serve the elite's security interest and preoccupations; to keep crime, violence and mal citizens confined within the favela.

Alongside the community policing unit, the neighbourhood was going to benefit from a city-wide urban development, improving infrastructure, living conditions and public services in the neighbourhood. State authorities and city officials launched what is known as the Growth Acceleration Program (PAC) in the early 2000s. The development program was to go hand in hand with the community police unit to bring security and development to Rocinha, as well as many other disadvantaged and neglected neighbourhoods in the city.

#### *Urban development in Rocinha*

In the case of Rocinha, the neighbourhood was promised two rounds of community development, PAC1 and PAC2. It seems that the community's most pressing security concerns were not related to drug trafficking, but rather to decades of state neglect and underdevelopment of the neighbourhood's basic sanitation infrastructure (water and sewage) and adequate public services (health, education and transportation). Unlike earlier state interactions with Rocinha, community activists and locals considered the program to be

progressive and inclusive since basic sanitation infrastructure was going to be given priority to be addressed (see also Silva, 2018; Sørbye, 2021b, p. 139)

In this way, Rocinha's security concerns and the risk they faced daily looked like they were going to be addressed in the first round of the PAC programme. Although Rocinha did receive several improvements to the neighbourhood, such as a sporting complex, a new library, an elevated pedestrian footbridge which only replaced an already functioning one, and a new health clinic instead of a hospital, the security concerns surrounding an enclosed sewage system continued to remain. This was neither done through PAC1 or PAC2 (ibid). This causes resentment, frustration and ultimately insecurity in the residents' everyday lives.

When I spoke with the two community activists in May 2022, basic sanitary infrastructure was still a security concern and a need for the neighbourhood. Municipal officials who were in charge of such matters had been invited, but never turned up to community meetings. Similarly, written requests and complaints from community activists remained unanswered. Alison also took me to Rua 4,<sup>3</sup> where many self-built homes had been demolished with the promises by city officials that new apartment blocks would be built. According to him, only one-fifth of the promised apartment blocks were at the end built.

Apart from these more visible and tangible security issues in the community, Alison and Gilberto were vigilant when it came to less visible insecurities the public security mantra with state interventions did not capture, whether police presence or slum-upgrading. To illuminate the neighbourhood's *other* security concerns and needs, Gilberto drew on decades of community activism and fighting for a more egalitarian society and the worker's rights and conditions, whereas Alison drew on similar community activism experience, and concepts from his university studies, such as the human security concept and categories within it, i.e., job security, food security, community security, civil and political rights). He also collaborated with civil and human rights institutions within the state for community development and resilience.

#### *Beyond the community police project and urban development programs*

If we were to imagine state security interventions like the community policing unit and the two rounds of urban development programs in Rocinha (PAC1 & PAC2) would have been successful and delivered as promised, Rocinha's inhabitants would likely still face socio-economic and political exclusion and segregation, which has little to do with the physical

---

<sup>3</sup> Rua 4 (Road 4) is an area in the neighbourhood.



structure of the city. It has to do with the social structure, forces and modus operandi of the city (Slater, 2021a, pp. 22-23; cited in Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170). As Gilberto explained, as a senior resident and veteran community activist,

“Security is about having food and places for recreational activities. It is about culture and education. A lot of people here do not have this. This is insecurity (...) While we do not have a socially just society, an egalitarian one, where workers have their rights guaranteed, we cannot have security” (Interview with Gilberto, 13.05).

Alisson explained something similar,

“The idea of human security is based on the presence of the state, not the state itself only, but acting together with the local residents in the community. Then health care, education, sports, security, infrastructure, basic sanitation and quality of life enters [in the neighbourhood]. Human security is a question far beyond what the state proposes. It is a question about people” (Interview with Alison, 01.06).

What becomes clear from the excerpts from Gilberto and Alison, is that they do not believe that state-led security policies, such as pacification police unit and urban development programs, do in fact cater for the neighbourhood’s security concerns and needs. While infrastructure is indeed important, and if it was delivered as promised, it seems far-fetched that residents in the favela would enjoy the same rights, opportunities and privileges as other citizens. During my interview with Alison, he underlined this is not only a problem for residents in the city’s favelas but also for people living in peripheral neighbourhoods that are not considered favelas, where the social conditions are the same.

Drawing on Alison and Gilberto’s stories, with insights from other participants too, it is possible to contend the state’s security preoccupation and attempted deliveries to Rocinha are addressing some of Rocinha’s security concerns, but only partially and often not as promised. Additionally, other security concerns related to rights, access resources and opportunities, seem to be somehow outside the scope of what the state is prioritising when interacting with the favela. Both community activists are pointing towards societal structures, where citizenship is still exclusive and not inclusive, which Slater (2019, p. 13) has pointed out as a challenge in cities.

Rocinha’s (in)security narrative as I have drawn up here, corresponds with Tom Slater’s observations that it’s not the vibrancy and appearance of public spaces, in this case, slum-upgrading in Rocinha, that alone determines people’s sensation and experience of insecurity

in urban spaces (Slater, 2021a, p. 3). As Gilberto and Alison's narrative illustrates, residents in particularly disadvantaged neighbourhoods have other security worries and necessities than what they mean the state and parts of the society are willing to address. To further explore experiences and reflections on security, I have chosen to focus on a research participant I have anonymised as Gabriel, the philosopher.

#### *4.2.2 The philosopher: Systematic injustices, structural dimensions and insecurity*

Gabriel the philosopher was born, raised and has lived all his life in Rocinha. In contrast to Gilberto and Alison, he did not migrate from Brazil's Northeast to Rio de Janeiro. However, he is in many ways similar to the two previous research participants because he is also an activist in the neighbourhood, working with a different NGO. By speaking to Gabriel, I realised he has thought for a long time and worked systematically in documenting Rocinha's history and reflected on the neighbourhood's marginal position in the city. His narrative draws a picture of a structurally disadvantaged neighbourhood, with strong feelings of outsidership and socio-economic and political exclusion, and a differentiated citizenship (a term borrowed from: Holston, 2009, p. 7; and Sørbye, 2021b, pp. 23, 27) with fewer rights, resources, opportunities and privileges than other advantaged citizens.

#### *Rocinha as experienced and perceived from within*

When I first met Gabriel, we walked through the community for about two hours, where he told me about Rocinha's history and evolution from an insider's perspective. Similar to several other research participants, it did not take long before Gabriel pointed at the apartment blocks in São Conrado, a rich neighbourhood only a stone's throw away from Rocinha. Visibly, the material contrast between the residential areas is enormous. In São Conrado, there are apartment blocks with more than fifteen to twenty floors, whereas in Rocinha most of the houses are self-built with bricks and are often connected. Socio-economically, the differences are also enormous.

Gabriel pointed out, those who live in São Conrado have everything, whereas people like him have almost nothing. With "everything" he meant access to educational opportunities, having water and electricity guaranteed, having their houses formally registered and different educational and employment opportunities to develop themselves. He said these circumstances were like living in a permanent war that has not been declared on them.

What separated the two neighbouring residential areas and those who live there, apart from only a stone's throw away, was what he described as an invisible wall, safeguarding the

privileged citizen's position in the city, with better access to rights, resources and opportunities. The philosopher expressed frustration over what he perceived as being an illegal immigrant in the city, where he was always living on the edge and not fully included in the city's citizenry. This resonates with other senior residents in Rocinha I spoke with. Victor, for instance, explained the feeling of outsidership and exclusion similarly,

“I think yesterday's quilombo<sup>4</sup> is today's favela. A favela is a place of poor people who were excluded, who did not have opportunities because they had freedom, but who neither had money nor power or possibilities to develop themselves” (Interview with Vitor, 13.05).

What becomes clear is not only the physical and material differences between São Conrado and Rocinha depicted by Gabriel and Vitor but also how Rocinha and its residents perceive they live in a structurally disadvantaged neighbourhood, where they do not have the same access, resources and privileges as those living in the formal city. They are free individuals, but not equal citizens and there are invisible barriers in the city's social structure that prevents their social mobility and deny them many opportunities. This affects their security prospects, whether inside Rocinha with infrastructural concerns, drug traffickers, diseases or outside since they have limited possibilities to move to a different neighbourhood with better access to public services and basic sanitary infrastructure.

#### *A different citizen with fewer rights*

As my conversation with Gabriel developed, he drew additional layers of Rocinha as a disadvantaged neighbourhood in the city. He pointed out, “we live in a democratic regime, but this democracy only gives me tasks to do, not rights.” With tasks to do, he referred to the daily duties both privileged and less privileged citizens have to do. I interpreted this as taking part in the city's labour market, whether formally or informally. With rights, he meant the police could do whatever they wanted to him, especially in the favela, since he was a person of fewer rights than those in São Conrado, Ipanema or Leblon.

He further pointed out how most homes in Rocinha<sup>5</sup> are not formally registered in the municipal property register (*regularização fundiária* – land regulation).<sup>6</sup> I interpret this as a

---

<sup>4</sup> Historically and in Brazilian Portuguese, a “quilombo” is settlement in the forest made by run-away slaves. Two of the research participants, who are native to Rocinha and not from the Northeast, used the term social quilombo when expressing structural dimensions that cause insecurity, exclusion and outsidership in the city.

<sup>5</sup> According to him, it was only the new apartment buildings around Rua 4 that were registered in the municipal's property register. I am not able to prove this, but have to trust him.

<sup>6</sup> I understand this as a legal document where the property/plot is registered and protected by legal rights.

structural/legal disadvantage in the system since Gabriel and other residents in Rocinha as well as favelas elsewhere in the city can be evicted and have their homes demolished at any time if city officials were to decide so. Residents in the formal city are not subjected to the same risks, uncertainty and ultimately insecurity. Because their property is based on formally registered buildings either owned or rented, rule of law will give them access to enforce their rights if they were facing eviction.

When I asked Gabriel about Brazil's progressive constitution of 1988, he said,

“Yes, it is beautiful [the constitution]. Brazil has one of the best laws in the world. If you look at the constitution, everything is there. However, in reality, it does not deliver [us] anything. It is made for the formal city, not us” (Interview with Gabriel, 24.05).

Brazil's Constitution of 1988, art. 5 reads,

“All are equal before the law, without distinction of any kind, guaranteeing Brazilians and foreigners residing in the country the inviolability of the right to life, liberty, equality, security and property, in the following terms” (Constituição Federal, 1988).

What Gabriel observes, is that he and his neighbours have the right to life, freedom, security and property. But it is experienced and perceived as the law and constitution neither cover them nor guarantee them their rights as it does for other citizens. They have life, some freedom, and some security, but their properties are not legally recognized. Thus, it seems like they have a differentiated citizenship as Holston (2009) and Sørbøe (2018) has written about, which is not inclusive but rather exclusive with perks applying mostly to only those who are not living in the favelas. The legal right aspect drawn out by Gabriel is another dimension of Rocinha's disadvantaged position in society, where emancipatory aspirations are clear but hard to achieve. From a security perspective, this matters because it impacts residents' well-being, survival and multiple (in)securities since they are born.

#### *The symbolic grip of the favela*

Gabriel has often asked himself how so much tragedy could be produced in Rocinha without others [those who do not live in a favela] feeling bad about it. He said it is a long process of dehumanization of them and the favela. According to him, the South Zone does not see them as humans or animals. They are seen as something in between, he believes. This perception of them and the favela, prejudice and discrimination, has been normalised in the city's social imaginary. Hence, symbolic power and forces can sometimes be perceived to be stronger

than economic and physical forces and structures, such as Bourdieu would remind us of (Slater, 2021a; cited Bourdieu 1991, 170, p. 22). This seems to be in line with Gabriel's reflections.

Similar to the United States in the 1960s, James Baldwin's famous statement, "It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have" (Slater, 2021a, p. 19; cited in Baldwin, 1972, p. 58). It appears strikingly accurate in Rio de Janeiro. Ignorance and power wielded by the city officials and elite segments of the population seem to prevent citizens in Rocinha from enjoying more inclusive forms of citizenship and living in a socially just, and equitable society.

Gabriel's personal experiences and reflections have drawn up a picture of a disadvantaged neighbourhood, with a strong feeling of outsidership and socio-economic and political exclusion from the city while simultaneously being tightly integrated into the city. He perceived it as if favela residents are only labour force in the city without the same access, rights and privileges as other citizens. However, Gabriel's experiences and reflections only get us this far. Therefore, it is insightful to explore people's lived realities of these structural dimensions that cause insecurity, with a focus on territorial stigmatization and coping strategies.

Exploring territorial stigmatization, both perceived and experienced, allows us further to investigate how individuals respond to systematic injustices, structural dimensions of insecurity and discrimination. They talk about various challenges that harm them, and which strategies they employ to deal with them in the city. These experiences are hard to imagine unless you step into somebody else shoes, as one of the participants phrased it.

#### *4.2.3 The young professional: Territorial stigmatization and navigational strategies*

Bruno and Julia do not know each other, but they have a lot in common and are in many ways different from most of the other research participants because of their workplace and university credentials. Bruno is now in his early thirties and works somewhere in the formal city as a communication specialist, for a company in a fancy business building with valet parking. Previously, he has also been active in various social movements in Rocinha and other favelas. He has lived outside Rocinha for some time but has chosen to return to the community where he grew up. Bruno recalls having many good memories from his childhood and has a strong feeling of belonging to the community. He speaks passionately about the

richness of the place, culturally and historically, which he believes is often neglected by outsiders as well as insiders.

Julia is a few years younger than Bruno and has also attended one of the city's most reputable universities. She has not participated in community activism but has managed to secure various internships in smaller and larger (multi)national companies to finance her studies (not tuition fees, but living expenses) and gain relevant work experience. Her grandmother knew all too well the importance and power of education. She strived for her granddaughter to absorb as much knowledge as possible and in one way built the foundation for job security and socio-economic mobility for her granddaughter, which she never had.

#### *Good memories from Rocinha as a young boy*

Growing up in Rocinha, Bruno has mostly only good memories from his childhood apart from the few times he was lined up against the wall and searched by police officers while playing in Rocinha's many *becos* (narrow alleys) with his friends. He felt a strong sense of belonging to the community and did not think much about it until he became an adolescent and was ready to look for employment opportunities outside Rocinha. Guided by older residents, he was told not to mention his actual postal address (Rocinha) in order not to suffer prejudice, discrimination and territorial stigmatization. This also corresponds with other residents that I spoke with in Rocinha. However, one of them mentioned this did not matter since all of his colleagues came from favelas. Nevertheless, this could very well affect their chances of securing employment opportunities, which can have an impact on their security in multiple ways, such as economic security (job and income), where they can live (in advantaged neighbourhoods without infrastructural inadequacies), which services they can access and whether they have enough money for food and time for culture and leisure.

#### *Stigma while meeting the police and health care services*

Later on, Bruno managed to get into a university elsewhere in the city and lived in Rio de Janeiro's *Zona Norte* (North Zone) for several years. Often when Bruno and his friends would take the bus to Copacabana, whether it was for work or just going to the beach, they experienced it as burdensome when they on occasion got searched when they were getting off the bus. Another person experiencing territorial stigmatization was an acquaintance of his, which I have anonymised as Eric, who was injured in a car accident in Rocinha several years ago. Bruno explained Eric was hit by a taxi in the favela, and the taxi drove off without taking responsibility. At the hospital, he believed Eric was treated poorly because of the

territory he was associated with. Consequently, he was not given the treatment he ought to be given. The nerves in Eric's ankle are believed to be beyond repair. With few possibilities, Eric spends most of his time inside his home. Bruno says he speculates whether Eric could have done more himself, but perhaps he has given up because he is so used to prejudice and discrimination.

#### *Childhood memories of a young girl*

Julia told less about her childhood memories from Rocinha than Bruno (Interview with Julia, 24.05). As a young girl, she relied on support provided by older relatives and a strong-minded, hardworking grandmother. Her relatives looked after her on the way to school, following her to the bus since she was six years old. She recalls one of her biggest fears was being kidnapped. Perhaps more importantly, in the long run, it was her dedicated grandmother who brought Julia with her to advantaged neighbourhoods in Rocinha's proximity. Together, they sold fruits and vegetables at street markets and corners. According to Julia, she was early placed in groups with other children from privileged neighbourhoods and she mentioned it had helped her.

In one way, Julia's grandmother who had very little schooling provided her granddaughter with greater possibilities of socio-economic mobility by making sure Julia got the best schooling they could provide for her. Paying for private education is seldom an option for residents in the favela. Julia and another education professional I spoke with in Rocinha, perceived private schools to be better funded and organized than public schools (Interview with Julia 24.05; Interview with Thaisa 27.05). Thaisa noted this as another dimension of inequality in the city that impacted youth unevenly and provided students from financially stronger families with an advantage to pass the entrance exam for university studies. This affects younger residents' lifelong opportunities and economic security.

#### *The university years: New classmates and friends*

In her adolescent years, Julia first took a vocational degree and worked as a technician for several years. According to her, this helped her with many of the questions she got when she sat for the university entrance exam a couple of years later.<sup>7</sup> Studying at Brazilian universities, whether federal, state or private, had mostly been limited to the middle- and

---

<sup>7</sup> Although I have not taken this entrance exam myself, I have heard students are tested in all subjects and normally have to be strong in all of them, to score well and secure a university spot. In this regard, I think Julia humbly downplayed her capabilities.

upper classes in society, who often were better prepared for the admission exam and had financial support from home.

At university, Julia made new friends with students from her socio-economic background as well as with other students living only a stone's throw away in São Conrado, or one metro stop away in Leblon in one direction and Barra de Tijuca in the opposite direction.

Several personal experiences of stigmatization emerged from Julia's narrative, navigating the marvellous city in a new context, at a different time and in other places than her relatives. At university, she found it somehow puzzling how she mostly ended up with other students who had the same socio-economic background and similar postcode as her. However, this did not prevent Julia from taking part in the university community and social activities outside the university. She made new friends from advantaged neighbourhoods, whom she studied together with, and went out with them in the evenings. However, according to her, they did not quite understand "what not having enough money meant" (Interview with Julia, 24.05). For her friends, not having enough money was associated with not having money for a trip to Miami or buying new, fancy clothes. For Julia, it was about having money for gas and rice to stay afloat and keep studying since she did not have the same financial and infrastructural support from her family.

One of her good friends from Leblon (an advantaged upper-class neighbourhood) told her "the poor are marked by the shoes they wear" (Interview with Julia, 24.05), so she borrowed her friend's shoes when they went out. Julia would also dress, speak and style her hair (straighten it) differently when navigating in the formal city, at the university and/or within social circles outside Rocinha to minimize prejudice and discrimination often associated with the favela. Yet, Julia was frustrated with some of her newly made friends because they would never come to Rocinha while they had no problems going out in Lapa (a rougher part of the city centre, known for its nightlife). Thus, she preferred to celebrate her birthdays on her own, going away somewhere else. Julia's coping strategies were mostly submissive, but she did it to ensure opportunities and economic security for herself.

When Julia was looking for job opportunities to finance her living expenses as a student, she concealed her postcode from potential employers, like most other participants I spoke with in Rocinha. She would provide a different post address from a lower middle-class neighbourhood elsewhere in the city that was not associated with the favela. This was painful for her because she "hated lying about it" (Interview with Julia, 24.05). However, she saw no



other option since the job opportunity could be lost because of the territory she was associated with. This had happened to her before and others who she perceived were not as qualified as she had gotten the job. If she had managed to secure a job, she would still not have mentioned she lived in Rocinha because she would fear the employer would pay her less, and that promotions within the company could be harder to achieve.

#### *Opportunities after the university studies*

Differently than most of the other research participants, Julia had her university credentials in her pocket, which enabled her to circumvent many invisible barriers other youngsters in Rocinha could not. By having the institution's stamp on her CV or mentioning it in any other social setting, she perceived, and experienced it as a boost in social capital and was treated fairer because of the identity mark the university gave her instead of being associated with a territory. However, her university credentials did not solve all of her challenges with territorial stigmatization. One of her family members works as a doorman in a fancy apartment building in Barra de Tijuca, a privileged neighbourhood one metro stop from Rocinha. According to him, apartments that were either for sale or rent in this gated community were not available if somebody with the "wrong" appearance or social background asked to live there, despite having the means to pay. The owner would rather let it stay empty than rent it out to them, she explained.

Bruno and Julia's narratives are interesting because they offer us insights into how individuals deal with stigmatization and structural dimensions that cause insecurity. Gabriel's reflections, on the other hand, has helped to identify these structural dimensions and systemic injustices in the city's social and physical structure. Julia's narrative is interesting because it illustrates how she takes small decisions to provide socio-economic mobility and security for herself, which started with her grandmother's dedication. Bruno's narrative was, unfortunately, rather short, and it is concerned with Rocinha and being proud of the neighbourhood. However, both narratives depict a picture of symbolic domination and suppression, where it is felt and expressed that the neighbourhood is not good enough and inferior. Educational opportunities provide some security and social mobility, but the neighbourhood taint remains.

#### *4.3 Analysis: The narratives interpreted from a different security perspective*

In the section above, I presented three security narratives from Rocinha in Rio de Janeiro. These security narratives are contextual, personal and vary among the participants based

various identity markers (Wibben, 2011, pp. 2, 85-87). In this section, I will analyse the identified security narratives chronologically to answer how residents experience and reflect on security, and which strategies some of them employ to navigate territorial stigmatization in the city.

#### *4.3.1 Rocinha's security concerns and grievances*

In the first security narrative, I explored what I have called Rocinha's security concerns, infrastructural deficits and grievances. Through Gilberto's and Alison's accounts, two community activists, many of Rocinha's security concerns correspond with the security categories found in the UNDP's 1994 HDR report; economic (job and income), food, health, environment, political, personal and community security (UNDP, 25-39). These security concerns ordinary people are often forgotten. For instance, Gilberto has pointed out what security means for him,

“Security is about having food and places for recreational activities. It is about culture and education. A lot of people here do not have this. This is insecurity (...). While we do not have a socially, just society, an egalitarian one, where workers have their rights guaranteed, we cannot have security” (Interview with Gilberto 13.05).

This is a security talk very different from the security concerns often reflected in state security talks, in the media, public discourse and social imaginary. The police, guns, drugs, and groups of organized crime seemed to be less important than improvements to the neighbourhood's infrastructure, social conditions, access to public services and opportunities for human development.

Since Rocinha's early days, the community activists and other residents have on their own, and sometimes together with state authorities, attempted to address the neighbourhood's infrastructural deficits, such as access unstable access to electricity, water, an enclosed sewage system and places for recreational activities. They have also attempted to improve access to public services, such as education and health care, and workers' rights and conditions. This is a kind of security that some IR and security feminists have defined as security concerns that threaten human well-being and survival. This challenges what is often perceived as security because security thinking is often connected to the state's security and survival.

Diving deeper into the first narrative with the UNDP's human security categories, residents' economic (in)security, i.e., job and income security, affects their well-being and long-term survival in a myriad of ways (Gjørsv, 2018, p. 225; UNDP, 1994, pp. 25-26). Residents' well-

being affects one's economic possibilities and thus various securities that may impact one's survival, both immediate and in the long run. Economic security is also tied to food security, housing security and personal security. For example, as Gilberto pointed out, many residents in Rocinha are struggling with economic insecurities, which affect people's food, housing and health security. Similarly, Alison pointed these insecurities or social conditions are not only a problem residing in the favelas but also in peripheral areas around the city. Thus, there are structural dimensions and factors that cause multiple, insecurities in people's everyday lives.

For the residents' health security, access to adequate public services, such as clinics, hospitals, doctors and medicines, is not only important but a security concern important to their well-being and short, medium and long-time survival (Gjørsv, 2018, p. 225; UNDP, 1994, pp. 27-28). In addition to access to adequate public services in the neighbourhood, the lack of proper basic sanitation infrastructure affects residents' health security. For example, tuberculosis and other waterborne diseases are security concerns to the residents' health security. These security threats are to a much greater extent present to residents in Rocinha, and other favelas in the city, than to residents in advantaged neighbourhoods in the city. Connected to health security is also environmental security because heavy rainfalls cause flooding of streets, alleys and stairwells in the neighbourhood. The water is often mixed with garbage and sewage since Rocinha lacks an enclosed sewage system and since the municipal garbage truck does not come by.

For personal, community and political security, I find it harder to connect newer security literature to my empirical findings. I will briefly state what these securities are about before reflecting on them based on the security narratives identified in this thesis. In the security literature, personal security can be described as threats from physical violence, whether state or non-state actors to individuals (Gjørsv, 2018, p. 225). Community security can be described as how a community helps individuals within a group (ibid). Political security can be described as where individuals' human rights are respected by those who govern, and where individuals are given a voice (ibid). For the latter, I would add residents' ability to participate in political questions concerning their neighbourhoods in a less subordinated way, where they have more power, voice and manoeuvrability to influence urban development programs in their neighbourhood.

Personal security is a concern with threats from physical violence in Rocinha. Although the police are generally considered to be a repressive force in the community, it is not a

prominent security concern among the residents. Within the community, residents work together to improve the neighbourhood's multiple insecurities, often one piece at a time since state authorities are perceived to be absent. Alison's earlier quote illustrated this, where the state's efforts to deliver security alone and not in a collaborative way with the community make it difficult. For example, there has been interaction and to an extent cooperation between state authorities, community activists and residents to improve Rocinha's infrastructural concerns and grievances. However, as the narrative illustrates, urban development programs often do not deliver as outlined and promised. It appears like the residents' political security, in the sense of having a voice and the possibility to participate in political questions that affect their insecurities, is limited. This seems rather strange when the favelas make up approximately one-fifth of Rio de Janeiro's population (IBGE, 2010), and participate so actively in the city – at least in the service sector.

Residents' experiences and reflections on security are as shown above always contextual and personal. By asking for security experiences and reflections from individuals and communities, different security narratives than the dominant state and elite interests become apparent. While not entirely overlooked, the security concerns of less privileged places like Rocinha seem to be less prioritised in the city's security narrative – at least in the official discourse and in mainstream media. I argue this changes what security means in the way it provides an alternative understanding. It also demonstrates for whom security is to a greater extent guaranteed and for whom it is not. In other words, those who are less privileged seem to have less security.

#### *4.3.2 Systematic injustices, insecurity and frustration*

In the second narrative, I focused on what I understood as systematic injustices and structural dimensions that cause insecurity for residents in Rocinha, and other favelas in the city. The philosopher's experiences and reflections on security expressed frustration and reflected on topics like poverty, inequality, subordination and discrimination on a structural level that causes insecurity. This narrative extends on the previous narrative, where the focus has been more "hands-on" security concerns, like basic sanitary infrastructure, urban development programs and community policing. The second narrative focuses on residents' experiences and reflections of everyday security, but over a longer time – including the past, present and future. An emphasis is given to exclusion and differentiated citizenship where favela residents perceive it as they are enjoying the same rights, opportunities and privileges in the

city as other citizens do. This affects favela residents' well-being, multiple securities and survival.

In this analysis, the various human security categories, as in the first security narrative, are also present. However, I have chosen to dig deeper into the research question by using Dikeç's political perspective, looking at exclusion and the social and physical structures in the city (Dikeç, 2017a, pp. 5-6, 9). Additionally, I draw attention to feminist and critical security studies' wider definition of security and security threats; attention to discrimination, economic insecurities and oppressive local structures that threaten people's security (Newman, 2016, p. 1179; Stern, 2005, p. 65; Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013, pp. 187-188). I acknowledge the alleged structures are not tangible, and they are hard to point out. However, these structures impact the respondents' security in multiple ways. Similar to Stern's (2005, p. 65) approach, narrators do not necessarily "speak security" in clear text and their identification of discrimination can be read as threatening to their security, well-being and survival.

In the second narrative, often started by contrasting the two vastly different living standards between Rocinha and São Conrado, two neighbourhoods that are next to each other. Gabriel perceived it as if they were living in two parallel worlds. Rocinha on the one hand was missing "everything", whereas those who live in São Conrado have everything. Beyond rights and opportunities, he experienced it as if they were living in a permanent war, where electricity, water supply and internet connections are intermittent. This impacted their lives in various ways. For example, with an electricity interruption, food in the fridge could turn bad. No water in the morning could mean no shower. Without an internet connection, it was hard to participate in online classes during the pandemic. He believed these security challenges were not present, at least not to the same extent, for residents in more privileged neighbourhoods, such as São Conrado.

Beyond the infrastructural shortages, inadequate access to public services and various shortages, the philosopher's security reflections open up and broaden what security means not only outside the state-centric notions, i.e., a focus on sovereignty and territorial control in the favela. Gabriel's narrative reflects strong feelings of outsidership and exclusion. This becomes clear when he mentioned that he feels like he is an illegal immigrant in the city. By drawing on Dikeç's (2017a, p. 5) definition of exclusion, exclusion is not only about a group or individuals being excluded from society itself. It is also about being excluded from

“enjoying rights, opportunities and privileges within a society” (ibid). This kind of exclusion appears to be rooted in the city’s physical and social structure.

Physically, residents in Rocinha are not excluded from the city since they are encircled by advantaged neighbourhoods and have short distances to work in the service sectors. However, residents’ rights, opportunities and privileges are experienced to be different than other citizens in Rio de Janeiro; hence social exclusion. With rights, their housing conditions are uncertain since they can be evicted at any time. In comparison, this is unlikely for residents in privileged neighbourhoods who have their properties registered in the municipality’s property register and protected by the law. For opportunities and freedom to develop oneself, Vitor’s quote is interesting. In his reflections on Rocinha’s (and its residents’) subordinated position in the city, he pointed out,

“I think yesterday’s quilombo is today’s favela. A favela is a place of poor people who were excluded, who did not have opportunities because they had freedom, but who neither had money nor power or possibilities to develop themselves” (Interview with Vitor, 13.05).

Victor’s reflections can be read as discriminatory structures and practices based on various markers of identity. Drawing on Stern, who reads Mayan women’s “identification of discrimination as also a naming of threats and danger/harm – as a source of insecurity” (Stern, 2005, p. 65), I read Vitor, Gabriel and other participants’ reflections of discrimination and subordination as the naming of threats, danger and harm. This is because it affects their well-being and survival. Some feminist security scholars label this as a threat to individuals’ security (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013, pp. 187-188).

With the lack of opportunities to develop themselves, as pointed out by Vitor, residents’ well-being, security and survival are shaped not only by the social structures in the city but also by interrelated political, economic and social causes as Dikeç has reminded us of (2017a, pp. 8-9). While Dikeç focused on urban rage and uprisings, I read participants’ reflections as urban frustration with systemic injustices that cause insecurity on a structural level. As for privileges, I find it harder to point to something tangible. However, privileges seem to guarantee people in the formal city what residents in the favela are missing, and that threatens their security. For example, they cannot choose where to live and have fewer choices for educational attainment and employment opportunities, which affects residents in Rocinha differently than their neighbours.

I must emphasise I do not suggest a totally equal society between the favela and the privileged parts of the city because it is unlikely to achieve full equality – even in more socially just and equitable democracies. However, in a more socially just society, where all citizens are equal before the law, have equitable access to opportunities, the freedom to pursue personal development and where privileges do not seem to be reserved only for certain segments of the population, could contribute to better security, well-being and survival for all citizens, including the city itself.

The second security narrative is about systematic injustices and structural dimensions that cause insecurity for residents in Rocinha. Residents' experiences and reflections on security illuminate exclusion and discrimination, which is threatening to and impacts their well-being, survival and security. This understanding of security challenges traditional understandings of security in the cities, such as the state's militarization of the streets and fighting groups of organized crime. Poverty, inequality and injustices ought to receive more attention in terms of security in the twenty-first century. As Wibben (2011, p. 106) and some feminist security scholars suggest, security is not necessarily just a thing, but perhaps better understood as constantly being negotiated and (re)made. With Brazil's newly elected president, promises have been made to increase social security benefits, restart urban development programs, and strengthen workers' rights among other initiatives that will hopefully reach a broader part of the population (Cassela et al., 2023). In this way, what security means seems to be changing and perhaps those who have had less security can gain more in the coming years.

#### *4.3.3 Strategies to navigate territorial stigmatization and insecurity*

In the third narrative, I explored how structural dimensions of insecurity and socially constructed barriers that affects residents in Rocinha. I looked at two younger professionals, who navigate the city in a new time and context. A new time and context because they have attained tertiary education and work in business environments that are unavailable to most of their neighbours and relatives. This third narrative therefore gives us an insight into how individuals specifically deal with systematic injustices and territorial stigmatization, which affects their lives in many ways. In this analysis, I focus on their strategies to get around socially constructed barriers and discrimination because of the territory they can be associated with. These challenges move beyond the material difficulties residing in marginalized city districts to immaterial challenges, which extend to the first and second security narratives. Ultimately, territorial stigmatization affects most parts of their lives, opportunities and freedom in the city. To aid this analysis, I draw on Tom Slater's (2021b)

activation and production of territorial stigmatization and was inspired by his case study in Toronto, Canada. Territorial stigmatization is concerned with “how people are discredited, devalued, and poorly treated because of the places there are associated with” (Slater, 2021b, p. 137). This thinking tool helped me to reflect on how identity and place matter in people’s everyday lives in cities, and which steps they take to deal with systematic injustices socially constructed barriers and invisible walls.

In the third security narrative, we met Julia and Bruno. I have chosen to call them young professionals because they have gone to university and work in larger companies, in higher positions than most of their community peers and relatives. Like many other residents, they speak warmly about the neighbourhood; its cultural and historical richness, and of many good childhood memories. Although they still do talk about their neighbourhood in this way, Bruno and Julia's narrative reveal residents employ various strategies to navigate territorial stigmatization, when they commute outside Rocinha, whether that is for employment opportunities, in social settings or while undergoing their education. Older residents have told them to conceal their postcode as a strategy not to suffer the stigma often attributed to their city district, which can be linked to their identity. These strategies are measures taken to avoid being discredited, devalued and poorly treated in the formal city because of their postcode.

Concealing one’s postcode was a strategy Julia elaborated on. She explained this was a strategy she employed not to suffer territorial stigmatization; being discredited and devalued because she came from Rocinha, and thus not being good or smart enough. She believed this has already had happened to her and could happen again. Consequently, she wrote up other lower-class middle-class neighbourhoods that were not associated with the favela not to lose out on employment opportunities. If the job was secured, the same participant explained she kept concealing her postcode throughout her employment – because she feared being poorly treated. She explained it could have an impact on her salary, that she had fewer expenses than others not living in a favela, or was not worth as much and perceived it as potentially giving fewer possibilities for promotion within companies. Yet, this strategy seemed situational and contextual. Another younger participant, who has not gone to university but works in the service sector, said this strategy was not necessary because all the colleagues came from stigmatized and marginalized neighbourhoods.

Another strategy residents employed to deal with territorial stigmatization was to dress differently, speak more formally and do various things to their appearance, in which their



identity could be linked to the territory. I noticed this myself when I met one of my friends from Rocinha at a café, only a few bus stops away from Rocinha in an advantaged part of the city. The participant dressed differently and spoke more formally than the participant did when we met in Rocinha a couple of weeks before. Apart from this, Julia gave me a deeper insight into how dressing and speaking differently played out in practice, and how it affected her everyday life. In social settings outside the favela, Julia would also dress differently, straighten her hair and speak differently. These mundane actions, which can be read as strategies, reduced her chances of being poorly treated because of the territory she can be associated with. For example, when she went out with friends from university (who often lived in privileged areas), one of her friends would lend her a pair of shoes so that she could disguise herself and make it harder for others to associate her with the favela. This could affect her evening negatively and how others treated her.

A less direct, on-the-spot strategy to navigate the neighbourhood taint was Julia's grandmother's long-time, life strategy for her granddaughter's social mobility and personal development. Her grandmother had learnt all too well the empowering effects and possible power of education that she had not gotten herself. Similar to Maria Stern's findings for Mayan women in Guatemala (Stern, 2005, p. 66), university education often seemed to provide a "passport" for greater social mobility, more but not absolute freedom and different opportunities in life. Julia further explained that her university credentials, saying that she graduated from a reputable university, helped her not to be poorly treated in some situations. The university credentials gave her social capital that she would not otherwise have had. This helped her to dodge the neighbourhood taint often ascribed to the favela. Her university passport credentials will probably affect her life positively in terms of well-being, survival and multiple securities. For example, in terms of life expectancy and economic security.

While my conversation with Bruno did not explore these themes and strategies in particular, mostly because I did not think about it during the interview, reading the interview transcript revealed different strategies to deal with territorial stigmatization. As a communication specialist, not for his company but as a favela resident, he had written several newspaper articles and had been active in social media. In his publications, he wrote positively about the favela, attempting to provide a counter-narrative of the favela as a dreadful place and to depict its richness. I interpret his actions and activities as a strategy to resist and dampen the effects of territorial stigmatization in the social imaginary and public discourse.

In this sub-section, I have explored which strategies residents employ to navigate territorial stigmatization. The most common strategy not to be discredited, devalued and poorly treated while navigating in the formal city, residents often concealed their postcode, dressed differently, wore different shoes and spoke more formally. These actions were not necessarily liked by the participants themselves, but they seemed to be forced to employ them in order to be respected and better treated. Slater has pointed out that these strategies residents employ to deal with territorial stigmatization often are submissive or acts of resistance (Slater, 2021b, p. 145). Similar to Stern's (2005, p. 64) findings, education was experienced and perceived to be a "passport" that enabled (some) residents to navigate more freely and on more equitable terms in the city concerning rights, opportunities and privileges. In turn, tertiary education provides Julia and Bruno with greater manoeuvrability in the city, which affects their daily lives in many ways. While some residents in similar circumstances to Bruno and Julia have moved out, they have chosen to stay in the neighbourhood.

Instead of seeing the favelas as the problem in the city, they ought to be seen as the problems to be addressed (Slater, 2021b, p. 162).

#### *4.4 What are these security narratives telling us?*

In the previous section, I analysed and treated these three security narratives separately. However, they build and extend on each other. In the first security narrative, I focused on the UNDP's human security categories, and with feminist security studies perspectives. The second narrative is concerned with many of the same security categories, but to dig deeper and read more implicitly, security was now understood and investigated through prejudice, discrimination, subordination and unjust structural aspects that cause insecurity in people's everyday lives in the city. In the last and third narrative, we were invited into the everyday lives of two participants and how they dealt with, and in some way navigated around social structures and barriers in the city. These barriers arguably affect their well-being, survival and multiple (in)securities.

Together, these security narratives as heard from Rocinha tell a story where residents' security concerns are many. Take for example infrastructural inadequacies, an enclosed sewage system and groups of organized crime. If these issues were to be addressed and resolved, I argue discrimination, subordination and territorial stigmatization of the favela are very likely to remain. Many of the residents want more than water, food and a sewage system. They would like places for recreational activities, culture, sports, educational opportunities and better-paid jobs, and stronger labour rights (Interviews with Gilberto,

13.05; Alison, 01.06). This illustrates what Tom Slater pointed out, people's concerns with urban life are to a far greater extent concerned with the everyday challenges than with the vibrancy of places (Slater, 2021c, p. 3). Beyond this, some residents I spoke with, questioned the absurdity of living in a parallel world. One participant felt like they were illegal immigrants in the city, with fewer rights (Interviews with Gabriel 24.05; Vitor, 13.05). Whereas another one pointed out that they were free, but without the same rights, opportunities and freedom to develop themselves as others. This is in line with what Dikeç (2017a, pp. 5, 9) and Fahlberg (2020, p. 9) have pointed out. As for IR feminism's broader definition of security, it changes what security means, which security threats we talk about, and for whom security appears to be guaranteed (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013, pp. 186-187).

Since the early 2000s, some younger residents in the favela have managed to benefit from educational opportunities and social policies that were implemented to deal with social inequality and poverty to increase social mobility in Brazil. However, an unjust neighbourhood taint (association of territory and identity) seems to still follow individuals who have managed to get some steps ahead with university attainment, whether that is in the workplace or other social settings, such as getting an apartment in a better place. This suggests at least two things. First, instead of seeing the favela as the problem in the city, it should be seen as an expression of the problems to be addressed, as Slater has pointed out (2021c, p. 162), for all citizens' well-being, survival and security. Braathen (2020, p. 161) has similarly suggested greater solidarity and non-violent interaction between city officials and the favelas. Second, there are multiple, interrelated economic, social and political causes for people's rage or frustration in cities (Dikeç, 2017a, pp. 5-9), particularly for marginalized citizens whom seem to be more affected than advantaged citizens. As for Brazil's issues with social inequality, poverty, urban violence and uneven development, there is no quick fix – but political will, as well as inclusive and redistributive policies, seem socially just and a step in the right direction. Newly elected president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's pledges to increase cash payments for poorer families, increasing minimum wage, restarting urban development programs (PAC) and strengthening worker's right seems indeed promising for human development and security in the city (Cassela et al., 2023).

Based on insights gained from this thesis' security narratives, I attempt to point out some important aspects for further research. Further, I will outline how my contributions may also have been beneficial to some of the research participants I have spoken to and attempt to spell out possible policy-relevant suggestions.

For future research concerning social inequality, poverty and security in cities, it is imperative to have contact with people on the ground. My narrative approach to security and Fahlberg's (2020) participant action-based research approach has demonstrated this. It provides greater agency to the research participants in the research process and scientific knowledge production. It also challenges what is considered security threats, what security means and for whom it is guaranteed (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013, p. 178).

Through this research process, I found it rewarding with the dialectical process between the researcher and the research participants. I believe both parties learnt from each other. Two research participants specifically expressed they had not always thought about and reflected on the topics in this way before. Another participant had gotten hope since what he dreamt of existed in reality; a fairer and more socially just society where the state, according to him, looks after its people. One last example was one participant's point that our interview and the narrative I created about Rocinha's security should benefit them too. In this regard, I have published a field note in *NyTid*, a Norwegian magazine. I hope this has raised some awareness of social inequality, poverty and multiple securities in cities. After this thesis has handed in, I plan to travel back to Rio de Janeiro to speak with the research participants about the thesis' findings and thank them again for their time and contributions.

Lastly, through these narratives and what previous research has illuminated, I echo the necessity to include community residents in the implementation, design and evaluation processes of large-scale urban development projects that are conducted to reduce social inequality and poverty, and to increase security in Brazilian favelas and other marginalized city districts around the world (Braathen, 2020; Sørboe, 2021a). This would reduce the top-down problematics, and foster a middle ground where the top and bottom would meet and cooperate from there. Alison's quote illustrates this well,

“(...) the presence of the state, not the state itself only, but acting together with the local residents in the community. Then quality of life enters [in the neighbourhood]. Human security is a question far beyond what the state proposes. It is a question about people” (Interview with Alison, 01.06).

## 5. Conclusion

In this thesis, I set out to explore what are security narratives in Rocinha. To explore this, I constructed an interdisciplinary narrative approach to security in International Relations, drawing on insights from human security research, feminist security studies and urban studies. I travelled to Rio de Janeiro, spent two months there and interviewed seventeen research participants. Based on the empirical data, I identified three security narratives. First, the community activists' security concerns and grievances. Then, the philosopher's reflections on Rocinha as a structurally disadvantaged neighbourhood and his strong feelings of exclusion and discrimination in the city. Lastly, the young professionals' strategies to deal with territorial stigmatization and structural causes of insecurity.

### 5.1 *Three security narratives*

In the activists' security narrative, it became clear that security concerns and grievances in Rocinha were much more diverse than worries about police operations and groups of organized crime. When I asked the community activists about everyday insecurities, Gilberto told me that many people in the neighbourhood do not have enough food, a good place to sleep, time and place for recreational activities, culture and education. He perceived that they cannot have security before the city becomes socially just and egalitarian, where workers in Rocinha have their rights guaranteed.

The municipal authorities have somehow interacted with the community in the last two decades through city-wide urban development programs, such as the growth acceleration program (PAC). Even so, Rocinha still lacks an enclosed sewage system, which has been promised and not delivered. Thus, residents run the risk of diseases that could have been avoided. On that matter, Alison, another activist, complained that city officials did not act *together* with residents in the neighbourhood when they attempted to address Rocinha's security concerns and grievances. If they had, according to him, then basic sanitary infrastructure, health care and quality of life would ensue. This underscores that residents in the favela must be allowed to participate in the design and implementation of urban development programs, that aim to bring security and development to the neighbourhood. This would increase the likelihood that the residents' security concerns and needs are better addressed, with greater chances of being guaranteed.

In the philosopher's security narrative, Gabriel's experiences and reflections on security was more concerned with discrimination, subordination and exclusion on a structural level that

causes insecurity in the residents in their everyday lives. In this narrative, he drew a picture of Rocinha as a structurally disadvantaged neighbourhood with multiple layers. First, he pointed to the material differences between the houses in Rocinha and apartment buildings in São Conrado. Then, on a deeper level, he experienced and perceived it as if he was an illegal immigrant in the city, a citizen with fewer rights, resources and opportunities in comparison to their privileged neighbours. Similarly, the philosopher's friend described the favela as a modern version of yesterday's quilombo (human settlement for runaway slaves), where it is perceived that the favela residents now have freedom, but are not given opportunities to develop themselves, and to participate in the city more than as a workforce.

Although it is challenging to point to tangible structures of subordination and oppression, reading their identification and reflections of discrimination and marginal position in the city illustrates structural dimensions that cause multiple insecurities in their everyday lives. This affects the resident's well-being and survival. There are clear aspirations for a more equitable city, but it seems hard to achieve due to the city's social structures and perception of the favela. Yet, I support those residents who hope that the favela's headwinds might be changing with Brazil's newly re-elected President Lula – and his political pledges to address social inequalities, uneven urban development and labour rights that affect the less advantaged citizens' well-being and multiple insecurities more than others.

In the young professional's security narrative, I did not specifically ask them about experiences and reflections on security in the city. However, their narratives illuminated various strategies that residents in structurally disadvantaged neighbourhoods with a questionable reputation employ to deal with territorial stigmatization and structural dimensions of insecurity to provide security for themselves. Julia mentioned that her university credentials were imperative for her future employment opportunities in the city. These credentials provided her with opportunities and freedoms other older residents have not been able to explore. With her university credentials in her pocket, she could pursue other employment opportunities that were better paid. This would affect her economic security and other security categories, such as health security and personal security. However, to provide economic security and opportunities for herself, she concealed her postcode while applying for jobs. She kept concealing it if she got the job, in order not to be poorly treated and devalued. She feared not being fairly paid and with fewer chances for promotions if the employers knew where she came from. While this might not seem like security, I argue it must be seen as such, because these coping strategies are employed to deal with the

consequences of territorial stigmatization in a city with invisible barriers to one's development, well-being and ultimately survival – whether in short or long-term perspective.

These narratives have illuminated some of the security concerns individuals and communities have. They are not representative of the city as a whole, but they illustrate some residents' experiences and reflections on security, and what security means for them. There is no quick fix for urban challenges such as social inequalities, poverty and organized crime. However, with this thesis, I have illuminated that it is necessary for academics and for city officials to step out of their towers and to listen and cooperate with people “on the ground”.

Future research in Rio de Janeiro could monitor the state and city officials' interaction with the city's favela during the next Lula period. More empirical studies are also needed elsewhere in the world, particularly to record the voices of residents from stigmatized neighbourhoods. The knowledge is there – we just need to ask, and listen.

## *5.2 Methodological and theoretical reflections*

Creating a narrative approach to security in the city with an international relations lens felt like patching together a quilt work – drawing on various analytical concepts and methods. Nevertheless, I found insights from feminist security studies and human security studies helpful to broaden the definition of security threats and concerns of ordinary people (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013). In the community activists' narrative, I used UNDP's (1994) human security categories to get an understanding of the security dynamics in Rocinha, and the multiple securities the participants were concerned with (Gjørvi, 2018). With Annick T.R. Wibben's (2011) feminist narrative approach to security, I got convinced there is always more than one security narrative to be told than the dominant state security narrative. I used this approach to give a voice to residents in Rocinha and identified three security narratives. Further, I found Maria Stern's (1998; 2005) method of reading security as a textual practice specifically relevant when engaging with this thesis' interview transcripts. In the philosopher's narrative, Stern's (2005) reading of the narrator's identification of discrimination as a threat to their security and well-being became useful since participants do not always talk about security in clear text. I am convinced Stern's method allows for a deeper understanding of participants' experiences of (in)security beyond the UNDP's human security categories, and direct attention to oppressive global and local structures (Newman, 2016, p. 1179; see also Gjørvi 2018).

Since this thesis has focused on city life, specifically in a marginalized place, I found it helpful to look outside international relations for analytical insights. From urban studies, Dikeç's (2017a) attention to structural dimensions that cause insecurity and a broader understanding of exclusion to include exclusion from rights, opportunities and privileges helped illuminate structures and politics that prevented favela residents to take part in city life on equitable terms in relation to their neighbours. Tom Slater's (2021b, 2021c) application of Wacquant-inspired territorial stigmatization was also found to be a useful analytical concept to see how residents dealt with the consequences of structural injustices and how they provided security and opportunities for themselves in the formal city.

Thus, a narrative approach to security with an international relation lens, with insights from urban studies, has helped me to deepen my understanding of security dynamics in the city by listening to the research participants' voices.



## 6. Bibliography

- Åsedotter, I. S. (2016). «*Nowadays there are shoot-outs all the time*». *Women, children, and Police Pacification Units (UPPs) in Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro*. Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI). Retrieved 13.11.2022 from <https://www.cmi.no/publications/5934-nowadays-there-are-shoot-outs-all-the-time-women>
- Baldwin, J. (1972). *No Name in the Street*. Dial Press.
- Besser, A., Vadot, A., Hoffman, A. R., Nemzer, E., & Al-sharki, N. (2016). *Understanding Rio's Violence: The Criminalization of Poverty*. Retrieved 20.05.2021 from <https://rioonwatch.org/?p=30636>
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Polity Press.
- Braathen, E. (2020). Pac'Stão versus the City of Police: Contentious Activism Facing Megaprojects, Authoritarianism, and Violence. *Conflict and Society*, 6(1), 145-164. <https://doi.org/10.3167/arcs.2020.060109>
- Braathen, E., Bartholl, T., Christovão, A. C., & Pinheiro, V. (2013). Addressing Sub-Standard Settlements WP3 Settlement Fieldwork Report. In E. Braathen (Ed.), *Settlement Field Report: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*. European Association of Development Institutes.
- Braga, G., Moura, P., Garcia, T., & Mihessen, V. (2020). *Mapa da desigualdade [Social inequality map]*. Retrieved 05.11.2022 from [https://casafluminense.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/mapa-da-desigualdade-2020-final\\_compressed.pdf](https://casafluminense.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/mapa-da-desigualdade-2020-final_compressed.pdf)
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed. ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Cassela, V., Borges, B., Sant'Ana, J., D'Agostino, R., & Felipe, L. (2023, January 1). 'DEMOCRACIA PARA SEMPRE' [Democracy forever]. *Globo*. <https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2023/01/01/lula-chega-ao-congresso-para-tomar-posse-como-39o-presidente-do-brasil.ghtml>
- Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Constituição Federal. (1988). *Artigo 5 da Constituição Federal de 1988 [Article 5, Federal Constitution 1988]*. Retrieved 12.11.2022 from <https://www.jusbrasil.com.br/topicos/10641516/artigo-5-da-constituicao-federal-de-1988>
- Corrêa, J., Cecchetto, F., Farias, P., & Fernandes, F. L. (2016). Poor youths and 'pacification': Dilemmas between discourse and practice from the perspective of

- young people about policing in Rio de Janeiro's favelas. *International Sociology*, 31(1), 100-120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580915615758>
- Curtis, S. (2014). *The Power of Cities in International Relations*. Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315851495>
- Curtis, S. (2016). *Global Cities and Global Order*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198744016.001.0001>
- Davis, I. (2019). I. Tracking armed conflicts and peace processes in 2018. In Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Ed.), *SIPRI Yearbook 2019* (pp. 33-42). Oxford University Press.
- Dikeç, M. (2017a). 1. Rage in the Urban Age. In *Urban Rage* (pp. 1-15). Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/doi:10.12987/9780300231212-002>
- Dikeç, M. (2017b). *Urban Rage: The Revolt of the Excluded*. Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300231212>
- Enloe, C. H. (1990). *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. University of California Press. <https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520279995/bananas-beaches-and-bases>
- Fahlberg, A. (2018a). "It was totally different than what we had before": Perceptions of urban militarism under Rio de Janeiro's Pacifying Policing Units. *Qualitative Sociology*, 41(2), 303-324. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-018-9381-3>
- Fahlberg, A. (2018b). Uneven development and the making of Rio de Janeiro. In *The Routledge Companion to the Suburbs*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315266442-15>
- Fahlberg, A., & Vicino, T. J. (2015). Breaking the city: Militarization and segregation in Rio de Janeiro. *Habitat International*, 54, 10-17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2015.08.042>
- Fahlberg, A., Vicino, T. J., Fernandes, R., & Potiguara, V. (2020). Confronting chronic shocks: Social resilience in Rio de Janeiro's poor neighborhoods. *CITIES*, 99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102623>
- Fausto, B., & Fausto, S. (2014). *A Concise History of Brazil*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gjørv, G. H. (2018). Human Security. In P. Williams & M. McDonald (Eds.), *Security Studies* (pp. 221-234). Routledge.

- Glenny, M. (2016). *O Dono do Morro: Um homem e a batalha pelo Rio* [Nemesis: One Man and the Battle for Rio]. Companhia das Letras.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Simon and Schuster.
- Håndlykken-Luz, Å. (2020). “Racism is a perfect crime”: favela residents’ everyday experiences of police pacification, urban militarization, and prejudice in Rio de Janeiro. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 43(16), 348-367. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2020.1800774>
- Hidalgo, D., Silveira, F., Padilha, D., Bassani, A. F., & Nascimento, I. (2021). Violencia urbana y políticas de seguridad: análisis en cuatro ciudades latinoamericanas [Urban violence and security policies: analysis in four Latin American cities]. *Revista EURE - Revista de Estudios Urbano Regionales*, 47(141), 165-182. <https://doi.org/10.7764/eure.47.141.08>
- Holston, J. (2009). *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. Princeton University Press.
- Hoogensen, G., & Stuvøy, K. (2006). Gender, Resistance and Human Security. *Security Dialogue*, 37, 207-228. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09670106060666436>
- IBGE. (2010). *Subnormal clusters, first results* (Censo demográfico 2010, Issue. [https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/periodicos/92/cd\\_2010\\_aglomerados\\_subnormais.pdf](https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/periodicos/92/cd_2010_aglomerados_subnormais.pdf)
- Instituto de Segurança Pública. (2021). *Séries históricas anuais de taxa de letalidade violenta no estado do Rio de Janeiro e grandes regiões* [Annual historical series of violent lethality rate in the state of Rio de Janeiro and major regions]. <http://www.ispdados.rj.gov.br/Arquivos/SeriesHistoricasLetalidadeViolenta.pdf>
- Lima, T. (2021). *Stop Killing Us! Jacarezinho Experiences Worst Massacre in Rio History* #VoicesFromSocialMedia. Rio On Watch. Retrieved 18.05.2021 from <https://rioonwatch.org/?p=65697>
- Lune, H., & Berg, B. L. (2017). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Pearson. <http://law.gtu.ge/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Berg-B.-Lune-H.-2012.-Qualitative-Research-Methods-for-the-Social-Sciences.pdf>
- Marques, E. (2021). Notes on Social Conditions, Rights and Violence in Brazilian Cities. *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, 27(1), 21-36. Retrieved 2021/01/02, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/13260219.2021.1954796>

- Newman, E. (2016). Human Security: Reconciling Critical Aspirations With Political 'Realities'. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 56(6), 1165-1183. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azw016>
- Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A Different Kind of War Story*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Passos, A. M. (2018, 2018/02/01). Fighting crime and maintaining order: shared worldviews of civilian and military elites in Brazil and Mexico. *Third World Quarterly*, 39(2), 314-330. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1374836>
- Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. Sage.
- RioOnWatch. (2019). *How Many Acts of Genocide Will it Take to Call the Extermination of Black Brazilians a Genocide?* Retrieved 27.03.2022 from <https://rioonwatch.org/?p=56561>
- Rocha, L. D. O. (2012). Black mothers' experiences of violence in Rio de Janeiro. *Cultural Dynamics*, 24(1), 59-73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0921374012452811>
- Schwartz-Shea, P., & Yanow, D. (2012). *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203854907>
- Silva, M. (2018, November, 11). Sem a conclusão do PAC 1, Governo do Rio quer iniciar o PAC 2 na Rocinha [Without the conclusion of PAC 1, the Government of Rio wants to start PAC 2 in Rocinha]. *Jornal Fala Roça*. <https://falaroca.com/sem-a-conclusao-do-pac-1-governo-do-rio-quer-iniciar-o-pac-2-na-rocinha/>
- Slater, T. (2019). Introduction: Producing and Contesting Urban Marginality. In J. Cupples & T. Slater (Eds.), *Producing and Contesting Urban Marginality: Interdisciplinary and Comparative Dialogues* (pp. 1-16). Rowman & Littlefield International. <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781786606426/Producing-and-Contesting-Urban-Marginality-Interdisciplinary-and-Comparative-Dialogues>
- Slater, T. (2021a). 1. Challenging the Heteronomy of Urban Research. In *Shaking Up the City: Ignorance, Inequality, and the Urban Question* (pp. 1-29). University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520972643>
- Slater, T. (2021b). 6. The Production and Activation of Territorial Stigma. In *Shaking Up the City: Ignorance, Inequality, and the Urban Question* (pp. 137-163). University of California Press. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1525/9780520972643-009>
- Slater, T. (2021c). *Shaking Up the City: Ignorance, Inequality, and the Urban Question*. University of California Press. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1525/9780520972643>

- Sørbøe, C. M. (2013). *Security and Inclusive Citizenship in the Mega-City: The Pacification of Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro*. University of Oslo. Retrieved 11.02.2021 from <http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-38706>
- Sørbøe, C. M. (2018). Urban Development in Rio de Janeiro During the 'Pink Tide': Bridging Socio Spatial Divides Between the Formal and Informal City? In M. Ystanes & I. Å. Strønen (Eds.), *The Social Life of Economic Inequalities in Contemporary Latin America, Approaches to Social Inequality and Difference: Decades of Change* (pp. 107-127). Palgrave Macmillan Cham. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-61536-3>
- Sørbøe, C. M. (2021a). *Neoliberal Fantasies, Favela Realities: Contentious politics of urban citizenship in pre-Olympic Rio de Janeiro*. University of Oslo. Retrieved 26.08.2021 from <https://www.sv.uio.no/iss/forskning/aktuelt/arrangementer/disputaser/2021/disputas-celina-sorboe.html>
- Sørbøe, C. M. (2021b). Politics of Urban Transformation in Pre-Olympic Rio de Janeiro: Contentions and Confluences Between Citizen- and Market-centred Agendas. *Forum for Development Studies*, 48(1), 129-152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08039410.2020.1832569>
- Stern, M. (1998). Reading Mayan Women's In/Security. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 3(2), 55-85. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41852859>
- Stern, M. (2005). *Naming Security - Constructing Identity: 'Mayan-Women' in Guatemala on the Eve of 'Peace'*. Manchester University Press.
- Techo. (2022). *About Techo*. Retrieved 19.11.2022 from <https://eu.techo.org/en/sobre-techo/>
- Tickner, J. A. (2005). What Is Your Research Program? Some Feminist Answers to International Relations Methodological Questions. *International Studies Quarterly*, 49(1), 1-21. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3693622>
- Tickner, J. A., & Sjoberg, L. (2013). Feminism. In T. Dunne, M. Kurki, & S. Smith (Eds.), *International Relations Theories* (pp. 179-195). Oxford University Press.
- UNDP. (1994). Human Development Report 1994. *UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)*.
- Wacquant, L. (2008). *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality* (1st ed.). Wiley.

Wacquant, L. (2011). Habitus as Topic and Tool: Reflections on Becoming a Prizefighter. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 8(1), 81-92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2010.544176>

Watts, J. (2013, October 3). Brazil: Rio police charged over torture and death of missing favela man. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/03/brazil-rio-police-charged-death-missing-man>

Wibben, A. T. R. (2011). *Feminist Security Studies: A Narrative Approach*. Routledge.

Williams, P. D., & McDonald, M. (2018). An introduction to security studies. In *Security Studies: An introduction* (Third edition ed.). Routledge.

## 7. Appendices

### 7.1 Table of research participants

#	Fictitious name and Interview date	Occupation	Place of residence	Evaluation
1	Thiago 10.05.22	Unemployed	Rocinha	Long-time friend. Pilot interview. My entry point into Rocinha.
2	Gilberto 13.05.22	Veteran community activist	Rocinha	A community activist who has fought for community development in Rocinha and workers' rights for decades. Thus, an interesting person to learn more about the non-spectacular forms of violence and struggles community residents encounter.
3	Jorge 14.05.22	Unemployed/runs his own NGO	Rocinha	Another NGO recommended I talked to this person after showing my research invitation letter. I spoke with the person and as the conversation developed, I realised he was an interesting research participant because he was engaged in community development, but outside the "usual" forums. He had also grown up in Rocinha and spent a lot of time reflecting on why things are the way they are.
4	Vitor 13.05.22	Painter/artist	Rocinha	Met the participant by coincidence in Rocinha, and spoke with him while taking cover during heavy rain. Based on this conversation, I decided to interview him since, 1) he was born and had lived in Rocinha since the 1960s, and 2) he had interesting reflections about Rocinha and its marginal position.
5	Roberto 17.05.22	Unemployed/NGO	Rocinha	Recommended by another participant. Runs his own NGO, which provides sporting alternatives to youth in Rocinha as an alternative to crime. He has a different focus than other community activists I spoke to.
6	Gabriel 24.05.22	Community activist & student	Rocinha	A resident with a lot of knowledge regarding Rocinha's history. I agreed to walk around the neighbourhood with him to learn more and listened attentively. This person, his insights and reflections were truly interesting. So, I asked him if we could have an interview at a later time.
7	Denilson 25.05.22	Service sector in Copacabana	Rocinha	Another long-time friend. He is different from most of the previous research participants because he is not a university student, community activist or health/education professional. He is an ordinary resident, a young male who is a "normal worker" as he said himself.
8	Alison 01.06.22	Community activist & student	Rocinha	Recommended by another research participant. Met the participant at community meeting and agreed an interview to talk about Rocinha's security issues the way he sees it and through the NGO where he is active.
9	Bruno 25.05.22	Community activist & working in corporate business	Rocinha. Has lived elsewhere, but returned.	Recommended by a friend. He has participated in various NGOs in Rocinha and other favelas. He also went to University and now works in a corporate business environment. He is therefore similar to but also different from other community activists – since he works in a business environment where other research participants do not. I am thus curious to learn about his experiences

				and reflections on insecurity and violence in Rocinha and beyond.
10	Ricardo 24.05.22	Service worker in Rocinha, runs an NGO and municipal candidate	Rocinha	Recommended by another research participant. Interested in his perspectives on food security in Rocinha since his NGO assisted many families in the community during the pandemic. Also interested in his story as a municipal political candidate.
11	Michelle 16.05.22	Health professional in Rocinha	Jacarepaguá	Recommended by a friend. An ordinary person, not engaged in community activism, but works in the health sector in Rocinha. Former resident.
12	Julia 24.05.22	Student & working in corporate business	Rocinha. Has lived elsewhere but returned.	Recommended by a friend. I have not had a lot of female research participants so far. It was hard to gain access and trust. This research participant was particularly interesting because she was not engaged in community activism, but a student and different than other participants since she navigated the formal city where other participants did not (social circles and professional/work).
13	Thaísa 27.05.22	Educational professional in Rocinha	Centro	Recommended by a friend. Different than other participants, she works with education in Rocinha. I am interested in her personal but also professional insights on security.
14	Iara 30.05.22	Health professional in Rocinha	Jacarepaguá	Recommended by a friend. Ordinary person. No activism. Grew up in Rocinha, but lives elsewhere. Professional in the health sector in Rocinha.
15	Bruna 06.06.22	High-ranking governmental employee, community resilience and human security		Recommended by another research participant. A governmental employee that does not “provide” security and development to Rocinha in the “traditional way” through police or urban development programs. Instead, with a human rights focus and community development with residents – coming from the state. Thus, I am interested in her experiences, perspectives and insights
16	Carolina 12.06.22 (verify)	Governmental employee, civil defence, natural disasters		Recommended by another research participant. Also, a person coming from the state but within a different branch and aim than the police; civil defence/natural disasters
17	Marcella 15.06.22	Charity	Leblon	I was supposed to talk to a friend of the participant, but the friend did not have time. This research participant lived in Leblon, but was frequently in Gávea (close to Rocinha). Interested in her experiences and reflections on security, and the view on Rocinha from an “elite’s” perspective.



## 7.2 Research invitation letter (English and Portuguese)

### **INVITATION TO JOIN RESEARCH PROJECT**

This is an invitation to participate in research on security in cities.

The research is focused on Rocinha in Rio de Janeiro. It aims to examine security in this specific urban community. For that purpose, I search participants, who are willing to participate in interviews.

The research is conducted as part of a master thesis at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences in Norway. Prior to my commencing my master studies, I lived in Rocinha for several months in 2015. In this research project, my interest is in how residents in Rocinha experience insecurity in their everyday life. I am asking you to participate in an interview in which I will ask several questions about your everyday life, how you experience insecurity, and what you do to stay safe.

#### **Why are you being asked to participate and what does it entail?**

You are asked to participate as a resident of Rocinha. The focus in this research is on this community and experiences with living here over an extensive period. You are asked to participate because of your experience with this community. You will be asked to share a bit about your background and your experience with living in Rocinha. The main bulk of the questions will focus on security in relation to your everyday life.

The information you share with me in the interview will be anonymised. This means you will not be identified, unless you ask to be named. Your contribution will provide invaluable data for my analysis and support my master thesis research, which will be published at NMBU's portal when completed.

The interview will be taped and later transcribed. It will be stored until the completion of the project, not shared with others, and destroyed upon finalization of the project.

#### **Who is responsible for the project?**

The Norwegian University of Life Sciences in Norway is responsible for the project. If you have any complaints, you can contact either me, my supervisor Dr. Kirsti Stuvøy (in English) and/or my co-supervisor Dr. Einar Braathen (in English/Portuguese).

[Kirsti.stuvoy@nmbu.no](mailto:Kirsti.stuvoy@nmbu.no) or [ainarb@oslomet.no](mailto:ainarb@oslomet.no)

#### **Participation is voluntarily**

It is voluntary to participate in this research. If you choose to decline the invitation or withdraw your consent either before, during or after the interview, you are free to do so without providing and reason or explanation.

Your participation in this research is much appreciated – thank you!

Sincerely,

Tore Øvstebø Næss

## CONVITE PARA PARTICIPAR DE PROJETO DE PESQUISA

Este é um convite para participar de uma pesquisa sobre segurança nas cidades

A pesquisa é focada na comunidade da Rocinha, no Rio de Janeiro. O objetivo é examinar a segurança nesta comunidade urbana específica. Para isso, procuro participantes que estão dispostos a participar de entrevistas.

A pesquisa é conduzida como parte de uma tese de mestrado na Universidade Norueguesa de Ciências da Vida na Noruega. Antes do meu início dos estudos de mestrado, vim fazer intercâmbio e morei na Rocinha por vários meses em 2015. Neste projeto de pesquisa, meu interesse é como os moradores da Rocinha experimentam a sensação de segurança / insegurança em seu cotidiano. Para isso venho por meio deste documento convidá-lo(a) a participar deste projeto por meio de uma entrevista na qual farei várias perguntas sobre sua vida cotidiana, como você percebe e lida com a sensação de segurança / insegurança e o que faz para se manter seguro.

### **Por que você está sendo convidado a participar e o que isso implica?**

Você é convidado a participar como morador da Rocinha. O foco desta pesquisa é nas suas experiências dentro desta comunidade. Você está sendo convidado a participar por causa de sua experiência com esta comunidade. A maior parte das perguntas se concentrará na segurança em relação ao seu cotidiano e/ou trabalho.

As pessoas entrevistadas terão sua identidade protegida, a menos que o entrevistado queira ser identificado, e as informações fornecidas por essas fontes serão utilizadas apenas para a dissertação de mestrado. Sua contribuição será crucial para a minha análise e servirá de insumo principal para esta pesquisa. Ao final do projeto os resultados serão publicados no portal da Universidade Norueguesa de Ciências da Vida na Noruega quando concluída.

A entrevista será gravada e posteriormente transcrita. Ele será armazenado até a conclusão do projeto, não compartilhado com outros, e destruído após a finalização do projeto.

### **Quem é o responsável pelo projeto?**

A Universidade Norueguesa de Ciências da Vida, na Noruega, é responsável pelo projeto. Se você tiver alguma reclamação, você pode entrar em contato comigo, a minha orientadora Dr. Kirsti Stuvøy (em inglês) e/ou o meu co-orientador Dr. Einar Braathen (em inglês/português).

[Kirsti.stuvoy@nmbu.no](mailto:Kirsti.stuvoy@nmbu.no) ou [einarb@oslomet.no](mailto:einarb@oslomet.no)

### **A participação é voluntária**

A participação nessa pesquisa é opcional, podendo o(a) participante optar por recusar o convite ou, após realizada a entrevista retirar seu consentimento antes, durante ou após a entrevista, sem fornecer e razão ou explicação.

Sua participação será muito apreciada – obrigado!

Sinceramente,  
Tore Øvstebø Næss

### 7.3 Interview guide (English and Portuguese)

This was the standard interview guide I began with. The interview guide was adapted on the fly based on the different personalities, insights and what the research participants talked about. Later interviews developed more naturally, in an unstructured manner. Nevertheless, they covered the research themes in the interview guide, allowing flexibility to cover what I was interested in, and make new discoveries together with my research participants.

#### **Interview guide v4.2**

#### **Security in Rocinha, Tore Øvstebø Næss**

Name of participant:

Date, time, place:

Occupation:

#### Part 1: Introduction

1. Welcome the research participant.
  - a. Reiterate my research interests and/or my interest in Rocinha
  - b. Explain the main themes of the interview
    - i. Background of the participant
    - ii. Everyday insecurity navigation
    - iii. Security in Post-Olympic Rio
    - iv. Security and Pandemic
    - v. The Police
    - vi. The Zona Sul
    - vii. The media
    - viii. Ending the interview (wrapping up, ask questions or add anything)
  - c. Thank you for agreeing to record this interview. Do you have any questions before we start?

#### Part 2: Getting to know my interviewee and their experience of (in)security and violence

- a) How long have you lived in Rocinha? Are you from Rocinha? Do you live here with your family? What do you do for a living?

#### Part 3: Everyday insecurity

- b) What is a typical day for you?
- c) Do you encounter any sources of insecurity (fears, threats and harm) during such a day?
- d) Do you make decision about where to go about your errands in relation to security?
- e) How do you stay safe?
- f) Do you have specific routines you apply in your daily routine to stay safe?

#### Part 4: Security and the Olympics

1. In/security in Post-Olympic Rio de Janeiro

- a) The Olympic games in 2016 – since then security has worsened: homicide rates up; Guerra na Rocinha; Pandemic, ; ... Is this your experience too?
- b) Alternatively, many people claim that security has gotten worse since [insert], do you agree?
- c) How was Rocinha affected by the Olympic Games and the Pacification?
- d) Has security in Rocinha worsened after the Olympic in your experience?
- e) What would you think is important to change to improve security in Rocinha?

Part 5: Security and the Pandemic

- a) Did the pandemic affect community's security, if so, how?
- b) How do you assess the job opportunities prior and after the pandemic?

Part 6: What the Police do

- a) What do you think about the police in the community?
- b) How do you perceive the police?
- c) And how do you think the police perceive you?
- d) Do they improve security in the community, if not, why not?

Part 7: South Zone

- a) What do you think about the more privileged neighbourhoods, e.g., Gávea, Leblon, São Conrado?
- b) How do you perceive residents from these neighborhoods?
- c) How do you think they perceive you?

Part 8: Newspapers, TV and social media

- a) What do you think about the newspapers in Rio?
- b) And how do you assess their representation of Rocinha?

Part 9: Other & Trust

- a) Are there other actors that are important in creating security in Rocinha?
- b) Who do you trust in, if any, to improve the security situation?
  - a. Current President / Lula
  - b. Governador C. Castro / opposition candidate Freixo
  - c. Mayor Pães
  - d. Local Council
  - e. Church/pastors
  - f. Football team?

Part 9: Ending the interview

- a) Summarise the interview
- b) Ask if the interviewee have anything to add
- c) Ask if there is anyone else, I should talk to/interview
- d) Thank the participant for their time and participation.

*Interview guide in Portuguese*

Guia de entrevista v4

Segurança das pessoas na Rocinha, Tore Øvstebø Næss

Nome do participante:

Data, hora, local:

Profissão/ocupação

### Parte 1: Introdução

2. Bem-vindo ao participante da pesquisa
  - a. Sou o Tore, faco um mestrado de RI, na área de estudos de segurança. O meu foco é segurança das pessoas e essa entrevista me apoiar para examinar a segurança nesta comunidade específica
  - b. Em 2015, eu morei aqui na Rocinha, e fiz um trabalho voluntário por 4 meses. Eu ensinei crianças e adolescentes inglês e matemática
  - c. Bem, hoje a gente vai falar sobre
    - i. Um pouco mais sobre você
    - ii. In/Segurança cotidiana
    - iii. Segurança no Rio pós os Jogos Olímpicos
    - iv. Segurança e Pandemia
    - v. A Polícia
    - vi. Zona Sul da cidade
    - vii. A mídia
    - viii. Confiança das outras pessoas
    - ix. Encerrar a entrevista
  - d. Obrigado concordar por gravar esta entrevista. Você tem alguma dúvida antes de começarmos?

### Parte 2: Conhecendo meu entrevistado e sua experiência de (in)segurança e violência

- a) Há quanto tempo você mora na Rocinha? Você é da Rocinha? Você mora aqui com sua família? Você trabalha em quê?

### Parte 3: In/segurança cotidiana

- a) Qual é um dia típico para você?
- b) Você encontra alguma fonte de insegurança (medos, ameaças e danos) durante esse dia?
- c) Você toma a decisão sobre onde fazer suas tarefas em relação à segurança?
- d) Como você se mantém seguro?
- e) Você tem rotinas específicas que se aplicam em sua rotina diária para se manter seguro?

### Parte 4: Segurança e como Olimpíadas

#### 4.1 In/segurança Pós-Olímpico no Rio de Janeiro

- f) Os Jogos Olímpicos de 2016 – desde então a segurança piorou: os índices de homicídios de sobem; Guerra na Rocinha; Pandemia; ... Esta é a sua experiência também ou não? Pode me contar como você veja a segurança aqui?
- g) Muita gente fala que a segurança piorou no Rio/Rocinha depois o presidente / Pães foram eleitos, isso é a sua experiência também?
- h) Como a Rocinha foi afetada pelos Jogos Olímpicos e pela Pacificação?
- i) A segurança na Rocinha piorou após a Olimpíada em sua experiência?
- j) O que você acha importante mudar para melhorar a segurança na Rocinha/comunidade?

### Parte 5: Segurança e a Pandemia

- a) Uma pandemia afetou a segurança da comunidade, se sim, como?
- b) Uma pandemia afetou a sua segurança na Rocinha?

#### Parte 6: O que a polícia faz

- a) O que você pensa sobre a polícia na comunidade?
  - a. Como você vê/percebe a polícia?
  - b. E como você acha que a polícia o percebe?
- d) Eles melhoram a segurança na comunidade, se não, por que não?

#### Parte 7: Zona Sul

- a) O que você acha dos bairros mais privilegiados, por exemplo, Gávea, Leblon, São Conrado?
- b) Como você percebe os moradores desses bairros?
- c) Como você acha que eles te percebem?

#### Parte 8: Jornais, TV e mídias sociais

- a) O que você acha dos jornais do Rio? O Globo por exemplo
  - a. como você avalia a representação deles da Rocinha?
  - b.

#### Parte 9: Confiança em quem

- a) Quem são os outros atores importantes na criação de segurança/insegurança na Rocinha?
- b) Em quem você confia, se houver alguém, para melhorar a situação de segurança?
  - a. O atual Presidente/ candidato da oposição, Lula?
  - b. Governador / candidato da oposição, Freixo
  - c. Prefeito Pães
  - d. Vereador local
  - e. Igreja/pastores
  - f. Time de futebol?

#### Parte 9: Encerrando a entrevista

- a) Resumir a entrevista
- b) Perguntar se o entrevistado tem algo a acrescentar
- c) Perguntar se tem mais alguém, que eu devo conversar/entrevistar
- d) Agradecer ao participante pelo seu tempo e participação.



**Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet**  
Noregs miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet  
Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Postboks 5003  
NO-1432 Ås  
Norway