

THEMATIC ARTICLE

Between *habitus* and *dépaysement*: a decolonial perspective on Rio de Janeiro Catacumba favela

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Abstract

This article explores the application of Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and *dépaysement* within the Catacumba favela in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, drawing insights from Janice Perlman's research. It examines the influence of various strategies- such as stereotyping, mythification, cooptation, uprooting, disenchantment, and coercion- on the traditional structures of housing, social aggregation, and socialization within the favela. Moreover, the study extends its focus to extract potential lessons and insights from these observed dynamics, particularly for marginalized populations living in the global periphery. Briefly, the study revisits Perlman's seminal research on favelas through Bourdieu's theoretical framework to uncover the historical roots of current social dynamics and their relevance for understanding decolonial practices in contemporary urban contexts. The findings offer valuable contributions to understanding the disruptive impacts of social structures and emphasize the importance of addressing these issues in both organizational strategies and public policies. By revisiting the Catacumba experience, the study also sheds light on the development of local leaders and the mobilization of distinctive forms of capital within these marginalized communities. Furthermore, it makes a significant contribution to decolonial studies by examining historical and contemporary colonization processes and forms of resistance within marginalized communities. By exposing and challenging the enduring colonial legacies that continue to shape the lives of marginalized populations, it offers insights into how these communities resist and navigate such legacies, contributing to the broader discourse on decolonization and the rejection of colonial structures.

Keywords: Decolonizing Studies. Agency. Community Leadership. Favela.

Entre habitus e dépaysement: uma perspectiva decolonial sobre a favela carioca da Catacumba

Resumo

Este artigo explora a aplicação dos conceitos de *habitus* e *dépaysement* de Bourdieu na Favela da Catacumba, no Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, com base nas pesquisas de Janice Perlman. Ele examina também a influência de várias estratégias – como estereotipagem, mitificação, cooptação, erradicação, desencantamento e coerção – nas estruturas tradicionais de moradia, agregação social e socialização dentro da favela. Além disso, o estudo amplia seu foco para extrair lições e *insights* potenciais dessas dinâmicas observadas, especialmente para populações marginalizadas que vivem na periferia global. Em resumo, o estudo revisita a pesquisa seminal de Perlman sobre favelas, por meio da estrutura teórica de Bourdieu, para descobrir as raízes históricas das dinâmicas sociais atuais e sua relevância para a compreensão de práticas decoloniais em contextos urbanos contemporâneos. Os resultados oferecem contribuições valiosas para a compreensão dos impactos disruptivos das estruturas sociais e enfatizam a importância de abordar essas questões tanto em estratégias organizacionais quanto em políticas públicas. Ao revisitar a experiência da Catacumba, o estudo também lança luz sobre o desenvolvimento de líderes locais e a mobilização de formas distintas de capital dentro dessas comunidades marginalizadas. Além disso, faz uma contribuição significativa para os estudos decoloniais ao examinar processos de colonização históricos e contemporâneos e formas de resistência nas de comunidades marginalizadas. Ao expor e desafiar os legados coloniais duradouros que continuam a moldar a vida das populações marginalizadas, oferece *insights* sobre como essas comunidades resistem e navegam por tais legados, contribuindo para o discurso mais amplo sobre decolonização e rejeição das estruturas coloniais.

Palavras-chave: Estudos decoloniais. Agência. Liderança comunitária. Favela.

Entre el habitus y el dépaysement: una perspectiva decolonial sobre la favela Catacumba de Rio de Janeiro

Resumen

Este artículo explora la aplicación de los conceptos de *habitus* y *dépaysement* de Bourdieu en la favela de Catacumba, en Río de Janeiro, Brasil, basándose en las investigaciones de Janice Perlman. Asimismo, examina la influencia de varias estrategias – como la estereotipación, mitificación, cooptación, erradicación, desencanto y coerción – en las estructuras tradicionales de vivienda, agregación social y socialización dentro de la favela. Además, el estudio amplía su enfoque para extraer lecciones e *insights* potenciales de estas dinámicas observadas, especialmente para poblaciones marginadas que viven en la periferia global. En resumen, el estudio revisita la investigación seminal de Perlman sobre favelas a través del marco teórico de Bourdieu para descubrir las raíces históricas de las dinámicas sociales actuales y su relevancia para comprender las prácticas decoloniales en contextos urbanos contemporáneos. Los hallazgos ofrecen contribuciones valiosas para entender los impactos disruptivos de las estructuras sociales y enfatizan la importancia de abordar estos problemas tanto en estrategias organizacionales como en políticas públicas. Al revisitar la experiencia de Catacumba, el estudio también arroja luz sobre el desarrollo de líderes locales y la movilización de formas distintivas de capital dentro de estas comunidades marginadas. Además, hace una contribución significativa a los estudios decoloniales al examinar procesos de colonización históricos y contemporáneos y formas de resistencia dentro de comunidades marginadas. Al exponer y desafiar los legados coloniales duraderos que continúan moldeando la vida de las poblaciones marginadas, ofrece *insights* sobre cómo estas comunidades resisten y navegan por tales legados, contribuyendo al discurso más amplio sobre la decolonización y el rechazo de las estructuras coloniales.

Palabras clave: Estudios decoloniales. Agencia. Liderazgo comunitario. Favela.

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INTRODUCTION

Aligned with the principles of decolonial studies (Guha, 1999), this study delves into the historical struggles and strategies employed in marginalized communities. Drawing from Bourdieu's theoretical framework (Bourdieu, 1984), it is imperative to recognize the longstanding grapple of these communities with legacies and structures of power that have profoundly shaped their socio-economic realities, thereby emphasizing the historical injustices and marginalization endured by them (Fanon, 1963; Said, 1979).

In this context, our aim is to comprehend how these communities have been subjected to various forms of colonization and neo-colonization (Castro-Gómez, 2021; Chambers, 2020; Chowdhury, 2023; Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Dyer-Witthof, 2015; Sassen, 2006; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Through this lens, one aspires to foster a more inclusive and critical understanding of the favelas and their inhabitants (Escobar, 2018; Grosfoguel, 2011; Lugones, 2007; Mignolo, 2011; Quijano, 2007; Santos, 2014). Analyzing the effects of strategies such as stereotyping, mythification, cooptation, uprooting, disenchantment, and coercion on the traditional structures of housing, social cohesion, and agency within the favelas (Fanon, 1952; Quijano, 2000) can allow us to better understand the complex dynamics at play in marginalized communities (Grosfoguel, 2007; Mignolo, 2011).

In 1969, Janice E. Perlman, a professor at the Institute for Urban and Regional Development at the University of California, Berkeley, conducted extensive research in Rio de Janeiro's favelas, including Catacumba, Nova Brasília, and Caxias. Utilizing multiple research techniques, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and in-depth questionnaires, she surveyed residents and local leaders who were randomly selected, compiling a chronological history for each respondent (Perlman, 1976).

In 1970, approximately one year later, roughly six thousand residents of Catacumba were resettled by the Rio de Janeiro State Popular Housing Company (COHAB-RJ) into the newly built Guaporé-Quitungo Complex in the Penha region. Others were transferred to areas such as Cidade de Deus, Vila Aliança, and Nova Holanda, which eventually evolved into new favela communities. Subsequently, the vacated Catacumba area underwent reforestation and was transformed into the Parque da Catacumba (Perlman, 1976).

In the middle of 1973, Perlman returned to Rio de Janeiro to conduct a follow-up study, enriching her initial research with updated insights into the lives of the favelados from Catacumba and beyond, thereby broadening her understanding of the diverse experiences within Rio de Janeiro's favelas (Perlman, 1976).

Building upon Perlman's findings in Catacumba from 1969 and 1973, this article investigates, through Bourdieu's theory of practice, how *habitus* and *dépaysement* were mobilized. The article explores strategies like stereotyping, mythification, cooptation, uprooting, disenchantment, and coercion, and their impacts on housing, social cohesion, and agency within local social structures (Bourdieu, 1977, 1962, 1958; Bourdieu & Sayad, 1964; Bourdieu et al., 1977).

In addition, revisiting research on the Catacumba community can offer valuable perspectives for integrating these considerations into the strategic frameworks of institutions and organizations more effectively. Such an examination also aids in crafting public policies aimed at softening the impacts of this transition, underlining the necessity for leaders who can navigate challenges through "bricolage" as described by Levi-Strauss (1962) and Stinchfield et al. (2013).

Perlman's pioneering research in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro in the 1970s provides a unique and detailed empirical foundation for examining the enduring socio-economic challenges and resilience of marginalized urban communities. Despite being conducted over 50 years ago, Perlman's work offers timeless insights into the lives of favela residents, making it an invaluable resource for understanding historical continuities and transformations within these communities.

This foundational work sets the stage for our exploration, allowing us to draw upon a rich dataset that captures the complexities of life in the favelas during a period of significant social and economic change. By revisiting Perlman's findings through the theoretical lens provided by Bourdieu, one seeks to illuminate the enduring nature of these social dynamics and their relevance to the contemporary challenges faced by favela communities.

Furthermore, in terms of its significance, this article offers a contribution to the understanding of marginalized spaces, such as favelas, refugee camps, segregated communities, and entities within the “lower economic circuit” (Santos, 2012). The reinterpretation of Perlman’s work with Bourdieu’s theoretical contributions provides a fresh perspective on the intricate realities of these communities, challenging and reframing deeply entrenched narratives and stereotypes. This reevaluation illuminates the agency, resilience, and intricate social structures inherent within the societies of favela dwellers.

At the organizational level, this study holds particular significance for the burgeoning Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) agenda (Kolk & Perego, 2014). Gaining a deeper understanding of the social dynamics within marginalized spaces (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000) can shape organizational strategies to enhance sustainability, promote equity, and ensure responsible business conduct (Kolk & Perego, 2014). Frequently overlooked in mainstream discourse on ESG issues, these spaces disproportionately bear the brunt of environmental hazards, social disparities, and governance obstacles (Santos, 2012).

This study also contributes to the field by bridging historical and contemporary analyses of favela communities, offering insights into the persistent and evolving nature of marginalization in the context of rapid technological and economic changes. By integrating Perlman’s empirical findings with Bourdieu’s theoretical framework, one provides a comprehensive understanding of the social dynamics within favelas, highlighting their relevance to current discussions on decolonization, social justice, and urban development.

Methodologically, this study can be characterized as grounded in a thorough review of literature relevant to the case study, enriched by an analysis of Perlman’s findings within the theoretical framework of Bourdieu. The primary technique employed for data analysis was content analysis, guided by Bardin’s established methods (Bardin, 2011).

Understanding the historical importance of 1970s social phenomena in the favelas is crucial for contemporary decolonial theory as it marks a pivotal period where the roots of current social structures, power dynamics, and community resilience were firmly established. The 1970s were a time of significant political, social, and economic transitions globally, and these changes resonated within the favelas, influencing the evolution of their social fabric. This era laid the groundwork for the forms of resistance, adaptation, and collective identity that are observed in these communities today.

In essence, this study contributes to the field by bridging historical and contemporary analyses of favela communities, offering insights into the persistent and evolving nature of marginalization in the context of rapid technological and economic changes. By integrating Perlman’s empirical findings with Bourdieu’s theoretical framework, one provides a comprehensive understanding of the social dynamics within favelas, highlighting their relevance to current discussions on decolonization, social justice, and urban development.

By revisiting this critical period through Perlman’s research, one gains invaluable insights into the genesis of these complex social formations and their enduring impact on the lives of favela residents. This historical perspective is essential for decolonial theory, as it provides a nuanced understanding of how colonial legacies have been perpetuated and contested within these urban spaces. It highlights the ways in which favela communities have navigated and resisted colonial and post-colonial power structures, thereby offering a rich context for examining contemporary forms of decolonization and social transformation.

In turn, reexamining Perlman’s research with Bourdieu’s theoretical lens offers profound insights into the intricate social fabric of favelas. This approach enriches our perception of power dynamics, structural relations, and the concept of *habitus* in the everyday lives of these communities. Instead of seeing favelas merely as peripheral entities, Bourdieu’s ideas unveil them as nuanced social landscapes with distinct mechanisms for social integration and cohesion. *Habitus*, a central Bourdieu construct, illuminates the ways in which individuals and entire communities navigate and are shaped by their socio-organizational and physical milieus, forging distinctive identities and a collective sense of place (Bourdieu, 1980).

By applying Bourdieu’s concepts of *habitus* and *dépaysement*, one explores the intricate ways in which favela residents navigate and are shaped by their environment. This approach allows us to examine the reproduction of social structures and power dynamics within the favelas, providing a nuanced understanding of decolonial processes and strategies at play in these marginalized spaces. Through this analysis, one aims to contribute to the broader discourse on social inequality, urban marginalization, and the potential for social change in post-colonial contexts.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Both Bourdieu and Perlman have made significant contributions to sociology, particularly in understanding social inequality and power dynamics in various contexts. Engaging with their theories offers deeper insights into complex social realities in contexts of *dépaysement* (Perlman, 2010; Skeggs, 2015; Swartz, 1997).

Bourdieu's sociological framework, emphasizing cultural capital, *habitus*, and symbolic power, provides valuable insights into the social dynamics of the Catacumba Favela. Cultural capital, encompassing knowledge, skills, and education, influences residents' social positions and resource access. *Habitus*, consisting of internalized behaviors and dispositions, shapes how individuals navigate their social world and interact within the favela. Symbolic power is manifested through the valuation of certain cultural practices, reinforcing social hierarchies and perpetuating inequalities (Bourdieu, 1986; DiMaggio, 1982; Lareau, 2011; Skeggs, 2015).

Bourdieu's sociology offers a comprehensive framework for understanding social inequality and power dynamics in the favela, emphasizing how cultural capital, *habitus*, and symbolic power shape residents' experiences and mobility (Bourdieu, 1977). However, it may have a weakness in its limited focus on external structural constraints and broader socio-economic and political factors affecting the favela context (Jenkins, 2002).

Perlman's conceptualization of the favela as an informal settlement provides insights into the structure, governance, and economic activities of Catacumba Favela. It highlights the importance of residents' informal networks and strategies in navigating bureaucratic challenges and surviving in poverty. This approach sheds light on informal economies like street vending and community-based services, offering livelihood opportunities. It also underscores the significance of social networks and solidarity in addressing daily challenges (Perlman, 2010; Portes & Roberts, 2005).

Perlman's theory focuses on residents' adaptive strategies and resilience within the favela, emphasizing how informal networks and economic activities contribute to social fabric and survival mechanisms. However, it might overlook systemic issues and structural constraints perpetuating poverty and marginalization (Caldeira, 1996; Das, 2018; Perlman, 2010).

Contemporary studies demonstrate how researchers have applied Bourdieu and Perlman's theories to understand social inequalities, cultural capital, and informal networks within urban contexts. Johnson and Martinez (2020) explore the role of cultural capital in educational attainment within urban slums, drawing on Bourdieu's framework. Nguyen and Lee (2018) examine the relationship between social class, cultural capital, and social mobility within marginalized communities, applying Bourdieu's concepts. Silva and Barbosa (2017) investigate the use of informal networks as survival strategies in informal settlements, reflecting on Perlman's theory.

In summary, Bourdieu's focus on cultural capital, *habitus*, and symbolic power offers a comprehensive framework for understanding social dynamics and inequality in Catacumba Favela. Conversely, Perlman's emphasis on the favela's informal structure and resident strategies provides practical insights into the experiences of poverty and marginalization. Together, their theories provide a holistic view of social life in the favela, informing contemporary studies on cultural capital and informal networks. These theories also hold relevance in discussions on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) concerns, as they provide frameworks for understanding social stratification and resilience within urban communities.

Habitus and local dynamics

Perlman's (1976) findings offer a vivid portrayal of the stark contrast between external perceptions of favelas and the nuanced reality within these communities. According to the records from the Secretariat of Social Services in Brazil during Perlman's research, favelas were officially described as densely occupied housing groups characterized by haphazard construction with inadequate materials. They lacked zoning, public services, and were often used without the owner's consent.

From an outsider's viewpoint, a typical favela presented itself as a congested and unsanitary human settlement. Women were observed carrying large water cans on their heads or congregating around community water sources for laundry. Men appeared to spend leisure time in bars, engaged in casual conversations or card games, seemingly without specific tasks. Naked children

played in the dirt, and the houses, constructed from mismatched materials, gave an impression of structural instability. Open sewers emitted unpleasant odors, particularly on hot, windless days. The pervasive dust and dirt compounded, transforming streets into cascading mud during rain (Perlman, 1976).

However, Perlman (1976) reveals that the internal reality of the favela diverged significantly from these external perceptions. The construction of houses within the favela took into consideration factors such as comfort, efficiency, climate, and the availability of materials. The arrangement of furniture reflected whimsy, and residents maintained clean living spaces. Many homes featured brightly painted doors and shutters, adorned with flowers and plants on windowsills. Pets were not just present but cherished and well-cared for.

Contrary to the image of idle men in bars, Perlman's observations indicated that most men and women in the favela woke up early and engaged in industrious work throughout the day. Women involved in laundry work often earned a living through these activities, and men frequently seen in bars were often awaiting the commencement of their work shifts. While not all children attended school, they generally displayed intelligence, alertness, and good health. Parents emphasized the importance of providing their children with as much education as possible.

Importantly, Perlman's findings bring to light the often-overlooked aspects of social cohesion, mutual trust, and complex internal social organization within the favela community. Various clubs and spontaneous associations flourished, demonstrating a rich tapestry of interconnected social networks that might not be apparent to external observers (Perlman, 1976).

Box 1 summarizes three attitudes toward favela communities as identified by the author.

Box 1
Favela: different associated habitus

Notion of Favela	Associated <i>Habitus</i>
Favela as pathological agglomerations	The prevailing negative view of favelas portrays them as disorderly areas inhabited by marginalized individuals, including vagabonds, thieves, and prostitutes. These communities are often characterized by substandard living conditions, lacking basic urban services and sanitation. Economically and socially, they are seen as a drain on public resources, contributing little in terms of skills or purchasing power. Additionally, the valuable land occupied by favelas is considered underutilized and detrimental to neighboring property values. The dominant perspective advocates for the removal of favela residents to cheaper, more remote areas with minimum housing standards. This negative myth overlooks the complexity of favelas and the potential for community development and empowerment.
Favela as communities overcoming difficulties	A <i>favela</i> is understood as a community inhabited by dynamic, honest, capable people, who could improve their neighborhood if they were given the opportunity. <i>Favelados</i> contribute to the economy as workers and consumers, and through the improvements they make to their land and homes. Over time, a <i>favela</i> will naturally evolve into a productive neighborhood fully integrated into the city. Residents' entrepreneurial skills and organizational spirit are clearly revealed in their collective effort, in public services in the community, as well as in the complex network of social organizations. These stronghold relatives of backward people actually constitute an important component of Brazil's cultural identity. There are many sources of satisfaction in the <i>favela</i> , such as "variety, adventure, convenience, loyalty, a sense of community, and mutual self-help. Rather than removing <i>favelas</i> , this second position would imply an official policy of legalizing and urbanizing the locality, granting <i>favelados</i> titles to their land, providing them with easy access to sources of finance, long-term loans and technical assistance, thus allowing them to become agents of their own improvement.
Favela as unavoidable calamities	A <i>favela</i> is seen as a natural, albeit unfortunate, consequence of rapid urban growth. <i>Favelados</i> are considered useful as cheap labor and easy-to-buy votes, despite being judged to be economically unproductive, politically unprepared, and socially undesirable. Those who defend this position adopt the paternalistic view that <i>favelados</i> are like children – they need to be guided, taught and educated by the good will of the more fortunate, without necessarily having to change the basic structure of the situation. The best programs are palliatives, such as distributing food and clothing, organizing health centers, mothers' clubs, among others. It is believed that, with this type of policy, the most deserving <i>favelados</i> will overcome countless obstacles and integrate into society.

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Perlman (1976, p. 40).

Box 1 encapsulates the significance of *habitus* and local dynamics in comprehending the social intricacies within the favela scrutinized by Perlman (1976). *Habitus* influences residents' perceptions and their navigation of their environment, affecting attitudes toward the community and strategies for overcoming challenges. Perlman's research uncovers diverse attitudes toward favela agglomerates, ranging from viewing them as pathological to recognizing them as communities overcoming difficulties. These associated *habitus* unveil the intricate interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors shaping dynamics within the favela, providing insights into lived experiences, social relationships, and collective actions, contributing to a holistic understanding of its social fabric (Perlman, 1976).

It is crucial to acknowledge that Perlman's findings retain significance in comprehending the social dynamics within the favela, despite the absence of updated data. While incorporating information that is more recent would enhance the analysis, Perlman's data offer valuable historical perspectives and insights into the enduring challenges faced by favela communities. Recognizing the temporal limitations and advocating for further research, the article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of favela dynamics, considering both past and present realities (Perlman, 1976).

The inclusion of Perlman's data from her 1970s work is justified for several reasons. Firstly, Perlman's study represents a seminal and comprehensive exploration of favela dynamics, providing valuable insights into social, economic, and cultural aspects. Referencing and analyzing her findings are essential to establish a historical context for understanding the studied favela. Furthermore, Perlman's data remain relevant due to persistent socio-economic challenges faced by favela residents. While circumstances may have evolved, fundamental issues such as housing, infrastructure, education, and employment remain pertinent. Perlman's data serve as a baseline understanding to assess changes, identify continuity, and highlight areas for further investigation (Perlman, 1976).

Although specifying gender proportions in favelas was difficult at the time due to a lack of census studies, Perlman (1976) found a higher percentage of women (55%) than men (45%) did in Catacumba. This imbalance may be attributed to greater options available to men, such as living in barracks, construction sites, or pensions, and higher migration rates for women. Regarding racial types, 21% of favelados were black, 30% mixed race, and 49% white. Black favelados represented practically all black individuals in Rio de Janeiro, while white favelados constituted only a fraction of the white population (Perlman, 1976).

The average age of favelados is 34. In terms of marital status, 24% are single, 66% are married or in stable relationships, 5% are separated, and 5% are widowed. The nuclear family prevails in the favela, with 90% of families in Catacumba being nuclear, averaging 4.6 children, which is lower than rural areas (60-70%) (Perlman, 1976).

Among favelados of working age, 28% were unemployed, and 13% had never worked. The value of education was a significant concern, often perceived as minimal in its impact and importance for socioeconomic advancement. Both migrants to the favelas and the original inhabitants (natives) faced limited choices in occupation. Career progression appeared to be unaffected by the introduction of new educational opportunities either within the city or in their places of origin. Typically, an individual's professional status was influenced by their social background and age.

Local community leaders were predominantly male (nine out of ten) and mostly white (65%), with an average age of 41- seven years older than the average age of the total population. They were literate and employed. These leaders, akin to indigenous chiefs, were locals deeply invested in their communities, elevating their concerns from isolated issues to those encompassing the entirety of their areas. While the favelas did not have a single leader with exclusive control over external authorities, a cadre of leaders functioned as political intermediaries, ensuring vital connections and relationships between the favela's local system and external entities (Pearse, 1961). The concept of a "structural hole" (Granovetter, 1973; Lin, 2001; Peattie, 1968) further underscores the significance of accessing higher levels of authority in advocating for local interests.

Political involvement among favela leaders and residents primarily manifested in administrative matters. A significant proportion (85%) engaged in activities such as consulting lawyers, seeking professional advice, using banking services, and enrolling in social security, health, or labor union services. Access to administrative contacts represented a vital source of power among favelados, which is crucial for understanding the politics within their spatiality (Perlman, 1976).

These findings led the author to conclude that, while politics was not the dominant interest in the lives of favelados, they were far from apathetic and acquiescent. They displayed sensible concern for issues directly affecting them and shared a common-sense approach to defending their interests and minimizing harm to the system. Although leaders had participation that is more active across all sectors, they followed the same strategy of risk minimization and gain maximization. In the

Brazilian context of the time, this meant serene and orderly integration into the prevailing political regime, contrary to widespread stereotypes about favela radicalism fueled by the ruling classes' fear of subversion and antisocial behavior (Perlman, 1976).

Although Brazilian society is not based on broad kinship groups or clans, strong kinship ties exist. The crony system elevates friends to the position of "almost relatives". Nearly two-thirds of migrants found their first job through the assistance of friends or relatives, with a higher percentage among women. Only 23 percent had to independently search for employment through methods like going door-to-door, responding to newspaper advertisements, or utilizing employment agencies (Perlman, 1976).

According to Smith and Inkeles (1966), assessed by Perlman (1976) using the Overall Modernity scale as indicators of traditionalism-modernity, factors such as religiosity, openness to innovation, family orientation, and empathy contradicted hypotheses about the "culture of poverty" (Lewis, 1996) and other myths surrounding the marginal nature of these spatialities.

Regarding religious orientation, 94% of favelados considered themselves followers of some religion, with 72% identifying as Catholics, 10% as Assembly of God, 5% as Baptists, 5% as Spiritists, and 4% as members of other denominations. However, 58% declared not belonging to any religious organization, and only 3% of those affiliated regularly attended services. Few displayed dogmatism, ruptures, or fanaticism (Perlman, 1976).

When it came to openness to innovation, respondents showed relative openness to science and technology but were more hesitant about changes in traditional practices. They exhibited eagerness to adopt new and modern aspects, often limited by economic reasons rather than attitude. They were among the early adopters of fashionable clothes, avid followers of the latest American music trends, and eager purchasers of new gadgets whenever possible (Perlman, 1976).

In terms of personal values, approximately 72% of men and 70% of women expressed sympathy toward the idea of forming a modern group, even surpassing the middle class as a comparison point. The birth rate in favelas was significantly lower than in rural areas. Favelados showed high levels of secularization, cognitive flexibility, and empathy. Education was highly revered in the favela, with individuals holding a college degree being respectfully treated as holders of a Ph.D. Generally, the aspirations of favelados did not differ from those of the middle class, and they displayed optimism regarding the future of their children and future generations (Perlman, 1976).

According to Perlman's findings (1976, p. 190), the Catacumba favelados did not possess a subculture of traditionalism or poverty. When favela dwellers expressed that "the poor don't have a chance" or believed that trying something "is no use," they were not reflecting inherent resignation or fatalism. Rather, they were realistically assessing their situation, suggesting that a change in the barriers they faced could lead to different responses.

Perlman's (1976) data revealed a significant degree of submission to authority. However, the concept of submission needed careful interpretation. Egalitarian norms were the exception rather than the rule in Brazilian social and political life, as passivity and respect for authority were instilled through the prevailing dictatorial regime imposed by the military with support from the United States government.

Contrary to myths about the limited economic contribution of favelados in terms of labor or consumption, Perlman (1976) collected data indicating that only 10% of male workers carried out their activities within the community, while the rest directly contributed to the external metropolitan economy. Furthermore, nearly one-third of favela women worked in domestic services considered essential by the middle class. Only 32% of favelados were considered unskilled at the time, primarily performing necessary tasks that generated income circulating within the economy (Perlman, 1976).

Favelados also made significant contributions to consumption. Ninety-two percent purchased clothes, and 72% bought food outside the community. Despite their low incomes, they constituted an important market for consumer goods. At the time of the survey, 35% were paying installments, with 24% for household items and 11% for clothes and shoes (Perlman, 1976).

Respondents also contributed to the economy through entrepreneurial activities within the community. Four out of ten favelados built their own houses, and between 5% and 10% established tents, shops, or bars that incurred municipal taxes (Perlman, 1976).

Furthermore, the data refuted myths about the prevailing work ethic in these communities. Contrary to the prevailing ideal, favelados valued work, scientific technology, and expressed respect for impersonal bureaucratic relationships (Perlman, 1976).

Equally, contrary to general belief, favelados declared themselves reasonably satisfied with their lives and prospects for the future. Nine out of ten mentioned aspects of their current lives in the city that they particularly enjoyed, and 70% believed there was as mutual help in the favela than in their places of origin (Perlman, 1976).

Dépaysement and its impacts

The aftermath of the 1973 relocation of Catacumba residents brought about immediate consequences across various dimensions, leaving an indelible impact on the economic, social, cultural, political, and psychological aspects of the community (Perlman, 1976).

Economically, the residents faced heightened challenges, including increased transportation costs and time spent commuting. Finding employment, particularly for women, became more arduous, compounded by the burden of monthly mortgage installments. Favela merchants were disproportionately affected, with many compelled to shut down their businesses due to a dwindling customer base, the expense of acquiring new licenses, restrictions on using homes for commercial purposes, or exorbitant rents for new stores (Perlman, 1976).

Socioculturally, the scattering of former residents into new housing developments based on income rather than social and family ties led to the disintegration of support structures within the favelas. Geographical isolation further contributed to a sense of detachment from urban life and activities. This upheaval gave rise to suspicion, distrust, and perceptions of an increased crime rate among the relocated residents (Perlman, 1976).

Community leaders, instrumental in fostering cohesion, were among the first to be relocated, either disappearing or being dispersed to settlements far from their constituents. Attempts to establish new neighborhood associations or organizations faced apathy and distrust among neighbors. The pervasive feelings of fear and despair made it challenging to gather people for meetings (Perlman, 1976).

During Brazil's democratization process in the 1980s, several factors reshaped the perception of favelas, moving from being seen as problems to potential solutions (Ribeiro, 1997; Valladares, 2005). Internationally, criticism emerged regarding the disconnect between urban planners, architects, and the realities of favela communities. Authors like Gans (1982) and Jacobs (2011) contributed to a shift away from projects that excluded access to the city. The pressure from residents and their organizations opposing forced removals and advocating for legal recognition of their neighborhoods played a pivotal role in changing perspectives (Valladares, 2005).

In Brazil, the economic crisis of the 1980s, coupled with austere programs and reduced public investments, led to a systematic increase in favela populations. The lifting of media censorship amplified reports of violence, drug trafficking, and crime in Rio's favelas, reinforcing a dual perception of the "formal" city inhabitants' fear of the population residing in the hills. Terms like "split city" and "divided city" became common, furthering this dichotomy (Ventura, 1984).

The 1990s witnessed the favela issue gaining prominence in academic circles, with an increasing volume of studies and research. Census data from 1991 and 2000 indicated the expansion of agglomerations into other regions, such as Jacarepaguá and Barra da Tijuca, as closed condominiums catering to the upper middle class were constructed (Valladares, 2005).

As of the latest estimates by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], 2020), there are 13,151 subnormal agglomerations (favelas) in the country, comprising 5.1 million households. In Rio de Janeiro city alone, there are 453,571 households in these agglomerations, representing 12.63% of the total number, making it second only to São Paulo in terms of the number of households in subnormal agglomerations (IBGE, 2020).

SPECTRA AND LESSONS FROM CATACUMBA

The marginalized groups are not peripheral but rather integral parts of the system. Integration does not always imply reciprocity, as society is a whole and the question is how its parts fit together. The marginals, in this case, are permanently outside society, lacking participation in the common values that define it. This perspective opposes the conflict model, as every society involves coercion of some members by others (Dahrendorf, 1959).

Perlman (1976) observed that the causes and continuation of marginalization were not rooted in the *habitus* (Bourdieu, 2021) of individuals, and their attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors did not include a self-defeating and morality-inhibiting syndrome. Therefore, the search for explanations leads us to examine structural factors or social institutions, such as labor and capital markets, class systems, social stratification, the role of the state in capitalist societies, and the international context. These factors greatly influence urban inequalities.

The key point is that marginality is not solely a result of deficient housing conditions or individual characteristics, but rather a consequence of a societal form rooted in the historical process of industrialization and economic growth in peripheral nations, particularly in Latin America. Marginalization arises from a development model that systematically excludes vast segments of the population from the central productive apparatus (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe [CEPAL], 1965; Perlman, 1976; Quijano, 1973; Santos, 1974).

According to data from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL, 1965), industrial development in less developed countries no longer leads to a significant increase in industrial employment. This leads to a disproportionate number of underemployed people without salaried jobs, lacking social security, labor protection, or stable income, and living in a state of constant uncertainty (Perlman, 1976). Quijano (1973) further emphasized that there exists a category of people who are excluded from the main nucleus of work due to insufficient incomes, and unable to access the consumption of goods and services. This issue extends beyond isolated individuals or small groups and affects vast sectors of the population, becoming a problem for society as a whole.

In the present scenario, two types of “marginals” or “outsiders” are identified. The first group consists of a marginalized bourgeoisie, including self-employed entrepreneurs and highly qualified professionals whose occupations are eliminated by new digital technologies. The second group comprises those in precarious occupational positions, such as migrants, intermittent workers, exploited Uber drivers, beneficiaries of social assistance programs, and individuals earning a universal minimum income (Frey & Osborne, 2017; Standing, 2014).

The labor dynamics of the digital economy can be understood through the notions of economic circuits. The “upper circuit” includes modern to hypermodern enterprises, while the “lower circuit” involves small-scale activities and non-modern services aimed at poor populations (Santos, 2012). The lower circuit constitutes a source of work, employment, and income for a significant portion of the population, sustaining their survival. In the contemporary digital society, this coexistence of production modes intensifies the separation between the “connected” and the “precarious”, leading to an extreme form of marginalization (Kowarick, 1974; Santos, 2012).

Contrary to previous suggestions of capitalism-oriented alternatives for the inclusion of the marginalized, current trends indicate an unrestrained income and wealth concentration expansion. The adoption of digital technologies, automation, robotics, and intelligent machines has rendered many occupations obsolete, impacting both technical-specialized roles and highly valued professions. The result is a growing divide between the “winners” and “losers” (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Frey & Osborne, 2017; Piketty, 2014; Schwab, 2017).

This widening gap raises questions about the role of the large marginalized population in the present stage of capitalist development characterized by large ecosystems and business networks that require a smaller but highly educated, skilled, flexible, and adaptable workforce. The remaining population, comprising the majority, is left to provide low-value services and products through intensively automated production and management systems. They face uncertainty and marginalization (Dowbor, 2018; Haskel & Westlake, 2018; Mason, 2017).

As income and wealth concentration increases, demographic, geopolitical, environmental, and technological factors further contribute to this marginalization. The marginalized sectors, including the favelados, have become subjects of study and experimentation for large platforms and organizational arrangements that replace mass production industries. They provide valuable attributes such as creativity, flexibility, adaptability, and resilience, which are mapped and converted into distinctive approaches, methodologies, and algorithms for the “upper circuit” of the digital era (Dowbor, 2018; Kurzweil, 2007; World Economic Forum [WEF], 2020).

Considering this, Perlman's (1976) studies gain significance when examined through Bourdieusian notions of *habitus* and *dépaysement*. They shed light not only on the dynamics of industrial society but also on the ongoing transition to the digital era catalyzed by the COVID-19 pandemic. These studies contribute to understanding how social agents with different *habitus* and unequal distribution of capital interact within a social space, where conflicts and alliances unfold in the pursuit of maintaining or transforming the current power dynamics.

Despite criticisms of Perlman's work, her studies remain the most referenced about marginalization (Valladares, 2005). Their rigor, richness, and methodological diversity make them valuable for historical and comparative analyses. However, further research and analysis are needed to explore the complexities and nuances of marginalization and its impact on societal relations and inequalities (Mason, 2017; Standing, 2014).

In summary, the ongoing transition to digital capitalism exacerbates the marginalization of certain social groups, creating a deep divide between the “connected” and the “precarious”. This widening gap in income and wealth concentration poses significant challenges for societies worldwide. Understanding the structural factors, social institutions, and power dynamics at play is crucial for addressing and mitigating the social and economic inequalities inherent in this transformative era (Krugman, 2012; Piketty, 2014; Schwab, 2017).

In addition, at the business and management levels, particularly regarding issues related to ESG discourse, the contributions of this article point to topics on the strategic agenda of organizations. Its insights are particularly relevant for organizational decision-makers in understanding the underlying premises and values as well as its potential impacts at societal, organizational, and individual levels.

Moreover, the article emphasizes the need for further research and analysis to comprehend the complexities and nuances of marginalization within the context of the digital era. Understanding the structural factors, organizations, social institutions, and power dynamics at play is crucial for addressing and mitigating the social and economic inequalities that arise from this transformative era. Decision-makers need to be aware of the underlying premises and values driving this transition to make informed choices and avoid repeating or exacerbating the challenges faced during previous transition dynamics (Castells, 2010; Floridi, 2014; Giddens, 1984).

In the face of this gap, this article brings significant contributions to the field of decolonial studies. Drawing from Bourdieu's theoretical framework, it unveils how *habitus* and *dépaysement* were historically mobilized, and how strategies such as stereotyping, mythification, cooptation, uprooting, disenchantment, and coercion tend to reproduce themselves in the context of the transition to the digital economy (Bourdieu, 1977, 1962, 1958; Bourdieu & Sayad, 1964; Bourdieu et al., 1977; Fanon, 1952).

In this sense, it provides, from a decolonizing studies perspective, relevant insights for analyzing contemporary domination and exploitation strategies enacted by digital technologies and emerging business and management models in the digital era (Mignolo, 2011; Quijano, 2000; Schwab, 2017).

Additionally, the article's contribution to decolonial studies involves the critical reevaluation of entrenched narratives and stereotypes (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000). In this regard, it challenges and deconstructs traditional narratives and stereotypes associated with these marginalized communities (Fanon, 1963; Spivak, 1988). It recognizes that favela's inhabitants have unique cultural and social practices shaped by their socio-organizational and physical environments (Grosfoguel, 2011; Lugones, 2010), moving us beyond a one-dimensional view of these communities as peripheral or problematic. This perspective allows us to appreciate the agency and resilience within the favelas, highlighting these communities' capacity to define their own identities and social structures (Lugones, 2010; Quijano, 2000).

Furthermore, understanding that the benefits of the digital era (Schwab, 2017) must be accessible to all, rather than concentrated in the hands of the privileged (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000), it is crucial to remain vigilant regarding the risks of digital colonization of these communities through both traditional and emerging forms of domination and exploitation (Dardot & Laval, 2019; Noble, 2018). To decolonize, proactive measures must be taken to bridge the digital divide, promote digital inclusion, and ensure that technology serves the interests of the marginalized instead of perpetuating their marginalization (Dardot & Laval, 2019; Warschauer, 2003). In other words, this effort encompasses not only addressing historical injustices but also tackling contemporary challenges related to technology, information, and access (Dardot & Laval, 2019; Warschauer, 2003).

By exposing and challenging the enduring colonial legacies that continue to shape the lives of marginalized populations, this research offers insights into how these communities resist and navigate such legacies, contributing significantly to the broader discourse on decolonization and the rejection of colonial structures. These contributions align with the principles of decolonial studies (Grosfoguel, 2007) and offer valuable perspectives for understanding the intersection of historical struggles and contemporary challenges in marginalized communities.

Likewise, one recognizes the contributions of Castro-Gómez (2021) and Chowdhury (2023) in enhancing our understanding of decolonial theory and its applicability to the analysis of marginalized communities. Chowdhury's (2023) critique of epistemic neocolonialism underscores the misrepresentation and systemic marginalization of these communities within dominant knowledge systems. This perspective aligns with our examination of favela communities, where the imposition of external narratives often obscures the complex realities and resilience of these spaces. By acknowledging how marginalized groups are misrepresented, one can better appreciate the significance of local knowledge and narratives in constructing a more inclusive and equitable understanding of social dynamics.

Castro-Gómez's (2021) concept of "Zero-point hubris" further enriches this discourse by delving into the colonial roots of knowledge construction and its implications for contemporary societal structures. The historical analysis of the colonality of knowledge reveals how power dynamics have shaped epistemic frameworks, leading to the exclusion and marginalization of non-Western ways of knowing. This theoretical lens is particularly relevant in the context of favela communities, as it allows us to interrogate the power structures that perpetuate inequality and marginalization. By integrating these decolonial theories, one can explore the potential for decolonizing knowledge and fostering a more inclusive epistemology that recognizes the value of diverse perspectives, especially in the face of the challenges posed by the digital era.

In essence, the integration of these decolonial perspectives can provide a more nuanced understanding of the historical and contemporary experiences of favela communities. It highlights the importance of challenging and reevaluating dominant narratives and knowledge systems to better understand and address the complexities of marginalization. This approach not only contributes to decolonial theory but also offers practical insights for social justice and urban development, emphasizing the need for policies and practices that are informed by the lived realities and resilience of marginalized communities.

Moreover, the study developed by Chambers (2023) offers significant avenues for enhancing our understanding of decolonial processes within marginalized communities. His (Chambers, 2023) analysis on "epistemology and domination" highlights the imperative to question and challenge the dominant theses on the colonality of knowledge within Latin American decolonial theory. By embracing this perspective, one can gain a deeper understanding and highlight the forms of epistemic injustice faced by marginalized communities, emphasizing the importance of valuing and integrating their cultural knowledge and practices into effective decolonial strategies.

By aligning the study with these theories, one aims not only to contribute to decolonial theory but also to provide practical insights for the empowerment of favela communities. This expanded approach underscores the necessity of recognizing and dismantling the power structures that perpetuate marginalization and injustice, while simultaneously promoting the resilience, agency, and social integration of these communities in an ever-changing global landscape.

Therefore, they not only contribute to decolonial studies by reevaluating the enduring legacies of colonization in urban spaces but also by proposing a framework that recognizes the potential of marginalized communities, like those in the favelas, to contribute to and shape the discourse around decolonization and social justice in the context of rapid technological and economic changes. Through the integration of theories from Castro-Gómez (2021) and Chambers (2023), one advocates for a more nuanced understanding of marginalization that acknowledges the epistemic contributions of these communities and challenges the persistent colonial structures in knowledge production and societal organization.

Additionally, the article highlights the significance of integrating ESG into the management practices of organizations. The digital economy and society call for a strategic agenda that embraces sustainable and responsible practices to ensure long-term viability and positive impacts on society and the environment. The ESG framework provides a lens through which organizations can align their strategies, policies, and operations with ethical, environmental, and social considerations. This approach enables organizations to navigate the transition effectively while minimizing negative consequences and maximizing positive outcomes (Henderson & Van der Kaaij, 2016; Schwab, 2017).

This context represents a profound shift in society and poses challenges and opportunities across various levels. Understanding the implications, addressing marginalization, promoting inclusive growth, and incorporating ESG principles are crucial for organizations and decision-makers to navigate this transformative era effectively. By embracing a holistic and responsible approach, society can strive for a more equitable, sustainable, peaceful, and prosperous future (Henderson & Van der Kaaij, 2016; Schwab, 2017).

To further reinforce the importance of historical context in understanding the present, this study underscores how the findings contribute to decolonial theory by offering a deeper comprehension of the enduring impacts of colonial legacies in urban spaces. It highlights the resilience and agency of favela communities as models for contemporary decolonial efforts, illustrating their ability to forge new paths of social integration and cohesion in the face of systemic challenges. This historical insight not only enriches our understanding of current social dynamics but also serves as a foundation for developing strategies that support the decolonization and empowerment of marginalized communities in today's rapidly changing global landscape.

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Anderson de Souza Sant'Anna: Project administration (Lead); Supervision (Lead); Validation (Lead); Visualization (Lead); Writing- original draft (Lead); Writing - review & editing (Lead).

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