

Bryan McCann, *Hard Times in the Marvelous City: From Dictatorship to Democracy in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2014, 249 pages, \$25.95 (paperback edition), ISBN: 978-0-8223-5538-0.

During the time-period leading up to the Olympics, Rio's favelas were at the forefront of global headlines due to violent confrontations between police and *favelados*, -- those favela residents who were being forcibly evicted from their homes. While favela residents were promised compensation and improved housing, many refused to move, leading to violent clashes between the police and the defiant *favelados*. But, these promises either fell far away from the mark or were lost in the disruption and corruption that surrounded the preparation for these two major events, and in the end, broken promises of improvements in infrastructure and access for Rio's poorest citizens was all that remained. For residents of favelas, the World Cup and Olympics reignited a cycle of displacement, destruction, and evictions that many previous favela residents had fought against in the 70s and 80s. While Rio de Janeiro has drifted from the minds of most Americans post-World Cup and Olympics, in Bryan McCann's book, *Hard Times in the Marvelous City: From Dictatorship to Democracy in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro*, Rio and its favelas are once again front and center of intensive investigation.

McCann is well-versed in modern Brazilian history, having published many articles and books on the topic; but *Hard Times* is an accessible read for anyone, regardless of their knowledge of modern Brazilian history, in part because McCann skillfully employs graphics, maps, song lyrics, and a clear writing voice to tell his story to a wide audience. McCann begins every chapter of *Hard Times* with an excerpt from a song that is about the hope and the plight of favelas or Rio as a whole. As an outsider who is unfamiliar with modern Brazilian history, I found that "The Big Picture" did an excellent job of giving the reader a general comparison of favelas, irregular subdivisions, and housing projects, and how they all differ from the other in terms of residents, property rights and development. With the chapters focusing on broad concepts, the lyrics give a layer of personalization that would be lost in a straight clinical analysis of favelas in Rio. The song excerpts humanize what could have been textbook favela history had McCann not shaped the narrative into broad overviews of massive changes throughout the favelas of Rio.

McCann successfully dodges the typical tropes that plague scholars writing about places and time periods that have not met the traditional concept of a successful renaissance. There were numerous missteps taken by both the leaders of Rio and residents of favelas. But, that is not the end of the story, because there were also many success stories, and positive outcomes brought about by the democratization of favelas. One of the key reasons behind the democratization of favelas was to prevent the expulsion of people from the favelas, and to offer ownership rights to the residents. While ownership rights were not extended to most residents, they were also no longer called for because favelas were given legitimacy and residents no longer feared being forcibly expelled because they had a favela association to represent them. However, with every step forward in one area for favela residents, there seemed to be two steps back. The residents of favelas were given a political voice through the favelas associations, but the associations also reemphasized the otherness of favelas as being wholly separate from the rest of Rio.

McCann's analysis emphasizes the fact that favelas were never seen as entirely a part of Rio, and although the *favelados* residing in them were not necessarily outsiders, they were not seen as typical residents or citizens of Rio. Instead of *favelados* having direct representation in the government of Rio, favela associations acted as the go between for the Rio government and *favelados*. Favela associations, like many other aspects of favela life that looked like vehicles for

positive changes, were taken over and perverted by traffickers and militias to serve their own interests. The theme of boundaries between the favelas and the rest of Rio is still as present today as it was during the development and implementation of democracy.

Pervasive themes that flow throughout McCann's analysis of favelas in Rio is hope, corruption, police violence, drug cartels, poverty, and lack of civil rights for *favelados*. McCann gives a brief detailed overview, of the many factors and factions that led to the breakdown of the ideals of the liberation and *socialismo morena* -- brown socialism -- movements that swept through Rio and the favelas in the late 1970s. Discussion of life in Rio's favelas cannot be undertaken without acknowledging race, particularly in terms of black residents who often had to fight the double-edged sword of being *favelados* and black, and *socialismo moreno* hoped to end the plight of black *favelados*. Leonel Brizola was one of the main advocates of socialism moreno, basing his 1982 and 1990 gubernatorial campaigns in Rio on the ideals of this movement. This movement helped Brizola to gain support of residents of favela residents. Brizola planned for sweeping reforms to bridge the gap between favelas and the rest of Rio. One of Brizola's major projects was Centros Integrados de Educação Pública or CIEPs which were community schools that focused on serving all aspects of the student's life. CIEPs were built in a specific model near certain favelas to make sure that they were incorporated into communities because after school hours, the buildings would be used for night classes, community meetings, or other neighborhood events. CIEPs did not reach their full potential with enrollment at half of the desired amount at many locations and a negative reputation from middle and lower-class families of being a school for poor, troubled kids. Brizola's goals for CIEPs, like many of his goals for Rio, were never fully realized.

While the changing times allowed for increased mobility for some favela residents to gain education and attain positions of power and leadership in the government, the changing times also opened the floodgates for the traffickers to take root. Carlos Magno Nazareth Cerqueira was a black favelado who was appointed secretary of military police by Brizola and served on the security council. Nazareth Cerqueira was unique not only because of the position he attained, but because of the ideas of community policing that he pushed throughout the force to end police violence and mend the fragmented relationship between favela residents and the police. Cerqueira's reforms were met with mixed reactions with many on the force refusing to implement his new policies. Cerqueira can be contrasted with Denir Leandro da Silva, also known as Denis da Rocinha, who was a well-connected local drug trafficker. Denis excelled at building his loyalty base through favors leading him to become for a time the city's "most notorious drug trafficker" (111). While Cerqueira could not stop police violence in the favelas, Denis had so much influence that when he was arrested and imprisoned, hundreds of favela residents marched to the police station demanding his release. Traffickers like Denis had a great deal of influence over favelas that even when slightly loosened would spring right back. The problem that seemingly no one in power could tackle was the ever changing and expanding power of the traffickers as well as the violence the traffickers brought to the favelas.

Unlike police violence that was the focus of many of Rio's leaders, traffickers often escaped critique. Brizola and his administration could not stop the violence, thus inaugurating a trend of political officials focusing on police violence, and ignoring trafficker violence. The late 1990s and early 2000s marks the rise of NGOs in Rio's favelas. But, NGOs did not escape the "law of the hill" as McCann describes it, in which government officials, NGOs, or any party that wanted to do business in a favela had to submit to the power or authority of the trafficker that controlled that territory. Due to the geography of the hills of Rio where many of the favelas are

located away from the main road access, traffickers in some cases could entirely prevent outsiders from gaining access to a favela. In other cases, traffickers could encourage resident shop owners to close their doors in protest when prominent gang members were killed or imprisoned. Even when the federal government stepped in during “Occupation Rio,” violence and trafficker control remained in place.

The “hard times” that Rio has gone through as analyzed by McCann is a reflection on the state of Brazil as a whole. The stark divisions between the favelas and other neighborhoods in Rio can be metaphors for the divisions that plague so many areas or groups throughout the world. Or, the divisions can just be seen as what they are, arbitrary lines drawn between communities that, as evidenced in McCann’s writings, will take a long time to overcome. “Although the reforms of the 1980s failed, the dream of the extension of full and complete citizenship to the residents of Rio’s favelas did not die” (17). The divisions between favelas and Rio may remain and the dreams of social equality may still not be realized, but favelas and *favelados* have survived.

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