Favela Media Activism

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Counterpublics for Human Rights in Brazil

Leonardo Custódio

Contents

Acknowledgments

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Chapter One

The Scholarly Relevance of Media Activism by Low-Income Youth

It was a sunny Saturday morning in June when I took the bus from my hometown Magé—a town in the outskirts of the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro—to Complexo da Maré, a densely populated peripheral area consisting of 17 favelas in the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro. I went there because of an event against the 2014 FIFA World Cup, whose kick-off had happened two days before on June 12. The event was called "Claim the Street, *São Jorge*." It was an effort of organized residents to mobilize people who lived on *São Jorge* Street and elsewhere in the favela to demonstrate against the high costs of the mega-event in contrast to the meager investments in healthcare, education, and other public services in Complexo da Maré. During World Cups, Brazilians have a tradition of decorating the streets to celebrate the national football team. The goal of the event organizers was to decorate *São Jorge* Street so as to demonstrate local discontent with the neglect and constant violence in their everyday lives. In order to invite people, the organized residents created an event in Facebook. They also invited other residents face to face. That is how I learned about the event weeks before, when one of the organizers invited two local acquainted photographers. She extended the invitation to me. So, I went.

At *São Jorge* Street, the organized residents and outside supporters like myself engaged in two types of actions. On the one hand, we distributed painting materials, ribbons and plastic Brazilian flags to the energetic and excited local children. At the same time, following the instructions of the organizers, we coordinated the painting and decoration process. On the asphalt, children and adults together drew and painted flags and World Cup symbols. We also wrote texts such as a ten-meter long *Copa pra Quem* (World Cup to Whom) across the ground of *São Jorge* Street. Children also marked the Brazilian flags with handprints in red to symbolize the deaths resulting from

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constant armed conflicts in Complexo da Maré. As we painted, we also en-
gaged in conversations with residents without previous activist experience
about the impacts of the mega-events to the lower-income sectors of the city.
For most of that day, we were about 60 people, mostly local children, reflect-
ing about human rights and citizenship as we proceeded with the cheerful
artistic intervention.

On the other hand, some of the organized residents made sure to record
everything. Some used cameras and microphones to record the whole pro-
cess. They also interviewed local children and adult passers-by about their
opinions regarding the impact of the World Cup on the city. Meanwhile, pho-
tographers with a history of engagement in activism and social movements
took many pictures demonstrating the cheerfulness of the event combined
with the displays of discontent among the residents of *São Jorge* Street and
other areas of Complexo da Maré. Among the organized residents, there
were also journalists from the community media of the various favelas of
Rio de Janeiro. These people and others constantly used mobile phones to
inform and mobilize their own social media networks. In the following days,
those videos, photographs, and texts circulated online to show how residents
organized themselves against the impacts of the mega-events in the city and
specifically in Complexo da Maré. These pieces of information added up
to increasing spheres of information, mobilization, and contestation among
favela and non-favela residents. In these spheres, people combine the use of
new and old media technologies to support or initiate online and offline ac-
tions that are part of the struggles of low-income citizens of Rio de Janeiro
for human rights and social justice.

The online build-up, the face-to-face execution and the informational after-
math of the event "Claim the Street, *São Jorge*" illustrate what I call "favela
media activism." By favela media activism I mean individual and collective
actions[1] in, through and about media as efforts to raise critical awareness
about everyday life constraints and injustices, to generate debates about these
issues, and to mobilize actions against or in reaction to material and symbolic
consequences of social inequality. The conceptualization of favela media
activism contributes to existing scholarly debates about media at the social,
economic and political margins of Rio de Janeiro and other unequal urban
contexts around the world. In this introductory chapter, I refer on the one
hand to the literature within the diverse and multi-conceptual field of research
and practice of communication for development and social change. On the
other hand, I refer to debates about the potential of Internet and new media
for fostering the engagement of young people in political processes—not only
in terms of forms related to party politics and representative democracy, but
also in the conflictual everyday life actions (Mouffe, 2005). like the case at

São Jorge Street[2]. After discussing the problems of both lines of research, I present the questions and objectives I have pursued, and describe the interdisciplinary strategies I developed throughout the research process that led to this book.

MEDIA AT THE MARGINS:
CURRENT RESEARCH CHALLENGES

In her plenary address at the 2015 conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), in Montreal, the Colombian US-based scholar Clemencia Rodriguez expressed her discontent with research about what she refers to as "media at the margins." By margins, she refers to the contrast to centers that result from the unequal distribution of power in and across societies. This inequality has simultaneously produced an abundance in the centers and a scarcity at the margins of economic and political power (Rodriguez and Thomas 2014). In Rio de Janeiro, for example, favelas are at these margins or at the periphery, as we commonly refer to marginalized spaces in Brazil (Becker 2009). According to Rodriguez, the problem is that research and theory have not been able to capture the fluidity, diversity and complexity of media at the margins. For her:

> We have never had enough scholars, researchers or policy makers paying attention to media at the margins. As a result, we tend to flatten media at the margins. We over-generalize overlooking key differences between very distinct types of media. In the last twenty years, numerous terms have emerged to name media at the margins. Some of them are alternative media, community media, citizens' media, grassroots media, autonomous media, indigenous media, pirate media and social movement media. [. . .] Instead of debating which term is a stronger theoretical descriptor for these type of media, I believe we have to maintain a healthy multiplicity. If there were enough of us, enough scholars, and plenty of research done about media at the margins, we could see that citizens' media are different from social movement media, and both are distinct from alternative, counter-cultural media, and there are for sure many other types of media at the margins. If we took the study of media at the margins seriously, it would be clear that each of these media is a different creature. (Rodriguez 2015).[3]

Rodriguez is not the only scholar to express concern about the quality of research on media at the margins. Criticism has also arisen among other prominent scholars in the multifaceted field of communication for development and social change. This field consists of a diversity of theoretical and pragmatic thinking and practice among scholars, researchers, and civil society practitioners, who analyze, evaluate, and/or promote communication

processes that involve marginalized social groups in media actions against consequences of social inequality, especially in the so-called Global South (Downing 2001; 2011; Rodriguez 2001; Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte 2006). Roughly speaking, these scholarly debates focus either on the media processes certain social groups create or on initiatives by national or international development, non-governmental, private or governmental development agencies (Gumucio-Dagron 2001; 2007). Such a diversity of theories and initiatives has led to conflicts that have affected, and not necessarily positively, the scholarly construction of knowledge about media at the margins.

The North-South geopolitical and academic imbalance has been one source of criticism. In his review and interpretation of historical and contemporary approaches to institutionalized initiatives for socioeconomic and political development through communication, the Malawian scholar Linje Manyozo (2012) denounces the predominance of Western thought and the consequent marginalization of developing world scholars (e.g. Escobar 1995). Manyozo argues that the notion of development *per se* should be challenged so that scholarly discourses do not "perpetuate the 'bullshit' development paradigms and policies that promote inequality and thus advance poverty and underdevelopment" (Manyozo 2012, 4–5).

Another source of criticism is how the expectation for immediate results from donors and agencies has affected theory. The Indian scholar Pradip Thomas has identified an impasse in theorization resulting from the influence of donors and agencies for results-oriented, short-term initiatives that ignore the socioeconomic and cultural contexts in which projects are implemented (Thomas 2014). The discontent with this scenario led to the 2015 special issue of Nordicom Review, which has the provocative title "Beyond the Impasse: exploring new thinking in communication for social change." The editor Thomas suggests that "to find a way out of the inertia and stagnancy in the theorizing of CSC then we simply have to engage with approaches that have thrown light on 'communication' and 'social change' from a variety of theoretical perspectives" (Thomas 2015b, 9).

In relation to the grassroots media by marginalized social groups, like the media in favelas, the focus of debates on conceptual differences and scholars' own expectations of societal impacts also jeopardize the critical aspect of theorizing. The Bolivian scholar Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron argues that in many cases, scholars use the terms alternative, participatory or community-based for media that are at the margins, but in practice do not characterize what their conceptual labels suggest (Gumucio-Dagron 2007). For example, the Brazilian Andrea Medrado (2007) shows that many scholars tend to be activists and therefore end up being very optimistic and supportive of the phenomena they investigate. In her view, with which I agree, this is a problem. In her study on

community television in Rio de Janeiro, Medrado demonstrates that despite their local importance, residents' participation was very small. For Gumucio-Dagron, the influences of personal views on theory about media at the margins has contributed for the development of ideal models that suit discourses of the Left, but make little difference to "the struggle of community media as a tool of social change, education, entertainment, socialization of knowledge, economic development, and so on" (Gumucio-Dagron 2007, 202).

These calls for different forms of theorizing media at the margins relieved my anguish as I sought for theories to help me make sense of media initiatives in favelas. My objective has been to understand the reasons and circumstances that led favela residents to engage in media. For that, I initially chose the concept of "community media." In South America, we also have our own set of different names (e.g. alternative, community, counter-hegemonic, participatory) for phenomena often unified under the umbrella term *comunicação popular*.[4] That is, the uses of media available by impoverished populations to mobilize peers and create their own local media systems. These media serve both as a source of entertainment and as channels for struggles to achieve better living conditions, to improve political participation, and to demand social justice (Festa 1986; Peruzzo 1998). I originally chose community media as a concept because it seemed to be the most common in the Brazilian and international literature. In Brazil, people also use *comunidades* (communities) to refer to favelas. Thus, the choice made sense. When I first went to favelas, the concept worked well. I soon identified what appeared to be community-led radio stations and newspapers that seemed to fit the ideal example of community media.

However, the more I familiarized with community media in practice, the more problematic I thought the concept was. There were some mismatches between the concept and reality. For example, community ownership is a key element for media to be "community" (Paiva 2003). Nonetheless, I saw that some of the media inside favelas (thus community-based) were maintained by local non-governmental organizations (NGO). I also saw community media that were restrictive about who could participate in broadcasting and who could not. In some cases, the restrictions seemed technical: they could not have each one of thousands of neighbors to host a program on the radio or to have a column in a newspaper. In other cases, participatory restrictions were due to personal disagreements and organizational rivalries. In these cases, participation, a very problematic concept (Carpentier 2011), did not occur as the ideal understanding of community media suggests.

Another mismatch between concept and practice appeared in the community-based media initiatives of favela residents that were parallel to or even completely disconnected from those ideal examples of community media. For

example, some favela residents have used online platforms to communicate inside, outside, and across favelas rather than only with their own social group. These situations made me wonder. Are these community media? How do I investigate them if they do not fit the definition of community media? In other words, I was more interested in the concept I had pre-defined than in the diversity of actions going on around me. I locked myself up in the concept and consequently missed nuances in and around media favela residents make.

In order to avoid conceptual constraints with community media, I tried expanding my theoretical boundaries with the debates about communication for development (C4D) and social change (CFSC). However, problems soon arose. For instance, I noticed that most studies concerning CFSC and C4D tended to focus much more on the organizations (from global NGOs to more local associations) that created media initiatives rather than on the people who participated in them (cf. Hemer and Tufte 2012). Studies often portray participants as illustrations rather than subjects in media initiatives at the margins. In Rio de Janeiro, I saw Brazilian, Rio-based NGOs sometimes acting colonialistically and paternalistically. Some questions about the relationships between participants and organizations remain unasked. For example, how do participants perceive their own participation in NGO-driven media initiatives? How do they analyze their relationships with peer participants and organizations? The absence of such questions is ironic. CFSC and C4D scholars have a great interest in evaluating and assessing the impact of institutionalized media at the margins, but participants rarely get to have a say in these evaluation processes (Cornwall 2000).

Alternatively, we can paradoxically treat these epistemological constraints and lacks as opportunities for analytical advancements that benefit both the academic community and society. I believe that the different names for media at the margins represent not only different types of media, as Rodriguez described in her IAMCR plenary address, but also different kinds of features within each kind of media. Newspapers and radio stations in favelas may simultaneously have community, participatory, alternative, and social movement characteristics. Therefore, the point is not to judge or measure whether they are participatory, community or alternative enough according to pre-defined criteria. Instead, we can see how these different characteristics interplay. For that, more open and flexible theoretical frameworks and methodologies are needed.

Flexibility in theory and methodology may generate approaches that address previously neglected aspects of media at the margins. For instance, in Rio de Janeiro there were citizen-led and NGO-driven media initiatives acting in partnership, but scholars do not often approach how these different types of initiatives relate to each other. In addition, during the research pro-

cess I saw that interactions between these two forms of media appear recurrently online. The online dimension of media at the margins have raised other problematic questions: how does the popularization of Internet affect media at the margins? How can scholars approach this phenomenon? One way to approach these questions would be to review approaches to the potentials of new media and internet for promoting the involvement of young people in different forms of political processes.

Scholarly debates in English regarding the potential of new media for civic engagement often use democratic theory as a backdrop to contrasting the more restrictive and vertical mass media with the open and horizontal online media (Putnam 2000). In these debates, internet, mobile telephones and other connectivity devices appear as potential or actual facilitators of people's active citizen engagement both in traditional party politics (Bennett 2008; Olsson 2008; Olsson and Dahlgren 2010).[5] In many cases, "youth" appears almost automatically as subjects of these actions because young people tend to be the typical users of new media (Coleman 2006). Some authors involved in these approaches share different levels of optimism about the potentials of new media and internet (Bennett 2008; Dahlgren 2007; 2009; Hermes 2006; Loader 2007). In contrast, some are more cautious (Livingstone, Couldry, and Markham 2007) and very critical (Breindl 2010; Pajnik 2005) regarding the claims regarding the benefits of internet and new media for more active forms of citizenship.

Optimistic approaches to new media potentials for civic engagement are incompatible with what I have seen in favelas. In the Brazilian context, the meaning and actual experiences of notions like "democracy", "citizenship" and "youth" vary significantly depending on one's socioeconomic background (Souza 2009; Holston 2008). In other words, social inequalities may cause young people from different social classes and races to have differentiated and even opposite experiences of citizenship and democracy. Being a favela resident puts local youth among those people who may not believe in the democratic political systems whose police forces violently repress their sporadic efforts to get offline and demand social justice. Like cases like the protests against police violence in London (2011) and Ferguson (2014–15), favela youth are also treated as "vandals" and "rioters" in public debates whenever they rise and cause conflicts as efforts to have their basic rights respected.

If we think of "civic" in terms of the enactment of citizenship (Isin and Turner 2002; Isin 2008), can the use of internet and mobile phones for the articulation of actions that break and burn be considered civic acts in the contexts of constant criminalization, institutionalized discrimination and the violent domination of marginalized people? Are these reactions "uncivic" (cf.

Dahlgren 2009) even if they challenge the authoritarian and thus undemo-
cratic sides of established democratic states? Some scholars have tackled the
democratic potential of the internet by taking inequalities among youth into
consideration (see Banaji and Cammaerts 2015; Seixas Silva and De Castro
2014). However, there is still work to be done to expand the scholarly reflec-
tions about media, society and citizenship by including the experience of
young people in non-Western societies (cf. Curran 2012).

   Some scholars have been critical of Western, techno-centric approaches to
new media potentials for democracy. For the Danish scholar Thomas Tufte,
the field of communication for development and social change needs to
be redefined after online-articulated mass uprisings shook national politics
around the world (Tufte 2013). For him, instead of prescribing solutions for
development, scholars need to "refocus [their] attention to the deliberative,
non-institutional citizen-driven change processes, full of media uses and
communicative practices, but emerging from a citizens' profound and often
desperate reaction to this global Now" (Tufte 2013, 235). Based on what I
have seen in favelas, I believe this is an urgent recommendation, especially
considering, as Tufte highlights, that Internet and mobile technology are only
part of "a multiplicity of cross-media uses, convergence and polycentric and
networked forms of media use" (Tufte 2014, 474).

   Similarly, Rodriguez et al. (2014) have identified four challenges that
those who want to study media at the margins should be ready to face in
times of constant, hybrid, and diverse uses of media technologies in social
movements. The first challenge is to acknowledge the value of ICTs without
reducing historical and human contexts to technological determinism. The
second is not to ignore the political economic frameworks in which informa-
tion and communication technologies (ICT) are developed as business. They
also recommend, like Tufte, that the "new" media do not replace the "old."
The third challenge is to define communication not only as the dissemination
of information, but also as dynamic processes connected to how people build
identities, a sense of belonging and agency. Finally, the fourth challenge is
for scholars not to ignore previous research on media at the margins, espe-
cially those that look beyond media and technologies. (Rodriguez, Ferron,
and Shamas 2014)

   Brazilian researchers have addressed these challenges in their approaches
to new media in peripheral Brazil. Maria Lúcia Becker (2009) conducted a
study about the correlation between digital inclusion and citizenship among
users of community technology centers (CTC) in peripheral neighborhoods of
two Brazilian capital cities (São Paulo and Curitiba). The study showed that
people without previous involvement in activism felt they belonged in society
as citizens because of their interactions online and at the CTC. Before they

felt marginalized. Those with previous involvement in activism explained how online and face-to-face activities complemented each other within their movements. (Becker 2009)

The US-based Brazilian scholar David Nemer (2015) conducted an ethnographic research on the periphery of another capital city (Vitória) to identify forms of empowerment among favela residents who used CTCs. Nemer's results showed, among other things, that CTCs were safe spaces in a context of violence in which users engaged in online and offline social gatherings. In his conclusion, Nemer suggested that one needs to rethink the notions of development and empowerment to include how individual decisions lead people to reach their own expected outcomes. (Nemer 2015) Finally, Patrícia Lânes de Souza and Julia Zanetti (Souza and Zanetti 2013; Souza 2015) mapped different forms of collective actors in favelas and peripheral regions in Rio de Janeiro in an effort to understand the online-offline dynamics of mobilization among marginalized youth. The results show an impressive and inspiring array of intergenerational, sociopolitical, and cultural dimensions of individual and collective actions in favelas.

This review of the challenges and impasses concerning research and media at the margins has helped me to overcome my own difficulties in locating my research interests in existing scholarly debates. The epistemological self-criticism and the examples of research beyond technology and media are included not only to allay my anxieties, but also to characterize an avenue of exploration that seems fruitful both to follow and to contribute to. Based on what I have seen in favelas, one aspect of media at the margins that remains unresolved is the interplay between citizen-led and NGO-driven media practices. Another aspect is how social inequality appears in the increasing interactions between actors from the margins and the centers. Finally, despite their different characteristics, formats, and structures, all media at the margins have one thing in common: the people who make them happen. Thus, it seems we cannot neglect their perceptions, analyses and experiences of their own actions any longer. These gaps in research partly explain my adoption of "favela media activism" as a working concept and the definition of the research questions and objectives I pursue in this study.

OVERCOMING IMPASSES IN RESEARCH

The different scholarly solutions to the impasses in the field of communication for development and social change share the same source of concern and discontent. For those authors, theorizing is stuck because the field seems unable to tackle the constant societal and technological changes surrounding

citizen-led or institutional media at the margins (Rodriguez, Ferron, and Shamas 2014; Thomas 2015a; Tufte 2013). In response to these challenges, the theoretical and methodologically flexible approach to the research questions pursued in this study results from and facilitates the exploration of interdisciplinarity.

Interdisciplinary research combines elements from two or more disciplines for searching or creating new knowledge about certain phenomena (Nissani 1997). As Moti Nissani (1997) warns in his defense of interdisciplinary research, "many complex or practical problems can only be understood by pulling together insights and methodologies from a variety of disciplines. Those who forget this simple truth run the intellectual risk of tunnel vision and the social risk of irresponsible action" (Nissani 1997, 209). One problem often highlighted as a shortcoming of interdisciplinary research is the risk of bringing in such differing influences and consequently losing theoretical robustness. In response to that claim, some authors argue that "the interdisciplinary researcher is not omniscient, nor yet a 'jack of all trades but master of none'. He or she is typically a specialist with a substantive research area [. . .] but also theoretical or methodological generalist or eclectic" (Buanes and Jentoft 2009, 453).

In the research leading to this book, I located myself in the field of communication for development and social change and explored other disciplines to tackle the dimensions of favela media activism. Let me illustrate this with a look at two key questions around which this study revolves. One question concerns the characteristics of the phenomena that follow the ethnographic tradition in urban anthropology (Hannerz 1980). The second question, concerning favela media activism, combines debates in the philosophy of action about reasons and motivations (O'Connor and Sandis 2010) with symbolic interactionist approaches (Blumer 1969). Together, they complement each other in dealing with actions, interactions and the context in which they take place. As the research process unfolded, I also engaged with media and journalism, democratic theory, sociology (on social inequality), urban studies, social movement research, development studies, media education research and youth research. In addition to allowing the construction of a more nuanced picture of favela media activism, this interdisciplinary exploration also contributes to debates in each discipline that inspired this analysis.

In studying favela media activism, I have two interrelated objectives. One of them is empirical. I wonder how my peripheral, predominantly low-income hometown would be in terms of political participation if it had a local scene of citizen-led media initiatives through which residents could, among other things, demand better living conditions, express their political discontent and celebrate local traditions and culture. I also wonder if someone

would be able to create conditions for this kind of initiative. For this purpose, I believe a better understanding of media activism in favelas could generate the necessary knowledge for the promotion of media in other environments. One problem with such objectives is that prescribed formulas of media for activism and civic engagement are very likely to fail if simply transplanted from one social context to another. Thus, what would one need to know about media at the margins before trying to promote media initiatives for activism and citizen participation in different places?

This issue leads to the second objective of a more epistemological nature. I believe that in order to grasp the complexity of media at the margins one has to find or develop ways to simultaneously approach not only the media, but also the actions and interactions among the people involved in them (cf. Rodriguez 2011). By actions and interactions, I do not refer only to concrete activities. I also refer to contextual factors that surround media initiatives; people's individual and collective motivations and objectives to engage in media at the margins; their self-evaluations, relationships with peers and organizations, personal views on politics and activism, and even feelings (e.g. excitement, disappointment, and trust).

Certainly all these interests are in themselves topics for stand-alone studies. Nonetheless, it is possible to take on the challenge of developing theoretical frameworks and methodologies that allow researchers to explore different dimensions of the empirical phenomena in which we are interested. In that sense, pursuing new strategies to research media at the margins (or other social issues, for that matter) is also a way of putting ourselves as researchers in the uncomfortable but highly motivating position of challenging our own limitations, misconceptions, and prejudices. What theoretical articulations and methods are necessary to create a detailed picture of favela media activism?

These empirical and epistemological objectives shape the questions I pursued in the research and define the shape of this book. They are:

a. What characterizes favela media activism?
b. What explains the engagement of favela residents in media initiatives at the margins?

Answering the first question entails not merely a descriptive effort. During my observations of media in favelas, I noticed that not everyone involved in them had the interest or commitment to act on behalf of social change, human rights, and social justice. Some, for example, merely (and fairly) wanted to practice their skills in radio broadcasting, journalism, and photography for professional purposes. By contrast, favela media activism denotes the self-proclaimed corollary to uses of media for different forms of social change in

favelas. As a complement to the first question, the second suggests a more in-depth approach to the favela residents who engage in media activism. Thus, considering individual and collective aspects, the second question enables the inclusion of secondary questions and methodological strategies to deal with unexpected elements in the process of citizen engagement in media at the margins.

These questions are meant to tackle what Thomas (2015a) considers the five principles a theory of communication for development and social change must tackle in its efforts to understand and promote media initiatives. First, we have to be explicit about how theory translates into practice. Second, we have to understand the processes that lead to the practices. Third, we need to know more about the structural factors (e.g. institutions, resources) that facilitate and especially constrain processes of engagement in media initia-tives. Fourth, we need to know about the contextual factors (e.g. traditions, hierarchies, politics) in which the initiatives occur. Fifth and finally, we need to tackle the power relations among the various people involved in the initiatives. (Thomas 2015a, 74–5) Considering the multi-dimensional nature of these principles, I believe it is not possible to comprehend favela media activism without engaging with theorizing that explores contributions from different disciplines.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book is comprised of two parts reflecting the investigation of the two questions I pursued during the research process. The first part follows this general introduction with my reflections about methodology, theori-zation and other aspects of the research process in Chapter 2. Following a critical ethnographic orientation, the fieldwork consisted of four years (2011–2014) of conversations, interviews, participant and non-participant observations of media activism in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. In order to understand what characterizes favela media activism, I familiarized with different community media, non-governmental organizations, multimedia collectives, and individuals who shape the complex scene of media at the margins in Rio de Janeiro (see Appendices).[6] This familiarization also come about through Internet since a significant part of their activism hap-pens online. In Chapter 2, I also reflect on my own decisions, choices, and dilemmas as part of the challenges of doing research as a "local outsider" (someone who lives abroad doing research "back home"). This chapter is a (self-) reflection on aspects in research processes often omitted from methodological textbooks.

In Chapters 3 to 5, I focus on explaining what "favela media activism" means. In Chapter 3, I draw from urban studies and sociological approaches to social inequality to reflect on the word *luta* (which translates as a combination of sacrifice, struggle and political resistance) and what it means in favelas. I argue that favela residents suffer from the consequences of social inequality, but also react, contend, and struggle for social change. Thus, I look at different types of problems and residents' actions against them. First, I present how they resist governmental and societal denials of their right to the city. Second, I look at how they react to crime and state-led violence. Third, I describe how they contest different forms of discrimination especially reinforced by the mainstream media's representation of favelas. Fourth, I describe how they use cultural traditions, music, and media to counter discriminatory symbolisms surrounding the understanding of favelas. Most importantly, this chapter sets favela media activism in a context of constant *luta*. For this reason, the engagement of favela residents in media activism cannot be reduced to access to media technologies.

In Chapter 4, I draw on social movement research and democratic theory to define what I mean by favela media activism. I understand favela media activism as a sensitizing concept, in the sense Herbert Blumer defined the term (Blumer 1969). To illustrate my methodological approach, I describe two tragedies resulting from police violence in which favela residents used media and journalism as part of their reactions to the cases. I conclude the chapter with a critical analysis of how favela media activism is characterized as acts of enactment and contestation of citizenship. Inspired by theorists who have reflected on the notion of citizenship from the Brazilian standpoint, I describe how the activities that I call favela media activism have acted as part of bottom-up challenges to the general acceptance of class-based differentiated citizenships among Brazilians.

In Chapter 5, I engage with the debates around the notion of "counterpublics" to make a descriptive analysis of favela media activism in Rio de Janeiro. I argue that favela media activism is a contemporary manifestation of uses and participation in media within the history of social movements and cultural politics in Latin America. First, I map three preceding movements of counterpublics formation in Brazil: The Abolitionist Movement (19th century), the Labour Movement (early 20th century) and the Anti-Dictatorship Movement (mid-20th century). These cases illustrate how forms of media activism were there long before the popularization of digital media technologies. After that, I identify two types and spaces for favela media activism in contemporaneity: community media and media collectives. The analysis shows that favela media activism also includes journalism, cultural and political interventions, demonstrations, pedagogy and networks of mutual support.

The second part ranges from chapters 6 to 8. It focuses on the trajectories of young favela residents before, during, and after their engagement in media activism. By trajectories I refer to the individual and social processes through which favela residents have gone in their lifetime leading to their engagement in media activism. Different authors have used the term for similar purposes. Catherine Corrigall-Brown (2012) has analytically categorized trajectories of participation among low-income US citizens in social movements. In Brazil, Jailson de Souza e Silva (2003) has studied the characteristics of the trajectories of favela residents towards the university system to ask why some made it and others did not. In addition, Patrícia Lânes de Souza (2015) has looked at the importance of NGO projects in the trajectory of engagement in activism among favela residents in Rio de Janeiro. In this book, I follow a similar understanding of the term to these authors.

In Chapter 6, having development studies and media education research as reference points, I analyze the relationship between the media educational initiatives of non-governmental organizations (NGO) in favelas with the engagement of residents in media activism. While I talked during the fieldwork to residents involved in media activism, it was clear that participation in NGO-driven media education projects was an important factor preceding engagement in favela media activism. First I describe how NGOs relate to social movements in the Brazilian context. Then I explain how media education is part of the repertoire of different NGOs in favelas. After that I present participants' critical evaluations of NGOs. I also present how they evaluate the relevance of organizations for their own activism.

In Chapter 7, I propose a theoretical approach to avoid simplistic claims that favela residents engage in media activism because of NGO stimuli. First, I review typical approaches to low-income youth in Latin America to argue that their social roles as political actors remain largely understudied. After that, I contemplate the dichotomous debates about social class and individualism, structure and agency. My point is to argue that the engagement of residents in media activism happens in relation to how entangled these issues are in the context of favelas. Then I make a point about how interactions in different structural formations of favela everyday life—namely at home, in favelas, outside favelas and in educational environments—are important aspects of residents' social actions. Finally, I explain how the interactions in these different structures may explain the engagement of young favela residents in media activism.

In chapter 8, I use the theoretical framework outlined in the previous chapter to reflect on the trajectories of residents who are involved in different forms of media activism. My goal is to identify how interactions with relatives and friends, neighbors, people in different educational environments

(school and NGOs), and society outside favelas (including media) relate to the engagement in media activism. I argue that participation in NGO projects represents a transition point. Before participating, residents mainly learned lessons and values to cope with the shortages and threats of everyday life in favelas. During this participation, they learned lessons and values for change, which they enact after their experience in NGOs. What is most important to ascertain is how complex and uncoordinated interactions in and through participation in NGOs are. Rather than suggesting that NGOs change residents' lives, I demonstrate the interplay between NGO interventions, individual and collective agency, and contextual constraints.

In the final chapter, I return to my original motivation to reflect on what I have learned both empirically and epistemologically in order to promote media initiatives in my hometown. Some of the conclusions include indications of a greater need for more partnerships between scholars, NGO practitioners, and activists who share the goal of social and political change. I also emphasize the importance of remembering issues of social inequality, political governance, and the political economy of mainstream media even when studying small-scale individual and collective civic action. The message is that no social action takes place in a vacuum. Neither is research completely detached from what happens out there. My point is that we can and should contribute to struggles against human rights violations, social injustice and social inequality with the research, theories, and methodologies we develop.

NOTES

1. By collective action and collective actors, I do not merely refer to the fact of people acting together, but to the tradition of studies about the formation of social movements (Mellucci 1996).

2. In terms of democratic theory, the understanding of political in this work derives primarily from Chantal Mouffe's understanding of conflict and antagonism as necessary conditions for democracy. "More precisely, this is how I distinguish between 'the political' and 'politics': by 'the political' I mean the dimension of antagonism which I take to be constitutive of human societies, while by 'politics' I mean the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political" (Mouffe 2005, 9).

3. *Technical note about quotations*: words in square brackets (e.g. [sample]) have been added to the quote for clarification purposes. Square brackets are also used to change lower-case into capital letters or vice-versa. When square brackets appear around ellipsis (e.g. [. . .]), it means that sections of the original quote were omitted. Regarding the identification of individuals whose quotes appear in the text, the criteria vary. Quotes from public statements online may indicate the name or affiliation of the speakers. Quotes disclose names of speakers when they are statements

by NGO directors and staff. In the case of interviewees involved in media activism, their names have been kept anonymous to prevent any problems because of their critical statements. In that case, their quotes appear under the code i-number (e.g. i-4, which means the fourth interviewee during the fieldwork). Finally, in terms of translation, the author freely translated all materials or statements originally collected in Portuguese.

4. At this stage, it is important to define the meaning of "popular" in the Latin American context. For that, I borrow Paola Sartoretto's definition. She explains that "the term 'popular' is commonly used in reference to movements or collectives of the people or popular classes across Latin American countries (e.g. trade unions, rural workers associations, women's groups, etc.). This usage of the term 'popular' thus differs from the English 'popular culture', which refers to mass and commercialized cultural manifestations" (Sartoretto 2015, 35).

5. Scholars from different disciplines and world regions have raised important analytical issues about the empirical and theoretical characteristics of political and civic engagement. In some cases, the former often appears in reference to traditional politics (e.g. voting, party campaigning, petitioning, protesting) and the latter to political actions often related to everyday life politics (e.g. community mobilization, product boycotting) (Barrett and Zani, 2015). However, for others the difference is not so clear-cut and the terms may appear interchangeably (Sherrod, Torney-Punta and Flanagan, 2010). Either way, empirically speaking both streams focus on processes of engagement in actions deemed political and/or civic among young people.

6. In chapter 5, I provide a detailed description of the collectives. In chapter 6, I describe the organizations.

Chapter Two

Ethnography as a Local Outsider

Dilemmas and
Decisions in the Research Process

In one of his many insightful reflections about the research process in the social sciences, the North American sociologist Howard S. Becker argues:

> As every researcher knows, there is more to doing research than is dreamt of in philosophies of science and texts in methodologies offer answers to only a fraction of the problems one encounters. The best laid research plans run up against unforeseen contingencies in the collection and analysis of the data; the data one collects may prove to have little to do with the hypothesis one set out to test; unexpected findings inspire new ideas. No matter how carefully one plans in advance, research is designed in the course of its execution. The finished monograph is the result of hundreds of decisions, large and small, made while the research is underway, and our standard texts do not give us procedures and techniques for making those decisions. [...] [S]ocial research being what it is, we can never escape the necessity to improvise, the surprise of the unexpected, our dependence on inspiration. (Becker 1965, 602–603)

Becker's quote describes the common challenges in ethnographic research. This has been specifically true in my investigation of favela media activism. Favela media activism is part of the multi-layered processes of civic action among favela residents. These processes involve decision-making, the search for self-development, and participation in non-formal education. In this trajectory, some favela residents become involved in online and offline civil society interactions and networks. As they engage with these practices and interactions, these residents simultaneously use media and journalism as instruments and platforms for their activism. In other words, the civic engagement of favela residents is a complex process of citizenship enactment (Isin and Turner 2002; Isin 2008) through political contestation, interaction,

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and collective action. Throughout this book, I describe and analyze how such engagement process occurs as they act in, about and through media.

However, before I begin the actual analysis of favela media activism, I would like to present a self-reflexive description of the research process that has led to this book. I do not mean to provide readers with a technical list of strategies for gathering and analyzing empirical materials. This is not a methodology report. Rather, it is an account of the theoretical and method-ological *process*. Methodology reports tend to imply that once researchers comprehend methods, they will be able to do research successfully. Conse-quently, one may feel at the least frustrated when pre-established plans fail. Idealized presentations of research may lead to unplanned contingencies (Denzin 1970). That is to say that our personal choices, external pressures, value-based decisions, data exclusions, interactions with peer researchers and political actors, and theoretical changes of mind also need consideration and discussion. Thus, as I describe my motivations, dilemmas and decisions during the fieldwork, I hope this chapter will contribute to debates about the unplanned contingencies and the need to improvise in ethnographic research.

TAKING A POSTCOLONIAL POSITION

As researchers, we make important decisions even before the research pro-cess starts. One of these decisions relates to one's individual interests and motivations. Is it possible and desirable to do impartial, unbiased and neutral research in social sciences? Some argue we should aim at it, but others rec-ommend otherwise.

The Italian political thinker Antonio Gramsci, for example, argues that "the starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory." (Gramsci 1971, 324) Following Gramsci, the Palestinian scholar Edward Said reveals that his own study of Orientalism "has been an attempt to inventory the traces upon me, the Orient subject, of the culture whose domination has been so powerful a factor in the life of all Orientals" (Said 1995, 25). Reject-ing neutrality meant a relief from the pain of denying or being cynical about my main motivation to do research: the exchange of knowledge with/among people who suffer from the consequences of social inequality and act against them.

However, it is important to clearly state that admitting one's position as a scholar committed to sociopolitical causes (Hale 2008; Shukaitis and Grae-ber 2007) does not mean ignoring the rigor of scientific practice. We cannot

avoid taking sides, but neither can we neglect considering how "our problem is to make sure that, whatever point of view we take, our research meets the standards of good scientific work, that our unavoidable sympathies do not render our results invalid" (Becker 1967, 246). With that in mind, one of my first concerns was to avoid research plans that would lead to results that mainly confirmed my own values and beliefs. For example, from the outset I avoided contrasting media made in favelas and corporate media. Had I done so, I would have inevitably ended up praising the former and demonizing the latter. Instead, I chose to explore the nuances within the context of media activism in favelas. By doing so, I was able to generate knowledge that may be useful in the struggles of favela residents.

Positioning myself contributed to the adoption of a postcolonial attitude throughout the research process. Postcolonialism is a contested concept that means many things related to the relationship between the colonizing and the colonized nations of the world. In geopolitics, postcolonialism is both a reference to the socioeconomic condition of former colonies and a criticism of colonial power. From an epistemological perspective, postcolonialism examines "relationships of power that determine who creates 'knowledge' about other places and peoples and the consequences of this knowledge [. . .]" (McEwan 2009, 23). The reading of sociological theories that ignore local contexts outside Western societies can be very disturbing if one is a researcher from the so-called Global South in Europe as I was. In response, I thought I could use my position as a Brazilian researcher in Europe to challenge different forms of Western-centrism.

However, researchers are not free from acting in a colonialist way just by being from the place in which they are interested. Take ethnography as an example. There are two kinds of ethnographers: the foreign and the local (cf. Prus 1996). Foreign ethnographers are those who travel and/or settle in different countries and continents than their own. In comparison, local ethnographers are individuals researching social issues "close to home." In different ways, the foreign and the local ethnographer have an important problem in common: the danger of defining a culture with which they are not familiar according to their own expectations, beliefs and values.

In the case of a foreign ethnographer, the problem seems rather obvious. Throughout the 20th century, ethnography reflected the geopolitical power structure in which ethnographers' predominantly Western knowledge about "others" bore the status of truth (Clifford 1983). What seems less obvious is the dangers of colonialism inherit in being a local ethnographer. Said has raised the issue of what one could call domestic colonialism. He argued that "the national bourgeoisies and their specialized élites [. . .] in effect tended to replace the colonial force with a new class-based and ultimately exploitative

one, which replicated the old colonial structures in new terms" (Said 1993 269).

This problem is evident in Brazil. Academics and favela residents have tended to be on opposite sides of the social divide. Thus the lives of local researchers may be very different from those of the social group they study. This distance sometimes generates tensions and conflicts. For instance, throughout and after my fieldwork I have heard complaints from activists who, for instance, refuse to be interviewed by academics. An example occurred during a debate in a favela where one community leader's speech made it clear that social gaps could isolate realities despite their geographic proximity. In a contentious tone, he said:

> The structure of the university is bourgeois. Moreover, the academics have a problem: they are like semi-gods. The science of the academics is the only one that suits. The knowledge of the academics is the only one that suits. Therefore, I make a proposal for you who live in a favela: let us start questioning researchers who enter the favelas to do their research. Sometimes I feel like I am a rat in a lab where they research and study me. They conclude their theses, their studies and don't even leave us the material that they produced. This is a shame.

This statement alerted me to the risk of acting in a colonialist way despite being a researcher from Rio de Janeiro investigating social phenomena back home[1]. Throughout the interactions with favela residents, I noticed that their relationships were very cautious not only with researchers, but also with activists and with others who come from the better-off side of Rio de Janeiro's social divide.

ETHNOGRAPHY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

The rejection of neutrality and the postcolonialist concerns led to the choice of critical ethnography as a methodological orientation. In short, critical ethnography is ethnography committed to challenging different forms of inequalities and injustices. Similarly to Jürgen Habermas' and Paulo Freire's understanding of self-reflective, emancipatory knowledge (Habermas 1972; Freire 1972; Morrow and Torres 2002), a researcher committed to critical ethnography is not just someone interested in generating knowledge about society, but also in changing it (Thomas 1993). Critical ethnography is "linked to our assessment of our own society as inequitably structured and dominated by a hegemonic culture that suppresses a consideration and understanding of why things are the way they are and what must be done for things to be otherwise" (Simon and Dippo 1986, 196).

In the sense of political engagement, critical ethnography resembles the tradition of communication studies in Latin America. The region's social inequality has led communication theory to be committed to class-based struggles for media democratization, human rights, and social justice (Lopes 2010). Since the 1960's and 1970's, for example, scholars have explored the method of action research to employ media technologies for grassroots political mobilization (Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte, 2006). These approaches are part of the fundamentals of the field of communication and social change. For its part, ethnography can complement pragmatic forms of sociological research by generating in-depth understanding of the intricacies of social groups, social contexts, and social actions (Geertz 1973; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Gobo 2008).

In its critical variation, an ethnographic research project can be a first step towards more active research with favela residents or other urban poor populations. The adjective "critical" relates to our political positioning. However, being critical may also cause the elitist attitude of assuming that researchers are the ones who best understand and know how to change the structural constraints in (often poor) people's lives (cf. Eagleton and Bourdieu 1992). In order to avoid such messiah complex, critical ethnographers must commit to non-reductionist context analysis (rejecting, for example, that the "system" directly manipulates or controls poor individuals). Researchers engaged in critical ethnography must also recognize that we cannot take the moral high ground and prescribe what is empowering or disempowering in power relations that are dynamic and dependent on specific contexts and struggles (Grossberg 1987). Instead, we can—and must—participate in processes, observe empirical realities, engage in knowledge exchanges with peers and the people in whose actions we are interested. By doing so, we contribute to struggles rather than merely evaluating or judging them from above.

THE CHALLENGES OF BEING A LOCAL OUTSIDER

With my political and methodological orientations roughly defined, it was time to identify the conditions that could facilitate or inhibit the gathering of empirical materials. One of these conditions was my being a local outsider. This condition can paradoxically be both facilitating and challenging. At first sight, the term "local outsider" as I use it has to do with my geographic position: I am a local from the Metropolitan Area of Rio de Janeiro doing research about my home society from abroad. In addition, I am a black man from a predominantly low-income, peripheral town in Rio de Janeiro. That means

my background is much closer to the favela lifeworld than that of my former light-skinned upper middle class classmates.

At times, this proximity facilitated access to people engaged in activism. For example, I asked one interviewee if he could introduce me to another activist. He called the other activist, but she was reluctant. Then, on the phone sitting opposite to me, he explained her how he thought I was different from a typical university student by saying: "this one is different. He is one of us. He is black from *Baixada* [the low-income, working-class region where my town is]." After that, she agreed to talk to me. When we met, she explained how tired she was of talking to academics.

Despite the facilitated access, being a local outsider also created challenges. This problem is evident in the international spheres of academic research, where one has authority just for being "from there." It seems that the closer one is to the context and social group under scrutiny, the more authentic people expect the study to be (Spivak 1993). I have often heard—and have myself argued in funding applications—that studying Brazil abroad as a Brazilian is an important advantage in relation to non-Brazilian researchers conducting their studies in the same society. For knowing the context and the language, it is true that there are certain advantages of being a local. However, the assumed benefit, legitimacy, and authenticity are distinctly problematic.

I also build my perception of favelas from the predominantly negative representations of their realities. Thus, I could even be in a more difficult position than the typical local academic. On the one hand, my deceptive sense of familiarity could be stronger for believing that I in fact share commonalities with favela residents. On the other hand, my risk of bias throughout the ethnographic process is greater. At times during the fieldwork, I forgot the scientific grounds of my research and became very emotionally involved with the activists' practices. Passion is certainly a pre-requisite for research. So is emotional involvement for ethnography. However, sometimes we are at risk of admiring more than being critical of the actions of those activists in whom we are interested. Thus we must make an effort to maintain a constant reflection on our positions as researchers throughout the research process.

HE ONLINE EXTENSION OF THE FIELD

Being abroad while doing research "back home" is also geographically challenging. In that respect, the internet affords another important condition to gather empirical materials. All agree that ethnographers have to "be there" and spend time observing, listening, writing, and even living life similarly to those social groups about whom they want to know (Geertz 1988; Wat-

son 1999). What we agree much less upon is what "being there" in the field means. When we think about ethnography in traditional terms, we understand fieldwork as the physical immersion of the ethnographer in the everyday life of the social group under scrutiny. Nevertheless, in times of constant flows of migration and communication interconnectivity across the globe, the perception of "field" as a specific geographic location seems to have diversified (Marcus 1995; Hannerz 2003).

Similarly, the popularization of the internet has also forced the rethinking of what being in the field means for ethnographers. Despite the persistence of digital divide, much of our everyday life experiences increasingly happen online. For this reason, we must treat what happens online as a constitutive part of social life rather than a detached virtual reality. After all, the online and the offline coexist (Miller and Slater 2000). Therefore, it is not just a matter of defining research that depends on either online or offline methods, but to methodologically combine online and offline strategies of gathering empirical materials (Hallet and Barber 2014; Hine 2000; Orgad 2009; Simões 2012; Wittel 2000).

My perception of online environments as extensions of the field was unintentional. For the most of the research process, I mainly thought of the internet as a channel for direct contact and as a database of community-based media content. I only realized the importance of including online observations in my set of empirical materials half-way through the research process. What drew my attention to the online possibilities for ethnographic research was a research report on uses of media for different forms of civic engagement in favelas. In the report, the authors emphasize that it is not possible to separate material reality from the 'virtual world' if one wants to understand the uses of media for mobilizing, denouncing violations of rights and demanding rights. (Souza and Zanetti 2013)

Realizing the importance of online environments for my empirical materials solved a potential dilemma. Had I followed a traditional offline procedure, I would not have been able to see all the mobilizing processes for local action that happened online. In many cases, these mobilizations and interventions happened simultaneously in different favelas. Had I only been there physically, I would not have been able to see actions outside my range of observation. Neither would I have seen actions that happened exclusively online. At the same time, had I followed a strict online approach, I would not have seen how these actions materialized on the streets. I would not have seen meetings neither would I have understood the role of non-governmental organizations or what it was like to challenge the police in a demonstration. The balance between what happens online and offline was crucial. The "updates," "likes," "shares," "posts," and "comments" on different social networks online are

also forms of meaningful interaction. For this reason, I agree with other colleagues when they argue that, depending on the research interest one has, "it is no longer imaginable to conduct ethnography without considering online spaces" (Hallet and Barber 2014, 307).

IMPROVISING IN THE FIELD

After describing my orientations and some conditions that influenced my fieldwork, I now turn to the experiences conducting the empirical part of my research process. As Becker and others have reported, the research act has many moments of doubts and the constant need to re-articulate some ideas, to discard others and even occasions of complete change of plans. The problem seems to be that these unplanned contingencies are taken for granted. Professors and colleagues often point out that it is quite natural to be confused and that the organization of ideas comes with practice and experience. The problem is that sometimes researchers cannot wait for scientific maturity under a pressing need for income[2]. As the clock ticks, novice researchers may find themselves articulating uncertain ideas into shallow theoretical frameworks and clumsy methodologies for the sake of funding applications. Depending on the urgency of applications and the scarcity of funds, there is very little time left for readjusting and improvising in the field, as Becker suggests.

Improvisation in research has nothing to do with doing something unexpected. For instance, Liisa Malkki (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007) makes an enlightening point about improvisation in research when she compares the ethnographic process to playing jazz. For her, the conditions for improvising arise from the preparation and experience gathered throughout a lifetime of study and practice. In my case, these conditions arose during the research process through literature-informed intuition, conversations with supervisors and colleagues (e.g. professors and peers), conference presentations, and lectures. These moments of dialogue fostered the "flexible intellectual openness" (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007, 181) to explore grounded theory while engaging with the empirical research. As Denzin argues, "theory and method must go hand in hand" (Denzin 1970, 4). This is one of the strengths of grounded theory in ethnography.

Grounded theory, in short, means a research process in which "most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research" (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 4). In ethnography, grounded theory is invaluable for dealing with unfamiliar social settings, the unexpected character of interactions of social groups and their construction of meanings to their actions in everyday

life (Tavory and Timmermans 2009). Grounded theory is also an important bridge connecting the "world of empirical data" to the "realm of theoretical reflections" throughout the research process (Mattoni 2014, 24). Ironically, I had not realized I was working with grounded theory until a very advanced stage in my research process. Before I went on my first fieldwork trip, I mainly reviewed literature in search of answers to my very first research question: why do favela residents become involved in community media? The improvisation and theorizing in my fieldwork process had this question as a starting point.

Exploration and Familiarization

With the question—why favela residents become involved in community media—in mind, I went to Rio de Janeiro for a two-month fieldwork period (March-May, 2011). My plan was multi-fold: I wanted (a) to familiarize myself with favelas and confront my own prejudices, (b) to interview practitioners in an exploratory way (Blumer 1969) in order to know more about community media, and (c) to have more information about the uses of internet in favelas. In order to contact people, I used different forms of convenience sampling (Weiss 1994). This approach is useful to find respondents through acquaintances who can connect the researchers to the people in which they are interested. In this case, former professors with a history of engagement in community media helped me contact some activists and non-governmental organizations. They introduced me and, most importantly, they vouched for me so that people found me trustworthy. The convenience sampling strategy led to meetings, informal talks, and semi-structured interviews with participants of three community media outlets.

These contacts generated very important insights. In relation to their uses of internet, I learned that new media did not substitute traditional media technologies (as some seemed to claim in Western-centric publications), but instead extended them by generating a sphere of public visibility and audience outside the favelas. Despite that, the interviewees still valued radio and newspapers for reaching favela residents more effectively. They claimed that most people in favelas had no Internet access.

The information gathered on the first fieldwork trip made me rethink my theoretical approach. Not only had I neglected the different socioeconomic shades in favelas, I was also unaware of the pedagogic importance of NGO projects for favela youth. The people to whom I talked also highlighted the importance of educational projects in civil society organizations for their personal development of critical thinking. Another shortcoming of the first fieldwork trip was my lack of experience with methods. I took very few notes,

procrastinated a lot with the transcription of interviews and consequently did not code the data rigorously. Despite that, I managed to improvise and, without realizing it, I started engaging with grounded theory.

For this reason, I readjusted my plans. The main change was discarding the concept of "community media" to focus on the potential of participation in NGO media-related projects for fostering citizenship among young favela residents from the perspective of communication for development and social change. By the end of 2011, my main research question had evolved into "how does participation in local media actions promoted by NGOs impact on the sense of citizenship among young individuals in a context of social inequality?" I had also familiarized with Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969). With that in mind, I wanted to observe how different kinds of interactions with different people affected the perception of citizenship among community-based media participants. For this purpose, I decided to use the second fieldwork trip to familiarize myself with different organizations.

Focusing on NGO Initiatives

In order to avoid the methodological mistakes of the first fieldwork trip, my preparations for the second trip were much more careful. Throughout the year, I identified and familiarized with four NGOs that were active in the promotion of media-related projects. These included technical media training (e.g. video production, camera operation), journalism, and photojournalism. Most of these hands-on trainings included lessons on social inequality, human rights and the political economy of media in Brazil. After this desk research, I started contacting the organizations. In the two months before my arrival in Rio de Janeiro, I intensively exchanged e-mails and private messages on Facebook both with local acquaintances (scholars and the favela residents I had met the year before) and directly with NGO staff members, with whom I managed to arrange meetings for interviews. To avoid methodological clumsiness during my time in the city, I developed a clear and executable plan of action together with my supervisors. That plan consisted of a brief description of the profile of each of the NGOs, a one-page description of the goals and methods for the trip, and the guide for the semi-structured interviews. The methods also included non-participant observation with a more regular field note taking process than the prior year. I had three goals for the second fieldwork trip. Namely,

a. to understand how NGOs that promote media-related projects operate.
b. to observe the context of NGO action and the interactions that happen in the projects.

c. to connect with directors to build ties for future participant observation of the projects.

The careful preparation paid off. I had allowed myself two months (May and June) for the fieldwork trip. However, in the first month I already managed to interview directors and project coordinators in three out of the four organizations. I also spent some time with the people I had interviewed the year before. Being effective in the first month was extremely important because Rio de Janeiro hosted the The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, known as Rio +20[3]. So, it became difficult to arrange interviews and meetings because the NGOs were involved in parallel events such as the People's Summit for Social and Environmental Justice in Defense of the Commons[4]. I only managed to complete my planned set of interviews after those events were over. At the time, I decided to observe and participate in those events as well. It was a good experience. However, in hindsight, it was very risky for my research purposes to take detours for about two weeks altogether.

Despite the abundance of events, I managed to acquire important knowledge about how those local NGOs operate. The most gratifying outcome of transcribing and coding already in Rio de Janeiro was to engage in theorizing while still in the field (cf. Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The interviews followed different themes: the origins of the NGOs, their participation in the projects, their relationship with sponsors (including controversial partnerships with corporations and governments), and their own evaluation of the projects. In relation to origins, I learned that the negative representation of favelas in media motivated the four NGOs to start media-related projects. Regarding their relationship with sponsors, they claimed to be able to act autonomously. Nevertheless, the most striking knowledge arose both from their evaluation of the projects and especially from what they did not talk about regarding the participation of favela residents in the projects.

In their evaluations of the outcomes of the projects, the interviewees highlighted the different paths former participants took. Some became professional journalists, photographers, and photojournalists. Others created their own collectives to use media for social change starting especially from their favelas of origin. Others became NGO staff members. Most importantly, some others also decided to teach what they had learned to other favela residents. For instance, the people I had interviewed the previous year as participants in a NGO-driven community media project were already giving classes on the topic in different favelas. They also participated in debates with other civil society actors. In the estimation of the interviewed NGO staff members, these people all have in common the fact that they act in and through media without forgetting the issues of social inequality and human rights.

In light of these responses, one would assume that the people who participated the projects did what they did because they participated in NGO projects. However, the NGO staff I interviewed could not explain why people participated in the projects. For that reason, while I was still in the city I started thinking about the next step: focusing on the participants rather than on the organizations. This idea set the tone for my empirical actions once I returned to Finland. With the support of one NGO coordinator, I contacted three former participants of an online journalism project. I contacted them through e-mail and Facebook private messages. These contacts were a useful starting point to the complex process of decision-making and societal awareness that the interviewees experienced before, during, and after participating in the project.

The Shift from Organizations to Participants

From the preparation months to the months after, the third year of empirical work brought major changes in the theoretical framework of my research project. Until the second fieldwork trip, I was mainly focusing on spaces (community-based media practices and NGO-driven media-related projects) in which favela residents could participate and consequently enact citizenship. However, neither of these research objects satisfied my curiosity about the individual decisions and trajectories. In my search for ideas, I reviewed different bodies of literature (e.g. research on development communication, youth, media education, NGO studies, Internet). This review process made me realize that studies have not shown much interest in the agency and the interactions of urban poor youth even though they were recurrent targets or subjects in those fields.

That is when I decided to look at theories of social actions. The idea was to build a broader theoretical framework that facilitated the handling of all the diversity of actions I was observing in the field. In this part of the process, I mainly tried to satisfy one pressing curiosity: "How do young favela residents decide to join NGO-projects and engage in civic actions by putting what they learned to practice? Why do they do it?" That is when the third year of the empirical work started. My goal was to understand how the interactions in NGO-driven media-related projects affected individual decisions of young favela residents to use media technologies or to become involved in media initiatives to be active civic actors.

With that objective in mind, the preparations for the fieldwork trip followed the pattern of the previous one. Four months before I went to Rio de Janeiro, I started e-mailing and sending private Facebook messages to former

participants in NGO projects whom I knew to be involved in media, civil society, and activism. After the successful experience of the previous year, I also prepared a careful plan of action with my supervisors. For the third trip, I would mainly focus on semi-structured interviews without neglecting non-participant and participant observation possibilities when possible. The interviews explored the moments before, during and after the interviewees' participation in NGO projects. In addition, the guide had sub-themes that emphasized five dimensions of interactions in which the interviewees engaged. These dimensions were their relationships with the community (the favela they lived in), the NGO, the peer participants, the societal structure and mainstream media.

Originally, my plan was to spend less time in Rio de Janeiro than the previous months. I had allocated one month and a half (May-June) to conduct the interviews. According to my schedule, I managed to interview eleven favela and peripheral neighborhood residents who had participated in media-related NGO-driven projects. Some of the interviewees were people I had interviewed in my first fieldwork trip. Since my framework had changed, I wanted to talk to them again from a different perspective. Others were people I contacted either through the Facebook profiles of the collectives they participated in or through common acquaintances.

These interviews were very complex. The answers to the questions I had formulated were illuminating. Take the five sub-themes, for example. The interviewees conceded the importance of the NGOs for their civic engagement, but were also very critical of their ties with corporations and governments. In addition, some argued that the dialogues with peer participants from different favelas were the best part of the projects. In relation to mainstream media, some claimed they did not feel discriminated against before they learned to be critical. Some also claimed that they engaged more with the causes of the favelas and the broader societal questions after having participated in projects.

In this process I realized that I could combine grounded theory with case studies to demonstrate the diversity of civic actions in which the interviewees were involved beyond the boundaries of NGO projects and their own favelas. That was the moment when Blumer's notion of "sensitizing concepts" was useful. Sensitizing concepts, Blumer says, give "a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances" (Blumer 1969, 148) rather than providing prescriptions of what things are. At that moment, the notion of "favela media activism" became a key concept for my study of the civic actions through media among favela residents.

Saturation of Materials and Feedback from Subjects

One of the most important things to remember in the empirical research process is to respect the people in whose actions we are interested. The problem is one of defining how to show and act with respect. What I learned in the years of listening and talking with favela residents involved in media activism is that researchers can contribute to local struggles. With that in mind, I found some things I could do in return for the people I met and interviewed throughout the years. For example, I shared the results of the survey I conducted with the NGO staff, translated a book a community media practitioner wrote into English, helped other interviewees with their university studies (e.g. by reviewing texts, assisting with application writing), and facilitated some conversations between foreign scholars and one of the NGOs I visited. In other cases, I participated in meetings and contributed ideas to discussions on community media content. For roughly two years I also acted as a text reviewer of a community newspaper. I moreover participated in different forms of online actions as well as in demonstrations in favelas and in other parts of the city. In different ways, these actions helped me to build trust and respect among the people I interviewed.

Nevertheless, except for the return of the survey results, these were more like personal contributions than exchange of knowledge. The activist's challenging statement during the debate I attended echoed in my head. For that reason, I also decided to create some possibilities for the people I interviewed in Rio de Janeiro to follow, evaluate, and thus somehow participate in my research process. Before my last fieldwork trip, I prepared two short documents in Portuguese containing my first draft of the list of contents and an extended abstract of my research plan. One of my goals for that trip was to present some preliminary results of the research for the people I had interviewed. In this exercise in accountability to research subjects (Milan 2014), they would actually have a chance to question, disagree, challenge and even deny what I planned to write about them. I also wanted to conduct group interviews with media collectives that act in different favelas. However, I gave up that idea when I felt I reached a saturation point (Glaser and Holton 2004; Mason 2010) after which I would not be able to generate new knowledge about their practices. Thus, I concentrated on meeting the former participants of NGO projects I had interviewed to present my plans to them.

In the cases where I managed to present the research to the interviewees, the reactions were of satisfaction. They approved of my decision to take my research plans to them. They often took copies of the documents I gave them and promised to read them. However, since the time we met, only one person made comments. At first it was somewhat frustrating, but then I realized that perhaps it mattered to them that I bothered to present something so they could

know about what I intended to write. After returning from the field, I also tried to publish accessible texts related to my research on Brazilian websites. One interesting outcome is that activists I had not met also access the texts and comment on the research as well. For instance, when I published a text on "favela media activism" (Custódio 2014), an activist questioned the concept of media activism even if she agreed with the core argument of the text. She shared the blog post on Facebook remarking that "even though [she does not] like the concept of media activism (*midiativismo*) for being Yankee, [she thinks] we are on the verge of a new popular communication from favelas with characteristics peculiar to each favela." Another remark is pressing in relation to the fieldwork timeline I have drawn in this chapter. Even though I stopped collecting empirical materials in Rio de Janeiro after the fourth field trip, I kept observing events and actions online throughout the dissertation writing process. After all, reality never stops. Therefore, despite defining my analytical boundaries during the years of fieldwork, some examples of empirical cases I use for case studies, contextualization and the construction of concepts include events that happened during the writing of the dissertation. In a way, this is one more example of unplanned contingencies in ethnographic research processes. Leaving oneself open to new events entails some risks, especially regarding schedules. With new events come observations that generate new ideas, which may lead to endless theorizing. However, with caution and a solid theoretical framework, it is possible to explore new events in ways to enrich the analysis while keeping the empirical materials as updated as possible.

RESEARCH SUBJECTS AND EMPIRICAL MATERIALS

As I have shown in this chapter, most of the empirical materials derived from observations of media practices and interviews. In this final section, I briefly present the names of the institutions and the profiles of interviewees with whom I familiarized and talked during the fieldwork. Initially, I talked to volunteers at the newspaper *O Cidadão da Maré* (at Complexo da Maré), editorial members of the community newspaper *Maré de Notícias* (also at Complexo da Maré), and people involved in the community radio *Rádio Santa Marta* (at Morro Santa Marta).

Then, to understand the actions of non-governmental organizations, I interviewed directors and staff members of four organizations (see Appendix 1) that promote media initiatives in favelas. They are *CEASM* and *Observatório de Favelas* (both at Complexo da Maré), *Viva Favela* (acting in different favelas from its headquarters in downtown Rio de Janeiro), and *BemTV* (working in Niterói, Rio de Janeiro's biggest neighboring city).

Finally, I interviewed 11 residents (5 male, 6 female) of favelas and peripheral neighborhoods about their own engagement in favela media activism (see Appendix 2). They were involved in journalism, photojournalism, documentary production, and media pedagogy. In addition, they were very active in social media and civil society networks. Since the criteria for selecting interviewees was based on advice from peers and organizations, each interviewee had very different life and activist trajectories. Some had had a long involvement in student movements; others had just started in activism. Most belonged to marginalized groups (e.g. blacks, migrants from Brazil's impoverished Northeast region). Some did not exactly live in favelas, but in favela-like, formal neighborhoods in marginalized regions of the city.

At first, these differences appeared a problem to scientific rigor. However, as I proceeded in my research process, I realized that the nuances among different personal trajectories would enrich the analysis of a complex phenomenon at the margins of Rio de Janeiro. When I describe or quote them individually, I anonymize them. When I talk about the organizations or events of public knowledge about which I came to know through media or public discussions on social networks, I may mention the people's real names. In any case, the text has been carefully written not to disclose the identity of those people whose personal stories appear as empirical materials in this research.

After using this chapter for an unconventional description of the research process, in the next chapter I contextualize favelas as the environments of the forms of media activism in which I am interested. Even though activism in, about, and through media is quite recent in favelas, favela residents have historically engaged in different forms of individual and collective actions to demand rights, mobilize for social justice, and thus challenge the manifestations of social inequality. My contention is that the everyday *lutas* (which translates as a combination of sacrifice, struggle and political resistance) of favela residents in Rio de Janeiro and possibly elsewhere in Brazil and other socially unequal countries provide a key backdrop for understanding favela media activism.

NOTES

1. Elsewhere I have reflected about how recognizing our own power position in social hierarchies and treating people with respect are important measures to reducing the impact of domestic colonialism in research. (Custódio, 2015b)

2. In Finland, for example, the pressure to have a convincing research plan starts already when one prepares to embark on doctoral studies. That is when one needs to start applying for the few yearly and highly competitive grants or salaried part-time/full-time research positions.

3. For further information on the Rio +20 conference, see www.uncsd2012.org (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

4. For further information on the People's Summit, see http://rio20.net/en/events/peoples-summit-for-social-and-environmental-justice/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

Chapter Three

Luta

Everyday Life Struggles in Favelas

People who do not live in favelas often associate them with two things: poverty and violence. Mentioning the word "favela" abroad, for example, often leads to references to one of Brazil's best-known films of all times. "City of God" is an Oscar-nominated, 2002 film that tells with astonishing photography and lively action of the late 1960's drug gang violence in an impoverished neighborhood of same name. Similar representations correlating favela, poverty, and criminality have contributed to the widespread prejudices and discrimination against favela residents. One cannot deny that favelas suffer from high crime rates and low-quality public services (e.g. education, health care, waste management, water supply and leisure facilities). (Davis 2006; Perlman 2010) However, defining favelas exclusively by the lacks, threats and stereotypes associated with them is an exercise in reductionism that reinforces rather than challenges prejudices.

One possible way to problematize reductionist perceptions of favelas is by approaching their everyday life. Different authors (Jovchelovic and Priego-Hernandez 2013; Perlman 2010) have been successful in describing some nuances and contradictions of life in favelas. In this chapter, I propose a similarly nuanced description of favelas by analyzing the struggles of residents as acts of resistance and contention regarding the deprivations and difficulties they face on an everyday basis. My use of the term "struggle" is a possible translation to the word *luta*, in Portuguese. However, *luta* demands clarification considering how loaded its meaning is in the Brazilian context. Literally, *luta* means fight. Nevertheless, low-income Brazilians especially take it to mean mindsets and actions in response to the hardships of everyday life. *Luta* may refer, among other things, to the duties of often-underpaid overtime, to the journeys through the slow-moving bureaucracy for public services, and to the long commuting hours. In other words, *luta*—together with *sacrifício*

(sacrifice)—means putting one's own welfare aside for the sake of family and other beloved individuals.

For outsiders, life in favelas is surreal and shocking, but also a distant reality. By contrast, for favela residents that is the everyday life in which they have been born, grown, lived and struggled to celebrate or change. Thus approaching their struggles is a way to avoid being condescending, pitiful, and judgmental in the analytical effort to understand what favelas are. It prevents us from looking at favela residents as poor people in need of charity, victims of circumstances in need of assistance or criminals in need of punishment. Instead, it provokes us to challenge our own preconceptions and observe other people's realities through empathetic and critical eyes. Thus my proposal is to adopt the *lutas*, the struggles of favela residents, as lenses to contemplate issues of housing, violence, prejudice, discrimination, and identity. The main goal is to reflect on what these struggles tell us about life in favelas and what it means to be a favela resident.

DEMANDING THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

For those familiar with Brazilian ethnic diversity, it is visually evident when one enters favelas that most residents are either blacks or *pardos* (mixed-race Brazilians), the latter especially from Brazil's northeast, the country's poorest region. The demographic constitution of favelas results from settlement processes initiated with freed slaves and continued with rural migrants into urban centers since the end of the 19th century. At the time, Brazil had just abolished slavery (1888), proclaimed the Republic (1889) and undergone a civil war (the War of Canudos, 1896—1897). Without governmental support, freed black people settled on hillsides around the center of Rio de Janeiro, the federal capital at the time. So did former soldiers of the civil war who migrated from the northeast into the capital to demand rights, find work and start a new life. That is how Brazil's first favela—*Morro da Providência*[1]– grew up behind Rio de Janeiro's central railway station in 1897 (Zaluar and Alvito 2006).

Since then, favelas have mushroomed. Especially in the first half of the 20th century, more *nordestinos* (people from the Northeast) fled the recurring droughts and limited opportunities to the fast-growing southeastern cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Today, the exact number of favelas varies according to the criteria of those counting[2]. According to the most recent census of 2010, the city of Rio de Janeiro alone has 763 favelas with 1.4 million people (Cavallieri and Vial 2012). This number is certainly higher if the other municipalities of the Metropolitan Area of Rio de Janeiro are included in the count.

One way to look at what living in favelas means is to analyze residents' struggles for their right to the city. The French philosopher and sociologist Henry Lefebvre coined the concept "right to the city" in the 1960s as part of his evaluation of how "the expansion of existing cities and creation of new ones has continued to support relationships of dependence, domination, exclusion and exploitation" (Lefebvre 2006, 34). Lefebvre argues that the working class—the builders and maintainers of cities—are paradoxically the greatest victims of segregation. In perceiving the right to the city as a basic right, the working class is potentially the main agent to transform the cities' organization from a space of bureaucracy and consumption into a renewed and dynamic urban life that meets social needs and facilitates a diversity of uses, exchanges, and encounters (178–9). The radical character of Lefebvre's conceptualization explains the widespread success of the notion of right to the city as "both working slogan and political ideal" (Harvey 2008, 40) among social movements engaged in struggles for adequate housing and living conditions in urban spaces (Mayer 2009). In Brazil, the mobilization of civil society and progressive political representatives has led to the promulgation of the City Statute in the Brazilian Constitution in 2001 (Fernandes 2007). However, segregation remains strong (Fernandes 2012; Rolnik 2012) and triggers local resistance throughout the country.

One of the main reasons for the persistence of urban segregation is a problematic type of governance based on the top-down relationship between political/economic elites and the working poor. We could refer to it as "pater-nalistic authoritarianism" (Gomez and Rodriguez 2006). With its roots in the colonial period, paternalistic authoritarianism is a pattern of social relation in which "the relationship between landlord and vassal was always ambivalent, both oppressive and protective, authoritarian and paternalistic" (45). This relationship materializes when, based on cultural and financial capital, a self-proclaimed enlightened and superior minority "assumes guiding roles identifying what is good, promoting what is convenient and establishing what is necessary for the rest" (47). In Brazil, the lighter-skinned and economically well-off middle and upper classes represent the minority that has dominated the economic and political spheres of the country.

In these circumstances, I would argue that the position of the working poor (Pochmann 2012) in contemporary Brazil has its roots and still bears a strong resemblance to that of the enslaved people in the colonial era. For instance, the low-cost and efficient labor force of blacks and *nordestinos* has been use-ful for the growth of Rio de Janeiro as a city. Despite that, local economic and political elites—often two sides enmeshed in a same social group (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos 2002)—have historically despised, denied and tried to prevent the working poor from living especially close to the centers of

business, tourism, and valuable real estate. The ambivalence of paternalistic authoritarianism in Rio de Janeiro lies in the paradoxical combination of how politicians approach the working poor for underpaid labor, political support and votes with state violence as it sweeps the working poor away from areas with potential for the profits of real estate companies.

The labor exploitation of the working poor in Brazil happens in different ways. On the one hand, men have especially provided muscle power for different sectors varying from construction and transportation to oil industry. On the other hand, both female and male working poor have occupied different positions as servants (e.g. housekeeping, cleaning, waiting tables, door keeping at hotels and commercial buildings, etc.). The problem is especially evident in highly unequal and socially hierarchical societies like Brazil. In such contexts, these types of tasks are regarded negatively. Most of us in Brazil tend to consider these positions to be work for the uneducated and unskilled. Thus, the general perception is that they are undignified labor. (Souza 2009) Consequently, Brazilian employers frequently refuse to pay fair wages for these kinds of job. Even more problematic is the fact that working poor also regard these jobs negatively. This is why the word sacrifice is so meaningful among the working poor. The justification for working long hours in time-consuming, demanding, and even humiliating jobs is the sacrifice of one's own dreams, plans, and welfare for the better living conditions of their offspring.

For thousands of favela residents, the paternalistic authoritarian state has exacerbated their housing burden by denying their right to live in areas considered to be of high value where a significant number of working poor finds jobs. Since the early 1900s, there have been at least four waves of policies when governments—overtly or in the name of altruism—acted to remove favelas from central regions and areas with high real estate value.

From 1902 to 1906, Rio de Janeiro's mayor Pereira Passos demolished poor tenements and violently evicted residents as part of a plan to turn the center of the city into a poverty-free environment for the amusement and commerce of the local bourgeoisie (Neder 1997; Souza 2012). In the 1940s, the government executed a plan to eliminate the "aberrations" from Rio de Janeiro's landscape. Politicians like the controversial President Getulio Vargas—known as the "Father of the Poor"—advertised the forced relocation of residents to remote peripheral areas as if they were life improvements. (Burgos 2006) In the 1960s-1970s, the state again violently cleared several favelas from the hyper-valued hills in seaside neighborhoods forcing thousands of families to move to building blocks kilometers away from their original housing area (Perlman 1979). In the 2000s, Rio de Janeiro has once again

violently evicted working poor families during its preparations for the FIFA World Cup (2014) and especially the Olympic Games (2016).[3]

In most cases, the state has often combined legalistic arguments (e.g. simplifying a complex housing debate into a matter of legality or illegality of favelas as urban settlements) with "life improvement talks" to justify the forced relocation of residents. During processes of evictions, a paternalistic and condescending state—personalized in the figure of a charismatic or hard-line governmental leader—decides what is best for the poor. (Burgos 2006) In most cases, police brutality is the mode of executing political decisions to ensure the fulfillment of the wishes of governments and their sponsors (in Rio de Janeiro, especially the real estate and tourism markets). The use of police force indicates the resistance favela residents often offer against evictions.

The everyday-life hardships and governmental disregard have led favela residents to create movements of resistance throughout the 20th century. Their struggles for the right to the city in Rio de Janeiro preceded Lefebvre's concept. In most common cases, they focused on immediate infrastructural renewal and anti-eviction reactions. Take the history of residents' associations as an example (Burgos 2006). Until the 1940s, the state disregarded the increasing number of favela residents because most residents were neither formally employed nor able to vote due to illiteracy. However, the populist interests of the government in the early 1940s motivated favela residents to create commissions to act against the ongoing evictions. Fearing the spread of communism among the poor, the state had the Catholic Church's support to both provide favelas with basic services (e.g. water supply, waste management, and energy) and build connections between the government and organized residents.

From the 1950s until the mid-1960s, residents created residents' associations (later developed into a federation) to demand further infrastructural development. Nevertheless, the military dictatorship (1964–1984) repressed and co-opted favela organizations thereby weakening the contentious character of residents' associations. The logic of exchange of political support for infrastructural improvements between politicians and residents' associations remains until these days. After the 1980s, another problem for the residents' associations was the rise of drug trade organizations and extrajudicial paramilitary groups (*milícias*, vigilante-like organized groups made up of off-duty or former police officers and firefighters). Their bureaucratic character, the subservience to the state apparatus, and the threat or control of criminal organizations have led to the current crisis of representation of residents' associations in favelas. (Fleury, Guerghe, and Kabad 2013) Despite that, their formation demonstrates how residents have struggled for their right to the city.

Discontent with the representation of politicians and residents' associa-
tions has recently contributed to the formation of non-bureaucratic collective
actors in favelas. These collective actors organize networks in and across
favelas with non-favela organizations, autonomous residents' associations
and progressive political parties. Despite also engaging in struggles for in-
frastructural development and against evictions, the main goal of these non-
bureaucratic networks is to emphasize the state's responsibility for the hous-
ing hardships in favelas and contest the structural roots of urban segregation.
In different ways, they question paternalistic authoritarianism and call for the
participation of favela residents in urban planning and decision-making. They
also refuse clientelistic relationships, demand transparency in governance,
and strive for a more inclusive and just society.

The resistance of the working poor community of *Vila Autódromo*
(Olaussen 2012; Silva 2007) illustrates the differences between and coex-
istence of bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic collective actors for the right
to the city. *Vila Autódromo* is a small community of 450 families located
by the Jacarepaguá Lagoon in the West Zone of Rio de Janeiro. The com-
munity results from the settlement of low-income families in search of work
during the urbanization of the uninhabited coastal region in the early 1970s.
The name *Vila Autódromo* derives from the community's location between
the lagoon and the Jacarepaguá racetrack (*autódromo* in Portuguese). In two
decades, the region changed from an uninhabited swampy area into *Barra
da Tijuca*, one of the most expensive business and residential neighbor-
hoods in Rio de Janeiro. Once the region gained popularity among middle
and upper class populations, *Vila Autódromo* became an obstacle to real es-
tate investors. The pressure to remove *Vila Autódromo* has been high since
the 1980s, but it only entered its most dramatic period in the 2000s when
Rio de Janeiro started preparing for the 2007 Pan-American Games and
especially the 2016 Olympics. In 2009, Mayor Eduardo Paes announced
that the city would clear *Vila Autódromo* for the construction of the Media
Center of the Olympic Games.

To resist the pressures for eviction, *Vila Autódromo* created its residents'
association in 1987 in order to represent the community's interests in ne-
gotiations with city and state administrators. In contrast to other residents'
associations, *Vila Autódromo* has since managed to act without the threat of
organized crime. It has also managed to remain untouched by the influence
of politicians. (Olaussen 2012) This independence has led to some important
accomplishments like infrastructural improvements (e.g. water supply, waste
management, energy and telephone), housing documentation and even legal
protection from evictions. However, the selection of Rio de Janeiro to host
the sports mega events created the conditions for city and state governments

to revert to previous arrangements and again to threaten to clear *Vila Autódromo*.

That is when the residents' association joined a broader movement not only against evictions, but also against paternalistic authoritarian governance. These movements included scholars, students, university departments, social movements, non-governmental organizations (NGO), alternative media groups and other kinds of favela and non-favela political actors. In 2010, *Vila Autódromo* was a member of the Urban Social Forum (SFU), one landmark international event for the Brazilian struggles for the right to the city[4]. From that event, the movement grew into the Nationwide Articulation of People's Committees for the World Cup and the Olympics. Together, they acted to inform, mobilize, and demand more participatory forms of governance for the construction of just and inclusive urban environments[5]. As one of the outcomes of these articulations, in 2012 *Vila Autódromo* released an alternative plan that shows that the community's removal is not necessary for the construction of Olympic venues (Faulhaber and Azevedo 2015; Olaussen 2012). In the first weeks of 2016, some families of *Vila Autódromo* were still resisting despite the fact that most of its original population had already accepted the relocation proposals and financial compensation from the city administration, thereby proving the power of the bureaucratic and market-friendly form of governance Lefebvre problematized.[6] Nevertheless, the case of *Vila Autódromo* illustrates the housing hardships in favelas and how the non-bureaucratic and networked struggles for the right to the city take place in Rio de Janeiro.

REACTING TO VIOLENCE

Another problem in favelas is the concentration of violence. The violence derives primarily from armed conflicts in disputes for territorial control by drug trade organizations, extrajudicial paramilitary groups (*milícias*) and the state security forces. (Justiça Global, OMTC, and MNMMR 2010) The high death toll among young people shows how life-threatening living in favelas can be. In a 2014 UNICEF report about violence against children and adolescents around the world, Brazil appeared as the country with the sixth highest homicide rates mostly connected to drug-related violence especially in large and unequal urban centers. (UNICEF 2014) Another study estimates that 48,000 youths will have been victims of homicides by 2019 in Brazil if the rates of urban violence of the previous decade persist. The study also indicates who are the most probable victims of these crimes: young (18–29 year-old) black men victims of firearms. (Cano and Borges 2014) Rio de Janeiro had a decline

in homicide rates after 2003. However, since 2012 the numbers have in-creased after leveling out at an alarming rate of 28.3 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. (Waiselfisz 2014)

These general numbers are more striking when illustrated with examples of recurring cases of violence in favelas. In February 2015, army soldiers opened fire against a vehicle with five young men because the driver failed to stop at a checkpoint at Complexo da Maré, injuring the passengers (one had a leg amputated).[7] One week later, State police officers opened fire against a van injuring commuters because the driver also failed to stop at another checkpoint.[8] At Complexo do Alemão, a State police officer killed a 22–year-old moto-taxi driver who again failed to stop at yet another checkpoint.[9] One week later, a shoot-out left three injured (including a police officer) during an open-air carnival party.[10] These are a few examples that made it into the news. Cases of crime and violence in favelas generally go unnoticed in non-favela environments. (Machado da Silva 2010) Journalists seldom consider shoot-outs in favelas to be newsworthy unless they involve the police and/or children and the number of victims is higher than the ordinary. (cf. Ramos and Paiva 2007) Consequently, much of the violence in favelas does not be-come subjects of public debate. Even more problematically, the sensationalist urge in journalists' coverage of crime in Brazil has contributed to the general perception of violence as something banal. (Rondelli 1998)

The high rates of violence in favelas also relate to the patterns of authori-tarian paternalism and elitism of the economic and political elites in gover-nance. The history of the police, for example, bears "an enslaving, clientelist and authoritarian heritage which we can observe in a mere police operation with the different treatment that vary according to the social strata to which the 'citizen' belongs." (Sousa and Morais 2011)

For two centuries, local governments have presented a causal correlation between the growth of working poor populations and urban violence. Thus, instead of tackling the consequences of social inequality to improve the living conditions and occupational opportunities of the working poor, the solutions to violence have historically emphasized repressive and violent surveillance. The military police and the justice system have "since the arrival of the Portu-guese [royal family] in Rio de Janeiro [in 1808], been used as tools to control the lower classes." (Ashcroft 2014) In practice, the actions of the police have evolved from the criminalization of Afro-Brazilian rituals such as *capoeira* and samba in the 19th and early 20th century to the treatment of favelas as the sources of drug-related crime and violence at the turn to the 21st century. (Ashcroft 2014) In 2007, the governor of Rio de Janeiro—who stayed in office for eight years until the election of his vice-governor in 2014—gave an illustration of this mentality when he suggested abortion as a measure to

reduce crime rates because, in his words, favelas are "factories for the pro-
duction of criminals."[11]

The systematic criminalization of favela residents becomes evident when
we look at security strategies throughout the 20th century in Rio de Janeiro.
Before the mid-1960s, governments promoted police control of the "danger-
ous classes"—that is, the working poor—on the peripheries of the growing
urban centers. (Sousa and Morais 2011) In practice thus meant defining
common crimes (e.g. gambling, theft, prostitution, sale of contraband and the
embryonic drug trade) as "a socially marginal and cloudy matter that caused
little public attention whose control had always been delegated to the will of
police authorities" (Machado da Silva 2010, 288–89). During the military
dictatorship (1964–1984), the police was extremely repressive. That period
saw the creation of *grupos de extermínio* (vigilante groups) among police
officers to kill suspects in favelas and peripheral regions. Paradoxically, that
time was also the period when Rio de Janeiro came onto the map of the inter-
national drug trade because of cocaine. The establishment and fast growth of
drug selling in favelas parallel with the expansion of police corruption led to a
promiscuous relationship of joint profit and armed conflicts between criminal
organizations and law enforcement. (Misse 2011) This relationship made it
evident that in Brazil the "police is not a remedy against violence, but a major
source of violence in its own right." (Wacquant 2003)

After the dictatorship, political debates on public security increased to
include the working poor as subjects of concern in policy-making spheres.
From that time to the present day, security policies have varied between the
promotion of confrontational strategies and the use of buzzwords like partner-
ship and participation in political rhetoric. (Costa 2011) For instance, Gover-
nor Leonel Brizola (1983–1987) prioritized respect for the civil and human
rights favela residents. However, the ideology of that politician did not find
support either inside the police force or in a society increasingly frightened
by the criminal display of firearms power and violence inside and outside the
boundaries of favelas. (Machado da Silva 2010, 283–300)

The increased perception of a divided city (Santos 1975; Ventura 1994;
Barbassa 2015) in the 1990s led to the urgency to control favelas and pe-
ripheries to stop criminality. During those years, "the clamor for 'tough' ac-
tions—that is, illegal actions—increased in such a way that the only chance
to prevent the moral contamination of the whole system [. . .] [was] to leave
the 'toughness' of repression to the will of the police." (Machado da Silva
2010, 293) The decade became notorious for police brutality. In 1993, police
officers killed eight teenage street dwellers in the central business district of
Rio de Janeiro. One month later, police officers killed 21 civilians in the favela
Vigário Geral. (Araujo and Salles 2008) In 1995, the Rio de Janeiro State

government distributed financial bonuses to police officers who confronted (and killed) suspects. (Costa 2011) In his overview of urban violence in Brazil in the 1990s, the French sociologist Loïc Wacquant suggested that the country experienced a "dictatorship over the poor" in that decade. (Wacquant 2003)

In the 2000s, policies combined the use of force and humane (at least in theory) community policing in favelas. Early in the decade, an attempt at community policing failed due to lack of political support and resources (Ashcroft 2014). The second and ongoing plan has been the Pacifying Police Unit (UPP). Since 2008, the UPP program has aimed at regaining "control of territories previously dominated by armed drug factions and establish[ing] democratic rule of law in those places" (Ashcroft 2014). The implementation of the UPPs starts with the occupation of territories by elite squads and federal armed forces. After belligerent operations arrests or expels criminals from the favelas to be "pacified", the military police set up bases in the territory. By early 2015, 38 favelas had received UPPs. The immediate reduction of homicide rates, the displays of heavy weaponry in the so-called "pacified" favelas, and the greater sense of security in non-favela environments have raised general support for the UPP program among politicians, celebrities, media organizations, and non-favela populations. (Cano and Borges 2012) However, the UPP program has also been much criticized among civil society organizations and political actors from favelas for the recurrent cases of abuse of authority, indiscriminate and excessive use of power, and flagrant disregard for the demands of local populations. (Mesker 2014) While smaller favelas with UPPs have enjoyed peaceful times, larger "pacified" favelas have suffered from an increase of armed conflicts especially after the end of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The escalation of violence in so-called "pacified" favelas has led to the resignation of the State's public security secretary and mastermind of the UPP program José Mariano Beltrame in October 2016 after 10 years at the job.[12]

The ultimate point of this brief description is that favela residents have historically been penalized for the violence rates in Rio de Janeiro. From confrontational actions to humanistic approaches to public security, the paternalistic authoritarian state seems to be more interested in protecting the cities against favelas than in ensuring the security of favela residents. In these circumstances, it is imperative to reflect on how favela residents not only cope, but struggle against violence. In fact, if we use the French scholar Michel de Certeau's distinction between strategy and tactics[13] as a reference (de Certeau 1984), we could say that the combination of coping and resistance in favelas constitutes tactical actions of impoverished populations in response to the state's neglect of favelas' welfare combined with military strategies of surveillance and control.

Since the 1990s researchers have studied the relationship between drug-related violence and everyday life in favelas (Valladares 2005). Problematically, studies on violence in favelas tend to frame residents, especially youth, either as criminals or victims. (cf. Zaluar 1999) In addition, some examples in the academic literature (e.g. Alves and Evanson 2011; Jovchelovic and Priego-Hernandez 2013; Zaluar and Alvito 2006) do not describe the tactics of favela residents against the brutality of criminal organizations and the police. Descriptions and analyses of anti-violence movements in favelas tend to be more common in research by human rights organizations (e.g. Justiça Global, OMTC, and MNMMR 2010; Souza and Zanetti 2013) that analyze and support the struggles of the working poor against violence.

Due to the high danger level, anti-violence movements in favelas have to be cautious. Thus most political actors from favelas avoid targeting criminal organizations. Instead, they often focus on society's general disregard and the state's responsibility for the incidence of violence in favelas and peripheral areas. Sometimes anti-violence movements start campaigns to generate knowledge and public debate about violence and human rights violations against the working poor. In November 2014, for example, the Brazilian office of Amnesty International launched the campaign "Young, black, alive." The campaign aimed at "mobilizing society and breaking the indifference with which the high rates of homicides of black youth are dealt in Brazil."[14] In June 2013, various residents' associations, non-governmental organizations, academics and individual citizens organized a memorial and demonstration after elite squad police officers killed ten favela residents at Complexo da Maré in retaliation for the death of a police officer in a conflict with drug dealers. Several thousand people gathered in one of the streets of the favela "to demand an immediate end to this type of police operation, where police agents enter favelas and kill with impunity." The title of the memorial demonstration was "state that kills—never again."[15]

In other cases, residents have also organized non-bureaucratic, networked movements against violence. One example took place in Complexo da Maré after "pacifying" security forces opened fire against the commuting vehicles in February 2015. After the sequential cases of army violence against favela residents, the Facebook-based collective group *Maré Vive* (Maré Lives) called for a peaceful demonstration against "this model of pacification that only favours those who have money and who live outside favelas"[16] emphasizing that the demonstration had "no political party, no NGO, no media support and no allegiance to drug trade organizations." On February 23, hundreds of people including favela residents, non-favela activists, and civil society representatives marched around Complexo da Maré under close surveillance by heavily armed of police officers and army soldiers. The demonstration ended

when the security forces fired on the crowd with rubber bullets, tear gas, and even lethal weapons after some protesters threw rocks in a reaction of anger against the security forces. Despite the turbulent end, *Maré Vive* participants considered the demonstration a success[17]. Thus, despite the risks and dangers of violence, favela residents have tactically targeted the state by combining online and offline articulations.

CONTESTING DISCRIMINATION

The state's disregard for welfare and security are examples of discriminatory practices against favela residents. At the end of 2014, one commander of the military police of the State of Rio de Janeiro recommended the construction of a concrete wall by Complexo da Maré to guarantee the security of drivers on *Linha Vermelha*, an expressway that leads to Rio de Janeiro's International Airport. He claimed that the existing acrylic noise barrier is not sturdy enough to prevent the actions of criminals[18]. Due to the previous accusations of segregation from residents and civil society organizations after the noise barriers covered several favelas from sight in 2010, the city rejected the idea of the concrete wall[19]. In any case, the commander's recommendation indicates a general perception that the city would be safer if criminality remained under repressive control within favelas.

This general perception of favela residents as potential criminals is perhaps the most harmful kind of prejudice against them, but it is not the only one. In class-hierarchical Brazil, favela residents are among those who suffer most from compound discrimination, a concept (Makkonen 2002) that refers to how the combination of prejudices increases the burden against a discriminated social group. Being favela residents (thus, in the eyes of outsiders, being somehow to blame for their own misery and criminality) tends to exacerbate the city experience of people who may already suffer discrimination for being black or *pardo*, uneducated, *nordestino* or simply poor. That situation leads to unconventional tactics to cope with discrimination in everyday life. For instance, research has shown that Brazilian working poor parents in multi-racial families tend to choose better education for their lighter-skinned children because they are likely to encounter fewer obstacles in professional life anyway (Schucman 2014)[20].

One possibility to describe the patterns of prejudice against favela residents is looking at the discourses about them in the mainstream media. Media representations have historically reinforced prejudices against favela residents and thus contributed to general discriminatory practices against them. Many Brazilian and foreign scholars have studied the representation of favela resi-

dents especially in newspapers and on television (Mattos 2007; Mattos 2010; Penglase 2007). Most of these studies tend to show how the media often represent favelas as spaces that lack urban infrastructure, public order, laws and morality while involving much danger, poverty and urban chaos (Rocha 2007). In the early 1900s, for example, newspapers and magazines supported the clearing of favelas in the belief that favelas were territories conducive to the spread of diseases and "villages of evil" where crime was concentrated. (Mattos 2007) Since then, journalism has reflected and even supported the policies of political elites towards favelas.

A very creative and thought-provoking study (Novaes 2014) analyzes the uses of maps of Rio de Janeiro in the Brazilian press throughout the 20th century. The study shows that a number of favelas located in the surroundings of central and wealthy neighborhoods did not exist in the press until the 1990s. From the 1970s, the cartography of favelas became prominent in journalism for mapping the territories of rival drug trade organizations. Those narratives reflected and fed the fear of non-favela populations. More recently, a new wave of favela maps in newspapers started with the Pacifying Police Unit (UPP) program. In this case, the press used maps to demonstrate the state control of favelas and, thus, to appease non-favela residents. However, most favelas remain without UPP units and thus invisible. The invisibility of favelas seems to resonate with governments. In 2013, the Brazilian authorities—especially Rio de Janeiro city's administration—called for Google to remove the word "favela" and any other indicators of favelas from their maps. (Novaes 2014)

The political support of private, elite-controlled Brazilian media for the controversial UPP program has created a new dichotomy in their representation of favelas in journalism. In addition to perpetuating the myth of a city divided between favela and non-favela neighborhoods (Novaes 2014; Perlman 2010; Ventura 1994), news media have also reported a division between "pacified" favelas and non-pacified favelas. The so-called "pacified" favelas seem to be integrated into the city with stories about local entrepreneurship and culture. At the same time, the news still represents non-pacified favelas as obscure territories under the control of drug organizations.

One reason for the stigmatizing news coverage may be the fact that journalists make news for non-favela residents (Ramos and Paiva 2007). The support for the government's repression against favelas may also explain why mainstream journalism rarely questions governmental policies and actions regarding favelas. The news about favelas often resemble warnings to non-favela residents with police officers or commanders advising on the safest routes for drivers or confirming that the increasing cases of armed conflicts in "pacified" favelas are temporary and isolated cases. In these narratives,

the voices of favela residents tend to merely illustrate the narratives with personal experiences with violence. Critical voices from favelas who question the unequal and unjust structure of Brazilian society go largely unheard in mainstream journalism despite their widespread echoes in social networks (Custódio 2014).

In addition to journalism, another source of representations of favelas is *telenovelas*. Since the 1960s, dramatized stories of everyday life on television (and even decades before on radio) have not only entertained audiences across social classes, but also served as symbolic arenas that set cultural trends, patterns of consumption and socio-political debates in Brazil. (La Pastina, Rêgo, and Straubhaar 2002) Due to their social relevance, *telenovelas* have been objects of innumerable studies that investigate and problematize its representations of marginalized and discriminated social groups. For instance, various scholars have highlighted how blacks and *nordestinos* have been under-represented and misrepresented in plots developed from the white, middle and upper class, Southeastern perspective that prevails among the directors and producers of *telenovelas*. Given the importance of *telenovelas* in Brazil, these representations may both reinforce prejudices and affect how individuals perceive themselves as part of a social group (Joyce 2012; La Pastina, Straubhaar, and Sifuentes 2014).

The representation of favelas in *telenovelas* differs from the journalistic narratives. Cacilda Rêgo (2014) analyzes the relationship between the recent economic boom among the Brazilian working poor and provides an insightful description of the representations of favelas in *telenovelas*. While journalism tends to portray favelas in relation to violence, *telenovelas* have increasingly emphasized what producers and directors consider positive aspects of favelas. This happens because of the significant increase in purchasing power among the working poor as a result of income distribution policies and state-led incentives for credit in the past decade (cf. Pochmann 2012). Thus, positive representations of favelas satisfy both the sponsors—responsible for the stratospheric revenues of *telenovela* advertising—and the ever-growing audiences in the lower classes (Rêgo 2014, 94).

The problem lies in what "positive" means. Especially after 2012, *telenovelas* have portrayed favelas from inside, shifting the focus of the narratives from violence and poverty to personal dilemmas. The plots tend to portray individuals making moral choices, living in poor-but-happy environments filled with hypersexual and/or ill-mannered yet sympathetic people who are often involved in one-gets-what-one-gives twists. In focusing on individuals, *telenovelas* have represented favelas in ways that deny their actual ethnic composition (e.g. white actors prevailing over blacks and *nordestinos*) and minimized the violence of drug-related conflicts and the

hardships favela residents go through every day. (Rêgo 2014) Thus, I would argue that the contradiction between journalistic and fictional narratives is misplaced because the *telenovela* narratives are not actually positive, but deny or fantasize reality. Consequently, the negative representations of favelas in journalism—supposedly reporting facts—gain a stronger sense of truth. This general negative perception of favela residents contributes to the discrimination against them.

During my fieldwork I identified three kinds of impacts of prejudices and negative media representations on the favela residents' everyday lives. The first impact is how residents relate to their own condition as favela residents. In certain cases, they seem to display shame about living in favelas. For example, throughout the years I became acquainted with a waiter in a bar in the center of Rio de Janeiro. He is a light-skinned *nordestino*. When I asked where he lived, he answered: Bonsucesso. Bonsucesso is a peripheral, formal neighborhood located between Complexo do Alemão and Complexo da Maré. Later I discovered he actually lived in a favela at Complexo da Maré. Lying about one's own address is a way to hide being a favela resident. A second impact of discrimination relates to its consequences outside favelas. For example, one of the recurring experiences of discrimination relates to how the criminalization of favela residents has affected the search for work. (Soares 2011) A third kind of impact relates to the reactions of favela residents to media discourses. The reproduction of prejudices in media has been the target of different forms of reactions among favela residents. For example, at the end of 2014 a black feminist group started a movement against a Brazilian version of *Sex and the City* called *Sexo e as Negas* (*Sex and the Black Women*). The series—created and directed by a famous white male actor—portrayed a group of four black women who led very liberated lives. The show was released as one of the first in Brazilian history to have the main cast composed mostly of black actors. In spite of that, an articulation of black and feminist movements denounced the recurring hyper-sexual representation of female favela residents on television in an open letter to the director. Then, they created a Facebook page calling for a boycott of the program. In February 2015, the page had over thirty thousand supporters. The controversy and the low ratings may have caused the series to be discontinued. [21]

In addition to such of immediate and direct reactions, the reinforcement of prejudices against favela residents in media discourses has also motivated more permanent forms of actions. For example, the directors and project coordinators of the four NGOs I interviewed explained that negative media representations motivated them to start projects that promote critical awareness of mainstream media discourses and technical training for media professionals and journalists among favela residents. Favela media activism

is also a set of actions that represent these kinds of counter-discursive, anti-discriminatory actions.

E-SIGNIFYING DISCOURSES AND IDENTITIES

In addition to struggling against discriminatory housing policies, violence and prejudice, I believe that any attempt to understand the favelas will not be complete without contemplating the symbolic processes of re-signification of the term "favela." Different individual and collective actors have acted in cultural movements to deconstruct prejudices and to promote positive self-representations of residents.

As consequences of the political and social processes described so far, the terms favela and *favelado* (favela residents) are heavily charged with negative connotations among non-favela and even favela populations. One way some find to deal with stigmatization is to deny it. For example, an ethnographic study conducted in a favela in the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro shows how residents reject the references both to their home region as a favela and to themselves as *favelados* (Freire 2008). The statements of the interviewees in that study reflect the general perception of favelas in Brazil. For them, as one interviewee explained, the term *favelado* "always evokes behaviors perceived as morally inferior [. . .] like being impolite, cursing, being dirty or dressing improperly, using drugs, prostituting oneself, begging, being dishonest, picking fights, stealing. In sum, 'practicing everything that is wrong.'" (106–7) Similarly, the interviewees also referred to their home region as *comunidade* (community) instead of favela because of the close relation of the latter with violence, poverty and subordination in the social hierarchy.

While avoiding the stigmatized terms is one legitimate form of reaction to prejudice, favelas have also seen efforts to change the meanings and perceptions of discrimination not only among favela residents, but also in society. The goal is to contest processes of discrimination and to re-signify what *favela* and *favelado* mean not only as designating terms, but also as identities. More importantly, these actions are not only practices of politicized members of civil society organizations. In fact, much of the resistance against prejudice and discrimination in favelas has manifested in different forms of cultural practices through traditions, music, and shared values. (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998) In these circumstances, the rising non-bureaucratic networks of favela-based movements have engaged in different forms of symbolic practices including media and journalism not only to create different representations of favelas, but also to publicize what they consider positive discourses and construct a counter-hegemonic identity.

Part of the re-signification of the favela identity combines the protection and enactment of the cultural heritages of blacks and *nordestinos*, the favelas' dominating ethnic and regional groups. One example is how samba and *funk carioca* (Rio de Janeiro's funk) emerged from amongst the working poor not only as mere music genres, but also as cultural and political expressions of the everyday life in the least privileged side of the Brazilian social divide. In the specific case of favelas, samba, and Rio's funk, "in addition to the affirmation of deep connections to the locale, reflect the specificity of a history marked by conflicts, prejudices and stigmas, resistance and vitality" (Souto de Oliveira and Marcier 2006, 61).

The internationally acclaimed samba originated in the early 1900s within the working poor black communities on the peripheries of Rio de Janeiro (Barke, Escasany, and O'Hare 2001). Initially regarded as a crime, in a few decades samba was appropriated by the federal government as a symbol of the Brazilian national identity (Martin-Barbero 1993). Throughout the 20th century, the lyrics of sambas were the channels through which the political voices from favelas resounded in society. In a study on the discourses of everyday life in favelas in sambas, scholars have identified statements against evictions, descriptive accounts of violence-related suffering, celebrations of Afro-Brazilian religions, and poetic descriptions of the hardships of the working poor (Souto de Oliveira and Marcier 2006).

A similar process has taken place with Rio's funk, Rio de Janeiro's appropriation of the Miami Bass hip-hop style that has risen from favelas and peripheries in the 1980s to become one of the most popular symbols of poor black youth. Rio's funk has also suffered from discrimination. In non-favela environments, Rio's funk still bears the status of low culture (or, I would argue, even "no culture") partly because some ramifications of the movement have—like the US-based *gangsta rap*—appropriated lyrics to support drug trade organizations as well as ostentatious, hypersexual, and violent behavior (Sneed 2007). This has led to a process of a general criminalization and prohibition of Rio's funk parties (Facina 2009). However, *funk* has predominantly been an important expression of the black community with lyrics and dances that affirm both blackness and being a favela resident as identities (Lopes and Facina 2012).

In response to the general criminalization of Rio's funk, favela-based activists and *funkeiros* (singers, DJs and dancers who participate in Rio's funk scenes) have organized demonstrations, events and online petitions to legitimize Rio's funk as a cultural and social phenomenon[22]. Since 2009, for example, *funkeiros* have created the Association of Professionals and Friends of Funk (Apafunk) to challenge the criminal and pornographic appropriation of Rio's funk, to influence policy-making and the promulgation of legislation

that respects the cultural value of the movement, and to use Rio's funk for the mobilization and participation in demonstrations against human rights violations in favelas. (Soares da Silva 2014) Another example is the monthly event called *Sarau Divergente* (Divergent Soiree). In this evening gathering, *funkeiros*, rappers, poets, and other artists from favelas and peripheral regions gather to celebrate music, poetry and arts that are engaged in the political struggles against human rights violations and social injustices in favelas[23].

In terms of northeastern culture, the cultural heritage lives through music, food, cultural traditions and the stories of hard work and sacrifice that cross generations. Walking around favelas reveals the strength of northeast culture in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. In Complexo da Maré, for example, one immediately notices the variety of northeastern accents and music especially at weekends along the street market of favela Nova Holanda. The market is an important commercial, gastronomic, and cultural center of northeastern traditions in Rio de Janeiro. In addition, the stories of sacrifice and hard work in the processes of migration and settlement also represent an important aspect of the northeastern cultural heritage in Rio de Janeiro.

Some of the people I interviewed in favelas are either children of northeast migrants or migrants themselves. Some were born in Rio de Janeiro. Their slight accents disclosed how their work ethics and life values have deep roots in their family histories. Being a favela resident often means putting school aside for work at a very early age. Consequently, favela residents in general work long hours for low pay. (Koslinski and Alves 2012; Soares 2011; Souza 2009) In this context, evoking the northeastern roots represents someone's own enactment of the tradition of hard work from predecessors despite all everyday life adversities. One interviewee, an activist photographer from Complexo da Maré, talked about his mother to draw on his northeastern roots.

> i-2: My mother came illiterate to Rio de Janeiro without a profession and with nothing but children on her back. [. . .] She became a trash collector. [. . .] I wasn't born at the time. Then, she met a woman who taught her about cooking as a profession. My mother was self-taught. Despite the difficulties, she learned and became a cook. [. . .] Can you imagine, man? A mother comes without anything but the children on her back, she has to manage without a home or anything. Man, I am very proud of that.

Like this photographer, favela residents involved in activism often engage in or demonstrate support for actions that celebrate the memory of *nordestinos* and the traditions of black culture. On different occasions, for example, they have used photography and online texts (e.g. blog posts, comments on social networks) for the documentation of festivities as demonstrations of support for local cultural movements. Their statements and actions indicate that preserving and enacting cultural heritages are symbolic actions that rein-

force the identities as favela residents in a context of general discrimination and material hardships. Another example is the community-based newspaper *O Cidadão da Maré* (The Citizen of Maré). Since 1999, *O Cidadão da Maré* has published stories and covered events[24] to celebrate Northeast culture. Activist photographers from favelas have also documented and thus supported northeastern folklore traditions in Santa Marta and other favelas in Rio de Janeiro.[25] In the following chapters, I argue that the actions to construct and protect favela-based cultural heritage and identities are important elements of the political actions among favela residents.

In this chapter, I discussed four aspects of the struggles, the *lutas*, of favela residents against everyday hardships. I focused on issues of housing, violence, prejudice and discrimination, and identity. My goal was to make an analytical description of what it means to live in favelas without reducing those complex urban environments to the stereotypical perception of them as spaces of poverty and violence. Instead, I presented how working poor favela residents organize movements and actions to contest paternalistic authoritarian forms of governance. I also showed how residents resist various forms of human rights violations (especially those perpetrated by the state) and challenge prejudices that reinforce discriminatory attitudes against favela residents. Finally, I described how residents construct an identity by re-signifying the meaning of "favela" as symbols of black and *nordestino* heritage and hard-working people. Thus, by approaching favelas from the angle of what residents consider worth struggling for, it was possible to discuss the structural roots for some material and symbolic hardships residents experience in their everyday lives. In addition, it was possible to introduce the context of favela-based political struggles in which media activism takes place. However, my reasons for using favela as a prefix to media activism do not merely relate to the place in which the actions take place. In the next chapter, I address the construction of favela media activism as a concept.

NOTES

1. The word "favela" designates a plant typical of Brazil's northeast that the first migrants found in their first settlements in Rio de Janeiro. Before being named *Morro da Providência*, the first working poor settlement was called *Morro da Favela* (Favela Hill). In decades, the word "favela" gradually designated all other settlements with similar characteristics.

2. In 2011, the nationwide newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* published a story about the general confusion about the number of favelas in Rio de Janeiro. For the story (in Portuguese), see http://sao-paulo.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,ninguem-sabe-quantas-favelas-existem-no-rio-imp-,809440 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

3. The World Cup and the Olympics Popular Committee of Rio de Janeiro have produced several reports about the impacts of the mega-events on Rio de Janeiro. The last one—"Rio 2016 Olympics: The exclusion games"—was released in December 2015. The report is available at http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=25747 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

4. For more information on the Urban Social Forum, see https://forumsocialurbano.wordpress.com/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

5. The World Cup and Olympics Popular Committee of Rio de Janeiro has produced several reports about the impacts of the mega-events on Rio de Janeiro. The last one—"Rio 2016 Olympics: The exclusion games"—was released in December 2015. The report is accessible at http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=25747 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

6. In late 2015, the website of Time Magazine reported on the resistance movement among dwellers of Vila Autódromo (Gregory 2015). In January 2016, evictions in Vila Autódromo continued despite pledges of Mayor Eduardo Paes to maintain the village in its place. See http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=26453 (last accessed on December 5, 2016). However, one month later, city agents resumed evictions pulling down iconic buildings, including the headquarters of the residents' association. See http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=27116 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

7. For more information about the shooting of a civilian car by police officers, see (in Portuguese) http://extra.globo.com/casos-de-policia/forca-de-pacificacao-fuzila-carro-com-cinco-jovens-na-mare-um-corre-risco-de-morte-15325719.html (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

8. For a news report (in Portuguese) about the shooting of a commuting van in Maré, see http://odia.ig.com.br/noticia/rio-de-janeiro/2015-02-21/ocupantes-de-kombi-sao-baleados-na-mare.html (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

9. For a news report about the killing of a moto-taxi driver, see (in Portuguese) http://extra.globo.com/casos-de-policia/mototaxista-morto-na-vila-cruzeiro-15279509.html (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

10. For more information about the shootout at Complexo do Alemão, see http://g1.globo.com/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2015/02/tiroteio-no-alemao-deixou-tres-feridos-um-deles-policial-diz-pm.html (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

11. For a news report on the statement of Governor Sergio Cabral defending abortion as a measure of violence control, see (in Portuguese) http://g1.globo.com/Noticias/Politica/0,,MUL155710-5601,00-CABRAL+DEFENDE+ABORTO+CONTRA+VIOLENCIA+NO+RIO+DE+JANEIRO.html (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

12. See http://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-rio-security-idUSKCN12B1ZQ (last accessed on December 5, 2016)

13. For Michel de Certeau, a strategy consists of "the calculation (or manipulation) of power relations that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets and threats (costumers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can

be managed." (de Certeau 1984, 35–6). By contrast, "a *tactic* is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power" (36–7).

14. More information about the campaign Young Black Alive can be found on the Amnesty International website. See https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/cam-paigns/2014/11/young-black-alive-breaking-the-silence-on-brazil-s-soaring-youth-homicide-rate/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

15. For a news report about the protest "State that Kills: Never Again", see http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=10000 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

16. In January 2016, the Facebook page of the event remained available. See https://www.facebook.com/events/1545214859061746 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

17. For dwellers evaluations of the demonstrations in Maré at the end of 2014, see (in Portuguese) https://www.facebook.com/Marevive/posts/810083865693734 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

18. For a news report on the police commander's suggestion of a concrete wall around *Maré*, see http://oglobo.globo.com/rio/comandante-de-policiamento-sugere-botar-placas-de-concreto-na-linha-vermelha-contra-assaltos-14875505 (last accessed on December 5, 2016). Recently, a thought-provoking article has drawn a parallel between the walls around favelas in Rio de Janeiro to the walls against immigration and asylum seeking in the US, Europe and the Middle East (Synovitz 2015).

19. For an example of reactions of local non-governmental organizations and favela dwellers to the building of walls, see http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=2155 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

20. With the increased international attention to Brazil because of the megaevents, journalists have also picked up on the nuances of racism in the country. For example, see Stephanie Nolen's report "Brazil's Colour Blind" for the Canadian The Globe and Mail. See http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/brazils-colour-bind/article25779474/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

21. The open letter to the director of the program "Sexo e as Negas" is available (Portuguese) here: http://blogueirasnegras.org/2014/09/10/ah-branco-da-um-tempo-carta-aberta-ao-senhor-miguel-falabella/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016). For the Facebook page of the boycott (Portuguese), see https://www.facebook.com/pages/Boicote-Nacional-ao-programa-Sexo-e-as-negas-da-Rede-Globo/275631862626353 (last accessed on December 5, 2016). In January 2016, the page appeared under the title *Mulheres Negras* (Black Women) as a discussion forum about more general issues of gender and race. For a news report in English on the program and the reactions to it, see http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nsenga-burton/brazil-controversy-over-t_b_6482264.html (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

22. For a news report about the repressive legal measures against *funk* parties in favelas of Rio de Janeiro, see http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=7064 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

23. For the Facebook page of the Divergent Soiree, see https://www.facebook.com/SarauDivergente (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

24. Some issues of the newspaper *O Cidadão da Maré* are available (in Portuguese) here: http://issuu.com/cidadaodamare2013/docs/cid06 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

25. The favela-born photographer Ratão Diniz has documented different cultural traditions of favela dwellers. For his work in favela *Santa Marta*, see https://www.flickr.com/photos/rataodiniz/sets/72157625910796444/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

Chapter Four

The Meaning of
Favela Media Activism

The use of media technologies, techniques, and journalism has been an increasingly important part in the struggles of favela residents. During the research process and after it, there have been innumerable cases in which favela residents used online and offline media as instruments and platforms for exchanging information to publicly organize different forms of political activities. I observed the circulation of community newspaper reports, blog posts, mobile phone videos, documentaries, and photographs denouncing the violence of city officials in evictions. I followed online discussions and mobilizations after cases of police violence. I also read, watched, listened to, and participated in mediated debates that aimed at problematizing racism and discrimination.

Such actions constitute the diverse and complex phenomena I refer to as "favela media activism." This is a concept which I believe to be very useful for reflections about the uses of media for civic actions among favela residents. This belief has its roots in Herbert Blumer's understanding of the functions of concepts for empirical research (Blumer 1969). For Blumer, scientific concepts come into existence when "on the basis of given tangible perceptual experiences which [are] puzzling, certain individuals [fashion] constructs which would give these experiences an understandable character" (156). That is, one develops a conceptual construct—in Blumer's terminology a "sensitizing concept"—in order to understand and explain empirical phenomena with which one familiarizes oneself during the research process[1]. In my case, I have familiarized with the online and offline political actions of favela residents.

With Blumer's notion of sensitizing concept in mind, I define favela media activism as *the individual and collective actions of favela residents in, through and about media. These contesting actions derive from and/or*

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*lead to the enactment of citizenship among favela residents. By engaging
in media activism inside, outside and across favelas, favela residents raise
critical awareness among peers, generate public debates, and mobilize ac-
tions against or in reaction to material and symbolic consequences of social
inequality in their everyday lives.* An important characteristic of favela media
activism is that it is part of and contributes to the formation of public debates
that contest the dominant discriminatory representations and policies against
the favela population.

As defined here, the function of favela media activism as a concept is
twofold. On the one hand, it is suitable for in-depth descriptive analyses of
individual and collective actions among favela residents. On the other hand, it
is appropriate for investigations of the reasons and objectives favela residents
have to engage in such actions. One of the limitations of "favela media activ-
ism" as a concept is that it is restricted to the Brazilian context. However, it
is possible to think of similar sensitizing concepts to fit other social realities.
As prefixes to media activism, we can substitute favela with "township",
"ghetto", "slum", "ethnic minority", and other terms that describe social
groups excluded from public debates and political processes in different so-
cieties all over the world.

My goal for this chapter is to introduce what favela media activism means
by explaining how I constructed it into a concept. First, I explain why the
actions in which I am interested characterize "activism." For that, I review
what activism means in the Brazilian context to describe how it relates to the
actions of favela residents. Second, I engage with existing interpretations of
media activism to demonstrate how the actions in favelas are characterized
as such. Third, I justify the use of "favela" as a prefix to media activism by
approaching favela as a term that simultaneously designates spaces of action,
a political identity and the targets of civic actions. In acting from and for fave-
las, not only do residents enact citizenship, but also contest the differentiated
citizenships typical of socially unequal and class-hierarchical Brazil.

In order to illustrate how the concept of favela media activism works—
how and what it sensitizes us to perceive and understand—I present two cases
of favela residents' reactions to tragic events resulting from police operations
in Rio de Janeiro. The first case occurred on a morning in December 2008
at *Baixa do Sapateiro*, one of the seventeen favelas in Complexo da Maré.
Matheus Rodrigues, an eight-year-old boy, grabbed a coin and rushed to a
local bakery to buy bread for his family's breakfast. As he opened the gate of
his house, a rifle bullet hit his head. The noise of the single gunshot alerted
the gang-controlled neighborhood. Immediately after the gunshot, passers-by
shouted that a police officer had killed a child. When Matheus' mother ran
outside, she found her son's dead body lying by the gate.

The second case was in April 2015 at Complexo do Alemão. At the time, Complexo do Alemão residents had been experiencing constant crossfire and several casualties resulting from the increasing armed disputes between drug trade organizations and the police. Criticism to the Pacifying Police Unit (UPP)—of which Complexo do Alemão had been the headquarters and symbol since the police occupied the territory in 2010 (Cano and Borges 2012)—increased to a point that the governor of Rio de Janeiro went to the favela at the end of March to listen to the residents[2]. However, ten days after his visit, Complexo do Alemão had two more victims of gunshot in less than 24 hours: a housewife on April 1st and the 10–year-old Eduardo de Jesus. As in Complexo da Maré, witnesses accused police officers of being the shooters[3]. As I give more details of the aftermath of these two tragedies, I describe in more detail how the online and offline reactions of some favela residents are characterized as examples of favela media activism.

TERMINOLOGICAL VARIANTS OF ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

The notion of activism is very often taken for granted. In general, we refer to activism as actions on behalf of a cause that challenge policies and practices aiming at reaching social goals (Martin 2007). The social goals of activist practices often appear in words that accompany the term. Activism may concern the environment, human rights, civil rights, labor rights, students' rights, and feminism, to name but a few. Even though activist practices go centuries back in history (Martin 2007), the term "activism" is recent, going back to the 1970s (Cammaerts 2007). Despite being quite popular in scholarly and everyday language, the notion of activism has received little scholarly attention (Martin 2007, 25). As an essentially contested concept, actions and understandings of activism may have different meanings depending on who defines them or for what purposes they are defined.

Brazil provides an illustrative example of how contested the term can be. *Ativismo* (activism in Portuguese) shares the designation of actions on behalf of causes for social goals with *militância* (militancy). Contrasting the two terms tells something about activism in Brazil. On the one hand, Brazilians have historically associated *militância* with left-wing and progressive actions. In his study on youth collective actions and left-wing *militância*, Fabio Carminati identifies three generations of left-wing movements. The formation and dissolution of the communist movement between the 1930s and 1950s; the radical student movements and armed resistance of the 1960s; and the "turn to the poor" along with the rise of workers' movements in the late 1970s and 1980s (Carminati 2006). Across these generations, the term *militância*

has gained a strong Left connotation. That is possibly why youth groups of left-wing parties are often called *militância*.

On the other hand, *ativismo* relates to engagement in progressive struggles (e.g. environment, civil rights) that are not necessarily related to more traditional political organizations such as political parties. Therefore, the term *ativismo* seems more generic and seems to have increased in use with the rise of the so-called new social movements (Mellucci 1996) in Brazil in the 1990s with their struggles for the environment, human rights, animals' rights, and so on.

Paradoxically, various recent morally-conservative, economically-liberal, nationalist and reactionary actors have contested the left-wing and progressive connotations of both *ativismo* and *militância* by also using the terms to refer to actions that can be considered xenophobic, homophobic, and fundamentalist. In the period after the presidential elections of 2014 culminating in the impeachment of former President Dilma Rousseff in 2016, different oppositional mass protests occurred in Brazil. Among the protesters, there are online-organized groups of activists who have systematically denounced corruption cases in the Workers' Party (PT). In addition, these movements have a long and diverse list of contradictory demands that vary from calls for more neoliberal policies to urges for military intervention. (Tatagiba, Trindade, and Teixeira 2015) These situations illustrate how activism as a term is a floating signifier (Laclau and Mouffe 2001) whose meaning may denote actions related to either progressive or reactionary values (Cammaerts 2007).

One way to grasp the variety of uses of *militância* and *ativismo* in Brazil is to look at how the terms appear in media discourses. In the press, for example, their different uses vary according to the actors reported on. Support groups of left-wing or right-wing political parties often appear as examples of *militância*. Actors of international and local non-governmental organizations such as *Greenpeace*, *Amnesty International*, and the like often appear under the category *ativismo*. Activists from favelas have traditionally been referred to as *lideranças comunitárias* (community leaders) often related to residents' associations and favela-based non-governmental organizations. More recently, however, the press has referred to the actions of young activists from favelas with the term *ativismo social* (social activism)[4].

Among favela residents engaged in media activism, the uses of *ativismo* and *militância* appear interchangeably. For instance, one of the actors I interviewed explained how he was lucky to learn photography in an NGO from an experienced *militante* professional photographer. From this learning experience he learned the more political potential of photography as an instrument for his *ativismo*. He said:

i-1: Photography is the means that is useful for my *ativismo*.

Another interviewee, also a photographer, described a similar learning process to explain his first contacts with the *militância.* He said:

i-2: Today, I say to myself: "I am a *favelado*." […] Today it is very clear to me what it means to be a favela resident, what it means to be a *militante* inside a working poor environment.

An interesting aspect in these and other similar statements by these interviewees' is the subtle or explicit emphasis on the relation between what they do and favelas. To some extent they are also contesting the meanings of the words *ativismo* and *militância* by appropriating them to designate what they do to advance social objectives within the specific social setting where they live. The two quotes suggest that their actions can contribute to psychological changes (e.g. how favela residents perceive themselves in society), social (e.g. the pride of living in a place that tends to suffer from material and symbolic problems) and political (e.g. how to understand the place of favelas and *favelados* in the society). Thus, if activism consists of actions on behalf of a cause that challenge policies and practices aiming at reaching social goals, *in favelas these goals are very much primarily grounded in the territory in which the actors live and only secondary to more general changes in society*.

What characterizes their actions as activism in practice? Let us return to the police crimes in Complexo da Maré in 2008 and Complexo do Alemão in 2015. At Complexo da Maré, witnesses to the killing of Matheus Rodrigues started making phone calls or rushing to the houses of people they thought could help in the tragic situation. Volunteer journalists of the favela-based newspaper *O Cidadão da Maré* (The Citizen of Maré) were among those immediately called. The non-governmental organization CEASM had founded the newspaper as a participatory project in 1999. Since then, *O Cidadão da Maré* had become a point of reference in the journalism made by residents for the residents of Complexo da Maré. Seven years later at Complexo do Alemão, witnesses used Facebook to circulate mobile phone videos and photographs of Eduardo de Jesus' body on the narrow staircase. Some witnesses sent the videos and photos as private messages to media collectives like "Coletivo Papo Reto"[5] (Straight Talk Collective) and "#OcupaAlemão"[6] (#OcupyAlemão) along with anonymous Facebook pages such as "AlemãoMorro"[7] (Alemão Hill) and "Jornal Alemão Notícias"[8] (Alemão News). These groups have throughout the years become references of information and mobilization inside the favelas of Complexo do Alemão.

In both crimes, residents used their media and journalistic skills to circulate the witnesses' versions of the crimes inside, across, and outside the favelas. At Complexo da Maré, some volunteer journalists immediately went to the crime scene to collect witness statements. Others used their personal

networks to contact human rights organizations and progressive politicians. Meanwhile, a volunteer photojournalist documented the crime scene in case the police tampered with it before the homicide unit arrived. In doing so, the photojournalist created one of the visual icons of the struggles against police violence in favelas: an image that shows the dry blood on Matheus' hand. He had a coin on his palm. At Complexo do Alemão, the media collectives first circulated the "breaking news" on Facebook and requested more information from followers who lived in the favela. Then they published angry and emotional analyses denouncing the recurrence of state-led violence in favelas.

We can then see that the immediate reactions of volunteer journalists and collective members to the police crimes are characterized as activism for representing the struggles of favela residents for justice. In their actions, they make no pretense of neutrality. Favela, as a territory and an identity, seems to make the crimes against individuals resemble acts against all residents including the volunteer journalists and members of collectives who publicly react to them. One example of this sense of unity is the phrase "*é nós por nós*" (it is us for ourselves) which activists in favelas have often used to highlight their commitment to the causes of favelas as their main social goal. In both cases, the immediate media and journalist reactions were the starting point for wider attempts at contention and mobilization. An efficient way to grasp these further actions is to contemplate them through the notion of media activism.

INTERPRETATIONS OF MEDIA ACTIVISM

In a similar way to activism, the notion of "media activism" has a history of practices that precede its history as a concept. If we think of it as uses of media for reaching social and/or political goals, it is possible to identify practices of media activism already in the 19th century when newspapers, pamphlets, and other printed forms of communication promoted historical changes. In Brazil, for example, the pre-industrial press was an important instrument for the movements pushing for Independence (1822), the abolition of slavery (1888) and the Proclamation of the Republic (1889). Print media was also important in the first half of the 1900s for the articulation of Brazil's labor and black movements. (Sodré 1999) In recent decades, the development of electronic and digital media enabled new meanings, goals and activities which today manifest as media activism. Providing a useful typology with a focus on online media, Alice Mattoni (2013) distinguishes between three kinds of media activism: activism *in*, *about* and *through* media.

Activism in the media happens when people use ICTs as spaces "in which to subvert symbols and icons representing those contentious topics activists

engage with" (Mattoni 2013). Thus, activism in the media is about challeng-ing media representations. As examples, Mattoni cites the deconstruction and re-signification of logos and slogans as acts against consumerism and the socio-environmental impacts of corporative business. (Harold 2004) She also includes politically motivated hacking by groups such as Wikileaks and the controversial Anonymous (Fuchs 2014). Following her definition, I would also add creative visual and audiovisual materials (e.g. social media "memes", remixed videos) as examples of activism in media when they aim at contesting political figures or events (Kligler-Vilenchik and Thorson 2015).

Activism about the media refers both to a social movement and "a connec-tor between different movements" (Mattoni 2013). As a social movement, media activism aims at the reform of media policies at the national and trans-national levels. That includes, for example, the actions of organized media practitioners to curb the power of media corporations over the airwaves by influencing policies in specific countries (for the case in the USA see Opel 2004) and internationally (Milan 2013). As a connector of movements, groups engage in "the creation of information and communication infrastruc-tures enabling other activists to perform a variety of media-related social movement activities" (Mattoni 2013). These practices include actions such as the international free software movement (Elliott and Scacchi 2008) and grassroots community Wi-Fi initiatives (Carpentier 2008).

Finally, Mattoni defines activism through media as the broadest sense of media activism. Thus, activism through the media is about mobilization processes. It implies actions in which activists use different media devices to "mediate their own social movement activities (such as organization, pro-motion, and representation of protest events and campaigns) […] resulting in a variety of artifacts diffused through alternative media channels" (Mat-toni 2013). Perhaps the best-known examples of these actions have been the eruptions of mass uprisings in recent years in various regions of the world (Castells 2015) when networked computers and mobile devices become in-struments for attempts to promote social, cultural and political change in the offline world (Meikle 2002).

The distinction between activism in, about, and through media is very use-ful as a starting point for descriptive analyses of media activism in today's hyper-connected, urban Brazil. As to what concerns activism in the media, the popularization of digital media and broadband mobile telephony for the past 10 years (Pereira 2014) has contributed to the increase of general politi-cal debates in the country, which until recently took the proverb seriously that says that religious beliefs, football preferences and political views are not up for discussion. In the context of an ongoing right-versus-left polarization in Brazil (Biller 2014), for example, memes, video remixes, music parodies, and

other audiovisual materials have become instruments for both the expression of political discontent and attacks on antagonistic mindsets. In the process, individuals and online groups also turn creative materials into mutual attacks based on irony, sarcasm and in many cases wrong information. Some have estimated that when it comes to debates on politics, social networks in Brazil have become a space of intransigence and radicalism (Wu 2014).

Regarding activism about media, the struggles Brazilian movements against the political power of national private media conglomerates consist of two parallel, but interconnected streams that precede the decades of digital media popularization. On the one hand, there is the nationwide community media movement. It consists primarily of small-scale community radio stations (including television and newspapers) that have appeared in the 1970s and mushroomed with the demise of the military dictatorship. In the 1980s practitioners formed associations to demand regulation and legitimization for the highly criminalized community radio sector. On the other hand, in the 1980s university scholars and students created a nationwide movement to call for policies that facilitated the pluralization of radio and television spectra against the domination of private media conglomerates. The actions of both movements have led to important outcomes such as the communication sections in the 1988 Constitution, the 1995 law on public broadcasting in the cable broadcasting system, and the 1998 law regulating community radio broadcasters. More recently, they have also supported the struggles for the civil rights framework for the internet in Brazil. (Paiva, Sodré, and Custódio 2015)

Concerning activism through media, the proliferation of new ICTs has facilitated networking among existing social movements in Brazil. More traditional movements such as the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) still rely on face-to-face forms of interaction, but their practices show that traditional and new media technologies have facilitated internal and external forms of interaction. (Sartoretto 2015; Scherer-Warren 2014) At the same time, new forms of collective actions have emerged. Some of these actions do not follow the great causes of the traditional social movements, but more specific, subject-oriented goals (identifiable in Twitter hashtags) both against the state (e.g. actions against the FIFA World Cup 2014 and the 2016 Olympic Games) and against other groups in defense of practices and identities (e.g. the Slut Walks) (Prudêncio 2014). Regarding the rise of right-oriented activism, an essay (Tatagiba, Trindade, and Teixeira 2015) has traced Right-wing movements back to 2007 to show that Facebook-based groups have used social networks to mobilize actions for a complex set of morally conservative, economically liberal and occasionally reactionary goals that include calls for

impeachment, the reinforcement of economic liberalism, and even military interventions. (cf. Fortes 2016)

Despite its usefulness in mapping types of media activism in Brazil, the distinction between activism in, about and through media has some epistemological limitations for approaching the cases with which I familiarized in favelas. One problem is that it risks neglecting how the three types of media activism overlap in everyday practices. Another problem is also a risk of neglecting the nuanced offline reality with which online actions integrate. These two characteristics—the overlap between activism in, about, and through media as well as the online-offline nuances—were evident in the aftermath of the police crimes in Complexo da Maré and Complexo do Alemão.

After the killings of the boys, the volunteer journalists in Complexo da Maré and the members of collectives in Complexo do Alemão engaged with simultaneous forms of activism in, about, and through the media. Regarding activism in the media, the volunteer journalists of *O Cidadão da Maré*—at the time without most of the digital devices available today—produced a written report and distributed it to the websites of human rights organizations, blogs of activists, and other media alternative to the mainstream private outlets. They also used their personal networks to inform mainstream media journalists of the residents' version of the story, which contradicted the police's official statement that the boy was killed in crossfire. A couple of weeks later, they also published an editorial and a special report on the crime in the newspaper's print version.

At Complexo do Alemão, members of collectives circulated information, commented the cases, and interacted with their extensive base of online followers. One important action of the collectives and anonymous pages was to deny the rumor that the 10–year-old Eduardo de Jesus was involved in the drug trade. Later on the day of the crime, Facebook users claimed Eduardo was a boy who appeared in a widely shared photograph holding a rifle. In response, collectives and anonymous pages shared actual images of Eduardo. In addition, one member of the *Coletivo Papo Reto* working at a cable channel of Brazil's biggest media conglomerate Globo managed to report on screen about the crimes on Globo News, Globo's all-news cable channel.

Their activism about the media appeared in the contrast between the discourses of favela activists and mainstream media. In general, when mainstream media outlets cover crimes in favelas, they tend to rely on official sources for explanations while the voices of residents appear as dramatic elements with more emotional than informational value. (Ramos and Paiva 2007) This is problematic when the main official sources, the police and the government, are directly or indirectly responsible for crimes. At Complexo

da Maré, mainstream media outlets reported the crime by focusing on its bru-
tality and reported on the residents' reactions against the crime by blocking
roads. They also reported on the accusations against the police by the resi-
dents, but the explanations of the crime mainly relied on protocol statements
(e.g. "we will investigate . . .") by senior police officials. A similar kind of
coverage was seen at Complexo do Alemão. While Eduardo's parents ap-
peared in tears on various channels accusing police officers of killing their
son, the explanations for what happened relied on official governmental state-
ments. Therefore, mainstream media coverage of crime in favelas tends to
concentrate on specific crimes and the immediate reactions of angry residents
and bureaucratic officials, as if the questions merely revolved around what
happened now and why it happened.

By contrast, the core questions in the actions of volunteer journalists in
Complexo da Maré and members of collectives and anonymous pages in
Complexo do Alemão were more structural in nature: why do police crimes
constantly occur? Why is there always impunity? In the special report about
the killing of Matheus in that month's print version of *O Cidadão da Maré*,
the volunteer journalists contextualized Matheus' death by listing other recent
similar crimes. It also criticized the government's public security policy.

Unfortunately, these hard stories do not stop repeating in the favelas of
Rio de Janeiro. The public (in)security policy of Rio de Janeiro is a policy
to exterminate the *favelado*. It reaps the lives of whoever is on the way, in
this case, by the back. The politics that should, in principle, preserve life.
However, what we see are police officers explaining and justifying the inex-
plicable and unjustifiable. It is a system that does not take either citizenship
or the human right to life into consideration.[9]

Members of collectives and anonymous pages in Complexo do Alemão
likewise related the individual crimes to a broader criticism of the recurrence
of violence despite the "pacified" status of Complexo do Alemão. In its page
on Facebook, the collective *#OcupaAlemão* contested a press release by Rio
de Janeiro's governor in which he said the police would not back down de-
spite Eduardo's death:

> "We will not back down", says the 'ungovernor' (*desgovernador*). Of course
> they won't. It is not their children having their heads blown up. It is not those
> white people at Zona Sul [beach area at the South Zone] being humiliated. It
> is not 'fine' ladies dying inside their homes. If it were, they would back down.
> (April 3, 2015, 5:00 pm)[10]

Even though these quotations target the government rather than the media,
they indirectly contest the lack of plurality of voices in the mainstream media
coverage of crimes in favelas. Favela residents involved in media activism of-

ten engage in rallies and events for media democratization. For instance, during my first fieldwork trip, volunteer journalists of the community newspaper *O Cidadão da Maré* invited me to attend a two-day seminar entitled "The power of communication: media against the people." The seminar took place at the headquarters of Sindipetro, the labor union of the oil company workers. Among the speakers there were community media practitioners, journalists and other organized workers. In the seminar the panelists and the audience debated about discriminatory representations and media ownership concentration.[11] Similar events were held in the subsequent years of fieldwork.

Activism through media appeared in the engagement in the organization and mobilization of demonstrations against police violence in favelas. At the time of Matheus' death, the volunteer journalists of *O Cidadão da Maré* helped organize walkouts that blocked Avenida Brasil, one of Rio de Janeiro's busiest expressways. They also participated in a demonstration in front of the state parliament days after the crime. Five years later, *O Cidadão da Maré* organized a memorial to the boy's death as part of the ceremonies to celebrate its 14 years of existence. In both occasions, the acts had the participation of civil society organizations and other actors from other favelas as well as from non-favela environments.

At Complexo do Alemão, the online-offline actions of members of collectives and anonymous pages online in articulating demonstrations were more evident. After successful articulations on Facebook, demonstrations took over the streets of Complexo do Alemão after Eduardo's death. The first one was on April 3 with a couple of hundred residents (including children) marching peacefully on the main road of the favela. However, that walkout ended when police officers used pepper spray and smoke bombs to disperse the crowd. On April 4, individuals, media collectives, residents' associations as well as civil society and human rights organizations organized another demonstration that included actors from other favelas and from non-favela environments. At the end, the participants of the demonstration celebrated the strong presence of residents and the fact that there were no conflicts. Participants in the demonstrations shared celebratory greetings popped up on the personal profiles of individual members of collectives in Facebook.

The actions after the killings of Matheus Rodrigues (Complexo da Maré, 2008) and Eduardo de Jesus (Complexo do Alemão, 2015) illustrate how different forms of media activism overlap in the cases of favelas. They show how residents have used both traditional media (e.g. newspaper) and digital media (e.g. social networks online, mobile phone applications) as resources for their struggles for against human rights violations and social injustice. The action of volunteer journalists at *O Cidadão da Maré* and the collectives at Complexo do Alemão are not isolated cases. The eight-year timespan

between the crimes have been the scene of a number of other cases of favela media activism not only in reaction to brutal police crimes, but also against arbitrary evictions and for better living conditions. Identifying these actions as part of the struggles against the situation of differentiated citizenships[12] in Brazil (Holston 2008) indicates the political value of the prefix "favela" to the notion of media activism.

ENACTMENT AND
CONTESTATION OF CITIZENSHIP IN FAVELAS

So far, I have described the empirical grounds that sustain the definition I gave to favela media activism in the introduction to this chapter. I have explained how the reactions of volunteer journalists and members of collectives and anonymous online pages to the killings of the boys in Complexo da Maré and Complexo do Alemão consisted of individual and collective actions in, about, and through media. I also showed how these online and offline actions happened as parts of articulations inside, outside, and across favelas. In different ways, these reactions generated critical awareness among residents (evidenced in their participation in demonstrations) and generated public debates about police crimes in ways that challenged the discourses of mainstream media and official statements from state authorities. Thus I believe I have demonstrated the descriptive value of favela media activism.

What I would like to do at this point is to turn to elements of my definition that give sociopolitical depth to favela media activism as a sensitizing concept. Namely, I refer to my claim that favela media activism represents the contesting enactment of citizenship against or in reaction to material or symbolic consequences of social inequality. This claim relates directly to my use of "favela" as a prefix to media activism. By using favela as a prefix, I do not simply mean to indicate the socioeconomic position of actors or the geographic space in which people perform their actions. Instead, I mean to highlight the political and ideological characteristics that distinguish actions of media activism in favelas from those in non-favela environments. To make it clearer, in the fieldwork I learned that even though there is a lot of collaboration and solidarity among favela and non-favela activists, the conditions and motivations for their struggles are essentially different and irreconcilable.

One conversation between two activists from favelas I observed in Facebook illustrates my point. In late May, 2015, another violent action of city agents supported by the municipal guard and State military police officials evicted residents of the favela *Metrô Mangueira*, in the surroundings of *Maracanã* Stadium[13]. The conversation was an apparent reaction to a perceived

lack of support from human rights organizations and non-favela residents involved in activism.

> *Resident 1:* I am getting a bit tired of everything. Of the fallacy of many and the little action, but especially of the lack of sensibility and solidarity to the most violated. About 10 years ago, there were a lot of people who claimed to be revolutionary and human rights defenders. Check nowadays where they are and what they do. Very few resisted.

> *Resident 2:* It really sucks. Even this area [activism] is rigged. I am still waiting for the phone number of a lawyer to the family of a child killed at home at [favela da] Quitanda. It is a buddy-buddy game. *These have the luxury of getting tired and changing the struggle (theme)*. (emphasis added) (May 28, 2015)[14]

This conversation is one of many examples of tension between favela and non-favela activists I observed during my fieldwork. In my view, even though non-favela groups support the struggles of favela residents, the differences that cause these tensions are irreconcilable due to the unequal and class-hierarchical nature of Brazil. Non-favela activists defend human and civil rights based on ideals and values. But at the end of the day, as the Facebook conversation suggests, they enjoy comfort, life stability, and security.

By contrast, activists from favelas act against concrete, urgent, and in many ways life-threatening experiences. So when they react to the killing of children in favelas, they do not do so only because of the belief that what happened is unacceptable according to human values. They do so primarily because the next victim could concretely be them, their family members or friends. They could be the next to be evicted for whatever real estate or touristic development policymakers decide to promote. It is they who may be discriminated against merely for being favela residents. This is the reason, I believe, why the interviewees emphasized that favelas are the main reason for their activism. I also believe it is the reason why the interlocutor in the Facebook conversation believes he does not have the luxury of changing the struggle in which he acts. My point in highlighting these irreconcilable differences between favela and non-favela activists is not to say that the activism of one is more genuine than that of the other, but merely to indicate that *there is a difference*. And this difference is not intentional, but structural and cultural.

Looking at how scholars have problematized citizenship from a Brazilian perspective is one way to approach the structural and cultural nature of the irreconcilable differences that make favela struggles distinctive forms of contestation. In general, the distinction between citizenship as a legal status and the experience of it in everyday life appear in discussions about Brazil in ways to highlight how the working poor populations like favela residents have historically been deprived of both.

In his classic *Os Donos do Poder* (The Owners of Power), Raymundo Faoro (1973) describes how the control of political power by economic and political elites (two sides of the same coin) for their own interests—what he calls the patrimonial state—has persisted from pre-colonial times in Portugal to 20th century Brazil. Comparing the Portuguese crown to the era of the populist-authoritarian Getulio Vargas (1930–1945), for example, Faoro argues that the patrimonial state—including politicians, landowners, businesspeople and media owners (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos 2002; Waisbord 2013)—has historically manipulated its relationship with the people by allowing political advancement to some and the provision of services as palliative measures to the poorest. One proof of the low regard of political elites for poor people is the fact that Brazil only established universal suffrage in 1988, when the illiterate population was finally allowed to vote. Today, this pattern of patrimonial state remains visible with the domination of representative politics by domestic and foreign economic groups (Comparato 2003). The evictions before the Olympics as well as the Pacifying Police Unit (UPP) have received great support from the tourism, real estate and construction sectors (Jennings, Rolnik, and Lassance 2014), for instance. Thus the legal right to vote has not guaranteed significant political representation for the needs and demands of the poor beyond measures of welfare and economic relief.

One reason for this may be what James Holston (2008) calls "differentiated citizenships." In his historical-ethnographic study of civic actions among favela residents in São Paulo, Holston argues that Brazil is a society that legalizes privileges and legitimates inequalities. The legality of the evictions and the official justification of police crime in favelas as collateral effects of a necessary war on drugs illustrate Holston's point. The law, he argues, has been a powerful instrument for the maintenance of the privileges of the economic and political elites. In addition, Holston believes it is considered acceptable to treat poor people in unjust and violent ways because Brazilian society perpetuates the differentiation between citizenships based especially on social class differences. He argues that,

> due to this perpetuation, most Brazilians have been denied political rights, limited in property ownership, forced into segregated and often illegal conditions of residence, estranged from the law, and funneled into labor as servile workers. These discriminations result not from the exclusion of Brazilians from citizenship itself. If that were the case, it would be difficult to explain their sense of belonging to the nation. Rather, these Brazilians are discriminated against because they are certain kinds of citizens. (Holston 2008, 7)

By "certain kinds of citizens" I would say an inferior kind, a kind whose value as citizens and human beings seems lower than those who enjoy

citizenship as a privilege. The mainstream media coverage and subsequent public debates about cases of police crimes in favelas illustrate how this differentiation materializes in everyday life. In both 2008 and 2015, the emphasis of media coverage was in ascertaining whether police officers committed the crime. When the evidence mounted, one security authority—a police commander or the Rio de Janeiro's secretary of public security—announced investigations, expressed sympathy for the families, but hardly doubted the effectiveness or failure of security policies.

By contrast, when a cyclist died[15] after being stabbed by underage muggers in one of Rio de Janeiro's touristic and expensive neighborhoods in May 2015, it raised nationwide outrage and fueled debates about reducing the legal age of criminal responsibility from 18 to 16. The reaction of Rio de Janeiro's secretary for public security to the crime is clearly indicative of the differentiated citizenships in Brazil. In his official statement via Twitter, he said "what happened yesterday at Lagoa, a beloved place among Rio's residents and tourists, is unacceptable. These scenes cannot happen again. Lagoa is a postcard. We cannot allow it"[16]. It is not the first time that the secretary differentiates the human value of citizens according to social class and geographic criteria. In 2007, while explaining the differences in police operations in peripheral favelas and those located in better-off neighborhoods, the same secretary stated that "a bullet shot in Copacabana is one thing, in Favela da Coréia another."[17]

To make matters even more problematic, the differentiation of citizenships does not appear only in the state's bureaucratic and justice systems. Perhaps its worst characteristic is its naturalization among Brazilians in all social classes, including the poor. The Brazilian sociologist Jessé Souza has extensively studied the structural, cultural, and psychological characteristics of social inequality in Brazil (Souza 2005; 2009). He argues that implicit and opaque value hierarchies disguised as "neutral" or "meritocratic" legitimize the social order that creates and perpetuates under-citizenry in peripheral modernities like Brazil. This happens because the ideal of citizenship—that all are worthy of respect and dignity under a legal rule of equality—has never been a reality in Brazil. (Souza 2005)

Instead, what has existed is a consensus that one has to meet certain criteria to enjoy something closer to the ideal of citizenship. According to this consensus, the more individuals have certain cultural features and are productive in capitalist terms, the more they will enjoy privileges that bring them close to the ideal of citizenship. By contrast, when individuals do not meet these criteria, Brazilians share a general perception that poorer people like favela residents deserve the discrimination in both arbitrary rules of law and everyday life (Souza 2005). Putting it bluntly, Souza claims that the value

of marginalized individuals in terms of social respect compares to the value of a domestic animal. Problematically, the working poor tend to normalize their lack of condition for competition in a capitalist and socially hierarchical society as personal weaknesses. Such personalization has led to the lack of self-esteem and to an implicit social agreement that some individuals are above the law and others below it. (Souza 2005)

The structural, cultural and psychological naturalization of differentiated citizenships in Brazil gives favela media activism its character as actions of enactment and contestation of citizenship. For that, we must define citizenship not only as a legal or electoral status, but as a political identity individuals construct as they act, for example, towards the actual universality of freedom, equality and dignity in society (Mouffe 1992; Isin and Turner 2002; Isin 2008). In an inspiring study on media uses for civic and political engagement in Western Europe and the Nordic countries, Peter Dahlgren (2009) describes the potential of the online platforms as a potential source of spaces for the enactment and articulation of civic actions. For him, these spaces allow individuals to become citizens as they act, interact, communicate and, in the process, develop civic skills and identities to be enacted as they participate in different forms of politics. In many ways, I have observed this process of becoming citizens and enacting citizenship during my fieldwork. In the reactions to the police crimes, for example, many of the people on Facebook or on the streets demanding justice were young people in their teens or early 20's who until then had not had a history of civic engagement.

In Brazil this enactment of citizenship is also contesting because it challenges the naturalization of differentiated citizenships. Dahlgren argues that civil society is a space of association and interaction in which individuals develop their citizen skills and identities. He also argues that "civil society can serve as a training ground that 'grooms' citizens, with involvement in nonpolitical associations and networks preparing people for civic political engagement and participation" (Dahlgren 2009, 69). This conception of civil society as a training ground is certainly apparent in Brazil among especially better-off non-favela activists, for example, who act without a sense of urgency for social goals that implicate changes that may improve their living standards and life styles. However, I believe this conception does not apply to activists from favelas. Rather than a training ground, I would argue that in favelas, civil society is in fact a material and symbolic battleground of constant contestation of endemic discrimination, state repression, and other forms of naturalized practices that reinforce the status of favela residents as under-citizens. The formation of counterpublics reflects the conflicting nature of bottom-up contestation in favelas.

In these circumstances, engaging in favela media activism represents three forms of citizenship contestation: in relation to the state, to society, and to favela residents in general. From the state, activists from favelas demand dignified treatment instead of disregard for the welfare of favela residents and police repression. They act for the rights to have rights (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998; Isin and Turner 2002; Isin 2008). This was the core of the reactions to the police crimes in Complexo da Maré and Complexo do Alemão. It is not just a matter of demanding that the police admit their wrong-doing, but of stopping the recurring patterns of violence and abuse of authority by the state upon favela residents. In relation to society, they act towards denouncing and deconstructing the general prejudices and discrimination they suffer. In this sense, challenging narratives of the mainstream media is one of the actions that contribute to the deconstruction of the negative stereotypes that reinforce the status of under-citizenry of favela residents that make brutal crimes such as the killings of children into sad, but acceptable casualties of a failing state-led war on drugs.

Finally, activists from favelas act to de-naturalize the status of under-citizenry among favela residents themselves. Favela residents share the prejudices and suspicions against other favela residents that I have so far mainly attributed to non-favela populations. There is a general belief that one way to avoid the hardships of life in favelas is self-attributing features that are recognized as valuable in Brazil's capitalist and social hierarchical structure (cf. Souza 2005). For instance, reinforcing the identity of *trabalhador* (worker) seems to add more dignity to the everyday life of a favela resident than the word *cidadão* (citizen), which in many ways can merely mean an unspecific someone (cf. Holston 2008). In these circumstances, reactions to police crimes tend to be much louder and anger-loaded if residents recognize the victims as *inocentes* (with no a relation to the drug trade) or as *trabalhadores* (workers). In general, however, such as arbitrary evictions, denial of jobs for merely being favela residents or police abuses seem to be taken as bad facts of life. Thus mobilization for justice and rights tends to be challenging. For instance, after the killing of Eduardo de Jesus, one member of a collective in Complexo do Alemão used Facebook to express the disappointment of the little support they often have once they act offline.

Resident/Collective Member: Sequences of inbox messages from residents, especially youth, have poured in telling us to demonstrate, to protest, to try somehow to express our indignation with all that is happening inside Complexo do Alemão. [. . .] MY FRIENDS, only in the last year, how many protests/demonstrations/walks have we started? I answer . . . many!! How many residents were present in them? I also answer . . . almost no one. [. . .] What happens, my

friends, is that the chaos continued, more blood was spilled, people died and now people 'apparently' want to participate. What do you think? (April 2, 2015)

The days following this statement saw the exceptional presence of residents protesting on the streets of Complexo do Alemão. However, the challenge to mobilization in favelas remains. In these circumstances, with naturalization of differentiated citizenships as a backdrop, one of the potentials of the favela media activism as a sensitizing concept is that it allows descriptive analysis of mediated civic actions among favela residents. This is what I have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter by giving the term a definition, explaining its variants and illustrating it with the cases in reaction to the police crimes in Complexo da Maré and Complexo do Alemão. Another potential is that it also enables in-depth investigations of what motivates people to engage with activism in, about, and through media in a context of predominant low self-esteem regarding the perceptions of justice, dignity, and equality in a class-hierarchical and socially unequal society like Brazil. To demonstrate this potential to sensitize us to the nuances of media initiatives within the struggle of favela residents, in the next chapter I present and analyze—in an historical context—examples of initiatives to which I refer as types or spaces for favela media activism. In addition, I analyze the societal relevance of these initiatives by reflecting on their meanings within the processes of the formation of counterpublics in Brazil.

NOTES

1. The notion of sensitizing concepts has certainly been challenged and criticized. Criticism has ranged from accusations of incoherence within Blumer's social scientific procedure to vagueness, lack of originality, and detachment from the social structural dimensions of society (van den Hoonaard 1997). Nevertheless, none of the critical reactions posed challenges to the use of sensitizing concepts in grounded-theoretical, exploratory research processes like my own. Hence its usefulness in this case.

2. For a news report (in Portuguese) on the visit of the governor to Complexo do Alemão, see http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2015/03/1606385-pezao-vai-ao-complexo-do-alemao-que-enfrenta-tiroteios-diarios.shtml (last accessed on December 5, 2016)

3. For a news report following the crimes at Complexo do Alemão, see http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=21222 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

4. For an example of local media treating favela dwellers under the title of *ativista social*, see http://odia.ig.com.br/noticia/rio-de-janeiro/2015-06-13/ativista-social-raull-santiago-e-contra-reducao-da-maioridade-penal.html (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

5. For the online page of "Coletivo Papo Reto," see https://www.facebook.com/ColetivoPapoReto (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

6. For the online page of "#OcupaAlemão," see https://www.facebook.com/OcupaAlemao (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

7. For the online page of "Alemão Morro," see https://pt-br.facebook.com/complexorj (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

8. For the online page of "Jornal Alemão Notícias," see https://pt-br.facebook.com/alemaonoticias (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

9. The quotation appears in the issue 58 of *O Cidadão da Maré.* For the full issue, see http://issuu.com/cidadaodamare2013/docs/cid_58_d6bc0c324127ba (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

10. For the quotation in context, see https://pt-br.facebook.com/OcupaAlemao/posts/1020191761343930 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

11. For a news report about the seminar, see http://ocidadaonline.blogspot.fi/2011/04/seminario-o-poder-da-comunicacao-midia.html (last accessed on December 5, 2016)

12. The definition of "differentiated citizenship" in this case differs from the debates about ethnic minority rights in Western societies (e.g. Kymlicka and Norman, 2000; Kymlicka 1995)

13. For a news report on the evictions at Metrô Mangueira, see http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=22247 (last accessed on December 5, 2016)

14. For the public conversation in context, see https://www.facebook.com/fransergiogoulart/posts/10153383822674801 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

15. For a news report (Portuguese) on the death of a cyclist in Rio, see http://riotimesonline.com/brazil-news/rio-politics/cyclist-stabbed-at-rios-lagoa-died-from-his-injuries/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

16. For the original quotation (Portuguese), see http://oglobo.globo.com/rio/secretario-de-seguranca-afirma-em-video-que-morte-de-medico-na-lagoa-inadmissivel-16213223 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

17. For the original quotation (Portuguese), see http://extra.globo.com/noticias/rio/beltrame-um-tiro-em-copacabana-uma-coisa-na-favela-da-coreia-outra-oab-critica-diferenciamento-720077.html (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

Chapter Five

Favela Media Activism and the Formation of Counterpublics

After contextualizing and defining favela media activism, I now turn to the description of its societal role and relevance. The media with which I familiarized in favelas are both spaces for and results of media activism. In different ways, they are essentially political, if we understand "political" in radical terms to include not only representative politics, but also our everyday social relations (Mouffe 2005). A more radical understanding of the political appears in the everyday struggles of favelas concerning issues of housing, security, discrimination, cultural heritage, and identities. Media made by favela residents bring media projects into life in such environment. Different kinds of media activism represent types of struggles that help generate the changes that *favelados* themselves define as needed.

One basic element for processes of social and political change is voice. By voice, I do not refer only to individuals being more vocal, but to social groups that speak up collectively to raise and contest issues that matter socially, politically and culturally to them (Spivak 1988; Couldry 2010). However, raising voices and recognizing their values are not enough. For example, there have been innumerable cases in which favela residents blocked roads shouting, burning tires and holding posters in front of television cameras and microphones especially after the killing of their neighbors. In these cases, mainstream media outlets heard and transmitted their voices to society. So did community media and media activist initiatives. Despite that, similar problems continue to occur without significant policy measures to reduce or eradicate them.

For that reason, we need to move beyond voices so that we can understand how recurrent outbursts of anger and despair can grow into unified and consistent waves (Gumucio-Dagron 2001) that spread and linger across favelas. I believe this process may create conditions for voices to matter enough to the

point of both mobilizing more peers to join struggles and legitimizing these same struggles in society. Hence the importance of media activism in favelas: it creates and explores discursive environments for contentious voices to circulate and generates conditions for further voice raising, mobilization and collective contention.

To clarify what I mean by "discursive environments" and "articulation of conditions" for raising voices in ways that matter, the chapter is structured as follows. First, I historicize how media in favelas are instrumental to the construction of counterpublics. After explaining how I understand counterpublics, I present a brief historical overview of how preceding movements raised voices and created movements that contributed to historical and political changes in Brazil. After that, I turn to two different examples of media in favelas: community media and multimedia collectives. Community media consist of traditional forms of media and journalism (e.g. newspapers, radio stations, news agencies) from and for favelas. Multimedia collectives are non-institutionalized forms of media that combine journalism, photojournalism, documentary making, and actions online as forms of activism.

As I present each case, I describe how community media, multimedia collectives and individual actors interact in networks of mutual support and collective action. I also demonstrate how these processes contribute to the formation and maintenance of counterpublics. I conclude with a brief reflection on the outcomes and potential drawbacks in these processes.

MEDIA ACTIVISM AND
HISTORICAL COUNTERPUBLICS IN BRAZIL

Actions of media activism such as journalistic and deliberative reactions online of favela residents against police violence do not happen in a vacuum. Neither do they happen because people merely have access to media technologies. They entail a complex set of social relations and interactions. They are also part of a historical process. In fact, at least since the 19th century Brazil has had a number of contentious media at the margins that precede and somewhat influence the phenomena occurring in favelas today. My goal here is to put media activism in favelas into an historical context. I argue that the activism in, through and about media in favelas today relates to preceding movements of counterpublic formation in Brazil. These movements occur as the construction and legitimization of contentious public discourses in complex sets of interpersonal interactions that construct webs of mutual support and collective action.

One way to look at the construction and legitimization of contentious discourses in favelas is through the debates around the notions of public sphere and counterpublics. Today, it is widely accepted (cf. Coleman and Ross 2010) that the trigger for these debates was Jürgen Habermas' definition of "bourgeois public sphere" in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Habermas 1991). Focusing on the 18th and early 19th century, Habermas defined public sphere as the publicly accessible social realm in which private and literate people engaged in critical-rational debates about common interests in society and consequently affecting politics and governance. These debates, originally held in *cafés* and other physical public spaces of the time, expanded their reach when the press became instruments to spread pedagogical and political reflections in and across societies. According to Habermas, when purposes of commercial profit and political power turned the press into a journalistic corporate business flooding the public sphere with partisan editorial opinions and advertising, critical-rational debates turned into competition for publicity among private people and even the state itself. As illustrations of the impact of this transformation for politics, the author cited examples of how the principle of publicity predominated in the mass media-dominated American and Western European public spheres of the mid-20th century when his book originally appeared in Germany.

Such an influential work generated a number of critical reactions which not necessarily refuted, but complemented it. Among the most influential critical responses were those that reflected upon other public spheres, or counterpublics. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge used Habermas' notion of bourgeois public sphere as a point of reference for their theorization of the "proletarian public sphere" (Negt and Kluge 1993 (1972)). They argue that the mode of production of the bourgeoisie has led to social orders of dictatorial nature grounded on capitalist values in relation to which the public sphere appears "as the illusory synthesis of the totality of society" (56). It is against this perceived unity that they propose the proletarian public sphere as a counterconcept and an actual counterpublic against the totalitarian character of the bourgeois public sphere (55–95). Despite being dated in terms of the constitution of labor relations and movements today, Negt and Kluge's publication remains an important reference for the theorization and organization of alternative public spheres to the dominance of neoliberal ideology over political debates in recent decades (Hansen 1993).

In terms of counterpublics, another important and highly influential response to Habermas is in Nancy Fraser's critique (Fraser 1992) of his definition of public sphere (Habermas 1991). From the perspective of feminist theory, Fraser argues that Habermas fails to examine other public spheres

and therefore does not perceive and analyze the conflictual relations between hegemonic—which Negt and Kluge call "constitutive"—and subaltern publics. Referring to stratified societies like Brazil, she calls these other public spheres "subaltern counterpublics" and defines them as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs." For her, subaltern counterpublics do not eliminate the hegemonic public sphere, but their proliferation widens the discursive space creating conditions for "widening discursive contestation" (Fraser 1992, 124). Thus, subaltern counterpublics are emancipatory, even if not revolutionary, because they serve as spheres for the formation and enactment of identities, collective organization and training for actions toward wider publics. Consequently, Fraser argues, subaltern counterpublics are able "to offset, although not wholly to eradicate, the unjust participatory privileges enjoyed by members of dominant social groups in stratified societies" (124).

Fraser has not been spared criticism either. Michael Warner reflects on the constitutive characteristics of publics (Warner 2002). Regarding Fraser's definition of subaltern counterpublics, Warner's main criticism is that the way she describes "counter" and "subaltern" does not match the examples she gives to illustrate her point. For Warner, the so-called "feminist subaltern counterpublic," which he picks out as Fraser's own illustration, is in fact a space for the circulation of discourse among people who do not necessarily have sufficient subordinate social status to self-proclaim a subaltern counterpublic. He seems to suggest that Fraser's argument aims at reforming the hegemonic public sphere rather than debunking a dominant-subordinate power relationship. In his own formulation of counterpublic (based, for example, on the queer counterpublic), Warner argues that

> a counterpublic maintains at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status. The cultural horizon against which it marks itself off is not just a general or wider public, but a dominant one. And the conflict extends not just to ideas or policy questions, but to the speech genres and modes of address that constitute the public and to the hierarchy among media. The discourse that constitutes it is not merely a different or alternative idiom, but one that in other contexts would be regarded with hostility or with a sense of indecorousness. (Warner 2002, 86)

From a Brazilian perspective, these controversies are very positive if we are to adapt the fruitful debate about publics and counterpublics to the national and regional reality. The Brazilian and other Latin American hegemonic public spheres (I refer to them from now on as "main public spheres") have historically been dominated by media under the control of confluent

economic and political elites, many times with the support of military regimes. (Paiva, Sodré, and Custódio 2015) In this historical context, grassroots movements have acted not only to speak up, but to be seen and heard; not only to be represented more accurately and respectfully, but also to be recognized in efforts to include themselves in processes of political decisions. (Martin-Barbero 2001) This scenario has made various Brazilian scholars to consider the counterpublics' critiques to be useful conceptual resources to reflect about public spheres in Brazil and in other Latin American countries (Avritzer and Costa 2004; Losekann 2009; Perlatto 2012; 2015).

For these reasons, I believe media activism is a fundamental element for the construction of favela counterpublics. In response to the predominance of discriminatory representations in Brazil's main public sphere, favela residents have made efforts to create their own counterpublics in a twofold process. On the one hand, favela residents raise their voices and talk to each other for self-recognition, self-representation, cultural celebration, identity formation and mobilization. Fraser refers to this process as intrapublic interactions (Fraser 1992, 124). On the other hand, favela residents have challenged not only discourses in the main public sphere, but also policies and other concrete forms of discrimination. Fraser refers to this conflicting discursive process as interpublic interactions (124). For the author, intrapublic and interpublic interactions enable "subaltern counterpublics partially to offset, although not wholly to eradicate, the unjust participatory privileges enjoyed by members of dominant social groups in stratified societies." (Fraser 1992, 124)

The discursive and symbolic contestation by subaltern counterpublics is in fact a constitutive part of Latin American social movements. In addition to contesting inequalities and under-citizenry (Souza 2005), social movements have "struggled to resignify the very meanings of received notions of citizenship, political representation and participation, and, as a consequence, democracy itself" (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998a, 2). This struggle for resignification is the core element in what Sonia Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino and Arturo Escobar define as cultural politics (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998b). They explain that cultural politics is a process through which "cultural meanings and practices come into conflict with each other" (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998a, 7). For example, favela residents enact cultural politics when they identify and challenge the general negative perception of *favelados*, which often leads to segregating and oppressing policies and attitudes. The authors argue that cultural politics is an essential characteristic of social movements in Latin America because they have always acted in reaction to concrete and symbolic, material and discursive, semantic and practical consequences of social hierarchy and stratification.

One important aspect of these processes of symbolic and discursive contestation is that they happen as outcomes of complex forms of interpersonal interactions. Fraser refers to this when she explains how 19th century subaltern social groups (e.g. women, workers, gays, and darker-skinned people) created parallel arenas of deliberation (e.g. journals, magazines, conferences, bookstores, local meeting places). In those places, occasions and platforms, people would "formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser 1992, 123). Among Latin American social movements, counterpublics arise from complex "social movement webs" (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998a, 14–6). These webs include, in addition to organizations and active members of movements, occasional participants, NGO sympathizers and collaborators, political parties, universities, progressive sectors of the Catholic Church and even parts of the state institutions. For this reason, any effort to grasp the role of media activism for the construction of counterpublics in contemporary Brazil or elsewhere cannot ignore how these actions are embedded in and facilitate these processes of interpersonal interactions.

In short, subaltern counterpublics are crucial for societal changes to take place that benefit people on the least privileged sides of social inequality. This is what Brazilian history tells. For this brief historical exercise, I describe the formation of counterpublics that played an important role in Brazilian history. First, I look at the Abolitionist movement in the 19th century. Then, I turn to the proletarian movement in the first half of the 20th century. Finally, I approach the resistance movement during the 1964–1984 military dictatorship. In the three cases, mediated and face-to-face actions played a crucial role in important changes of mindset that led to policy changes in the Brazilian society (for a similar historical approach to Brazilian counterpublics, see Perlatto 2015). These movements can be approached as ancestors of today's media activism in favelas. In addition, their characteristics and outcomes indicate what we can expect as societal impacts of favela counterpublics.

The Abolitionist Counterpublic

Brazil was the last country in the world to abolish the slave trade and the enslavement of Africans. Princess Isabel signed the Golden Law, which promulgated the abolition, in May 13, 1888. For this reason, many Brazilians often consider the abolition an act of benevolence by the princess. However, the Abolitionist Movement had been active at least since the mid-1800s to promote anti-slavery ideals and policies. In this process, printed publications and constant gatherings were fundamental instruments to challenge and thus end slavery. Between the 1820s and 1840s, anti-slavery discourses already circulated among the urban poor populations through *pasquins*. *Pasquins*

were small and ephemeral publications through which individuals and small groups (including free blacks) published political opinions and provocations about class, race and other issues that did not make the pages of the official or aristocratic press. (Sodré 1999) Once published, children of slaves and former slaves literally shouted the information of *pasquins* on the streets and alleys of the biggest provinces (Barbosa 2013, 151). Consequently, even those who could not read also heard about the Abolitionist cause. Thus, *Pasquins* contributed to the formation of the abolitionist movement (Costa 2008).

After the abolition of slavery in the United States in 1865, the abolitionist movement in Brazil gained strength with the support of local and international elites. Consequently, the aristocratic press (which fed the main public sphere of the time) also started promoting debates regarding the emancipation of slaves. (Costa 2008) In other words, the subaltern counterpublics concerning abolition managed to influence debates in the main public sphere. One important platform for the legitimation of abolitionist ideals was *Revista Illustrada*, Brazil's first cartoon magazine. It was especially crucial for being understandable among the illiterate as well. On the occasion of the abolition in 1888, one of the leaders of the Abolitionist movement referred to *Revista Illustrada* as "the Bible of Abolition for those who cannot read" (Sodré 1999, 218). Admittedly, economic and political factors—such as the pressure from the British (Costa 2008)—also influenced this process. However, without counterpublics fed by easy-to-access publications embedded in the Abolitionist movement, there are chances that the slavery abolition would have come about later and on different terms.

The Labor Counterpublic

The press also played a role in the formation of the labor movement and counterpublic in Brazil. On the one hand, newspapers and other printed materials were instrumental for the mobilization and articulation of a labor movement. On the other hand, it disseminated labor ideals and demands in the main public sphere contributing to the promulgation of labor laws. Similarly to the abolition, Brazilians often associate the achievements in labor rights with the deeds of the populist and authoritarian President Getulio Vargas. (Antunes 2006) However, for almost a century prior to Vargas' Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT) in the 1940s, organized workers mobilized movements and staged strikes demanding rights especially through print publications.

Vito Giannotti (2007) describes the role of the press for the mobilization of workers and demands of rights since the mid-1800s. According to him, the first labor publication appeared in 1858, when typographers staged Brazil's first organized strike. From that event until the 1920s, hundreds of small

publications disseminated socialist ideals shaping the labor movement into an important subaltern counterpublic in Brazil. Those publications enhanced face-to-face interactions in strikes and assemblies. They also informed workers in other places about the advances of the movement. From the 1930s onwards the growth of the labor movement and its ties to the communist movement led to its persecution. Brazil suffered military interventions especially characterized by the persecution of communists. Consequently, the labor press suffered severe censorship. Today, after surviving different authoritarian regimes that criminalized organized labor movements, unions have maintained the labor press as a means both to communicate and mobilize affiliated workers, and to support general struggles of low-income working class social groups. (Giannotti 2007)

Anti-Dictatorship Counterpublics

A recent ancestor counterpublic of media activism in favelas emerged during the military dictatorship between 1964 and 1984. At the time, the military controlled the main public sphere in Brazil through censorship and violence. Media outlets and corporations had the permission to pursue financial revenues and market growth so long as they did not question, challenge or criticize the actions of the government. Punishments to oppositional media varied from warnings to censorship. In the case of individual journalists, expressing dissent led to exile, torture or death. (Mattos 1982; Porto 2012)

In such a context, it is possible to identify at least two subaltern counterpublics operating at the political and geographical margins of authoritarian Brazil. On the one hand, Brazil had an anti-dictatorship movement involving communist leaders, dissident military groups and left-wing, urban, university members with middle and upper-class backgrounds including artists, scholars, students and journalists (Gaspari 2014; Lahuerta 2010). The alternative or small press was an important instrument of the movement to question the ideology, satirize the government, and denounce the violence of the regime. The confrontational discourse articulated in secretive gatherings led to the arrest of a number of editors and journalists in the alternative press. Despite the oppressive system, about 150 anti-dictatorship publications appeared to promote the counter-discourses, demonstrations, and direct actions against the regime. (Kucinski 1991)

On the other hand, an embryonic and fragmented community radio movement started to take shape on the peripheries of capital cities and in the rural areas. One part of this movement consisted of the promotion of radio broadcasting among rural and urban poor populations by the Basic Ecclesiastical Communities (CEB), a progressive sector of the Catholic Church. (Fávero

2006) These processes promoted broadcast training along with lessons on human and civil rights. Thus, they were micro-spaces with their own mechanisms for communication and political articulation (Santos 1995) including both Christian and non-Christian groups during the dictatorship (Betto 1985). Another part of the community radio movement consisted of individuals and small groups that created radio stations to fill the gap concerning local interests left by commercial stations based in capital cities. Occasionally, as was the case of *Rádio Favela*, stations would broadcast political messages especially regarding demands for services and other local needs (cf. Peruzzo 1998).

In comparison, the anti-dictatorship press had greater influence in publics outside its own than in the community radio movement. Along with artistic movements, the alternative press was important to keep the outrage against authoritarianism alive in a repressed society. Perhaps for being so identified with the anti-dictatorship movement, the alternative press as it was ended with the democratic transition in the 1980s. In the case of the community radio activities, it had more relevance for the formation of subaltern counterpublics scattered all over Brazil. Only after the 1980s, with the creation of community radio associations, did the movement gain a more cohesive and organized character (Paiva, Sodré, and Custódio 2015).

Favela Counterpublics

In different ways, media activism in favelas is a recent chapter of this historical process of formation of counterpublics in Brazil. They have had an obvious influence on the embryonic community radio activities of the 1960s. Media in favelas also relate with the struggles against discrimination and absence of rights seen in the abolitionist press and the labor press. Not surprisingly, today we see constant interaction among members of favela, labor and black counterpublics. For example, in April 2011, when I attended a seminar[1] at the headquarters of the oil industry workers' union, the organizers included journalists of a community newspaper and the panelists included rappers identified with anti-racism struggles.

With the expansion of media activism in favelas, we could say that there is an expanding "favela counterpublic" in Rio de Janeiro. Organized struggles against human rights abuses and social injustice are examples of the existence of important intrapublic interactions among actors from different favelas. Likewise, reactions to police violence show how residents use media and journalism to speak out beyond the boundaries of the favelas in which they live. The dominant discriminatory representations and discourses about favelas in the main public sphere have not remained unchallenged, even though

political decisions still seem to ignore the interests of the poor. Therefore, one cannot expect immediate outcomes from the actions of subaltern counterpublics in society; it is necessary instead to observe and notice the gradual changes these movements generate.

Most importantly in our times of media-tech fetish, this brief historical overview also shows that the formation of subaltern counterpublics is not merely a discursive process. Talking, the essential element in this process, also entails face-to-face interactions in assemblies, informal gatherings, demonstrations, and other occasions when people perform different roles and tasks. In addition to talking, people also display affect, share anguish, and provide mutual support. Because this is such a complex process, we cannot claim that without media or media activism there would not be counterpublics. However, the uses of methods and technologies of mediated communication certainly enhance the process and increase their reach to more people and their influence in the main public sphere.

The importance of media technologies, in comparison to the three historical cases, is greater in our contemporary hyper-connected and information-saturated reality. Certainly we should not think of new ICTs (e.g. Internet, social media, and mobile phone applications) as neutral technologies (Martin-Barbero 2001). Different authors have called our attention to the corporate limitations to the expansion of online technologies and platforms and how that is a problem in what concerns restrictions to access, user freedom, and enactment of citizenship online on a global (e.g. Curran, Fenton, and Freedman 2012; Dean 2003; Morozov 2011; 2013; Isin and Ruppert 2015) and local (Ridell 2002; 2005) level. However, despite the increasing threats of digital feudalism (Meinrath, Losey, and Pickard 2011), it is undeniable that subaltern social groups have appropriated digital technology as instruments in their own struggles and processes of counterpublic formations (cf. Warner 2002)[2]. With all this in mind, I identified two types of media movements in favelas. I categorize them as community media and multimedia collectives. The next two sections respectively present each of these according to what I saw in Rio de Janeiro.

COMMUNITY MEDIA IN FAVELAS

For decades, community media have been important elements in the formation of favela counterpublics. At first sight they are smaller versions of traditional media channels. In Brazil, the term often refers to radio stations (broadcasting over the air or wired loudspeakers), newspapers, magazines, and even television channels (Paiva 2003; Peruzzo 1998). Since the pioneer

cases in the 1960s, and especially at the end of the military dictatorship in 1984, community media have mushroomed around Brazil. Licensed and unlicensed community radio stations together amount to almost nine thousand initiatives scattered around the country (Paiva, Malerba, and Custódio 2013). Specifically, in Rio de Janeiro, a 2009 study used Internet searches to identify about 110 community and alternative media initiatives. According to the author, this number could have been even higher if they had included face-to-face inquiries to residents' associations. (Ribeiro 2010) Most of these media occur among low-income, urban social groups characterizing the Latin American tradition of *comunicação popular.* That is, communication processes that arise from within the subaltern classes in their struggles against consequences of social inequality (Peruzzo 2012).

Differently from their mainstream counterparts in Brazil, community media do not treat journalism reporting or other forms of content production as business. Instead, they act as types of grassroots public media and/or platforms for political actions on behalf of or together with the social groups in which they are embedded. Even if small in scale, different community media fill a gap left by a precarious public service media sector in Brazil. (Matos 2012) In addition, community media often involve members of the social groups in which they are embedded (Howley 2005; Paiva 2003; Rennie 2006). Thus their content primarily targets favela residents. Communicating to non-favela audiences is secondary. "Community" also suggests different forms of participation by members of the social group in different stages of content production and distribution (Carpentier 2011; Peruzzo 1996). Participation in events also occurs. Due to the physical proximity of the media and their target audience, the interactions between practitioners, journalists, and the social groups tend to be very intense and personal.

In what follows, I present four examples of community media in different favelas of Rio de Janeiro. I refer to them on the order I got to know them in the first field trip I took in 2011. Today some have changed their formats. Others have completely different people involved in them. One of them is no longer operating. However, they remain valid illustrative examples of how diverse community media initiatives can be and of the challenges they face to keep alive. The four cases I refer to are: *Rádio Santa Marta* (radio station), *O Cidadão da Maré* (newspaper)*, Maré de Notícias* (newspaper) and *Viva Favela* (a news agency -like online platform). These cases of community media consist of both NGO-driven and citizen-led initiatives. Despite their own peculiarities, my goal is to demonstrate their roles in the formation of favela counterpublics. They both generate debates and serve as platforms for discursive and face-to-face interactions among social movements and civil society actors.

Rádio Santa Marta (Citizen-Led Community Radion Station)

The brief history of the radio station at favela Santa Marta[3] (2010–2011) started in 2002 when two local residents talked about the importance of community radio. They agreed that a broadcasting station would be more effective as channel than the existing system of loudspeakers at the favela. Soon more residents joined the plans, and only six years later they managed to start up the station after a local non-governmental organization (NGO) donated a transmitter. Nevertheless, they discontinued the station in early 2010 after the passing of one of the founders. Weeks later, another local resident and activist of Santa Marta participated in a university seminar where he met an old friend, a famous musician and activist. After hearing the story of the radio, the friend donated new equipment for the station to continue. They invited other residents and civil society actors (e.g. the residents' association, local NGOs, activists, and public media journalists) and, in September 2010, *Rádio Santa Marta* started broadcasting and transmitting online.

Once the station was on the air, *Rádio Santa Marta*'s main problem became the long bureaucratic licensing process. Following legal advice from civil society supporters, the station complied with the terms of the 1996 Community Media Law (Paiva, Sodré, and Custódio 2015) from the outset. For example, the practitioners created the station's statute and board of direction. The station only transmitted in a 1–km range, operated with not-for-profit goals, and valued local culture and educational topics. They also managed to have the five necessary external observers to guarantee they were not acting commercially. With all that, they started the licensing procedures. While they waited for the long legal process (it can last close to or more than ten years), the station quickly became an important communication channel for the people of favela Santa Marta.

As a citizen-led community media initiative, everything about *Rádio Santa Marta* was collaborative. The decision-making processes on programs, finances, and actions were in open assemblies twice a month. Volunteer residents acted as hosts in their free time. The daily programming consisted of one-hour to two-hour shows from 8 a.m. to midnight. Since few hosts had journalistic or broadcasting training, one supported the other in dealing both with the equipment and hosting skills. In order to pay bills and operating costs, the station received donations from other residents. Those donors who had some kind of business (e.g. bars, grocery stores) had their names mentioned as "cultural sponsors." Program hosts also donated part of their own income for equipment improvement and maintenance.

Rádio Santa Marta had very diverse and audience-engaging programs. Altogether, the station had 23 daily and weekly programs. Their themes varied. There were shows for the elderly, reports by the residents' association, and

many music programs. The station also had talk shows about Latin American culture, teenage issues, and poetry. In all programs, hosts announced job and educational opportunities. They also raised critical issues. For example, the gospel show surprisingly ran a program in which a doctor discussed teenage pregnancy, birth control, and STD prevention with listeners[4]. Music show hosts provoked the audience to avoid passivity and join the vocational courses available for the community. All programs invited listeners to call and make requests, critical remarks, and theme suggestions. *Rádio Santa Marta* also promoted events such as a football tournament, musical shows and parties broadcast live from different locations (e.g. football pitch, bars) inside the favela. They also questioned the State, especially the Pacifying Police Unit's (UPP) rules governing community gatherings and the officers' coercive control measures.

In the months that followed, *Rádio Santa Marta* became an important reference for residents. In interviews available in their YouTube channel[5], one of the hosts celebrated the station for bringing different generations together. Others described how important the station was for their cultural life. However, despite its relevance, in May 2011, agents of the federal police and the National Telecommunication Agency (ANATEL) seized the station's transmitter and shut the radio down for operating without a license. After that, the station continued operating online, but hosts gradually discontinued their programs. Today, both the station and its website are off air[6]. For years now, the station directors have been waiting for a decision on the licensing process.

In addition to generating debates within favela Santa Marta, the radio station also facilitated and engaged in interactions with social movements and civil society actors. The launching of the station had the support of organizations such as the Brazilian branch of the International Association of Community Radio (AMARC) and the Association of Professionals and Friends of Funk (APAFUNK). Other organizations, such as the Piratininga Communication Center (NPC), provided training to some of the hosts of the radio station. On several occasions, I attended roundtables in which practitioners of the station debated with representatives of different community media and social movements. *Rádio Santa Marta* also organized roundtables and discussions with activists and organizations from different parts of the city. When the federal police shut the radio station down, a number of social movements and civil society actors circulated the information and shared their outrage online. These networks mobilized lawyers to assist members of the station taken into custody. Days later, academics, alternative media channels, and others joined the station's hosts in a demonstration at the entrance of favela Santa Marta to collect signatures for a petition in support of *Radio Santa Marta*. Thus the

political role of the radio was not only broadcasting, but also being part of civil society and social movement webs of mutual support and resistance.

O Cidadão da Maré (NGO-Driven Community Newspaper)

The first edition of the newspaper *O Cidadão da Maré*[7] (The Citizen of Maré) circulated in June 1999. The newspaper is essentially an NGO-driven community media initiative. The non-governmental organization Center of Studies and Solidary Actions of Maré (CEASM) created and has maintained the newspaper administratively. The reason for including communication as part of the NGO's actions was the predominantly negative representation of favelas in mainstream media. CEASM has maintained its activities with public funding and corporate support. In the specific case of the newspaper, it also runs advertisements for small businesses in Complexo da Maré. *O Cidadão da Maré* has also received money prizes that have contributed to its maintenance. The printing of the newspaper is according to a not-for-profit agreement with an established nationwide publishing house located in the favela. The publishing house commits to running 20 thousand copies. To distribute the editions of the newspapers around Complexo da Maré, journalists, volunteers, and part-time workers deliver the paper from door to door, in local shops and even in the lively street market.

Despite being part of the actions of a non-governmental organization, the staff teams *O Cidadão da Maré* have enjoyed high levels of editorial autonomy. This autonomy also characterizes it as a citizen-led initiative. Since 1999 the team has mostly consisted of a managing editor (the only role where a professional qualification was required), a general coordinator/editor-in-chief, an editor, and volunteer journalists/reporters. Despite the hierarchy, most of the people involved shared roles. Editors write stories, volunteer reporters photograph and edit, everyone reviews each other's texts, and they are all free to speak their minds in newsroom meetings to decide the topics of each edition.

The original challenge to mainstream representation and the engagement in everyday life political struggles has been reflected in the content of the newspaper. From its first to the most recent editions, *O Cidadão da Maré* has covered diverse aspects of everyday life in Complexo da Maré. The newspaper has featured stories about public health services, unemployment, education, and security. It has also valued local examples of success and the history of the favelas. For example, *O Cidadão da Maré* 's first issue featured a long 5–page report describing each favela that composes Complexo da Maré. Their goal was to introduce and integrate residents of neighboring favelas who often know know very little about each others' community. Since

then, *O Cidadão da Maré* has published 65 issues. Some headlines indicate its critical-political analysis of local realities. For example, "the youth from Complexo da Maré goes to the university" (Issue 5, 2000), "the adventure of being elderly in Complexo da Maré" (Issue 23, 2002), "reviewing the housing issue in Complexo da Maré" (Issue 36, 2004), and "tackling unemployment" (a report on how residents found legitimate income sources despite being unemployed) (Issue 40, 2005).

Other headlines mention contentious discourses especially about public policies. For example, "who will take your soul?" (Issue 44, 2006) and "Public security: the right of everyone?" (Issue 61, 2009–2010) are analytical reports on security policy and police violence. Other headlines question governmental administrative problems and decisions. For instance, "the health sector is sick" (Issue 63, 2011), "Pan 2007: population questions billions government spent for the Games" (Issue 51, 2007), and "Megaevents: what does the word represent for the people?" (Issue 65, 2013). The newspaper has also tried to relate Complexo da Maré with world events. For instance, "Iraq invasion: lines that connect Complexo da Maré to the Middle East" (Issue 28, 2003) and "who pays for the world economic crisis?" (Issue 59, 2009).

Despite its role in public debate in Complexo da Maré, *O Cidadão da Maré* has also struggled to keep its regular circulation. The newspaper, originally thought to be monthly, has faced a number of challenges in the past 17 years. One problem was administrative. In 2007, some directors of CEASM, including some of the founders, left the organization due to internal disagreements. The conflict caused severe funding impacts. It also divided the staff of *O Cidadão da Maré*, who took sides in the management disputes. Some volunteer reporters and journalists left the newspaper. Since then, CEASM has struggled to raise funds to maintain its priority: the educational initiatives. Publishing the newspaper has mostly been a task of those volunteers who remained on the staff. They have been active online on social networks (one blog plus accounts on Facebook and Twitter), but their main priority of circulating in print in the favela has been very irregular. Consequently the newspaper has had difficulties in recruiting both corporate sponsors and local advertisers. Personal schedules have also made it difficult for volunteers to participate in meetings and conduct journalistic investigations regularly. For these reasons, between 2010 and the end of 2013, *O Cidadão da Maré* only published five issues. In 2016, the newspaper has temporarily stopped publishing after the publishing house moved its headquarters from the favela.

In spite of difficulties *O Cidadão da Maré* has been an important platform for debates and mobilization. In addition, some of its staff have also engaged in community media training. For example, journalists responsible for *O Cidadão da Maré* have organized community media courses since 2012. Their

goal is to renew and maintain the staff. These free-cost, 2–month to 4–month courses have consisted of weekly meetings with lectures both by staff members and by guest speakers. These include university professors, practitioners of other community media initiatives, and civil society actors. Some staff members of *O Cidadão da Maré* have also participated in roundtables and demonstrations in support of social movements, low-income workers and other favela residents. Thus, like *Rádio Santa Marta*, *O Cidadão da Maré* has also been active in articulating movements with other civil society actors.

Maré de Notícias (NGO-Driven Community Newspaper)

In December 2009, the local non-governmental organization *Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré* (Maré Development Network) published the first issue of the monthly newspaper *Maré de Notícias*[8] (a play on words with the name of the favela that literally means "Tide of News"). Some founders of *Redes* were people who had left CEASM's board of directors. Thus, unsurprisingly, *Redes* has a structure of initiatives similar to their former organization. *Redes* focuses on five different axes: culture and arts, local development, education, public security and communication. Like CEASM, the organization also created the newspaper in response to governmental neglect and misrepresentation of mainstream media about favelas.

The difference between *Maré de Notícias* and *O Cidadão da Maré* is that the former is exclusively an NGO-driven newspaper. The editor-in-chief is a salaried employee of *Redes*. The staff of journalists, photojournalists, and reporters includes both salaried journalists and trainees. External contributors (e.g. photographers and specialist columnists) also produce content for the newspaper. Even though the staff holds regular newsroom meetings to decide on topics to be published, the decision-making process is as hierarchical as in mainstream media. Therefore, while *O Cidadão da Maré* recruits volunteers to learn journalism and produce the newspaper, *Maré de Notícias* purposefully restricts the production of the newspaper to a small and professionalized staff.

Since the staff of the *Maré de Notícias* is partly on the payroll of *Redes*, the newspaper is not and does not claim to be an autonomous project. Thus, *Redes* has more control over content than has CEASM in *O Cidadão da Maré*. In addition, *Maré de Notícias* receives part of *Redes*' overall financial and institutional support from international development organizations and corporations such as Brazil's oil company Petrobrás. Consequently, *Maré de Notícias* has had a consistent monthly circulation throughout its existence. Each month, a part-time, paid team of local residents circulates the favelas of Complexo da Maré distributing the newspaper's 40 thousand free copies.

Maré de Notícias has defined one of its goals as being dialogue with its target audience at Complexo da Maré. For example, the name of the newspaper resulted from a competition among the audience. An 11–year-old boy suggested *Maré de Notícias* and won a desktop computer as a prize. Another participatory feature of the newspaper is that the themes it covers results from a survey in which *Redes* interviewed 2,300 people to ask about their expectations of a newspaper. They also dedicate the newspaper's last page to contributions from readers (e.g. poetry, photos, and essays). Regarding feedback, the team claims to listen to suggestions, complaints, and requests on social networks online, face-to-face at the headquarters of *Redes* and during the delivery process. Journalists of the newspaper who live in Complexo da Maré also claim to talk to and answer the questions of their readers as they walk around the favelas.

In a similar way to *O Cidadão da Maré*, *Maré de Notícias* also contributes to the formation of a local public in Complexo da Maré by raising a number of different themes. In every edition, they report on topics that vary from announcements of health and educational services to profiles of historical or successful residents of Complexo da Maré. The newspaper also features guest columnists. For example, teachers who talk about the right to education (Issue 12, 2010) or a special column explaining where people can find appropriate public healthcare (Issue 41, 2013). The newspaper also participates in the coverage of political events in Complexo da Maré. For instance, in one of their earliest issues, they reported on the elections of the residents' associations and about their reactions to the construction of a sound barrier hiding the favela from those passing on the expressway (Issue 2, 2010). Finally, the newspaper also features contentious stories especially denouncing governmental neglect or police violence. For example, the newspaper has questioned the Pacifying Police Unit (UPP) program (Issue 41, 2013; Issue 59, 2013; Issue 54, 2014; Issue 43, 2013), denounced the lack of maintenance of urban infrastructure (Issue 16, 2011; Issue 5, 2010) and questioned evictions (Issue 57, 2014). Together, *Maré de Notícias* and *O Cidadão da Maré* have contributed to making Complexo da Maré one of the best-served favelas in Rio de Janeiro in terms of media environment and circulation of information.

Regarding the role of community media as a platform for social movement interactions, during my fieldwork I did not see *Maré de Notícias* organize or participate in debates and other discussion events. One reason perhaps is its lack of autonomy as a project of *Redes*. For example, the newspaper's website is a subpage in the NGO's page (*O Cidadão da Maré*, for example, has independent pages online from its mother organization CEASM). *Redes*, however, is quite active in promoting events especially with its sister organization *Observatório de Favelas* (Favelas' Observatory), some of whose

founding members also left CEASM. For instance, *Redes* and *Observatório de Favelas* organized a demonstration and meetings with residents after the police killed over ten people in retaliation to the killing of a police officer in 2013. The organizations have also supported campaigns by the local branch of Amnesty International and local human rights organizations. In these cases, *Maré de Notícias* serves as an institutional newspaper reporting on the actions of the organizations that collaborate with *Redes* in their initiatives. Thus, as an element to the formation of counterpublics, the role of *Maré de Notícias* relates more to content production rather than social movement articulations.

Viva Favela (NGO-Driven Community Journalism Website)

Viva Favela[9] is a 2001 project that publishes reports and news by favela residents and people from other low-income social groups in Rio de Janeiro and elsewhere in Brazil (Davis 2016). Of the cases with which I familiarized, *Viva Favela* is the example closest to the stereotypical cases of NGO-driven initiative by better-off populations on behalf of underprivileged people. The initiative is a project of the Brazilian NGO *Viva Rio*.

Strictly speaking, *Viva Favela* is not community media in the sense that it does not relate to one specific favela or peripheral neighborhood. The project functions both as an online platform for journalistic narratives from the margins and as a journalism training institution for favela and peripheral residents. In addition, *Viva Favela* maintained the website and the monthly magazine *Revista Multimídia* (Multimedia Magazine). In order to partici-pate in the website, it was only necessary for anyone living anywhere in the country to register as a user. One did not have to have participated in the workshops to contribute. In May 2012 the website had about 2,000 registered users, but active users publishing content numbered 300–400. To publish in the *Revista Multimedia*, interested participants had to participate in face-to-face or Skype meetings to discuss themes and report subjects. Today the production of content online is more restricted to staff members, regular contributors, and participants of the workshops. The *Revista Multimídia* has also featured guest editors who invite contributors to discuss a certain theme. For example, the issue of December 2014[10] was a special edition about media and communication in favelas and peripheral areas.

Regarding content, the reports *Viva Favela* publishes reflect the logics of community media to emphasize positive aspects of everyday life and the demands for life improvements by favela residents. In early October 2015 the news page of *Viva Favela*'s websites featured stories both by staff members and by community correspondents. Stories included a homage to health workers in high-risk areas, the description of hip-hop as a pedagogi-

cal strategy for drug users, and the coverage of the second poetry anthology of a former house cleaner. In some circumstances, *Viva Favela* also uses its platform to contest actions of the state. For example, on August 26, 2015 it released a note contesting local governments' decision to prevent buses from peripheral areas from reaching beach areas after cases of robbery on seaside neighborhoods.

These four cases of community media with which I familiarized in Rio de Janeiro indicate how they contribute to the formation of favela counterpublics. Regardless of their distinct peculiarities, *Rádio Santa Marta*, *O Cidadão da Maré*, *Maré de Notícias,* and *Viva Favela* have enabled residents to learn, improve or exercise their skills in media content production and different journalistic genres. In addition, they have also been fundamental to learning and debating on human rights and social justice. Consequently, not only the content they circulate, but also the actions they organize (e.g. courses, debates, roundtables, cultural gatherings, etc.) are often strategic for the creation of a local setting appropriate for the spreading of political ideas. These ideas thus circulate both inside and outside favelas to become the preconditions to undermine the predominance of discriminatory perceptions concerning favelas in the main public sphere.

Having said that, is it possible to say that everyone participating in community media has activist purposes? Not necessarily. For example, some of the volunteer journalists I interviewed had personal and professional rather than activist motivations for participating in community media. In one case, an interviewee was very emphatic about not being interested in turning the favela where she lived into a political cause. She acknowledged the importance of community media to contest the discriminatory representations of mainstream media. She also understood that she had to find ways to contribute to achieve change in the favelas. However, when she reflected about her reasons for participating, she claimed it was especially for professional growth. She said:

Community journalist: My participation here is small because I have other tasks [in the organization]. I asked to participate in the [media] for personal development and professional training. Therefore, I don't have such strong ties [to the media] because of the other things I do. […]

Q: Would you like to work in the commercial media?

Community journalist: I am a capitalist. I don't have any problem working anywhere in the field in which I choose to work as long as they pay me.

In addition to this interviewee, I also heard references among community media practitioners to people who have left projects and initiatives to build a

professional career in the commercial media market. Therefore, this example shows that the engagement in media activism is not an automatic outcome of the participation in community media. In the next chapters I explain how the contentious attitudes in media initiatives also derive from a complex process of critical pedagogy, exchange of knowledge, decision-making responsibilities, and politicized interpersonal interactions. Examples of essentially contentious media initiatives are citizen-led multimedia collectives to which I now turn.

MULTIMEDIA COLLECTIVES IN FAVELAS

The rise of multimedia collectives as forms of activism in the favelas and peripheral areas of Rio de Janeiro relates directly to the popularization of new media (online social media platforms, mobile telephones). This is one of the claims of the study entitled "Communication and Youth in Movement: New Technologies, Territories and Inequalities" (Souza and Zanetti 2013). The study revealed how young favela residents have used new media technologies to produce and circulate textual and audiovisual materials for the mobilization of collective action. These processes include interactions on social networks online and especially offline. Therefore, while acknowledging the importance of new media technologies, it is also crucial to avoid false dichotomies between the real and the virtual concerning media activism in favelas.

There are innumerable multimedia collectives now active in the favelas and peripheries of Rio de Janeiro. Souza and Zanetti (2013) identified and worked with three categories: culture and NICTs, gender/young women, and favela identity. Following their categorization, the multimedia collectives with which I have familiarized belong to the favela identity category. I have observed autonomous citizen-led initiatives which use media-related skills (e.g. photography, documentary production, journalism, web-design) to act together for rights and social justice in favelas. These collectives consisted of small groups (often between three and 12 people) formed on the basis of some kind of established relationship of affinity and/or geographic proximity. Again, I would argue that some of these relationships started in organizations such as NGOs. These organizations play a mediating role (Souza and Zanetti, 2013) in enabling access to media, training in techniques and technologies, sometimes even financial support, and opportunities for people to meet, talk, and organize strategies together.

In my research process I familiarized with five multimedia collectives. I present them in the order I learned about them between 2011 and 2015. They are: *#EntreSemBater*, *#OcupaAlemão*, *Favela em Foco*, *Coletivo Papo*

Reto and *Maré Vive*. In the following sections, I explain what their names mean since these terms in Portuguese help explain the actions the collectives perform. As Souza and Zanetti (2013) have also indicated, such initiatives can be ephemeral. Some of the cases I studied no longer exist. Nevertheless, they remain important examples that illustrate the dynamic processes of non-institutionalized forms of engagement in media activism in favelas and how they contribute to the formation of favela counterpublics.

#Entresembater

#Entresembater[11] was a multimedia collective a group of friends created in 2011 as a collaborative project. They focused on four different fields of action: evictions, urban occupations, street dwelling, and the situation of ex-convicts. The name *#Entresembater* is a phrase that indicates different aspects of housing-related issues concerning marginalized, low-income populations. Literally, it translates as "no need to knock to come in." However, it can also mean "do not beat me up when you come in," in reference to violent police incursions in favelas. Another possible interpretation relates to the hashtag symbol. Those interested in participating in their discussions and actions online and offline are welcome to do so. At the time of the interviews (April-May, 2013), fewer than ten people from different favelas formed *#Entresembater*.

The formation of the *#Entresembater* came about as the final assignment for the conclusion of a yearly media education course called the People's School of Critical Communication (ESPOCC). The school is one of the projects of the non-governmental organization *Observatório de Favelas* (Favelas Observatory). In 2011, the final assignment of the course was to create socially conscious advertising campaigns for the development of local commerce. However, some participants refused. Instead, they wanted to create something they considered to be more meaningful. That is how they developed the idea of *#Entresembater*.

At the time of the interviews, *#Entresembater* was actively involved in social movement webs. They produced materials and participated in events against the human rights violations preceding the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Specifically, members of the collective were actively involved in supporting resistance movements of residents by denouncing the violence and illegalities of evictions during the preparations for megaevents. For example, they produced one video essay[12] in which residents talked about their family memorabilia before the city evicted them from *Vila Autódromo*, the low-income neighborhood surrounding the area to be used for the main venues of the Olympic Games. Another example was a short documentary[13] about

the mobilization against the evictions of residents of *Morro da Providência*, Brazil's first favela in the center of Rio de Janeiro. Other civil society actors and social movements circulated both videos online. In addition, *#Entresembater* also showed their productions in sessions in the alleys of favelas. They also gave photography workshops for children in communities under threat of eviction. Reports and images of those workshops also circulated as blog posts and social media materials.

By the time of writing (April, 2016), *#Entresembater* had been inactive as a collective, but its members continue involved in other media initiatives.

#OcupaAlemão

The formation and action of *#OcupaAlemão*[14] illustrate the dynamics between online and offline actions together with interactions across favelas in Rio de Janeiro. At the end of 2012 various favelas faced a number of conflicts despite or in some cases because of the implementation of the Pacifying Police Units (UPP) in them. Such was the case in *Morro do Borel*—a favela in the middle-class neighborhood of Tijuca—and Complexo do Alemão. In the last week of November, *Morro do Borel* residents organized a demonstration in response to the curfew the UPP imposed on the community. Inspired by the global Occupy Movement, they called it *Ocupa Borel* (Occupy Borel). In the same week, police officers had killed an 18–year-old man in Complexo do Alemão. When some residents heard from friends of the demonstrations in favela do Borel, they also decided to organize what was named *Ocupa Alemão*. On December 6, at 9 p.m., the *Ocupa Borel* and *Ocupa Alemão* happened simultaneously—exchanging information online through hashtags #ocupaborel and #ocupaalemão—with hundreds of inhabitants in the alleys of the favela, walking, singing, dancing and demanding respect. With the success of the demonstrations, friends and activists from Complexo do Alemão decided to maintain *#OcupaAlemão* as a collective.

At the time of the interviews with two of its members (April-May, 2013), *#OcupaAlemão* was already recognized as an example of youth mobilization in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. By then the collective had seven members who individually had a history of engagement in other social movements, groups and organizations involved in the struggles of favela residents. Other people also participated in the regular meetings contributing for the planning and the execution of actions in and outside Complexo do Alemão. In addition to face-to-face actions, *#OcupaAlemão* also maintained quite active communication on social media, especially Facebook, but also Twitter. Online, the members of the collective announced actions to mobilize participants, denounced police abuse, and communicated with collectives, social move-

ments, and individuals from different favelas or low-income peripheral areas to organize actions.

Their actions often focused on occupying spaces in Complexo do Alemão and creating initiatives to involve and mobilize other residents. At the time of the interviews, they focused on having open-mic or talk-circle events in open areas inside the favela to discuss governmental neglect, lack of cultural and leisure facilities and other themes arising from everyday problems. One of their actions was to solicit donations of books to start a free library in one of the poorest areas inside Complexo do Alemão. Lacking spaces for the library, the collective built shelves and put the books in a bar, one of the points of reference for residents of that area. Social media platforms were important in gathering books and publicizing the outcomes of the event. Another example of action was a walk for residents and outsiders to explore and occupy neglected areas of favelas with public talks and cultural interventions. The collective also created videos, blog posts and other materials about the event to circulate online.

More recently, *#OcupaAlemão* has adopted a more contentious attitude than at its beginning. One possible reason for the increase in more confrontational discourses and actions relates to the increase of violence in Complexo do Alemão despite the presence of the UPPs in the favela. In March 2014, the group supported local protests and organized a plenary session in a square to demand justice after the numerous killings of young people in favelas of Rio de Janeiro. As an outcome of their involvement in social movement webs, dozens of civil society organizations, social movements and individual supporters signed a manifesto against the criminalization of poverty and police violence in favelas.[15] The tone of anger and calls for rebellion increased as more police crimes occurred. In 2015, part of the original members left to pursue other forms of collective actions, but *#OcupaAlemão* remains as one of the most important references of youth political mobilizations in, about, and through media in Rio de Janeiro. The existing and new members continue to use social media and organizing face-to-face events to publicly denounce police violence, racism, discrimination and governmental neglect.

Favela em Foco

In English, *Favela em Foco*[16] means Favela in Focus. The name of the collective denotes its emphasis on the production of images—mostly photographs, but also films—to document cultural and political aspects of the everyday life of favela residents and low-income workers. The interest in starting a collective began in 2007 among young friends from *Favela do Jacarezinho* who participated in a photography workshop. The organizers of the workshop

were photographers from the non-governmental organization *Observatório de Favelas*, the same NGO whose members of the collective *#Entresembater* participated in the media education project. In fact, some of those who, years later, created *#Entresembater* had been active in *Favela em Foco* too. Back in the 2007 photography workshop, the young participants decided to document life at *Favela do Jacarezinho* as a course assignment. For that, they planned a magazine to be distributed among residents to challenge the stereotypes of favelas in mainstream media. However, they were not able to pursue those plans. In 2009, the young friends enrolled in another project of *Observatório de Favelas* called *Imagens do Povo* (Images of the People). That project included a school of photography which combined the teaching of technical skills with lessons and discussions about human rights and discriminatory representations. In *Imagens do Povo*, the young friends met other people with similar interests of acting politically through photography, thereby initiating the formation of *Favela em Foco*.

By the time of the interviews with some members of *Favela em Foco* (April-May 2013), the collective consisted of ten to fifteen photographers who had participated in the *Imagens do Povo* project. The collective's website served as a platform for the presentation of individual or collective works. Three cases of that period of time illustrate how their activism goes beyond the symbolism of photography and the virtual spaces of image sharing to support local struggles. In March 2013, one of the members of *Favela em Foco* produced blog posts, photographs and one short video to document the celebration of the 7th anniversary of an urban occupation (when homeless people take over abandoned land or buildings and collective turn them into housing facilities). The texts describe the threat of eviction by the city administration preceding the 2016 Olympic Games. The photographs portray the faces of the families. The video presents the music that celebrated their resistance.

In April 2013 the same photographer recorded the immediate events following the killing of a 21–year-old man by a police officer. After hearing about the crime in his favela's Facebook group, he grabbed his camera and ran to the scene. There he took photographs and made videos. Later, he wrote a blog post describing the crime. He illustrated the text with an image of a dead young man, lying in a pool of blood, and reaching out for his hot-dog. His post circulated widely among civil society organizations, social movements and individual supporters in different social media. Finally, in May 2013, different members of *Favela em Foco* joined forces in support of the population of favela *Bandeira 1*, which caught on fire leaving hundreds of people homeless. The photographers jointly documented the destruction of the favela through videos and photographs. They also circulated the denouncing videos and photographs in social networks online to raise awareness and

mobilize support for the residents. The photographers also solicited donations and organized an event called *Ocupa B1* (Occupy B1). During the event, favela and non-favela activists promoted workshops on music, Afro-Brazilian martial art capoeira and photography among the residents. They also showed films and photographs of the residents' own struggles.

Favela em Foco remains actively engaged in using photography, social media and face-to-face interactions as part of their contribution for the struggles of favela residents.

Coletivo Papo Reto

The young activists who left *#OcupaAlemão* soon joined other residents to create *Coletivo Papo Reto*.[17] The name of the collective translates as "straight talk." In Rio de Janeiro, that means avoiding demagogic opinions when voicing criticism or tackling problems. Therefore, their proposal was to communicate in clear and direct terms with residents and outsiders about the everyday life struggles in Complexo do Alemão and other favelas of Rio de Janeiro. This communication includes intensive interactions on different social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, blogs) and through mobile phone applications (e.g. WhatsApp). It also involves regular meetings among the members of the collective and occasional discussion events, demonstrations and other types of face-to-face interactions with other favela residents and non-favela partners and supporters. By early 2016, the collective had eight members mostly connected through long-term friendship and ideological-political affinity.

Coletivo Papo Reto combines journalistic reporting with political mobilization strategies. Its Facebook page provides a detailed illustration of the diverse actions in which the collective engages. One of their main types of actions is reporting and denouncing police violence. *Coletivo Papo Reto* has produced a number of photographic and audiovisual journalistic materials about police crimes and residents' protests in Complexo do Alemão. As part of the members have studied and/or worked in journalism, their images, videos and texts are of professional quality. They also report on and support cultural events and initiatives in the favela. For example, the collective has campaigned for more leisure and cultural facilities in Complexo do Alemão.

Their mobilization strategies include using social media to create or support face-to-face, on-the-spot actions for social change. For example, in June 2014, *Coletivo Papo Reto* joined forces with other activists and citizen-led initiatives to promote a day of artistic interventions, music presentations and discussion in protest to the governmental neglect of the favela at the dawn of the FIFA World Cup. They decorated the streets—a Brazilian tradition in

times of World Cups—with posters, photographs, and graffiti denouncing human rights violations in Complexo do Alemão and other favelas. Later, in August 2014, they participated in the organization and coverage of a "walk for peace" following the rise in the death toll of residents of Complexo do Alemão. Similar and even more confrontational demonstrations against police violence and governmental neglect have been held regularly since then as the crimes have continued.

In 2016, *Coletivo Papo Reto* perhaps grew into being the most widely known citizen-led multimedia collective in Rio de Janeiro. Perhaps because of its members having a long trajectory as activists and as professionals in mainstream media outlets, they have managed to build important partnerships and gain significant visibility in Brazil and abroad. The members have featured in nationwide talk shows and their actions have appeared in the Brazilian press. In early 2015, *Coletivo Papo Reto* started a partnership with the New York-based, not-for-profit organization Witness, which supports video-making initiatives against police and other forms of human rights violations around the world. That partnership led to a special report on *Coletivo Papo Reto* in the New York Times Magazine in February 2015. Notwithstanding their fame, the collective remains engaged in contentious actions in Complexo do Alemão.

Maré Vive

Maré Vive[18] is an anonymous network of residents in the favelas of Complexo da Maré. Its name means "Maré Lives" in reference to the vibrant local culture and social diversity. *Maré Vive* uses social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) and mobile phone applications (e.g. WhatsApp) to communicate and mediate communication among favela residents and to non-favela residents. In contrast to other citizen-led multimedia collectives, the members of *Maré Vive* are very careful not to reveal their identities. Since I was unable to meet them in Rio de Janeiro during my fieldwork trips, it is not possible to estimate how many members *Maré Vive* has. Nevertheless, the group's public page on Facebook has become one of the most dynamic spaces for denouncing police violence, governmental neglect, and for celebrating local culture and traditions.

The online actions of the collective started on March 29, 2014. On that night, their first Facebook updates announced that they were preparing to stream live videos of their coverage of the army occupation of some favelas in Complexo da Maré on the following morning. Officially, the occupation represented one of the first governmental efforts to arrest or expel drug dealers and then implement UPPs in the favela. For residents involved in *Maré*

Vive, other activists and human rights organizations, the occupation included coercive and superficial measures. A that moment, *Maré Vive'*s live coverage focused on presenting residents' opinions, evaluating of levels of danger in different areas inside Complexo da Maré, and commenting on reports on commercial television channels. Residents could participate by sending private messages in Facebook or via WhatsApp. These comments would then be added to *Maré Vive*'s newsfeed, either signed or anonymously, under the pseudonym "Resident of Maré." The information on their page contrasted with the live coverage of mainstream media mainly celebrating the occupation and focusing on the official versions by governmental and military authorities.

Today, *Maré Vive* remains one of the main sources of information for residents of Complexo da Maré. In October 2016, *Maré Vive* had over 77 thousand followers in Facebook. Residents also have created several other anonymous pages to inform people in Complexo da Maré about armed conflicts and to denounce human rights violations. In addition, hashtags such as *#frominsidemare* and *#whatmarehas* have become symbols of online communications about local traditions and cultural diversity.

The five examples of multimedia collectives in favelas demonstrate how residents used new media technologies and tactically appropriated the privately owned social media platforms such as Facebook combined with journalistic skills to mobilize collective actions and demand respect for rights. The multimedia collectives *#Entresembater*, *#Ocupaalemão*, *Favela em Foco*, *Coletivo Papo Reto* and *Maré Vive* are examples of many citizen-led initiatives that best define what favela media activism means. In comparison to NGO-driven community media, multimedia collectives may not have the institutional support, the funding sources or the technical infrastructure for action.

However, not being dependent on non-governmental organizations allows them to be as contentious as they can within the complex realm of political struggles in favelas. Despite the comparison, I do not oppose community media and multimedia collectives. After all, as the examples show, both community media—as institutionalized spaces for media activism—and multimedia collectives—as non-institutionalized results of media activism—complement one another in the formation of favela counterpublics. Together they make an important symbolic and mobilizing contribution to the struggles of favela residents. Yet what kind of societal impacts do these actions generate? What concrete differences do favela counterpublics make in Rio de Janeiro? Do all these actions really generate change? In order to answer to these questions, we need to reflect on what kind of changes one can achieve in what amount of time considering the structural constraints a highly stratified society creates for those struggling at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES MEDIA ACTIVISM MAKE?

I started this chapter with a brief overview of cases of counterpublics to those in favelas today. I had at least four reasons for making that historical detour. First, by referring to the abolition movement, the labor movement and the resistance movements during the 1964–1984 dictatorship, I wanted to empha-size that there have been counterpublics in Brazil before the rise of new ICTs. In those cases, there was a dynamic process balancing mediated information and face-to-face interactions. Second, I wanted to highlight that counterpub-lics do not evolve in a vacuum. They arise from within social groups that experience a deep sense of socio-political discontent and react to cases of suffering and injustice. Third, the formation, establishment and legitimation of counterpublics takes time. It also takes articulation among different actors in society. Finally, the "impacts" are not merely the ultimate outcomes of the strengthening of counterpublics. We cannot argue that the abolition of slav-ery, the achievement of labor rights and the end of the dictatorship were the "impacts" of their respective counterpublics. In fact, these depended to great extent on other events and actors perhaps even unrelated to the struggles of those demanding change.

What I mean to say is that "impact" and "difference" are also in smaller, less revolutionary changes than those turning points in history. If we look at the bigger picture in Brazil today, the general criminalization of favelas remains. So do governmental negligence and human rights violations. In ad-dition, favela residents still have to cope with misrepresentation and discrimi-nation. Thus, one impact-oriented evaluator may consider all the struggles of residents to be failures in terms of macro-level change. However, in these years of observing forms of media activism in favelas, I have noticed very subtle changes that indicate how fruitful the process of formation of favela counterpublics (see Figure 5.1) has been in the past decades. These changes appear small in times of domination of the main public sphere by private media corporations and of hyper-individualism with the predominance of the neoliberal mentality. Nevertheless, they are important and lead somewhere if we think of processes of redefinition and enactment of citizenship among people who have historically been denied basic rights.

One difference is how favela residents without prior engagement in social movements interact with others involved in media activism. During the in-terviews with journalists of community media, they referred to how people in favelas stopped them on the streets to comment on a story or recommend topics. Online pages of multimedia collectives—with thousands of follow-ers—have also become forums of discussions filled with testimonials from anonymous residents against police violence, angry complaints about the
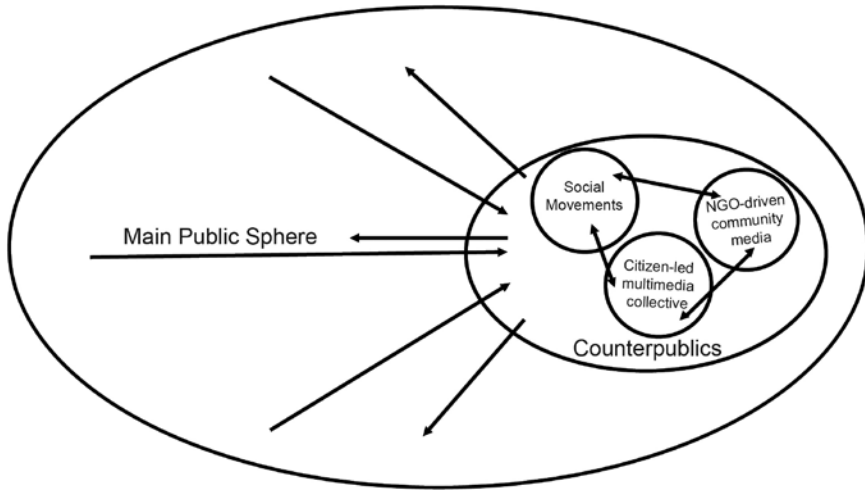
Figure 5.1.   Interplay between main public sphere and counterpublics in Rio de Janeiro.
Source: Figure designed by author.

lack of quality public services, and even criticism of one's own community's lack of care for the place where they live. These conversations online have contributed to the increase of participants in protests and demonstrations in favelas. In 2011, I participated in debates and other events with very few local participants. Between 2014 and 2015, thousands of people have marched for peace through the narrow alleys of Complexo do Alemão and the streets of Complexo da Maré. Thus, favela residents have increasingly participated in collective actions.

A second difference is how people who engage in media activism have been becoming positive examples for other favela residents. Back in 2011, one volunteer journalist in a community media initiative told me how one mother had asked him to advise her son to follow the journalist's example and not become involved in wrongdoing. Likewise, others have performed (Rodriguez 2011) and gained visibility in such ways that they become alternative references to drug dealers for younger generations. In situations of police violence or any other situation that requires calling the attention of authorities, many people have looked to members of community media or multimedia collectives for assistance. In other words, people involved in media activism have slowly gained the respect and trust of other favela residents. The support and admiration are not unanimous. In online pages, there are many favela residents who disagree with and question the constant denouncing of police crimes and silence about the wrongdoings of drug dealers. However, other

residents challenge those opinions and defend the activists, demonstrating how members of the community acknowledge their importance.

A third difference achieved by media activism in favelas include some changes in the interactions with the main public sphere. In recent years, favela residents involved in media activism have occasionally managed to influence narratives about crimes and demonstrations in favelas. During the interviews, people to whom I talked explained how they have acted as press agents to facilitate journalists' access to favelas and residents. These inter-personal interactions increase the chances of less discriminating coverage. On one rare occasion, a member of a multimedia collective working for a mainstream television network gained permission to conduct live coverage of a police crime in a favela. Media coverage of favelas is still predominantly negative. Voices from favelas are still very rare in mainstream news. Access to journalists also depends on well-connected activists taking a much less confrontational attitude than they would have wanted to. However, these situations suggest that there are fissures through which to influence mainstream media discourse.

A fourth difference, also related to the main public sphere, is that favela residents engaged in media activism have gradually gained more access to governing politicians. Consequently, they have managed to confront policymakers and governmental authorities. Most importantly, these favela residents have also recorded these encounters and circulated them online preventing them from being hidden from public scrutiny. For example, in April 2015, members of *#OcupaAlemão*, *Coletivo Papo Reto* and other civil society organizations and social movements participated in a forum with state authorities to debate the armed conflicts in Complexo do Alemão. In the videos the activists released, it is possible to see how the participants, including the activists of the collectives, confronted the officials. In other events they have also debated with Rio de Janeiro's mayor and governor. All these meetings have been recorded and circulated publicly online. While these debates may not lead to policy implications, they do allow activists to increase legitimacy as a local, political actor among residents.

Finally, a fifth difference that media activism in favelas makes is that favela residents seem to increasingly believe that their reactions to human rights violations and injustices matter. This is especially visible in the number of videos residents have made which ended up debunking false versions of police crimes in favelas. In September 2015, a mobile phone video by a resident of *Morro da Providência* provided evidence about the murder and crime scene staging by police officers. Before the video, the officers claimed the victim had shot at them. Mainstream media took that version as a fact and made no further investigation. However, the video clearly shows how

they placed the gun in the hand of the wounded victim and fired shots. The circulation of the video caused the arrest of the police officers and a change in the mainstream media narratives. One cannot make causal claims to suggest that the individual filmed the police officers because of the increasing role of media activism in favelas. However, this occasion and others like it prove that there are dynamic and interrelated favela counterpublics challenging the main public sphere and mobilizing an increasing number of favela residents. This is the kind of difference media activism in favelas makes in Rio de Janeiro—subtle, but very meaningful material, symbolic, and mobilizing contributions to the struggles of favela residents and other low-income populations.

So far I have described what I mean by favela media activism and reflected on what it means in terms of actions, actors, and societal impacts. This answers the first of my research questions: what characterizes favela media activism. In the next chapters, I turn to my second research question: what explains the engagement of favela residents in media initiatives at the margins? Basically I have explained what favela residents do as media activists and key contributors to counterpublics. However, I am equally interested in how and why favela residents become involved in media activism in the first place. To approach this problem, I shift the focus from descriptive analysis to an explanatory approach to the engaged actors' trajectories in their processes of engagement in media activism.

NOTES

1. For information about the seminar (Portuguese), see http://ocidadaonline. blogspot.fi/2011/04/seminario-o-poder-da-comunicacao-midia.html (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

2. These contemporary processes of digital media appropriation reflect the political nuances of media uses for the formation of publics in democratic societies. (Dewey 1927; Park and Burgess 1969)

3. Materials for the description of *Rádio Santa Marta* include interviews with one of the co-founders, access to the flyers practitioners produced and also online resources such as videos and news reports in alternative media websites.

4. The practice of connecting religious and social information has ties with the theology of liberation typical to the work in the Basic Ecclesiastical Communities (CEB) (Fávero 2006). What was surprising in this case is that the program's host was part of an evangelical church. Brazilian evangelical churches are often very conservative in terms of sexuality and birth control.

5. For *Rádio Santa Marta*'s Youtube channel, see https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzi_9cx-w2PFIagvrbAs0jA (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

6. Elsewhere (Paiva, Malerba, and Custódio 2013), we discussed about how online media do not necessarily fit the community-oriented interests of community media

practitioners. The internet is a means to communicate with outside listeners while radio reaches more locals.

7. Empirical materials consist of interviews with one director of the non-governmental organization (NGO) that conceived and maintains the newspaper; interviews with volunteer journalists and newspaper former editors-in-chief; previous newspaper editions (both printed and archived online); and observations of newsroom meetings and public events the newspaper staff organized.

8. Materials for the description of *Maré de Notícias* consist of the results of one group interview with the newspaper's staff (2011). I also accessed different editions (available online at http://redesdamare.org.br/blog/category/mare-de-noticias/, last accessed on December 5, 2016) of the publication and one descriptive report about *Maré de Notícias* on the civil society journalistic website Rio on Watch (available online at http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=18194, last accessed on December 5, 2016).

9. Materials used for the description of *Viva Favela* include interviews with the project's coordinator (June, 2012) and former participants of its media workshops (August-September, 2012). In addition, I consulted one book by one of *Viva Favela*'s former staff member (Ramalho 2007) describing the history of the project. I also included information gathered on *Viva Favela*'s website (www.vivafavela.com.br, last accessed on December 5, 2016).

10. For the special issue of the *Viva Favela* magazine (in Portuguese), see http://vivafavela.com.br/21–comunicacao-na-favela/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016)

11. Materials for the description of #Entresembater mainly consisted of interviews with members of the collective, online observations of their interactions in social media, and access to some of their audiovisual productions. In an earlier book chapter (Custódio 2014b), I provide a more detailed analysis of the different online and offline dimensions of their actions.

12. For the video essay on *Vila Autódromo* families, see https://vimeo.com/60478467 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

13. For the short documentary about dwellers' resistance at favela *Providência* (Portuguese), see https://youtu.be/2dURl8fUFU4 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

14. Materials for the description of *#OcupaAlemão* consist of interviews with members of the collective and online observations of their actions in social media. I also read blog posts (http://rioonwatch.org.br/?p=7282, last accessed on December 5, 2016) and interviews (https://youtu.be/UfQ0leMG6ps, last accessed on December 5, 2016) in which members of the collective describe their actions.

15. For an English version of the manifesto, see http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=14046 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

16. Materials for the description of *Favela em Foco* derive from interviews with members of the collective and observations of their online activities. In addition, I also consulted their website (https://favelaemfoco.wordpress.com/, last accessed on December 5, 2016) for consultation of their actions. Elsewhere (Custódio 2014b), I made a more detailed analysis of the formation and action of *Favela em Foco*.

Chapter Six

The Relationship between NGO Work and Favela Media Activism

In the previous chapters, I noted the importance of the work of non-governmental organizations (NGO) for the formation of favela media activism. In my descriptive reflections about the fieldwork process, I demonstrated how I familiarized with media in favelas and contacted residents involved in media activism through NGOs. When I described the history of bottom-up political struggles in favelas, I described how NGOs have acted and supported actions of local associations and residents. In my description of favela media activism, I used the term "NGO-driven" to characterize institutionalized forms of media initiatives different from those citizen-led forms which residents create and maintain collectively and autonomously. Thus here my goal is to explore further the relationship between NGO work and favela media activism by analyzing the characteristics and development of NGO pedagogical projects in favelas of Rio de Janeiro.

Before that, however, it is necessary to clarify what NGO means in terminological and political terms in the Brazilian context. In his approach to non-governmental organizations at the international level, Peter Willetts (2011) describes how the term "NGO" has been contested since its first mention in the UN Charter of 1946. For that reason, he defines it by negation. For him, "NGOs are any organized groups of people that are not direct agents of individual governments, not pursuing criminal activities, not engaged in violent activities, and not primarily established for profit-making purposes" (Willetts 2011, 31). In practice, this suggests that the term can refer to many different types of organizations. NGOs can vary between those for humanitarian aid, human rights advocacy, and environmental activism to the defense of religious conservatism and promotion of reactionary values. They may have autonomous partnerships with governments or be co-opted into service provision. They may also be global, regional, national or local.

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One way to be more specific, at least in terms of the scope of action, is to use alternative acronyms. According to Willetts (2011), we can arguably differ between NGOs, civil society organizations (CSO), and community-based organizations (CBO). In UN debates, NGOs often refer to international organizations, CSOs to informal organizations within specific countries, and CBOs to organizations at the micro-level in urban and rural environments. These differences, made without clear criteria (Willetts 2011), also imply distinct types of organizational management. For example, management may vary from international bodies to local associations suggesting that CBOs are potentially closer to local communities than NGOs. Explaining the differences between acronyms could be useful to describe the scene of organizations in Rio de Janeiro. As regards favelas, we see international NGOs doing advocacy (e.g. Amnesty International), organizations that resemble nationwide CSOs (e.g. *Justiça Global*) and CBOs (e.g. residents' associations in favelas).

The problem is that in practice the differences between organizations may not be as clear as the acronyms suggest. During my fieldwork I looked at the activities of four organizations: CEASM, *Observatório de Favelas*, *Viva Rio* and *Bem TV*. I focused on them because they all had media-related projects. CEASM and *Observatório de Favelas* have headquarters inside favelas while *Viva Rio* and *Bem TV* operate from offices in city centers. CEASM is closest to CBOs for promoting projects for the population of the favelas where it is located, but it also acts as CSO when it engages in cooperation with other organizations. *Viva Rio* is characterized as international NGO for acting in Brazil and abroad, but also as CSO for its work in different favelas across the country. *Observatório de Favelas* and *Bem TV* operate in different places in Rio de Janeiro (sometimes in other states), thus combining characteristics of CSOs and CBOs. All this to say that, in the case of Rio de Janeiro, different acronyms can be more confusing than clarifying.

This confusion is one of the reasons for me to refer to the organizations with which I familiarized primarily as NGOs. Using only "NGO" facilitates the simplification of terminology (Willetts 2011). After all, my goal is not to discuss the meanings of acronyms, but how organizational practices relate to favela media activism. Another reason for using "NGO" as a term of reference is empirical. In Brazil, organizations, politicians and people in general commonly use NGOs to refer to not-for-profit organizations that act with the support of, in partnership with or independently from governmental and/or corporate bodies on behalf of favela residents. Therefore, everyday uses of the term "NGO" justify its use in this study[1].

A very interesting consequence of choosing "NGO" is that it allows shifting from endless terminological disputes to the heated political debates about

the actions of NGOs in society. The controversy is evident in the literature on the phenomenon of the NGO-ization of social movements and people's struggles. For some scholars, the increase of NGO interventions around the globe relates to the recent expansion of neoliberalism. For promoting initiatives in accordance to governments' ideal definitions of development and change, NGOs have contributed to "the professionalization and depoliticization of social action" (Choudry 2013, 1). Consequently, they believe that NGOs "frequently undermine local and international movements for social change and environmental justice and/or oppositional anti-colonial and anti-capitalist politics, in complicity with state and private sector interests" (2). From a similar critical perspective, the Brazilian scholar Evelina Dagnino (2010) argues that the process of NGO-ization has marginalized the more radical contesting, bottom-up social movements the country.

In light of my empirical observations, these claims about the marginalizing impacts of NGO-ization seem true. For example, the 2015 citizen-led, online-organized demonstrations in Complexo do Alemão against the killings of a woman and a child (see Chapter 3) ended up with the police firing rubber bullets, using pepper spray and teargas into the crowd. By contrast, when the NGO *Observatório de Favelas* called a demonstration in 2013 against police violence in Complexo da Maré after the police elite squad killed a dozen young residents as a reprisal after the death of a police officer the day before[2]; there was no state-led repression. One thing these examples show is that there seems to be a predisposition on the part of the state at least to accept NGOs' demonstrations. However, I also noticed that there were NGO staff members and representatives subjected to police repression in Complexo do Alemão. Likewise, there were favela residents and contesting activists in the NGO-driven demonstrations. Therefore, the relationship between NGOs and social movements in Rio de Janeiro seems to be less dichotomous than one might assume from the critical literature on NGO-ization. The correlation between NGOs and favela media activism is also an example that NGOs may not be as depoliticizing as the criticism to them would suggest.

With these debates about the politics of non-governmental organizations as a backdrop, this chapter[3] aims to describe and analyze how NGOs and favela media activism correlate. For that, my idea is to move from the dichotomy between NGOs and social movements (Choudry 2013) to their interrelations. First, based on the organizations on which I focused, I describe how NGOs appear in the history of Brazilian social movements, what characterizes their relationships with favelas, and how non-formal education is part of their repertoire. Second, I describe how NGOs have continued another Latin American tradition by implementing media education initiatives as part of their operations. I also show that despite not necessarily being *de facto*

grassroots, their motivations to promote media arise from in-depth knowledge and dialogue with favela residents. Third, I present evaluations of NGOs by people who have participated projects and are now political actors in favelas. While their statements corroborate some of the NGO-ization criticisms, they also reveal how former participants believe NGOs have affected their own processes of engagement in social movements. Finally, I reflect on the limitations of approaching NGOs from an exclusive organizational point of view if one is to understand how they relate to processes of political engagement among the urban poor.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
NGO AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

One of the characteristics in the literature about the NGO-ization phenomenon is the dichotomization between NGOs and social movements (Choudry 2013). The impression one gets from literature is that NGOs are artificial collective actors that use connections and financial support from governments and corporations to manage and promote change within the boundaries of the neoliberal status quo. In these characteristics, NGOs differ from organic, bottom-up, citizen-led collective actions for radical social change in micro and macro structures of power. While it is true that this dichotomy can exist throughout the world, what I observed during my fieldwork indicated that the relationship between NGOs and social movements might be much more complex. For instance, it seems that the correlation between NGO work and favela media activism exists because of how NGOs are part of the history of social movements in Brazil.

Four Cases of NGO Work in Favelas

During my fieldwork, I familiarized with four NGOs that act in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. The Center of Studies and Solidary Actions of Maré (CEASM) is the NGO responsible for the newspaper *O Cidadão da Maré*. The newspaper is only one of the various projects it promotes at Morro do Timbau, one of the favelas of Complexo da Maré. CEASM has existed since 1997. Its founders were residents and former residents of Maré who had been active in social movements since the 1980s and had careers especially as university scholars and researchers. Since its inception, CEASM has focused on education (e.g. a course to prepare young residents for university admission tests), culture (e.g. dance and capoeira classes), computing, local history, vocational training, services (consultancy to private and public institutions), and

communication. Since its foundation, CEASM claims to have had over one thousand students accepted in highly competitive university admission tests.

Observatório de Favelas, the NGO responsible for the project where members of the collective *#Entresembater* met (see Chapter 5), originated in 2001. In its website, it defines itself as a non-governmental organization "that undertakes research, consultancy and public actions to produce knowledge and elaborate political proposals focused on slums and urban issues"[4]. Its founders were dissident members of CEASM and therefore also residents or former residents of favelas. Since its foundation *Observatório de Favelas* has combined academic research and pedagogical projects—including media education—to generate new knowledge about favelas and to promote critical and vocational training in media and advertising among favela residents. Recently, it has also actively engaged in advocacy[5] especially against state-led institutionalized violence in Complexo da Maré, where it has its headquarters. The different projects reach hundreds of participants from favela and non-favela environments every year since the NGOs foundation.

Bem TV is a non-governmental organization with headquarters in Niterói, the main city of the Metropolitan Area of Rio de Janeiro after the capital. According to its website[6], its history dates back to 1990 when two university students of communication idealized an organization to use their knowledge in media and journalism for social change. For the first ten years, the organization acted through video training and production in favelas of Niterói. Later, it has changed into an organization that also promotes multimedia methodologies aiming at low-income youth and school educators. Its list of projects also includes media training and education towards child rights protection and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. *Bem TV* claims to have involved over one thousand young people in its multimedia project alone.

Viva Rio (the organization responsible for the multimedia initiative *Viva Favela*) started as a collective reaction of people from different socioeconomic and professional backgrounds to the high rates of violence in Rio de Janeiro in 1993[7]. One of its most iconic actions was the anti-violence walkout *Reage Rio* (React Rio) that gathered over 400 thousand people wearing white for peace in the center of the city. In 1995, the group institutionalized as a non-governmental organization to promote initiatives against social inequality in Brazil and later even abroad (e.g. Haiti). Their work became a reference for policy makers, who turned some of their recommendations and methodologies into policies or governmental programs (today's Pacifying Police Unit program trace back to *Viva Rio*'s suggestions). Today, *Viva Rio* is one of Brazil's biggest and most influential NGOs acting through research, policy consultancy and initiatives in issues concerning security, education, health, and environment[8].

This brief description demonstrates one important characteristic of NGO work in Rio de Janeiro. All the organizations have roots in the region. Nevertheless, they display different types of social ties with favela residents. On the one hand, *Viva Rio* and *Bem TV* have the socioeconomic divide as a symbolic boundary between the organizations and favelas. Their headquarters are in non-favela neighborhoods. On the other hand, CEASM and *Observatório de Favelas* consist of better-off residents or former residents of favelas. These different types of social ties suggest that NGO conveners have some first-hand or mediated awareness and experience of the lacks, threats, and hardships of everyday life in favelas.

It is undeniable that social hierarchies exist and affect power relations between NGOs with residents and governments (De Wit and Berner 2009). However, the description demonstrates that these four NGOs are not as detached from local realities if we compare them to foreign organizations developing aid programs abroad and implementing them in favelas, for example. While NGO-ization debates have a point in what concerns the privileges of NGOs over social movements in relation to the state, it could be significantly informative to pay careful attention to the interrelations between different organizations and local communities.

Social Movement Characteristics of NGO Work in Favelas

The brief description of the four NGOs in favelas also indicates how these organizations relate to the history of social movements in Brazil in specific ways. There are three aspects that I find particularly important to take into account in order to understand these relations. First, in historical terms the action of NGOs is a recent phenomenon in a longer tradition of collective actions against social inequality in Brazil. At least since the 1960s, people in different sectors of Brazilian society (e.g. scholars, university students, the Catholic Church) have acted together on behalf of low-income populations in rural and urban environments. Under the repressive military regime (1964–1984), micro-organizations acted at the grassroots level to provide material, technical and intellectual support to bottom-up social movements of workers, peasants, favela residents, and other groups struggling for better living conditions. The efforts to obtain financial support from international development agencies led these micro-organizations to institutionalize themselves. The first registration of organizations as NGOs in Brazil was in 1986. With the democratic transition in the 1980s, the number of NGOs increased and culminated in the foundation of the Brazilian Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (ABONG) in 1991. (Dysman 2013)

The fact that these four NGOs started during the 1990s or early 2000s is not necessarily a coincidence. In that period, the Brazilian economic and political stability led to the reduction of foreign financial aid to non-governmental organizations. In these circumstances, Evelina Dagnino (Dagnino 2008; 2010) explains that NGOs spread in Brazil especially in the 1990s because of a confluence between neoliberal efforts to reduce state costs and the interest of non-governmental actors to guarantee financial support. Consequently, NGOs and entrepreneurial foundations became ideal governmental partners with which to conduct welfare initiatives while competing social movements were marginalized. Collective action in favelas today still reflects this logic. For example, the four NGOs I analyze here list governmental and corporate sponsors and partners to their projects. Meanwhile, residents' associations have struggled with lack of financial and material resources (see Chapter 3).

Second, as a part of the history of Latin American social movements, the NGOs display a curious dualistic type of relationship with favela communities. On the one hand, they resemble external entities to the communities in which or on whose behalf they act. This is clear in the cases of *Bem TV* and *Viva Rio*. Both have their headquarters in the centers of the cities. In order to promote their initiatives, participants either go to the headquarters or the staff members go to the favelas or peripheral areas. To some extent, this happens in *Observatório de Favelas* as well. Even though they are located inside a favela, staff members admit that very few residents participate in their projects (Baroni 2013). In that sense, the organization that most resembles a community-based organization is CEASM, which has often emphasized that its priority is to provide services to the residents of Complexo da Maré.[9]

On the other hand, the four organizations maintain different types of ties with favelas. The four organizations resulted from efforts of middle/upper class, non-favela residents or/with socioeconomically better-off (former) residents. This close relationship has influenced how they develop projects with in-depth awareness of local needs. Perhaps the clearest example of the social ties between NGOs and local communities is how organizations have incorporated favela residents in their staff. In *Viva Rio*, researchers from favelas and community leaders have participated in the development and conduction of some of their pedagogical initiatives in favelas. In addition, residents from favelas and peripheries have also acted as educators, photographers and instructors on projects such as the multimedia initiative *Viva Favela*. A similar process has occurred in *Bem TV*, *Observatório de Favelas* and CEASM, where former participants of projects have become educators and project coordinators.

Finally, the third aspect of social movements' history that appears in NGO work is the emphasis on education as a repertoire. Since the 1960s the concept of non-formal education has appeared in debates about educational policies, especially in relation to the so-called Global South (Smith 2001). The division between formal and non-formal education "reflects the gulf between government provision through the school system, on the one hand, and the needs and interests of marginal populations who are most alienated from the system on the other" (Smith 2001). In Brazil, public schools are constantly targets of general criticism for their low-quality services and consequent high number of dropouts (cf. Bonal and Tarabini 2014). The precarious school system and the growth of civil society concerns about education explain why non-formal education is crucial in favelas and other low-income environments.

Even if non-formal education existed within social movements already in the 1970s, it was the NGOs, in cooperation with governments and other social associations, that have popularized policies and projects of non-formal education from the 1980s onwards. The Brazilian scholar Maria da Gloria Gohn identifies five dimensions of the process of non-formal media education in Brazil: (a) the learning about civil rights, (b) the development of vocational skills, (c) the exercise and practice of community-based organization, (d) the flexible and spontaneous learning of traditional school subjects, and (e) the education developed in and through media. (Gohn 2011, 105–9)

These dimensions relate to the educational initiatives of the CEASM, *Observatório de Favelas*, *Viva Rio* and *Bem TV*. Most importantly, in the case of this study, is the understanding of how media appears in these pedagogy processes.

MEDIA EDUCATION AS NGO REPERTOIRE

The four NGOs with which I familiarized promote media education in favelas. In favelas, media education matches the general definition of the term in international debates (Hobbs 2008). That is, media education is "the process of teaching and learning about the media" that "aims to develop *both* critical understanding *and* active participation" by enabling people to "interpret and make informed judgements as consumers of media" and "to become producers of media in their own right" (Buckingham 2003, 4). However, the processes of media education in favelas have different political peculiarities (Custódio 2015a). These peculiarities are interrelated and have to do with aspects of the context of favelas I have described at different points in this book. NGO-driven media education takes place (a) in the realm of non-formal edu-

cation and (b) relate to social movement struggles against the consequences of social inequality, culminating in practices that (c) redefines the notion of citizenship. These peculiarities appear in the history of media education in social movements and in NGO work.

Media Education in Brazilian Social Movements

It is possible to make a rough outline of the trajectory of media education in social movements in Brazil. As socio-pedagogic processes, media education happens in struggles against the consequences of social inequality. Its roots go back to Paulo Freire's seminal perception of critical pedagogy and communication as processes that fuel the bottom-up struggles of people on the less privileged sides of social divides (Freire 1987). The Brazilian dictatorial regime (1964–1984) forced Freire into exile and prevented the implementation of his pedagogical ideas in the country's school system. Nevertheless, Freire's critical pedagogical methods have been preserved in Brazil especially due to the grassroots actions of social movements and non-governmental organizations. In these spheres, media education has significantly grown both as pedagogical methodologies in non-formal educational practices and as repertoires of civic action.

The implementation of media education in Brazil, represented at three key moments since the 1960s, still remains today along with the struggles for the democratization of media and society (Paiva, Sodré, and Custódio 2015). In 1960–70, media education took place underground during the military regime as methods of basic education and community articulation of rural and urban poor populations. A well-known case of grassroots media education was to be found all over Brazil in the Basic Ecclesiastical Communities (CEB) (Betto 1985). Progressive sectors of the Catholic Church created the CEBs to promote literacy. One of their pedagogical methods was the creation of schools for radio broadcasting. In these radio schools, youths and adults "created content for literacy (reading, writing, and math)" combined with "knowledge in health, agriculture, associative life [and] religion" learned through "a series of activities complementary to the schools in order to motivate community mobilization and organization" (Fávero 2006). They would then broadcast the information they produced from small-scale community-based radio stations.

In the period of the democratic transition throughout the 1980s, these grassroots practices of media education multiplied among a diversity of civic actors. In different forms of social movements, associations and organizations (e.g. landless and homeless movements, residents' associations, labor unions, student unions and others) generated educational processes through which participants engaged in individual and collective acquisition of socio-political

knowledge (Gohn 2012). This includes the participation in practices of what is known in Latin America as *comunicação popular*. That is, grassroots media meant to promote people's participation in communication processes as "a means of raising critical awareness, mobilization, political education, information and cultural expression of the people. [*Comunicação popular*] is a channel to express the denunciations and demands of the oppressed populations" (Peruzzo 1998, 124–25). Since the making of *comunicação popular* demanded technical and journalistic training combined with the raising of awareness concerning civil rights and politics, the participation in those media has also represented the engagement in critical education through media practice.

Since the 1990s, NGOs have occupied a prominent position in the promotion of media education in Brazil. One way to understand the functioning of contemporary media education initiatives is to look at how the four NGOs in this study—CEASM, *Observatório de Favelas*, *Viva Rio*, and *Bem TV*—have promoted it in favelas and peripheral neighborhoods across the State of Rio de Janeiro.

In the case of CEASM, media education appears in different projects. In their preparatory course for university admission tests (known as CPV project), participants studied traditional school subjects by problematizing them with reference to their own everyday lives. From a critical standpoint, the teachers (including university researchers and professors) relate subjects to discussions about social inequality, human rights, and the history of favelas. As part of the process, they also discuss media representations and the criminalization of poverty in Brazil.

In addition to the CPV project, the newspaper *O Cidadão da Maré* also appears as a space for media education in CEASM. André Esteves (2004) describes and analyzes the making and the participatory process in the newspaper. Esteves conducted an ethnographic study by volunteering and then acting as editor of *O Cidadão da Maré*. He explains that the newspaper originated as a project of local media in which residents would act as journalists at different stages of news production. Initially, he argues that most of the staff consisted of volunteer journalists who had been studying on the CPV project. While CPV resembled traditional forms of education, in the newspaper volunteers learned media making and journalism by doing. Esteves describes how the project was successful in preparing participants to pursue degrees and professional careers related to media while also being involved in political actions.

At *Observatório de Favelas*, the pedagogical projects focus exclusively on media education. Their two media education projects are *Imagens do Povo* (Images of the People) and the People's School of Critical Communication (ESPOCC). *Imagens do Povo* (created in 2004) combines technical skills in

photography with knowledge of human and civil rights to train favela and non-favela residents into photographers able to document and value the history and culture of favelas and peripheral neighborhoods. *Imagens do Povo* also maintains a photo agency to support photographers in their search for positions in the labor market[10]. In a recent article based on her doctoral dissertation, the Brazilian scholar Alice Baroni looks at *Imagens do Povo* in her study on community and mainstream photojournalism (Baroni 2015).

ESPOCC (founded in 2005) aims at "initiating youths and adults from favelas and peripheral neighborhoods in knowledge and experiences with the theory, methodology and languages of *comunicação popular* [people's communication] in order to empower their critical and transforming agency." *ESPOCC* bases its yearly courses on three key questions: "can people from favelas and peripheral neighborhoods challenge dominant representations and represent themselves? Can they identify and solve their own communication-related obstacles? Can these experiences be sustainable?" Since 2012, *ESPOCC* has promoted courses on "affirmative advertising" (non-profit, community-oriented forms of advertising to value socialization, local culture and entrepreneurship)[11].

At *Viva Rio*, the main media education project is *Viva Favela*. In Chapter 5, I described *Viva Favela* as a multimedia, online and offline platform for the production and circulation of information from favelas and peripheries. However, the project also includes different forms of media educational practices. When it started in 2001, the NGO staff recruited mostly young low-income people who participated in workshops that prepared participants to act professionally in news writing, photojournalism, and other media-related tasks (cf. Ramalho 2007).

During my fieldwork, *Viva Favela* conducted workshops both at *Viva Rio*'s headquarters and in favelas due to their partnerships with community organizations. Participants were often favela or periphery residents who could spare time for extra-curricular education. After participating in *Viva Favela*, some participants became professionals working as freelancers or in the media market. Others joined community media or started their own initiatives where they lived. A few others became staff members training other generations of participants. In October 2015, *Viva Favela* promoted workshops such as the Program for Multimedia Community Correspondents (PFCCM)[12], focusing specifically on young people from different favelas in Rio de Janeiro.

Bem TV is the organization that most predominantly promotes media education projects. In the project *Olho Vivo* (term translatable as "smart eyes"), the NGO promotes media workshops on video production, photography, and digital media. The project started in 2003 and focuses on low-income adolescents of favelas and peripheral neighborhoods in the Metropolitan Area of

Rio de Janeiro. According to the project's website, in *Olho Vivo* "boys and girls are stimulated to use what they learn to know their own communities and to elaborate media proposals that may contribute for the local development and for the improvement of youth's quality of life."[13] One of the outcomes of *Olho Vivo* was the youth-led, audiovisual group *Nós na Fita* (a slang term that means "count on us", literally translatable as "us on the tape"), in which former participants of *BemTV*'s project raised public issues concerning favela youths (e.g. sexuality, STD prevention). (Leite 2005)

Another project of *BemTV* is *Educomunicar* (a neologism combining the words education and communication)[14]. Since 2006, this project has promoted media education methodologies and classroom practices among teachers of public schools. At the end of the project, teachers are stimulated to create media projects in their own schools and to increase their media education knowledge with colleagues, students and even the school directors.

The description of the media education projects demonstrates how NGOs have catered to the professional and political self-development of residents. Media education projects promote the political engagement of favela residents with everyday life issues and at the same time prepare them to act professionally. The fact that NGOs have promoted these goals is not arbitrary. If we think in terms of project planning and execution, the duality between professional and political forms of change relates to the different types of social ties the NGOs maintained with local communities. These actions are not haphazard; they result from strategic planning developed according to NGO conveners' own experience and/or dialogue with local populations.

Favela Residents' Needs and Struggles in NGO Project Development

Different elements that characterize the planning and implementation of projects also demonstrate the closeness between NGOs, local communities, and social movements in Rio de Janeiro. My analysis here is based on observations, interviews with NGO directors and project coordinators[15], and interviews with former participants[16] of NGO projects. I first describe how discriminatory media representations and the formation of counterpublics among favela residents have inspired media education projects. Then, I look at how the combination of vocational training and political awareness indicate concern with the under-citizenry condition of young favela residents. Finally, I look at how NGOs organize events and involve participants in events to raise awareness and mobilize engagement in social movement webs.

Discriminatory representation as NGO Motivation

NGO directors and project coordinators in the four organizations described how discriminatory representations of favela residents in mainstream media motivated their actions. As mentioned before, CEASM started as a collective action of residents and former residents including scholars and researchers. According to a former participant in CEASM projects and director of the organization at the time of the interview, media representations were among the local problems that motivated the articulation of the projects in education and media practices. He explained that:

> In the creation of CEASM, [the founders] thought about acting on four fronts. In fact, they noticed four problems here [in Maré] right from the beginning. One was the issue of education in Maré. [. . .] A research from the 1990s showed that only 0.05 percent of the population in Maré had a higher education degree. The other issue was the low self-esteem and the relationship mainstream media has with favelas. From this, two big areas of action came into being. One was the rescue of local memory and the valuing of local identity. The other was *O Cidadão da Maré*, which was an instrument of communication from Maré to Maré. There was also the fourth line, which was the creation of jobs and income. [. . .]

In a similar way, the residents and former residents who founded *Observatório de Favelas* also turned their own concern about media representations into fuel to start the NGO and projects such as the critical communication school ESPOCC and the photography school *Imagens do Povo*. A non-favela scholar and one of the directors of *Observatório de Favelas* at the time of the interview, described how the group of friends gathered to form the NGO. He explained that:

> The idea came from some people partly of low-income origins, residents of peripheries and favelas who shared the anguish of seeing how their places were represented in a very negative way in the media. [. . .] Then, these people got together with the objective of constructing actions and developing initiatives that could somehow [. . .] show the other side. Show the histories of resistance, creativity and production. [. . .] In summary, they wanted to overcome the huge and unequal frame through which favelas were seen and represented.

For the other two organizations, the perception of negative media discourses as a motivation arose differently. For *Viva Rio*, it was dialogue. According to the non-favela project coordinator at the time of the interview, as the organization consolidated itself as a powerful NGO in Brazil, it brought together people from different sectors of society, including favela community

leaders and mainstream media owners. The coordinator explained that those situations of dialogue were in the roots of the *Viva Favela* project. She said that:

> In the meetings, it was always clear that the mainstream media was on the side of *Viva Rio*. It was indeed. Then, the leaderships from favelas took advantage of those moments to criticize how favelas appeared in the newspapers. They pointed out the image they portrayed of favelas and the stigma that existed against residents because of that. This was repeated in different meetings and made it very clear: they all knew that there was no effort to try and revert it.

In the case of *Bem TV*, the two university students who started the organization were involved in social movements, such that one for media democratization in Brazil. According to a former project participant and educator at the time of the interview, the founders of *Bem TV* were young people who wanted to use communication for something socially relevant. For a long time, they went to favelas to participate and film meetings of residents and organizations involved in land disputes. When they arrived with the equipment, local children and adolescents approached them. These situations motivated them to start teaching young residents about how to make media. Since then, *Bem TV* has been part of a nationwide media education network and their projects have changed through time. However, their original ideals remain, including the production of discourses different from mainstream media's. The educator explained that:

> We don't use communication as an end, as a wonderful product. There are occasionally wonderful outcomes. However, we take into consideration the process through which the participants go. We think that it is most important if they learn to have a critical view about the media, to know that they are also capable of producing narratives that differ from what mainstream media talk about their communities. Then, it is about them producing and speaking about what there really is in their communities.

These quotes show how the formation of the NGOs and the development of media education projects contained motivations typical of the grassroots social movements in the contexts of favelas. These motivations were first-hand or learned perceptions that negative media representations have an impact on the livelihood of favela residents. In response, the four organizations developed projects that could somehow contribute to the formation of counter-publics among favela residents. Therefore, contrary to the criticism to NGOs in NGO-ization discourses, the four organizations with which I familiarized maintain the social movement tradition of acting on behalf of low-income

populations, according to what those populations perceive as problems to their own everyday lives.

Vocational Training, Professional Practice and Political Action

Another characteristic of NGO work in favelas is the combination of political awareness with vocational training. In all organizations, the engagement in counter-public actions appeared along with common words such as autonomy, capacity building, income generation, and sustainability. In other words, organizations aim at mobilizing residents to be more critical and active citizens in society while also providing them with knowledge to pursue better-paying jobs or careers otherwise not widely available for favela residents. In other words, the organizations strategically tackle the entanglement of class stratification and neoliberal individualism among low-income Brazilians. I develop these ideas further on the next chapters.

In the case of CEASM, the creation of jobs and income was among the original motivations of the NGO founders. In terms of professional growth, the preparatory course for the university admission tests (CPV) was a case of capacity building while the newspaper *O Cidadão da Maré* was a space for journalistic practice. Even though not all those who participated the CPV project became volunteers on the newspaper: for those who participated in both the projects were complementary. At least three participants of both projects whom I met acquired higher education degrees in journalism and now work in various media sectors in Rio de Janeiro.

At *Observatório de Favelas*, the two media education projects have the combination of political and professional growth as part of their strategy. A non-favela coordinator of *Imagens do Povo* at the time of the interview, described how the project combined the photography school with a photo agency and a database of images. At the school, they aimed to train photographers to act professionally from a human rights standpoint. For that, in addition to photography, they studied philosophy, history of arts and law. The agency and the database served as professional platforms through which photographers studying on the projects can enter the labor market, maintain their personal portfolios and build their own clientele.

There was a similar approach at the other *Observatório de Favelas'* project ESPOCC. At the school of critical communication, the non-favela coordinators at the time explained the three core issues of the project: can favela represent itself? Can people from favelas identify and solve their problems? Are their actions sustainable? Since 2011, these questions have been processed in their yearly course on "community advertising." On the course, participants

learn about advertising to create self-sustainable agencies and to value local commerce in favelas.

Viva Rio's multimedia project *Viva Favela* also combined political engage-ment with professional practices. Then project coordinator described how *Viva Favela* promoted the idea of citizen journalism in workshops and trained participants to use the online platform professionally. She said:

> *Viva Favela* is more of a space where we give visibility to what they are produc-ing as a volunteer group that sees benefit in what we do. [. . .] It is becoming a network of *comunicadores* interested in entering the labor market. Thus, *Viva Favela* becomes a portfolio for many of them.

In addition to supporting the formation of counterpublics in different fave-las, *Bem TV* also gives professional support to former participants of their projects. At the time of the interview, an educator of the project said that one of their actions was to give technical support to multimedia groups partici-pants created after the end of the project. One news website for different fave-las in Niterói and a multimedia production group are examples. In addition, at the time of the interview, the NGO had an agency-like initiative called *Bem TV Productions*. In this initiative, the NGO offered video, photography, and event coverage services to private clients. They then used the service fees for financing their projects. When clients hired them, former participants were invited to gain professional experience and make some income.

Another characteristic of the NGOs is that all four hired former participants as staff members. This has different types of positive outcomes. For the par-ticipant hired, it is a job opportunity. For example, many former participants of the *Observatório de Favelas*' school of photography now work in compa-nies or as freelancers after gaining professional experience working as staff members at the NGO. Another outcome is the shift from participant to educa-tor/instructor in the project. That shift helps organizations to strengthen the sense of belonging of new participants with their projects by having favela residents teach their peers. For the educator, it is also an opportunity to act politically by acting in political processes through teaching.

These examples demonstrate how vocational training and professional opportunities also result from the close ties between NGOs and local popula-tions.

NGOs in Social Movement Networks

Finally, another example of the interrelations between NGOs and social movements is how the four organizations acted within social movement net-works. On certain occasions, they participated in broader social movement

events. For example, during the Rio +20 Conference for Sustainable Development in 2012, both *Viva Rio* and *Bem TV* recruited project participants to cover the People's Summit, an open-access, civil society-led, parallel conference in Rio de Janeiro. By doing so, participants of NGO projects contributed to the dissemination of information about social movement demands and demonstrations against climate change, deforestation and different forms of human rights violations.

A second type of networked NGO action is the partnerships they created with different organizations. CEASM, for example, had a partnership with the NGO *Núcleo Piratininga de Comunicação* (NPC), which has had a long tradition in promoting media and journalism training for community leaders and labor unions. *Bem TV* has promoted visits to and interactions with other organizations that promoted similar media education projects in Rio de Janeiro. Participants of their projects would visit other municipalities and states meeting other low-income young people involved in similar activities. *Observatório de Favelas* also promoted joint actions and events with other organizations. In Complexo da Maré, they often partner with sister organization *Redes* (see Chapter 5) to promote cultural events in favelas. It also promotes initiatives with organizations in different favelas, too.

These examples of actions demonstrate that despite being institutionalized and having closer ties with governmental and corporate sponsors, the four NGOs have managed to act along with different organizations and social movements in Rio de Janeiro and Brazil. Therefore, the claims in NGO-ization debates about NGOs de-politicizing social action are not reflected in the cases of the organizations I observed in my research process. On the contrary, the NGOs seem to contribute to the struggles of grassroots actors and social movements engaged in different forms of struggles for human rights and social justice. Therefore, the relationship of NGO work and favela media activism lies in the opportunities for acquiring knowledge about media and journalism for favela residents. One last step is to reflect upon how former participants of NGO projects evaluate those experiences.

PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATIONS OF NGO WORK IN FAVELAS

So far, I have demonstrated how NGOs in Rio de Janeiro do not have a dichotomous relationship with grassroots social movements. I have also argued that NGOs in favelas present different levels of social ties with favela residents. These two characteristics have made NGOs support grassroots struggles and promote change in issues related to under-citizenry by promoting political awareness, vocational training and professional opportunities.

Thus, in terms of its correlation with favela media activism, NGO work has been successful in promoting critical knowledge and technical skills useful for residents who engage in struggles in, about and through media. However, acknowledging the importance of their work should not prevent us from evaluating the political roles of NGOs in favelas. In this sense, one problem in the scholarly literature about NGOs is that participants rarely have a say in discussions about the positive and negative aspects of NGOs intervening in their everyday life.

Limitations of Organizational Approaches to NGOs

Studies about the relationship between NGOs and their "beneficiaries" are very common in the field of development research. My use of quotation marks in "beneficiaries" aims at problematizing another highly contested concept in the jargon of NGO research and practice. Since low-income people who presumably need different forms of help often form these target social groups, like favela residents, "beneficiary" seems to imply powerlessness and passivity (Brunt and McCourt 2012). For this reason, other terms such as "stakeholders", "clients" and "partners" have been adopted to assign a more meaningful and active role to target groups (Cornwall 2000). However, one issue is certainly more problematic than any terminological divergence: research has focused more on organizations than on the people who benefit from or participate in their projects.

Some authors analyze organizational strategies to deal with donors, international and local partners, and governments (Eade 2000; Edwards and Hulme 1992; 1997). Another recurrent theme in NGO research is their accountability not only to donors and other institutional partners, but also to local target groups (Bendell 2006; Kilby 2006). The problem with these kinds of organizational approaches is that they leave little room for understanding how people who participate in the projects relate with those organizations and staff members intervening in their lives.

Even the apparently more neutral term "participant", which I have used in this study, seems to be taken for granted. One key problem is the vagueness about who participates, how participation is promoted and its outcomes (Carpentier 2011; Cornwall 2011). In addition, the positive connotation of the term "participation" has been questioned. Sometimes participatory plans are not executed in the field (Brunt and McCourt, 2012) leading to tyrannical impositions of participation onto local target groups (Cooke and Kothari 2001). In general, researchers seem to focus on understanding how to enhance participatory practices (Cornwall 2000; Hickey and Mohan 2004). With some exceptions (Hilhorst 2003; Lewis and Opoku-Mensah 2006; White 2000;

Eliasoph 2011), little has been presented on the not always positive nuances of participation or the participants' evaluations of NGOs and their own participatory processes.

Criticism and Praise: Evaluations of (Former) Participants

I would like to conclude this chapter by presenting how some residents involved in media activism evaluate NGO work in favelas. I talked with people who had participated or were still involved in NGO projects. When I asked them about their views on NGOs, they conceded the importance of participating in the projects for their own activism. However, they also raised questions and criticism about the conflicting relationships among organizations, about the restrictions for participation in projects, and about the relationships between NGOs and the state.

To some extent, their descriptions of gratitude to NGOs paradoxically indicate that the organizational strategies for raising political awareness among favela residents are effective. This paradox appears, for example, in the statement of a former participant in pedagogical projects and member of an NGO-driven media initiative.

> i-9: I, for example, was raised in an NGO and recognize all they did for me. I recognize and am grateful. Then, if today I criticize NGOs it is also because they opened doors to [critical] thinking possibilities.

In other cases, they praised NGOs while also making political claims about what NGOs mean as political actors in the contexts of favelas. Another former participant whom the NGO hired as an instructor after the project raised a recurrent issue during the interviews: the state's prioritization of NGOs over schools.

> i-1: Even though I am critical of the place where I work, I can't delete this history. This is where I learned. However, I have it in my mind that I should have learned this kind of things at schools, you know?

His criticism is directed at both the state and the NGOs. In relation to the state, he indicates that investing in NGO projects is a way for governments to shirk their responsibility to guarantee quality education to favela residents. This kind of criticism echoed in the evaluation of another former participant in an NGO-driven media initiative.

> i-6: The biggest question I have is why the state needs to invest in NGOs if it could do its job directly. I see there is interest in investing in NGOs because [the state] does not want to take responsibility.

These claims corroborate the arguments in the NGO-ization debates that NGOs support neoliberal, governmental agendas. In that respect, the evaluations also indicate that NGOs are to blame for not pushing for systemic, governmental changes.

Another example of how the investments in NGOs do not facilitate broader social change is how restrictive the participation in projects can be. While it is true that thousands of favela residents have benefited from NGO projects in favelas, their ways of operating leads to the engagement of a certain type of participant while excluding favela residents with poorer living standards. In order to participate in projects, people have to enroll. Therefore, participation is restricted to people who know about the projects and meet the selection criteria (often involving being at school and being able to read and write). This creates barriers to the many favela residents who do not have the prerequisites for participation. One of the interviewees admitted this fact.

> i-1: I think one of the cool things in [the projects] is that, for example, only people who are interested in the stuff enroll for it. Even [a project] has the characteristic of opening positions for people who already work or act within the field of communication. To some extent, this is nice because you bring affinities together. However, you end up ignoring the kid who does not have an established profile.

Another interviewee echoed these concerns. She had participated in projects and at the time of the interview volunteered in a NGO-driven media initiative. According to her, only few favela residents get to participate in NGO projects.

> i-10: NGOs are restricted to the same group of people. [. . .] It is always the same people. The assertive ones who are already at the university or have a degree. [. . .] Certainly, there are always people participating, but it is always the assertive ones.

In these cases, the interviewees are referring specifically to media education projects. In extra-curricular, school-like projects, the diversity in participants seemed greater. Nevertheless, these evaluations of participatory restrictions also demonstrate how NGOs have very little power to promote broader societal changes in comparison to the state. The measures aimed at favela youth are as if NGOs dealt with stable favela residents while the state focused on crime control rather than capacity building. The question then is why NGOs do not challenge the state neglect to turn their projects into policies.

One reason, according to the interviewees, is that NGOs also benefit from the state's lack of interest in societal change. A member of a multimedia col-

lective explained how he perceives the parasitic relationship between NGOs and the state.

> i-5: We like these institutions [NGOs], we have affective and socialization ties with them. However, we, young people who think about and discuss social problems, think an institution also needs poverty to maintain itself. [. . .] An NGO is important, but as times go by you see their managers getting rich, changing their lives, you know.

The perception that NGOs benefit from poverty appeared in other statements as well. For another former participant of projects, exploiting poverty may cause problems when it comes to the relationship between NGOs and local populations. Consonant with the previous quote, referring specifically to NGO founders who were favela residents, she said:

> i-9: You see leaders of NGOs and community leaders getting so much visibility that they even forget where they came from. Many of them have become white. They have forgotten they are black. [. . .] This reinforces the distrust favela residents have in NGOs and these alleged leaders that speak for the community. Who said they could speak on behalf of the community? Is it just because they created an NGO?

The perception interviewees had about NGOs depending on the perpetuation of poverty and not being legitimized representatives of favelas is useful to problematize my argument so far. In the preceding sections I have claimed that NGOs' social ties with favela residents help them to develop initiatives that cater to needs and demands of local populations. However, this is not enough to gain local trust if the organizations do not act on behalf of the community in conflicting issues. In other words, while former participants see educational services as positive, they do not feel NGOs engage in advocacy and political support for residents as much as they could. This expectation is clear in a statement of the former participant and NGO worker.

> i-1: The problem is not having the money of the state, but not criticizing the state when they should. "The money comes from the state, so I can't criticize the state." Where is the clause? Where is it in the contract? There is nothing. Therefore, you have to say it. Projects are complicated. They have strings attached. "I won't say anything otherwise next time we will not have financing."

Another problem that relates to the fear of positioning among NGOs is how organizations relate to one another. In some cases, NGOs have open institutional conflicts with others. During my fieldwork, for example, I felt as though I was walking on eggshells when members of NGOs criticized other

NGOs as we talked. Another case happened when a worker in an NGO did not have permission to speak on the microphone in a demonstration another NGO had mobilized. In the estimation of some interviewees, this relates to the neoliberal logic of competition for funding among NGOs.

> i-5: Nowadays, in Rio de Janeiro, NGOs have battles of egos. Those inside the social movement networks notice it. There is some professional respect, but there are disputes over which does more work in this or that area, which is better in this or that area. There are these clashes about who does more than the other does, but not in a productive way. It is really about the name, the status and for the benefits one will have to obtain things.

One consequence of these disputes is that they end up demotivating people who otherwise would be willing to acting politically. For a former participant and instructor in NGO projects, the NGO clashes in Rio de Janeiro cause problems to the strengthening of favela-based political action.

> i-2: The more I understand about *militância* [militancy, activism], the more I feel the need to be involved. However, for me to engage I need to feel comfortable. Moreover, this gossip, petty disputes, these bad things that happen especially in the field of NGOs end up making one feel like getting away from it more and more.

The discomfort due to disputes among NGOs creates another interesting phenomenon: participants make a distinction between the organization and the projects. In some cases, this differentiation results from the sizes of the organizations and their projects. In the case of *Viva Rio*, for example, the NGO is so big and hierarchical that its project *Viva Favela* resemble an organization on its own. This also happens in smaller, yet hierarchical organizations such as *Observatório de Favelas* and *Bem TV*. People who participate in specific projects do not necessarily meet the general directors.

Consequently, some of the people with whom I talked separated their gratitude to projects from their criticism of the organizations. For instance, a former project participant explained how he relates differently to the project in which he works and the NGO that runs the project.

> *Q:* Is there any conflict between what you do personally and what is done through [the project]?

> *i-4:* There is no conflict because I think what I do is in complete agreement with [the project]. Of course, there is another actor, which is [the NGO]. Maybe there would be [conflict] with [the NGO] regarding positioning about changes in the city, in politics... For example, [the NGO] clearly supports the UPP [Pacifying

Police Unit] program. This is not a unanimous position among social move-
ments, among the [staff of the project].

All these evaluations of NGO work in favelas by former participants in-
dicate how complex the relationship between organizations and local popu-
lations can be. In this chapter, I have argued that NGOs do not necessarily
have a conflicting relationship with social movements. Neither do they create
projects that are completely detached from the reality of their target social
groups. The fact that NGOs consist of favela residents, former residents and
open dialogue with local communities facilitates the compatibility between
project planning and local needs and demands. Nevertheless, the evaluations
of participants indicate that many problems remain despite the social ties
between NGOs and favelas.

These evaluations confirm the relationship between NGO work and favela
media activism. However, they do not explain how these correlations hap-
pen. I therefore find it necessary to move beyond organizational approaches
and develop ways to analyze the trajectories of residents engaged in media
activism before, during and after participating in NGO projects. I turn to this
problem in the next two chapters in order to outline an approach to these
engagements that does not predetermine the residents' motivations and goals.

NOTES

1. During my fieldwork, I heard mentions of another acronym, OSCIP, which
stands for *organização da sociedade civil de interesse público* (civil society or-
ganization of public interest). This is the official acronym established by law, but
NGO largely remain as a regular reference term outside legislative and bureaucratic
discourses.

2. For information on the NGO-driven demonstration in *Complexo da Maré*, see
http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=10000 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

3. This chapter extends the book chapter "Political Peculiarities of Media Educa-
tion in Brazilian Favelas" (Custódio, 2015a) and the conference paper "Beneficiaries'
Agency in NGO-Driven Media Education Projects in Favelas of Rio", presented at
the 2nd Nordic Conference for Development Research in Finland (2013).

4. See *Observatório de Favelas* page in http://of.org.br/en/nossa-historia/ (last ac-
cessed on December 5, 2016)

5. See *Observatório de Favelas* page in http://of.org.br/en/categoria/areas-de-
atuacao/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016)

6. See *BEM TV*'s page (in Portuguese) in http://www.bemtv.org.br/portal/nossa-
Historia.php (last accessed on December 5, 2016)

7. For a brief historical overview of *Viva Rio*, see: http://projetodraft.com/o-viva-
rio-inova-ha-20-anos-quando-juntou-intelectuais-e-liderancas-comunitarias-contra-a-
violencia-no-rio/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

8. For *Viva Rio*'s page, see http://vivario.org.br/en/about-us/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

9. For CEASM's page, see http://www.ceasm.org.br (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

10. Read more about *Imagens do Povo* (in Portuguese) here: http://www.imagens-dopovo.org.br/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016)

11. Read more about ESPOCC (in Portuguese) here: http://www.espocc.org.br/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016)

12. For further information about the multimedia community correspondent initiative, see (in Portuguese) http://vivario.org.br/viva-favela-e-coletivo-coca-cola-firmam-parceria/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

13. For information (in Portuguese) on *Projeto Olho Vivo,* see http://www.bemtv.org.br/projeto-olho-vivo/?page_id=101 (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

14. Brazil has an important movement for *educomunication.* These movements consist of scholars, educators and non-governmental organizations. Together, they push for policy change and for pedagogical innovation in terms of uses of media technologies in educational processes. Different authors have written about *educom-munication* in Brazil (e.g. Eléa 2014; Soares 2011). For *Bem TV*'s *Educomunicar* project, see http://www.bemtv.org.br/portal/educomunicar/index.php (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

15. I conducted these interviews between May and June, 2012.

16. I conducted these interviews in 2013.

Chapter Seven

Agency, Structure and Interaction

Elements that Shape Favela Media Activism

What I heard from one favela resident makes a good starting point for the analysis of how favela residents engage in media activism. To my question about what it is like to live in a favela, this member of a multimedia collective answered that "in the favela, I usually say that we—especially men, but also women—grow up very fast." This answer recurred in other situations and intrigued me. What does it mean to grow up fast? How does it differ from growth outside favelas? How does the experience growing up in a favela differ between men and women? I also wondered how growing up fast related to engaging with media activism. I had already felt it would be insufficient to claim that people got involved in media activism because of their participation in NGO media education projects. His answer made me wonder how other aspects of their everyday lives related to their political engagement processes.

As I further familiarized with teenagers and young adults involved in media activism, the complexity of their engagement processes became more evident. As I observed actions and heard personal accounts of their own processes of engagement, one paradox struck me.

On the one hand, they talked about things they had to do as low-income youth in Rio de Janeiro. For example, some interviewees had the self-inflicted or external pressure to drop out of school at an early age to supplement their household incomes. Others had to juggle between their education, household chores, and work. On the other hand, they also had things they wanted to do along with what they had to do to achieve their own goals. Attending extra-curricular vocational courses or preparatory projects for university admission tests were examples of actions towards achieving their personal objectives.

When I say this is a paradox, I refer to the conflictual co-existence between their obligations consequent of their low-income socioeconomic statuses and

the pursuit of their individual goals. In this paradox, I argue that they experienced "turning points" that paved their way to media activism.

My goal in this chapter and the next is to explain this paradoxical continuum, identify turning points and analyze how personal trajectories growing up in favelas relate to engagement in media activism. This chapter is an effort to explain how socioeconomic needs and individual desires relate to each other in the lives of young favela residents. First, I reflect further on what it means to be young and grow up faster in favelas. I also argue for the necessity of approaching young favela residents as political actors. After that, I formulate a theoretical framework through which to include socioeconomic and individualist imperatives in the analysis of engagement in favela media activism. In the next chapter, I use this framework for empirical analysis.

FAVELA YOUTH: FROM PROBLEMS AND VICTIMS TO POLITICAL ACTORS

A first step towards grasping the process of engagement in media activism is clarifying what it means to be young in favela. My initial reason for focusing on youth was empirical. All the people I met started acting in media between their mid-teens and mid-20s. Thus they were all young in terms of age. However, youth entails much more than how old one is. According to UNESCO, youth is a life stage representing the "transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community." This means that the ways we experience youth vary according to socioeconomic, political, and cultural factors. This is why Pierre Bourdieu argues that "it's an enormous abuse of language to use the same concept [youth] to subsume under the same term social universes that have practically nothing in common." (Bourdieu 1993, 95) In other words, being young in a favela differs from being young in wealthier environments.

This is how the claim that youth in favelas grow up fast—or faster—makes sense. Wealthier young Brazilians often follow the expected slow path of long-term education under stable economic conditions which allows time for rest, leisure, and vocational trial-and-error experiences before starting in work life and gaining financial and social independence. By contrast, young favela residents shoulder adult responsibilities very early in life. Not rarely, even in childhood. Among the people I met, these responsibilities included supplementing household income, raising younger siblings, caring for elderly family members, and dealing with children of their own. Therefore, even if they are of the same biological age, low-income and wealthier youth often have quite different life experiences in Rio de Janeiro.

Growing up fast seems to be a consequence of socioeconomic constraints. By that I mean that young favela residents assume responsibilities early in life because of external or self-inflicted pressures related to low-income living conditions. For instance, various studies have shown the correlation between school drop-outs and the need to work in Brazil. Tania Dauster (1992) conducted one of the pioneer anthropological studies about the correlation between favela dwelling, education and work in Rio de Janeiro. In that study, Dauster argues that children and young people leaving school to work was not only related to pressure to support the family, but also to what resembles choice or decision—constrained by their living conditions—as "strategies of the socialization system among the low-income populations" (Dauster 1992, 33). The study describes patterns of naturalization of gender-coded child labor (e.g. household chores for girls and physical work for boys) among favela residents who think education and work are complementary aspects of social life in favelas. In these circumstances, Dauster argues, boys and girls choose to work so that they can help at home (and have the respect of the family as a worker) and have their own money. This money represents self-sufficiency and also the ability to consume material goods (e.g. tennis shoes, clothes), with which they can build an identity based on tastes and styles.

Over two decades later, Dauster's results keep on recurring in more recent studies. For instance, in the edited book entitled "Urban Inequalities, School Inequalities" (Ribeiro et al. 2010), scholars use empirical materials to discuss how Rio de Janeiro's school system reflects the local social hierarchies. They demonstrate, for example, how living in favelas (especially in those distant from the city center) increases the chances of 15–19 year-olds and especially 20–24 year-olds being simultaneously out of school and unemployed. Another study focuses on the trajectories of low-income students who have returned to adult schools after dropping out of education earlier in life (Carrano, Marinho, and Oliveira 2015). This study also indicates how living in a favela relates to the need to work that pushes youth to quit education. A report (Venturi and Torini 2014) on the transition from school to work in Brazil shows that low-income children and young people have remained longer in school than in the early 1990s. However, the reasons for dropping out of school to go to work remain gender-coded. They are mostly economic for young men (e.g. self-maintenance, household support) and family-related for young women (e.g. marriage, motherhood) (Venturi and Torini 2014,15).

Labor in childhood and early youth also remains an issue of social status and identity formation. For example, Lucia Rabello de Castro (2006) demonstrates how consumption is a way for young favela residents to hide markers of poverty and to feel included in society. She argues that "in Brazil, given the gross and disparate social inequalities, life-styles and looks provide

signs to locate people on one side or the other of the dividing line between the worse and the better-off" (De Castro 2006, 184). For that purpose, some choose a drug-dealing career due to its immediate financial satisfaction and the power they can exert over others. Others choose to drop out of a dysfunctional school system to face the hardship of life as a worker. Similarly, Alexandre Soares (2011) demonstrates how combining work and education is a possible exit from the socioeconomic isolation and confinement in favelas. He identifies a pattern of "course culture" especially in favelas closer to the city center and tourist attractions. This culture results from young residents' search for extracurricular opportunities to adapt to contemporary demands for the acquisition and renewal of knowledge, and to avoid exclusion from work, consumption and economy. For him, low-income young people face a double challenge to accumulate knowledge in a context of socioeconomic constraint and to learn to be flexible to adapt to the contemporary work processes.

These examples illustrate the interplay between socioeconomic obligations and individual imperatives framing favela residents' growth. For these reasons, I believe, in agreement with other colleagues (e.g. Soares 2011), that researchers and scholars have to find alternative approaches to avoid superficial and even discriminatory explanations for youth livelihood and actions in favelas. In a review of the relationship between youth work, research and policy in Latin America, Patricia Oliart and Carles Feixa (2012) identify three traditions of youth studies. One of these traditions deals with youth as political actors. This tradition has mainly focused on student movements. A second tradition has focused on youth as either problems or victims of inequality and violence. A third tradition looks at low-income youth as creative and critical citizens who participate in cultural and political movements.

In the case of young favela residents, very typical approaches treat them as either social problems or victims of circumstances. The primacy of security discourses on public debates about favela youth is an evidence. For example, the Brazilian Federal Government is inconsistent when it comes to policies towards low-income, urban youth. While it promotes progressive campaigns to reduce the high homicide rates among low-income youth, it also supports and sponsors the militarization of favelas by the police (Ashcroft 2014), which is partly responsible for the high rate of homicides especially among low-income, black young men.

Research, even if meaning well, has also reflected the emphasis on favela youth as problems or victims especially of violence. For example, a lot of attention has been paid to how young male favela residents enter and leave the drug trade (Zaluar 2000; 2001; Barcellos and Zaluar 2014; Rinaldi 2006; Teixeira 2010). The importance of these studies is undeniable, especially for the proposals and implementation of more nuanced and humanistic security

policies. However, the predominance of such studies also, even if indirectly, contributes to the criminalization of young favela residents. This is what Soares (2011) refers to when he argues that we also need to look at youth from favelas from the perspective of rights and the phases of citizenship development.

In that direction, alternative approaches to favela youth treat favela residents as potentially creative and active citizens, especially in cultural political initiatives. Approaching the potentialities of young favela residents is very common among civil society actors, especially non-governmental organizations (NGOs). One recent example is a book about the entrepreneurial potential of favela residents (Meirelles and Athayde 2014). The authors, both engaged in non-governmental initiatives, used quantitative methods to create a portrait of the often-ignored urban and economic innovations that have taken place in favelas.

Of the three traditions in youth studies in Latin America, the least developed one in relation to favela youth regards their roles as political actors. There are certainly some very thought-provoking studies. For instance, Souza and Zanetti (2013) provide an important descriptive account of how favela and periphery residents have engaged in different forms of cultural practices as struggles for human rights and social justice. Another example is the study on different forms of socialization shaping identity formation, cultural practices and political resistance in favelas (Jovchelovic and Priego-Hernandez 2013). A third example is a study on the trajectories of young favela residents in NGO projects. From an anthropological perspective, the article reflects on how participation in projects relates to engagement in activism. (Souza 2015)

These studies embrace the complexity of everyday life and civic engagement in favelas. They indicate how much of the political action among favela residents results from different relationships between youth, organizations, and other civil society actors. They also treat favela residents as individuals capable of acting for change instead of depending on external interference. In different ways, they also tackle the dynamics between socioeconomic pressures and individual drives. However, studies that focus on the trajectories of favela residents as or into becoming political actors are rare in contrast to those studies focusing on violence and cultural entrepreneurship.

With that background in mind, I believe that to understand how favela residents engage in media activism it is necessary to move beyond the dichotomy between structural functionalism (as if they acted in reaction to external pressures and stimuli) and voluntarism (as if they decided to do what they do out of nowhere). At the same time, it is necessary not to ignore the importance of context and interpersonal relationships for individual decision-making processes. In addition, it is important to identify moments

in the complex continuum between what residents must and want to do that demonstrate how their engagement in media activism—or any other form of political action—starts. Favela residents' engagement in cultural and political actions has given rise to different longstanding sociological debates. At a conceptual level, these debates revolve around "structure" and "agency" along with "class" and "individualization." In sociological thinking, these two pairs of notions often appear as dichotomies. Nevertheless, dichotomies do not make sense or are not fruitful when we want to grasp and explore the favela resident's social actions.

STRUCTURE AND AGENCY IN FAVELA EVERYDAY LIFE

Articulating scholarly debates about structure/agency and class/individualization may be useful to explain how engagement in media activism comes about in favelas. Debates about structure and agency happen around interpretations of social life and human behavior. They emphasize either the influence of social environments on our actions or the autonomy we exert when we act. (Ritzer 2008) To overcome the dichotomy between structure and agency, some scholars have suggested that the structural elements do influence human action, but that human action also affects the structure. This is Anthony Giddens' main premise in his structuration theory. For him, structures are dual in the sense that they affect how people act, but also change in consequence of those actions. (Giddens 1984; Baber 1991)

Here I should turn to some non-academic discussions about the involvement of young people in the drug trade in favelas as examples of how structure-agency discourses appear in Brazil. In structural terms, some Brazilians believe that the mere fact of being born in favelas turns individuals into potential criminals. This view appeared in the statement of Rio de Janeiro's former governor when he said that favelas are factories of criminals (see chapter 3). By contrast, from an agency-related perspective, some believe that engaging in crime results exclusively from personal choices. These beliefs arise, for example, in the widespread criticism of human rights advocates, who presumably act to protect criminals. The popularity of anti-human rights politicians who defend police-led torture and killings of those who choose to become criminals illustrate this phenomenon (Douglas 2014). The duality between structure and agency often appears in analyses according to which favelas are neglected territories whose standards of living and lack of opportunities contribute to the renewal and expansion of drug trade organizations. This is a typical view in civil society proposals for state-led infrastructural, educational and vocational policies and initiatives to improve living standards in favelas.

The relationship between structure and agency in favelas also appears in scholarly discourse often related to the civil society approach. For example, Sandra Jovchelovic and Jacqueline Priego-Hernandez (2013) describe the interplay between context and the actions of favela residents by approaching people who have participated in cultural initiatives by NGOs. The authors explain that the violent surroundings teach residents "from an early age to read the signs of the context, to recognize those who are 'involved' (a euphemism for those who join the drug trade) and to adjust their own behavior in relation to what is available" (Jovchelovic and Priego-Hernandez 2013, 172). That is, favela residents acknowledge that the context exerts influence in their decisions, but also claim that their choices also define their life trajectories.

Another important argument in the study concerns the importance of interactions and collectivity for the individual decision-making process. They describe how residents enact agency in their relationships with relatives, churches, NGOs, and networks that extend beyond the borders of favelas (Jovchelovic and Priego-Hernandez 2013, 174). The authors also describe different processes and perceptions of change individuals and their immediate communities experience. However, the study is not very clear about what structural changes individual and collective agency can generate. The authors conclude that "social change requires individuals who understand themselves as agents and believe in their capacity to act as protagonists of their own lives" (204), but do not indicate what "social change"—that is, structural change—means. I return to this issue of collectivity and change later on.

The second set of debates I believe to relate to the everyday life of favela residents concerns class and individualization. In scholarly debates about modernity (Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994), these two concepts appear in opposition. On the one hand, class divisions belong to a past when one's socioeconomic position determined one's livelihood (Bauman 1982). On the other hand, individualization (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001) refers to contemporary times in which people need to constantly update and acquire skills and knowledge to increase their individual chances of prospering in neoliberal times amidst social instability and risks. The individualistic logics apply to both the poor and the better-off.

In other words, people are increasingly on their own in building careers and life styles in a contemporary, individualized world. In that sense, Zygmunt Bauman (in Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001) makes the distinction between class and individualization even more clear. He argues that "'individualization' consists in transforming human 'identity' from a 'given' into a 'task'- and charging the actors with the responsibility for performing the task and for the consequences (also the side-effects) of their performance" (xv). He goes on to argue that "no more human beings are 'born into' their identities"

(xv). In other words, identification and collective action based on class have succumbed to the increasing dominance of the individualized, self-reflexive ideology.

Such a view of individualized times is quite strong in Brazilian public debates, too. For example, recent movements led by higher-income urban Brazilians (Tatagiba, Trindade, and Teixeira 2015) have demanded the country to be a society with fewer state interventions and more freedom for individual economic prosperity. They have also been very vocal against welfare programs for poverty reduction and social equality because they supposedly undermine one's own desire for self-improvement and do not promote a meritocratic environment (Tatagiba, Trindade, and Teixeira 2015). These demands have appeared in political decisions especially after president elected Dilma Rousseff was ousted by the congress' vote two weeks after the closing ceremony of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games (Fortes 2016) . Before the impeachment, in spite of its history on the left, Rousseff's Workers' Party (PT) had increasingly adopted measures of austerity to appease both international investors and the neoliberal opposition. These measures include cuts in labor rights and investments in basic public services (e.g. education and healthcare). These measures have been boosted after vice-president Michel Temer took office.

However, as I have explained while describing the relationship between study and work, in favelas class and individualization co-exist rather than being mutually exclusive. In this sense, I would argue that favela residents live in a state of "entangled modernity" (Therborn 2003). The term originated from critical scholarly debates against eurocentrism in the grand narratives of modernity. The key argument shows, for example, that the way European colonies developed into modernity differs very much from how colonizing, Western European countries developed. In post-colonial societies like Brazil, experiences in everyday life may vary from pre-modern, modern, and late modern depending on one's socioeconomic status and geographic location. Hence the reason for class (a symbol of 19th and early 20th century modernity) to be entangled with individualization (a symbol of contemporary neoliberal, late modernity).

This coexistence between class and individualization indicates how we cannot give up class as an analytical term just yet (Holston 2008; Scott 2002; Souza 2005). Favela residents are still born into the class-based position of favelado. Even if they refuse its discriminatory connotations, some of their hardships (e.g. violence, general low income) still occur because of where they live, which is essentially a socioeconomic issue. Family and certain types of work (e.g. muscle and domestic service) are also still quite strong for the socialization of favela residents. Simultaneously with these class-related

aspects of everyday life, residents also act in individualized ways. For example, Perlman (2010) has shown how favela residents perceive their own education as their path to social mobility. According to her, this is also a source of disillusionment with the educational system. Contrary to expectations, the more time spent in education, the wider the income gap between favela and non-favela residents with the same level of education (Perlman 2010, 229). This only illustrates how class-based constraints and individualized interests are connected in favelas.

How do these sociological debates around structure-agency and class-individualization relate to the engagement of favela residents in media activism? One more of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's and Bauman's points helps us returning to this issue. For the German authors, individualization is "eroding the social-structural conditions for political consensus, which until now have made possible collective political action" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001, 29). For Bauman (1982) individualization leads people to being civically indifferent, tending to be "lukewarm, skeptical or wary of 'common good', 'good society' or 'just society'" (xvii). He goes on to argue that "the other side of individualization seems to be the corrosion and slow disintegration of citizenship" (xviii). By citizenship, he refers to the political mindset rooted on societal concerns that lead to individual and collective action for what one considers improvements in social justice and welfare.

By contrast, the entanglement of structure and agency, class and individualization I have seen in favelas does not oust collective action. It is to grasp how citizenship is enacted in favelas that we need a theoretical framework that embraces a complexity that the scholars cited here seem to have missed. For poor people in the so-called Global South, the relationship between structure and agency, class and individualization is extremely complicated. It is to the articulation of this framework that I now turn.

BECOMING POLITICAL THROUGH INTERACTIONS IN DIFFERENT STRUCTURAL FORMATIONS

A brief recap of how I define favela media activism seems necessary to explain how the concept relates to the entanglements between structure and agency, class and individualization in the everyday life of favelas. Earlier, I defined media activism as individual and collective actions in, through and about media. These actions derive from and/or lead to the enactment of citizenship among favela residents. By engaging in media activism inside, outside, and across favelas, favela residents raise critical awareness among peers, generate public debates, and mobilize actions against or in reaction to

material and symbolic consequences of social inequality. I also argue that media activism is one of the crucial elements for the formation of favela counterpublics today.

This definition suggests at least three moments of change. On a personal level, residents enact citizenship by engaging in cultural and political actions. On a community level, they share knowledge and foster change among other favela residents. On a societal level, mobilized favela residents join forces to challenge and transform broader patterns of oppression and discrimination. This differentiation of levels of change is more complex than it looks at first sight. Thus, in order to explain how favela media activism occurs, one needs to tackle not only the question of structure and agency in a context of class-based pressures and individualization, but also those of interpersonal relationships and change. For this purpose, I suggest that Willian H. Sewell's theory of structure (1992) and Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism (1969) combined allow for in-depth explanations of the processes of engagement in media activism.

Structural Formations in Favelas

The way Sewell understands the interplay between structures and agency is suitable to analyze how context relates to processes of engagement in favela media activism. In his article "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation", Sewell (1992) rearticulates the meaning of "structure" so that it is possible to explain how people's actions can trigger social change. As a starting point, Sewell identifies three problems with the notion of structure, which he considers "one of the most important and most elusive terms in the vocabulary of current social sciences" (1). For him, the term is (a) too deterministic (e.g. when one claims that living in favelas turns young men into potential criminals). For this reason, (b) it is difficult to study agency-related change (e.g. when one claims that residents' protests or online discussions will not have any social impact). In addition, he also argues that (c) the discrepancy between sociological and anthropological understandings of structure creates confusion and undermines the usage of the concept. (2–3)

In response, Sewell sets off to rethink the notion of structure so as to recognize the agency of social actors and to include action-triggered change in the concept of structure (Sewell 1992, 3). In his words,

> Structures, I have argued, are constituted by mutually sustaining cultural schemas and sets of resources that empower and constrain social action and tend to be reproduced by that action. Agents are empowered by structures, both by the knowledge of cultural schemas that enables them to mobilize resources and by the access to resources that enable them to enact schemas. [. . .] Structure is dy-

namic, not static; it is the continually evolving outcome and matrix of a process of social interaction. Even the more or less perfect reproduction of structures is a profoundly temporal process that requires resourceful and innovative human conduct. But the same resourceful agency that sustains the reproduction of structures also makes possible their transformation—by means of transpositions of schemas and remobilizations of resources that make the new structures recognizable as transformations of the old. Structures, I suggest, are not reified categories we can invoke to explain the inevitable shape of social life. To invoke structures as I have defined them here is to call for a critical analysis of the dialectical interactions through which humans shape their history. (Sewell 1992, 27)

Using favelas as an illustrative example is a suitable way to clarify what Sewell's definition of structure means. Let us start by claiming that in accordance with Sewell's thought, in general, we talk about favelas as structures. To make my point, let me return to the fact that favela residents work earlier in life than wealthier, non-favela youth. What makes certain types of child or teenage labor not only socially acceptable, but also a naturalized source of pride among favela residents is what Sewell identifies as schemas. For him, schemas are procedures that people can enact or reproduce in different contexts of interactions. As examples, he cites rules of etiquette, esthetic norms, recipes for group actions and other forms of informal and not necessarily conscious procedures that "can be used not only in the situation they are first learned or most conventionally applied" (Sewell 1992, 8).

With this definition in mind, I would argue that the sentence "working early in life is a way to grow up fast" represents one of the schemas that shape the actions of a significant part of child and, to a higher degree, young favela residents. Based on the literature about the relationship between education and labor in favelas, one could plausibly hypothesize that schemas like this one resemble unsaid and shared rules of thumb by which those growing up in favelas abide even if they do not necessarily enact them (e.g. when they can afford to prioritize education). In this case, one learns about the relationship between work and growth at home. Not only by imposition from parents or other significant adults, but also by listening to stories of older relatives who have gained respect for being workers since early age in contrast to being a criminal or living idly. Most importantly, this schema arises not only at home, but also in the outside world within favelas (e.g. when teenagers can shout out they are workers to avoid the violence of criminals or police officers) and outside (e.g. to prove to a potential employer one's credentials of honesty and work ethics despite their stigmatized postal codes). I take it that is what Sewell means by "transposition of schemas" in his definition of structures.

In addition to schemas, another constitutive element of structures is re-sources. Sewell argues that they exist in two types: human and nonhuman. He explains that,

> nonhuman resources are objects, animate or inanimate, naturally occurring or manufactured, that can be used to enhance or maintain power; human resources are physical strength, dexterity, knowledge, and emotional commitments that can be used to enhance or maintain power, including knowledge of the means of gaining, retaining, controlling, and propagating either human and nonhuman resources. (Sewell 1992, 9)

While the examples Sewell cites to illustrate the differences between types of resources seem clear, it is important at this stage to make a remark in re-lation to power. Following Giddens, Sewell basically understands power as authoritative—the capacity to have command over people—and allocative—the capacity to have command over objects and other material things (Sewell 1992, 9). However, he argues that despite being unevenly distributed in soci-ety, "some measure of both human and nonhuman resources are controlled by all members of society, no matter how destitute and oppressed" (10).

The understanding that young favela residents have resources and thus some sort of power differs from the typically criminalizing, victimizing and stigmatizing views about them. It helps to understand why "working early in life to grow fast" is an important schema for those who grow up in favelas. For example, when one drives from Rio de Janeiro's International Airport to the city center, one sees children and adolescents selling candy and snacks on the side of the expressway. Relying mostly on human resources (e.g. body, street savvy), but also on nonhuman ones (e.g. thermal boxes, easy-to-carry bundles), they are able to have some income that may affect their relation-ship with other people in their households or neighborhoods, for example. As another plausible hypothesis, one of these teenagers could in fact be the big-gest income provider in their household and thus have some power over older relatives, turning the traditional family hierarchy upside down. In societal terms, the teenager selling candy by the road seems deprived of any power. However, general powerlessness in societal terms does not mean absolute lack of power.

Following Sewell (1992, 10), we could argue that the empowered capacity of enacting schemas by accessing and mobilizing resources is what makes agents of young favela residents. This is a suitable moment to return to the question of how structures and agency—in its individual and collective nature (Sewell 1992, 21)—relate to media activism in favelas. I believe favela media activism consists of important acts of agency. For Sewell, agency entails the reinterpretation and mobilization of resources combined with the capacity

for transposing and extending schemas to new contexts (17–19). In the case of community media and multimedia collectives, favela residents use what they have learned about media and journalism to act, for example, against the normalization of human rights violations. When they repeatedly make videos and write posts in social media claiming that police crimes are wrong, they use their main human and nonhuman resources (e.g. political knowledge, social networks, technical skills, media technologies) to extend what we could call political schema (e.g. critical conversations and mobilization strategies) to other favela residents.

The problem with using favela media activism as an example of acts of agency is that it credits the external provider of resources as the main source for change (Sewell 1992, 16). In this case, NGOs could be credited as agents of change for providing favela residents with access to human and nonhuman resources. What can be done to avoid treating favela media activism as the deterministic result of NGO initiatives in favelas?

Perhaps the most pressing action is to avoid conceptualizing favelas as single structures. In that sense, Sewell makes another important point when he argues that we cannot theorize change in structures "unless we adopt a far more multiple, contingent, and fractured conception of society—and of structure. What is needed is a conceptual vocabulary that makes it possible to show how the ordinary operations of structures can generate transformations" (Sewell 1992, 16). According to him, we need to acknowledge the multiple structures that produce resources. He argues that structures are multiple, exist at different levels and are based on different types and quantities of resources. These structures also intersect and overlap (19). In addition, schemas or procedures apply to different circumstances (17). Finally, in relation to resources, Sewell argues that one cannot predict their outcomes, neither can their meanings be completely free of ambiguity.

These axioms, as Sewell calls them, reinforce the perception of how conflicting the enactment of agency can be. Moreover, they also show how communication is crucial for the interplay between structures and actions. For these reasons, if we think of favela media activism as individual and collective enactment of agency, any attempt to understand its formation process must tackle the dynamics between different structures—or "structural formations", as I refer to them from now on—in favela everyday life. We also need to know what these structural formations mean for favela residents and what kind of resources they produce. All this remembering the class-individualization duality operating as a backdrop. Problematically, despite its rich description of the complex relationship between structures and agency, Sewell's argumentation lacks a more profound approach to the interpersonal interactions through which structures and resources gain meaning. If

communication fuels social action by generating and transforming meanings of schemas and resources, it seems crucial to understand how these interactive processes operate. For that purpose, Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism appears a valuable resource.

The Meanings of Interactions

The three premises of Blumer's symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969) makes it evident how it complements Sewell's theory of structure. According to him, the first premise is that human beings act according to the meanings things have for them . The second premise is that meanings arise from interpersonal interactions The third premise is that people interpret these meanings in a personal, formative process in which they use and revise meanings "as instruments for the guidance and formation of action." (Blumer 1969, 2–5)

One phenomenon related to the struggles of favela residents provides an illustration of how these premises arise empirically. I refer to the shift from grief to political action among mothers of victims of police crimes. After the killing of their children, some mothers have been very vocal not only in demanding justice for themselves, but also in supporting movements against human rights violations in favelas. The meanings of their participation in such movements may vary from hope of recognition of a crime to struggles against social injustice. In many cases perceiving a personal loss as a reason for political action evolves as they interact with people who already are involved in struggles. Ultimately, however, the decision to act results from their own processes of reflection and interpretation of what the crime and their own grief mean.

Nevertheless, meanings and their interpretations alone do not explain people's actions. This predominant emphasis on microsociological phenomena and on individual agency are among the main criticisms to symbolic interactionism. In his analysis of the debates about symbolic interactionist validity as a scholarly field, Gary Alan Fine (1993) shows how interactionists before and after Blumer have had to respond to functionalist claims that they neglected macro-structures. "The easy charge had always been that symbolic interaction was a microsociological perspective, with no interest in structure, no belief in the power of organizations and institutions, and no constructs to examine such issues" (Fine 1993, 78). Dmitri N. Shalin (1986) also demonstrates how critics accuse interactionist approaches of being astructural and subjectivist. In response, he argues that in fact a structural understanding of society has been a constitutive characteristic of interactionism. "Neither individual nor society, according to interactionist theory, can be accorded unqualified primacy—each one is an aspect in the ongoing process of social

interaction, and both are mutually constitutive" (Shalin 1986, 14). As I have discussed so far, my intention in this study is to demonstrate how societal aspects of the everyday life in favelas relate to residents' engagement in media activism. How to clearly demonstrate the macro-structural relevance of symbolic interactionism in the case of favela media activism?

My answer is in David A. Snow's effort to extend Blumer's definition of symbolic interactionism (2001). Snow argues that the emphasis on the symbolic "deflects attention from other principles and topics relevant to both symbolic interactionism and sociology more generally, such as social structures and culture and variation in their levels and degrees of constraint" (Snow 2001, 368). In this sense, Snow's list of orienting principles of symbolic interactionism, meant to broaden Blumer's original conceptualization, resemble much of Sewell's theory of structure. For Snow, the principles are four. One relates to how interaction defines the existence of individual and society. Another concerns how symbols and meanings are embedded in existing contexts and systems of meanings. A third principle relates to how changes emerge "not only in the organization and texture of social life, but also in associated meanings and feelings" (372). The last principle concerns how agency should not be thought in contrast with structure. (Snow 2001, 369–74)

Articulating Sewell's theory of structure and Blumer's symbolic interactionism allows to raise questions that problematize the engagement in favela media activism even further. What structural formations constitute the everyday life of young favela residents? How do they enact agency in a context of class-based pressures and individualization? How do gender differences affect one's enactment of agency? How do these structural formations affect their actions? How do the meanings of their actions change as they interact with other people? How do media become resources for action? What does acting in, about and through media mean? What kind of structural changes do their actions make? These questions elaborate the second research question I posed at the beginning and focus on what explains favela media activism. This question demands that theorization is combined with an empirical conception of everyday life complexities in favelas.

HOW TO EXPLAIN ENGAGEMENT
IN FAVELA MEDIA ACTIVISM?

So far, I have argued that the interplay between class and individualization is a backdrop to the social actions of favela residents. I basically understand social action in a Weberian sense. For Max Weber, social action is "an action

in which the meaning intended by the agent or agents involves a relation to another person's behavior and in which that relation determines the way in which the action proceeds" (Weber and Runciman 1978, 7). In these terms, media activism is a social action which aims at informing, mobilizing, and ultimately bringing about social change—whatever residents consider change to be—in a context of class inequality and individualization.

However, I am not primarily interested in understanding the nature of media activism as a social action; my focus is on the process of engagement in media activism of young favela residents. For this reason, I believe a theoretical framework that approaches the interplay between structural formations and agency is necessary. According to what I learned during the research process, people did not engage in media activism because they one day decided, out of nowhere, to do so. Neither did they do it because NGOs persuaded or manipulated them into doing so. Their engagement evolved in a complex process of interactions in different structural formations in their everyday lives.

What are these structural formations in concrete terms? Following Sewell's definition, I identified four structural formations that played a role in the lives of the people with whom I talked before they got involved with cultural-political actions including media activism. They are *família*, *favela*, *estudo*, and *asfalto*. (Figure 7.1)

Família translates as family, but it also includes close, quasi-familial relationships without necessarily a blood tie. Childhood or school friends with whom one keeps a close and relationship fall into this structural formation. In Rio de Janeiro, it is typical to call a close friend a cousin or to refer to them as *família*. Hence my inclusive definition of the term. By favela, I refer to the realm of community-based relationships in favelas. These relationships include people with whom one is acquainted, but not necessarily close. This includes, for example, elderly, young neighbors whom one meets on the streets, in local churches, and at parties. It also includes drug dealers, police officers, and others involved in the routine of the drug trade, violence and armed conflicts. *Estudo* translates as education. By this term I refer to structural formations arising from the interactions in the formal (e.g. public schools) and non-formal (e.g. NGOs) environments for education. Finally, *asfalto* literally translates as asphalt, but in Rio de Janeiro it refers to the world out there beyond the favelas. It refers to the non-favela urban areas with their regular service provisions, cultural venues, work opportunities, and considerable peacefulness (in contrast to the violence-ridden favelas). I include the police and mainstream media representations because they contribute to the materialization or reinforcement of discriminatory patterns when favela residents venture into the non-favela world.

These are not all the structural formations that constitute everyday life in favelas. The people I met also talked about being involved in the church,
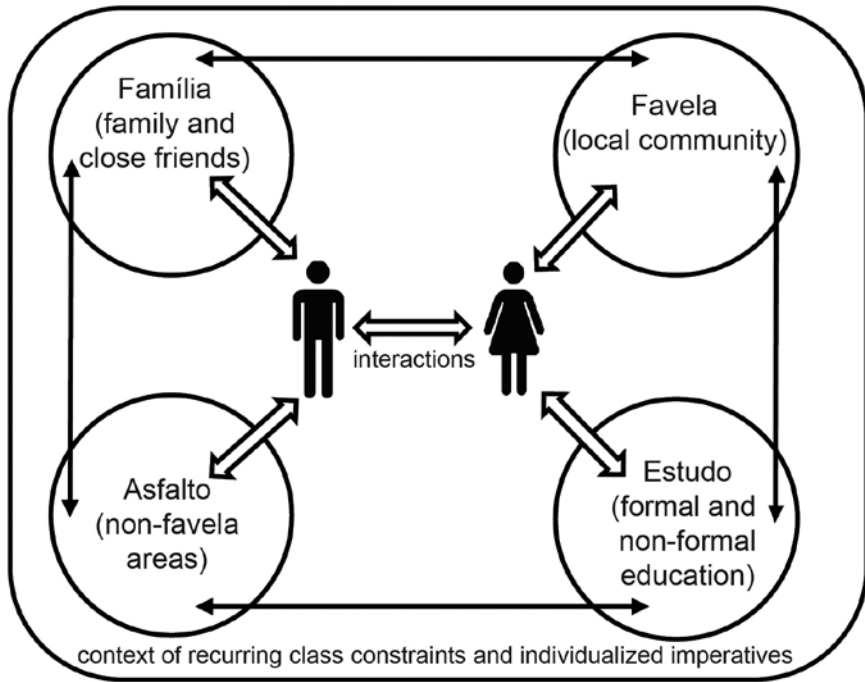
Figure 7.1. Structural formations, agency and interactions in favelas
Source: Figure designed by author.

sports facilities, *bailes* (Rio's *funk* parties), hip-hop groups, and others. However, the materials I collected during my fieldwork are not enough to analyze their relevance for media activism. Despite that, the analysis of how the people I met related to the four structural formations I identified is enough to demonstrate how complex the engagement of young favela residents in media activism is. One way of demonstrating the applicability of this framework is to present questions one can ask about how the concepts relate to the actions of young favela residents engaged in media activism.

By structure I do not refer here to the constitutive character of *família*, favela, *asfalto*, and *estudo*. In other words, the primary point is not whether one grows up with both parents or with other relatives, it is not important if one studied in a public or private school, and so on. Instead, I am interested in the dynamics of interactions, their meanings and how they affect people's actions. For example, to what extent do the rules learned at home affect how young people act in school? How do the school lessons and conversation between classes affect their ways of dealing with the threats and lacks in favelas? How does friendship affect how young favela residents deal with

a discriminating society? How do all these not always conscious patterns of behavior, schemas in Sewell's terms, relate to engaging in media activism?

Another aspect of structures is resources. For Sewell, enacting schemas generate resources as much as using resources generates schemas. In practice, this means that one pattern of behavior shared across time generates ways in which people can deal with different situations. For instance, studying can potentially generate resources for young favela residents not to have to grow up early. Similarly, having street-wise friends may prepare young favela residents to cope with discrimination in the city in different ways. Then this framework helps reflect on what kind of resources the enactment of schemas from the four structural formations I identified generates. How do these resources relate to the engagement in media activism among the people I met?

These questions about structures as dynamics of interactions, schemas, and resources culminate in what agency means. Once again, following Sewell, I understand agency as the individual and collective capacity to reinterpret and use resources even in different situations than in the schemas that generate them (Sewell 1992, 19). At the same time, agency also relates to having some control and thus the capacity for transforming the social relations in which one is involved (20). In other words, the lessons one learns in the family dialogues may generate resources to change how a favela resident deals with the challenges in the structural formation of education. Another example would be how what one learns at school combined with friendship relations affects how one relates to society outside favelas when they look for work. And again, how do these enactments of agency in distinct structures affect their engagement in media activism? Or how does the engagement in media activism affect their social relations at home, the alleys of the favelas or in the city?

Finally, following Blumer, I can raise questions about how interactions in different structures affect the meanings of the schemas and resources young favela residents enact. For example, how does the meaning of working early in life change, if it does, when a young favela resident interacts with people who try to convince her/him to study instead? How does a male favela resident perceive the criminal activity of a friend when relatives tell him that what the friend does is wrong? How do these meanings affect their actions? What kind of interactions generate meanings for schemas and resources that are directly related to one's engagement in media activism?

These questions suggest how to analyze the dynamics between the structural formations (family and friendship, community, society, and education) and agency behind favela media activism. In the next chapter, I apply elements of this framework to the analysis of different stages of the engagement process of the people I met.

Chapter Eight

Nuances between Coping and Change

Trajectories to Favela Media Activism

In the preceding chapter, I referred to a statement of a favela resident engaged in media activism about favela youth growing up fast. The complete quote is helpful now to present how context and individuals relate to each other in favelas. He said:

> In favelas, I usually say that we—especially men, but also women—grow up very fast. Quite early, the boy has to learn to make ends meet and the girl has to help the mother at home, quite young she learns to cook, she learns how to take care of the things of the house. The boys go on to the street to figure out a way to help with the household income. For example, I remember when I was 12, 13 I would wait for the weekend when we had a street market here [. . .] to carry the bags of the old women who would climb the hill in exchange for one, two *reais*. We were always in this rush. When we could, we flew kites. Sometimes, we studied. (i-5)

This quote suggests that growing up fast in favelas relates to working early in life. One could argue that the tasks described are typical free-time jobs for pocket money. However, for him, in the context of favelas, it was a way to act like other youngsters who put leisure and education aside for income.

In addition, growing up faster also relates to how young favela residents have to live life despite the violent conflicts between drug dealers and the police, the discriminatory media representations, and so forth. Thus, in these circumstances, interactions and structural formations generate a number of strategies to live on despite the lacks and threats of everyday life. During the research process, I learned that interactions in different structural formations vary a lot. It is still possible to demonstrate how interacting with family, the community, friends, with educational peers and educators, and with non-favela elements (people and institutions) relate to the trajectories

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of the people I met towards engaging in media activism. As defined earlier, by trajectories I mean individual and social processes through which favela residents have gone in their lifetime leading to their engagement in media activism.

I argue that the interactions in the structural formations generated two kinds of schemas. On the one hand, interactions with family (*família*), non-favela residents (*asfalto*) and other favela residents (*favela*) often generate *schemas to cope*. On the other hand, interactions with close friends (*família*) and educators and peer students (*estudo*) potentially generate *schemas to change*. By schemas to cope, I refer to moral lessons and values by which young residents abide as they deal with the everyday life in favelas. By schemas to change, I refer to the interactions that lead to values and knowledge, which somehow transform how young residents perceived structural formations and their own roles as agents in society.

In this chapter, I elaborate on this argument to describe how the process of engagement in media activism proceeded among the people I met. The chapter has three parts. First, I describe how some interactions favela residents experience as they grow manifest lessons to cope with their everyday realities. Second, I describe how interactions in the realm of NGO projects unexpectedly turn what were supposed to be lessons for self-development for better coping into schemas to change. Third and finally, I describe how engagement in media activism and civil society leads to personal and structural changes in favela residents' everyday lives.

COPING WITH EVERYDAY CONSTRAINTS

It is highly unlikely that favela residents think of engaging in activism as they grow up. The reason is that class-based constraints shape the interactions residents go through since early childhood. Working early in life is only one proof of that. In this section I describe how the favela residents I met primarily learned to cope in their interactions with family members and neighbors. Coping is also something they learn when they need to venture in the outside world of the city. In these circumstances, I argue that the pursuit of education consists of efforts to cope better rather than necessarily to change.

Família

In childhood and teenage years, the family appears as the main source of schemas according to which the favela residents I met act. For some, working early was directly related to their interactions with relatives. Sometimes

it resembled a family tradition. In some cases, residents seemed proud of having followed in the hard-working footsteps of their family members. One photographer, for example, related his early work experiences to his grand-parents' migration from the northeast to Rio de Janeiro.

> *i-1:* I have always worked. I worked two years as a gardener, one year and eight months as a cook. I have been an electrician. I am always ready and willing. If there is a roof to lay, I will lay roofs. I will go back to gardening. No problem.
>
> *Q:* How old were you when you started working?
>
> *i-1:* I already worked at 14, 15. My family descends from *nordestinos*. They came here in the rural exodus. [. . .] My father is a bricklayer. My mother is a steelworker. My mother has worked since 12. My dad has worked since 12.

His having had different jobs reflects typical work patterns among adult low-income workers. Early in life he learned that working is not necessarily about pursuing a career, but exploring opportunities available to generate income. In this case, early labor apparently also relates to gaining family respect by following in the hard-working footsteps of older generations.

In other cases, the class-related pressure to start working early was not subtle, but actual pressure. In moments of family turbulence due to socio-economic constraints, working was a priority even for the young people. For example, a photographer and blogger described how he had migrated from the northeast to Rio de Janeiro following in his mother's footsteps. When he arrived in Rio, he wanted to study, but couldn't.

> i-3: I arrived in Maré in 1994. [. . .] My objective was studying, but I had to work to help my mother [. . .] and put education a bit to the side. Only later did I return to school. I was already quite old. I was 17 when I registered to continue the third year
>
>   [. . .].

In another example of the dilemma between education and work, a journal-ist explained how class-based constraints prevailed over her personal interests for individual growth.

> *i-6:* Since childhood I had a dream: 'One day I want to have a university de-gree.' 'Oh, but this is not for you. Pity, you have to work.' There was support to continue studying: 'Keep up studying and one day you will make it.' However, reality knocked on our door every day: 'One day you will have to stop [study-*ing] to work.'*
>
> *Q:* You heard that at home?

i-6: At home. [. . .] Then, when I turned 14, reality changed. Three days after my birthday, my mother died. [. . .] 'Damn, now I have to work. I have four small siblings to help, my grandmother is studying, my stepfather is sick . . . '

These two examples illustrate how socioeconomic pressures affect childhood and youth in favelas. These pressures demonstrate how the action of working early relates to family interactions. However, we should not take these cases as rules. In other situations, families were in fact supportive of educational pursuits. For instance, a journalist described how her older sister supported her studies by telling her to pursue a university degree.

i-7: [My sister] used to say: 'I didn't grow up with the things you had when you grew up. Stop being lazy and study.' In our family, few people went to the university, you know? My parents and my uncles came from Paraíba [an impoverished state in Northeast Brazil], so they had no chances for it. However, my sister did it. 'I went to the university. In our family, I did it. I want you to do it.'

In this case the sister was both a role model and a supporter. In another case, parents also supported another journalist to pursue education. In her mid-teens, she had already been juggling between education and work. During our conversation, she got very emotional remembering her parents' role.

i-9: Imagine: school in the morning, work in the afternoon, and the university preparatory course in the evening. The nicest about all this is that I remember arriving dead beat and lying down on the sofa. 'I won't go to the course.' Then, my dad made me juice: 'Have it, my daughter. Now go.' [*She started crying*] I feel emotional because it made a difference, especially when we have no role models who had gone to the university. And there was no pressure. My father never forced me to study. For him, I was already in a good place. Dad was a lathe operator. Mom was a seamstress, so they didn't demand. However, my mother used to say: 'the only thing I can give you is education. I will let you study. I will not force you to work.'

These last two quotes contrast with the earlier ones and show how different family interactions can be. In the first cases family interactions were related to traditions or pressure to early-life labor. Therefore, class was influential in determining how those interviewees acted. In the second type of cases family interactions were fundamental for the individualized pursuit of self-development. In both cases, however, interactions led to the transmission of moral schemas and values. The different types of interactions both generated lessons of how people in their socioeconomic conditions need to enact effort and sacrifice to improve life.

In the circumstances of early-life work, effort and sacrifice are characterized as schemas to cope because of the kind of resources they generate. In cases of early-life work traditions and pressure, a young favela resident acquires the capacity to find sources of income by following the examples of older relatives. This practical knowledge is fundamental in dealing with socioeconomic constraints and early adult responsibilities. In the cases of family support to education, the main resource is the stability and infrastructure that allows young favela residents to pursue education without having to work. Therefore, both cases demonstrate that family interactions are important for coping with the constraints and lack of opportunities life in favelas entails.

For this reason, the relationship between family interactions and the engagement in media activism mostly occurs through moral and ethical schemas. An exception was one of the cases in which one interviewee's engagement in cultural-political actions happened as she partnered with a family member (her mother) to create a fashion initiative for young women. In most cases, however, interactions with parents and relatives created the schemas to cope by which they abided.

Asfalto

In a previous chapter, I described how discrimination against favela residents is perpetrated in Rio de Janeiro. I also demonstrated how the mainstream media reinforce class-based prejudices. Thus one could assume, as I did, that discrimination is a societal factor that directly influences how favela residents interact with non-favela environments. However, experiences of discrimination varied significantly among the people I met. For instance, one of the photographers explained how he never felt discriminated against while hanging out on the beach. That was possibly because he only interacted with his favela acquaintances.

i-2: I think that [I was not discriminated against] because I always went with a group. Then, I had no one to talk to, to ask these things.

By contrast, another photographer also referred to the beach to describe how he felt discriminated against.

i-4: I always circulated in the center of the city, in the [touristic and higher-income] South Zone and stuff. [. . .] I was sure that those people did not see me as someone who belonged there. I believe it was about the customs and all. Because there is a difference between people who live on the periphery and those who live in the South Zone.

In other cases, they did not feel discriminated against because they became part of a group. One of the journalists explained how the people at her school outside a favela did not treat her differently for being a favela resident.

> i-7: I feel like one of them, like a normal person. I don't feel discriminated against. Also because if I were like most of the girls here, wearing mini shorts, putting lots of cream on my hair, I don't think I would be in their group because this is strange. It is different for them.

The look she describes often relates to an idea of vulgarity often related to a girl from a favela. In my interviewee's case, the fact that she had lighter skin, dressed up soberly, and liked rock music (rather than *samba* or Rio's funk) possibly gives her non-favela friends the impression of her not being a typical favela girl. This probably also explains why the two photographers have different perceptions of discrimination on the beach. The one who did not feel discriminated against had lighter skin than the second photographer, who was black. The description of these cases is not a psychosocial analysis of subjective experiences of discrimination, but a description of how percep-tions of interactions in the city differ. Despite these differences, all the people to whom I talked recognized that discrimination is a fact even if they did not experience or perceive it.

Realizing discrimination is therefore a schema residents enact when they interact with the *asfalto*, the city outside favelas. One thing favela residents do to avoid discrimination is claiming to live elsewhere. This is especially common while they look for jobs. One member of a collective described what often happens.

> i-5: I got tired of looking for jobs especially in the center of the city with my friends. We talked well, dressed well. We always took care of the way we spoke and the way we looked. So we always had a good reception where we arrived. However, when we said 'we live in [the favela],' the guys said: 'Are you from a favela? We can't give you the job. You will miss too many days of work due to shootouts. I don't know with whom you associate there, how come I will put you in my shop?'

Thus, lying about one's address is a schema to cope with face-to-face discrimination. But how does one deal with discrimination in the mainstream media? Before engaging in media activism, the people I met did not deal with it because they did not realize it. Some did not understand or perceive discrimination.

> i-11: I never had this perception because I didn't understand it. I did not real-ize. For example, I never stopped to think about why TV hosts were all white. I never thought about that.

In other cases, discrimination in media specifically against favelas caused discomfort and confusion. One journalist described how the predominant coverage of violence in favelas contrasted with what residents experienced in their everyday life.

> i-6: I used to see all of it and noticed that, for example, when they talked about Maré, I mainly heard about shootouts. I just saw bad things and noticed that that was the view people had about us. 'Oh, you live in Maré? It is very violent there.' Then I started to question. 'How come the favela is violent? I may live in a difficult place, but there are so many good things. So many beautiful things.'

The quote indicates that despite the perception of discrimination in the media, the interviewee also lacked resources to deal with it. This perception of lack of resources to act against discrimination in media was echoed in the words of a photographer. He means that while favela residents did not have well-elaborated words to express their discontent about media representations, they did feel disturbed.

> i-1: Most people are naturally critical. What we lack are instruments for people to act critically. [. . .] Watching those things on television hurt. Even if you did not engage in critical thinking, you saw that many favela residents work a lot. They work to keep the country on the move and [the media] shows only 5 percent of what happens inside the favela. It is unacceptable.

One could claim that Internet could be a resource for reaction against media discrimination. However, when I asked some interviewees about what they thought about the potential of internet for that purpose, they did not sound very optimistic.

> i-11: I think things are not given. The children will not make social and transforming uses of Internet if there are no paths to it. [. . .] Me neither. If I am in Facebook, I will not do it. I will be distracted, listening to music, liking, sharing. That is what they do. It is not a given.

These examples of how young favela residents deal with discrimination demonstrate how constraining interactions with society outside favelas can be. In relation to discrimination in the city, favela residents have learned to developed strategies not to challenge, but to cope with discrimination (e.g. lying about one's address in a job interview). In relation to discrimination in the media, I did not identify any schemas, but anguish and a sense of not being able to do anything about it. Perhaps they talked about cases in the media with peers, but these dialogues possibly had a therapeutic value. Thus, before engaging in cultural and political actions, interactions in the discriminating

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society did not generate resources that might explain their engagement in media activism.

Favela

In terms of context, the favela is without a doubt the most pertinent social environment for its young residents. It is in the favela that they spend most of their time. The most dangerous consequence of social inequality is the concentration of violence in favelas. This condition often leads us outsiders to assume that young favela residents are vulnerable or somehow involved in crime. Even though I like to think of myself as a socially conscious individual, I also reproduced that assumption. My clumsy question to a photographer illustrates how researchers can reproduce prejudices.

> *Q:* When you were a young boy in the favela you grew up in, how did you consider your relationship with the drug trade? How did your participation in certain NGO projects affect your participation . . . no, not your participation in the drug trade, but your relationship with people you knew . . . or with the situation of being around and not become involved . . . ?

> *i-1:* This is really fucked up, you know. In all the conversations we have about the favela, this issue comes up. It's not a criticism, but everyone always asks about the drug trade.

> [. . .] I think people could have done anything [of their lives], you know. What I believe is that we lack choices. [. . .] People don't fall into the drug trade, you know? The boys who deal drugs today did not fall there, they chose it because they had few options to choose from. [. . .]

In addition to contesting the dominant victimization and criminalization of favela youth, we can also interpret the answer as an outraged appeal for external observers to stop relating the agency of favela residents with the drug trade and violence. However, despite his reminder, I decided to keep reflecting on how young favela residents deal with violence. In most cases, the people I met credited family interactions and values with their capacity of keeping a distance from the drug trade despite its physical and social closeness.

> i-7: I don't think I kept much distance from [the drug trade]. I believe the biggest difference was to have a good family structure, to have good dialogue with my dad and my mom. [. . .] I could even talk to my friends involved in the drug trade [. . .]. They don't want to make a living and retire from the drug trade. They want to make some money, leave, build a family . . . for me, the greatest difference was my family.

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i-11: I never talked to [drug dealers] because I was actually angry about that situation, you know? I used to think it was absurd not being able to return to my house because of that situation. So, when I walked by, I didn't greet them. But my mother said: "You have to greet them. At least say 'good morning,' 'good afternoon,' 'good night' so that if something happens they will not say you are stuck-up." [. . .] So after that I started greeting them to protect myself.

The two quotes interestingly show different perceptions of the drug trade. The male interviewee (i-7) seems empathetic to the choices his—mostly male—peers made to become involved in the drug trade. By contrast, the female interviewee (i-11) is angry for having to interact with drug dealers in order to avoid retaliations and threats. As I see it, when they were younger, drug dealing did not appear as a problem to be eliminated, but as a constitutive part of the community with which one has to learn to live. In that sense, favela residents also acquire schemas to cope with violence from streets or the *becos* (narrow alleys) of the favelas.

i-6: I always saw [the drug trade] as something distant from me. Even though they invaded my roof and my house, I always . . . I mean, I didn't need anyone to tell me that was not nice, that guns were not nice, that the police was not nice [. . .].

i-5: In the favela, a girl and a boy learn to understand life very early. It's like when we find bodies in the middle of the street or experience a shootout situation. You learn that you can't be on the street when a shootout is happening, that you have to lie down on the ground or that you have to run into a shop. [. . .]

The process of learning to cope and pursuing work or education in favelas also makes gender differences evident. Circulating in favelas is much more complicated for young men. For young men fear was related to the possibility of being taken for a member of a rival drug trade gang. For instance, one of the male photographers described how he managed to avoid danger when he went to a favela different from his own.

i-1: [. . .] once, it happened that I was in the favela of a rival gang, you know? Then, the guy [dealer] said: 'What the fuck! Where do you live?' If I were to say the name of my favela, he would claim: 'Oh, you are with the Red Command.' So, I kind of suspected and said: 'Come on, brother. I live in [a gang-free neighborhood], you know?' I didn't even mention it was close to my own favela. 'Well, it's cool then, man. It's cool . . .'

In the same way young men learn to sense and avoid trouble, young women also learn that they have more freedom to circulate in favelas. For example, one of the female journalists explained to me how she benefited

from her brother's decision not to participate in an educational course an NGO offered due to fear of crossing borders in favelas.

> i-9: My brother even enrolled on the course, but he was afraid of going there. 'If I go to the other side, the dealers will get me.' [. . .] Then I thought: 'Well, I think I will take this course.' [. . .] The difference: being a woman. The problem has always been about men. Men can't cross.

These examples of community interactions around violence show how favela residents become context savvy very early in life. By context savvy, I mean acquiring schemas and using resources to cope with and avoid violence. Before engaging in media activism and *militância*, the people I met did not understand the drug trade and the police as a clear-cut dichotomy between "bad guys" and "good guys." Instead, they perceived both sides as constitutive of their everyday life. In this sense, the *favela* environment—like the *família* and the *asfalto* ones—generate schemas and resources to cope.

Estudo

The interplay between class and individualization affected the educational trajectories of the people I met. As children, most had to go through a precarious school system where the likelihood of getting stuck in under-citizenry is often high. In hindsight, a member of a collective described what schools represented to him as he grew up.

> i-5: The education at the public school is of horrible quality. The teachers work in ten schools, so they already have difficulties to teach. Students have difficulties at home. Sometimes, they go to school only thinking about the meal. They go to school to have lunch, to have some breakfast. [. . .]

However, despite this widely recognized precariousness, schools were also important for socialization. For instance, one of the interviewees described the importance of school for her in the adolescence living in a violent environment.

> *Q:* How was it to grow up in a place that had drug trade, violence and *milícia* [extrajudicial paramilitary groups]? How was it to be a girl at the time?
>
> *i-11:* It was very complicated. I moved to the favela when I was 12. [. . .] I didn't spend time playing on the streets, I didn't go to the beach at the weekends because I didn't know anyone. [. . .] That is why I loved going to school: I had friends there.

A second aspect of the school socialization is how early collective actions occurred inside the school system. The fact that schools were generally pre-

carious did not prevent some students from acting for collective purposes. The photographer who had migrated from the Northeast explained how participating in school organizations helped him build a new circle of friends.

> i-3: I ended up getting involved in some things at a school here [at the favela], for example. For three years, I was the representative of my class. The school did not have a students' union. For those three years, I tried to organize the union. I ended up not managing because it demanded bigger of a team [. . .].

Socialization in schools also led the people I met to look for additional forms of education. For that, they looked to NGOs. As described previously, non-governmental organizations had created extra-curricular opportunities for education since the 1990s. Thus, all the favela residents I met looked for NGO projects or other forms of extra-curricular activities to acquire skills and knowledge for personal growth. In some cases, this growth was related to increasing the chances of getting better-paid jobs. The relationship between education and the labor market is another schema favela residents learn early in life.

> *i-6:* I used to be a girl who went to school at 7 a.m. and returned home at 6 p.m. [. . .] We spent the whole day at school. [. . .] In the eighth grade, I started a preparatory course here at [the NGO].
>
> *Q:* But if you were at school, why did you decide to also study at [the NGO]?
>
> *i-6:* Because I always wanted to learn and prepare myself for the labor market. My grandma always told me: 'you have to study, you have to take courses, you have to prepare. Soon you will be old enough to look for jobs.' So, I always tried to spend my time studying. If I weren't at school, I would be taking computing courses, trying to learn some language, or trying to learn telemarketing. I tried to fill my schedule with courses. I never had money to pay for courses, so I always looked for the free ones.

Offering the courses free of charge was certainly appealing to the NGO projects, but it was not only how the people I met learned about the courses. Interactions with friends and relatives informed and motivated participation too.

> i-3: I had some friends who participated in the dance group [of the NGO]. That allowed me to approach [the NGO] and get to know more about their work. [. . .]
>
>   i-7: Since the beginning of last year I have wanted to study journalism. Then I talked to my sister and she said: 'Look for something here in the favela. How about that newspaper we always receive here at home? You could write to it. Do you think it would be possible?' So, I checked their contact information and sent an email [. . .]

In other cases, staff members of NGOs circulated in different schools and announced the courses available to students.

> i-11: I didn't know what NGOs were. I can't even remember if they introduced themselves as such. They said it was a project, an audiovisual course. So, I fantasized: 'Hm, television? Working on video?' I remember that at the time I had already taken modeling courses [. . .] 'Then, now there is a chance of linking it with video courses.' Only later did I realize that it was nothing I was expecting. I have friends who thought that it was a course to fix television sets.

In addition to interest in the contents of the projects, another motivating factor to participate in the projects was money. In Rio de Janeiro, it is quite common that NGOs provide financial, transportation, and meal support to participants. In the case of a photographer, the financial support led him to participate in a photography workshop even though he was not as interested as his friends were.

> i-1: You give 100 *reais* for a young guy who doesn't want to do anything, maybe one day he will want to do something. [. . .] What led me [to the NGO project] was the 100 *reais* for the fun. It was the 100 *reais* to buy whisky in the parties and drink with my friends, to go out with a girl. [. . .]

Others also looked for NGO projects for the financial support, but they also had an interest of acting for the common good. One volunteer staff member on a community newspaper combined her childhood dream of acting in solidarity actions with her need for income. By the time of the interview, she was 22 and had a child. An extract from our conversation reveals how she combines individual interests with the interest in acting on behalf of others.

> *Q:* How did you become interested in these kinds of initiatives?
>
> *i-10:* Since childhood I had wanted to find a profession in which I could help people. So, I used to think that charity was above everything. However, as time went by, I studied and realized it wasn't about charity, but about actions that will change people for people themselves to change their lives. Then I sought for actions to add to my need of helping others. One thing led to another.

Her statement called my attention to a phenomenon I had naively neglected before the fieldwork. Some young residents showed interest in acting for change in favelas before they participated in NGO projects. In one case, a group of friends had already decided to act collectively when they had the idea to look for NGO projects. From NGO projects, they wanted to acquire more expertise for their own actions.

i-5: Our looking for projects happened when we decided that we wanted to do something with the basic knowledge each of us had. We thought: 'it must be something with NGOs. Let's check the NGOs.'

Q: Were NGOs references of possible places to acquire knowledge?

i-5: Not the possibility of knowledge, but of thinking of ways to do something without being involved with the state and without being regular work. [. . .] We wanted to see how [the NGOs] worked so we could do [what they did] [. . .].

These cases illustrate how class-based and individual motivations lead young favela residents to look for additional educational opportunities. Their search for self-development also represents efforts to cope. Despite the lacks and threats, young favela residents act in ways to both become better prepared for the labor market and be active citizens in society. The description of how they get to NGOs also demonstrate the diversity in educational backgrounds, expertise and interests of the young people who participate in NGO projects. In this sense, these projects are not only educational opportunities, but also hubs in which favela residents from different walks of life meet. These encounters and diversity is at the core of their engagement process in cultural political actions such as media activism.

TURNING POINTS: FROM COPING TO CHANGE

In these circumstances, how did the people I met start envisioning themselves as agents of structural transformation? When I started this research, I credited NGOs for their engagement in activism. In my uninformed mind, I imagined that those organizations cast a political spell over disenfranchised individuals who then magically turned into active citizens and cultural-political activists. I was wrong. The NGOs did play an important role in their process of engaging in media activism. However, it was not necessarily because of how the NGO directors planned the projects that I consider them turning points.

When I refer to experiences in NGO initiatives as turning points, I mean that the favela residents I met experienced situations and interactions that changed their ways of seeing and relating to their everyday lives. In light of their descriptions and evaluations, I look at three different elements of these processes: (a) what kind of knowledge they acquired from the NGOs; (b) the importance of dialogue (with educators and peers); and (c) their perception of how they changed.

As I described before, the main motivation for the people I met to participate in NGO projects was to improve their own skills and knowledge either for the enhancement of individual potentialities or for collective purposes. As

they attended preparatory courses for university admission tests, computing
workshops, photography schools, and so on, they started learning about the
political aspects of life in favelas. The connection between what they learned
(in terms of classroom knowledge) and what they lived in everyday life was
the main difference between the school and the NGO initiatives. For some,
the NGO projects initially represented possibilities of acquiring better skills
to deal with labor challenges and adult responsibilities.

> *Q:* Why was it different [at the NGO]?
>
> *i-11:* Because it was directed to the labor market. Then, we learned math by
> knowing how to fill in a check payment at the moment of negotiating one of
> our videos. We studied geography to understand the history of that place. So,
> [the learning at the NGO] focused on understanding another history, not what
> we learned at school.

The practicality and usefulness of the content was an important differ-
ence between NGO projects and schools. However, the political trigger that
kindled their interest in activism came with the political lessons embedded in
the process. One of the journalists described the importance of her participa-
tion in NGO projects for arousing her political interest.

> i-6: I learned to know. Inside the newspaper, inside the preparatory course for
> the university admission tests, I learned to know . . . circulating inside the favela
> to write the stories that I learned to see the favela. [. . .] I won't say that the
> NGO saved my life, but it helped me a lot to answer to my own interrogations.

Thus, the interactions on the NGO projects led them to re-interpret what
being a favela resident means. In the interactions on the NGO projects, she
acquired resources to turn anguish and discontent into a political problem she
could deal with and perhaps resolve. The other people I met went through a
similar process.

In addition to the pedagogical role of the NGO projects, another equally
important part of the acquisition of political resources was the interactions
with peers and people from different socioeconomic environments. One of
the characteristics of the NGO projects is that participants interacted with
middle-, upper-class university students and professors. Some NGOs also
organized events with organizations from different favelas or regions. They
also organized events with established social movements. These experiences
of *troca* (exchange through dialogue) and the characteristic of NGO projects
as meeting points appeared as important reasons for most of the people I met
to engage in activism.

i-4: I think that the main factor to validate the experience [at the NGO] is that there is not that segregation in 'it's only people from favelas' or that 'it's only for people of pacified favelas.' [. . .] [The project] serves as meeting points for different people, of different social classes and points of views. Many times, you don't build relationships with that kind of person. However, [if you do,] you will absorb experiences of that person and you will change according to what you believe in. I think [the project] is very valid as a meeting point.

Q: How were the debates in these meeting points?

i-4: The dialogue was always enriching. It was always nice. Many times we fought, not physically, but in relation to how we positioned ourselves. [. . .] There were people who occupied and lived in abandoned buildings, there were rappers, street artists. There were militants of [left-wing] political parties. There were lots of points of views.

His words about changing according to what one believes indicate a statement of agency and subjectivity we cannot notice if we transfer the responsibility of political engagement to NGO stimuli.

In addition to being the starting point in activism for some, it was also important for people who already had the interest of acting in their own communities. For these people, participating NGO projects represented the expansion of their circles of partners and references in local struggles. If initially, they wanted to act on behalf of their own communities, after participating NGO projects they became aware of other actors engaged in similar kinds of struggles in other favelas. In other words, their participation in the project triggered a mindset oriented towards acting in terms of public to affect not only favelas, but also society.

i-5: The socialization [at the NGO] was great. Some people I met there, others I had known from militancy. Today we are all friends to the point of hanging out in each other's houses and participating in struggles in each other's territories. What is interesting about [the NGO project] is that it involves people from all over Rio de Janeiro who are favela and non-favela residents. [. . .] Many people I know in Rio de Janeiro I met there. From City of God to Vidigal, we got to know each other there. [. . .] The relationships were always very positive. The debates happened many times in the beginning, which is very important. [. . .] It was very heated in the beginning, but then we got closer and found what we had in common.

The brief description of the ways in which the interviewees acquired political schemas and resources demonstrate how important the educational and kinship structural formations were for their engagement in media activism. Had they studied the technical and professional aspects of media, journalism and photography, they would possibly have been able to have greater chances

on the labor market. However, the political lessons and debates combined with the formation of friendship circles around political struggles contributed to their decisions to engage in cultural-political actions. In a way, for most people with whom I talked, becoming a political actor was an unexpected outcome of their pursuits of individual-professional resources. These encounters helped them bring together and translate schemas and resources they had acquired in different structural formations into targets and strategies of their activism. This process of politization, culminating in their actions to form counterpublics through media activism, led to various types of changes in their lives and in their interactions with different structures.

SOCIAL CHANGES THROUGH MEDIA ACTIVISM

One aim of this book is to understand how people's actions may bring about social change. The problem of this goal is that it is as unclear as it is appealing. What is it that we understand by "change"? In my case, change has often related to my hopes for a more just and egalitarian society. Thus, when I envisage changes in the favelas or peripheries in Rio de Janeiro, I imagine low-income people living without the constant threat of violence, in a society with equal educational and work opportunities and where one's gender, ethnicity, looks or socioeconomic status do not determine one's livelihood.

The truth, however, is that it is unlikely that community media journalists or multimedia collectives in favelas would be able to bring about these changes. At least, not alone. These actors have little power in the spheres of political lobbying, policymaking and mass communication to make such changes. Nevertheless, accepting this fact does not mean denying their capacity to bring about some relevant social changes that may trigger other transformations at the meso and macro levels. The formation of counterpublics is an example of how pressure for change from the very basic community level can affect and change aspects of the main public sphere. If we think of social change as a never-ending process towards apparently utopian goals, we also need to think of the small and easy-to-ignore changes that shape it. In this sense, the theoretical framework articulating Sewell's theory of structure and Blumer's symbolic interactionism, as I did in the previous chapter, enabled me to identify different kinds of changes media activism can create in favelas.

Noticing Militância as a Structural Formation

Perhaps the most significant change that occurred after the people I met became involved in more politicized interactions was that they noticed another
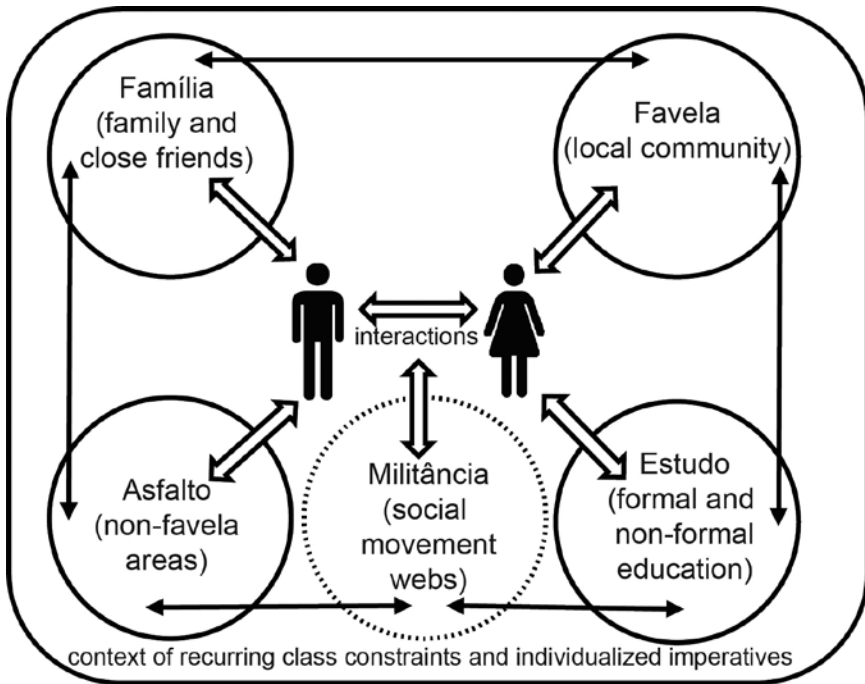
Figure 8.1.   Appearance of "militância" as a structural formation after schemas for change.
Source: Figure designed by author.

structural formation: *militância*, the sphere of interactions with social move-ments and civil society organizations (see Figure 8.1).

So far, I have described how young favela residents related to NGOs as part of the educational structural formations. Nevertheless, as they interacted and developed political awareness, NGOs gained new meanings. On the NGO projects, the people I met became acquainted with favela and non-favela peer participants and educators who had had a history of engagement in differ-ent forms of collective actions and social movements. These interactions revealed a universe that for most of them had been unknown. They interacted with people who acted for human rights causes; they became involved with organizations, movements that performed different kinds of political roles in society; they familiarized themselves with political struggles inside and outside favelas; they learned about words and initiatives that helped them understand their own anguish in relation to inequalities. It is in this sense of revelation that I say that they noticed *militância*. And once they noticed and familiarized themselves with different political struggles, they created their

own patterns of interactions with the individual and collective actors involved in them.

In other words, NGOs stopped being extracurricular schools to become gateways and bridges to the existing, but not fully identified social movements in favelas and non-favela environments. One of the community newspaper journalists described the snowball effect from education to cultural-political action in NGOs.

> i-6: If it weren't for the preparatory course for the university admission tests, I wouldn't have known about [the newspaper]. If it weren't for [the newspaper], which is a project of [the NGO], I wouldn't have chosen journalism. I wouldn't have been so inside the community media movement defending it as a way of life.

Similarly, one of the photographers described how participating in the NGO pedagogical projects was fundamental to his activism for connecting him with other young people who were also experiencing or discovering political action. He said:

> i-2: My contact with militancy happened [while studying at the NGO]. It was the time I joined a youth group in the Catholic Church. I met a group who worked at [the NGO], who studied there, and other people who did not study there. There was the militant youth group of the church, too. We traveled to Bahia and there I was, a middle school student among a lot of university students. It was one of the best experiences of my life meeting those people. It was my first trip as a militant. [...]

In addition to perceiving NGOs as gateways or bridges for broader social movements, they also started noticing or reinterpreting other forms of political actions around them. As I described earlier, favelas are historical spaces of political struggles. However, not all perceive or understand the actions of local resistance as something political. One reason relates to how mainstream media tend to criminalize certain movements. For instance, one conversation I had illustrates how collective actions by favela residents may appear to their disengaged neighbors.

> *Q:* How did you use to feel when the people demonstrated, for example, blocking the expressway?

> *i-7:* I used to think it was curious. Because at the time I didn't read newspapers, I only watched television. It was curious because they used to say: 'residents close the [main expressway], burn buses, and throw rocks at the cars.' And I used to wonder: 'But why did they do it?' Sometimes I saw protests against the rise in bus fares and thought: 'they didn't have to complain. Activists won't

change anything. [. . .] Today, I believe things do change depending on how things are done. [. . .] Before I used to think [demonstrations were] unnecessary because I didn't know what they were. [. . .]

This quote shows that despite favelas being spaces of struggles, media representations informed the interviewee about the protests. In that sense, those civil society actions did not exist for her as structures of political action. Those actions only became politically meaningful to her when she started participating in the NGO-driven newspaper and interacting with other journalists and activists.

This re-interpretation only occurred as the interviewee acquired political awareness. In this sense, political awareness grew despite class-based constraints and individualization. The reason is that they interacted in ways to critically act and reflect on their own social conditions and their roles in society. The discovery of civil society and the interactions with different civil society actors generated more political schemas and resources that were fundamental for other types of changes.

ICT Instrumentalization and Journalism as Political Resources

The perception of ICTs and journalism as resources for cultural-political action also represented a kind of change in the lives of the people I met. In the first part of this book, I conceptualized and described how favela media activism is crucial for the formation of counterpublics. What I did not do was to explain how the people I met started conceiving of ICTs and journalism as instruments for their activism. The more they became involved in political interactions across networks for *militância*, the more they perceived their media actions as means to reach their political objectives.

For that reason, most of the people I met used the words *instrument* or *tools* to explain what ICTs, multimedia productions, and journalism meant to them. I would refer to the skills to photograph and make journalism as human resources. In contrast, Internet, mobile phones, computers, and cameras are non-human resources. Engaging with them politically depends on one's enactment of political schemas.

For the journalists on the community newspaper, making journalism was characterized as a means to promote change in how people interact with the community and society. One of the journalists claimed not to be an activist, but explained that her actions on the newspaper and in a local radio station were "social." Our conversation shows what she understands "social" to be.

Q: Why do you consider participation in the newspaper and in the radio station to be social?

i-7: I consider it social because in one way or another you change people's lives. For example, you developed [as an individual] because of all you have read. You have your opinions for all you have read, seen, and heard. With all this, you give other views to people. You can tell people about things that are right in front of them and they had no clue. Mobilize people, make people know more about the places where they live.

Another journalist on the community newspaper also explained how journalism is part of "her" *militância*. As she explained her engagement in political practices, she also tackled issues of ethics in journalism. For her:

i-9: I don't do impartial or uncommitted coverage. On the contrary, my coverage is committed to the low-income workers. I am not ashamed to say it. I'm not neutral. I'm on the side of the worker, of the favela residents who may have had their rights violated.
[. . .] My work is a militant journalism.

These two examples demonstrate how journalism is characterized as a political resource. Nevertheless, they do not demonstrate how the interviewees started seeing journalism as such. In order to see how the change came about, a more suitable example demonstrates how the interactions in civil society affected how some people I met used Internet. For some, participation in NGOs represented their first access to the Internet. Political uses of Internet are not automatic outcomes of access. In the interviews I asked how they would compare their recent uses of Internet to their disengaged times. In most cases they described how their uses were mainly related to fun and socializing. One of the photographers illustrated this process by describing his own change in Internet use. He said:

i-4: I used to [use Internet], but not for the purposes I use it today. I used to use Internet for fooling around in social media and to read news. I didn't use to see Internet as a tool as I see it today. Today, I see the Internet as a tool to promote values. [. . .] At that time, it was more about social networks such as Orkut, ICQ [. . .].

In his case, his perception of Internet as a political tool evolved as he interacted as a participant on an NGO project. For others, the interactions with friends and existing collectives represented the politization of Internet use outside the NGO realm. This was the case with the collective members, who already thought about change in their communities before looking for modes of action in NGOs. In some cases, interactions for fun might lead to the problematization of reality and ultimately to collective actions online/offline. This is what happened to a group of friends who interacted in a *telecentro*

(a spot for Internet access in favelas) before they decided to start acting as a multimedia collective.

> i-5: The *telecentro* was more of a space for entertainment. It was the place we had to talk, gather, make some money, and do some teenage things. When it closed, we started organizing events to maintain it. It was more of an entrepreneurial than a social thing. When we stopped organizing events, we talked about our dreams. We didn't want to be like our parents. We didn't want to be housekeepers or bricklayers. Neither did they want that for us. This was the difference. At the time of the *telecentro*, we acted to keep the place in which we enjoyed hanging out. Then, a bit older and thoughtful about the future, we started acting in the social realm. Before, we used social media to produce events and chat with the guys.

These descriptions of how engagement in journalism and uses of Internet occurred illustrate how multifaceted the processes of acquiring schemas for cultural-political actions are.

Becoming Role Models

One important aspect of the process of acquiring political awareness as schemas for action was the importance they attached to role models. By role models, I mean people who behave in a certain way and generate examples others can follow. For example, the photographers referred to the man who had conceived the project they participated as someone who demonstrated how photography could be political. He was an educator, but also a role model as a professional photographer.

> i-1: In this process, [he] was fundamental. A humanist photographer who has denounced slave and child labor. He ceased to be with his family to document Brazil. In a way, he taught me how to show beauty where all people see the negative and pejorative sides. That was fundamental to my existence in addition to some books I read and the everyday life.

For others, the role models were educators in projects other than those specifically in media. For example, the people I met who had participated in the same preparatory course to university admission tests credited one of the teachers with triggering the students' interests in acquiring political awareness. One of the journalists in the community newspaper explained how this teacher—a very active participant of several social movements and networks—was a role model for her. She said:

> i-9: Once a month, we would watch a film at an event called 'Sunday is a day for cinema' in which we attended debates with some themes like dictatorship,

women, workers . . . Our geography teacher promoted this event. He used to take us to lands occupied by the Landless Workers' Movement, he connected the newspaper to critical media organizations. [. . .] So, I credit him with all this. [. . .] It wasn't enough to talk in class. [The NGO project] took us to places. [. . .] We had an important basis for politization. It wasn't about the classroom, but about noticing reality.

These examples illustrate how interactions operate in the re-interpretation of aspects of reality in processes of politization among the favela residents I met. However, they do not indicate a most interesting phenomenon: how people who had had role models ended up becoming role models themselves for younger generations. For example, when I first talked with the staff members of the community newspaper, I asked them if they felt their relationship with the community had changed after they started acting as journalists. One of them said:

Community journalist: In time, you end up being role models for other people in certain ways. I once heard the mother of a friend say: 'Please, tell your friend to do this or that. Don't let him do this or that.' We end up becoming examples. Then, it also creates some responsibility. [. . .]

In this quote, it is not clear if the interviewee became an example of individual success or of a political actor in the community. Either way, unwilling or unexpectedly, the interviewee's actions have created a different schema, which other favela residents can acquire and enact. Female journalists likewise became role models for younger women on the projects. For instance, the youngest journalist to whom I talked (18 years old at the time) described how interacting with the older one was important for her. She said:

i-7: I am the youngest there and I am very shy. I used to say 'everyone is at the university in journalism. I am still in middle school. What am I doing here? No one here is young anymore. Then [the other journalist] said: 'come on, I am only twenty something.' [. . .] As the youngest, I feel I have to listen more than talking. [. . .] She is the coordinator, almost like a boss. She is very kind to everyone. If she tells you off, she does it in a way that does not offend you. When someone does something, she gives support. I don't know how she does it. [. . .] I think it is very pleasant to be with people like her on the newspaper.

What these examples show is that, in Sewell's terms, being a role model means creating schemas by action. This is not restricted to those people with whom one interacts in educational or civil society structural formations. In the context of favelas, this means affecting how other favela residents relate to the community, society, and even their families. For example, a journalist shows how she became a role model for her older relatives.

i-6: My grandma is now at middle school and wants to go to the university. In the northeast, she stopped studying at the fourth grade to work. She only started studying again after I entered the university. [. . .] She works all day long, from Sunday to Sunday, as a house cleaner. At night, she goes to school. [. . .] None of my siblings studies anymore, but they say 'if only had I followed [the interviewee's] advice.' [. . .]

This quote teaches us two lessons. One is that being a role model is essentially the materialization of the production of schemas, even if unexpectedly, through action. The other is that producing schemas does not automatically mean having people enacting them. Therefore, structures are not coercive, but constructed or changed as people interact and enact other schemas than what are considered the norms in different circumstances. Another important indicator of this quote is that as people interact, their roles in certain structures also change. In her family, the informant was still a daughter, but no longer one to follow the coping schemas. Instead, she became a person who created schemas for change. In the fieldwork, I also noticed this shift at the intersections between educational and civil society structural formations of civil society as people shifted from apprentices to educators.

From Apprentice to Educator

One important type of change I observed during the research process is how the people I met eventually turned pedagogical practices into resources for change. Most of them joined or created their own spaces for pedagogical action. In that sense, being an educator is also a type of schema for change. Consequently, different pedagogical methodologies or initiatives were resources they enacted as part of the media activism they performed.

Throughout the research process I learned and observed many of these pedagogical initiatives the people I met performed. I could group these actions into at least four types: (a) classes and workshops as NGO staff members; (b) self-organized courses or lectures in NGOs and social movements; (c) courses with various civil society actors; and (d) community-oriented pedagogical interventions. These types overlap for two reasons. One reason is that they are media pedagogical initiatives in which the people I met were involved simultaneously. Therefore, they could be involved in different initiatives at the same time. Another reason is that these initiatives often supported other initiatives, thereby creating a sense of organized action among different residents and civil society actors.

The first type refers to the transition from being participants in NGO initiatives into being educators in those same organizations. Some of the NGOs have financial resources to maintain projects and renew their staff.

Some people I met benefited from these processes and started working in the organizations they originally sought out as educational opportunities. Thus, being an educator in an NGO is both a source of income and a way to affect other residents. One of the interviewees, for example, described how it was important for her to shift from NGO participant to media educator at an early age. She said:

> i-11: For me it was important because I started [being an educator] as an adolescent.
>   [. . .] To me, it was important to speak and be heard early. [. . .] I like [teaching]. I also like the paperwork, it is important. But I enjoy more being in touch with the kids in their everyday life. It's all quite close, you see. They live what I live.

In this case, we could argue that her change from a participant into an educator happened within the NGO pedagogical structure. In a way, she would introduce the sphere of civil society to her pupils in the same way as someone else introduced it to her.

In the second type, people organized their own courses and lectures to teach in different NGOs or social movements. For example, one of the photographers (who worked in the same NGO where he studied photography) explained how he had given workshops in different cities and regions of Rio de Janeiro. The organization of these workshops in various places and to different audiences related with agreements he made with different civil society organizations. In his case, it related to his own reputation as a photographer rather than his workplace. For him, going around workshops and lectures was a way to raise critical discussions in other favelas than his own. He said:

> i-3: In fact, we share our knowledge in photography. We debate things like the visual place of the favela in the city, how newspapers represent favelas [. . .]. Some classes are very playful because they are meant for children and adolescents, but we try to make [these workshops] in a way to discuss these things.

A third type of pedagogical action also entails sharing knowledge, but meant to enhance or increase skills for strengthening individual and collective civil society actors. One example was the community media course organized by the participants of a community newspaper. The course included lectures and workshops by university professors, union leaders, and members of NGOs and social movements. In response to my question about why they created the community media course, the journalist who coordinated the course's first version replied:

> i-6: We thought: 'we have so many years in community media. So many years of struggle. Why not pass this experience on to other people?' We will train

new community media practitioners if they want to. We believe that it is a situation of exchange. [. . .] We thought the course could have classes about what community media means, what social movements are, and what favela means. We also work with journalistic writing, but beyond the techniques. I personally have a political and ideological interest in training others community media practitioners who follow this line. [. . .] Our goal was to train more community media practitioners for the newspaper.

The fourth type refers to less conventional forms of pedagogical action, or interventions, as the people I met described. These interventions took place in streets, alleys and other open spaces in favelas. They included workshops in photography, street art, dance and poetry. In similar ways to the other events, interventions are often intended to bring people of different backgrounds together to discuss subjects of interest to favela residents. One of the members of a multimedia collective explained how these interventions are strategic in expanding political discussions beyond the kinship circles among those who have already achieved political awareness. Together with her partners in the multimedia collective, she helped organize events ranging from the implementation of a small library to arts workshops in the favelas where she lived. She explained,

i-8: I usually say that it makes me sad when we militants and social activists gather to discuss one subject because we often talk amongst ourselves. We need to take this knowledge to the community. We need to include the community in these matters because they are the ones who suffer the most from them. We suffer indirectly because we know our rights. [. . .] I repeatedly insist on it. That's why we started these field actions. [. . .]

What such pedagogical actions show is the extensive interest among the people I met to share knowledge and exchange experiences. In this sense, this mentality illustrates how they changed from young people driven by individualist goals of self-development into civil society actors concerned about creating counterpublics as parts of struggles for common good among favela residents. As they engage in pedagogical actions, they also generate new schemas that may become references of action and a source of political awareness to other favela residents. The changes listed here and the actions they imply demonstrate the political relevance of interactions between favela residents involved in (media) activism and their families, communities, friends, and non-favela social groups and civil society actors.

Chapter Nine

Research Outcomes

Findings, Lessons and Interdisciplinary Contributions

When I started conducting the research that led to this book, I had in mind the similarities and contrasts between favelas and my hometown, a predominantly low-income working class town in the outskirts of the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro. During my childhood and adolescence, my perception of favelas was decidedly prejudiced. Informed by a highly discriminatory media coverage, I used to see favelas as naturally violent urban spaces that I should avoid. As a young and better-educated adult, I realized that poverty and violence were not natural features of favelas. I learned that, in fact, residents organized movements and struggled against them. One type of action within these collective struggles has been the use of media technologies and the engagement in media and journalism against these and other consequences of social inequality. This is the phenomenon I call "favela media activism". When I learned about media initiatives in favelas, I noticed that in my hometown we also had problems with poverty and violence, but cases of media activism were rare. In these circumstances, I wondered: what would I need to know if I were to promote media activism for political mobilization and social change in my hometown? What characterizes media activism in favelas? How do young people become involved in it?

The search for answers to these questions shaped my research process. In the scientific-activist research process, I examined different aspects of media activism in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. The research followed two lines of inquiry. On the one hand, I focused on defining the concept of "favela media activism" and analytically describing what it means as a social phenomenon. For that purpose, I identified it as a type of *luta* (the Portuguese word that means "fight" used to refer to bottom-up political struggles) in our contemporary information age of hyper-connectivity and abundance of ICTs in everyday life. In these *lutas*, favela and periphery residents engage

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against human rights violations and social injustice. Then, I looked at how political actions in, about and through media characterize both the enactment and contesting of citizenship among low-income populations in a context of stark social inequality. After that, I focused on how NGO-driven or citizen-led community media and multimedia collectives contribute to the formation of counterpublics that both challenge the main public sphere and mobilize resistance and political action among favela residents.

On the other hand, I focused on how the engagement of young favela residents in media activism takes place. First, I looked at how non-governmental organizations promote media education for political awareness and mobilization in favelas. I assessed the evaluation participants made of NGO projects to argue that, despite their importance, one cannot establish a causal relationship between media education initiatives and engagement in media activism. Following this, I articulated a theoretical framework through which to scrutinize such processes of engagement without treating them merely as outcomes of NGO interventions. To construct this framework, I critically reviewed theories related to the debates around class and individualization as well as structure and agency with symbolic interactionism. I argued that interactions in four everyday life structural formations—*família* (family and close friends), *favela* (neighborhood, area of residence), *estudo* (socialization at schools and NGO projects), and *asfalto* (relationships with non-favela people and discourses)—played important roles in how young favela residents act socially and politically.

Finally, I applied this framework to reflect upon the trajectories of young favela residents towards their engagement in media activism. First I demonstrated how interactions with family and friends, neighbors, non-favela social groups and at school often lead to people primarily learning how to deal with their everyday lives in a context of class-based constraints and individualized imperatives (e.g. the pressure to juggle between work and education early in life). Then I described how extra-curricular, NGO-driven educational opportunities represented turning points in the lives of the people with whom I familiarized. The interactions in these processes generated different kinds of resources (e.g. political knowledge, technical skills, access to technology) to act for structural changes in their everyday lives. It is through these processes of political engagement that the people I met noticed and became involved with another structural formation: *militância* (the cross-class, cross-favela networks of social movements and activist groups). This complex process lies behind the engagement of young favela residents in media activism.

Overall, this research has enabled me to answer my activist and social scientific questions. In this concluding chapter, I reflect upon some lessons I learned from my research process. First, I review some of my key findings.

Media activism in favelas does not happen in a vacuum. This study shows the relationship between media activism and other types of cultural-political actions in favelas, favela media activism's societal and public relevance, and its complex processes of engagement. Second, I analyze their value for practical initiatives. I believe some results suit both organizations that promote initiatives on behalf of specific target social groups (e.g. NGOs that act towards and with low-income youth) and citizen-led, grassroots initiatives by social groups acting on their own and their communities' behalf (e.g. citizen-led multimedia collectives). In both cases, some lessons I learned may appear as tactical recommendations for organizations and self-organized collective actors engaged in communication for development and social change in Brazil and elsewhere.

Third, I reflect upon the interdisciplinary value of the findings. One advantage of interdisciplinary research is that not only does it explore different sets of methodological and theoretical knowledge, but it may also generate contributions to the advancement in research in different fields and disciplines. Therefore, I reflect on how some findings can contribute to the debates from which I derived some ideas and approaches in my research process. Throughout this chapter, I also address some open issues I was unable to deal with in this research. By doing so, I indicate how approaching these issues may enhance the empirical and theoretical knowledge concerning media activism among low-income social groups in unequal societies.

FOUR KEY FINDINGS

The research leading to this book was essentially an exploratory process. At the beginning I merely had a slightly informed curiosity about the uses of media and journalism among favela residents as a social phenomenon. I believed they played an important role in promoting political awareness and mobilizing low-income people for bottom-up struggles against human rights violations, discrimination, and governmental neglect. However, I did not know much about media at the margins other than some of their productions and a few stories.

After years of fieldwork, I believe I have managed not only to know some specific cases in-depth, but also to provide explanations for both the societal relevance and the processes of engagement in media activism in favelas. These explanations relate to what I consider the four key findings of this research. They are (a) *how media activism relates to existing struggles and movements inside and outside favelas*, (b) *the differences between NGO-driven and citizen-led initiatives*, (c) *how favela media activism relates to*

the formation of counterpublics, and (d) *how engagement in favela media activism is a process of agency enactment through interaction framed by class-based and individualization imperatives*.

Historicizing Favela Media Activism

The first key finding results from an effort to avoid both media-centrism and the victimization-criminalization of favela residents. Favela media activism, as I define it, relates to three distinct, but interrelated historical processes in Brazil. One is the tradition of struggle and resistance among favela residents. Favela residents have historically organized movements aiming at improving living standards, combatting discrimination, and reacting to the governmental responsibilities for the predominance of violence in favelas. Therefore, media activism is one more type of political action in which favela residents engage for human rights and social justice. Hence, my careful avoidance of referring to the people I met as "media activists". Media activism is something residents *do*, not what they *are*.

The second historical process is the formation of counterpublics in Brazil. Media activism in favelas follows a line of uses of media for sociopolitical change that goes back to the Independence, Abolitionist, and Republican movements of the 1800s, the labor movement of the mid-1900s, and the underground counterpublics during the dictatorship in 1964-1984. In this historical timeline, favela media activism is one of the contemporary facilitators and generators of counterpublics to challenge the dominance of political and economic elites over the main public sphere in Brazil. The third historical tradition to which favela media activism relates is the uses of media and journalism by and within social movements for the promotion of political awareness and mobilization among low-income Brazilians. This tradition is part of a growing movement for media democratization in Brazil since the 1960s. Historicizing favela media activism has allowed me to avoid claiming it exists as a phenomenon due to the popularization of new media or the intervention of non-governmental organizations in favelas, for example.

Distinctions between NGO-driven and Citizen-led Media Initiatives

The second key finding was the distinction between NGO-driven and citizen-led media initiatives as spaces for or results of media activism. On the one hand, NGO-driven media initiatives tended to have quasi-professional structures for media and journalistic practice. The initiatives of this kind with which I familiarized– the newspapers *O Cidadão da Maré* and *Maré de Notícias*, the photography school *Imagens do Povo*, the *People's School for Critical Communication* (ESPOCC), and *BemTV*'s audiovisual projects—

provided participants with media and journalistic training and technological infrastructure. In addition, NGO-driven media initiatives also resembled newsrooms and media studios due to their professional approach and financial support from governmental and private/corporate sponsors. The organizational structure and the financial support have facilitated the maintenance of the initiatives for long-term periods. In some cases, volunteer participants also receive financial support or even become staff members of NGOs.

On the other hand, citizen-led media initiatives were fundamentally political, in the radical sense of the term. In these cases (the multimedia collectives *#Entresembater*, *#OcupaAlemão*, *Favela em Foco*, *Coletivo Papo Reto* and *Maré Vive*), especially young people joined forces, skills, and knowledge to use ICTs and media available to act on their own and other favela residents' behalf. These collectives often maintain a very active presence in social networks online, which are often instruments to share information about human rights violations in favelas. In addition, the online instruments also serve to mobilize residents and non-favela activists for demonstrations and cultural-political events promoted by collectives or other civil society organizations. Multimedia collectives often act exclusively on a volunteer basis. Due to their autonomy from established organizations and thus complete independence from the state, multimedia collectives tend to be more vocal and open against state violence and neglect than NGO-driven media initiatives.

Despite the differences, NGO-driven and citizen-led media initiatives in favelas tend to be mutually supportive. Members of different media initiatives tend to interact and join forces in different events. Being a *favelado* is a shared identity that often brings people from different favelas and social movements to act together.

Favela Media Activism in the Formation of Counterpublics

The third finding relates to a typical justification request I heard from colleagues in various debates throughout my research process: what is the social impact of favela media activism? Despite the elusiveness of the question, it is possible to identify how favela residents can make a difference in society through their political engagement in, through and about media if we think of how they shape the formation of counterpublics. The basic element for policymaking is debate. Not only in the sense of parliamentary deliberation, but also in public discussion. The problem in Brazil is that not all social groups have had a chance to participate in these debates without the representation and filtering of commercial mainstream media. Thus, the possibility of lower-income people raising their voices in legitimatized spaces of public debate—mostly in or through media—have historically been restricted to a few concessions in a predominantly discriminatory and exclusive public sphere.

In contrast to this scenario, media activism proves its importance. In terms of public debates, it has two roles. On the one hand, it mobilizes others to act politically in their everyday lives. When favela residents engaged in media activism turn their communication processes inwards to the favelas, they contribute to the articulation of favela counterpublics. In these counterpublics, favela residents engage in public debates about the lacks and threats in their own everyday lives. They also share political knowledge with each other and gradually turn their specific demands and complaints into public issues. The more people from different favelas participate in these counterpublics, the bigger and more widespread the movement gets. As they grow, it becomes increasingly harder for the main public spheres to ignore these counterpublics. In recent decades, especially after the popularization of Internet, mobile phones and digital media devices, the representation of favela residents and the coverage of issues concerning favelas has apparently become more nuanced. As an avenue for further research, it seems that the reason for an apparent decrease of discrimination against favelas in media also relates to the establishment of favela counterpublics. In this process, media activism is fundamental.

An In-depth Approach to Political Trajectories of Favela Youth

The last key finding relates to the engagement processes of young favela residents in media activism. As an effort to avoid media-centric and NGO-centric explanations, I articulated a framework through which to look at the trajectories of favela residents who used media and journalism for political purposes. For that, I noticed how class and individualism, structure and agency—often seen as dichotomies—are in fact entangled and mutually influential in the context of favelas. With that in mind, I articulated a theoretical framework to reflect about the relationships between societal structure, individual agency and interactions in the processes of politization and engagement among young favela residents. My goal was two-fold. I aimed at understanding how engagement in media activism came about in a context of class-based and individualized imperatives. I also wanted to know how interactions in different everyday life structural formations related to favela youth's engagement processes.

In using this framework to analyze retrospective statements of favela residents engaged in media activism, I described how some interactions generated practical knowledge for young favela residents to cope and also knowledge and motivation to act for societal change starting from within the context of favelas. The moral and ethical lessons—which I have referred to as schemas to cope and schemas to change–derive from interactions with dif-

ferent groups of people. These schemas have a direct relation to how favela residents use resources (e.g. knowledge, technical skills, and technologies) and act. In their relationships with family, friends, their communities, and society (e.g. outside the favelas and as media audiences), I argued that young residents mainly learned how to cope with the hardships and life-threatening situations in favelas. Despite family-supported individualized drives (e.g. to pursue education for better jobs), most people I met had to deal with class-based imperatives (e.g. working early in life, juggling between education and work). Most were also emphatic in evaluating schools as unable to provide them with resources to change the patterns of low-income livelihood.

This is the importance of NGO projects as turning points: in different pedagogical projects participants acquired skills and knowledge to change into political actors. Interestingly, most interviewees came to NGOs following their individual interests in self-development while a few were already somehow active politically. At first, NGO projects were seen as extensions of structural formations for education. However, they differed from schools. There, the people I met learned and debated about issues related to social inequality and their own roles in society. In addition, they also interacted with peer favela youth, university professors, activists and other people from different walks of life. In these processes they realized how media representations affected their lives and learned how they could use and produce media to act politically.

As consequences of these processes, their lives changed and so did their relationships with different social groups. For instance, *militância* (militancy connected to social movements and civil society organizations)—one structural formation that they did not notice before participating in NGO projects—became part of their lives. All interviewees participate in different events (e.g. debates, demonstrations, artistic interventions) with social movements and NGOs dedicated to struggles against social inequality. In addition to engaging in media initiatives, they have also used pedagogy as a political instrument to share resources with engaged and disenfranchised favela residents. Due to their activism, some have also become role models in their communities, families, and friendship circles. Interestingly, they have also become very critical of NGOs despite acknowledging their importance for their own trajectories. For them, NGOs provide state- or corporation-sponsored relief to problems that should be solved through policy and investments in public schools. As they distanced themselves from NGOs, they created and pursued different kinds of political trajectories individually (e.g. photographers, bloggers) or collectively (e.g. journalists, members of collectives).

In summary, these four key findings reveal details of initiatives and engagement in favela media activism. Rather than definitive explanations for

this social phenomenon, the findings indicate paths to further detailed knowl-
edge about media activism among low-income, urban youth in Brazil and
elsewhere. I believe these paths may contribute not only to scholarly debates,
but also to the development of methodologies and tactical actions among
practitioners and activists.

LEARNED LESSONS TO INFORM
RESEARCH AND ACTIVIST PRACTICES

Activist researchers, NGO practitioners and grassroots activists have at least
one characteristic in common: their aim to deploy skills and knowledge for
social change. That means the actions of the three imply efforts to somehow
influence, challenge, or inspire other people to assess their own reality and act
differently so that society ultimately changes. This influence over people may
operate in different ways. It may be coercive, persuasive or reciprocal. Since
these three types of interpersonal influence represent different power rela-
tions, it is no surprise that there is much dialogue and conflict among people
doing applied research, acting in organizations, and engaging in grassroots
actions.

Earlier in this book, I illustrated some of these conflicts in research about
communication for development and social change. The reasons for scholarly
concerns about the limitations and problems in this field relate directly to the
conflicts arising from the uneven power relations between the three stake-
holders (researchers, NGO workers, and activists) and a fourth: the people on
whose behalf or for what benefit they decided to act. The impasse I described
refers specifically to the relationships between development agents from
so-called developed societies and the subjects of their interventions in the so-
called developing world. However, I also indicated that these conflicts erupt
at the domestic level in unequal societies like Brazil. Sharing nationalities or
zip codes does not prevent conflicts between agents of social change strate-
gies and their target social groups.

For this reason, researchers, practitioners, and activists need to remember
certain methodological and ethical issues when trying to make differences in
other people's lives. Since the 1960s, these reminders have appeared recur-
rently in debates varying from critical scholarly literature to bottom-up dis-
cussions online and offline. Conferences that bring these three stakeholders
of development and social change together are also examples of spaces where
the need to remember such issues often appears.

For example, at the 2014 Ørecomm Festival[1], scholars and practitioners
shared concern about how to promote ethical, critical and respectful devel-

opment research. Based on his experience doing collaborative and applied research on interactive radio and civic engagement in Africa, Dr. Sharath Srinivasan of the University of Cambridge listed five points to reduce mistakes researchers often repeat in communication for development and social change projects.

First, he suggested a "reality check" among researchers to familiarize themselves with local actions rather than creating techno-centric solutions inappropriate to the contexts of action. Second, he believed development research should foster spaces of engagement that allow spontaneous socialization and contention rather than controlled forms of participation. Third, researchers should reflect on how more passive forms of participation (e.g. listenership) also count as engagement. Fourth, he argued that powerful publics of collective action may arise despite the top-down nature of development projects. Fifth and finally, Srinivasan reminded us that we need to value voices and their local diversities.

Following Srinivasan's inspiring presentation, I created a list of lessons I learned during the research process. These lessons may function as practical recommendations not only to activist researchers and practitioners, but also to grassroots political actors who promote local initiatives of communication for development and social change. For NGO practitioners and activist researchers, these recommendations may be useful for planning ethical and inclusive initiatives respectful of local people and their social peculiarities. For local political actors, such as the multimedia collective members in favelas, they may function as strategies to enhance mobilization and their impacts in public debates. Ultimately, these lessons may also suit these stakeholders to increase mutual support and respectful actions towards people whose lives they act to change.

Lesson 1: Familiarize with the Context

Before starting media initiatives for social change, it is crucial to know about the target social group and their contextual peculiarities, the reality check to which Srinivasan and others have referred. Some reasons for why the NGOs and citizen-led collectives chose to act in media activism reveal the importance of being familiar with the context. For example, the perception of the mainstream media representation of favelas as a problem happened because of the actors' awareness of its discriminatory patterns. In the case of the NGOs, this perception was an outcome of either first-hand experience (e.g. the NGOs founded by favela residents founded) or dialogue with favela residents (e.g. NGOs hiring residents or consulting with favela leaderships). A similar process occurred among the favela residents involved in media

activism, even though for them it was necessary to be in a critical pedagogi-
cal process to de-normalize and react to discrimination in media and society.

Another example of the importance of being familiar with the context ap-
peared in the instrumentalization of media. The combination of online and
offline initiatives demonstrates awareness about the levels of access and
usability of ICTs among favela residents. The prioritization of radio and
newspapers as instruments represented, at an earlier stage, the perception that
online media would not reach most favela residents. Today the increasing
uses of social media online and mobile phone applications among NGOs and
citizen-led collectives indicate how aware actors are of changes in patterns of
socialization and ICT usage in favelas.

These examples do not mean that being from a certain social context auto-
matically means one is fully familiar with it. On different occasions, members
of multimedia collectives demonstrated annoyance about other residents not
getting involved in the activities and initiatives they promoted. Despite being
from favelas, they had no explanations for why people did not join them. In
these circumstances, I noticed the risk of political actors accusing others of
being apathetic or lazy about acting for change. While this could be an actual
reason, it is not very productive to accept these assumptions as an absolute
and immutable truth. Thus, I believe that even favela residents have to make
efforts to familiarize themselves with their own social environment. For in-
stance, engaging with research (e.g. surveys, questionnaires, and interviews)
may actually be an important strategic instrument to enhance mobilization
processes. This is one example in which researchers/practitioners and grass-
roots actors could mutually benefit from their relationship. There may be
processes in which these stakeholders exchange information about contextual
peculiarities and methodological skills.

Lesson 2: Tackle Individualization Imperatives

Another aspect of social change to bear in mind is that low-income people
also have financial and vocational aspirations. In the literature about com-
munication for development and social change, we do not often see debates
about why low-income people participate in NGOs. In Rio de Janeiro, I found
that favela residents do so for individual reasons. Some joined NGO projects
because they offered some money. Others wanted to have more education to
increase their chances in the labor market. A third group looked for media
initiatives because they had already decided to pursue journalism as a profes-
sion. In very few cases they looked for NGOs for political purposes. Never-
theless, if I think of the literature about media initiatives for social change,

we hardly ever debate about how the political and social changes we expect are sustainable in contexts where people may have to provide or supplement the household income very early in life.

During the research process, I observed different ways of dealing with the issue of income and professional self-development among favela residents. Even though the NGOs I investigated had an agenda that promoted actions against human rights violations and social injustice, they also demonstrated concern for the individual self-development of participants. In some cases, they provided small financial support to reduce the risk of participants dropping out of NGO projects before their conclusion. In other cases, NGOs provided space for professional training through volunteering. In other situations, NGOs used their institutional legitimacy to facilitate the entrance of participants in the labor market. In fewer cases, NGOs hired former participants. In all these cases, the pedagogical processes combined knowledge about the consequences of social inequality with high-quality professional training. By doing so, organizations demonstrated how social change is a very difficult task if people who need to act for change at the same time have to maintain themselves financially.

The challenges to financial self-sustainability was the main threat to the maintenance of unpaid, citizen-led multimedia collectives. All the people I met who were involved in such initiatives raised the issue of how difficult it is to keep up their activism and at the same time pay bills, support their families, and make ends meet. Hence the urgency for low-income political actors to create strategies to cope with capitalism rather than denying it. In that sense, researchers and practitioners who may have a higher degree of financial security can develop ways to support those grassroots initiatives in ways that increase their chances of reaching a balance between their activism and their income needs.

One example of partnership is that between the New York-based organization Witness and the multimedia collective *Coletivo Papo Reto*. While their agreements do not involve direct financial support, Witness has contributed to *Coletivo Papo Reto*'s internal organization, renewal of video-making devices, and articulation with peer collectives from different countries. With increasing nationwide and international visibility, *Coletivo Papo Reto* has also gained legitimacy as a political action within and outside the favelas where its members live. Consequently, their chances of making a living out of their activism (e.g. lecturing, giving workshops, getting jobs in established media companies) increase. Their cases show that those interested in promoting communication for development and social change can do more than merely transferring knowledge to low-income target groups.

Lesson 3: Combine Teaching, Debate and Socialization for Political Awareness

What characterized NGO projects as turning points to engagement in political action was not only their strategy to teach about the consequences of social inequality. Most importantly, they created opportunities for low-income participants to learn, question, and contest even the very same lessons they were learning. In addition, they also had the opportunity to socialize with people from different class backgrounds. Thus participating in months-long NGO projects created opportunities for both personal self-development (e.g. professional training, vocational education) and for understanding in very clear terms how social inequality affected their lives. Political awareness raising was not indoctrination, but a process in which they learned to problematize their own realities and to develop their own solutions to both socioeconomic constraints and restrictions to the enactment of citizenship in favelas.

Citizen-led multimedia collectives have likewise promoted different processes of mobilizing other favela residents. Artistic interventions, poetry and rap recitals, workshops, roundtables, and debates are examples of offline strategies to initiate dialogue about human rights and social justice with local populations. In those in which I participated, the events with more disenfranchised residents were those that combined political discourses and play. For example, the events to decorate the streets of favelas in response to the high costs of the FIFA World Cup—like the *São Jorge* Street case I described in the introduction—mobilized more favela residents than a quasi-academic debate about police violence and public security. Similarly, protests against the murder of favela residents often attract a more diverse crowd than the marches outside favelas against the general criminalization of black favela youth. In this sense, on the one hand, researchers/practitioners and grassroots political actors could influence each other to develop strategies to take a combination of teaching and debating to the streets as ways to attract more people to participate the discussions.

Lesson 4: Understand the Dynamics between the Main Public Sphere and Counterpublics

The dynamics between counterpublics and the main public sphere is a theoretical construct with potentially tactical usefulness to practitioners and grassroots political actors. In practice, they already act upon it. It takes tactical thinking to create media education initiatives that counter the mainstream media discriminatory discourse. Another example relates to the choices of different media platforms grassroots actors make for different purposes (e.g. traditional media for internal communication and online platforms as chan-

nels to reach external publics). However, the relationships between publics can accomplish more than the construction of counter-representation and mobilization.

Distinguishing between the main public sphere and counterpublics may be useful to systematize a variety of distinct, but interrelated actions. One example is the relationship with the mainstream media. Certainly commercial media conglomerates are important players if we think of the formation and maintenance of the main public sphere. For this reason, they create a complex paradox for political actors engaged in media activism in favelas. On the one hand, they reinforce discrimination against favela residents. On the other hand, they are also legitimate sources of information among most favela residents. Therefore, their discourse needs challenging and denouncing, but antagonizing mainstream media may lead to difficulties in disseminating counter-messages to broader audiences through the mainstream media itself.

In that sense, understanding how the dynamics between the main public sphere and counterpublics work and relate may enable practitioners and grassroots political actors to create systematic plans of action for different purposes. Actions could include mobilizing more favela residents (creating counterpublics), challenging mainstream media discourses, and using mainstream media platforms to communicate with broader audiences.

Lesson 5: Value Different Types of Structural Change

The understanding of different forms of interactions, structures and changes in favelas may also be tactically useful. In favelas, the NGOs and multimedia collectives engage in different communication and pedagogical strategies for individual and political change. However, the targets of change are seldom clearly stated. For example, one often hears general demands urging favelas to rise up against injustices, push for urgent media democratization and denounce the problems of capitalism. While these do indeed function as motivational goals for greater changes, they also tend to undermine the relevance of smaller changes in everyday life that may ultimately accumulate and have a broader effect.

Smaller changes are not necessarily trivial. For instance, multimedia collectives and individual actors who produce information denouncing state-sponsored violence have contributed significantly to a culture of filming police abuses in favelas. In theoretical terms, their actions have contributed to transforming interactions at the community level from relationships that predominantly teach how to cope (except, of course, those existing cases of *luta*) to political articulations of contention and change. The same happens within family and friendship circles when someone engaged in media

activism inspires other residents to pursue engagement in political activities despite the lacks and threats of everyday life. When people talk about these changes, they often sound as if they were fortunate, but unexpected outcomes of their actions to change society. While it is true that not all changes are predictable or even as desirable as expected, I believe that considering smaller changes as part of tactically planned actions may enhance the promotion of mobilization in favelas.

Lesson 6: Engage in Actual Dialogue

Finally, the lesson I learned that specifically relates to researchers in processes of communication for development and social change is the importance of engaging in actual dialogue. During the research process, I heard about the processes of *troca*. Literally, it translates as exchange. In practice, it means sharing and acquiring knowledge through socialization. These processes were important for grassroots political actors. However, researchers seldom talk about these processes of knowledge exchange. From the high ground of science, researchers may talk about contributing to local struggles, but in fact political actors from favelas often described how researchers rarely return the results of studies.

One reason for not being as collaborative as we wish is that we do not really engage in dialogue. Researchers do recommend, evaluate, and analyze, but that means speaking. Dialogue also entails listening, and this is something we seldom do. How many times have we heard about researchers returning their unfinished texts for the people in whom they were interested to evaluate the outcomes? In Rio de Janeiro, I participated in two events in which scholars submitted their research results for debate with the people they had interviewed and observed. The discussions were quite intense and the research subjects gave very important feedback and comments on the materials. However, the materials had already been published. Therefore, even though researchers heard what they had to say, it was not really a case of listening and acting because of what was said.

As noted earlier, I tried to engage in dialogue with my own research process. While the dialogue did not go as I had expected, it was clear to me that I had given up a significant part of my hierarchical power as a researcher by presenting incomplete ideas to the people whose actions I had theorized. As a result, I did not get much substantial feedback, but the comments suggested that the people I met felt respected when I contacted them and told them I needed their evaluation before I published. The lesson of engaging in dialogue is certainly an important methodological one when conducting ethnographic and activist research. This and the other lessons are also useful as

answers to the question that motivated my research. What do I need to know if I am to promote media education and media initiatives for social change in my hometown? These lessons will hopefully be equally useful to other researchers contemplating the same kind of action as they are to me.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONTRIBUTIONS

The characteristics of media activism in favelas and the processes of engagement in them are multidimensional and complex social phenomena. For that reason, it was important to engage with theories and approaches from different disciplines to explain their nuances. In addition to the key findings and the practical lessons resulting from this research, I believe that the results of this study contribute to advancing theory in some of the disciplines that somehow influenced my interdisciplinary effort. Up to this point, I mainly suggested how the results might be useful for the field of communication for development and social change. However, in this section I list some potentials of contributions to other fields. Namely, the fields of (a) social movement theory, (b) media and journalism, (c) media education and (d) youth studies. In different ways, approaches to the dynamics of the main public sphere and counterpublics as well as the approaches to structural formations of everyday life serve as fruitful theoretical frameworks for more detailed studies of different aspects of favela media activism.

Scholars committed to social movement research have recently shown great interest in online-organized mass demonstrations. Social media and mobile telephones in particular had an important role in movements such as the Occupy Movement and the uprisings in the Middle East inspiring digital media enthusiasts and scholars to celebrate the centrality of new ICTs in contemporary forms of political mobilization (cf. Castells 2015). However, the emphasis on media technologies may not only distract observers from the constraining political economy of digital media technologies in general and social media platforms in particular, but also from the complexity of mobilization processes in face-to-face, street-level relationships.

In this case, the results of this study point to the need for more people-centered approaches to the formation of social movements in the contemporary information age. The identification of the layers of interpersonal relationships, pedagogical initiatives and inter-class dialogue indicate that Internet uses for political purposes are merely the tip of an iceberg of civic engagement processes (Custódio 2014). In addition, discussing differences between low-income and better-off strata in movements is also crucial to understand how different socioeconomic backgrounds affect how people become involved in mass movements.

One issue in my own research that remains open for further research is how people from favelas engaged in the recent mass protests in Brazil. Since June 2013, mass demonstrations all over the country led many people to believe that the giant—the Brazilian people—finally woke up. While it is true that many young people, especially the well-off, have been more active as citizens in recent years, mobilizing lower-income populations for demonstrations against more general issues (e.g. corruption, policymaking) remains a tough challenge. In some of the protests in which I participated, it was evident that the majority of the people demonstrating were lighter-skinned students with apparently stable living standards. As they marched on Rio de Janeiro's main street, low-income workers looked at the crowd with suspicion or simply rushed into bus or metro stations trying to return home after a long day at work. At the same time, one hardly sees the same crowd of middle- and upper-class youths supporting low-income protesters when they demonstrate against police violence, for example.

Thus, the questions about how social class and offline initiatives affect the engagement of low-income people in protests and demonstrations can potentially enrich debates in the field of social movement theory.

Regarding media and journalism studies, this research offers at least two important insights. One of these insights relates to the relationship between commercial mainstream media and media at the margins. Instead of framing them as antagonists, I believe it is important to analyze how their conflicts and interplays have affected the constitution of publics in a society. Due to their political economic power, Brazilian commercial mainstream media remain the powerful institution that determines topics debated in the country's main public sphere. In that sense, it remains to be investigated how counterpublics have affected public debates. For example, the question about changes in the representation of low-income populations such as favela residents and the impacts of bottom-up counterpublics on these changes remain open for further research.

Another insight reflects upon the role of journalism in socially unequal societies. Due to its establishment in the past century and a half, we have treated industrial journalism as seen in mainstream media organizations and in institutions of higher education as "journalism". Other forms of journalism consequently acquire prefixes that somehow differentiate them from what we treat officially as journalism. For instance, we talk about "citizen journalism" and "amateur journalism" to distinguish journalistic practices of people who have not been through the university system or have not legitimized themselves by working in the media industry. However, the experience of observing journalism and photojournalism at the margins in Brazil showed me that those practices resemble journalism before industrialization and

professionalization, in which people instrumentalized the press for political purposes. I therefore believe that the results of this study raise a question about what counts as journalism and the types of journalism there are outside the legitimatized spaces for standardized practices.

In terms of media education, the main contribution of this research relates to the political peculiarities of media initiatives in favelas. Elsewhere (Custódio 2015a), I have reflected upon how media education research often focuses on its school-based methodologies rather than on its political aspects. Issues related to media educational processes outside the school system are therefore largely ignored, even though they have been crucial for the political engagement of low-income youth in Brazil and elsewhere. The results of this study thus raise issues of how these pedagogical processes take place outside schools; their political peculiarities and relevance; and how knowledge about them can contribute to the dominant policy and school methodology debates in the field of media education.

This research also generated important insights that one could approach from the standpoint of youth studies. One of these insights relates to the role of low-income, marginalized youth as political actors in the context of social inequality. The question about how and why young people living among lacks and threats due to their socioeconomic status remain an urgent issue. A second insight relates to how access to and uses of digital and mobile media relate to their processes of civic engagement. The issue related to the challenges of balancing cultural-political actions with the individualized imperatives remains open for further research, for example.

In this chapter, my goal was to indicate (a) different outcomes from this ethnographic approach to favela media activism, (b) paths for cooperation with civil society actors, and (c) possible alternatives for further interdisciplinary research. Moreover, a less obvious interest was to demonstrate that the findings, lessons, and research proposals are applicable to studies beyond the Brazilian borders. As mentioned in chapter 4, my choice to define the social phenomenon in which I am interested as "favela" media activism was risky in the sense of restricting it to the Brazilian context (we do not talk about favelas elsewhere in the world). However, the outcomes of the study suggest that it is possible to adapt a similar effort of historicization, theoretical articulation, contextual analysis, and in-depth trajectory analysis to other societies.

After all, Brazil is not the only unequal society in the world. Neither is it the only one where social groups suffer from marginalization. It is possible to think of similar sensitizing concepts to fit other social realities. As prefixes to media activism, we can substitute favela with "township", "ghetto", "slum", "ethnic minority", and other terms that describe social groups excluded from

public debates and political processes in different societies all over the world. This is the greatest value of people-oriented studies. Studies that focus on the characteristics of struggles, their history, their embeddedness in social contexts, and the potential and actual structural changes they can generate.

NOTE

1. The Ørecomm Festival is a gathering between development scholars and practitioners organized in partnership between Danish and Swedish universities. For more information, see the page of the Ørecomm Festival 2014 at http://voiceandmatter.net/ (last accessed on December 5, 2016).

Afterword

The first time I heard about favela residents making media was in the early 2000s, when I rented the film "Something in the Air" (*Uma onda no ar*, 2002) from a video store in Magé, my hometown in the Metropolitan Area of the State of Rio de Janeiro. The film tells a true story of four friends who lived in a favela and had the idea of starting a radio station in the early 1980s. They gathered money to buy the transmitter, improvised a studio in a room in one of their houses and started broadcasting. Soon the local population started participating in the station's programs by asking for music, requesting social assistance, and making announcements. The friends also used the radio to raise issues of social injustice, violence, drug abuse, and racism.

Problematically, the transmission of *Rádio Favela* jammed the signal of commercial broadcasters. As a result, the friends became targets of constant police persecution. Despite the violent repression of the police, they resisted and, with the assistance of a journalist and a lawyer, managed to acquire a license to operate as a community radio station. The original *Rádio Favela* remains active[1]. Nowadays, I appreciate its importance as a communication channel that inspired other favela residents in Brazil. However, at the time I considered the film boring and failed to perceive the political significance of both its narrative and the story behind it.

In fact, for a long time ignorance and prejudice defined my knowledge about favelas. I used to see them almost exclusively as densely populated, violence-ridden and poorly equipped urban environments. Despite the fact that I liked some cultural and musical traditions from favelas (e.g. samba, Rio's funk), I was actually afraid of both favelas and their residents. I would say this fear derived specifically from mainstream media's sensationalist discourses because until I started my research I had neither spent time in favelas nor become acquainted with favela residents.

As a child, I used to walk by newsstands on the way to school and stare at the photographs of dead bodies on the ground covered in blood and dust. These images illustrated news about the armed conflicts between criminal organizations and the police. These cases mostly happened in favelas. Today, the bodies no longer make the covers, but the death toll and the general perception of favelas as naturally dangerous environments persist.

As teenagers, my friends and I used to buy those sensationalist newspapers and take them to school. There, we used to compare, in disgusted giggles, the most and least shocking gunshot wounds on the invariably male, young, and black or dark-skinned bodies like my own. By lunchtime at home, we used to listen and laugh at radio broadcasts of *Patrulha da Cidade* (City Patrol), a very popular, self-proclaimed "humoristic-journalistic" police program—on the air since 1960—in which actors portray police officers, criminals, and victims in comic versions of actual crimes.

Similar sensationalist, pseudo-journalistic police programs that explore and satirize violence have also aired on television. In the 1990s, we also used to watch the nationwide police program *Cadeia Nacional* (a play on words that meant either Nationwide Chain or National Jail). The host Luiz Alborghetti was a conservative politician who made a career as a sarcastic, angry, and sweaty commentator, who praised indiscriminate killings by the police as effective measures against generalized violence. Two of his famous catchphrases were "*bandido bom é bandido morto*" (A good criminal is a dead one) and "*não precisamos de mais cadeias, precisamos de mais cemi-térios*" (We do not need more jails, but more cemeteries). Despite appearing on a small and now defunct commercial TV channel, the program had high audience ratings. Those and other catchphrases remain omnipresent in sensationalist police programs on several television channels today. They are also quite popular in everyday conversations. Most importantly, these kinds of radio and TV programs also reinforce the general perception that favelas are intrinsically violent.

All this to say that from childhood to early adulthood, I grew up with the idea that favelas were highly dangerous places populated by murderous criminals that constituted a threat to the rest of the population. The criminalizing media coverage of favelas and the naturalization of violence, which have preceded me, continue these days. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to claim that generations of non-favela inhabitants before and after mine have a similar negative perception of favelas.

Years later, in the mid-2000s, I heard about favela residents' media again during my bachelor's studies in communication and journalism in Brazil. We had two courses on the theme: community communication and third-sector media. At that time, my relationship with politics and society had already

changed. By the time I attended university, I had already grown very criti-cal of social inequality, racism, and social injustice in Brazil. In fact, I had started to identify similarities between what I knew about favelas and life in my hometown.

In my hometown, violence rates were not as high as they seemed to be in favelas, but we also regularly saw and heard of crime victims left on the ground in different neighborhoods. In addition, my hometown also lacked security, public services, and urban infrastructure. Thus, when we discussed media in favelas at the university, I immediately wondered how my home-town would be in terms of politics if it had similar media initiatives. The main media outlets we read, listened to and watched in Magé were all from the city of Rio de Janeiro.[2] Thus, I imagined the city having local media in which residents could denounce irregularities, complain about abuses, communicate with others and maybe organize actions for social change. As I learned more about favelas beyond the mainstream media narratives, my perceptions of them changed. Since then, I have seen favelas as urban areas in which people who have suffered the most from violence, social inequality, and governmen-tal neglect act for bottom-up resistance and change.

Seeing the media made by favela residents has made me believe that journalism and mediated communication form an important combination of knowledge and practical skills for marginalized and criminalized social groups to have as they act for social justice, civil and human rights in to-day's hyper-connected, information-saturated world. However, in order to understand the role of media (techniques and technologies) and journalism for bottom-up civic actions, we also need to look at how and why people get involved, individually and/or collectively, in often small-scale, community-oriented media practices. It is not possible to comprehend the roles of media and journalism for people without scrutinizing what their meanings are for the same people in whose actions we are interested. These questions, as the book shows, lie at the heart of "favela media activism."

All this to say that in addition to being exploratory, this study was also a journey of self-discovery. As I mentioned in the last chapter, throughout the research process, I constantly kept one question in the back of my head: what would I need to learn if I were to promote political uses of media and journalism in my hometown, located at the margins of the margins of Rio de Janeiro? To some extent this was a rhetorical question in that I did not originally intend to act on what it suggests. I kept asking myself the question because I wanted to push my sociological imagination (Mills, 1959) in a con-crete manner. The question also became a way of creating and maintaining empathy with the people I met. I believe empathy is the minimum researchers must have when they set off to investigate people and their actions.

Nevertheless, as I became more familiar with media activism in favelas, other more (self-) critical questions arose. Seeing the people act made me wonder about my own political role and motivations in society. Many times I have admired and even envied these people for what they did in spite of their everyday life constraints. Their actions seemed much more relevant to society than pursuing a degree. A degree is something we can easily think of as an exclusively personal accomplishment in an increasingly neoliberal academic culture. Consequently, we may ignore what the educational process means in terms of knowledge acquired and how this knowledge can be socially and politically invaluable. In these anguishing circumstances, I wondered: what can I do to make some kind of difference in society? What does "difference" mean? How to balance the pursuit of a career with the sense of duty to contribute towards a more just and egalitarian society?

Ironically, in a way, it was the experience of the research process and the interactions with politically active favela residents that helped me confront my academic-activist uncertainties. During the conversations and intervening interviews, we also talked about living an adult life in very different ways from that of our social groups. Some of the people I met had university degrees, others were starting their university studies or planning their next educational steps. When we talked about these issues, I could identify shared experiences, doubts and sources of pride (e.g. many of them, like me, had also been among the first ones to reach such high levels of education in their families). In these moments, I described to them how I felt uncertain about how I could act politically during or after my personal accomplishments. As wise young people, they repeated in different words: *o importante é somar*. Literally, the sentence translates as "what matters is joining forces." That is, what matters is that one joins the struggles, that one joins the force they believe to have for the efforts to change what they think needs changing. They did not ask for help, support or other preferential treatment. *Somar* means joining forces while respecting those who already act for a cause or for changes.

These words of wisdom and encouragement were possibly the most important lesson I learned during my research process. As scholars or researchers, we must always remember that we are not above the people in whose actions we are interested. Perhaps this is our greatest problem: a significant part of the (social) scientific community reproduces in its culture the belief of being semi-gods, as the community leader angrily described in the event I attended during one of my fieldwork trips. In our complaints about difficulties in getting funding or about how exhausting our schedules can be (mostly because we make them our schedules full ourselves), we tend to isolate ourselves from the rest of society. As if we were not as priviledged as we are. As if our

problems were bigger than those of "ordinary people." We easily forget that other people also have knowledge and that what they know matters even if it is not a result from years of higher education. We also risk forgetting that other people also struggle and juggle between socioeconomic constraints and individual imperatives. Behind our institutional walls and frequently incomprehensible jargon it is also easy to forget that we—the "experts"—also contribute to the ways the main public sphere restricts the pluralization of counterpublics and voices. I wonder if I would have realized and questioned my own position in social hierarchies and power relations without the conversations with the people I met in favelas. Talking to them helped me to become aware of the excluding character of academic structures, something we easily take for granted from within.

This state of self-awareness has helped me think of what possible differences social scientists can make in society. Perhaps the initial and most important change is in our attitudes. We must recognize our privileges and concede our positions of power in society while acknowledging and respecting—even if disagreeing with—other forms of knowledge. Another important fact to remember is that self-criticism, humility, and respect are not qualities, but never-ending processes. Recognizing our positions in society and respecting people allows us to stop acting as if we were somehow superior without neglecting that as academics we do have much more access than *favelados* to economic, political, and intellectual spheres—those in which legitimized voices echo and chances of policymaking influence are higher. In other words, it is our choice as individual social scientists and research communities whether we reproduce the prejudices of academia, abstain from politicized attitudes (certainly a fair choice) or become powerful additions to political causes or struggles against human rights violations and the consequences of social inequality.

All this is to say that my doubts and questions still linger, but they have changed. The question that I constantly ask myself now is: what can I do *as a researcher and a scholar* to *contribute* to those political struggles in which I believe? I do not have an answer and I am not sure whether I will ever have or want an ultimate solution. However, the findings and lessons learned in this research process do open potential paths for relevant theoretical contributions to social sciences and social movements. They also create possibilities for collaboration with colleagues, activists, and other agents of social change in Brazil, Finland, and elsewhere. The question certainly points at a number of different uncertainties. Nevertheless, having doubts about the future from now on is certainly more promising than when I started. It is definitely no longer a rhetorical question.

NOTES

1. The station, now called *Rádio Autêntica 106,7 Favela FM*, operates in the city of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais. It is available for live streaming at http://radio-favelafm.com.br (last accessed in December 5, 2016).

2. Different authors (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos 2002; Waisbord 2013) have described media in provinces and municipalities like Magé, my hometown, as oligarchy and clientelistic. That is, local political and economic elites instrumentalize newspapers, radio stations, and television channels as their own political platforms. In Magé, newspaper editors often use their publications to support friendly politicians and attack their opponents. In recent years, journalists who are more independent have used blogs for the coverage of local politics. However, I would argue that Magé remains predominantly dependent on the media printed or broadcast in the state's capital Rio de Janeiro.

Appendix 1

Details about NGO Staff Interviews

NGO/Project (website)	Interviewees/positions* (at the time of the interview)	Date/Duration of Interview
Observatório de Favelas (www.observatoriode favelas.org.br)	NGO director	Date: May 10, 2012. Interview Duration: 54min.
Observatório de Favelas, project: *Imagens do Povo* (Images of the People, www.imagensdopovo. org.br)	Project Coordinator	Date: May 15, 2012. Interview Duration: 35min.
CEASM (http://ceasm.tumblr.com/)	NGO Director	Date: May 16, 2012. Interview Duration: 55min.
BemTV (www.bemtv.org.br)	Educator	Date: May 17, 2012. Interview Duration: 50min.
Observatório de Favelas, project: Popular School of Critical Communication (ESPOCC, www.espocc. org.br)	Project Coordinators	Date: May 23, 2012. Interview Duration: 1h 03min.
Viva Rio, Project: *Viva Favela* (www.vivafavela.com.br)	Project coordinator	Date: June 27, 2012. Interview Duration: 1h 06min.

Appendix 2

Details about Interviewees Involved in Media Activism

List of interviewees (favela residents involved in media activism)
Interviews conducted in May-June, 2013

Code	Age*/Gender (*at the time of interview)	Professional/Activist Profile* (*at the time of interview)	Date and Duration of Interviews
i-1	25, male	Photographer on NGO projects and member of multimedia collectives	May 13, 2013 (Duration: 1h 41min)
i-2	30, male	Photographer, former member of community media and NGO projects	May 16, 2013 (Duration: 1h 34min)
i-3	32, Male	Photographer, blogger and NGO staff member	May 17, 2013 (Duration: 48min)
i-4	26, Male	Photographer, member of multimedia collectives, former member of NGO projects	May 18, 2013 (Duration: 1h 06min)
i-5	23, Male	Multimedia producer, journalist and member of multimedia collectives	May 20, 2013 (Duration: 1h 37min)
i-6	27, Female	Journalist, member of NGO-driven community media	May 23, 2013 (Duration: 1h 02min)
i-7	18, Female	Student, member of NGO-driven community media	May 24, 2013 (Duration: 1h)
i-8	23, Female	Unemployed, member of multimedia collectives	May 25, 2013 (Duration: 1h 30min)
i-9	30, Female	Journalist, former member of NGO-driven community media	May 28, 2013 (Duration: 1h 53min)
i-10	22, Female	Student, member of NGO-driven community media	May 29, 2013 (Duration: 1h 24min)
i-11	Under 30*, Female (*Interviewee refused to inform her exact age)	Educator, NGO staff member	May 29, 2013 (Duration: 1h 07min)

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